THEATRE AS A PLACE OF LEARNING: THE FORCES AND AFFECTS OF DEvised
THEATRE PROCESSES IN EDUCATION

by

Mia Perry

B.A., University Trinity College Dublin, 2000
M.A., Central School of Speech and Drama, London, 2004

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Abstract

This study investigates the forces and affects of contemporary devised theatre practices in education. Inquiries at two sites form the basis of research: an analysis of professional contemporary devising practice with regard to educational applications and implications within it; and an analysis of a devising process in a secondary school program to consider the benefits and limitations of this approach in the context of education.

This work is situated within a poststructural perspective on embodied pedagogy (Davies, 2000; Ellsworth, 2005; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000), and within the theory of nomadic thought, as developed by Giles Deleuze (1990; 1994) and his collaborations with Felix Guattari (1983; 1987). Taking up pedagogy in this light, I consider the student as a body/mind/self in motion (Ellsworth, 2005) and focus on a non-representational perspective of analysis, understanding pedagogy to be lived and experienced by means of forces of affect, sensation and interrelation. Accordingly, this study challenges the dominant perspective on pedagogy, as occurring and evaluated according to representational logic, reliant on semiotic systems.

This study asks: What can be gained from a new lens through which to understand the construction of theatre and drama in education? And, what are the connections and crevices between theatre practices today and theatre and drama in education?
# Table of Contents

Abstract ............................................................................................................................................... ii

Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................... iii

List of Tables ......................................................................................................................................... vi

List of Figures ....................................................................................................................................... vii

A Prelude .............................................................................................................................................. viii

Acknowledgements .............................................................................................................................. xi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY .............................................................................. 1

Introduction to the Sites ....................................................................................................................... 4

Introduction to the Theoretical Framework ......................................................................................... 5

Research Questions .............................................................................................................................. 8

Introduction to Methodology ............................................................................................................... 9

Descriptions and Perspectives on Relevant Terminology .................................................................. 11
  Devised Theatre: An Overview ........................................................................................................ 11
  Drama and Theatre in Education: A Perspective ............................................................................. 16
  Embodied Pedagogy: A Working Definition .................................................................................... 17

Outline of the Dissertation .................................................................................................................. 17

CHAPTER TWO: THEORY AND RESEARCH ..................................................................................... 19

Theoretical Framework: Exploring Experience and Forces of Affect .............................................. 19
  Along with Representational Logic .................................................................................................. 21

Background Literature ......................................................................................................................... 27
  Research in Drama and Theatre Education .................................................................................... 28
  Embodiment in Education ............................................................................................................... 34
  Non-representational Approaches to Educational Research .......................................................... 38
  Conclusion ........................................................................................................................................ 41

CHAPTER THREE: A PRACTICAL AND CONCEPTUAL METHODOLOGY ................................. 43
Research Design .................................................................................................................. 45
Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 45
A Statement of Positioning ................................................................................................. 46
Positioning, Paradigms, and Practices ............................................................................... 48
The Sites ............................................................................................................................... 48
Data Sources ....................................................................................................................... 50
Unit of Analysis: The Creation Cycle .............................................................................. 52
Stages of Analysis .............................................................................................................. 54
Coding: Identifying Territories ....................................................................................... 55
Rhizome Theory .................................................................................................................. 56
Framework Summary ......................................................................................................... 61

CHAPTER FOUR: FORCED ENTERTAINMENT ................................................................. 65
Data Generation and Selection at Forced Entertainment .................................................. 66
Data Context: Introducing the Company ........................................................................... 67
“Unpacking the Present”: Navigating the Experience of Creation in ................................ 71
Forced Entertainment’s Working Processes ....................................................................... 71
Preparation (1): The Smooth and the Striated Spaces of Creation .................................... 71
Preparation (2): Collaboration and Improvisation ............................................................. 80
Performing (1): Improvisation and Bodies at Play ............................................................ 83
Performing (2): In Rhizomatic Relation to the Audience .................................................. 87
Spectating: A Process of Inquiry and Analysis .................................................................. 92
Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 96

CHAPTER FIVE: LISMORE SECONDARY ........................................................................ 98
Researcher Role and Data Selection at Lismore Secondary .............................................. 100
Lismore Research Context ................................................................................................. 101
Bodies in Space and Time .................................................................................................... 103
The Nature of the Process Undertaken ............................................................................... 105
Devising with Characters, Consensus, and the School Play ............................................ 107
Devising with Characters: Expanding the Grounds of the Learning Self ......................... 108
List of Tables

Table 3.1: Basic stages of data analysis ................................................................. 54
List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Data analysis diagram ................................................................. 63
Figure 4.1: Forced Entertainment performers in improvisation, April, 2008. (Still image captured from video.) ................................................................. 69
Figure 4.2: Forced Entertainment performers in improvisation, April, 2008. (Still image captured from video.) ................................................................. 83
Figure 4.3: Robin Arthur entering the performance space at the beginning of Spectacular, 2008. (Still image captured from video.) ................................................................. 89
Figure 4.4: Robin Arthur performing Spectacular (Forced Entertainment, 2008). Picture: Hugo Glendinning ................................................................. 90
Figure 5.1: The drama class talking to an audience after a final performance. (Still image captured from video.) ................................................................. 103
Figure 5.2: Positioning exercise ................................................................. 114
Figure 5.3: Subjectivity exercise ................................................................. 116
Figure 5.4: Character biography notes ................................................................. 118
Figure 5.5: April performing a monologue in the role of Lexa, her character. (Still image captured from video.) ................................................................. 120
Figure 5.6: Sam and Victoria (foreground) ................................................................. 128
Figure 5.7: Kyle and Victoria ................................................................. 130
Figure 5.8: Program notes ................................................................. 136
Figure D.1: Devised theatre: A map of practice ................................................................. 184
A Prelude

As I compose the beginning of this manuscript, I take my mind back to the incarnation of this project. True to life, and to a rhizomatic way of seeing it, there are multiple beginnings to this journey. One, is a year spent in Moscow in 1998, where I witnessed first hand, the effects of an immense appreciation of, and deep engagement with, the arts. The effects were broad reaching, and included a human interconnectedness and a sense of place and history that infiltrated people’s day-to-day lives. Theatres and galleries, opera houses and recital halls, were in abundance and full, night after night with people of all ages and from all walks of life. Ticket prices, venues, and public education made these engagements accessible to all. I returned from Moscow, to my degree in theatre studies in Dublin, with an entirely new perspective on the potential roles of theatre in our societies. The integration of community, culture, place, and history that has been facilitated to a large extent by the arts, imbued a cohesiveness and mutual understanding amongst the people in Moscow that was powerful to observe and intoxicating to live amidst. Beginning number two, is a Masters degree in theatre devising, during which time I discovered my love of theory and research, a discovery that shook my self-identification and perseverance with performance practice, and guided my pursuits towards the vocation of academia from where I felt I could best contribute. Beginning number three is the most obvious one, the incarnation of this particular project, complete with questions, intentions, time lines and funding applications. Approximately five years ago, through the striations of the academic spaces that we navigate, I found a way to focus my general interest in theatre arts and society. This focus was in education. I began to ask if theatre can educate, if it has a place in institutional education, and if it does, why it does, what is it about theatre than can contribute to education? What are the affordances of contemporary theatre to the classroom? With some answers to these
questions, I hoped to forge a bridge between contemporary theatre practices and contemporary education. I immersed myself in what already exists in the field of theatre and drama in education, and in a project that spans a contemporary professional theatre company and a secondary school drama program. Finally, beginning number four, occurred in October 2009 as I started to write this manuscript. I didn’t realise the extent to which I was “beginning” as I retreated to my office to write, but indeed, what became clear was that this growing manuscript was a project unto itself. With the experiences I have had in this project, and the data that I have collected, I could have written many other dissertations, all differing in terms of that which I chose to include, the way in which I selected my words, the moments which I chose to magnify. What follows then, is one version of the events that occurred and my best attempt to analyse and discuss them. I use the framework and methodology that I believe is most useful and most insightful in the context of the field at large and in terms of the potential value of the findings.

In straddling disciplines in the academy, I have risked isolating myself from educational theorists by engaging in arts practices that are largely unfamiliar in this context. On the other hand, to scholars in theatre arts research, much of the description and discussion of the practices engaged in is potentially superfluous. I have distanced myself, as much as possible, from a role of advocacy in drama and theatre education, and in doing so, have isolated myself from the majority of research practice that is carried out in this field. I share the passion and belief in the potential force of drama and theatre, but not the belief that the force is always a positive or useful one. Furthermore, I have taken up a theoretical framework and methodology that challenges the representational paradigm dominating research in the social sciences and humanities. In doing this, I risk the incongruousness of my work with other work in the field, and amongst my peers. In short, I write from a position of instability that I find at once productive and restrictive.
Lacking a solid network of people around me who are familiar with the same “language,” I am protected to some extent from an engagement in Heidegger’s “idle talk,” in other words, an ambiguity and tranquility that comes from working within reassuring and familiar discourses. In places of such familiarity, one can float in a world of discourse, and ultimately become alienated from reality. In only partial contrast to this, my work and process has been characterised by a need to describe and explain territories, terms, practices, and approaches, across disciplines and discourses. I must clarify that I do not claim to be above or beyond idle talk; indeed, I believe that I walk on the precipice of it in every chapter, paper, and presentation. I believe in the instability of theory and the fact of practice, and in this light, I strive to maintain a relevance and an applicability in my work, whilst at the same time honouring the complexity of the practices under investigation. This manuscript proceeds to waver between articulated thought for the sake of scholarship, and applied theory for the sake of practice, and I accept this position, albeit with some restraint.
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Through her texts I have found inspiration, guidance, and strong theoretical roots that have supported me through the various phases of my doctoral work.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This study is situated in the field of drama and theatre in education, with a specific focus on devised theatre and devising practices. Devised theatre, in brief, is a postmodern genre of theatre generally based on the subjectivities and circumstances of the artists involved, rather than an imposed fiction; the living textualities, rather than the pre-written text of a playwright (Govan, Nicholson, & Normington, 2007; Heddon & Milling, 2006). A more detailed introduction to this form of contemporary performance practice will be outlined later in this chapter. I position the production and performance of devised theatre as an anomalous place of learning (Ellsworth, 2005) with unique affordances in terms of its pedagogical potential. Traditional notions of drama and theatre education are broad, and they have varied across time and place. In general terms however, it can be seen to be invested in one or more of the following objectives: the study of drama and theatre (written texts and performed plays), the enrichment of other areas of curriculum, self and interpersonal development, or the production of theatre. The relationship between “drama” and “theatre” in these various approaches is a debate that has been explored by drama education theorists for decades (Slade, 1954; O’Neill, 1985; Bolton, 1984). Cognisant of this issue, I maintain that across drama and theatre in education, the connection with the artistic practice of theatre is central to the existence of the pedagogical application. This connection may be stronger or weaker depending on the experience and style of the facilitating teacher, but the connection is there all the same. Even with the most process-orientated drama education practice, for example, Process drama, expounded by Cecily O’Neill (1995), the structures of practice are directly and transparently drawn from their theatrical roots. Considering the educational implications of theatre and drama practice that have been demonstrated and documented at
length, it seems imperative that educational practices and programs maintain a connection with, and relevance to, contemporary theatre and performance practices. This assertion is a point of departure for this study.

If we consider just the past sixty years of theatre history, the art form has evolved and developed in numerous ways that have affected methods of collaboration, modes of representation, theatre technology, forms of narrative, and the fundamental positions of the performer and spectator. In our schools however, across that same sixty years, drama and theatre education is still largely structured on social constructionist methods and concepts that were established when the practice was first introduced in our education systems. The work of Dorothy Heathcote, Brian Way, Gavin Bolton, and Augusto Boal provided some of the key influences in establishing drama in education practices at that time, and much of this work remains central to the field today. Within a practice concerned with, and dependent on, human subjectivity, contemporary conditions – social and political – inevitably affect the drama and theatre-based interactions in our classrooms; whether intentionally or not, the era of new medias, informational technologies in excess, and the post modern condition of popular media all become forces of influence. Despite this ever changing landscape that feeds the subjectivities participating in drama and theatre in education, the innovations in the field over the past sixty years have occurred largely in accordance with the similar social constructionist lens and framework of practices that were established in the middle of the 20th century – as the practice of drama in education was taking root. Surveying a trajectory of research and practice in the field over the course of its history, there is much of great value and impact to be gained. Similarly, there is much to be gleaned from a consideration of contemporary theatre practices. My project then, is concerned with bridging a dialogue between the two fields of theatre practice and
education. This study asks: What are the connections and crevices between theatre practices today and theatre and drama in education? And what can be gained from an alternative lens through which to understand the construction of theatre and drama in education?

Devised theatre, although a form of theatre that has been growing in prevalence since the early 1970’s, has remained on the margins of mainstream theatre until very recently. Today, companies that incorporate devising as a core creative tool are as prevalent as any other, and methods of devising are taught in the vast majority of university level theatre programs. The practice and theory of devising is becoming steadily more established, but as yet, very little empirical research has been carried out in terms of its potential for educational applications. Poststructural pedagogical practices are inherently present in devised theatre but rarely as an intentional agenda played out by the practitioners themselves. A thorough analysis of the relationship between devised theatre and pedagogy has yet to occur.

My preoccupation with devised theatre in education stems from my experiential and theoretical findings of the connections between this type of theatre and poststructural notions of pedagogy (Britzman, 1991; Davies, 2005; Ellsworth, 1997, 2005; Lather, 1992). Accordingly, the data that feeds this study come from two primary sites: firstly, Forced Entertainment, a professional devised theatre company, based in Sheffield, UK; and secondly, Lismore Secondary School, a mid-size secondary school in a district outside of a major urban centre in Western Canada. This study then has two primary aims: to investigate professional contemporary devising practice with regard to educational applications and implications within it; and to analyse a devising process in a secondary school program to consider the benefits and limitations of this approach in the context of education.
Introduction to the Sites

My research interests prompted me to identify a professional devised theatre company in order to closely analyse the processes of inquiry and representation that are taken up in this form. After considering and communicating with a number of companies in Canada and the UK, I selected Forced Entertainment as my site of research. This decision was based in part on the history and reputation of the company: Forced Entertainment has been at the forefront of the devised theatre movement in Britain for over two decades. In a genre of theatre that evades easy definition, the work of this company is solidly and recognisably positioned in the tradition of devised theatre practice. This factor enabled me to position my own theorizations and applications accordingly.

The opportunity to work in a classroom in conjunction with my research of professional devised theatre practice came about due to a larger research project that I was a part of (the YouthCLAIM project – discussed in more detail in Chapter 5). A teacher at Lismore Secondary School, and fellow graduate student, invited me to work with her drama class; it was a suitable site and context for the YouthCLAIM project and in this way the school became the second site of my doctoral study.

The fact that the two sites of this research are located in different continents is important to note. The relevance of this disparity lies mainly in the history of devised theatre rather than the contemporary social, political, or cultural contexts. This study is designed to facilitate and analyse a paradigm of practice that is necessarily and inherently contingent upon place and context. It is beyond the scope of this work to compare the aesthetic or pedagogical qualities emerging from the two sites, or the practice in terms of socio-political or cultural factors. What is under investigation is how the two diverse sites take up the practice in their own unique context
and circumstance, rather than how their practices compare according to any particular standard or model.

Introduction to the Theoretical Framework

This study, considered as a whole, has roots in two main disciplines: education and theatre. In this way, both the theories and methods engaged in throughout this work represent an attempt to embrace a transdisciplinary space. The following framework summary touches on the key components of my theoretical and methodological approach.

The study is situated within a poststructural perspective on embodied pedagogy (Davies, 2000; Ellsworth, 2005; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000; Springgay, 2008), and within the theory of nomadic thought. Nomadic thought is an epistemology developed by French philosopher, Giles Deleuze and his collaborations with French philosopher and psychotherapist, Felix Guattari. Within what is collectively a diverse and substantial body of work, Deleuze and Guattari challenge representational logic, the dominant paradigm of thought since Plato (Massumi, 1992, p. 4). Nomadic thought rejects “the artificial division between the three domains of representation, subject, concept, and being” (Massumi, 1987, p. xii). In this way, it replaces analogical thought with that which is rhizomatic, and guided by forces of sensation and affect.

Taking up pedagogy in this light, I focus on a non-representational perspective, considering pedagogy in terms of how it is lived and experienced by means of forces of affect, sensation and interrelation. This is in contrast to the more typical perspective on pedagogy, as occurring and evaluated according to representational logic, reliant on semiotic systems. This is not to deny the integral representational dimension inherent in teaching and learning; rather it is to give attention to an equally integral but largely overlooked aspect of the pedagogical process.
Considering the body in conjunction with poststructural and non-representational notions of pedagogy becomes essential as I apply theoretical paradigms to lived practice. Our minds, the subject of the majority of education research and practice, can account for only a fraction of the pedagogical encounter. Directly addressing the body in educational research is something that is called for with ever more frequency (Ellsworth, 2005; Fusco, 2008; Powell, 2007), and in response to this, a quickly expanding field of inquiry is emerging. My endeavour in this terrain has been informed and inspired by poststructural theorists in education (Davies, 2000; Ellsworth, 2005; Grumet, 2007), along with philosophies of the body in social theory (Shilling, 2003), phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), and feminist theory (Grosz, 1994). Elizabeth Ellsworth, in *Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy* (2005), describes the student as a learning body/mind/self in motion, and goes on to analyse a series of “anomalous places of learning” in terms of their sensational and pedagogical impacts. These places of learning include museums, exhibitions, and performances and they are considered according to the experience of learning that they allow. Analysing public spaces in terms of their pedagogical implications is not uncommon; public pedagogy and out-of-school literacies, are areas of inquiry that encompass such endeavours (Dyson, 1997, 2003; Giroux, 2005, 2008; Hull & Schultz, 2001). What Ellsworth achieves in this study however, is a discussion that is focused not on alternative modes and methods of disseminating information to students, but rather on how the experience of living in and through these spaces and events can affect and contribute to the evolving learning body/mind/self, in terms of forces of sensation, corporeality, and inter-relation.

Following on from Deleuze, Guattari, and Ellsworth, my attention in this study is focused on process, with signification and semiotic regimes as a secondary (but always present) consideration. I am interested in considering experience, and the learning experience in
particular, as a process of sensation and emergence. An attention to process, sensation and emergence (movement) brings to the forefront an attention to the body. Massumi states, quite simply, “When I think of my body and ask what it does to earn that name, two things stand out. It moves. It feels. In fact, it does both at the same time…” (2002, p. 1, emphasis in original).

Finally, the notion of emergence, suggests the change inherent in embodied experience. The notion of becoming is a central aspect of Deleuze’s corpus, and is taken to describe “the continual production of difference” (Stagoll, 2005, p. 21). Many poststructural theorists have taken up this notion of becoming, to replace the more traditional focus on being (Davies, et al., 2001; Knight, 2009; Springgay, 2008). In line with this, Ellsworth calls for a pedagogy that “address[es] a student that is not coincident with herself, but only with her change. … a learning self that is in motion” (2005, p. 7).

Recent work in education has brought critical and poststructural theories to bear on drama and theatre based practices in the classroom. Sharon Grady’s work (2000, 2003) has brought drama in education practices into direct relation with critical pedagogy theory. Grady has importantly problematized the role of applied theatre methods in critical pedagogy, as well as proposed and theorized a pluralistic approach to drama education. In Britain, Helen Nicholson (2005; 2009) has written leading texts in Applied theatre, theatre in education, and performance creation. In her work, Nicholson brings a critical light to notions of efficacy and ethics in drama and theatre in education. In Canada, Kathleen Gallagher (2000, 2007) has published two in depth critical ethnographic examinations of drama processes in secondary school settings. These texts expose the complex and contested ground of drama work as it comes into contact with social, political, and ideological structures. Similarly, Carmen Medina (2004, 2010), based in the US, explores drama and performance structures in education in terms of their affordances to critically
negotiate the socio-political positions of youth. These works portray a sample of the contemporary and innovative research in the field that is pushing the boundaries of social constructionist models of research in drama and theatre in education, and paving the way for new perspectives and new frameworks with which to approach the field.

Finally, this work builds upon contemporary theory in performance, principally the performing arts. Performance studies, although not taken up as a key element of my theoretical framework, has been influential in my evolving perspective on the performing arts and performance in pedagogy. Of particular relevance, is the shared focus on process and interrelation, common across performance studies research as well as Deleuzian philosophy (Cull, 2009). The study and theorisation of postmodern and postdramatic theatre (Auslander, 1997, 2008; Lehmann, 2006; Fuchs, 1996) has directly informed both my participation in, and analysis of my data. Recent studies in devised theatre (Heddon & Milling, 2006; Govan, Nicholson, & Normington, 2007), and applied theatre (Nicholson, 2005; Thompson, 2003; 2009; Taylor, 2003) have provided additional key contexts for this work.

Research Questions

This study is guided by an investigation into the affordances and implications of contemporary devised theatre practices in education. In this way, I have attempted to understand professional devised theatre processes in terms of their pedagogical implications. Accordingly, I have attempted to understand the construction of drama in education with a new lens informed by professional theatre practice and poststructural pedagogical theory. The study emerges as a conversation of sorts, between two contexts of practice, with material intentions to identify and articulate responses to the following three questions:
1. In examining the inquiry and creative processes of professional devised theatre, what are the implications to more traditional learning contexts?

2. What emerges through engagement in devising methods with youth about the pedagogy afforded by such practices?

3. What are the connections, and what are the crevices, between devised theatre and education?

Introduction to Methodology

This following section is aimed to inform and contextualise the proceeding chapters that pursue in more detail the theoretical and methodological frameworks of this study.

I have stumbled over the terms of reference and categorisation as I try to define the structure and approach of my methodology. Gallagher, in her ethnography, *The Theatre of Urban*, describes a “porous methodology” (2007, p. 7) which seems to most accurately describe the experience of my own study. Across two diverse sites, and three-and-a-half years since the beginning of the initial fieldwork, the nature of my research has been contingent upon expected and unexpected circumstances. Ulf Hannerz has described ethnographic work as “the art of the possible” (2003, p. 213), and indeed the circumstances surrounding my life and work have directly impacted the possibilities of my participation in the research and therefore the nature of my methodology and data generated. This project has been guided by both personal and methodological forces and was carried out with both improvisational and systematic processes. The project overall has taken place in the framework of a poststructural qualitative study using ethnographic methods across two specific institutions (Britzman, 2000; Lather, 1991, 2007; Stewart, 2007).
Patti Lather proposes a methodology of “getting lost, where we think against our own continued attachments to the philosophy of presence and consciousness that undergirds humanist theories of agency” (2007, p. 9). This notion has resonated with me throughout the analysis and writing stages of this project. She goes on to argue that “‘getting lost’ might both produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently in working toward more Deleuzian ‘stumbling’ practices that take such losses into account” (p. 13). Working against, as well as within, representation logic in analysis across both sites, has enabled me to take Lather’s advice and lose my way. My theoretical and analytical frameworks position representation as only one aspect of any experience or emergence, one that is mediated through forces of sensation and affect.

The analytic process evolved from what began as an improvisational conversation between my observations, practice, collaborators, and theory in the field, to a systematic examination, at my desk, of all captured moments, through video, interviews, field notes, and artefacts. The system of analysis was always emerging, as moments and comments, observations and memories, proceeded to resist and break up the structures that I had carefully put in place for the purposes of the study. My charting of events soon became a mapping of encounters, and in this way, the extent to which the following narrative builds from the work of Deleuze, Guattari, and scholars of their work, became substantial. In the footsteps of other postmodern and poststructural researchers and theorists (Conquergood, 2002; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; St. Pierre, 1997; Sontag, 1999), I look within the data at what is happening, rather than what is done, and how things function, as opposed to what they might or might not mean. In each site, considered separately, I have selected informative examples of practice and examined moments or excerpts of activity in terms of their forces of impact, sensation, and affect.
Central to the work of Deleuze and Guattari, and characteristic of nomadic thought, is the theory of the Rhizome. The metaphor of the rhizome offers a way to visualise and analyse experience according to networks of lines rather than points. The rhizome has multiple entry and exits points, whereby any line can lead to any other. Unlike the “tap root,” or the tree root, the rhizome does not lead back to a single logic, a single truth, or a common objective. This concept is taken up as an analytical tool throughout this study. Coinciding with my analysis, this report of it exists as representational, within a representational paradigm. It attempts, however, to portray another aspect of experience, eluding semiotic analysis, and in this way, to contribute another possibility, or line of flight, to conversations on pedagogy, arts education, and theatre.

Descriptions and Perspectives on Relevant Terminology

*Devised Theatre: An Overview*

Devised theatre is a sprawling category, with practices and interpretations varying from continent to continent as well as from theatre company to theatre company. It is a form of theatre that has become, over the past decade, established and widely practiced. “Postmodern” and “postdramatic” have both been used to describe devised theatre and its various performative relatives, and terms and definitions continue to swirl in the theory and critique of the practice. A particularly useful way to approach a definition of devised theatre is proposed by Govan, Nicholson and Normington (2007) in their book on contemporary performance practices. They suggest that devising may be most accurately described in terms of a plurality of “processes of experimentation and sets of creative strategies” – rather than a single methodology” (p. 7). For the purposes of this chapter, I will look briefly at devised theatre as emerging through art and socio-political history and outline some characteristics of the form that are helpful in differentiating it.
from other forms and genres of theatre. Finally, I will summarize my own perspective on, and approach to, devised theatre, one that plays out in my classroom practice and fieldwork with youth, as well as my analysis and theorization of data. This self-reflective statement is at once a glossary and a caveat that contextualizes my practice and research in this muddy terrain. This positioning of practice is critical to my scholarship when working within a field that has so many versions and varied epistemological undercurrents.

Devised theatre relates to Western theatre practices, most commonly used in reference to European and Australian theatre, although the term has seeped into American theatre discourse and is quickly becoming recognized throughout North American practice. Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling (2006) suggest that, “An improvisational and creative aspect of performance, something akin to devising, has been a part of the folk arts of popular performance across time and across cultures” (p. 10). This notwithstanding, devised theatre is commonly traced back to the first half of the 20th century. There is a direct link with Futurism in the early 1900’s and the fervent revolt against traditional forms, structures, and processes in the arts on a multidisciplinary level (Goldberg, 2004). Also influential is Dadaism, a movement that emerged during World War I as a reactionary movement against an ideology of logic and reason (implicating almost every social and political structure). A more direct relation can be seen to Surrealism, a movement that shared in Dadaism’s non-conformist approach, but was primarily concerned with problematizing and dismantling social, political, and aesthetic structures attempting to express the very “functioning of thought” (Breton, 1924). Surrealist work is characterised by an interest in dreams and the subconscious, along with chance and randomness, all of which resonate in the practices of theatre devising today. Performance art (such as Happenings, street performance, etc.) in the mid 20th century, shared in a similar desire to break
up, or meddle with, established structures, expected processes, and conventions. Nourished by a history of “leftist” artistic, political and philosophical movements, devised theatre came about in part as a response to representational theatre (that became synonymous with traditional theatre): The conventions of the traditional form were deconstructed, and the linear narrative embedded in playwriting was often rejected in favour of the multiple voices and interwoven stories of collaborative play building. Typically, devised theatre practice is traced to the 1970’s in the context of: the socio-political consciousness that emerged during the 60’s; new advances in media technology; significant development of the feminist movement; and above all, the state of the conventional art forms at the time, or their perceived short-comings.

As a general rule, devised theatre is the creation of original work or the re-imagining of traditional texts by one or more theatre artists, often in collaboration with visual art, creative technologies, and other forms of performance such as music and dance. Devised theatre is often more closely related to Live art (Heathfield, 2004) and performance art (Goldberg, 1988, 2004, Wark, 2006) than traditional notions of theatre, but ultimately the maze of terminology serves devised theatre better as a metaphor in itself than a descriptive tool. Key elements of devised theatre that differentiate it from other types of collective play creation include the commitment to multiple perspectives and subjectivities (specifically those of the creators involved), to multi-modalities (specifically lending equal weight to movement, sound and visual technologies as opposed to the traditional dominance of text), and by extension to performances that are not led by a “sing[ular] vision,” or an “authorial line” (Etchells, 1999, p.55).

The presence of professional theatre positioned as devised is strong across the theatre industries of most Western urban centres today. Some of the most influential companies, in addition to Forced Entertainment (est. 1984) that have emerged over the past 60 years include,
The People Show (London, UK, est. 1966); Theatre de Complicité (London, UK, est. 1983); The Wooster Group (New York, est. 1975); Goat Island (New York, est. 1987), Radix (Vancouver, Canada, est. 1988); The Electric Company (Vancouver, Canada, 1992); Sidetrack Theatre (Sydney, Australia, est. 1979); and Melbourne Workers’ Theatre (est. 1987).

Influenced by my own training in devising along with my personal journey of being a spectator, a practitioner, and a teacher of devised theatre, I have developed an understanding (one that is always evolving) of devised theatre. My own subjectivities (including preferences, desires, beliefs) feed directly into what is essentially my interpretation of the form. This understanding creates a lens through which I watch performance of all kind, but also a paradigm of practice from which I facilitate drama and theatre work in education. It is important to reiterate that this is a single (albeit fluid) interpretation of a form which is porous and subject to endless reconstruction. I break down a description of my “version” of devising into the following categories: subject, aesthetic, and performance dynamics.

**Subject.** Devised theatre occurs in an intimate relationship with the circumstances of its creation and existence. A group of artists collect in a time and space to create work, work that will be entirely affected by the circumstances of its development. The realisation of this can be as simple as a ladder that happens to be stored or left in the rehearsal room that becomes part of the final performance. Or it could be the more ephemeral influences of the current political or social climate, for example. Or a song that is lingering in someone’s head; a conversation that occurs between creators over tea, etc. etc. There is no end to what feeds into the creation and performance of devised theatre. It is performance created out of the banal and the profound “stuff” of everyday life, as lived by the creators/devisers.
Aesthetic. The aesthetic of devised theatre is characterised by an interdisciplinarity that emerges when text is removed from its usual position of dominance. That is not to say that text is used less in this form, indeed many devised theatre performances are based heavily in written and verbal text. Text is not an assumed modality as it is in “literary theatre” forms that are based on staging written dramatic texts. When written text is used in devised theatre, it is often drawn from improvisations carried out in rehearsal or found materials (prose, lists, lyrics, public domain documents). Often devised theatre has little or no verbal text, as physical bodies become the medium of expression, or sound and visual design. As circumstance weighs heavily in the creation of devised work, the form engages in technology as an important and sometimes key medium of performance (reflective of the ever growing influence of technology on our day to day lives).

Intertwined with circumstance, technology, and the dynamic of performance, the linear narratives of traditional theatre forms are rejected in devised theatre. In their place, narratives are often cyclical, disjointed, abstract, or conflicting. In this way, a devised theatre performance is reflective of lived experience and its attendant textualities considered holistically, rather than the Aristotelian story arc (that characterises classical and traditional theatre) that portrays stories as individual “truths” distinct from the myriad other stories inevitably starting and stopping and moving and interrupting around and within it.

Performance Dynamics. While a piece of devised theatre can be about anything, it is always also about performance. The relationship between the actor and the spectator is engaged with either explicitly or implicitly, as is the relationship between the actor and the role or function that he or she is performing. Concepts of time and space are often explored, as devised theatre experiments with durational performances (lasting for hours or days), and site-specific
performance. The physical space of performance often extends outside traditional theatre spaces into jails, apartments, gyms, to name but a few. Within theatre spaces, both lighting and design are used to comment on the spatial elements of the relationship between the spectator and the show – audiences often sit in full view during a performance, and actors may move and perform among spectators, or directly address spectators. Devised theatre, in this way, can always be considered “site-specific.”

In summary, devised theatre is an interdisciplinary, multi-vocal, non-linear form of theatre that allows for collaboration, for conflict, for consensus, and for dissensus. When successful, spectators will emerge from a performance provoked into thought, self-reflection, and awareness of their own position of spectator and their own process of making meaning.

_Drama and Theatre in Education: A Perspective_

I believe that drama and theatre in education can smudge the line and enrich the relationship between curriculum and life. Subjectivity is the raw material and product of this subject. It is about spectatorship: in students’ lives, of their peers, of their society and culture, of themselves. About expression: through the multiple modes of body, space, word, image, and sound. About imagination: expanding the possibilities of existence. About sensation: allowing students’ minds and bodies to be affected and to affect through relating to each other and possibilities outside of themselves and their material surroundings. About unsettling: breaking up routine and established pathways of thought and behaviour in order to discover other possibilities of creation and experience. About critique: making transparent assumptions, grand narratives, and dominant discourses. About diversity: honouring and exploring different perspectives,
allowing for conflicting narratives, and making dissensus productive. About relating: to aspects of oneself, to others, to other times, to other places, to other perspectives.

*Embodied Pedagogy: A Working Definition*

Embodiment in education is a term that can be heard with increasing frequency in contemporary research across paradigms and discipline areas. Along with a theoretical movement like this however, a diluting of language can occur (Loutzenheiser & MacIntosh, 2004). “Embodiment” has become an accepted “truth” in pedagogical theory, but the implications of this term, as well as the specific meanings behind it, are less and less clear as it is taken up with increasingly diverse objectives. In awareness of this, I summarize my understanding and use of the term in the following way: Embodiment in education describes teaching and learning in acknowledgement of our bodies as part of whole sensate beings in motion; inscribed, living, emerging, and inscribing subjectivities. That is, the body is always in a state of becoming, at once as a representation of self, a site of experience, sensation, and affect, and a mode of creation in progress. In addition, embodiment is a state that is always contingent upon the environment and the context of the body: “Continuously and radically in relation with the world, with others, and with what we make of them” (Ellsworth, 2005, p.4).

**Outline of the Dissertation**

This chapter has introduced the purpose and rationale for this study and outlined the guiding research questions. I have introduced the theoretical and methodological frameworks that structure the study, and provided descriptions of terminology that are central to the thesis as a whole.
Chapter two involves two foci: Firstly, the text outlines the theoretical foundations for this study and introduces some of the frames of reference applied in my analysis; secondly, this chapter contains a review of research reflecting the fields of study most directly influencing this work.

Chapter three lays out the overall methodological design of this study. A positioning statement locates myself, the researcher, in relation to the sites of my research. The chapter goes on to introduce and explain the stages of analysis undertaken and focuses particular attention to rhizome theory as I have taken it up in analysis.

Chapters four and five comprise of data analysis. Chapter four focuses on the creation processes of Forced Entertainment. This chapter provides a context for devising practice through the analytical lens provided by nomadic thought and the rhizome theory. Chapter five moves into the school setting. Chapter five builds and expands on the framework established in Chapter four both in terms of the practices facilitated and observed (the theatre company site directly influenced my work in the school site), and the process of analysis (the analysis of Forced Entertainment informed the analysis of the school based data).

The final chapter serves to bring the two sites of research into conversation through a theoretical and empirical discussion on issues that resonated with significance across the project. The chapter contains an overview of the assenting forces and opposing forces of devised theatre practice in traditional educational contexts followed by the proposal of a particular hybrid form of devising in education. Finally, the dissertation concludes with some perspectives on the construction of drama and theatre in education and learning environments more broadly imagined.
CHAPTER TWO: THEORY AND RESEARCH

The theoretical paradigm that informs this study is drawn principally from poststructural theory, in particular in relation to embodied pedagogy and nomadic thought. This chapter begins with an exploration of this theoretical landscape. The second half of the chapter reviews current research in the various and often interrelated fields that have influenced and informed this study. The review is divided into three sections: theatre and drama in education, embodiment in education, and non representational approaches to research in education. The chapter concludes with a summary of the theoretical perspectives that underlie my research.

Theoretical Framework: Exploring Experience and Forces of Affect

Influenced and inspired by poststructural theory, as I have been since early in my doctoral work, I questioned the value and relevance of my own interpretations of events, of data. I became critical, and then critical of my critical-ness. I became wary and self-conscious in a social science climate where so much time and space and resources can be drained in beautiful theoretical rhetoric that floats like clouds above the firm realities of desks and school walls. The work of Deleuze and his collaborations with Guattari provides a theoretical and philosophical landscape within the poststructural paradigm that is at once enigmatic and pragmatic. My interactions with Deleuze and Guattari’s work are the result of a search to find a way to investigate, consider, and talk about learning experiences in a way that acknowledges and directly addresses the modalities, subjectivities, and movements that occur during drama and theatre practices in learning contexts.
In pedagogical theory and practice, poststructuralist scholars take up an awareness of the subject as always becoming and always in relation, and apply it to the way we think about students and the learning experience (Britzman, 1991). In addition, a focus on the constitutive force of discourse in relation to self, subjectivity, and performance (Davies, 2005; Foucault, 1983, cited in Davies, 2005) lends a perspective to the roles of power, culture, and desire in the classroom. Ultimately, this colours the representations of learning that structure the school experience, i.e. the exam, the presentation, the project, the “answer.” The binary logic that distinguishes good from bad, and self from other, is challenged in poststructural thought, as the structure of the sign and the signified is problematized. That is, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is not a simple one whereby the signifier represents the truth or reality of the signified, rather the signifier is one possible indication of the signified, partial and contingent on subjectivities (that are always in flux). Knowledge, truth, and the human subject are constituted by discourses in poststructural thought, making all three contingent and always emerging. What’s more, discourses are acknowledged to be multiple, and often conflicting. In poststructural notions of education, knowledge is unstable, and subjectivity is fluid. In this way, poststructural theorists in education propose that we consider students as individual learning selves always in motion, and in relation (Davies, 1997; Ellsworth, 2005).

An awareness and critique of constitutive discourses, including binary logic, implicates the construction of the learning experience in poststructural pedagogy. Challenging the mind/body binary, and the in-school/out-of-school knowledge distinction has led to proposals for practice in interdisciplinary spaces (Ellsworth, 2005), in connection with out-of-school literacies and skills (Moje, et al. 2004; Moll et al., 2005), and in creative and arts-based learning (Gallagher, 2007; Medina, 2004; Springgay, 2008). The student subject in poststructural
pedagogy is an embodied subject and in this light, many poststructural theorists in education grapple with ways in which to talk about the body, to theorize the body, and to create learning experiences that address not only the mind, but the mind/body/self of the student (Davies, 2000; Ellsworth, 2005).

There are complications, and indeed contradictions, inherent in the concept of a poststructural practice in education. A system that depends upon the differentiation between right and wrong, pass and fail, acceptable and unacceptable, is bound to come across conflicts with a paradigm that maintains the subject as constituted by discourses and knowledge as unstable (Mellor & Patterson, 2004). During my fieldwork facilitating devised theatre methods in education, some of these conflicts became very clear. As I strive to honour the complexity of experience, of learning, and of research, it is with recognition of this contention that I hope to take up poststructural theory to inform my inquiry.

Along with Representational Logic

From the enlightenment philosophy of Kant, to contemporary paradigms in education, there is a strong conviction that experience is more than that which is represented or representational. Lyotard’s aesthetic of the sublime draws directly from Kant, “The region of the sublime [being] the distance between [the] faculties of conception and presentation” (Quick, 1994, p. 30). Phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; van Manen, 1997), complexity theory (Mason, 2008; Sumara, 2000), feminist theory (Braidotti, 1993; Grosz, 1994; Grumet & McCoy, 2000), and poststructural theories in education (Ellsworth, 2005; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000) are among the contemporary bodies of work that address, to varying degrees, non representational
concepts in education. Experience beyond that which is represented is very often accepted as real, yet underexplored as an element of pedagogy or art practice.

The notion of experience is central to the focus and nature of this study, yet it is a term that I use very carefully. Across all paradigms of educational research, experience is taken up generally to refer to the direct conscious contact with events, circumstances, and relationships. This understanding forms the basis for empirical research. In the work of Deleuze, experience alone does not account entirely for an event, a moment, or a memory. Experience, according to Deleuze, is born out of the conditions of its own possibility (Deleuze, 1988; Semetsky, 2005; Stagoll, 2005). Based on this understanding, the phenomenological body is linked with forces beyond conscious perception: “cosmological forces, forces from the outside, that the body itself can never experience directly” (Grosz, 2008, p. 3n). Deleuze claims a transcendental empiricism to his philosophy, grounding his perspective in actual experience but with the understanding that “reality as it is experienced does not reveal the preconditions of experience” (Stagoll, 2005, p. 283). To Deleuze, this calls for transcendental inquiry and in the context of poststructural research, this understanding of experience supports the contingent nature in which empirical research is carried out and represented. Lather, in her proposal for a methodology of “getting lost,” draws on the notion of “difficult knowledge” as articulated by Pitt and Britzman (2003, cited in Lather, 2007, p. 13). She explains: “[‘lovely knowledge’] reinforces what we think we want from what we find, and the latter [‘difficult knowledge’] is knowledge that induces breakdowns in representing experience” (p. 13).

Deleuze and Guattari take up poststructural concepts through what they term “nomad thought” (1987). Nomad thought is positioned in contrast to traditional representational thinking that has become characteristic of Western Metaphysics since Plato (Massumi, 1987). The root,
tap root, tree, or arborescent tree are various metaphors used to indicate this model of thought. Theorists and philosophers such as Cixous, Derrida, Artaud, and Foucault, among others, have taken up this opposition in various ways—rejecting the notion of unified meaning; that is, the notion of thought that, no matter how diverse, leads back to a singular logic or reason (a tap root). What Deleuze and Guattari propose is a system of thought that “does not respect the artificial division between the three domains of representation, subject, concept, and being; it replaces restrictive analogy with a conductivity that knows no bounds” (Massumi, 1987, p. xii). When these three categories are unsettled, the ways in which we think about and analyse learning expands. Rather than basing experience and emergent learning on the material signs of representation (for example, a word or an image), which can all be considered as beginning or end “points” or positions, a focus is lent to the transitions and movements between these points. In other words, looking beyond representation involves acknowledging the processes of movement, that is, movement from one point to another. Massumi (2002) grapples with the problems of putting corporeality back into the body and matter back into cultural materialism, to this end he suggests that his task is not to contradict signification, rather to “find a semiotics willing to engage in continuity” (p. 4).

The notion of semiotics is addressed directly by Deleuze and Guattari, and not surprisingly, their consideration of it problematizes the system of meaning transference involved in semiotic analyses. Deleuze and Guattari use the term *a-signifying semiotics* to incorporate into semiotics the existence of an a-signifying gap (1987, 1994). Semetsky (2007) explains that this gap is proposed “as a precondition of meanings, that is, meanings are conferred not by reference to some external object but by the relational, or rhizomatic, network constituting a sign-process” (p. 200). The relational network of lines, forces, and abstract mappings that characterise rhizomatic
analysis describe a process of thought and experience that occurs *between the sign and the meaning conferred*. This brief reference to semiotics as taken up by Deleuze and Guattari proves to be an aspect of their philosophy that resounds in all of the theories and concepts that they propose. A-signifying semiotics is also a useful way in which to conceptualise the process of analysing the aesthetic and pedagogical practices of drama and theatre in education. Art and pedagogy can be, and are overwhelmingly, considered semiotic practices, grounded securely in the realm of communication and representation. The a-signifying gap articulates the potential space within and along with the semiotic process. This gap can be seen as the focus of the analyses contained in this study.

The contents of the “gap” between sign and meaning cannot be described in terms of other signs or concepts. Both sign and concept exist as creations or inventions that come about as a result of the processes afforded in the a-signifying gap. What occurs in this gap is considered “beyond the level of consciousness” (Semetsky, 2007, p. 200) and is therefore manifested as forces of affect, sensation, and intensity. In pursuing a nomadic process of inquiry, these descriptive terms become central to articulating an understanding of experience and *becoming*. On the notion of force, as taken up by Deleuze, Stagoll explains, “Every force exerts itself upon others. No force can exist apart from its inter-relationships with other forces and, since such associations of struggle are always temporary, forces are always in the process of becoming different or passing out of existence, so that no particular force can be repeated” (2005, p. 107). Affect is succinctly described by Leander and Rowe (2006) as “the change that occurs when bodies come into contact” (with other forces), they explain, “affective intensities are the forces between bodies through their contact or collision rather than an expression of their qualities as things” (p. 433). A sensation is a similar force but it implies the involvement of the bodily
senses; it is an affect that is visceral, physical, and results in embodied change. Put in other words, “Sensation is the affect, which is neither subjective nor objective; rather it is both at once: we become in sensation and at the same time something happens because of it” (Boundas, 2005, p. 131). Intensity can be described as that which is materialised in body, action, or event. In this way, we are constituted by intensities that are received through forces of sensation and affect.

The binding quality of these aspects of experience is the nature of interrelationality inherent in all of them; as quoted above, “no force can exist apart from its interrelationships with other forces” (Stagoll, 2005, p. 107).

The centrality of notions of interrelated behaviour and process finds resonance in the field of Performance Studies (Cull, 2009). Although Performance Studies has been slow to take up Deleuzian theory, there is, like in many fields, an emerging interest and application. A recent edited volume, *Deleuze and Performance*, edited by Laura Cull (2009), illustrates this trend. There are small traces of work found across the writings of Deleuze, that address the theatre. But added to his broader ontology, they add considerable momentum and provocation for my overall theoretical framework. Deleuze provides the most significant insight into his perspective on theatre in a short piece of writing entitled “One Less Manifesto” (1997). In this piece, drawing on the work of playwright Carmelo Bene, Deleuze proposes a theatre of “non-representative force” (p. 246), and goes on to articulate a methodology for such a theatre. This work by no means prompted a movement in theatre practice, but it does position Deleuze in particular alignment with broader theatrical movements at that time (the work was originally published in French in 1978), all of which have directly fed into the development of the genre that we now call devised theatre. Performance studies therefore holds considerable possibility in my ongoing inquiry into devised theatre and Deleuzian thought. In the context of the present study however,
it is a backdrop to my work in that it has influenced my development as a scholar in this field, but has not been taken up directly in the framework of this study.

As a final note, although my interpretation and use of nomadic thought and non representational theory is primarily led by the work of Deleuze and Guattari, my relationship with their work has been aided, and to some extent mediated, by other scholars who have engaged with the major works of these philosophers. In particular, I draw on the work of Simon O’Sullivan, Elizabeth Grosz, Brian Massumi, and Inna Semetsky to enrich and broaden my understandings of Deleuze and Deleuzo-Guattarian theory. With this depth and diversity of scholarship to draw from, I find my way in the theoretical landscape of Deleuze and Guattari by focusing on select concepts; by borrowing, adopting, and adapting from their extensive scholarship. I do not claim that the analysis and findings presented in this manuscript result form a strictly Deleuzo-Guattarian analysis (I question that any such thing exists); rather they come from a cyclical process of dissecting and integrating data with the theories of Deleuze and Guattari, along with other poststructural theorists, scholars in arts education, and embodiment studies. In the wake of other scholars (e.g. Bleeker, 2004; Bolt, 2004; O’Sullivan, 2006; St. Pierre, 2008), I am bringing Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts into other spaces; in particular, spaces where drama and theatre meet education, and in turn those spaces are guiding and flavouring my interpretations of their concepts and theories.

In summary, the theoretical framework of this study establishes a lens through which to consider the learning experience in terms of what affects occur, what is happening, what new sensations and perceptions does it prompt in the body? This is in contrast to looking at experience in terms of what it means, what the representative signs of that experience (or the beginning and end points of a process) may refer to or indicate. If we consider the student as a
learning self in a constant state of motion (becoming), then a logic of representation allows only for the observation of a student once she has reached a recognisable position. Models of representation are “limited to a particular mode of existence, or a particular dimension of the real (the degree to which things coincide with their own arrest)” (Massumi, 2002, p.7). This doesn’t eradicate subjectivity, or the possibility for changing positions, but it assumes or shepherds a unified experience that is based on recognised destinations, structures of movement, and pathways of thought. But representational thought, O’Sullivan adds, “is the condition of our subjectivity and as such has to be ‘gone through’ as it were” (2006, p.16). The notion of a “contingent primacy” has been put forward by Judith Butler (1992, cited in Loutzenheiser, 2007a, p. 105) and emerges as a useful concept here. Lisa Loutzenheiser (2007a) elucidates this notion in its intended context of identity construction and representation; I find the term equally useful in regard to representation and non-representational perspectives on experience. I take up the term, primacy, to refer to the necessary and dominant mode of semiotic and representational logic that guides our school and academic activities. The contingent in this case refers to the aspects of experience that are not representational in nature; that is, the sensational, the interrelational, the in-motion. Both the subject of my research and the process of my analysis exist in the contingent primacy of representational logic.

Background Literature

The following section provides background to the fields of study that have most prominently influenced my own theoretical position. In some cases, an alignment with current research has prompted my pathway into inquiry, in other cases, it has been a disassociation with perspectives, with methods or outcomes of research, that has led me to seek alternative
approaches and practices. In this way, the literature described below has impacted, to varying
degrees, the nature and potential impact of this study.

Research in Drama and Theatre Education

Theatre and drama in education is inherently a multimodal, embodied practice with
human subjectivity at its core. In this way, theatre and drama in education can answer the calls to
multiple literacies in education (New London Group, 2000) and challenge the “textualism” that
Conquergood describes as “not a transparent or politically innocent model for conceptualising or
engaging the world” (2002, p. 147). In its embodied nature, drama and theatre in education has
the potential to address the mind/body binary that pervades in educational practices and
paradigms (Davies, 2000; Ellsworth, 2005; Kazan, 2005). In addition, Clifford Geertz suggests
that performance is also a site of exchange, and a key to understanding “how the deeply different
can be deeply known without becoming any less different” (1985, p. 48). As Jonothan Neelands
reminds us however, it is how you use drama and theatre that determines its impacts (2004).
Despite the multimodal, participatory, and experiential nature of drama, specific knowledges,
ideologies, and modalities can be, and have been, privileged in drama and theatre practices. In
particular, the body is often considered as separate from, and subservient to the mind. Research
in this field relies largely on a representational paradigm; that is, drama and theatre-based data
are considered according to their function as sign systems of meaning.

In broad strokes, phenomenological frameworks, and in particular, social constructionism
and social constructivism, provide the base for the vast majority of research in the field of drama
and theatre education. Within these frameworks, data are most often transcribed, translated or
crystallised into textual forms for analysis and for representation. In particular, written and
spoken text in the form of student reflection is heavily depended upon – often serving as the primary data under analysis, rather than the experience of the drama or theatre itself. Exceptions occur in the form of photography, diagrams, or video recordings of performance or process. Methods of analysis in contemporary drama and theatre research revolve primarily around narrative and semiotic models. The following review is positioned as a critical overview of research, both historically and thematically.

As O’Toole and O’Mara state in their chapter in the *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education* (Bresler, 2007), scholarship in drama in education has “overwhelmingly been provided by the practitioners, some of whom, like Slade (1954), Ward (1947), and Bolton (1979), certainly treated formal research methods with respect” (p. 205). This statement has two key implications: Firstly, research in the field has been, and continues to be, driven by, and designed around, practitioners (theatre practitioners and drama teachers) and their practice. The second implication is that, whilst some practitioners undertook studies through formal research methodologies, others did not. The others that are implied here are the authors of the myriad papers published over the past century that consist of descriptions of theatre and drama practice based on personal interpretations of experience rather than systematic methods of analysis or representation. In *Critical Links*, a research compendium published in 2002 documenting research in arts and education, James Catterall comments “Thinking and writing about drama in education in the middle of the 20th century did not involve much professional or social inquiry or research. Rather the deep experiences and up-close observations of teachers and coaches in the schools as well as the trainers of teachers engendered a broad consensus that drama can teach” (p. 58). Much of the recounted practice referred to here has resonated profoundly in the field, particularly during the latter half of the 20th century when drama as a tool for learning began to
gain prominence as a paradigm of practice (Heathcote, in Johnson & O’Neill, eds., 1984). The problem, in terms of research literature, emerges when descriptive accounts of practice are taken up as research and inserted, cited, or drawn upon as support or evidence in research studies. In this way, descriptive approaches have been repositioned in the field as research and the waters of a review of research become muddied.

To add to this muddied terrain, much of the literature positioned as research is carried out by researcher-practitioners, often in a methodology described as “reflective practitioner research” (Taylor, 1996). An applied theatre practitioner is generally engaged in their work because they believe it is important and has positive effects for individuals and society. This may be a generalisation, but it is typically not a profession that one enters into for fame or financial gain. With this in mind, it is not surprising to find that since its introduction into school curriculum, which can be traced back to the early 1900’s, research and literature on drama and theatre in education has been weighted with the drive to endorse, advocate, and justify the practice. Jonathan Neelands (2004) identifies a “rhetoric of transformation” as characteristic of a trend in Western drama education, and suggests that the commonly cited, localized “miracles” of personal transformation are used as a way to validate the practice. This inclination of advocacy is strengthened further by the fact that drama and theatre has, and continues to be, positioned in uneasy instability in the curricula, budgets, and recognition of schools in the majority of the Western world. In research literature in drama and theatre in education, this factor has created an almost impassable veil in that we as researcher/practitioners are so preoccupied in strengthening the position of drama and theatre in education, that we neglect or deprive ourselves of the time and energy to be critical, systematic, and transparent in our methods of research and analysis. This aspect of the research is strengthened by encouragements such as the following by Saldaña
and Wright in a handbook on drama and arts education research (1996): “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*” (p. 129, emphasis added). They elaborate by adding that a function of research is “to show decision makers that drama and theatre for youth ‘works’.” Such a blanket endorsement for what are diverse, subjective, and contingent practices is uncritical, and yet unfortunately all too common in our scholarship. At times this agenda plays out to such an extent that research and advocacy – or analyses and what are sometimes referred to as “victory narratives,” – become blurred beyond distinction.

There is a growing body of work, however, that is based on robust research methodologies with critical and reflexive paradigms. Occasionally, research has been published that foregrounds the complex position of the subjective and experiential practices of drama and theatre in the institutionalised, goal-oriented education systems that provide the contexts of the practice. One such study, written over twelve years ago is “Casey at the bat: A hybrid genre of two worlds,” by Bresler, Wasser, and Hertzog (1997). In this study, the hybrid genre referred to in the title is that of “school art,” specifically describing theatre performed by professional actors for students. With a detailed description of such an event, followed by interview and field note analysis, Bresler et al. consider broadly the tensions and conflicts inherent in bringing art into a school system, concluding in part that, in this study “the combined goals of both artist and school staff are far more attentive to mainstream educational norms than they are to artistic concerns” (p. 104).

A significant amount of research in the field of drama and theatre in education can be positioned broadly as concerned with the affordances of drama and theatre education for literacy and multiple literacy skills (O’Toole & O’Mara, 2007) (see Baldwin & Fleming, 2003; Laidlaw,
In this work, drama processes are taken up as vehicles for transmediation (Siegel, 1995), supporting the interpretation and exploration of print texts (Mages, 2006; Medina & Campano, 2006), as well as scaffolding exercises to develop print and multiple literacies (Early & Yeung, 2009; Winters, Rogers, & Schofield, 2006). Another common area of interest is drama for social and personal development in education (see Donelan, 2002; Neelands, 2009; Wilhelm & Edmiston, 1998 as examples). Drama practice considered in terms of literacy and personal development holds porous borders with theory and research focused on play (Edmiston, 2008; Kendrick, 2005); an overlap of research interests that creates an area rich with potential for further exploration. Drama and technology (Carroll, Anderson, & Cameron, 2006; Carroll & Cameron, 2009), and drama across the curriculum (Chan, 2009; Fels & Belliveau, 2008) are other areas that have attracted considerable attention. The studies referred to here are weighted heavily in the terrain of drama, as opposed to theatre, in education. In this way, process is valued over performance, and the notion of representation itself is rarely addressed directly. Performance studies and poststructural theory complicates much of this work as questions of representation, spectatorship, and embodiment muddy the terrain of what counts as “pretending” versus “being,” and what counts as “learning” versus “play.”

As mentioned earlier, frameworks with constructionist and phenomenological foundations dominate the field of drama and theatre research in education. Along with that, ethnographic methods provide the prominent data sources, most frequently in case study contexts. Exceptions to the case study structure include Kathleen Gallagher’s two ethnographies based on youth engagement with drama practices in educational settings. The first of these, *Drama education in the lives of girls* (2000), portrays a group of female high school students.
negotiating their own identities within discourses that set them in roles often conflicting with the realities of their complex and varied subjectivities. In the second, more recent study, *The theatre of urban: Youth and schooling in dangerous times* (2007), Gallagher continues to explore the potential of drama as a system of learning but moves the focus from drama as the subject, to drama as the method of inquiry. Gallagher approaches the field with a critical, feminist lens and employs a reflective practitioner role within a traditional ethnographic model of research (Schwandt, 2007). Despite the claims that Gallagher makes about the appropriateness of the methodology to drama education research (2000, pp.13-18), critical ethnographies are rare in the field, making these studies influential in the development of research in this area.

The research up to this point can be seen to exist within the broad consensus referred to by Catterall, “that drama can teach,” and that Saldaña and Wright propose, that drama “works.” These loose propositions are hard to discount, and as I undertake the work of this thesis, I too share their contention. Having said that, I believe that nothing is that simple. Gallagher expresses a concern regarding arts-based research that I believe applies equally to the practice of drama and theatre in education. She states, “My worry …is that [arts-based research] somehow sees being artful as inherently ethical and thereby gets itself off the ethical hook” (2008, p. 69). I share Gallagher’s objection to practice that “naively side-steps the politics and ethics of being and creating with others” (p. 69). Brian Edmiston is one of the few drama education scholars who has directly addressed this issue (2008; Wilhelm & Edmiston, 1998; see also Murray, 2006). Drama can teach, it can work, but it can also harm, it can intimidate, it can create walls. And I refer again to Neelands, who states: “It is what we do, through our own human agency, with drama that determines the specific pedagogy and specific powers that these examples of rhetorical elision ascribe to the idea of drama itself” (2004, p.48, emphasis in original). In short,
drama and theatre are mediums that can be taken up to support problematic systems and values, just as readily as they can be used to challenge them. In light of this, I am inspired by, and build from, research and practices in the field that are critical, reflexive and transparent.

*Embodiment in Education*

In social constructionist paradigms, the theoretical framework within which a large proportion of work in theatre and drama education research is carried out, the body is considered as representational and subservient to the mind. Grosz describes the commitment of social constructionists to the mind/body dualism in the following way:

…even if the mind cannot exist without the body, the mind is regarded as a social, cultural, and historical object, a product of ideology, while the body remains naturalistic, precultural; bodies provide the base, the raw materials for the inculcation of an interpellation into ideology but are merely media of communication rather than the object or focus of ideological production/reproduction. (1994, p.17)

As a result of this perspective, the body, in social constructionist drama and theatre education research is rarely positioned at the centre of analysis; it is generally considered as a tool for inquiry and representation only in as much as it is a signifying object (Davidson, 2004; Osmond, 2007). Anton Franks (1996) wrote an important and influential article on the body in drama education, and now 14 years later, it is still one of the few texts directly addressing the body as an object of research. In this paper he declares that “despite the fact that drama education relies on bodies and the body as the main means and form of mediation, there is very little in theories and ideas around drama in education which raises the body as an object of study and as a
problem” (p. 105). Franks investigates the body as a means of representation, “how bodies make meaning in the world, how meanings are represented in and by bodies” (p. 105, emphasis in original). He bases his inquiry in critical cultural studies, drawing substantially on social semiotics as a method of analysis. The body as semiotic has been taken up and explored in various areas of the field, in particular in Boal’s Image and Forum Theatre practices (Rozansky & Aagesen 2010; Howard, 2004).

In 2007, Christopher Osmond contributed a chapter on drama education and the body to the *International Handbook of research in Arts Education* (Bresler, 2007). In this chapter he illuminates on Franks’ earlier article and honours its significance, whilst at the same time recognising what the cultural studies approach excludes. The absence that Osmond refers to is recognition of the body as “a site of knowledge itself” (p. 1110). In this light, Osmond considers the body in terms of what he describes as the “subjective underpinnings” (p. 1117) by focusing on the body as “knower,” the body as “doer,” and the body as “aesthetic medium.” Osmond’s conceptualization of the body, drawing from phenomenology and poststructural theory along with more traditional constructivism, stretches the representational paradigm, whilst not upturning it. The chapter offers a helpful perspective on this aspect of drama and theatre in education, and through Osmond’s review of literature in the field, he underlines the general paucity of research in this area.

Investigating the body in drama and theatre in education has led me back to poststructural pedagogy theory, which offers an informative and productive perspective on embodiment in education – it is in this terrain that embodiment is addressed with most rigour. From the outset, poststructuralist thought reveals some of the monolithic reasons for why the body is so often missing from educational research, and indeed from the classroom (hooks, 1994). The binary of
mind/body is recognised and critiqued at length by poststructuralist theorists in education (Davies, 2000; Ellsworth, 2005; Grumet, 2007; Massumi, 2002), with the discourses of the mind considered as overwhelmingly and problematically dominant. The very idea of the body as anything other than a biological space subservient to the mind therefore immediately applies pressure to traditional boundaries in education.

Poststructuralist researchers consider the body and mind as co-existing in relation to structures, discourses, time, place and other. The body is corporeal, biological, sensual, social, cultural, and ultimately relational. This perspective is explored in numerous research studies in education (Ellsworth, 2005; Fusco, 2006; Gallagher, 2007; Hagood, 2005; Pillow, 2000) but it is also one that is gathering prominence in far reaching areas of academic scholarship. In *Places of Learning* (2005), Ellsworth has provided a thorough, theorized, and provocative engagement with embodiment in education. In the introduction to this study, she positions her inquiry in relation to the broader movements away from the mind/body dualism that has pervaded fundamental human activities for so long.

Intriguing developments in cultural studies, media studies, architecture, science studies and aesthetics are now shifting the terms in which theorists and critics pose questions of experience, study it, and design for it. Recent developments in brain research and the life sciences are throwing into crisis long-held assumptions about such fundamental human activities as cognition, perception, sensation, and action. … Such events have provoked a sense of urgency in the search for new mindsets capable of moving away from the strict binary discourses of self/other, real/virtual, reason/emotion, mind/body, natural/artificial, inside/outside, thinking/feeling, irony/humour. Contemporary social, cultural, and
aesthetic theories are marked by the search for ways to rethink the terms of these binaries that have been so strategic to social, political, and educational thought. (p. 3)

As mentioned previously, Ellsworth articulates the student as a learning self in motion, a body/mind/brain “not coincident with herself, but only with her change” (p. 7). Her book is a critique of stasis – of the student considered as a fixed entity and of knowledge considered “made.” Drawing on a wide range of theorists from philosophy, fine arts, and cultural criticism, Ellsworth develops the notion of thinking about pedagogy experimentally, in particular, as sensational. By introducing sensation into pedagogy, she is implicating theories of non representational thinking. If we consider learning selves as sensational beings, learning through our interactions with the world as they affect, move, change, our body/mind/brain, the notion of teaching and learning evolves from one of semiotic communications to one of interwoven experiences that happen both prior to and in conjunction with processes of intellectualisation and communication. Analyses of aesthetic spaces, or “anomalous places of learning” (architecture, exhibitions, performances), illustrate the potential for aesthetic experience in education to move us out of the binary oppositions described earlier (Ellsworth, p. 161), and to engage learning selves as not only cultural and cerebral, but as sensation and material. Crucially, Ellsworth asks: “How does the fact of human embodiment affect activities of teaching and learning?” (p. 2).

A review of literature across the broad field of education reveals a small but wide ranging scope of scholarship in embodiment. There have been a number of edited volumes published over the past decade addressing the topic from various theoretical standpoints (see Bresler, 2004; McWilliam & Taylor, 1996; O’Farrell, Meadmore, McWilliam & Symes, 2000; Springgay &
Freedman, 2007) revealing a growing level of attention to a subject that is undeniably relevant to the field, but still lacking in sufficient discourse and empirical analysis to support it.

Non-representational Approaches to Educational Research

The analysis of meaning is not rejected but is rather put in its place

Related to Ellsworth’s call to consider pedagogy as sensational, a number of educational theorists have begun to challenge the assumptions of representational logic and expand semiotic systems of interpretation. This direction in qualitative inquiry has been fuelled by postmodern and poststructural philosophy, and some of this work is covered above in the review of research in embodied knowing and learning. For the purposes of this section, I will focus on research that has drawn on the work of Deleuze, and his collaborations with Guattari.

Conceptual and theoretical investigations into the theories of Deleuze and Guattari in education have become more numerous over the past decade. Inna Semetsky (2007) cites a chapter written by Leach and Boler in 1998 as a prompt for this trend, in which they call for further exploration into the work of Deleuze in relation to educational theory and practice. A special issue of the journal of Educational Philosophy and Theory was devoted to this subject in 2004. In 2008, Semetsky published an edited volume entitled, Nomadic Education, introducing a wide range of approaches and ideas from across educational and philosophical fields of practice. Semetsky’s extensive work in Deleuzian theory in education has not only contributed to bringing together and promoting a community of scholars engaging in this work, but it has brought the theories of Deleuze together with those of John Dewey and Charles Sanders Pierce. Through this inquiry, Semetsky engages in making tangible links between the time-honoured Dewey-based approaches to contemporary education and the philosophy and nomad thought of Deleuze
Elizabeth Grosz, in her groundbreaking work, “Volatile Bodies” (1994), positions Deleuze and Guattari’s theoretical perspectives in relation to poststructural and feminist critiques of their work. Grosz acknowledges problems (implied by feminist critiques) within Deleuze and Guattari’s work, including the reliance on terminology of the technocratic era (made possible through the discrimination of women). She goes on to temper the criticism with the supposition that all theorists, feminist and otherwise, depend on our shared histories of language and knowledge, thereby relying on the same technocratic discourse and struggling with the same paradigms of binary and representative logic. Grosz explores the major works of Deleuze and Guattari to uncover the affordances within their approach for feminist scholarship. She suggests that, “in challenging theoretical paradigms that presume the centrality of the subject and the coherence and effectivity of signification, they problematize our most common assumptions regarding identity, relations between subject and object, substance, matter, corporeality” (p. 164). These contributions, whilst not actively supporting feminism, Grosz confirms, “may help to clear the ground of metaphysical oppositions and concepts so that women may be able to devise their own knowledges, accounts of themselves and the world” (p. 164). I would add that this same clearing of the ground opens up the possibilities for learning selves from all walks of life, both within and beyond what would be considered recognisable or dominant categories of identification. On a more fundamental level, Rosi Braidotti asserts that what Deleuze and Guattari propose with nomadic thought is “an empowering redefinition of the process of thinking itself” (1993, p.1).

In “Chaos, territory, art” (2008), Grosz revisits the non-representational aspect of experience, as explored by Deleuze and Guattari, and through this paradigm considers art,
specifically, art as “a compound of sensation” (p. 74). Whereas art is considered by the majority of historians, analysts, and practitioners as a semiotic medium, Grosz develops the notion of art as a place of intensity and invisible forces. “Art is the art of affect more than representation, a system of dynamized and impacting forces rather than a system of unique images that function under a regime of signs” (p. 3). In this way, Grosz’s theorizations directly enrich and affirm the relationship I forge between my work in drama and theatre arts and my analytical and theoretical framework built from Deleuze and Guattari.

A telling introduction or proviso that can be seen across various theorizations or applications of Deleuze in educational research includes the notion that there is no single or correct way to interpret his work (Massumi, 1992; O’Sullivan, 2006; St. Pierre, 2008). St. Pierre frankly states: “So you will never get to the bottom of a concept like multiplicity, you will never be able to figure out what it really means, nor, if you become the least bit Deleuzian, will you want to” (2008, p. 184). It is on this note that I proceed to review a number of empirical studies that have incorporated the work of Deleuze and Guattari.

The influence of Deleuze and Guattari’s work can be seen in a wide range of methodological approaches. In a poststructural ethnography researching the body in public spaces, Caroline Fusco focuses her inquiry on “how the discourses and material practices of the body and space work,” as opposed to what they mean (2008, p. 173). In this way, she endeavours to examine how truth claims relating to the body in society function and are taken up in cultural discourse. She proposes that a focus on doing rather than meaning, “may move us away from the accusations that are often levelled against poststructuralists’ interpretations” (p. 173).

Stephanie Springgay draws on concepts from the theory of the rhizome in her study, *Body Knowledge and Curriculum* (2008), to illustrate the value of the deterritorialized space in
education. Aspects of rhizome theory have been taken up as tools of analysis a number of recent studies in literacy education (Gough, 2004; Masny, 2006; Voithofer & Foley, 2009). Of particular influence to my own trajectory of research is a study by Leander and Rowe published in 2006. In “Mapping Literacy Spaces in Motion: A Rhizomatic Analysis of a Classroom Literacy Performance,” Leander and Rowe developed a framework of analysis from key concepts of rhizomatic theory to look at literacy presentations as spaces of rupture rather than representation in the classroom. In a thorough exposition of the theory, the authors present a detailed and rich example of the affordances of their approach for research focused on multiple literacies and the body in education research. This study, along with others mentioned in this review, reveals the demand, when addressing the body in education, for paradigms of thought and discourses alternative to those based in semiotic and representational logic.

Maintaining a focus on written texts, Donna Alvermann (2000) experiments in “rhizotextual” analysis. In this study, Alvermann revisits research on the perceptions and attitudes of youth regarding reading practices in a public library setting. This incarnation of rhizome theory was expanded by Eileen Honan (2004, 2007) who, inquiring into the ways in which policy documents are used by teachers in day to day practices, has analysed curriculum documents in relation to interview texts with practicing teachers.

Conclusion

The conceptual and empirical studies referred to above necessarily represent only a portion of the diverse strands of scholarship in the three areas of drama, embodiment, and nomadic thought. The review illustrates an aspect of my own journey through these fields, and the connections that I have made between them to bring me to this point in my own research. My
experience as a teacher and practitioner lies primarily in drama and theatre arts, and it was in this space that I first became interested in theorizations of the body, and particularly the body in education. As a doctoral student and surveyor of theory, I took this emerging focus and followed the theoretical signposts of my supervisors and of Ellsworth, Grosz, and Grumet, amongst others who inspired me along the way. In this way I was drawn to the work of Deleuze and Guattari, and in their theoretical landscape I found my feet, and my voice. The framework that I have laid out in this chapter has grounded my study, but furthermore, it has provided a perspective through which to see and live.
CHAPTER THREE: A PRACTICAL AND CONCEPTUAL METHODOLOGY

This study, investigating the affordances and implications of contemporary theatre devising practices in education, is intended to contribute new possibilities to the relationship between the theatre arts and drama in education – a relationship that is crucial to the affects, relevance, and impacts of the practice. This study looks to the construction of drama practices and re-imagines it, informed by contemporary theatre practices and poststructural theory. Finally, this study addresses the complexities and challenges involved in bringing contemporary artistic methods into educational contexts.

Being a transdisciplinary scholar, I am fortunate enough to have a broad scope of research practices and methodologies to draw from, but along with that comes the need to be accountable and accessible to scholars and practitioners across those same broad disciplines. That is, there is little value in finding a methodology for examining theatre in education research that convinces social scientists if it baffles or lacks relevance to theatre theorists or practitioners. This position has been a challenging but important factor in my work. I have endeavoured to find a methodology that honours the multimodal and cross-disciplinary material of my data across educational and professional theatre settings. My objective has been to create an analysis that can be meaningful both to academic scholars, as well as educators and theatre practitioners. I hold myself accountable to generating an analysis and discussion of data that can further theoretical conversations regarding the nature and purpose of pedagogy and the arts in pedagogy, whilst also contributing to practical developments in the practice of theatre and drama in education.

The poststructural theory that informs this study aligns with the paradigm of theatre practice under investigation. Devised theatre is variously described as poststructural,
postmodern, and postdramatic (Carlson, 1996; Lehmann, 2006). The qualitative methods taken up in fieldwork were carried out with both improvisational and systematic elements with a strong awareness of my own role in the data generation and the partiality of my experience. My analytical framework emerged as a useful and productive way to uncover the complexity of the data generated through qualitative fieldwork. I employ a nomadic and non-representational approach to data analysis, which allows forces of sensation, interrelation, and affect to emerge at the centre of my analytical lens. In this way, the body in time and space is brought into focus. Art, Grosz states, “is the art of affect more than representation, a system of dynamized and impacting forces rather than a system of unique images that function under the regime of signs” (2008, p.3). Concurring with this assertion, I draw on the extensive work of Deleuze and Guattari, and in particular, concepts pertaining to rhizome theory, to develop my approach to data analysis.

Contributing to research that is extending the reach of representational analysis, I outline a design and methodology herein that maintains a focus on how things happened in the sites of research, on the relationship between details – people, events, words, projects, accidents, instructions, and on the forces and sensations that took place. In resistance to the prevalent assumption that data, art, and indeed pedagogy, function solely under a regime of signs (Grosz, 2008, p. 3), I look to the movement of bodies, discourses, and forces of affect, in space and time. In this way, I consider the performances, interactions, and participation in the data in terms of how subjectivities are being produced, how inquiry and learning is happening, rather than how they are being signified (Leander & Rowe, 2006).

This chapter proceeds to locate my position as the researcher of this project. The research design is then laid out including an introduction to the methods and concepts at work in the
framework of analysis. Finally, the analytical framework itself is described in the concluding section of this chapter.

Research Design

Introduction

This research is designed in the form of a qualitative study using ethnographic methods. The methodological structure incorporates two distinct sites of inquiry with a common focus on the drama and theatre practices therein. One site is Forced Entertainment, a professional devised theatre company in the UK. The second site is a Grade 9 drama class at Lismore Secondary School in Western Canada. The sites correspond to the two principal concerns of this study: firstly, professional, contemporary theatre practice; and secondly, applications and implications of contemporary theatre practice in educational settings. My role in the school site involved introducing the same paradigm of practice in which Forced Entertainment works to the classroom. In this way, I facilitated the creation of a devised performance with Grade 9 drama students as the final part of a year long program in devising methods. The nature of my own approach to teaching and to devised theatre, influenced by Forced Entertainment, combined with the structural and epistemological organization of the school context, to result in a devising practice that resembled the “hybrid genre of two worlds” that Bresler et al. (1997) identified in their study of theatre in school contexts. Creative practices meet education structures. The data analysis drawn from these two sites are not intended to be comparative or parallel. The differing contexts and circumstances of the two sites position the research, and myself the researcher, in very different ways. As a result, the data analysis of Forced Entertainment serves to inform and frame the analysis of devising practice in the school setting.
A Statement of Positioning

Locating myself at the intersection of experience and analysis as portrayed in this study, the following positioning statement is intended to contribute to the transparency of this report. I hope that in being present, as much as is possible in this written form, you, my readers, in turn will feel implicated in the meaning you may or may not derive from this work.

In terms of some traditional socio-political and geographical categories of identification, I am European (British by birth, Irish by upbringing), White, and female. The majority of my study and work, until the time of this doctoral project, was immersed in various contexts of theatre practice and scholarship. One aspect of this engagement was teaching theatre and drama, inside and outside of school environments. My training in devised theatre occurred during my Masters degree in contemporary theatre practice that took place in London (UK) between 2002-2003. In between and amidst the study and practice of theatre in academic institutions, I have worked with various theatre companies in equally various roles. My experience in theatre arts therefore includes acting, devising, producing, directing, teaching, and administration. The past six years have involved the focused application of my theatre background to education.

Forced Entertainment, one of the two sites of research in this study, is a company that has been a significant influence on my interest in, and understanding of, devised theatre. Before the time of this study I had watched their performances in both live and recorded format and had read extensively on their practice. I had met one of the company members prior to this study in an informal context but apart from that, I arrived as an unknown researcher into their work space. As an “outsider” to this company, my observations and experiences in the site were limited by the fact that their working methods and interpersonal relations were unknown to me. As a result a significant amount of my attention was taken up trying to “make sense” of what I was
experiencing. On the other hand, it is my position as “insider” in the field and practice of devised theatre that enabled me to navigate through the practices observed. In addition, I was able to easily locate and analyse their work in relation to broader contexts and practices within the same genre. The nature of my fieldwork and my relationship with the company resulted in a very broad set of data, spanning multiple data sources and an extensive period of time. Moments of detailed, “close up” fieldwork emerged as short, intensive periods of focus in what is a porous and always evolving relationship with, and knowledge of, the company.

Lismore Secondary school was introduced to me by a graduate student colleague who was a teacher at that school. I was invited to work in the drama program of the school, specifically with a focus on the practice of devising. In conjunction with the larger project of YouthCLAIM (as mentioned earlier), this school became the ideal place for me to apply and investigate my devising practice in the context of education. In this context, I was positioned as outside of the school system, “from the university” and “an expert in devised theatre.” These qualifications lent me a certain freedom from the usual expectations of authority figures by students in terms of practice, evaluation, structure, etc. This context, added to the processes and paradigms I was introducing, imbued in the work a tension between in-school and out-of-school practice, behaviour, and expectation. The nature of my participation and fieldwork at this site resulted in a similar abundance of data (as that related to Forced Entertainment), but data that are heavily weighted with close-up, one-on-one, detailed interactions, rather than a broader scope of knowledge of individuals (over time, across contexts, etc.), the institution, or the conditions of their participation.
Positioning, Paradigms, and Practices

This study involves an analysis of data gathered within the parameters of this project and presents findings that are inherently limited by the fact that they draw from a finite number and range of experiences and are analysed through one epistemological lens. Accordingly, the findings earn their validity through the specificity, transparency, and depth of the analysis carried out. Traditional practices in qualitative research that include data saturation, triangulation, and member checking are not addressed specifically in this study (although they emerge to varying extents indirectly) due to the particular framework of analysis that emanated from my theoretical framework.

The Sites

Although my theoretical and methodological frameworks remain consistent throughout this study, the nature of my involvement with both sites differed significantly, both in duration, and in the roles of participation taken up. Accordingly, my methods of data collection also differed across the sites. The following two chapters provide more detail on the individual sites and methods of data generation; for the purposes of this chapter, I will briefly summarize the scope of each site and the data generated.

In relation to Forced Entertainment, my fieldwork in the site of this company was preceded by a long-term and evolving knowledge of them through live and recorded public performances, performance reviews, interviews with company members, and texts published by and about the company. In this way, drawing on Marcus (2007), my design blurs the beginning and end of the fieldwork in this site and considers it “within the broader contexts and operations that so much research now entails” (p. 355). My presence at the site of the company was authorised by the
company for a duration of a maximum of two weeks to coincide with a period of new work creation. My time there involved the observation of intensive rehearsal and creation work between March 31st and April 11th 2008. My field notes and reflections from these two weeks are supported by video-recorded rehearsal data, along with a video recording of the production that arose from the rehearsal process I observed. In addition, I conducted extended interviews with each of the six company members. The scope of this site is extensive, and as with any research site, it is porous. The line between my own previous knowledge and experience of the company’s practices and my observations during the fieldwork is blurry. My personal history with the company’s work, and with the type of work that they make, amounts to over eight years; my participation with the work over that time has included that of an audience member, scholar, observer, interviewer, and artefact analyst. My analysis of this recent data therefore, is intricately dependent upon that history and repertoire of roles.

My involvement with the drama program at Lismore Secondary School occurred in conjunction with a larger federally funded research project, The Youth CLAIM project (Rogers, Winters, Perry & LaMonde, 2009) that explores critical literacy in relation to arts and media practices among youth. This was coupled with an interest from the school in introducing devising methods into the existing drama program. To accommodate both sets of needs, in addition to those of my own doctoral research project, I took on the dual roles of co-researcher and facilitator at this site. The prominence of one role over the other shifted continually as the needs of the project unravelled. The fieldwork at Lismore spanned a school year, between September 2007 and May 2008. During this time, I co-facilitated at least two of the three drama classes per week, supervised two evening theatre outings, and conducted interviews both midway and at the end of the project with nine of the sixteen participating students. Field notes,
video and audio recordings, photography, transcribed interviews, and student written artefacts comprise the expansive and diverse data set that was generated at this site. In addition to this is the lived experience: Encompassing regular school class times, evening outings, and the public presentation of the students’ work, my relationship with the site, and the students within it, is one that exists on a continuum with friendship at one end and the distance of authority at the other. I met the families of some, and drove some home at the end of the night. About some students I learned histories, contexts, and personal struggles, and others I know only through their work and interactions in class time. Each of these varying dynamics informs the lens through which I re-encounter, remember, re-live, and analyse the data.

**Data Sources**

The following section provides an overview of the sources and types of data collected and generated using qualitative and ethnographic methods across the two sites of this study (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Palys, 2003).

*Observation.* With regard to Forced Entertainment, my direct observation during the company’s rehearsal process was recorded primarily through detailed field notes including transcribed dialogue (both verbatim and paraphrased). In addition I have had access to all video footage taken within the duration of my observations of the performers in improvisatory processes. Outside of my observations of the company’s rehearsal process, I have been a spectator of the company’s public performance work. Video recordings of the live performances and reflective notes support this element of my research.

With regard to the school site – where I was a participant observer – I recorded observations through field notes, written after each day of field work, and video and audio
taping. Specifically, student performance work was recorded by video, and focus group
discussions and performance feedback was recorded by digital audio recorder.

Throughout the fieldwork, and in the first levels of data organisation and analysis, I
added reflective notes to my field notes. These notes take the form of ideas, questions, and self
reflection in relation to the research experience recounted. With regard to Forced Entertainment,
these notes informed questions posed in interviews or informal conversations with participants.
In the case of the Lismore, these reflections informed the way in which I proceeded to facilitate,
and collaborate in, the work of the class.

*Interviews.* I conducted and audio recorded semi-structured interviews (Wengraf,
2001) with each of the six core company members of the theatre company. These interviews
lasted between 35 and 85 minutes. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted and audio
recorded in the school site with students on a voluntary basis. In total, 15 interviews took place, 8
were carried out by my supervisor and co-researcher, Dr. Rogers; the remaining 7 were carried
out by myself.

Focus group discussions took place at the school site and were recorded with either audio
or video tape. These focus groups sometimes happened spontaneously in the classroom due to an
issue of contention or interest emerging (for example, a discussion of a scene developed by
students that push the boundaries of acceptability with regard to language used and content
explored in the school setting). At other times, these discussions were planned with particular
objectives (for example, to identify a framework for the final performance). Participants either
sat in a circle on the floor, or sat in a group facing a performance space (when the discussion
emerged in response to a presentation or class performance). No focus groups took place at the
theatre site.
Artefacts. From Forced Entertainment artefacts gathered include production scripts and published texts and images (including performance reviews, program notes, chapters, articles and books written by or about the company).

From Lismore Secondary, artefacts include student-generated written texts, found texts and pictures (photographed and drawn). Found texts are a categorisation of printed text used in contemporary performance. The term indicates that the text originated as a text with a distinct purpose other than that of performance. Often these texts are literally “found” in public spaces (shopping lists, memos-to-self, etc.), but they may also be public domain texts found on the internet, or published texts other than dramatic texts. Examples of student artefacts include free-writing on a particular topic, and photographs taken or found to develop a particular scene or performance idea.

Unit of Analysis: The Creation Cycle

My use of Deleuze and Guattari’s theoretical base and their non-representational paradigm is tempered by the circumstances of this data and research project. Within the context of educational research, the implications of my theatre practice with youth, and the research that comes from it, are directed towards educational practices in the broadest sense of the term. When I delve into nomadic thought, as elaborated by Deleuze and Guattari, I often find myself losing touch with the classroom from which the data emerged. Simultaneously, I begin to fumble for the implications of my findings in an academic context that exists and functions in a representational paradigm. As I type and draw symbols, letters, and diagrams, and struggle to make my research tangible, I find the need for a methodological space that bridges the often enigmatic, poststructural theory of analysis with the practice of drama and theatre in classrooms
and communities. To this end I turn back to the practical paradigm of drama education predominant since the 1980’s referred to by O’Toole and O’Mara (2007, p. 113) as the “unifying paradigm.”¹ This paradigm served to focus aspects from various models in drama education as they had emerged throughout the 20th century, and can be summarized as creating, performing, reflecting. This tri-focal structure has direct correlation with a framework proposed by visual anthropologist, Gillian Rose to approach methods of visual analysis across the disciplines and fields in which it is carried out. Rose (2007) divides visual analysis into three sites: “the site(s) of the production of an image, the site of the image itself, and the site(s) where it is seen by various audiences” (p. 13, emphasis in original). As I relate these two structures from visual anthropology and drama in education to my drama and theatre based data, I interpret the sites in the following ways:

- the site of preparing: the process of preparation and planning of drama and theatre work (incl. research, instruction, discussion, writing, gathering materials)
- the site of the performing: the performance of the work in question - either as a part of the creation process (i.e. improvisation or rehearsals), or as a final performance (physicalisation and embodiment of planning)
- the site of spectating: the process of viewing and reflection - either by co-creators of work in progress, or a public audience of a final production (incl. discussion, writing)

To distinguish a specific unit of analysis from a data set that is broad in its modalities, forms, and content, I use the formation of a “creation cycle.” The creation cycle in this case consists of the three categories of process described above that I abbreviate as follows: preparing, performing, and spectating. I consider each category to be porous and interrelated and therefore, dividing up the data into these subsections is primarily for organisational purposes.
Across both sites, preparation merges with performance and spectatorship seeps into both other areas. In positioning a rhizomatic analysis next to a framework such as this, I acknowledge the segmentarity that I am thereby imposing. I undertake the analysis with a continual awareness of the permeability of the categories within the unit of analysis, while at the same time, living in acceptance of the “messiness” now characteristic of much feminist and poststructural research (Lather, 2006). The creation cycle is a helpful starting point however, and thus provides signposts through the data.

**Stages of Analysis**

Below is a rudimentary portrayal of the stages of analysis, focusing on the order and types of analyses engaged in. These stages are described and unpacked in the remainder of this chapter and brought together again in a second framework diagram more reflective of the actual experience of data analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Organising data into unit of analysis</th>
<th>Preparing</th>
<th>Performing</th>
<th>Spectating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coding (for territories)</td>
<td>Examples: Interrelationality; Time/space; Body</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Concepts applied from rhizome theory</td>
<td>Assemblage; Territory; Smooth and striated space/time; Lines of segmentation, flight, deterritorialisation, and reterritorialisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Basic stages of data analysis
**Coding: Identifying Territories**

An ongoing and recursive reflection and analysis of the fieldwork process occurred through writing field notes, taking part in research meetings, and collaborating with research participants. In this way, the data generated were being focused, not only by my own perspectives and position as the researcher, but also by points of interest and themes that were being identified throughout the process. Removed from the sites of fieldwork, qualitative coding guided my first systematic level of data analysis.

The coding (that strengthened some previously held ideas, unsettled others, and uncovered more still) afforded a systematic survey of the data. In addition, it thoroughly familiarised me with my data, and helped me attain a certain level of distance from it (a gradual adjustment of my relationship to the fieldwork that is ongoing). The codes that emerged from this process helped to guide my way into the proceeding and more substantial process of rhizomatic analysis.

In order to resist the “fixing” of meaning that can occur from a striated and primarily representational method of coding, I did not use the codes to structure the rhizomatic analysis, nor did I investigate only data that supported them. Instead I considered them as *territories*, a Deleuzian term that is more fully interpreted later in this chapter, but in brief I take up the term to refer to a space, an ecology, or a collection of things, that are interconnected sharing certain functions and behaviours. In my use of the term, I identify (by means of coding) “the body” as a territory; “spectatorship” as a territory; “improvisation” as another, etc.

A territory does not imply a fixed state, and along with all of Deleuzian theory, it implies a spatial property. These territories are not representative of a beginning point of inquiry or analysis, any more than this dissertation is representative of the end. They did however offer a
level of organisation (striation) to my analysis. Ultimately, considering my codes as territories, as opposed to fixed themes or concepts, afforded me a place from which to begin writing and to continue inquiry in this form (I draw here from Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth St. Pierre’s notion of writing as inquiry, 2005).

**Rhizome Theory**

The following section delves into some key aspects of Deleuzian and Deleuzo-Guattarian theory. The description and exploration of the concepts and terms below represent my own understanding and use of these terms. This is distinct from any universal understanding of them, which is in itself resisted by the theory from which they originate. A resistance to categorisation is evident throughout Deleuze and Guattari’s work, and in this way, my appropriation of concepts is necessarily contingent on the context and purpose of this study.

Nomadic thought is characterized by the rhizome: a network of lines rather than points, where there are multiple entryways and places of departure, and every line can connect to any other, “multiplying its own lines and establishing the plurality of unpredictable connections in the open-ended, what Deleuze called smooth space of its growth. In short, it lives. Rhizome does not represent, but only maps our ways, paths, and movements” (Semetsky, 2007, p.200, italics in original). Deleuze and Guattari explicate the rhizome theory in terms of six principles, the first two of which are those of connectivity and heterogeneity:

1 and 2. Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything and must be… This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order…. A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains,
organizations of power, and circumstances relevant to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7)

Characteristic of Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts, the rhizome is not one side of a binary; that is, the rhizome is not the opposite of a root. The root, or the taproot model of thought, is implicated in the rhizome in that you need the root in order to produce the rhizome. Similar to deconstructionism, which relies on a pre-existing structure, nomadic thought relies on a certain amount of the dominant modes of functioning in order to challenge and respond to it, to pave new possibilities. Deleuze and Guattari (as cited in O’Sullivan, 2006) suggest:

“‘You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of significance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations, force you to; and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantities to enable you to respond to the dominant reality’” (1987, p. 160)

Considering the rhizome in relation to a series of lines and territories provides a symbolic structure through which to unpack experience with this lens. As learning selves are put in relation to others, to ideas, and to experiences that address the assemblage of their surroundings and subjects, forces emerge that give rise to new action, thought, feeling, and movement. These processes can be described in terms of rhizomatic lines. Leander and Rowe summarize these lines as those of “desire, multiplicity, and creation” (2006, p. 435). In basic terms, lines correspond to the movement of body, thought, or action through time and space. In similarly basic terms, rhizomatic lines fall into two categories: Those that organise, or maintain structure; and those that disrupt previously established structures. The former is referred to as a line of
**segmentarity**, describing lines or structures that form a hierarchical system of segments/orders/compartments (binaries, cycles, linearities). A line of segmentarity can be realized as a process of action, a system of behavior, an ideology, etc. This type of line exists in every rhizome as an organizing component. The latter category of line refers to **lines of flight**, or **lines of deterritorialisation**. These lines disrupt and depart from either lines of segmentarity or another line of flight. The term describes a path of mutation, “something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organisations” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 216). These paths are prompted by **ruptures**, a term used to describe instances in which forces (of subjectivity or circumstance for example) collide to cause a diversion from a previous pathway of thought or action. Deterritorialisation is “a movement producing change …. to free up the fixed relations that contain the body…exposing it to new organizations” (Parr, 2005, p. 67). Every territory will have points of rupture and deterritorialisation, only to lead to **reterritorialisation** where the new relations uncovered by deterritorialisation are brought together in reestablished territories. Lines of segmentarity, then, can be seen to set up the aborescent system of functions; in other words, systems that ultimately ascend to a unified “truth,” as the roots that feed a tree. **Molecular lines** of segmentarity reach from one segmentation to another by deterritorialising and reterritorialising once again. Finally, lines of flight that rupture the other two lines potentially lead to alter the assemblage (see below) as a whole (Lorraine, 2005, p. 145).

The **assemblage** is a key principle of nomadic theory. Deleuze and Guattari, as well as the many scholars who have applied their theory, take up this concept in various ways. It can be understood as a loose structure of ideas, circumstances, or organizations consisting of territories that sustain it. Leander and Rowe summarize the assemblage as the “performed organization of language (enunciation) and ‘content’ (material and conceptual bodies)” (2006, p. 437). But this is
not to say that an assemblage has a solely representational or symbolic function, or that it is a fixed organisation. In broader terms, Kylie Message asserts that an assemblage “manifests a series of constantly changing heterogeneous elements and circumstances that come together for various reasons at particular times” (2005, p. 275). Assemblages are semiotic (in their expression), and pragmatic, that is, comprising content based on actions (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 504). An education system is an assemblage, as is a book, and a parent. The assemblage has distinct defining territories that dictate its interaction with its participants and witnesses.

Assemblages are territorial, and the territory is a further organizing principle, very closely related to the assemblage, and equally hard to define. A territory is like an assemblage in that it is an internal organization that moves and alters with every new force and interaction. An assemblage can be considered in terms of the territories within it; a territory, on the other hand can be considered in relation to the assemblage, or assemblages, that it operates within. The notion of territory becomes particularly useful in my take up of rhizomatic thought, as the motion inherent in pathways or maps of thought and action, is embedded in the nature of the territory.

Message (2005) explains, “Although a territory establishes connections from the areas of representation, subject, concept and being, it is distinct from a fixed image, signification or subjectivity. Through this we can see that a territory is primarily marked by the ways movement occurs over the earth, rather than by State borders” (p. 275). The “State” in this sense refers to the strict organization of relations, including linguistic.

To think about my interpretation of these concepts, ideas, and principles through simplified concrete examples, we can consider the school as an assemblage. Within this, individual students, classrooms, and subject areas (for example), can be seen as territories. A curriculum can be seen as a line of segmentarity; a school production of Julius Caesar, feeding
into various areas of the English, History, and Socials curriculum can be seen as a molecular line of segmentarity; and a devised contemporary interpretation of that play (departing from the original text, directions, contexts, etc.) can be seen as a line of flight.

*Space and time in nomadic thought.* Nomadic thought is concerned with pathways of thought or action from point to point. In this way, space and time are integral to every concept described thus far. Deleuze and Guattari consider time and space to be inextricably related, indeed they talk about space and time as parallel concepts, often using the term “space-time” when time is central to the subject in question. As the “discursive practice of place” (Conley, 2005, p. 258), space in Deleuzo-Guattarian theory, is a place in which events are realised (in time); where active engagement takes place. In this light, space and time can be considered as embedded with potential. Space in relation to time is considered in terms of its relative smoothness or striation. Deleuze and Guattari suggest various models through which to understand types of smooth and striated space dynamics. One of these models is the musical model. Using the work of Pierre Boulez as an example, they suggest that the striated space and time is that which is counted, attached to a specific rhythm and octave. The smooth time-space is occupied without counting. The smooth space operates irregularly, without predetermined order, in conjunction with striation to create new possibilities of composition. Deleuze and Guattari summarize:

The striated is that which intertwines fixed and variable elements, produces an order and succession of distinct forms, and organizes horizontal melodic lines and vertical harmonic planes. The smooth is the continuous variation, continuous development of form; it is the fusion of harmony and melody in favour of the production of properly
rhythmic values, the pure act of the drawing of a diagonal across the vertical and the horizontal. (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, pp. 479-480).

It is important to draw attention to the contrast between the notion of smooth as used here and smooth in the context of levelling or flattening of surfaces or differences. The smooth space, as taken up by Deleuze and Guattari, implies a space that allows for difference, irregularity and change, in contrast to the striated space that is considered a space that fixes, organises, and prescribes.

Finally, and it almost goes without saying, time and space formations are never one without the other, “the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.474), smooth spaces occur in striation, and striated space forms in smooth.

**In Conclusion.** Rhizomes are not to be easily seen everywhere; the arborescent model at times can be so rigid that for periods of time, representation and reproduction supersedes movement and creativity. These moments are brief however, and rare. Human nature is not static, homogenous, or solely segmentary. “Each and every body is propelled and perpetuated by innumerable levels of the affective forces of desire and its resonating materializations” (Colman, 2005, p. 232). In this light, the rhizome provides an alternative way of thinking; in other words, a means through which to consider and describe experience as “affective change” (Colman, 2005, p. 232) in the world.

**Framework Summary**

*The lure of method lies in its putative logic.*

*It offers us a system and a way into the world.*

- Grumet, Anderson & Osmond, 2008, p. 136
My intention is to honour both the complexity of the data generated, as well as the tangible “business” of working with youth, with theatre practice, in schools. I use the sites within the creation cycle (preparing, performing, spectating) as interrelated concepts, each affecting the other. In this way, I begin the process of making the framework rhizomatic to the field of data. My overall analytical frame is designed to address the corporeal, multimodal, and multidimensional nature of the data. In some cases, my data consist solely of spoken and written discourse, in which case, my analysis depends heavily upon that mode, but not so far as to discount the bodies (my own included) that delivered and negotiated those texts. In other places, my data includes video footage of performance work. In these cases, the analysis framework is not biased toward one mode. If a line of flight, or a path of inquiry, can be traced from a visual image to a gesture, to a word, then each mode is examined in terms of the role it plays, and the way that it works to affect change or inform inquiry. In this way, modality becomes secondary to the sensations, affects, and relations that it results in.

A tension between using points of recognition (i.e., themes, concepts, categories) for organisational purposes, and resisting them for theoretical purposes is evident throughout. Various concepts within the rhizome theory become predominate at different stages of the study. This shifting conceptual focus occurred as a result of the affordability of certain concepts over others to explore particular areas of the data. For example, deterritorialisation becomes a pivotal element of the performing work with youth, and the notion of smooth and striated space is instrumental to my analysis of the preparation work of Forced Entertainment. Ultimately I navigate the data through these rhizomatic elements in order to bring me to a perspective and understanding of the sensations and affects of experiences of inquiry in drama and theatre practice. This in turn informs my theorization of constructions of drama and theatre in pedagogy.
The diagram below is a visual representation of the stages, sites, and nature of the data analysis engaged in throughout this study.

Figure 3.1: Data analysis diagram

An analysis of data in this framework is positioned to contribute to an understanding of the forces at work within places of learning, that is, of the forces of affect that influence and
animate the very act of experience and learning. This framework draws on specificity and systemization in what is essentially a way of seeing and living. The following chapters of analysis represent a rhizomatic journey through what I have come to regard as assemblages of data. The form of this representation is highly striated, and the rhizomatic journey through data has been written in relation to the representational conditions in which we live and work (O’Sullivan, 2006, p. 16). Whilst acknowledging that I am inevitably drawn to interpret and make meaning from the data in front of me, my objective has been to avoid resting conclusions on the meanings that I recognise or resonate with, and not to lend weight to interpretations of representations that shadow the occurrences of movement, sensation, disruption and cohesion that make up experience. The tension between representational and nomadic thought is as tangible in my analysis as it is in the very practice it considers. My method of analysis emerges as a productive engagement with two ways of being, at times complementary, at times at odds.
CHAPTER FOUR: FORCED ENTERTAINMENT

My experience and theorizations of devised theatre have led me to consider the practice in terms of embodied inquiry and representation. Whether we think about the spectatorship of professional devised theatre or the engagement with its creation methods, there are significant correlations between poststructural notions of pedagogy and paradigms of devised theatre practice. The following analysis is a rhizomatic inquiry into the creative processes of professional devised theatre with particular attention to themes and issues relevant to education.

I base my inquiry into professional devised theatre on the practices of Forced Entertainment. This company, established over 25 years ago, has remained at the forefront of the devised theatre movement in Britain and is made up of some of the most experienced and influential devised theatre artists in contemporary Western theatre. In a genre of theatre that evades easy definition, the work of this company is solidly and recognisably positioned in the tradition and mode of devised theatre practice.

Speaking of their process, Tim Etchells, artistic director of Forced Entertainment, explains, “We tend to begin from simple concrete things... and to work from there... So ‘what its about/dealing with’ is always something that comes later” (Etchells, interview, April 2008). The “simple concrete things” that Tim is referring to are the material realities, bodies, places, objects, and periods of time that make up the context of their work. Deleuze and Guattari state, “To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations” (1987, p. 3). Guided by these related perspectives, this chapter is positioned at once as an exploration of the practice of devised theatre, as well as an exploration into the application of nomadic thought as expounded by Deleuze and his collaborations with Guattari.
This chapter begins with details regarding the data generation specific to this site, followed by further background to the site and a description of the nature of the fieldwork that was carried out. The analysis is focused on the creation process of a performance piece entitled, Spectacular (Forced Entertainment, 2008). The descriptions and analysis contained in this chapter serve both as context and frame for the subsequent analysis of devising practice in a school setting.

Data Generation and Selection at Forced Entertainment

The context for this study begins with a decade of following the work of Forced Entertainment. I first became familiar with the work of the company during my M.A. in contemporary theatre practice in London (2002-2003). Their work in this context was positioned as exemplary. Previous to the fieldwork directly related to this study, I had watched two live performances by the company, and read extensively on their work. For this project, I spent two weeks in observation of the company in rehearsal in March and April of 2008. Specifically, my observations took place between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, for two weeks. In addition to this, I spent time with company members outside rehearsal hours to conduct interviews or informal conversations. During this time I collected extensive field notes and researcher reflections, and conducted extended semi-structured interviews with each of the six company members (see Appendix A for interview questions), in addition to in person and e-mail correspondences before and after the fieldwork took place. Finally my data include video footage of performances and rehearsals, performance texts of numerous Forced Entertainment works, and publications written by and about the company.

The data specifically drawn on in the following analysis were selected based on their
suitability to best exemplify the processes of inquiry and performance encountered. I consider
the focal data used as typical and representative of the company’s work. In addition, data were
selected due to their relative suitability to transcription or representation in the context of this
dissertation. I endeavour to keep the portrayal and analyses of practice tangible and within the
terrain of academic rigour; it has therefore been important in the selection of data to use sources
and material that can be adequately substantiated by multiple sources or multiple pieces of
corroborative data.

Data Context: Introducing the Company

Forced Entertainment is a nationally and privately funded organisation with full time
administrative staff in addition to the six core creative artists. The company create and produce
new devised work and tour nationally and internationally. Individual productions are developed,
performed, toured, and then often remounted in subsequent years contributing to a repertoire of
work that the company performs on an ongoing basis. Performance venues for the work range
from traditional theatre spaces, to festival venues, and arts centres. Audiences for this work are
significant, relative to audience sizes for contemporary theatre performance, due to the standard
and reputation of the company’s work. Audiences are often considered to be primarily made up
of either formally educated, middle class, and liberal arts enthusiasts, or young people who
typically attend music festivals and concerts. These generalisations have been attributed by
company members to the characteristics of their work that contrast with traditional theatre
conventions and align with the performative characteristics of live music or sporting events.
More detail on these characteristics emerges in the analysis that follows later in this chapter.
The following description is drawn from field notes taken throughout the first week of observation at the site. In this way, this description provides an overall impression of the site rather than a description of one specific event.

Forced Entertainment is based in Sheffield, England; it has been since soon after its inception in 1985. The company’s office and workspaces are now in a large multipurpose building called the Workstation. The offices are upstairs; the rehearsal space is in the basement, accessed through various dark passages and doors, near to the underground parking and loading bay of the building. The room is a large “black box,” rigged with lighting frames. It resembles many standard theatre rehearsal rooms. My visit to the company occurred part way through the second phase of a show creation process. The first phase had taken place earlier in the year and had resulted in a work-in-progress performed in Bergen, Norway. The space is “lived-in,” scattered with the remnants of weeks of work. A trestle table with a coffee maker, cups and milk stands in one corner of the space. On it is also a copy of Anthony and Cleopatra, The Great Gatsby, an edited book on Bobby Baker (performance artist), and a set of handcuffs. A couple of Guardian newspapers are lying around. And a bottle of cough medicine that Cathy (performer) brought along for herself. There is a pile of costume pieces in another corner of the room, a small soundboard, a television, and a big blue rigging ladder. Finally, various costume “heads”—a horse’s head and a chicken’s head, to be more specific—are strewn on the ground at the edge of the room. Most mornings begin with the company sitting in small circle near the coffee maker, six chairs and two large, ancient-looking, industrial electric heaters in amongst them. The heaters give off a bright orange light which makes everyone’s skin look orange, and hurts your eyes after a while. On my first morning of observation I didn’t expect to be joining the circle, and told the
group as much. They laughed and said it was too cold to be a “fly on the wall.” Sure enough, after half an hour I realised what they meant. The room was freezing. And airless.

The company is made up of six artists: Tim Etchells (artistic director), Richard Lowdon (designer, performer), Robin Arthur (performer), Claire Marshall (performer), Cathy Naden (performer), and Terry O’Connor (performer).

Half way through the first day of my observations, Richard stuck the letters S P E C T A C U L A R cut out of cardboard on to the rafters. By the end of the day, the T had fallen to the ground. S P E C A C U L A R remained. By the end of the second day the fallen letters were of more interest to the company than the few remaining. Periodically someone would re-arrange them, I kept a note of some of the concoctions: REACT; CATER; SCALP CRATE. The title of the show, “Spectacular”, was agreed upon before I arrived, it wasn’t a topic of discussion; as the company fumbled around for a solid direction for the show (after discarding the results of the
first phase of this project), it was easy to muse on the metaphor of the anagram game going on silently whilst they worked.

Despite the cold, I did retreat from the discussion circle and sit on the floor at the side of the room. Most days, I would begin on a chair in the circle, and by the end of the day be on the floor at the side. I began in the circle to be polite – it didn’t seem right to say hello and then sit behind them and watch and listen, with only the sounds of my pen and paper to speak for myself. But as the day progressed, the circle would break up, improvisations would be set, or people would drift to different parts of the room – to pace about, to lie on the costume pile, to play with the cardboard letters. As the circle broke up I would retreat to the wall. I felt much more comfortable there, partly because it felt more honest – I was there to observe, and although my presence was felt, and therefore significant in some way, I did not have a voice there in the literal sense of the word. The other reason for my preference to separate myself from the group was the weight of atmosphere in the room, an atmosphere created by the sense of history, of interpersonal relationships and of pressure to make work that they were happy with in the short time remaining before their scheduled premiere and tour. After a few days of being baffled by the whole experience, I began to realise that this group of people work in an acute state of balance and understanding with each other. If I were to make a comment in that room it would be like interrupting a conversation that has been going on for 25 years. Very little is said that is superfluous, very little “small talk,” and virtually no “niceties.” An excerpt from my field notes elaborates on this observation:

People listen to each other, but don’t humour each other – an idea is proposed, a question posed and it is either agreed with, disagreed with, or sometimes left hanging. It seems so far that people listen and speak with equal authority…

(Field notes, April 3, 2008)
“Unpacking the Present”: Navigating the Experience of Creation in Forced Entertainment’s Working Processes

The following analysis is presented in terms of the creation cycle (the unit of analysis divided into preparing, performing, and spectating). As with every analysis herein, the creation cycle is used as an organising structure for an overall performance creation process. In this way, when multiple areas of interest occur within one site (e.g. preparing), that section of analysis is divided again according to the focus of the content. In addition, within each site (preparing, performing, spectating), specific analytical concepts are focused on to explore that element of the overall cycle.

**Preparing (1): The Smooth and the Striated Spaces of Creation**

A traditional dramatic performance or rehearsal process that is based on the staging of a text (fixed in time, and representative of another space) or an event (occurring in, or over, time in a specific place) is striated by its own origins and objective. That is, the points at which the process begins and ends can be considered fixed and pre-determined. The written play text or the original event corresponds to the beginning point, the representation of that text or event on stage, the end point. The process from one point to the other is relevant only in so far as it serves the end objective or point. In this way, from “page to stage” can be regarded as a line of segmentarity, an organising structure. The details, style, and forms of the representation (the end point, the public performance) may emerge during the process, as individuals interpret or contribute unique perspectives, but these variations must exist as molecular lines (supple lines of segmentarity). That is, they depart from one segmentary line but reform a line of segmentation.
that maintains the objective of representing an already conceived, or already occurred, series of events.

In his book on the work and processes of Forced Entertainment, Certain Fragments, Tim Etchells contrasts the type of theatre implied above with that of Forced Entertainment:

If the process of direction in the theatre most usually has at its heart the interpretation of a text and the fixing of a set of meanings in it, the staging of one interpretation out of many possible ones – perhaps we had in mind something utterly different – of theatre or performance as a space in which different visions, different sensibilities, different intentions could collide. (Etchells, 1999, p. 55)

Despite the fluidity and smoothness implied above in regard to Forced Entertainment, striated space and segmentarity is an inevitable aspect of their context and work. Space and time in Forced Entertainment’s process is striated by material circumstantial forces (for example, the size and temperature of the room; the objects and costumes at hand), and pre-organised performance schedules, (equating to a finite period of time in which to create), amongst many other broad and miniscule details that make up the context of their work. In creating performance, however, Forced Entertainment seeks out the smooth space-time where performance emerges from flight lines that occur at times in reaction to, and always in relation to, the striations around them. In some cases, this involves establishing a particular striated space (like rules of behaviour for example), in order to test the striation and experiment with ways of disrupting it. In theory and practice, the company strives to allow for natural rhythms, emergent concepts and multiple perspectives by working without prescribed themes, fixed agendas, or concrete processes.
Further segmentarity can be seen in relation to stylistic and philosophical desires and tendencies within the assemblage of the company. These can be seen as territories of desire and movement, arising out of deterritorialising acts in the company’s past, as artists broke away from traditional practices and forms. These territories include lines of segmentarity, some of which I will proceed to describe. The company shares a resistance to Aristotelian structures of theatre; this I consider as one line. Another is a line built on a history of collaboration resulting in habits, techniques, and strategies. These lines of segmentarity feed hierarchy and opposition in the work (for example: “the temptation to construct a [linear] narrative out of that is very strong and not very nice,” Tim, field notes, April 7, 2008; and in response to a description of an idea to try out, Tim comments, “that starts to sound like a ‘play,’” field notes, April 8, 2008). Territorial positions that are taken up accordingly in turn strengthen segmentation and materialise as strong forces and characteristics of the company’s style.

In the early work of the company, their public performances could be characterised as flight lines from the segmentary lines of traditional theatre (interpreting texts, narrative, plot driven content). As new territories and performance traditions were established by Forced Entertainment and other like-minded companies (breaking away from linear narratives, text based performance, etc), new lines of segmentarity developed (in a reterritorialised space). Examples include the direct address to the audience as opposed to the fourth wall and the use of new media or improvisation in performance. The acknowledgement of, and resistance to, segmentarity is evident in Richard’s (performer/designer) comments on the trajectory of the company’s work:

…everything was part of a continuum. … And then, some things, I mean, they’re finished, but they’re sort of also unfinished. And so there’s this sense perhaps of
unfinished business all the time, somewhere in the back catalogue and that you find yourself-- I mean, it must be a very powerful thing, the rehearsal room, the fact that one’s referencing, like, shows from 15 years ago. So, in a way, we’re constantly digging over, I suppose, our own strategies and in some ways, you’re kind of trying to break your own strategies…

(Richard, interview, April 7, 2008)

The smooth space that the company strives for is one embedded with segmentarity, but considering the process rhizomatically, the lines of segmentarity are often used as opportunities for rupture. To illustrate this point, Tim comments on the work in a recent media interview, “If it works inside stereotypes for a while, as it often does, it always finds a way to crack them open or break them. Often the bloke will take centre stage, but only really so that the women can come sneaking around and smash it all to pieces" (as cited in Brown, 2008). It is the deterritorialising itself that becomes substantive in the process. Another creation strategy, briefly noted earlier, characteristic of some of Forced Entertainment’s work is to impose strict rules of interaction for performance (similar to the rules of a game). The examples referred to here can be seen as platforms to explore, to breaking point, the striated spaces that we are familiar with, and highlight the ruptures and lines of flight that can emerge.

Without a centripetal force of prescribed text or concept (as is characteristic of traditional theatre models), the group draw on their lives, and the span of their work together, frequently referring to past projects or shows, films, or music for example, that they have experienced. The process of creating a new work begins with the banal and the profound experiences and sensations of each company members’ lives inside and outside of the company. This could involve a costume piece, a scene from a film, a list found on the internet, or it could be an unused
piece of material discovered in a previous creation process. Some comments from the company on this subject help to give a sense of the expanse and yet proximity of potential starting points:

Cathy: “I think music, I think we’re always looking for any sort of found thing that might be interesting or useful in some way…. And we looked for things that generate action….. quite a lot of that comes from costumes….” (Cathy, interview, April 9, 2008)

Claire: “I think we’ve got more conceptual about how we talk about shows or where we start from. Quite often it’s, you know, what’s in the cupboard? … quite often it’s what’s leftover from another show…. we used to sit and watch films…. sometimes, you know, we like to go root around in the costume department of the big theatre. Or when you’re just walking about, you – kind of your eyes are open for looks, I think…” (Claire, interview, April 8, 2008)

Richard: “I think a lot of the time you may work in response to the last thing you’ve made, or things that you feel that you didn’t turn over enough, or things that you just don’t want to do again – like, let’s please not do that. And you’re sort of searching around for the next move to make sense, but it’s a very blind process. You know, the stuff that happens outside of the rehearsal room, I mean, I think in a way, you spend a lot of time thinking. I mean, I guess just like anybody, I mean, you just absorb stuff and then sometimes you see things and you go, oh, that’s kind of nice. Like, I saw this nice thing in a film, or there was this great story on TV the other day. Or oh, that would be nice for one of the costumes we have in the cupboard to talk about…” (Richard, interview, April 7, 2008)
In short, there are no restrictions on what might ignite a creation process. Once entered into
the rehearsal space, the company engage in discussion and improvisation in a cyclical
manner, one feeding from the other. There are no schooled performance techniques, no repertoire
of skills on display; instead, a group of people with a common interest in performance as
engagement. Discussion in the creation process is relatively unstructured (seeking out a smooth
space): A comment relating to a previous improvisation might be followed by someone sharing a
humorous line from the day’s papers; a question might be followed by an extended silence, only
to be proceeded by a completely different train of thought begun by someone else. Terry offers
the following comment on the nature of discussion within the creation process: “It is utterly not
about … your stake in this, or who you are going to be asked to be, or what you are going to be
asked to do, or what you are proposing for yourself. It’s just following the thought processes.
Just watching collisions happen between people’s thinking…” (Terry, interview, April 10, 2008).
To serve as an illustration of the collaborative inquiry of discussion, the following section details
an excerpt and analysis of my field notes. During this described series of interactions, the
company are discussing the possibilities for expanding the “skeleton” performance (a short hand
term to describe one possible direction for performance development) to include more than the
two performers currently involved.

In the course of the conversation, the company go back and forth along molecular and
molar (fixed) segmentary lines, looking for places of potential rupture. Terry begins by
establishing the common territory, implying a reference to a shared history, from which a line of
segmentarity can be seen to emerge. At this point, Robin moves further along the lines now
familiar to the company, proposing to add the “unrelated,” resisting that which would close the
“economy” of the piece.
~ Terry: “I think it is a bit unusual for us to try and make the reality clear and coarse.”
~ Rob suggests having something that may be entirely unrelated happening – then he would be happier trying to find the connection – thinking of it as a strand or a block that sits next to another one, otherwise “there’s a closed economy about it.”
~ Tim: “maybe we can start again in another place” …… “we have been here before – when we were trying to extrapolate more things for Gerry and Bruno” (this is a reference to a previous production, *Bloody Mess*).
~ For the most part they have a cup of coffee constantly on the go – a coffee pot always brewing – all of them drinking coffee.
~ They stare into the distance when not talking, some walking, some still.

At various points, the line is ruptured – costumes are tried on, past shows are brought up – and through this, quite typical, rhizomatic conversation, the assemblage of the creation is slowly emerging.

~ Cathy goes to look at the pile of costumes, she’s putting on a dress and a wig. Terry lifts the white ghost sheet. Cathy puts the stuff back. Terry chuck the sheet down in the pile of costumes.
~ Rob talks more about Jerry and Bruno (from *Bloody Mess*), the double act routine – is this a double act?
~ Tim asks: “Were Claire to talk, what would she say?” … [the word] “normally” is all that he can imagine she could say (normally this is like this and this would be happening etc. etc. referring to the premise/basis of the skeleton’s text).
~ Terry: “I wonder if you have to get rid of Rob, and Claire speaks at the end after Rob is gone.”
Rob: “… ask Claire questions – like ‘are you alright?’…”

Tim: “It’s interesting for me because it unpacks the present….”

Rob: “I don’t know where such a dialogue goes”…. “you might get to the ‘on a scale of 1 to 10’ questions……I dunno…. “

Tim: “The distinction you [Rob] are making between Jerry and Bruno as a double act and this as an event is an interesting one.”

Cathy begins making new words with the fallen “spectacular” letters.

The time frame is absent from these notes but the references to actions serve to indicate the disjointed and irregular pace of verbal interactions. Long periods of silence occur between spoken words; a silence that does not seem to punctuate the conversation. In contrast, it appears as if the conversation continues to be active, but for those silent periods of time it is internal and individual and only shared with others when it is deemed useful or desired.

Rob: The last bunch of shows worked from a line of people who tell you why they’re here…previously the shows were ... based on something else, a world that everyone bought into and thus did the audience… (a consensus)

The performers are the anchor or the world/event is the anchor (I think Rob said this as well)

Terry: I wonder if you can start with Claire?

Cathy: I think the only way someone else can come on is in a skeleton costume

People go in and out of focus on the issue at hand. Claire picks up the paper for a few minutes, people come and go to the loo

Rob talks about a Girondelle show…describes it – in it they take on one another’s roles, they all do everything.
Tim calls for another improvisation, directing Robin and Claire to “go from the end interlude again,” by this, he means to take up the improvisation from a particular, recognisable point that has been reached before. And thus, the performance mode, and the forces that that invites, takes up the process of inquiry. From the spoken discourses that inquire into the relations between shared histories, material objects, aesthetic interests, and performance theory; the improvisation (which can be described as performance and play) draws on, and embodies forces that are restricted from the spoken word. We can think of improvisation in terms of representation, in which case, modalities are introduced – gesture, image, sound, etc. – and offer alternative possibilities for interpretation. Considered non-representationally however, the focus is moved to forces of affect and interrelation that come into play when the striations of spoken language and conversation are loosened. A previously quoted interpretation of affective intensities by Leander and Rowe (2006) provides a useful perspective with which to consider the relationship between discussion-based and improvisation-based inquiry: “Affective intensities are the forces between bodies through their contact or collision rather than an expression of their qualities as things” (2006, p. 433). In this light, we can position conversation as a space that facilitates the “expression” of “qualities,” and improvisation as a space in which the “contact or collision” of bodies takes place.
Preparing (2): Collaboration and Improvisation

As an overarching description of process, collaboration is a term that is often used about and by the company. It is a mode of practice that is frequently associated with contemporary and experimental forms of theatre. It is central to the related genres of “collaborative creation” and “ensemble theatre,” common in Canadian theatre practices. Typically, collaborative theatre involves a non-hierarchical structure, whereby all contributing artists share the roles and responsibilities of creating and performing work. This is by no means a consistent or systematic approach, as collaboration is obviously a complex and highly variable condition of practice. In the work of Forced Entertainment, collaboration is embraced in untraditional and unstable terms. On one hand, Tim suggests that collaboration for this company might be the interconnected and personal nature of the company’s method of working; an “endless proximity to other people, physical, vocal, all day and into the night, watching people fade in and out of coherence and concentration…” (Etchells, 1999, p. 54). On the other hand, he proposes the possibility that collaboration is “just a good way of confounding intentions” (1999, p. 55). In this light, he offers an insight into a crucial element of their process of creation. He states: “I trust discoveries and accidents and I distrust intentions” (1999, p. 55).

Intention assumes a known and recognisable outcome. According to Deleuzian theory, that which is recognisable does nothing to disturb thought, it merely reconfirms and “recognises itself the more it recognises things: this is a finger, this is a table” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 138). What forces one to actually think is that which is unrecognisable, that which is encountered through senses: “In recognition, the sensible is not at all that which can only be sensed, but that which bears directly upon the senses in an object to be recalled, imagined or conceived” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 139). In this way, relying on recognition depends on the assumption that the sensational
encounters of the past will be summoned to align with the experience of the present, causing recognition and the confirmation of a cohesive understanding of the world. “The sensible is referred to an object which may not only be experienced other than by sense, but may itself be attained by other faculties. It therefore presupposes the exercise of the senses and the exercise of the other faculties in a common sense” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 139). Improvisation is an artistic process of inquiry that can take place in smooth spaces that are unshackled from the striations of spoken discourse, conversational interactions, and “the expression of qualities as things” (Leander & Rowe, 2006, p. 433). Accordingly, it can allow for encounters through the senses. Considered in this way, the improvisation of Forced Entertainment beckons analysis that reaches beyond a representational reading.

Thinking about the improvisation process sensually then, the forces of diverse subjectivities, material realities, bodies, along with the enigmatic forces of nature, energy and chaos (Grosz, 2008, p.3) are brought together in action and interaction. Improvisation can take inquiry beyond the realm of recognition and confirmation, and into a smooth space of encounter and discovery. As Tim and the company seek to allow for the smooth space of improvisation in order to see and analyse what “actually happens in time and space” (Tim, interview, April 11, 2008) when bodies are put into relation, they are acutely aware of the shortcomings of intention and representation, and the difference between that which opens up pathways of meaning making, and that which simply reconfirms our own image of ourselves. He explains:

it’s about an interest in really what happens in time and space… and what happens in the interaction between players in time and space. Not your fantasy about that, not your big idea about that, but, actually what happens…. I mean, you can say of the durational pieces, to a certain extent, within a structure, there is a sort of organic and, to use quote
marks, “natural” flow of energy and events. Which arises from the rules, the situation and the intentions of the people who are playing. But [the action presented] is really happening and the problem with theatre is that, in our view, is that it’s not really happening anymore. You’re making a dramaturgy, so dramaturgy is always about forcing things. Like, you need a climax, you need a resolution, you need a joke, you need a transfer of energy. So theatre always wants something and normally theatre wants something when, in nature, it wouldn’t be there. So I think the attention to these rehearsal tapes and to the common creativeness of what happened is about trying to always get back to nature, ha, ha. To go back to those actually chaotic emerging moments …. and actually to understand these actual rhythms of interactions in space and time, it’s so much more interesting and useful to us than to understand anybody’s fancy idea of that. Or anybody’s kind of purely theoretical kind of drawing of that...

(Tim, interview, April 11, 2008)

Intention suggests a path to something that is recognisable and therefore already territorialised: If you can already articulate what you want to see or do, then the event is simply a reconfirmation of a theoretical or practical knowledge. The improvisations undertaken by Forced Entertainment are set up as explorations, to see “what happens” when you put one or two or more elements in a space together. It is an inquiry into bodies and minds in time and space. When this practice is related to Tim’s perspective on collaboration, his “distrust [of] intention” informs the approach to improvisation. Crucial elements in every successful improvisation are the diverse understandings that people will bring to it, along with the misunderstandings of others’ intentions, or the accidental or unintentional words, sounds, gestures, or actions. These elements, along with the bodily, material, and indeed, the cosmological forces (Grosz, 2008, p.3)
at play serve as potential ruptures in lines of segmentarity and fuel for lines of flight and new territories.

*Performing (1): Improvisation and Bodies at Play*

![Figure 4.2: Forced Entertainment performers in improvisation, April, 2008. (Still image captured from video.)(Image)](Image)

Improvisations in the creation process of Forced Entertainment are always video recorded. When something interesting or useful is discovered during the improvisation, the company will watch the recording of it, sometimes once, sometimes again and again. From this, discussion will ensue based on what was seen in the recording of the performed improvisation. The following section considers the improvisation in Forced Entertainment’s practices as performance, informed by the process of spectating that the company applies to it. In discussion of the improvised performance, the company speaks of materiality and of embodied events. In this discussion, that can last hours or days, there is little talk of abstract concepts or ideas; rather an acute attention to what exists in time and space in terms of the improvisation in question or
the project so far. In the case of this data, the project so far revolves around a skeleton, a screaming woman, and variations on that dynamic that have been explored. The physical explorations, the improvisations, constitute a process of inquiry and then, after the fact, they become the object of inquiry. It is during the processes of improvisation that inquiry takes place on a personal and physical level. The lines of segmentarity (practiced strategies, familiar tendencies, material circumstances, etc.) are not made obsolete, but the ability to rupture them, to take lines of flight, is expanded. As discussed above, this is due to the multimodal nature of improvisatory performance but also the material, the bodily, and the cosmological forces of sensation, affect and intensity that come into play as the space of creation is smoothed. The improvisation is an emerging piece of raw material that is destined to be picked to pieces in discussion, but that is considered in terms of an event in time and place, rather than a representation of events. That is, the improvisation, as it occurred, is not like a piece of clay to be manipulated to fit conceptual plans, it is an event that can be analysed and drawn on to find out more about itself. The company will refer to themselves in the third person and first person interchangeably when discussing the interactions of the improvisation. This factor indicates the distance at they position themselves in relation to the event of the performed improvisation, but also the complicated relationship between performer and performed role that exists in the practice.

The company actively explore ways of being on stage. When the company takes up roles in this performance it is looking for ways to explore the circumstance of the performance – again, a material reality, rather than a fantasy. Greg Giesekam, a theatre studies scholar, offers a perspective on this aspect of the work: “There is a continual playing around with the extent to which action or speech is ‘real’ or ‘fictional’ as performers move between adopted roles and
versions of themselves” (2007, p. 118). In this way, they often look to “play” different types of “performers” rather than fantastical characters. Incorporating this device affords a consistent attention to the “performance” of the theatrical event, and the indistinct lines between reality and fiction. Relating to this topic, Richard offers one particular example from the company’s past: “And [the chicken costumes] came from, I was thinking about mascots, just thinking about, like, what kind of costumes haven’t we plundered and [of] people who know they’re in public. It’s like mascots you might have at a football game or something like that…” (Interview, April 7, 2008). In the case of the project in development at the time of my field work, Robin plays a host or an MC-type role, dressed in a skeleton suit, and Claire plays an actor doing her “dying scene.” The relationship between the roles they are playing and themselves is intimate and unsteady – Robin addresses Claire with her own name in the performance, suggesting that she is not acting, but rather “playing” herself, “playing” with Robin. Likewise, Robin speaks to the audience of his doubts about his own suitability for the task at hand: “Am I really the best person for this job?” (Spectacular, 2008). In both cases, Robin and Claire can be seen, as Giesekam notes, as playing versions of themselves. In this light, an organising foundation for the work can be seen as the materiality and corporeality of themselves – six bodies in a room (five performers and one director), with an objective to build a public performance and an aesthetic based on their various relationships to each other and to their future audiences.

The body, in these processes, is central. It disrupts the signifying capacities of text with breath, emotion, posture, gesture and energies (Lehmann, 2006). In this way, contexts are contorted and signification becomes un-tethered. The primacy of text is challenged with the presence of the body, and as signifiers mingle and complicate each other, the primacy of semiotics is challenged with the possibility of sensation and affect. Representation can exist
without that (thing, place, time) which is being represented, and can therefore be carried out without bodily knowledge of the “represented.” Sensation and affect, on the other hand, occur by means of the body entwined with mind and self. When considering the work of Forced Entertainment in a non-representational light, therefore, it is integral to direct attention to the bodies at play.

Bodies in the rehearsal rooms and performance spaces of Forced Entertainment are not only creative, signifying, and inter-relational, they are of course biological. They are six artists who have been working together for over twenty-five years, and now, in their middle-ages they are in various degrees of health, fitness, and flexibility; the realities of which materially affects their work and collaboration. In Spectacular, Robin pats his rotund belly protruding in the black sweater of his skeleton costume with deliberation. In addition, their bodies are cultural and as time goes on, members of the company have suggested their changing attitudes and comfort levels with “playing” as a mode of inquiry and creation. They are striving to find new ways to “be” on stage, as the bodies that they are. Terry comments, “Robin’s sort of said that he has to look at us now, as kind of middle-aged people, and imagine what we would do. And that, you know, … the excuse whereby you play, once you’ve reached that age, is – it’s more of a stretch” (Terry, interview, April 10, 2008). The body in performance – in improvisation or otherwise – can be central and relational. The sensational, cultural, and the biological come into relation. Richard relates, “You look, in all performances, for ways in which you can somehow enter being in it, in a way that matters. In a way in which you are somehow personally at stake…” (Richard, interview, April 7, 2008).

In the improvisation then, bodies (and roles) are brought into relation with an urgency of performance (creative inquiry), with an audience (of bodies), with each other, and with space and
time. In this space-time, reactions, ruptures, molecular and flight lines, are prompted by forces of sensation, affect, and intensity. Forced Entertainment do not work in denial of linear narratives and sign systems, but in confrontation with them. Just as we live in a representational paradigm, we also live in narrative, and to a large extent the narratives that relate and mediate our lives, particularly in media and fiction, are linear. In confrontation with these paradigms, the improvisatory inquiries of Forced Entertainment consist of embodied impulses, guided by forces both inside and outside of experience and planning.

Performing (2): In Rhizomatic Relation to the Audience

When the rehearsal process concludes, the process of creation begins a new phase, that of public presentation. The following section focuses on this aspect of performance; performance in relation to a diverse and largely unknown public. To coincide with the public performance of Spectacular, press materials, program notes, and text for the company’s website were written. In these materials an attempt is made to describe what the show is about. The “about” question haunts this company as they struggle with the contradictions of naming something that is always in the making with every changing audience and incarnation of the work. To represent it in such a guise is considered to make it static, to hang it upon concepts and signs, as opposed to letting it move freely amid the forces of interrelation, emergence, and sensation. The following two quotations are from the company’s website and from an interview I conducted with Tim Etchells respectively. They reveal two coexisting perspectives on the work and provide a provocative backdrop to the analysis that follows:

Spectacular is about the now of the performance moment, the trembling edge of laughter, possibility and invention. It’s about death and playing dead, about the strange contact
between two performers on-stage and an audience caught between what they are
watching and what they are being told. *(Forced Entertainment, 2008)*

… to read the work in [terms of what it is about], you need to be able to see it as an
object, as a statement and ... I’m just very aware of the pieces as processes and systems
and machineries that kind of work with space and time and watching, and the idea of
audience and the idea of event in, you know, very particular sorts of ways. But I think –
that’s kind of all I think about with them…. I’m just aware of what we’re doing and how
clever or not clever or misguided or not misguided or interesting or not interesting, the
decisions that we made are…. *(Tim, Interview, April 11, 2008)*

The audience sit in rows, looking onto a black space, empty except for a standing
microphone in one corner. As the lights dim over the audience, they slowly rise on the
performance space. The space remains empty for a moment. Someone appears at the far end and
wanders slowly into the light of the performance space-time. These moments, beginning with the
buying of the ticket, the choosing of a seat, and leading up to the entrance of the performer,
engage the spectator in a series of confirmations with regard to the mode and level of their
participation and relationship with the performance. This process of entering into an experience
is guided by lines of segmentation that point to socio-cultural structures, as well as personal and
organisational ones. It is at this point, on the entrance of the performer, that the company begin
to take up the opportunities of deterritorialisation and to unsettle the positions and assumptions
of their audience. The performer, Robin, behaves as if he has just stumbled upon this space
unintentionally – there seems to be hesitation in his entrance. He wanders into centre stage wearing a slightly shabby black costume painted with a recognisable skeleton frame, complete with a black balaclava worn back-to-front on his head, with a white skull painted on.

![Figure 4.3: Robin Arthur entering the performance space at the beginning of Spectacular, 2008. (Still image captured from video.)](image)

Before doing anything else, or saying anything, a small yet significant gesture serves to set the performance along a molecular line: Robin looks at the audience and then, by looking down at himself and his attire, and shrugging his shoulders, raising his hands out to his sides, he openly acknowledges the pretence that he is engaged in. The gentle laughter in the audience suggests that we too acknowledge the slightly ridiculous nature of the façade in front of us. The relationship established now in this performance time-space is a direct one between the audience and the performance. The planes of time and space are now established as shared, we are not being asked to suspend our disbelief or to pretend, perhaps, more accurately we are being invited to “play” in the actual spaces and interactions of the moment.
With the first introduction of text, Robin begins to rupture the assumptions (that are inherently segmentary) of time, he begins: “Yeah, uh, well, normally there’s been a bit of a warm up act before I come on...” (Spectacular, 2008). The play on time, i.e., Robin describing the “other” show that usually happens, makes transparent the striations and expectations of time in the theatre experience (i.e. a performance is generally assumed to consist of a direct representation of “the” event or story – fictional or not – happening “live” with the audience, who in turn are expected to maintain a suspension of disbelief to support the immediacy of the action). In Spectacular, the performing skeleton removes himself from the “actual show,” taking on the role of reporter of it, and in this way, assumes more in common with his audience and increases his proximity to them by becoming their informer. In this manipulation of space-time,
it becomes, as Lehmann (2006) suggests, an object of the experience, bringing the participants (creators and audience), in transparent relation to the present. This dynamic further blurs the line between the real and the fictive experience. The consequences of this dynamic are manifold, in particular they involve the way in which we experience time and space in this context, and how we make meaning from that experience.

In Spectacular, like in much of their work, Forced Entertainment look for the smooth spaces within what is the highly striated form of theatre. In traditional dramatic theatre, where the performance is situated apart from the audience, the space can be taken to be symbolic or metaphoric of another location. Lehmann postulates that postdramatic theatre (a category in which Forced Entertainment easily fits), turns a space from a “metaphorical, symbolic space into a metonymic space” (2006, p. 151, italics in original). He describes a space as metonymic if “it is not primarily defined as symbolically standing in for another fictive world but is instead highlighted as a part and continuation of the theatre space” (2006, p. 151, italics in original). In Spectacular, the conceptual divisions of the performance space and the audience (“real world”) space are blurred, and in this way, a space and time is opened up for possibilities of divergent lines of flight. Also, as a metonymic space is incorporated, the semiotic function of space (and the events within it), is challenged with the proximity of real, tangible forces of sensation and interrelation that become shared in the performance space: interdependent and affective. The real and the unreal; the now and the past and potential future; the spectator and the actor, are put into relief and the consequences of this are central to the experience of the performance, both as actor and spectator. As the time-space becomes a continuum between spectator and performer, and reality and fiction, the experience of the audience is altered. That is, when the spectator is directly implicated in the shared experience, the performance event becomes more than the
decoding of signs, this form of theatre is better described by Lehmann as one of “shared energies instead of transmitted signs” (2006, p. 150). The performance space can be seen to form a rhizome with the world.

Spectating: A Process of Inquiry and Analysis

An essential element of the creation process of Forced Entertainment is the watching, re-watching, analysing, unpacking, and reflecting on, their own work. To an extent, one could profess that spectatorship is the crux of the process, the practice upon which all other elements are hinged. The preparation and the performance are generated based on that which is witnessed, watched, and felt by the group. The company are not interested in themes or plots which can be plucked from the air; they have no intention to invent a climax or stage an agenda. In this way, the raw materials of an improvisation, a past performance, or a found costume, text, object, piece of music, etc. form the basis of inquiry and creation. In other words, they depend on their own spectatorship and witnessing to provide the perspective and material to move forward with new work. The role of spectatorship is facilitated in part by the commitment to video recording every improvisation that takes place in rehearsal. As discussed earlier, after watching the work and recordings of the work the discussions focus on “actually what happens” rather than theoretical or conceptual ideas based on what happened (Tim, interview, April 11, 2008). What is essential to note, however, is that the discussion is rarely of meanings that could be derived from the performance; but rather what was happening, and how it affected the spectators/creators respectively. Rather than seeing the work, either in progress, or in public performance, as an object, Tim states that, “[I am] just very aware of the pieces as processes and systems and machineries that kind of work with space and time and watching. … I’m just aware of what
we’re doing and how clever or not clever or misguided or not misguided or interesting or not interesting, the decisions that we made are” (Tim, interview, April 11, 2008). In this way, the spectatorship and reflection playing out in the heart of Forced Entertainment’s process is one of sensations shared as well as interpretations explored. Some short excerpts from my field notes illustrate the interpretive and affective expressions of spectatorship:

“It’s alienating…it doesn’t make you care about any of the people”

“I quite like it when it’s a bit urgent, when it’s communicating something”

“I like it when it breaks things literally, I like it when it drops things on the floor. …there’s a kind of glee about it…”

(field notes March 31-April 11, 2008)

The process of unpacking and discussing the embodied event of performance implicates all of the same forces as those that went into the performance from the outset. That is, lines of segmentarity structure our processes of reception as much as they do of creation, and from those, forces of sensation and affect prompt ruptures and a process of spectatorship can lead to entirely new directions of inquiry.

The work considered as rhizomatic, of course includes organising lines of segmentarity, but the concealment and disruption of these lines is a driving force of the work. Tim reacts against theatre that tries to build itself from intentions and concepts, considered here as lines of segmentarity: “Theatre always wants something and normally theatre wants something when, in nature, it wouldn’t be there” (Tim, interview, April 11, 2008). He looks instead for performance that more closely resembles life, which is elusive of course, but which is full of smooth as well as striated spaces, ruptures as well as lines of segmentarity. To attempt to plan a rupture theoretically is an oxymoron, but rupturing, deconstructing, destabilising, and reterritorialising
are what Forced Entertainment are known for doing. The results are performances that are often unsettling to audiences of traditional theatre, or audiences desirous of linear narratives or confirmation of fixed ideas or identities (the company have often commented that some of their most committed supporters are people more inclined towards concerts and sports, rather than theatre per se).

It is important to acknowledge that for some, the deterritorialising nature of the work creates barriers to the accessibility of the performances. We all long for lines of segmentarity – it is why we are inclined to look for narrative lines, metaphors and symbols, even in work that is trying to resist it. Biologically, emotionally, psychologically our bodies thrive on a certain amount of striated, structured space. Deleuze and Guattari state: “We are segmented from all around and in every direction. The human being is a segmentary animal. Segmentarity is inherent to all the strata composing us. Dwelling, getting around, working, playing: life is spatially and socially segmented” (1987, p. 208). We are wound up in a world of taxonomy, hierarchy, and convention – this isn’t against our human nature; rather, it is not encompassing of human nature. It is a convenient aspect of human nature, but not the whole of it. “There is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organizations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 216).

The creation process and performances of Forced Entertainment have many implications, but something that can be seen throughout their work is a resistance to, and exposure of, the “resonance apparatus” (a Deleuzo-Guattarian concept that describes structures that facilitate the recognition and reconfirmation of self and knowledge) and the “overcoding machine” (another Deleuzo-Guattarian concept that describes systems that fix and order meaning). The space created in the work is one in which forces of sensation and affect and processes of meaning
making and experience are individual, un-prescribed, and in relation to the subjectivities of each spectator implicated in the shared times and spaces of the work. Tim expresses a desire that sheds light on his approach to creation and performance that is worth quoting at length:

…one of the things that the work tries to do, and this is, I think it’s – in its own way, it is its actual subject always, is that it tries to talk to you about the ways in which you are making meaning. It doesn’t just create a space in which you’re allowed to make meaning and wash its hands of you. It sort of says, like, if I put this and this together, you know, you’ll make a little story. But if I erase them and put something else there now, you’re going to make another story. If I put that and that there together now, you’re going to make another one. And actually two or three steps into this process, you’re going to start watching your own action now and think, oh, yeah, I am doing this, aren’t I? Like, you know, it asks you to reflect on, I suppose, those kinds of processes that are going on in you. Which for me is about agency, … it’s not about saying, here are some things, form from this the single narrative that you would like to form. It’s about saying, here are a bunch of things in motion and in conflict with each other, you just watch how busy you are making sense of this and attend to the sets of judgements and inspirations and creative leaps that you are making while you do that. And for me, …I think – I mean, the work can of course mean different things to different people, but I think what it should, in my view, always do, is also make them aware that their own reading is a slightly multiple thing. And that the next person to them might be thinking something different…

(Tim, interview, April 11, 2008)
The notion of “meaning making” that Tim refers to in the above quoted interview excerpt is used in relation to the process of interpretation and the contingency of the meaning that is made. This strikes an important contrast to more traditional constructions of theatre and dominant discourses of art interpretation and performance analysis, whereby there is a set of meanings to be presented by the performance and interpreted in turn by the audience. Universality becomes a core quality in both the non-linear poststructural theatre of Forced Entertainment and traditional forms of theatre, materialising in two very different ways: In traditional theatre, a sense of universality is sought through embedding meanings in performance that can be relevant to all; in the work of Forced Entertainment, the possibility of universality is presented when performance is constructed to resist any sort of conformity to meaning and invite unique interpretation from every member of every audience.

The devised theatre of Forced Entertainment can be seen as engaged in lines of flight from the resonance apparatus, to expose, explore, and perhaps celebrate, the smooth spaces; performing the multiple, discordant, frayed, failed, mis-timed, under-qualified, confused, diverse, longing, human.

Conclusion

The analysis contained in this chapter offers a detailed perspective on the creative practices of a professional devising company. The rhizomatic nature of the analysis allows for an inquiry that is grounded in process and the movement of thought, bodies, and representations across time and space, and in relation. The conceptual territories that were identified through coding were opened up in this chapter to reveal the complexity and possibilities in the interrelation of bodies in creative practice. Through mapping processes of discussion,
improvisation, spectatorship, and public performance, the affordances of looking beyond, or perhaps to the side of, representational interpretation becomes ever more apparent. The inherent instinct to make my own meaning still emerges in my analysis and indeed, in my relationship to the work, but my awareness of the multiple forces that feed that meaning making process is heightened.

This portrayal and analysis of a professional theatre space and practice can be regarded as one side of a conversation. This conversation is about a relationship. The following chapter makes up the other side of the conversation, carried out by a portrayal and analysis of a school drama project.
CHAPTER FIVE: LISMORE SECONDARY

With an overall intention to investigate the affordances of devising in education and with no devising program currently established in a secondary school in my locality, it became necessary for me to undertake the co-construction and facilitation of a devising program in a pre-existing drama program at Lismore Secondary. The devising project was carried out as the main element of the Grade 9 drama program over the course of one school year (September 2007 – June 2008). This space and time became the context for the meeting point of theatre devising and “drama and theatre in education.”

The following data were generated as part of a larger study, the Youth Critical Literacies through Arts Integrated Media (YouthCLAIM) project: A federally funded research project examining the critical literacies and arts-integrated media practices at three youth sites (Rogers, Winters, Perry & LaMonde, 2009). At each site we explored issues related to youth identity and the use of arts and media for cultural engagement and critique. At Lismore Secondary we were looking specifically at devised theatre in this role. As a research assistant on this larger project, the focus of my data collection, and indeed the subjectivities that I brought to my role as participant and facilitator, were influenced by the range of interests and theoretical paradigms that reached across two interrelated, but distinct sets of research questions.

The school-based project was structured in three phases, planned in conjunction with the larger CLAIM research team and the drama teacher at Lismore Secondary. The phases of work were: 1. The development of tools of creation; 2. Spectatorship; and 3. Performance creation. During the first phase, lasting approximately three months, we engaged in text interpretation and performance creation techniques, using modalities as a central focus. In this way, we worked on
traditional text based scenes and re-interpreted them using sound, movement, objects, costume, and visual technologies. This phase was designed to introduce students to an interdisciplinary approach to performance and representation.

The second phase of this project was concerned with spectatorship; this phase took on two primary foci: 1. Watching contemporary devised theatre; and 2. The role of spectator that we play in our day-to-day lives. During this phase we went to see two professional devised theatre productions and engaged in a series of performance reflection and spectatorship exploration classes, the latter drawing particularly on performance studies as a theoretical frame (see Schechner, 2002). This phase of the project spanned the shortest amount of time, but involved some of the most significant developments in the project. The theatre trips offered examples of contemporary theatre practice to the students, most of whom had never seen professional devised theatre before. In this way, the performances expanded the understanding and experience of what constitutes “theatre” for the students, and became a point of reference, comparison, and inspiration throughout the final performance creation phase of the project. The explorations in spectatorship were geared towards bringing awareness to the ways in which we perform and spectate in our day-to-day lives. As opposed to bringing up discussion on theories of performativity, this work was intended as a stepping stone to devising, in which our day-to-day lives, our own subjectivities, and our own performances are valued as the raw material and potentially the performance material of the work. The play text that separates our lived experiences from the fiction of the theatre work in conventional theatre is put aside, and this element of devised theatre renders spectatorship a key element of the engagement in, and perspective on, the practice.
Finally, the third phase of the project involved the creating, rehearsing, and performing of a public production. This final phase involved an immersion in a devising process, including strategies drawn directly from Forced Entertainment, along with practices developed through my own training and experience in the form. The data analysed herein were selected to exhibit aspects of devised theatre and is therefore drawn entirely from this final phase of the project.

*Researcher Role and Data Selection at Lismore Secondary*

As the primary researcher in this site, my role was changeable and dependent on the circumstances and needs of the site on a day-to-day basis. Overall, I moved along a continuum with participant observer at one end and facilitator and performance director at the other. Facilitating, to a significant extent, the learning and creation of devised theatre rendered my role very active in the generation of performance-based data.

Following a process of coding across the complete data set, the main pieces of data analysed in this chapter were selected largely because they afforded the possibility to explore some of the territories that emerged as prominent and interesting. The rhizomatic nature of the analysis took me beyond focal data points to draw on a broad range of data from the project as a whole. In addition, the main data pieces selected illustrate moments representative of the nature and process of the overall creation project, and demonstrate some of the complex places of inquiry and representation that can occur in devised theatre methods. The analyses involve an endeavour to slow down some moments in the year long process of the drama program, and centre around three events that took place in the performance creation phase of the project. These analyses portray a detailed investigation into a fraction of what happened, and a fraction that is
chosen as representative, to the extent that it can be, of the movements of thought and action, inquiry, and emergence that occurred.

*Lismore Research Context*

The participants of this study were based in a school district outside of a major Western Canadian city, that serves middle and working class families. The youth were generally conscientious and desirous to achieve success as qualified by the dominant discourses of the school, i.e. involvement in school activities and a trajectory towards tertiary education. The youth were also invested in the establishment and maintenance of strong friendships; an aspect of the class that became central to the nature of the collaboration throughout the project.

The drama class was made up of sixteen Grade 9 students (fifteen by the time of the project’s completion), in addition to two Grade 12 students who were there to develop directing and stage management skills alongside the main Grade 9 class. The students came to the program with varying levels of experience in theatre and drama and varying objectives within the program. Diane, for example, was taking weekly screen acting classes outside of school, was very active in drama class, and seemed deeply invested in her various roles throughout the drama program. Nathan on the other hand, had applied to take Home Economics that term, but being excluded from that class due to numbers, he was offered drama as an alternative option. It was his first time taking drama and although he conveyed a respect for the practice, he showed little interest to do any more than was demanded of him. Drama was offered in the school in conjunction with art, therefore those taking drama would take it for one year, and then move to art for the second year. As a result of this, some students were in the drama class solely because
they wanted to take art. The various perspectives and objectives of the students in this class provided a diversity of interests and approaches within the group.

Notwithstanding the range of perspectives, the context of this study, being in a Western Canadian secondary school, introduces a functional structure and mode that is a common force of influence on every student and teacher. The classroom in this context is a space in which people come together with specific and assumed objectives; that is, to acquire the skills and knowledge they need in order to get to the next grade, vocation, or institution. These are specific spatial and temporal goals and they necessarily permeate every activity that takes place. The drama class is not an exception to this condition. The arrival of a “guest” instructor, researcher, theatre practitioner (I was introduced in various ways over the course of the year), created an opportunity for a small chink in that structure, in that I was not going to evaluate the students, nor was I directly able to help them move through the graded, striated structure of the system. In this way, I was already an anomaly. As the year progressed, and the expectations of “drama class” were being challenged by the poststructural approach of devising, the mode in which this drama classroom functioned became less and less stable.
The drama classroom in this study was the school studio theatre space: A “black box” auditorium/rehearsal room. Daily, classes inhabit this space and work within the flexibility and constraints of open floors, spotlights, sound equipment, and tiered seating. A typical class sees backpacks strewn everywhere and a teacher’s desk sitting in the corner of the space equipped with a computer and the various accoutrements of a teacher’s headquarters. The contrast with the lines of desks and bright lights of every other classroom in the school creates an element of smoothness in this space. The fundamental opening of floor space suggests that bodies are to be seen and engaged with here. The dark walls, floors, and drapes for exits and entrances, invite possibilities of play, pretend, concealment, and in short, layers of reality. A guest instructor, “a theatre person from the university” (being me, the researcher) present in the space, serves to further smooth out some of the expectations carried into the “drama class.” With my entrance
there is an element of the unknown, of the yet to be known, in the otherwise comfortable
dynamic of experienced and familiar students with their experienced and familiar teacher.

This space is at the same time heavily striated. The studio theatre is in the main school
building, the drama class is scheduled in the main day’s timetable, and the program is part of a
regulated, evaluated curriculum. As a result, every student and teacher arrives with a complex set
of expectations – they have a specific objective in terms of where and what they need to get to,
from where they are currently positioned. That idea is fixed in the territory of school, within their
position of student or teacher within that system. Time in this educational space is also striated.
September to June. One “school year” represents a fixed series of projects within curriculum, the
next year moves to the next. The day, from 8 to 4; the class, from 8:35 – 9:30; 9:35 – 10:30. To
get from Grade 9 to Grade 10, there are a series of steps to be achieved. Classrooms operate to
serve this mode of functioning. The drama classroom is no exception or excursion from this
infrastructure. This striation of time-space exists in the drama classroom and intertwines with the
potential of smoothness in drama and theatre engagements.

Within the highly striated time-space of the drama classroom, the devising project was
one step in the many that had to be taken for the youth in their goal-oriented roles as students.
Within the project, the youth were ready to be coached, instructed, and guided, but they never
lost sight of where they needed to get to, and I as facilitator of their work, counted as a resource
for them to draw on in order to reach that goal. The drama teacher, with whom I was working in
conjunction, represented to the youth another key element involved in getting where they needed
to go. Within this time-space, assessment is a glaring line of segmentarity that runs throughout
the school environment, and the teacher has, in this regard, the authority to determine success
and progression.
Space and time considered in this way position the devising work described in this chapter as a vehicle to smooth out the striated spatial and temporal structures, never abandoning the segmentarity that exists, but working across it and around it to achieve acts of artistic and individual sensation and representation.

The Nature of the Process Undertaken

I begin this contextualisation with a brief introduction to the position and expectations that I, as co-researcher and facilitator, brought with me to my interactions with the drama class of this study. This is followed with a more concrete summary of our overall process of creation.

Devised theatre and contemporary performance can be considered close relatives, or simply, part and parcel of the same movement, sharing the same characteristics of porous boundaries and a resistance to taxonomy. A preoccupation with its own form has been a common trait of devised theatre, and with the arrival of poststructuralism and consequent epistemological adjustments, contemporary practice can emerge as a complex negotiation of form and structure (Carlson, 1996). Performance becomes constitutive, it becomes about performance, about the relationship between the performer and the performed, and about the relationship between the performer and the spectator (Lehmann, 2006; Fuchs, 1996; Auslander, 1997). The “character” in this context is no longer a device to serve as a simple or complex representation of another being. It is very common in poststructural theatre for actors to perform “as themselves,” enacting a performance with no disguise of their own personality or physicality, reminiscent of musicians or sportspeople – a performance becomes less based on “pretend” and more on “showing.” Characters, when used, are more frequently used to explore the very act of performing, in this way, an actor may play more than one role, and change costumes on the stage
in front of the audience, or go in and out of character in the presence of the audience. Another technique, particularly relevant to Forced Entertainment, is the practice of performing in the roles of public performers. The company seek to explore “ways of being on stage” (Terry, Interview, April 10, 2008), so they “play” cheerleaders, hosts, clowns, actors, etc. They inquire into performance by taking up archetypal performers and recontextualising them. In this manner, they still retain their own subjectivity (e.g. that of the Forced Entertainment performer), and they make transparent the relationship between the people, their profession, and the roles they perform. In the case of poststructural theatre, the person on stage is transparently the performer, that person’s profession is performance, and the role that person performs is transparently, explicitly, in relation to that.

With the above described paradigm guiding my work, the overall process of work in the devising project of this study involved the generation of performance material through explorations of self, of modalities, of themes, concepts, and texts, to name just a fragment. The students engaged at times enthusiastically; at times they were restless, impatient, and frustrated on this journey that was supposedly leading them to an “end-of-year show.” In analysing the overall process, it appears that when I succeeded in distracting their attention from the assumed structure of create-rehearse-perform/get to where we going, then we could engage in rich, productive, and creative work. As soon as their focus loosened from the work in progress, the process halted as it conflicted with expectations and prior understanding. It became sticky with competing needs, desires, and objectives.

The resistance was essential and helped guide my facilitation of the process. I would move in one direction, and they would go with me for so long, then with a resistance from them, and some time in a sticky, difficult place of negotiation, we would change direction; they would
then give me rope enough to follow that direction for a while, until resistance rose up again, and
again I would adapt. We followed this give and take relationship, sometimes with ease,
sometimes with tension, throughout the year.

Taken as a whole, the process of the year-long project could be portrayed by following
the chronological planning of teacher and researchers, or perhaps by piecing together the paths of
practice that led from phase to phase, and process to process. More accurately, and in hindsight,
this project emerged in relation to planning, rather than according to plans. As one process
evolved in relation to another, plans were put aside, new directions were taken, old methods were
abandoned. In this way, the overall process smudged the edges of recognisable structures. And
while this created many challenges for the existing institutional structures of time, curriculum,
evaluation (the very structures that allowed the study to take place at all), the fluidity and
improvised nature of the process allowed for ruptures and emerging changing subjectivities
within the project. When recognised as such, these unplanned, and often untried lines of flight,
only served to strengthen the forces and outcomes of the work.

Devising with Characters, Consensus, and the School Play

The data in the following analysis are divided according to three main territories
identified. And each corresponding analysis takes on a slightly different focus. The territories are
categorised as follows:

1. Devising with character: Expanding the grounds of the learning self
2. Devising as rupture: Consensus and dissensus in the classroom
3. Devising performance: Rhizome and representation
Section 1 deals with an individual student negotiating a character building process in the context of devising. I draw on the notions of smooth and striated spaces in a discussion of positioning, subjectivity and lived experience. In addition I use the concept of transitional space as explored by Ellsworth (2005) to situate the process of character creation and consider the implications. Section 2 looks closely at an improvisation process with the whole class of students working in collaboration. Here I focus on the concepts of territorialisation and rupture that occur in different stages of the cycle. In the final, section 3, of this analysis I look to the end of year production; the public performance in which the devising work culminated. This analysis involves a more general overview and description of the performance, portrayed using a rhizomatic lens.

As per the analytical framework used throughout this study, the following analyses are organised in terms of creation cycles, consisting of three sites: that of preparing, performing, and spectating. Section 3 is an exception to this structure: The data are drawn from the final performance only and in this way revolve around the “performing” site of the creation cycle. The site of “preparing” includes the entire year-long project, some of which is unravelled in the 1st and 2nd sections of focal data, and the site of “spectating,” considered fully, is unfortunately beyond the scope of this study.

Devising with Characters: Expanding the Grounds of the Learning Self

Preparing: Meeting in the Middle

In my role as facilitator, I wanted to find ways for the students to be on stage, as drama students, in relation to a role that would function to expose and explore aspects of their position, rather than assume that they would “perform” a “fictional” text. In this way, I “distracted” them from their expectations of “pretending” by creating performance pieces with them based on texts,
based on objects, based on subjects. They journeyed with me for a time, as we were building scenes based on Spiderman, on fantastical underground tunnels from Canada to China, on emigrating to Australia, the list goes on. But concern was mounting in the class, and during a group discussion a number of the most vocal of the students expressed their frustration at what was perhaps a “bit too much of the abstract stuff” and a desire to get down to the real “acting” (Geraldine, focus group, February 25, 2008). Cassie contributes: “You asked before about what we think actor and acting is, and acting, to me is, … an actor is developing a character and he throws away, he or she, throws away who they are and then becomes that character” (Cassie, focus group, February 25, 2008).

This discussion revealed a key tension between the process we were engaged in, and the systems and structures in which the youth functioned. The school production staged by the drama program the previous year had been Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*; the simultaneously occurring production being rehearsed by the music department at the time of this research project was *Oklahoma*. These plays were typical of productions at this secondary school. Students auditioned for parts, rehearsed, and performed in character, in costume. Outside of these school productions, the youth had experienced very little professional or community based theatre. Some had seen very occasional productions in the city, some had been to the local Shakespeare Festival. One student had “tag[ged] along” with her parents from time to time to see theatre in the city (April, interview, May 27, 2008). The students were informed and introduced to the form and methods of devising from the outset of the year; furthermore, they attended devised theatre during the second phase of the year-long project. Despite this scaffolding work, the students remained attached to previous notions and expectations of traditional performance forms and methods. Considered another way, the mode of performance that I was facilitating was
unfamiliar territory for the students, and thus stood in the way of their expectations and assumed pathway to their objectives.

Bringing this background to the project reveals lines of segmentation in relation to performance, or in other words, specific organisations of behaving and receiving. The form of performance that was familiar and comfortable with this group was performance within a striated space. This is a space supported by entrances and exits, props, sets, lights, costumes, curtains, and characters. This is a space that delineates the relationships between the performer and the performed, between the performed and the spectator, between reality and the fiction portrayed. In pursuing performance creation in the absence of a significant pillar in this construction (that is, character), and asking them to look to themselves, to their own bodies/minds/selves, for performance material, I was deterritorialising a key aspect of their drama program. What I was asking this group to undertake was deviating from their experiences and their expectations.

Recognising and working through this space of rupture became a pedagogical issue as well as an artistic one. I was prompted to establish a place and practice that contained enough recognisable points of contact in order for students to engage and invest in the work, whilst at the same time challenging traditional pathways in drama and theatre in education, and introducing the poststructural elements of performance practice that exist in devising. Explicating Winnicott’s theory of transitional space, or “holding environments,” Ellsworth explains:

According to Winnicott, the job of a “good enough” holding environment is to “hold” without imposition our capacities to sense and creatively use our own processes of self-complication. When it manages to do that, it also holds the potential for our own responsive engagement with what is different from our selves. An environment of interrelation holds the potential to become transitional space when it provides
opportunities for us to both act in the world and to be acted upon by it – while at the same time offering us the flexible stability we need to risk allowing ourselves to be changed by that interaction. Stability may be offered in the form of limits, forms, traditions, expectations, or conventions. (2005, p. 32, citing Winnicott, 1989)

The students were pushing me to make their space of learning, their transitional space, more stable by allowing for the convention of character in performance. In following this prompt, the space provided by character emerged as a rich holding environment within which the students played with some previously carried out devising strategies in the relative safety of the space of “character.” The space of character allowed the opportunity for students to interact with something different from themselves (physicality, location, age, etc.), while at the same time risking the outcome of putting themselves in relation to that which is different. The characters adopted were developed from a process of positioning and subjectivity that the group had engaged in, articulating their interests, concerns and positions in their own worlds. The process (outlined in Appendix C) resulted in a series of characters that were rough, unstable, in-progress hybrids of the students and their chosen “performed” person. In this way, the character development process involved the “self-complication” that Ellsworth mentions above.

Performing (1): Student and Character, in Relation

During an exercise that preceded the character development process, the students had identified a series of ideas, concepts and subjects that they deemed important to them, as individuals and as a group. The first building block of the character development work was a self-selected theme or idea chosen from this list (e.g., “food,” “creativity,” “impulses”). I asked
the students to imagine a person who might share a strong interest in this idea or theme. In this context, it was not surprising that the students created characters that personified aspects of themselves, and in this way complicated the striated space of “performer” and “performed.” They engaged in the process through their bodies, physically exploring an alternative way of standing, of walking, of interacting in the space. In addition, they developed the characters through narrative – writing textual biographies. They put their characters in relation to others in creation through conversation, interview and finally, scene creation.

In some cases the characters revealed aspirations of the students, in others it was an exploration down a path that was possible in their own lives, in sight, but forbidden or foreboding. Some examples of this relationship between student and character came up with regard to appearance: She’s like me, but without braces (Lisa, classroom exercise, February 26, 2008); he’s like me, but six foot tall (Sam, classroom exercise, February 26, 2008). Often age was a distinguishing factor: Many of the 14 or 15 year-old students became young adults in their 20’s. As the holding space opens up the parameters of possibility, realities are explored, at times playfully, at times with dark or satirical tones.

To undertake an analysis of these characters, and pursue an inquiry into this process of creation, it is easy to lean on the recognition of signifiers: I could describe the student to the best of my knowledge, then describe the character created and suggest the correspondence between those two entities. It is provocative to consider such attributes as the 14 year old student who becomes 27, or the middle class, suburban teenager who becomes a princess or a down-and-out artist. Brown hair becomes green, and a 4 foot 5’ boy becomes a 6 foot tall man. These alternative possibilities of being, brought forth by the students themselves for the purposes of character creation, serve to further demarcate their own subjectivity – we know ourselves
through knowing our difference: I am a “student” and therefore not an “artist.” But this analogical thought, when considered in isolation is limited and problematic. It works towards solidifying something that is fluid, and fixing something that is always emerging. That is, our learning selves. In addition, this approach assumes a “rounding-off” and hierarchical ranking in conceptual and material structures (Massumi, 2002).

If, on the other hand, we consider the process rhizomatically, a provocative and revealing analysis gathers force. Through this lens, I map the circumstances of this process, the contexts of the choices made and enacted by the students, the actions that occur, and the sensations, affects and intensities produced by the performances. Paying attention to the body in the time and space of this project can lead to an understanding of spaces of emergent learning occurring in the classroom, and reveal pedagogical moments as active in-motion processes, rather than a series of representations of concepts, subjects and ultimately, end points.

The following analysis focuses on April, mapping a process of self-reflection (Figures 5.2 & 5.3), leading to character development (Figures 5.4 & 5.5).
I am:
daughter
sister
friend
advisor
safe
student

By writing a list of positions (Figure 5.2), April is making transparent lines of segmentarity, but also subjectivities. These positions are not detachable however, and an exercise such as this brings to the surface the reality of the complex and shifting positions within which we function. This exercise does not keep these positions in motion, rather it freezes them in that moment of consideration, as if attempting to striate the space of subjectivity. The value of such an exercise seems to work against the notion of the student as a learning self in motion; however, in looking for spaces of inquiry, assemblages and territories need at times to be paused mid-motion in order to understand the forces and relations within them. Our use and understanding of
these texts resume movement, and so the assemblage is ongoing and altered by this written artefact. This exercise is an example of many that were motivated by the desire to animate the fluid positions of the youth, to work against any tendency to act from singular fixed positions within binary organisations - as “students” within the striated space and time of “school.”

These segmented positions of figure 5.2 suggest and relate directly to the body in time and space. The “student” is embodied in the striated space and time of the school, the “daughter” in the space and time of the relationship with her mother. “Friend” is a motivating position in many locations as space becomes smoother with positions that are harder to fix with binary organisations (“friend” sits on a continuum of potential proximities). “Safe” suggests a different relationship with time and space, and prompts the realisation that these positions are contingent upon each other, intricately connected. The interdependency of these positions is critical to the perspective of this text as a rhizomatic map. Rather than analyse or interpret April as “safe” and as “friend,” the rhizome reveals an understanding of a person moving through this world, where the signifier, “friend” is no more than a point of reference out of which erupts lines of flight to other positions, or away from them.

Similarly, a task was set to write down things that “were important to you.” This was an individual process that enabled the students to be freed from the very strong pull towards consensus that revealed itself as a driving inclination in the group work and discussions that we engaged in. I was under no illusion that writing individually would entirely free the youth from the striations and segmentary lines of school and friendships/alliances, but within that space, I was looking for moments of rupture. Figure 5.3 shows April’s response to this task.
What is important to me:

Life!

Individuality

People see me as who I am, how I see myself

Family

Making the right decision – If I don’t, to learn from my mistakes

People to take me seriously

Food!

How I feel – How people feel around me, people I know and care for

My impact on things/people

Friends!

Freedom of speech, thought... free choice

Destiny/future
Within this example, we can see the desire to experience and exist in the intermingling of smooth and striated spaces: The deterritorialisation suggested by “individuality,” “how I feel,” and “freedom of speech” is punctuated with the organising and territorial structures of “family,” and “friends.” This text serves to highlight desires and allow for the sensations of freedom (inherently smooth spaces, driven by affect and lines of flight), whilst maintaining the tethers of segmentarity for support. The process of the exercise invited April to engage with emotions, desires, and concepts, and relate herself to them, be moved by them, reject some, inscribe some on paper. As the list grows, the outside forces of peers, memories, dreams, to name but a few, intermingle with the phenomenological body, and text is taken up to fix in place a fraction of what is an ever-changing aspect of April’s interaction with the world. This tension between fixing and freeing, between segmentarity and flight is indicative of the space created by the devising work in the classroom. In other words, the exercises proposed were deterritorialising processes within a space that functions to territorialise. Just as the “family” labels, the classroom organises. As opposed to being an inhibiting factor, this tension is rich for devising with youth. As tension mounts, the possibility for rupture increases, it is within these ruptures that emergence and the potential for inquiry takes place.

Figure 5.4 (below), “My Character,” is a text written after a guided process of embodied character development. Having explored the physicality of the emerging character and a mode of interpersonal behaviour with other characters, April wrote biographical details of a character she named Lexa.
My character: Lexa

Important word: Life/Health

Ex drug addict

Artist

Created one piece of famous art (got inspiration when on drugs)

Quit doing drugs for fear for life

Can’t create any more successful art, blames that she is sober

Has to “decide” between art/money and a long life

- thinks that drugs is the answer

has “writers block” except for art/sculptures

grew up in a “welfare” neighbourhood

intelligent but “naive”

This process, similar to the former two described above, was another process in capturing a moment-in-time to view a snapshot of an always emerging assemblage. Considering this semiotically, as part of April’s artistic output, brings forward interesting issues concerning a
youth’s perspective on drugs, art, and notions of success, for example; but by looking at it as part of a rhizome, that is neither begun nor ended in this artefact, we can interrogate the text as an inquiry of bodies in time and place in relation. As April, holding pen to paper, put herself in relation to ideas of another imagined self, the affect between self and other materialises in sensation which bleeds out (as instructed) onto paper, into signifying language. That sensation as it inspires and guides the character development is simultaneously moving through April. What that sensation is, or means, is less relevant than the process of learning that is, as Ellsworth proposes, “not coincident with herself, but only with her change” (2005, p.7).

Considering these three texts, we can see how April experiments in a corporeal world, smudging the edges of her own positions and her imagined alternative realities. Her character becomes a smooth space within which she can try out life that is less than “safe” (Figure 5.2), but can try on “intelligence” and “artist” (Figure 5.4) as positions without the fear of being unqualified. April can lend her body the history, emotional, and material forces of “welfare” and “drugs,” putting them into relation with her own body, contexts and lived experiences. In this way, the character becomes an invented assemblage of diverging realities. The affects and sensations of this character are also those of April, they share the space, and in this way, the embodied process is one of emergence for April as well as her character. April may well find a shift occurring in her empathy towards, and theoretical perspectives on, drug addiction, art, or welfare living, she may well find her relationship with people like Lexa altered, but what has a wider impact is the way in which April, the learning self, physically, emotionally and psychologically engages with, and changes in, the process of creation and representation.
Performing (2): Embodied Hybridity

Characters were further stretched, explored, and tried on through scene and monologue creation. The image below has been captured from a video recorded performance of April’s monologue; the transcribed text of the monologue follows.

![Figure 5.5: April performing a monologue in the role of Lexa, her character. (Still image captured from video.)](image)

Transcribed text from performed monologue:

Sometimes I feel like smashing this thing! I mean just looking at these numbers drives me crazy. It’s like each hour takes away my life, my freedom. Now there’s just so much control on my life, I mean I used to have a chaotic life, I used to do whatever, whenever, it was great. But now, now I have this stressful schedule that I have to follow. Speaking of schedules, my god, seriously, I get up in the morning, have vitamins, breakfast, prescriptions, then I have to go for a power walk; then at eight o’clock I have a dentist appointment; then at twelve, I have to go
to the doctors; then at three I have to have another power walk; four o’clock I have a scan; six o’clock I have to make dinner and more prescriptions; and then ten o’clock I have to go to bed. I mean, I have no life. When does it ever stop? But that’s the thing isn’t it, time never does stop, it just keeps going on and on, an infinite loop. When do I fit in? I mean, what’s the point? Are you just going to die? Going to keep time? Just like my heart keeping time with every weak beat. Except time goes on forever, you never know when my heart will stop. Time can only tell.

In this monologue in-progress, April plays within the context of the character, Lexa’s, life, a context that is an interesting hybrid between her character’s and her own. It is drawn together with the universal motif of time. Deleuze and Guattari resist the simple dynamic between concept, subject and being, throwing an analysis into an interesting journey that asks how this monologue, as an assemblage, is functioning, how it is proliferating possibilities, how it is emerging as change in itself. The text works through the strict striated space of dependent, medicalised, and controlled life, depicting a scenario relevant to many people in our society that exercise very little control over their own time, time that is taken up with the various responsibilities chosen or imposed: work, family, health, consumption, etc. In enacting and performing this reality, April is playing in this environment, in part, exaggerating it for the sensation it gives her and her audience. Desire is a key concept in poststructuralist theory; Grosz argues that while desire is considered in psychoanalytic theory to be a lack that strives to be filled, Deleuze and Guattari take up the notion of desire to be “an actualization, a series of practices, bringing things together or separating them, making machines, making reality” (1994,
The embodied play in this monologue, play that is animated by desire, is bringing singularities together (taken from April, taken from the imagined character, Lexa), it is breaking down assemblages (of time, of social structures), it is becoming a new perspective, a new way of being. It is becoming a reality in itself. The performance of that reality is in turn becoming a time and place of putting self in relation to other (performed character), and of learning (through the sensory act of representing emotion and thought through performance).

As I map rhizomatic lines through and from this monologue, the motif of time becomes a point of connection. And as do all points, it takes me to the performing body. An analogy can be made between the description of time in this monologue and the temporal structure of school, as the student bodies in this study are driven, with the ring of a loud bell, from one space to the next, from one subject to the next. There is very little space within that for divergence – a slip of yellow paper with a note from the previous teacher will excuse you from a tardy entrance to class. The act of creating this monologue formed connections between diverse aspects of life, aspects that April is related to through experience, through curiosity, and corporeality. Concepts reach out as analogies, and the relationship between the concept and subject in terms of hierarchy is disrupted as April puts herself in a position of powerlessness by the concept of time. Being in time and space becomes a function of circumstance and circumstance becomes the bricks and mortar of April’s character. The character’s physical body becomes the vehicle of experience and in doing so, disrupts the semiotic authority of text, “sensuality undermines sense” (Lehmann, 2006, p.162). In this way, the body becomes an object of exploration. The body is a victim to drugs/society; the body becomes dependent on institutional drugs/medicalised. The body loses the freedom of independence in the plight to preserve sustainability. Simultaneously, the body of April, able, strong, thin, white, shiny dark hair, feminine, fashionable clothes, stands, lies, shouts
and struts about a school stage. This body is the vehicle of expression. This is the body that is sensing, is being affected and affecting, this is the body that is changing. As this body is watched and heard, the rhizome can be seen to extend to the audience, the spectatorship of self, of peers, of witnesses.

*Spectating: Watching Others, Being Watched*

Interrelation is a key element of embodied pedagogy, and in this light, the way in which one sees and understands others, and oneself in relation to others (real or imagined), is integral to this analysis. The forces of being watched, watching others, watching and reflecting on oneself, can be considered as the underlying text, or pretext of this devising project. A performance creation process implies an audience from the outset, and thereby adds striation to the space of inquiry, in other words, the process is given a recognisable end point, which informs the pathways that are chosen along the way. This analysis focuses on the self-reflection of April, discussing the trajectory of her creative process in an interview that occurred after the project (May 27, 2008).

“It all started out ‘cause I wanted to be a little bit older than our age right now.” In talking about her experience, April discusses the interrelations between her understandings of herself and her character. She states: “the creative side of Lexa, my character, was based upon me …[but] her personal experiences, I’ve obviously not really had.” It is these experiences that point to “the raw parts of life that aren’t so great” that April refers to and that became central to her character biography. In identifying with the character, April proposes: “she’s obviously having a down time and, you know, everyone’s kind of had that.” April went “people watching” downtown, exploring parts of the city usually cut off from in her day-to-day life, she referred to
this experience as influential, and one that affected her work in the character development process. She explains: “I actually went to go see myself … you can just see a lot of stuff and you just kind of absorb it … and when I think about people with issues and, to make my character, actually, I [ask], what are the issues that I see around and stuff, and I just kind of absorbed that.”

In April’s reflection we can observe the lines of segmentarity that equip her with the sense of familiarity from which to diverge towards the new territory of a character. A characteristic of “creativity,” and a shared understanding of having a “down time” become points of departure. The lines taken from these moments of connection were prompted in part by her spectatorship of society, an older, more urban, less conventional section of society than that which she knows from her home and school life. April describes the sense of watching others and being affected by it, as “absorb[ing],” and just as any with any object—a sponge, a root—April is altered by the sensations taken on, a process that continues as she explores those absorbed sensations in processes of character development and representation. In these processes, April engages with her body/mind/self as historical (older than her age), ideological (socio-political and philosophical choices that have contributed to her circumstance), and biological (her body is medicated, her heart is weak). The representation of this process, in performance, puts April in relation to another force of spectatorship: that of her peers, a public audience of family, friends, teachers, and community members. With this interaction the cyclical nature of creation continues, and the process can be viewed as rhizomatic to the world around her.
Devising as Rupture: Consensus and Dissensus in the Classroom

The creation cycle analysed below took place soon after the character development process described, in part, above. The cycle begins with a group discussion leading to the proposal by a student of an idea for performance. The student, Diane, describes her idea, the other students discuss it, and I proceed to set up an improvisation based on it. The improvisation lasts approximately 10 minutes (still images have been captured from video footage for the purpose of illustrating the analysis). Finally, in a group discussion after the improvisation, reflection, impressions, and ideas are shared.

Preparing: Establishing the Scene

In the process of discussing an idea for performance, and planning for the embodied and performed exploration for it, the students made a collaborative attempt to articulate an assemblage – an outline of the spaces and content – for the “imagined world” under construction. This process was led by the students and carried out in the form of a group discussion. This group discussion makes up the primary data for this part of the analysis. The students spoke to each other from their positions as fellow students, taking up their roles as participants in the class. In this manner, they proceeded in a process that can be considered in terms of lines of segmentarity. Deleuze and Guattari write of the segmentation of our lives in society into pathways, definitions, binaries and groupings. Segmentation allows for stratification, and therefore, in this case, for common organising principles and recognizable structures. Accordingly, this is the primary tactic used by the students in the phase of performance planning. Diane suggested: “I think if people came on from different sides … [and] I could try to get a background for the screen where it’s like traffic…. ” She continued, but then faltered, saying, “I
have a vision in my mind, but I can’t really describe it” (Focus Group, April 15, 2008). Here we come to an intersection in the discussion, but the drive to strengthen the lines of segmentarity is taken up by another student. Victoria steps in to help: “it’s …like the idea of a street, people all go somewhere….” Diane corroborates: “Exactly” (Focus Group, April 15, 2008). With every new comment in this process, the territory of the work becomes more and more defined, and the opportunity for movement and innovation within that becomes more restricted but at the same time, more likely. This dual consequence of territorialisation is because the tighter the definition, the shorter distance you have to go to step outside of it, but also the less freedom you are given to do so.

Early on in this emerging assemblage, processes of deterritorialisation are happening. Adrian Parr (2005) states: “In so far as it operates as a line of flight, deterritorialisation indicates the creative potential of an assemblage” (p.67). Diane, even in introducing her idea and initialising the territory within it, offers possibilities for flight: “someone might have something in it, someone might drop it and everything falls out, someone might just keep going…..” It is interesting to note, that in my role as facilitator, my contribution to the discussion feeds this aspect of the process, “Does your briefcase have a laptop in it, does your suitcase have your whole world in it….?” Apart from these possibilities for lines of flight, the group discussion functioned primarily to organise, align, and striate; the students took on a common purpose to establish lines of segmentarity. It isn’t until we look at the embodied improvised performance that the space of creation becomes smoother and more susceptible to rupture.

This group discussion, along with many other discussions and interactions throughout the project, reveals a drive towards collaboration, cohesion, and consensus – qualities that are not necessary to, and to some extent conflicting with, the development of devised theatre. This drive
however, became a central characteristic and tension within the work and the dynamics of this group. Characteristic because the students generally participated in a mutually supportive, interdependent mode; a tension because the devising processes engaged in encourage divergent, conflicting, and contrasting perspectives, both in terms of inquiry and representation. This tension emerged as central to the relationship of devised theatre and education and is discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter.

Performing: Improvising in Smooth Spaces

The process that follows – the improvisation (performance) – begins to offer alternatives to consensus-driven models of inquiry. In this case, the students take up the tools of a character (and all that that allows) and a bag or container of some kind; in addition, they let go of the spoken discourse and rely on physical and gestural modalities (their improvisation taking place to a backdrop of music). With these tools and adjusted hierarchy of modes, the complex web of relationships that exist within the group of students (allegiances, social and academic hierarchies, etc.) is loosened, allowing for new possibilities to emerge in terms of connections, ideas, and deterritorialisation.

The following images (figures 5.6 and 5.7) show stills taken from a video recording of the improvisation. I have selected these two moments in part for the simple reason that they are clearly visible in the recordings and the interactions have translated very well to the visually recorded mode. Other interactions involved more subtle exchanges, or exchanges that were partially concealed from the eye of the camera, etc. These two examples therefore, represent just a fraction of what occurred amongst the fifteen youth at any moment within the ten-minute improvisation.
Figure 5.6 portrays a moment that was immediately preceded by Sam knocking over Victoria’s bucket – a bucket that she was lugging around as if very, very heavy. When knocked by Sam, the “empty bucket” jettisoned across the space, revealing its actual weight. In the still image here, Victoria is investigating the bucket as if looking or checking for its contents; Sam is meanwhile holding his hands in the air as if to plead innocence or ignorance. That is a rough context and description of what can be interpreted from the visual and gestural signifiers in the image; what this image (indicative of action) is doing involves another line of analysis. There are many molecular lines and lines of flight that can be seen to be emerging within this interaction. The collision of forces (forces of people, action, intention, internal and external character movement) is a rupture in itself, seen as two lines meeting momentarily and then diverging once again. As Sam knocks Victoria’s bucket he can be seen to be creating a rupture, dismantling the pretence of weight that Victoria had been creating with her performance. Whether intentional or
not, the action breaks down the previous attempts at consensus (described in the analysis of the site of *preparing*) with a direct challenge to her position (that is, to the imagined world she is playing in and representing). At the same time, the collision affects both characters physically, altering or forming a physical dynamic that wasn’t there previously. This dynamic, frozen in time in an image, sees Sam standing over a crouched Victoria. The sensation of this corporeal interaction, like any other, affects the experience of the performers, and the progress of the action; the sensations have influenced the journeys of those characters. In my analysis of this moment, based on the image above, I am making no claims for the particular significance of this moment over any other; it is a fleeting, responsive, embodied interaction that, like every other, contributes to the rhizomatic growth of ideas, experiences, and performance creation. It is as significant as any other in the improvisations of students within the devising process, in that improvisation in this context is a space and time of inquiry.

If we were to follow these two student performers closely throughout the discussions and inquiries previous and subsequent to this improvised moment, we could map points on a trajectory that led them to the nature of their roles and participation in the final performance, as well as their reflections in final interviews. Without mapping the entire process here, it is worth noting that in the final production Victoria’s character is portrayed in the role of a bartender at work who is also an aspiring musician. In the same scene, Sam plays the role of a performing musician. Whilst the final production came about as a result of a series of embodied and improvisational inquiries and discussion; by the time of the public performance, it was scripted and rehearsed. The improvised moment analysed here, however, and the infinite other moments that took place around it, resulted from an actual interaction that occurred in time and space between bodies/minds/selves in relation, and could not have been prescribed. As Tim Etchells
says in relation to improvisation in Forced Entertainment’s process: “actually to understand these… rhythms of interactions in space and time [is] so much more interesting and useful to us, than to understand anybody’s fancy idea of that. Or anybody’s kind of purely theoretical … drawing of that” (Interview, April 11, 2008). Within this analysed moment of inquiry, the dynamics of interrelation are explored – façade, misunderstanding, and colliding forces all play out through the affective intensities of two people, with characters, in relation.

Figure 5.7: Kyle and Victoria

Figure 5.7 is taken from an interaction that happened a few moments after that of figure 5.6. In this image, Kyle, who is moving across the space, carrying a guitar case over his head, has caught Victoria’s attention. Considering the assemblage created in the site of preparing, and considering the lines of segmentarity put in place (with the proposal of an imagined busy street, traffic, people coming and going, etc.), this interaction can be seen as an active
deterritorialisation. Kyle chose his bag in accordance with his character (a young musician), and “played” with the affordances of this improvisational mode. He moved with the case as if floating or flying the case through the space. Perhaps he was lifting his guitar case over his head because the imaginary surge of so many people left no space for such a bag; perhaps his guitar case was indeed floating or flying. There are myriad interpretations of this interaction with his prop, with the space, and with the other participants. What is more important in terms of this analysis however, is what is happening in the moment that allows for this line of flight. The improvisational mode freed Kyle of the striations of verbal text adhered to in discussion, and perhaps as a result of this, or perhaps in part due to the interaction with a broader scope of forces (bodily, material, cosmological), his action emerges as a divergence or line of flight from objectives and consensuses established in the preparatory discussion. In this moment, music is playing, bodies move around the space engaged in various activities, and forces of sensation swirl through the group. The inquiry facilitated by this experience is sensory, embodied, and relational. Kyle is affected by the bodies, sounds, sights, along with less tangible forces around him and in relation to that, discovers a way of being, and of contributing, to the emerging assemblage of the performance.

In the case of this work, the spaces opened up by donning a character, by disrupting the dominance of spoken discourse, and by putting students in relation to each other in unexplored circumstances, allowed for pathways of investigation and inquiry that were unexpected and unplanned. These interactions did not all function to confirm decisions or stabilise territories that were established in the preparatory discussion. Many of them, including the two moments analysed here, can be considered as lines of flight from the segmentary lines of expectation, convention, and consensus. The inquiry that occurred in this process can therefore be seen as
rhizomatic. The third site of analysis continues to investigate the inquiry taking place across this creation cycle.

_Spectating: Regaining common ground_

The process of spectatorship here is based on the reflective discussion carried out by the students immediately after the improvisation drawn on above (Focus Group, April 15, 2008). Two main points of focus emerged through this discussion, firstly in relation to character development, and secondly, in relation to the multiple modes of interaction and representation. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the notion of “character” remained very important for this group of students in the overall performance creation process. It provided the transitional space, or the safe context, in which to play, create, and investigate the dynamics of the group and circumstances of the work. In light of this, it is not surprising to find that one of the main foci of their spectatorship and reflection of this process was the way in which characters were explored or represented. The following comment, offered by Diane, suggests the significance of character representation in the improvisation process, and attributes a quality to the extent that one can achieve a verisimilitude in their performance: “everybody was really really natural with it, it wasn't like trying to perform which is kinda nice because …that’s happened a lot, so it felt really natural, it felt like everybody was actually their character.” The notion of “natural” is a pivotal and contentious point in this reflection as well as more generally throughout the creation process. From the perspective of devising practice, embodying and representing the “natural” flows, connections, and disconnections in meaning and experience is central to the aesthetic form. The improvisation, considered as a smooth space, serves this objective in allowing for the natural movement of events without the imposition and striation of script or third party direction. The
students took up the improvisation willingly on these terms, but with the insertion of character, which I consider in this context to function not only as an intermediary (between their own subjectivity and the world), but also as a mask – lending a metaphoric and porous barrier between themselves and their audience (of peers, teachers, researchers, communities, etc.).

Victoria refers to the character inquiry involved in the improvisation: “it helped because I know a little bit about my character but not everything…thinking about how is my character going up to other people because you wouldn’t necessarily know that…so it helped build my character.” This comment suggests the affordances of the embodied act in relation. In terms of inquiry, this comment implies the process of the encounter, which is described by Deleuze as “something in the world that forces us to think” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 139). He differentiates this from the object of recognition, which would assume that previous knowledge or experience is being confirmed. The encounter in improvisation is encouraged by the smooth space of the practice.

A number of students focused their reflections on the modality shift at work in the improvisation (that occurred to the background of music, and required no specific verbal text). Sam, for example, “liked how…you could just go up to someone else’s character and just have a conversation without even saying anything, you could just like with eye contact or something……” Kyle adds: “because we couldn’t talk that much….we had to express ourselves with our movement and our facial expressions, so while we were still our characters we were almost overdoing them so that we could get our point across whenever we interacted with someone else.” These comments suggest, not only the significance of the unsettling of the primacy of spoken discourse, but also the notion of play. That is, the improvisation, in smoothing
the striations of verbal language, narrative structures, and specific objectives, allowed for a level of freedom in the students’ explorations, interactions, and representations.

What is happening in this reflection draws on much of the same processes that occur in the preparation phase. Reclaiming dialogue as the primary mode of communication, the students return to mutually supportive roles, complementing each other and “making sense” of what happened in the improvised moments. In this way, they can be seen to have been reterritorialising the work, and creating new lines of segmentarity. The instability that emerged in the improvisation, in terms of the relationships between students and the relationships between the performed and the “real,” was re-stabilised in reflection. Diane’s comment on the success of their character portrayal (quoted above) serves this function of stabilising the performance dynamics of the event. Later she adds: “like some people would be coming on and off and some people were actually on the entire time, just like sitting, …some people were showing their actual character and some people were showing the feelings of their character…. ” By emphasising the character driven aspect of the work, the students can be seen to have been relieving themselves in part of the responsibility of their actions and interactions. In discussion, they do not take up the notion of the “real” in the performance, or the performance in the “real.”

Through the process of reflection, the students organise a revised assemblage. In recounting and describing events that occurred in the improvisation, in stabilising notions of performance, the students are identifying and reterritorialising from lines of flight that had occurred. This is not a retreating process, however, or a reversion to a state previous to the improvisation. Reterritorialisation, Leander and Rowe (2006) describe, involves a process in which “deteritorialised elements recombine and enter into new relations” (p. 433). In this way, transformations have occurred in the way the students are able to think about the assemblage of
the work and therefore in the way that they are able to deterritorialise once again, in a process that is continual.

Devising Performance: Rhizome and Representation

The following analysis is based primarily on the data relating to the final performance. The public productions took place in the theatre space at Lismore Secondary school on the 9\textsuperscript{th} and 10\textsuperscript{th} of May, 2008. The play lasted approximately 45 minutes and all cast members were on the stage throughout the performance, with the exception of people leaving to take off and bring on props and set pieces. The stage was backed by a large projection screen, onto which students projected images generated during the creation process\textsuperscript{4}. Recorded music was used during transitions and movement pieces and lighting was designed and operated by two Grade 12 students with the help of the drama teacher and a colleague from UBC.

The analysis is introduced by Figure 5.8 which depicts a page from the program notes for the show. The performance is then considered in terms of an assemblage and the structuring lines of segmentarity that can be observed along with the flight lines and deterritorialisation that takes place.
Note about the performance from director-mentors Mia Perry and Marjorie Dunn:

This performance has grown out of a collaborative creation process that we call devising. Over the past four months, the grade nine drama class has been exploring ideas, characters, media and movement. The piece of work that we are presenting tonight does not represent any single artistic or authorial vision – rather, it is a presentation of multiple ideas, themes, characters and ambitions. A princess is trapped in a tower with a list of things that make her happy; a group of students try to be productive and creative under the pressure of time and making meaning; and characters and creators collide on streets, in clinics and in bars.

We hope that the many perspectives and personalities that have gone into the creation of this piece invite you to continue the process by bringing your own.

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We also acknowledge generous sponsorship from the ArtStarts Artist in Residence Program.

Figure 5.8: Program notes

The performance revolves around four main spaces: A fairy-tale style tower, fully adorned with a princess on top; a medical clinic; a bar; and a group of students trying to come up with a performance that “means” something. Interwoven with these scenes are monologues and movement sequences. The play therefore didn’t portray a continual story line, or represent consistent themes or topics. Rather, it could be better described as a collage of ideas and processes that, brought together and framed as they were, became an assemblage of events,
interactions, perspectives, and performance styles. The performance can be broken down roughly into “scenes.” The “tower scene” revolved around a princess trying to break the curse of her father that keeps her there by finding four people who will read her book of “things to be happy about” and find meaning in it. The “clinic scene” was a portrayal of four young women dealing with various transgressive circumstances including unwanted pregnancy, drug abuse, and promiscuity. The “bar scene” involved a group of aspiring musicians battling with the confidence and the means to pursue their ideals. The “process scene” was the anomalous scene in as much as it involved the cast members abandoning their characters and adopting the roles of drama students under pressure to create a performance. The monologues were exposes of two particular characters from the assemblage of play. Finally, the movement sequences were places in which these divergent worlds and characters collided with one another, always accompanied by a material or metaphorical representation of the “luggage” of their lives.

The movement sequences were one of two elements that provided a through line, or a line of segmentarity, in the performance. The movement sequences functioned as a transitional device, moving the performance space from one location and situation to another. In this way it served the purpose of maintaining traditional theatrical conventions - I can see a cast member pick up her own tower and carry it off stage, but there is music and movement to suggest to me that it is not part of the “story.” This sequence occurred three times within the performance providing structure, repetition, and familiarity. Coincidently with this function of segmentarity, the movement sequences created the space for ruptures within the performed worlds and with that a multitude of flight lines. Abruptly every character was put in relation to one another. The princess came face to face with the ex-drug addict, who bumped into the young drummer. In this way, new possibilities of meaning, experience, and affects came into play in unexpected ways.
For the moments within the movement sequences, the characters and students ruptured their imagined worlds and thus unsettled any structure of narrative that the individual scenes relied on. The hierarchy of modes was unsettled, as music and movement become predominant, and form and style of performance thus altered the impact and affect produced.

The second element that emerged as a line of segmentarity, or a theme, was the “happy text” and the narrative of a search to find people to make meaning from it. This pursuit was set up in the opening scene of the performance and was concluded (albeit with some abstraction) in the final scene. The “happy text” was a book that Lisa, a student, brought into class as part of a process in working with found texts. The book, *14,000 Things to be Happy About* (Kipfer, 1989) is simply a long list of circumstances, objects, actions, ideas, etc. that might make people “happy.” The book immediately appealed to me as a facilitator, as such a text is rich with potential for performance, in terms of comedy, irony, and playfulness. The text appealed to many students within the class, but for a number of different reasons. Lisa, for example, did not read it as ironic, but rather as a cheerful, fun book that her mother had given to her to brighten her spirits. A key value in this text was that its function moved and morphed in every context that it was put. Quoting the book directly, the students evoked smiles, cheer, and humour in each other and in their audience. In working with the text in the devising process, the meaning of this text began to expand. The characters of the “tower scene” used the text as a narrative devise – it became a book that was written by Princess Jaylene, who was imprisoned in her tower until four people “found meaning” in this text. The book, in this way, took on a symbolic role, being a personal perspective, that unless shared, would keep Jaylene imprisoned. Considering the book symbolically, the students deterritorialised and complicated the initial more straightforward interpretation of the text. In the context of the performance, characters found it “meaningless”
and “useless” as well as “about happiness” (production script). As the final performance began to take shape, and I was faced with periodical tension amongst the students concerning “what this is all going to be about;” the story of this book in the performance – and the quest to find meaning in it – became a strong analogy for the creation process, as well as a narrative device and line of segmentarity in what can be considered the rhizomatic assemblage of the performance.

Conclusion

Selecting and analysing three creation cycles in no way encapsulates or represents the year long process of this fieldwork. Accompanied by the backdrop of contexts, I hope that the rhizomatic analysis of the focal moments presented in this chapter exposes the nature of the practices engaged in and the potential as well as the complexity of the embodied inquiry and representation therein.

Key points of interest that emerged through this analysis include the tension of facilitating devised theatre methods with a group of students that maintain traditional expectations and understandings of performance, acting, and theatre. Directly related to this tension, the affordances of character development and performance within this creation project became apparent. The character became a “transitional space” for the students in which to experiment and live in relation to difference. The characters emerged as invented assemblages of divergent realities, made up of the students’ own subjectivities and experience as well as those adopted from their surrounding worlds.

As characters are explored through performance, the interrelation taking place takes on further dimension as the body is implicated in the experience. The body as sensational as well as semiotic disrupts the signification of text, and imagined physicality (of character) is put in
relation to actual physicality. The experience of the mind/body/self in the process of character
development and performance is one of hybridity, synchronicity, and change.

The overall process revealed an inclination to group consensus, interdependency and
mutual support. Disagreement or dispute of any kind was addressed as extremely problematic.
This dynamic, that had a significant influence on the work created, and that created further
tension with devising practices, was loosened when the primacy of verbal discourses were
unsettled, and alternative modes of communication and interaction took precedence. During
these times, most notably in improvisations, inquiry and interaction could be seen to function in
smoother spaces, without the striations of verbal language and all of the weight that those
discourses carry.

In conclusion, the journey of this work at Lismore Secondary has been a windy one, and
in endeavouring to focus my attention on questions that I did not know the answers to, the terrain
around the corner was often unknown. The risk of failure and disappointment, always inherent in
undertaking a creative project, was heightened by the fact that I was facilitating a method of
practice that was previously unknown to the students and teachers involved. In that process, I
risked allowing the youth to create with no censorship of subject matter or content, with no
imposed agenda or theme. Most significantly, I risked failing the youth in their trust in the
process, a process that found them treading in unfamiliar territory. For better or worse, I cannot
comfortably say that the youth’s expectations were met and surpassed, that they all benefitted
from the process, and that the risks paid off. I can, however, claim that the youth maintained an
investment and engagement in this project through numerous waves of doubt; they created and
performed a devised performance that met with enthusiasm and interest from their communities;
and they expressed pride and fulfillment in their work in interviews, group discussion, and post-performance talk-backs.
CHAPTER SIX: THE FORCES AND AFFECTS OF DEvised THEATRE

Devised theatre emerges in this study as a rich site of embodied pedagogy that can be analysed and explored using the non-representational approach afforded by the philosophy and frameworks of Deleuze and Guattari. In conjunction with this, the applicability of devised theatre in traditional educational contexts materialises as a complex and contested issue. In this concluding chapter I begin by discussing some of the key findings of this study, framed as territories of possibility. This discussion explores aspects of devised theatre that emerged as rich places of learning across the two sites of research. From here, I look more closely at the relationship between devised theatre practice and traditional educational contexts and articulate an intersection in the form of a particular hybrid form of devised theatre applicable to schools.

The Territories of Possibility in Devised Theatre in Education

This section expounds on territories of possibility that have emerged through this study. The discussion is divided into two areas reflective of territories that emerged in analysis. My understanding of these areas of interest has been enriched and broadened by the rhizomatic analysis that has been carried out.

Interrelationality

The extent to which interrelation played out across both sites was overwhelming. The statement seems almost too obvious to make and the notion that we do not live, act, or speak in a vacuum is far from new. In the context of this study, however, the implications of this dominant theme centre around two main points: Creation processes and analysis methods. Throughout the two chapters of data analysis, across the two sites of research, engagement with devising
processes occurred in relation to the multiple, complex network of forces impacting each participant. Relations to people, place, history, and imagined others, are just a few examples of the dynamics affecting the participation at any and every moment. It has often been acknowledged that drama in education is based on human subjectivity; this study reveals that in the construction of drama illustrated here, human interrelation makes up at least a part of that base. The interrelational nature in which the members of Forced Entertainment approach the work of devising emerged in every aspect of the work analysed. Similarly, the nature in which students (and teachers) take up, inquire, and represent through drama and theatre processes in education is utterly connected with how they relate to one another, to their teacher, to the classroom, and to the world.

Devised theatre provides the opportunity for an attention to, and exploration into, the ways in which we relate to one another and our world. The theory of transitional space (Ellsworth, 2005), as introduced in Chapter 5, becomes pertinent in this aspect of the work. Based on Winnicott’s (1989) notion of transitional space, Ellsworth explores the dynamic of a place whereby the learning self is put in relation with that which is different from herself, and through the mechanisms and mediums engaged, an interrelation occurs. In this light, the transitional space is a theory that responds to Ellsworth’s supposition that “we cannot know self in absence of separate different others. We cannot know others in absence of self” (p. 61). Integral to transitional space is the maintenance of separation between the inside and the outside; the interrelation that occurs does not massage difference, or blur distinctions of diversity, Ellsworth continues, “we cannot know only through difference….we cannot know only through cohering” (p. 61). Ellsworth’s theorisation of transitional space resonates strongly with elements of devised theatre in education; it is not however, a comprehensive or enveloping framework.
through which to consider the practice. The transitional space, according to Ellsworth, is an ephemeral space that cannot be planned and cannot be known before it occurs. It takes us by surprise. Interrelationality, as a concept to lend focus to, beckons our attention throughout the inquiry and representation processes, throughout the various facets of work with students. In the most prescriptive moment and in the most improvised; through the lines of segmentarity and in the ruptures.

With regard to methods of analysis, the significance of interrelationality in my findings suggests the importance of pursuing ways and discourses to look beyond the results of the relations that guide our experiences and actions in the world. The results, the end points, the signifiers, are valuable, as are the semiotic frameworks for their analysis, but interrelationality is an “in between” space, a space between the end points of representation. Deleuze and Guattari offer a certain paradigm, which I have found useful and illuminating in this undertaking, but I am under no illusion that it is the only, or the best one. What I am convinced of, is that interrelationality is too strong a force in creative and learning experiences to overlook, or leave in the footnotes.

The Body

As my theoretical and methodological frameworks laid out in the early chapters implied, the body is positioned as central to the processes of inquiry and representation, as well as the process of analysis in this study. As many scholars before me have suggested, we sense first, and intellectualise second (de Bolla, 2001; Ellsworth, 2005; Massumi, 2002; Osmond, 2007). Forces of sensation are visceral and physical, therefore, a non-representational perspective on learning demands an engagement with the body in conjunction with the mind and self (subjectivities). In
the field of drama and theatre in education, the body remains at the edge. Considering its significant role in drama and theatre practice, research and practice that directly explores and addresses the body is sparse. This study has focused on the body in terms of its interactions and functions within the creation and learning experience.

The body is revealed as a rich terrain of creation, inquiry, and representation. It is intricately related to our notions of self and the functions of our mind. This dynamic emerges throughout the rhizomatic analyses of this study. The significance of the body and the relations around it throughout this study has strengthened and deepened my commitment to the complex and integral role of the body in education and research. The implications of the centrality of the body in this research extend to the way we imagine and construct embodied pedagogies, as well as the methods we take up to research and analyse learning and creative experiences.

Theoretical attention to the body in education is becoming more and more common (this study included), but for the majority of our practice in classrooms we abandon the bodies, put them under desks, and ask them to be as still as possible to focus on the more important work of our minds. So when a teacher bravely directs, “Let’s embody this now,” what does that mean to our limp academic bodies behind desks? “Do we need to stand up for this exercise?” In drama class, when students arrive expecting to be released from the rows of desks, they arrive as the same bodies that have been kept under tight control for the preceding classes that day. So, when a drama teacher directs, “Find a partner and begin the mirror game,” how can bodies react other than to comply with the instruction and attempt to employ their bodies in as accurate a representation of this exercise as they can muster, simultaneously monitoring their participation with the set of discourses they are practiced at knowing, the discourses of the mind. Warm ups, guided meditations, movement classes are all variously taken up by drama and theatre educators
to awaken and engage the body in the practice, but in the context of education as a whole, this is a very particular and challenging endeavour.

Embodied pedagogies across the curriculum could change the landscape of “a day at school.” The classroom could become a place in which the mind and body and self in motion is engaged. Arts based educational approaches, including drama and theatre, offer useful frameworks and resources with which to move towards this goal.

Resonating with me throughout this study are two statements: “When I think of my body and ask what it does to earn that name, two things stand out. It moves. It feels. In fact, it does both at the same time…” (Massumi, 2002, p. 1, emphasis in original); “I am, therefore I think” (Osmond, 2007, p. 1109). Massumi proposes to find ways of putting corporeality back into the body; Osmond suggests considering the body as “knower,” “doer,” and “aesthetic medium.” Both of these insightful endeavours call for research paradigms and methods that incorporate, but reach beyond, the representational. It is my hope that this study can open some avenues of thought or glimpses of possibility to this end.

Theatre as a Place of Learning: Connections and Crevices

*Devised Theatre and Education*

As the journey of my research moved from the preparation of theory to the application of fieldwork, it became apparent, in waves, that “devised theatre” and “education” do not go together like hand in glove. That being said, people don’t fit hand in glove into the institutionalisation and standardisation of schools. In this way, I cannot claim that devised theatre can improve the “academic success” of schools in their current modes of operation. I leave this phase of my research with one of the same questions that has lingered with me since I first
entered the field: How can learning be evaluated? This study, not surprisingly, has led me to theorisations and thinking at the edges of dominant notions and constructions of education. I refer back to Ellsworth (2005), who warns:

When we use pedagogy to create potential fields of emergence for learners and for teachers, we risk creating a potential field of emergence for education itself. When we construct and inhabit pedagogies that hold our knowledge as teachers in ways that are responsive to the fact that a learner is an open system – we engage the fact that, as a human practice, education itself is an open system. (p. 166)

When the perimeters of education are opened in this way, devised theatre can offer an alternative way to imagine and construct drama and theatre in education. Further more, it can provide a productive space in which to explore the potential capacities of experiential, creative, and embodied learning.

There are many aspects of devising theatre that fall into easy step with contemporary Western education and the range of demands, desires, and expectations that that entails. This is particularly relevant to critical and post critical pedagogies. The multimodality inherent and the embodied inquiry and representation involved are two of many examples of aspects of devised theatre practices that connect with dominant theoretical and practical recommendations for education. There are perhaps as many aspects, however, that don’t. Undertaking a devising project in a school could, in some interpretations, be considered an oxymoron. The school discourses of success and failure, of lesson plans and learning outcomes, conflict with the experimental, exploratory, and open-ended processes at the heart of devising. These connections
and crevices became increasingly clear in the fieldwork of this study as I brought devising practices and perspectives into the classroom. The expected and familiar structures of class time and space, and of class-based collaboration and evaluation, were unsettled by the devising processes. At the same time, the common base of circumstance, understanding, and community present within the drama class was a rich terrain from which to devise.

The practice of devised theatre can be seen as a *construct* that explores and frames circumstance, subjectivity, and interrelationality in creative and artful ways. The work of Forced Entertainment richly illustrates this perspective. Nomadic thought, and in particular elements of rhizome theory, provided a conceptual space through which to understand and articulate the depth and potential richness of devising processes and performance. Drawing from my own training and experience in devising, including some practices taken specifically from Forced Entertainment, the devising program in Lismore Secondary was designed to introduce and create devised performance with youth. In this terrain, the rhizome theory proved to be equally supportive and appropriate in mapping the processes and interactions that made up the school-based fieldwork. What emerged with regard to the creative practice was a complex negotiation between structures of school and traditional drama and theatre in education, and experimentation with contemporary devising practices. The resulting work, in process and performance, has much in common with the professional devised theatre that I have explored, but also much that differs. As a genre with no single “method” or “form,” the notion of hybridity is always implicated in devised theatre practice – that process of hybridisation continues here.

Through the experimental process that took place at Lismore Secondary, the coinciding fieldwork with Forced Entertainment, and an always evolving understanding of the complex relationship between art and school, what emerged during this project is best described as a
unique hybrid of devised theatre, one that I am very simply calling: “Devised theatre in education.” A description (below) and supporting appendix (Appendix D) begins to map and articulate this hybrid construction. In the mapping of devised theatre in education, hindsight allows me to assuage the wrong turns and develop the right ones, and it is my hope that, although the nature of this work demands that it is never a predictable journey or a certain outcome, the articulations of practice laid out in this dissertation may provide a solid enough base from which to risk devising practices in educational contexts. I stress the word risk because I believe that, even in the hybrid form of devised theatre in education, without risk there is no rupture, or alternately, with smooth space comes risk.

Embracing a hybrid form of devising does not imply a practice that aligns seamlessly with educational structures. I do not intend to iron out the conflicts of divergent approaches to inquiry and representation in order to make devising more closely resemble accepted and familiar arts-based approaches in education. On the contrary, I maintain that it is as much in the oppositions to educational structures, as in the assenting traits, that the relevance and value of devised theatre lies. The following section briefly elaborates on these opposing and assenting facets of devised theatre as uncovered by the research and analysis of this study.

Assenting Forces or the Intrinsic Connections

Devised theatre processes and performance are multimodal in their representation engaging body (gesture), text (word), sound, image, and space; the representational form of devised theatre provides a rich space to explore the multiple modalities that youth bring to the school context. The collaborative aspect of devising is also a trait that fits easily into classroom
practice. In support of curriculum structures, the flexibility of topics, subjects, or foci for devised theatre makes it a useful space for learning across curriculum.

Devised theatre draws on the subjectivities and interrelations of creators (or participating students and teachers) as the core resources for creation and inquiry. This has material, philosophical, and socio-political implications. I will touch here on the flexibility of the form to resources in education and the inclusivity of the practice.

Devised theatre in education is site-specific in nature. The space available, the props, the technologies, and all the other accoutrements that can go along with drama and theatre in education, will guide the creative process. The material affordances and restrictions of the school will be important ingredients in the process that is undertaken. In this way, the work is not dependent on a well-equipped theatre or a generous budget for the drama department (as a staging of Oklahoma might be). Cull has cited Deleuze as suggesting that theatre (in his articulation of it) “might be a vehicle or machine that puts us in contact with the real” (2009, p. 5). This statement can be taken up in many ways, but it feels appropriate to refer to it in the context of the material conditions of doing theatre with youth in schools. In devised theatre the performer does not need to “pretend” to be someone else, and likewise, the classroom, the gym, or the school auditorium does not need to pretend to be a “theatre.”

I maintain that devised theatre in education is inclusive. Unlike many forms of drama and theatre, there are no specific artistic, technical, cultural, or academic know-how that are required to take part in inquiry and representation through devising in education – the “beautiful girl” with the amazing singing voice will not always play the lead role; the students who take extra-curricular “acting” classes, will not always lead the cast – the expertise required is of oneself. This premise makes all students equally competent and influential in the devising process. The
student who perhaps prefers to watch and reflect rather than perform will be as integral to the
creative processes as the student who is drawn to the spotlight. This has advantages and
challenges in terms of classroom structures of participation and evaluation. The main advantage
of this aspect of the work is an allowance for multiple ways of learning, knowing, and being in
education. The student who does not write well may find avenues for inquiry in building or
designing a piece of stage set for example. The challenges of this “all accepting” nature of the
work materialise in a lack of easy evaluation criteria, and a contradiction with prescribed
methods and levels of participation.

*Opposing Forces or the Crevices of Possibility*

The process of creation in devised theatre depends on emergent and unprescribed outcomes. There is no predetermined script to adhere to, no specific display of skill to uphold. This aspect of the process creates challenges to evaluation - an almost unavoidable reality of drama and theatre in education. Discourses of success and failure permeate the school context, and regardless of the individual’s perspective on both, the stigma of failure is powerful in the educational context. It is defined as a negative and not as an element of the human condition that can be productive as a place in which to learn, and from which to reflect. Devised theatre practice in this light, is faced with a significant challenge. The creative process, if process is indeed honoured, needs to be able to fail. If there is no risk of failure, there is no risk of discovery, encounter, or anything other than retracing recognisable or prescribed steps. In devising, in ideal circumstances, failure needs to be as acceptable as success; in contrast, in education, everything that can possibly be done to prevent failure is done.
The raw material, or the subtext, for devising is subjectivity, interrelationality, and bodily, material, and cosmological forces. In this case, the extent of what can or could be explored or represented is boundless. This absence of restriction presents challenges to formal education. There are many topics, discourses, emotions, etc. that are unacceptable in most educational contexts and devising practice does not inherently support this aspect of the educational assemblage. It does not necessarily oppose it, but the perimeters of “acceptability” are not in place in devising as a form of inquiry or representation; they would have to be imposed.

Finally, in this consideration of challenges to this practice, is the general culture of consensus in education. Devising thrives on lived, embodied, and proposed difference; education depends on that difference being tempered and put in subordination to representational aspects of pedagogy and a learning self which can be homogenised, generalised, and grouped. I take up the idea of “difference” as proposed by Deleuze (1994) to be a fundamental aspect of our realities, rather than a relative form of sameness. The homogenising effort of schools suggested above implies the ordering and cohesiveness that is strived for in classroom management, curriculum, evaluation, along with age, gender, academic strengths and weaknesses, etc. School is structured to organise, align, and striate. Organise space, time, age, and at times gender, subjects, and experience. In this organisation, like is put with like (age groupings, curriculum content, etc.) and a general consensus of purpose and process resides. This doesn’t discount the individual struggles, conflicts, differences of opinion, perspective, and methods of practice that exist in every school. But the system is built to minimise the expression and impact of those differences. In some cases this can be illustrated with the school uniform, in others it is standardised testing, in others it is codes of behaviour. In this environment, consensus reigns as most desirous and
rewarded. I speak in general and systemic terms, but it is evident in the details of every day classroom practice, as group projects culminate in a cohesive presentation of knowledge, and those that conform to the organisations of time, space, subject, etc. are rewarded over those that do not. This schooling in consensus may seem like an ideal circumstance for theatre creation, but in devising in education it is the opposite. And in the school site of this study, that culture of consensus became a point of resistance to the process and possibilities of devising. Consensus levels and unifies the creative space, quickly creating segmentation around that which is agreed upon. Devising thrives on difference, dissensus, and deterritorialisation. Here is an opposition to educational structures, but more importantly, it prompts a question for further inquiry. How does education look when we consider it in terms of dissensus? How does our education system prepare us as teachers and students to live in diversity, difference, dissensus, and desire (for that which is different)? This question arose during my fieldwork due to the pivotal effect of the strong continuous inclination towards consensus in the classroom, and in contrast, the drive against it in the theatre company setting.

“Devised Theatre in Education”: Overview of a Hybrid Form

In light of some general observations of devised theatre – as outlined in the opening chapter of this manuscript and as illustrated with the work of Forced Entertainment – in addition to the experience of introducing elements of devised theatre into classroom practice, I settle on the notion of a particular hybrid form of practice. This hybrid, that I am simply referring to as Devised theatre in education, is meant in part to define and articulate a practice, and in part to provide a starting point from which to develop this practice. Rather then trying to fit a square peg into a round hole by attempting to force devising paradigms into educational spaces flexible
enough to allow the attempt; I propose to position devised theatre in education as a productive contribution to education that provokes embodied, sensational, and nomadic inquiry and honours subjectivity and difference. In this way, devised theatre in education allows the space for resistance and dissensus as much as structure and cohesion. Devised theatre in education then, works within the broad material and ideological perimeters of the education system whilst allowing opportunities for rupture and divergence therein. Accordingly, the following description is in direct relation to the overview of devised theatre outlined in the introductory chapter of this dissertation. In some places, the description below is identical to that of devised theatre, in other places it digresses.

Subject. Devised theatre in education occurs in relation to the circumstances of material space, time afforded, and curriculum prescribed in the school setting, along with the student and teacher subjectivities involved. The work created will be an engagement with, and reflection of, these circumstances. The performance-based process could therefore find focus in an area of curriculum, a material element of space, an inter-personal dynamic, or it could emerge from shared concerns, interests, or questions. These are a few of many possible starting points of inquiry; the extent of possibility is only determined by the limits of acceptability, expectations, and demands of the classroom in question.

Aesthetic. The aesthetic of devised theatre in education is characterised by an interdisciplinarity that emerges when text is removed from its usual position of dominance. That is not to say that text is used less in this form, indeed devised theatre in education can be based heavily in written and verbal text, however it is not an assumed modality. When written text is used, it is often drawn from improvisations carried out in rehearsal or found materials (prose, lists, lyrics, public domain documents). Often devised theatre has little or no verbal text, as
physical bodies become the medium of expression, or sound and visual design. As circumstance weighs heavily in the creation of devised work, the form engages in technology as an important and sometimes key medium of performance (reflective of the ever growing influence of technology on our day to day lives).

Intertwined with circumstance, technology, and the dynamic of performance, the linear narratives of traditional theatre forms are unsettled in devised theatre in education. Linearity has a place, but narratives that are cyclical, disjointed, abstract, or conflicting emerge as possibilities of inquiry and representation. In this way, a devised theatre in education performance can be reflective of the multi-vocality, the diversity of perspective, and the emergence of subjectivity within a group of collaborating students.

Performance Dynamics. While a piece of devised theatre in education can be about a wide range of things, it is always also about performance. The relationship between the student/performer/creator and the spectator (be it peer, community member, or evaluator) is engaged with either explicitly or implicitly, as is the relationship between the performer and the role or function that he or she is performing. Devised theatre in education is always site-specific, whether the school circumstances allow for a proscenium stage, a gym, or a classroom to house the performance and/or creation of work, the work exists in engagement with, and according to the striations of that space. Within the performance spaces, theatrical devices (lighting, design, etc.) are taken up to comment on the spatial elements of the relationship between the spectator and the show – audiences may sit in full view during a performance, performers may move and perform among spectators, or directly address spectators.

In summary, devised theatre in education is an interdisciplinary, multi-vocal, non-linear form of theatre that allows for collaboration, for conflict, for consensus, and for dissensus. When
successful, spectators and creators will emerge from a performance provoked into thought, self-
reflection, and awareness of their own position of spectator or creator and their own process of
making meaning.

Devising in Classrooms and Curriculum

When assessing the contributions of devised theatre in education, it is clearly evident that
the form offers similar affordances to other more traditional forms of drama and theatre in
education. What is of interest to me, however, as I endeavour to articulate some “end points” to
this study, is not simply how devised theatre in education can support multiple literacies in
education or the material demands of classroom based learning (although I am convinced that it
can), rather it is in the way in which a consideration of devised theatre in education and
education in non-representational terms can adjust and expand the way we approach drama and
theatre practices as learning spaces, and furthermore the way in which we think about the
construction of the learning experience.

Xiao-Jiu Ling (2009) relates Deleuze’s polemic position on philosophy to education. As
Deleuze states: “There is no need for philosophy,” Ling suggests that, “There is no need for
education” (p. 42, italics added). To explain, quoting Deleuze, she adds, “it is necessarily
produced where each activity gives rise to its line of deterritorialisation” (Deleuze & Parnet,
2006). Accordingly, Ling goes on to suggest that perhaps what “we can aim for education is a
transgression, in which its possibility hinges as much on opposing moral (nomos) law as to
natural (physis) law” (citing Deleuze, 1994, italics in original). Furthermore, she states, “by
working in opposition to the order of the always already-existing laws...Deleuze is proposing
new possibilities of working in the direction of creating artistic realities.” Ling, in relation to
Deleuze, proposes thinking of education as an artistic endeavour (Ling, 2009, p. 42-43). Thinking more concretely about the connection of Deleuze’s work and education, Ling proposes thinking about curriculum through Deleuzian philosophy. She elaborates with the following questions:

If one takes curriculum to mean something akin to a wall or a back-bone to the structure of the educational system, how could one approach it in such a way that allows the multiplicities in the creative work of education come to the fore, to “pierce the wall” of curriculum itself, or, to make it porous? What might be the exigencies on us educators ourselves in this kind of attempt? If the attempt to make deterritorialisation in the field of education indeed demands a becoming-nomad of the educator, what do we need to prepare ourselves for that kind of line of flight into the desert of our own ignorance? How do we populate it with the children of our own event in meeting say, Deleuzian works? And ultimately, what kind of experiments of thought could one have in the theory of learning, in this regard? How does one begin again and again, like a refrain, where each repetition already signifies an artistic singularity? (Ling, 2009, p. 42-43)

Relating the above proposition to this study, devised theatre in education, an artistic endeavour that seeks out the smooth spaces amidst striation and that finds direction from the ruptures in segmentation, emerges as a productive space in which to approach educational possibility. In other words, a productive place of learning.

Ellsworth reminds me that “education must deal in and with “knowledge, it must repeat and foster recognition of congealed, formulated, predictable thought forms and cultural forms” (2005, p. 160). But she goes on to identify the proviso: “Yet, for education to avoid becoming
propaganda or coercion, it must be open to difference, to the unthought” (2005, p. 161). Under the subtitle of “Pedagogy’s Burden,” Ellsworth positions pedagogy’s role as one of possibility within the necessary structures of curriculum:

Curriculum, when staged as education’s content, cuts relationality, plural interconnections, swarming complexity, the fluidity of the world into “subject matter,” “facts,” “timelines,” “diagrams,” “textbooks.” Then it asks pedagogy to put these elements or units back together into the living, breathing continuity of the experience of the learning self. (2005, p. 163)

In this way, devised theatre in education can support pedagogy by opening up the spaces of living experience and relationality, by exposing the self in relation to pedagogy and always in motion (Ellsworth, 2005). The creating/performing self can react to, respond to, and rupture pathways of embodied inquiry, mapping a process of learning in resistance to, but in the context of, the “endpoints” of knowledge and curriculum. The spectating/experiencing self is prompted to question her own habits and processes of receiving knowledge and interpreting curriculum. Devised theatre in education disrupts the authorial line, or familiar organisation of content and representation, in favour of a rhizomatic construction of experience, where every participant, performing or otherwise, is implicated, engaged, and affected.

In the theorisation of practice laid out in this study, the whole learning self in motion (Ellsworth, 2005) is engaged. The invitation to imagine, invent, play, and interact is made not only with the objective of representation, but also with that of interrelation, sensation, and affect. In this way, attention is paid to the bodily and material forces (that also involve and embody the cosmological forces) that constitute the learning experience. The processes of inquiry and
representation take part in the ongoing creation and interrelation of subjectivities and knowledges.

So, when we think about drama and theatre, we think less about “role play” and “staging,” and more about engaging in time and space and subjectivity. In this way, nothing is irrelevant, from the desks crowding the room, to the interpersonal dynamics of the students and teachers, to the current affairs of the day. The role of the teacher becomes less about directing action, or prescribing outcomes, and more about listening, bringing awareness, and framing inquiry. I propose that the burden of pedagogy that Ellsworth speaks of can be shouldered, in part at least, by the smooth spaces of engagement afforded through devised theatre in education.

**Advocating for Two Values**

I propose that there are two critical requirements for the potential place of learning discussed in this chapter, neither of which are extraordinary, but both profoundly significant. One is articulated by Ling, above as: “a becoming-nomad of the educator.” This notion of becoming-nomad can be seen in a number of ways. In terms of educational application, I consider it to be a way to describe creative thinking, awareness to forces of circumstance and sensation, and openness to multiple perspectives. It may sound lofty, but I believe it is the opposite. I believe it is the banality and profundity of presence, listening, and paying attention. The second requirement is also referred to by Ling, but also by educational theorists across critical and post critical paradigms: this is the requirement of critical and ethical consciousness (see for example, Edmiston, 2008; Grady, 2000; Ling, 2009; Luke & Gore, 1992). This endeavour becomes essential to the practice of devised theatre in education, as in the deterritorialising of educational structures, the supervision of acceptable ideas, perspectives,
actions, and interactions is as subject to opposition and rupture as any other segmentary structure. As I mentioned earlier, allowing for smooth spaces in education is risky, and the safe and productive navigation of that terrain with youth requires a facilitator that can contextualise, frame, support, and inform students in their individual processes of inquiry, representation, and change.

Conclusion

Despite the inevitable and ubiquitous shifting ground of educational policy and funding for the arts, I believe that there will always be a place for “theatre” of some description in “education”: be it the “end-of-year show,” the role drama in Social Studies, or the Theatre for Young Audiences company that visits the school. In this light, I dare to hope that the work reflected in this dissertation can add to the conversation of critical, creative research in the field of arts in education. If this conversation can be kept alive, and in touch with the contemporary world, then at every intersection with education, and every opening of opportunity in education, the field and practice of drama and theatre in education will be strong, will be relevant to the conditions of society, and to the intricately related fields of theatre and performance.

This study has delved into the realm of drama and theatre education with a consideration of devised theatre in that context. Through this process and the epistemology that informed it, the notion of how drama and theatre is constructed in the curriculum is brought into focus. Furthermore, and in light of contemporary practice and policy, the construction of pedagogy itself becomes implicated.

Contemporary theatre practices come about in response to the social, cultural, political, and economic climate of their incarnation. The same can be said of education. It is therefore
imperative that the content and places of learning in our contemporary pedagogies remain in close connection with that which is being produced in the broader communities of our societies. The style, the processes, and the role of Forced Entertainment, for example, exists due to an always evolving dynamic between the people involved, their experience of the world, and their ability to explore that experience through theatre. The work is an active engagement with contemporary times. I propose in this dissertation that through particular applications of devised theatre in education, places can emerge in schools for youth to similarly actively engage with the theoretical, material, and practical realities of contemporary times.

This study revealed the crevices in the relationship between contemporary devised theatre practices and the structures and striations of school. The very nature of devising however, allows this relationship to become productive and rich in possibility. Devised theatre in education can work with, from, and out of, the striations put in place by curriculum, time tables, and expectations. It can do this by locating moments of rupture, by unravelling lines of flight, by exposing and exploring the complexity, the interrelationality, the corporeality, and the universality of difference.
Notes

1 This paradigm of practice, according to O’Toole and O’Mara (2007), grew out of three divergent trends in drama and theatre education that had occurred with varying degrees of prominence throughout the 20th century: Learning about drama; drama for expression and personal development; and drama across the curriculum – learning through drama.

2 This is not the case for all types of improvisation. Some forms, particularly forms of performed improvisation and improvisation exercises in education, are based on well-defined rules of participation and narrative structures.

3 All names of students and school are pseudonyms.

4 The images referred to here included a selected numbers of photographs taken and/or found by the students as part of specific inquiry processes within the performance creation project. The final selection of images was made by one student who took on the role of projection design and operation.

5 The “mirror game” describes a well known drama exercise whereby two participants stand opposite one another, both put up one or two hands, palms facing each other and one leads the other by moving their hands. Extensions to this game involve neither participant being designated the “leader” but both sharing the leadership in an unspoken give and take manner.
References


Davies, B. (2000). (In)scribing body/landscape relations. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.


Franks, A. (1996). Drama education, the body and representation (or, the mystery of the missing bodies). *Research in Drama Education, 1*(1), 105-119.


Osmond, C. R. (2007). Drama education and the body: "I am, therefore I think". In L. Bresler (Ed.), *The international handbook of research in arts education* (pp. 1109-1118). The Netherlands: Springer.


Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions for Forced Entertainment

1. On the foundation of the company: Were there particular reasons or circumstances that you associate with the formation of this company?

2. On the genre of the work: Do you think about the genre or form of the work in a particular way/in particular terms?

3. Can you describe your role in the company, in relation to the roles that others take up?

4. In what ways, or on what level, do you find connection with the work? (Personally, emotionally, politically, technically, etc)

5. What sort of resources, materials, influences do you draw from in your creation work? (to the extent that you can identify them)

6. What is your experience of the work in educational contexts? And/or: Do you have any thoughts on your work as educational, either to participants through the process, or to the world that sees it?
Appendix B: Interview Questions for Lismore Secondary

Part 1: Mid-way through the project

1. Can you tell me what you like to read/watch/listen to/spectate? And why?
   What is your experience of theatre so far?
   In what ways do these mediums (that you enjoy) appear in/contribute to theatre as you have experienced it?

2. The activities: What aspects of the theatre devising work have you enjoyed and why?

3. What is your role in the class/ How do you see your contribution in relation to the rest of the class?

4. Reflection on work:
   Can you tell me what you liked about your previous scene-based project? Where did the ideas come from? What did you discover through the process?

5. What do you hope to achieve in the next project?

Part 2: After the end of project

1. (for anyone that we haven’t interviewed before) Can you tell me what you like to read/watch/listen to/spectate? And why?
   What is your experience of theatre so far?
   In what ways do these mediums (that you enjoy) appear in/contribute to theatre as you have experienced it?

2. What did you like about the play (Wunzaponna)? What did you find most challenging? What did you not like?

3. What was it like performing your own work?
4. What was your character and how (if at all) does that character relate to yourself? (or/and a person/people you know)

5. Tell me about the ‘x’ scene – what was happening in that scene, what did it mean to you? What would you think/hope it might mean to an audience member?

6. Can you see any influences or comparisons in the play with other forms of media?

7. What did you learn in this process? (possible prompts: about yourself, about your peers, about theatre making)

8. Has your perception of drama changed? Has your approach to drama/theatre changed?
Appendix C: Character Development Process at Lismore

The following description outlines a process of character creation as it emerged in the Lismore drama program. The work was carried out in the context of the yearlong program including “theatre skills” workshops involving various strategies to create performance; contemporary performance spectating and analysing; and devised theatre creation work. All of these activities and foci directly contributed to the processes described below, both in the students’ familiarity with theatre methods and their awareness of genres of theatre performance.

Step 1: Generating

We used free writing strategies and group discussion to generate ideas, themes, concepts and curiosities that the students had.

a. Free writing: On “what is important to me”
b. List writing: “I am……” (Positioning)
c. Group discussion on areas and ideas of importance, relevance, or significance to the class. Ideas from this discussion were recorded as single words or phrases on a white board and then transferred to paper.

Step 2: Looking for characters

The ideas were explored through various unpacking processes:

a. Open scene building based on theme: Groups of approximately 4 students were given one concept each (eg. “the future”) and one form of performance each (eg. movement), and asked to develop a scene based on that idea. Scenes were presented to the class and discussed.

b. Character development: Each student focused on one idea freely selected from the initial group brainstorming. They individually imagined a type of person that would possess that idea as a pre-occupation or significant character trait. Through a guided embodied meditation of sorts, each student began to imagine and embody how that character would hold themselves – how they would stand, walk and sit. Next, each student thought of a name for their character, and began to imagine the age and context of that person.
c. Character biographies: The students wrote a short biography of their emerging character, stating various details including, name, age, occupation, likes, dislikes, or anything they felt interested by, or clear about in relation to this emerging character.

d. The characters interacted with each other through informal mingling, conversation, role drama, and finally direct “interviewing”.

e. Scene development based on characters: The students self-formed groups of characters that might likely find themselves in a common location. For example, young musicians and artists grouped together and located themselves in a rehearsal room; mythical or historical characters located themselves in a fairy tale. In these groups the students created scenes to illustrate and explore their characters and contexts.

f. Scene development based on found texts: Each student bought in a found text (the type of which ranged from whole books, to song lyrics, to poems). Each group was given a text from the accumulated texts of the class, and asked to create scenes involving their characters but using no words other than those from the found texts provided.

g. Monologues: Each student wrote and performed a monologue in the role of their characters.
Appendix D: A Visual Perspective on Devised Theatre in Education

The diagram below portrays a perspective on a process of devised theatre creation and performance in education and the relationship between creators and the context of their work. The creators and/or performers work in relation to (rather than in amongst) their communities, audiences, and contexts. The material spaces that they work in are differentiated to varying extents from the space of the audience/home etc. The layers of activity, beginning with creation and inquiry, become more “focused” as they reach the centre (performance), but each layer remains porous to the one before or after it.

Figure D.1: Devised theatre: A map of practice
Appendix E: Certificates of Approval issued by the UBC Research Ethics Board

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

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Forced Entertainment (Theatre Company) Workstation 15 Paternoster Row, Sheffield, England S1 2 BX

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The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following:

Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Chair
Dr. Ken Craig, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Laune Ford, Associate Chair
Dr. Daniel Sather, Associate Chair
Dr. Anita Ho, Associate Chair
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL- MINIMAL RISK RENEWAL

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Other locations where the research will be conducted:
- Forced Entertainment (Theatre Company) Workstation 15 Paternoster Row Sheffield, England S1 2 BX

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):
- Theresa Rogers
- Mia Perry

SPONSORING AGENCIES:
- N/A

PROJECT TITLE:
- Theatre as a place of learning. Examining embodied pedagogies in devised theatre practices

EXPIRY DATE OF THIS APPROVAL: March 9, 2011

APPROVAL DATE: March 9, 2010

The Annual Renewal for Study have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board

- Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Chair
- Dr. Ken Craig, Chair
- Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
- Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair
- Dr. Anita Ho, Associate Chair
Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Rogers, T.

DEPARTMENT
Language and Literacy Educ

NUMBER
B06-0931

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT
UBC Campus,

SPONSORING AGENCIES
Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council

TITLE:
Video Production as a Critical Social Practice Supporting the Multiple Literacies and Cultural Expressions of Youth

APPROVAL DATE
DEC 07 2006

TERM (YEARS)
1

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:
Nov. 28, 2006 Contact letter / Consent form / Parent consent form / Oct. 25, 2006 Questionnaires

The application for ethical review of the above-named project has been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approved on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board
by one of the following:
Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair,
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Arminee Kazanjian, Associate Chair
Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Associate Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures