Opening Intercultural Spaces — Crossing Borders

Rea Dennis

There was great excitement when Japanese influence was first seen on the western stage; presented not by Japanese practitioners but infused in a familiar western aesthetic. The influence of Indonesian ritual performance and Indian traditional dance similarly emerged in the west and transformed dance and theatre languages through a fusion of cultural interactions and collisions. The exotically different forms; the different address of the body; the integration of ritual and other religious form; and the various conceptions of the audience invigorated classical and traditional European forms and bought new audiences and new ways of seeing. This short essay discusses the emergence of intercultural theatre practices and explores some of the intercultural potential in playback theatre.

Interculturalism in theatre and performance can refer to artistic practice that fuses artistic sensibilities from two or more cultures. Artists are curious and theatre makers often have patterns of migration across cultural boundaries. This assists us to develop ourselves as social resonators and documenters. We are anthropologists with a passion for revealing culture through story, symbol and image. We seek to attune our ‘eye’ to detail, our sensibilities to diversity, and our artistry to innovation and excellence. Our attention is first on developing ourselves. This is then transformed in the act of making theatre for a particular audience (1). This relationship between audience and artist drives the creative process. The narrative and the performance aesthetic become infused with the cultural context of the community within which it is made and the lived history of the artist/creators. The performance is both of the culture and at the same time produces culture responding to the complexity between the actual theatre audience and social systems of the cultural context; between the theatre go-er and contemporary culture.

Art traverses cultural boundaries. Artists compose from themselves and their social and cultural environment. Brook and Artaud sought to expand their socio-cultural palettes and travelled away from their own countries: Brook to experience theatre and performance in other cultures, Artaud to live in the other cultures (2). This led to the expansion of their practice and their understanding of the dialectics of a living culture. Criticism of the unacknowledged appropriation of cultural capital followed.

Post-colonial perspectives in the work of writers like Rustrom Bharucha initiated a new dialogue about theatre, cultural capital and globalisation. Bharucha draws particular attention to the complexities of theatre and performance and its relevance in relation to the context within which it occurs. He considers the potential of crossing borders and the aesthetic innovation arising from intercultural performance. In his examination of the outsider status of Artaud in Norway and the Orient and Brook in India he proposes that Artaud had prompted “intimate new relationships between differing groups in the community.” While, Brook “captured the flavour of India” – an accomplishment more valuable than merely presenting the substance of the nation; nothing is “harder in theatre than to represent the flavour of another culture” (3). Meanwhile he is strongly critical of theatre practice that takes from other cultures without acknowledgment (4). These critiques have similar relevance for practitioners of playback theatre.

Playback theatre has expanded from its middle class North American roots into over 150 countries. Inherently intercultural it acts to stage intimacy in the 21st century world of consumerism and competition. It confronts apathy and isolation. Sometimes described as a reflection or a mirror of the community (culture) in which it is manifest it is increasingly practiced by visiting artists in places with people whose culture is vastly different from their own. The actor may or may not ‘know’ a culture as lived experience and regardless of their preparation: their research, background, experience, maturity, skills and intuitive attunement to the mystery of collective experience in the theatre they can remain an outsider, a visitor. Thus, in order to perform playback well Heather Robb argues that the playback actor must possess a rich mix of cultural and skill-based training and relevant cultural knowledge, for example, “oral history: myths, fairy tales, songs, symbols, archetypes”. (5) go to p.18

Below—Members of Meta Playback group (Italy) & SOG (Austria) meet for intercultural practice training, story page 20

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From the Editor

This issue re-opens the discussion on playback and interculturalism.

Bi-cultural and cross cultural work within a playback company in preparation for bicultural and reconciliatory work is presented through the story of Paula Kingwill from South Africa.

Bev Hosking from New Zealand reflects on her work with Maori theatre director Christian Penny has influenced the way in which she teaches playback theatre.

The function of the playback performer as documenter and ethnographer is introduced in my article and Mountaine Mont Jonas’s journal of his recent work in Cambodia demonstrates the way in which the playback artist can be visitor in very different cultures.

Read about new work in Lithuania while new groups continue to be feature with a story from Chilean playbacker Loreto Campusano.

The issue also reports on the PhD award bestowed on Playback founder Jonathan Fox in Germany earlier this year.

Thanks again to contributors and translators. Once again there are a range of languages represented in this issue. Any comment of this is most helpful.

Translation in this issue includes:

Sheila Donio — Portuguese
Michele Chung & Eddie Yu — Chinese
Omolyo Bayo — Yoruba
Elena Roncoroni — Italian
SOG — German
Ramiro Salas — Spanish

Letters and Stories to Interplay Editor
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From the president

Dear members of IPTN & friends of Playback Theatre

I am just back from working with the Dutch Playback community - many groups, different ages and experience. I had other travels this past year: the German-speaking Playback gathering in Frankfurt where I took part in a workshop exploring multilingual playback; School of Playback Theatre (UK) to train participants of diverse ethnic backgrounds; and Hungary for the multinational workshop on Emergency PT. Meeting many people working together with great creativity, good will and spirit of service to each other I see that we do Playback together as if there are no differences in language, social background, race, or age between us.

We are part of one human community. Yet, the presence of differences also contributes to and enlarges our scope of creativity and good will. This is a wonderful experience. But sometimes I ask myself what happens when we touch the 'Deep Stories', as Jonathan calls them, those stories of national trauma, political conflict, major loss; the big wounds of pain and injustice which sometimes stand on the ground of our diversity? Can we still be there for each other in the same Playback spirit? What do we really know about each other - the political contexts, cultural histories and social agendas? How much do we need to know about these issues? What do we need to know about ourselves in relation to these issues?

In my troubled war beaten region, we can only stumble around these issues as we are seldom called to do Playback with audiences of diverse political ideologies and religious backgrounds, or with Palestinians. This is because it is sometimes too hard, still too challenging to touch the diversities between us. Where I live these are burning issues touching our lives from breath to breath in matters of war and peace, life and death.

I want to share two stories that reflect this issue in our company in Tel Aviv:

We were invited to go to a Jewish village near Beit Lechem in the West Bank. For some of us - this land is rightfully part of the State of Israel. For others in my group – these are Occupied Territories, and thus is part of Palestine. These actors refused to go there. They felt that by going we would be making a political statement of support and legitimizing the Jewish settlers. Instead we invited the people of this region to our theatre space in Tel Aviv, where all members of my group felt we could honor their stories in the Playback spirit despite our own conflicting perspectives. Some of the villagers told 'nice and safe' stories. They did not challenge us with stories from their hard and painful life which might touch the core of our own opposing political agendas.

The second story is from an open performance in Tel Aviv. A very young woman came to the tellers' chair. She spoke in a quiet but clear voice, "Two years ago I was sent out from my home… I lost the home of my childhood… I cannot go there anymore." The audience held their breath. We felt the deep silence. She was touching an open wound – an enormous trauma for her and a meager part of Israeli society - the big evacuation of Israeli settlements from the Gaza strip two years ago. While her tragedy had been a step towards a better future for many Israelis, including people in the audience and the actors, we heard her and gave voice and image to her anger and pain. The teller’s actor cried in the arms of the actor who played her house. People in the audience cried with her while a farewell ritual took place on the stage, accompanied by songs and prayers a blessing for her future from her ‘evacuated house’.

Playback is a vehicle moving the wheels of humanistic values forward. For his contribution to this work, Jonathan received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Kassel in April. Congratulations Jonathan and Jo.

Lots of love to all of you
Aviva
Queridos membros da IPTN e amigos do Playback Theatre,

Acabei de voltar de um trabalho com a comunidade do Playback da Holanda - muitos grupos, idades e experiências diferentes. Também fiz outras viagens nos últimos anos: para a conferência de Playback em alemão, em Frankfurt, onde participei de um workshop que explorou Playback em vários idiomas; para a Escola de Playback Theatre (UK) para treinar pessoas vindas de diferentes etnias; e para a Hungria, no workshop PT Urgente. Encontrar várias pessoas, trabalharmos juntos com tanta criatividade, boa vontade e espírito de servir ao outro me faz ver que fazemos Playback juntos como se não houvesse diferença na língua que falamos, na nossa base social, raça ou idade.

Somos parte de apenas uma comunidade de seres humanos. Ainda, a presença das diferenças contribui e aumenta nossa criatividade e boa vontade. Essa experiência é maravilhosa! Mas algumas vezes me pergunto o que acontece quando chegamos às histórias mais "profundas", como o Jonathan se refere àquelas histórias de tempos nacionais, conflitos políticos e grandes perdas. O que acontece quando tocamos nas grandes feridas de dor e injustiça que algumas vezes estão na base da nossa diversidade? Ainda podemos estar disponível ao outro no mesmo espírito do Playback? O que realmente sabemos sobre o outro, sobre seu contexto político, seu histórico cultural e social? Quanto realmente precisamos saber sobre essas questões? O que precisamos saber sobre nós mesmos em relação a esses questões?

Na minha região destruída pela guerra, só nos deparamos com essas questões nas raras vezes em que somos chamados para fazer Playback para um público com diferentes ideologias políticas, que vêm tanto de ideias ideológicas diferentes, como de diferentes religiões, ou com palestinos. Isso porque algumas vezes ainda é muito difícil, muito desafiador, tocar nas nossas diferenças e confrontar as ideias "simpáticas e seguras". Não nos desafiaram com histórias sobre a guerra e a paz, mas com seus dias e provações, com suas necessidades e desejos.

Quero contar duas histórias que refletem esse problema na nossa vida e morte.

A primeira história é sobre uma apresentação numa aldeia judaica perto de Beit Lechem, na Cisjordânia. Para alguns, essa região é de direito do Estado de Israel. Para outros do meu grupo, estes são territórios ocupados e, portanto, parte da Palestina. Estes atores se recusaram a ir até lá. Eles sentiram estariamos fazendo uma declaração política quando tocamos nas grandes feridas de dor e injustiça que algumas vezes estão na base da nossa diversidade. Aquelas pessoas contaram histórias "simpáticas e seguras". Não nos desafiaram com histórias sobre a guerra e a paz, mas com seus dias e provações, com suas necessidades e desejos.

A segunda história é sobre uma apresentação aberta ao público, em Tel Aviv. No meu grupo, temos membros de todas as ideologias políticas, culturais e sociais, e temos muitos interesses e disputas ideológicas, mas todos nós aprendemos a fazer Playback juntos independentemente das nossa diferenças. A maioria dos atores no meu grupo sentiam que poderiam honrar as histórias no espírito do Playback independentemente do que acontecia nas diferenças de ideia nas plenárias.

A primeira história aconteceu num pequeno auditório num pequeno espaço cênico deserto, onde todos sabíamos que não havia espaço para isso. Ninguém havia esperado que fossem tocadas essas histórias, e não há um grande número de pessoas na platéia. Mas a platéia estava ouvindo atentamente, e a platéia ouviu duas histórias de mulheres que tiveram que sair de casa porque as suas vias de saída foram cortadas pelas autoridades israelenses.

A primeira história é sobre uma mulher que teve que sair de casa porque não tinha permissão para ir para a Palestina. Ela explicou que tinha sido embora da sua casa por causa de suas visões políticas contraditórias.

A segunda história é sobre uma mulher que teve que sair de casa porque sua casa foi destruída por uma bomba durante a guerra.

O Playback é um veículo que move as rodas dos valores humanos. Por sua contribuição a este trabalho, o Jonathan recebeu em abril, o título de PhD pela Universidade de Kassel na Alemanha. Parabéns Jonathan e Jo!

A todos vocês com 
Aviva

Translation Eddie Yu
Whose Story is it Anyway? Playing with race and identity in South Africa

Paula Kingwill

Starting with a clear vision and a passion for change, South African practitioner Paula Kingwill grapples with the realities of creating a racially diverse theatre company in a culture still reeling from apartheid.

There is a story behind the story of the forming of our company that I think you might be interested in. The story starts with my identity as a white South African and the responsibility that identity carries. I am South African. I am a woman. I am a dramatherapist. I am white. Each of these identifiers is loaded with assumptions and facts – mine and yours. They are also pivotal factors in the story of whiteness. They form my choice to be part of founding and directing The Bonfire Theatre Company. Most of you will have heard of apartheid. You will know that this was a system that entrenched the separation between races in law. You may know that a separate education system was created, called the Bantu Education system, which intended to oppress its graduates so that they could serve and never lead. You may have heard of the Group Areas Act – this legislated that white people were the only citizens of South Africa leaving all others in a constant state of limbo – of not belonging – suspended between earning a living in the cities and living with their families who were forced to live in the rural areas. Much has already been written on apartheid and its consequences. What I hope to show here is how I was born into a society that was violently divided and that over the three decades of my life I have been the privileged beneficiary of this divide. I have also been sickened by the toxicity of this privilege as I have begun to understand it better and I now celebrate the possibilities for healing for my community and me post apartheid. Anthropologist, Melissa Steyn (1) defines whiteness very clearly: the ideas of whiteness were constructed relative to the "other" who is not white. White became synonymous with 'better than'. Black became the receptacle of all the split off parts of the self that 'white' people found difficult to own. Because of this 'purified status' white people then became entitled to privilege received for them because they were 'better than'. These privileges were entrenched in law and protected with both physical and psychological violence. In order to protect this identity from being challenged by reality testing white South Africans separated themselves from black South Africans in allegiance with the Group Areas Act. Becoming aware of the construction of my identity has meant that I have to recognise the harm done to the 'other' so that I could maintain the identity of privilege. Also, I must recognise the harm done to myself through loss of access to the 'other' in the spirit of what novelist, Kiran Desai (2) writes about in The Inheritance of Loss: "But the child shouldn't be blamed for a father's crime... But should the child therefore also enjoy the father's illicit gains?"

Forming The Bonfire Theatre Company has given me a means of responding to the responsibility that my identity carries. My vision for the company is to provide a space that explores a new discourse in South Africa; a discourse about crossing racial, socio-economic divides. Through the form we can play with identity, stepping in and out of each other's shoes, playing each other and being played by each other. In this way we are forced to see ourselves differently, no longer defining ourselves in relation to the 'other' but rather as part of a whole. So we start to tell the story that is the South African story, rather than the story of splits, which is based on fear, prejudice and ignorance.

In order to do the work of changing identity and to challenge the balance of power it is necessary to start with ourselves: The individual and the company. Racial integration does not happen naturally in South Africa at this time, it must be artificially inseminated. I knew that Bonfire needed to be as representative as possible of South Africans so that when we are to tell the stories of South Africans the tellers need to have the choice of whether they choose someone who looks like them. But when we had the idea of forming this company we were far from the diverse and representative group of performers we needed to be. The 'we' was a collective of white folk. The fact that we are a collective of white people demonstrates the profound split that still exists in South Africa today. This 'we' had constellated out of a similar interest in theatre, improvisation and physical theatre and while we made many attempts to draw people of colour into the collective this did not happen naturally.

So we set about working towards creating a legitimate South African theatre company. We held auditions specifically stating that we were looking for people of colour to join our company. Our first successful candidates were two black men and it is at this point that the challenge of real and honest integration began.

Our first challenges were geographical and linguistic. Both men lived in previously designated black townships outside Cape Town - while this is only a few kilometres from Cape Town in many respects it was worlds away. The black actors always travelled in one direction, towards the white people and away from their homes. On arriving they were required to speak in the dominant language; the language that all the white people are fluent in. Thus they are forced to speak English. These conditions meant that the new actors are double disadvantaged: by the language that all the white people are fluent in and the new actors are forced to speak English. These new acts are double disadvantaged: by the language and the fact that are learning a new and extremely difficult form that everyone else has been practising for a year. The improvised form is full of the pressure of time. Actors are challenged to think quickly. The black actors struggled to express themselves at that speed in English, or to feel confident to give their ideas - ideas that were so different from those being expressed by the white actors. They found it difficult not to feel like their ideas might be seen as wrong.

The dominant culture is white and western. The dominant culture sets the standards by which all else is measured. Our aim is to challenge the dominant culture. But we are the dominant culture. These two black men were in the position of carrying the pressure of helping to change. =>
We start by creating a culture of saying the words out loud: Black and White. Not whispers and allusions. We say, “white people this” and “black people that” - inviting challenge, inviting breaking of stereotypes, playing with what was once the unplayable. We start a slow process of building trust using dramatherapy exercises to make everyone equally vulnerable, to shift power relationships within the play and build tolerance for these new positions.

Later in the year two black women join the company. Of the four black company members two are so young that the majority of their education took place in a democratic South Africa. The third was educated abroad. Only Thulani (3), the fourth, is old enough to have come through the Bantu Education system while it was still fully intact. There is a huge gap between him and the other company members; a gap that we struggle to bridge. We struggle and we fail. Thulani leaves us after just over a year of performing with the company. He cites one of his reasons for leaving as the fact that he is unable to fully manifest his potential, to be fully himself in the company.

We are forced to ask: What could we have done differently? We are disappointed. We are forced to look at our values and expectations and how these are exclusive in spite all our best intentions toward inclusivity. As time goes on we experience other challenges that would be found in any theatre company. But when we start dealing with these challenges we find that they too are tangled in some way or other with race and issues of inclusion and exclusion.

One way that I have understood this challenge is by looking at intimacy and the level of trust in communication. For example, often when a company member is late or has sudden changes in availability there are explanations that could be given early enough to have made alternative plans. The lack of intimacy and trust can mean that important things that are going on in individual lives are not communicated within the company and therefore cannot be discussed in relation to the company activities. I explain this as a problem that runs along the lines of who feels comfortable enough to talk about the company activities. I explain this as a problem that runs along the lines of who feels comfortable enough to talk about who they are, what they are feeling in and what feels ‘out’. And these lines are mostly drawn around race. The depth of the relationships is limited by the gaps in understanding and expectations. We need to be able to understand the experiences of our colleagues and how we represent ourselves and perhaps we can use this to continue to explore the vastness of common humanity and to challenge deeply held (secret) beliefs that we have about each other.

On one of these tours we took some time to explore other lineages through a family constellations process. We made a profound experience where we literally got to stand in one another’s shoes and in each other’s families. This resulted in a deep shift in the relationships between company members. In this process we had the rare luxury of time - the most essential ingredient for building real intimacy.

As we enter our third year of working together as a professional company I look back on how far we have come from a collective of white folk wanting to tell South Africans stories. Thulani forced us to see our blind spots as well as to accept our limitations. We acknowledge that despite the urgency of our desire to create a racially integrated company the reality will take much longer.

It is not yet possible for us to get it right so that all company members of all race and class groups can feel equally included and empowered all the time. Instead we aim to encourage everyone to look a little more deeply at themselves, to understand a little better how we came to define and identify ourselves the way we do, and to look towards the fluidity of these definitions. The playback form frees us from the restrictions of who we are and how we represent ourselves and perhaps we can use this to continue to explore the vastness of common humanity while understanding the surface definitions of difference.

We are now three years into our journey of creating a new space for South African narratives. We have played back hundreds of stories of as many people. Each story adds a little to our story as we continue to grow and to challenge the ways that we define ourselves and each other.

Notes:
(3) Not his real name, Thulani means ‘be quiet’ in Xhosa.

Paula Kingwill is the director and conductor of The Bonfire Theatre Company. A registered dramatherapist, she works with a range of different client populations in her private practice and within institutions and organizations. Paula has a Masters in Dramatherapy from California Institute of Integral Studies, 2000. Her documentary: Tending the Saplings: Dramatherapy in South Africa was made in 2004 and has been shown internationally.

The Bonfire Theatre Company was officially formed in Cape Town, South Africa in October 2005. It is a theatre company that bases its work on the principles of playback theatre.
Existe uma história por trás da história da formação da nossa companhia que acabo que pode interessar a vocês. A história começa com a minha identidade como sul-africana branca, e a responsabilidade que a identidade carrega. Pego que você precisa a sua história dentro da minha.


A maioria de vocês deve ter ouvido falar do apartheid. Vocês devem saber que é um sistema que, através da lei, separou raças. Talvez vocês participem da minha decisão de ajudar a fundar e de dirigir a Bonfire Theatre Company.

A maioria de vocês deve ter ouvido falar das Leis de Área de Agrupamento, que determinaram que os brancos eram os únicos cidadãos da África do Sul, deixando todos os outros em constante estado de limbo, de “não pertencentes”, proibidos de ganhar a vida nas cidades e forçados a viver com suas famílias nas zonas rurais. Muito já foi escrito sobre o apartheid e suas conseqüências. O que pretendo mostrar aqui é como nasci em uma sociedade de que foi brutalmente dividida e como, por três décadas da minha vida, fui privilegiada por essa decisão. Também fui intoxicada por esse privilégio até começar a entender melhor. Hoje começo as possibilidades de curar a mim e a minha comunidade pós-apartheid.

A antropóloga Melissa Steyn define a raça branca claramente, alegando que as características desta raça foram construídas em relação a "outra", que não é branco. Branco viu-se sinônimo de "melhor". Negro viu referência de todas as características que os brancos tinham dificuldade em ter. Pelo status de "pura", a raça branca se tornou privilegiada – era a "melhor" raça. Os privilégios foram fortalecidos pela lei e por proteger sua identidade de ser comparada no dia-a-dia, os sul-africanos brancos se separaram dos sul-africanos negros, em obediência à Lei de Área de Agrupamento. Ter consciência da construção da minha identidade significou ter que reconhecer o mal feito ao "outro" para que eu pudesse manter a identidade privilegiada. Também precisava reconhecer o mal feito a mim mesma pelo teatro, seja na África do Sul, seja no mundo. Mas deveria a criança, a partir daí, participar dos ganhos ilícitos do pai?

Criando a Bonfire Theatre Company passei a ter um meio para responder a essa responsabilidade que a minha identidade carrega. Minha visão é que a companhia ofereça um espaço para explorar um novo discurso na África do Sul. Um discurso sobre divisões raciais e socioeconômicas. Através da técnica podíamos brincar com identidades, se colocando no lugar do outro, representando o outro e sendo representado por ele. Desta forma, somos forçados a olhar para nós mesmos de uma maneira diferente, não mais nos definindo em relação ao "outro", mas sim como uma parte do todo. Então, começamos a contar a história da África do Sul, ao invés da história das divisões, que é baseada no medo, preconceito e ignorância. Para realizar esse trabalho de mudança de identidade e desafiar o equilíbrio do poder é necessário começar por nós mesmos: individualmente e como companhia.

A integração racial não acontece naturalmente neste momento na África do Sul. Precisa ser inseminada artificialmente. Eu sabia que a Bonfire precisava representar os sul-africanos o máximo possível para que, quando contásssemos suas histórias, os narradores tivessem a opção de escolher quem mais se parece comigo. Mas quando tivemos a idéia de criar o grupo, nós estávamos bem longe da diversidade e da representatividade que precisávamos ter em nosso grupo de atores. O "nós" era uma predominância branca. O fato de sermos um grupo de brancos demonstrava a profunda segregação que existe na África do Sul ainda hoje. Este "nós" formou uma constelativa de mesmos interesses pelo teatro, pela improvisação e pelo teatro físico. E apesar das nossas tentativas em tornar os negros parte do nosso coletivo, isso não aconteceu naturalmente.

Então decidimos trabalhar para criar uma companhia teatral legitimamente sul-africana. Fizemos audícias deixando claro que buscávamos negros para fazer parte da companhia. Os primeiros candidatos bem sucedidos foram dois homens, e foi neste momento que começou o desafio da integração real e honesta.

Nossos primeiros desafios foram geográficos e linguísticos. Os dois homens viviam em cidades previamente designadas aos negros, fora de Cape Town – o que seria apenas alguns quilômetros de distância, era na verdade um mundo todo de distância. Os atores negros sempre viajavam para uma direção, ao encontro dos brancos e para longe de suas casas. Ao chegarem, eram solicitados a falar o idioma predominante – aquele no qual todos os brancos são fluentes. Portanto, eram forçados a falar inglês. Essas condições tornavam os novos atores duplicamente em desvantagem: pelo idioma e pelo fato de estarem aprendendo uma técnica nova e extremamente difícil, que todos os outros já praticavam há um ano. Essa forma de improvisar e cheia de pressão com relação ao tempo. Os atores são desafiados a pensar rápido. Os atores negros lutavam para se expressar em inglês naquela velocidade, ou para sentirem-se seguros em dar suas idéias – idéias totalmente diferentes das que eram sugeridas pelos atores brancos. Era difícil para eles não sentirem que suas idéias eram vistas como erradas.


Qual seria uma outra maneira?

Começamos criando uma cultura de dizer em voz alta: Negro e Branco. Sem sussurros ou alusões. Dizemos: "os brancos isso", "os negros aqui-lo" – convidando ao desafio, convidando a quebrar estereótipos, brincando com o que já foi impossível de se brincar. Começamos um processo lento de confiança através de exercícios de dramaterapia para deixar todos igualmente vulneráveis, para alterar as relações de poder através da brincadeira e da construção de tolerância a essas novas posições.

Mais tarde naquele ano, duas negras entraram na companhia. Dos quatro negros do grupo, dois são tão novos que a maior parte da sua educação aconteceu em uma África do Sul democrática. O terceiro estudou fora do país. Apenas Thulani*, o quarto, tem idade suficiente para ter estudado enquanto o Bantu estava totalmente intacto. Há uma enorme lacuna entre ele e os outros integrantes do grupo. Uma distância que nos esforçamos para diminuir. Lutamos e falhamos. O Thulani nos deixou depois de passar apenas um ano se apresentando com nossa companhia. Ele apresenta como uma das razões para sua saída o fato de não ser possível para ele mostrar todo o seu potencial e se expressar completamente dentro grupo.

Somos forçados a perguntar: O que poderíamos ter feito diferente? Estamos frustrados. Somos obrigados a olhar para nossos valores e expectativas e como estes excluem apesar das nossas melhores intenções em direção a inclusão. Com o passar do tempo, vivemos outros desafios que são encontrados em qualquer companhia de teatro. Mas assim que começamos a lidar com eles, percebemos que também estão ligados de uma forma ou de outra às raças e a questões de inclusão e exclusão. =>

Paula Kingwill
Compreendi este desafio verificando a intimidade e o nível de confiança na comunicação. Por exemplo: normalmente, quando um integrante se atrasa ou acontece alguma mudança em sua disponibilidade, as explicações podem ser dadas com antecedência possibilitando um outro planejamento. A falta de intimidade e de confiança podem significar a não comunicação de algo importante sobre a vida de um integrante que, por não ser relatado a um compartilhamento, não pode ser discutida e a relação do fato com as atividades do grupo. Coloco isso como um problema paralelo quanto a se sentir confortável o suficiente para falar de seus problemas; paralelo a sentir-se “dentro” ou “fora” do grupo. E essas linhas paralelas são desnecessárias normalmente em torno da questão racial. A profundidade das relações é limitada pela lacuna que existe na compreensão e nas experiências de cada um. Novamente, nossa intenção de sermos inclusivos e integrados requer muito mais do que convivermos para que “elas” façam parte deste “nós”, requer que ambos dêem um passo em direção ao outro. O meu maior desafio é encontrar maneiras de facilitar este processo.

O playback theatre é a própria solução. Ensaiamos usando nossas próprias histórias. É através destas histórias que aprendemos sobre o outro. Aprendemos sobre a cultura e a experiência do outro. Começamos a contar histórias sobre experiências que tivemos com outros integrantes do grupo. Dividir essas histórias é uma maneira crucial de diminuir essas lacunas e criarmos intimidade. E claro que o conforto em dividir histórias importantes muda com a confiança crescendo e trabalhamos para criar uma cultura onde não há problemas em contar histórias pessoais. Contamos histórias sobre o dia-a-dia, assim como histórias que mudaram nossas vidas. Neste processo, descobermos que somos semelhantes e diferentes, e vagarosamente o respeito e compreensão crescem... e aí cresce a intimidade. Aprendemos que precisarmos ser capazes de contar e ouvir histórias que desafiam a ideia de que temos sobre nós mesmos e sobre a cultura de como vimos os outros.

Vou contar uma história: Estava extremamente difícil de contatarmos uma das integrantes da nossa companhia e parecia que ela não fazia esforço nenhum para nos passar sua disponibilidade. Sua presença também era inconstante nos ensaios. Mas em um ensaio ela se ofereceu para nos contar sua situação através de uma história. Em sua história, ela contou da recente descoberta da morte de seu irmão. Por algum motivo, ela se sentiu mais confortável em contar a companhia o motivo de seu comportamento estranho do que falar diretamente com a diretora ou com o elenco sobre isso.

Como diretora, percebi que preciso manter contato com os integrantes individualmente e assistindo ao trabalho deles em grupo, para ver onde a dinâmica está mais volátil e criar exercícios que possibilitem que essas dinâmicas sejam trabalhadas de maneira segura e construtiva. Chegamos aos limites, sentimos resistências e, devagar, mudamos.

Durante o desenvolvimento da companhia tive que considerar diferentes maneiras de trabalharmos. Meu treinamento em dramaterapia tem tido um valor inestimável. Uso os processos de dramaterapia como uma parte essencial do nosso aquecimento, para encorajar o autoconhecimento. É a junção de interação física e de proximidade, com o relato íntimo das histórias que vivemos através do playback theatre. Através dos exercícios, crio proximidades artificiais onde surge a experimentação. Então, através da rotatividade, esses exercícios levam o grupo a uma proximidade orgânica.

Outro momento em que criamos intimidade tem sido durante nossas viagens. É quando podemos interagir além dos limites dos ensaios e das apresentações. Vivemos, comemos e fazemos faxina juntos. Estas foram provavelmente as experiências mais importantes para derrubar barreiras e aumentarmos a confiança. Durante as viagens, podemos praticar e testar o que aprendemos sobre o outro, fortalecendo nossas relações. Como sulafricanos, somos divididos primeiro pela geografia. Aquelas que cresceram durante a apartheid sempre viveram longe dos contemporâneos de outras raças. A intimidade criada por vivermos, comermos e dormimos sob o mesmo teto é significante e desafia fortemente crenças (secretas) que temos sobre os outros.

Em uma dessas viagens, separamos um tempo para explorar nossas descendências através de um processo de constelação familiar. Esta foi uma experiência intensa onde literalmente tivemos que nos colocar no lugar do outro e de sua família. O resultado foi uma grande mudança nas relações entre os membros da companhia. Neste processo, tivemos o raro benefício do tempo – ingrediente essencial para construímos a verdadeira intimidade.

Hoje, começando nosso terceiro ano como uma companhia profissional, vejo o quanto caminhamos desde aquele grupo de brancos que queriam contar histórias a sulafricanos. O Thulani nos forçou a olhar para nossos pontos cegos e a aceitar nossas limitações. Reconhecemos que, apesar da urgência do nosso desejo em criar uma companhia com integração racial, nossa realidade vai levar muito mais tempo.

Ainda não nós é possível a perfeição de que todos os membros da companhia, de todas as raças e classes possam se sentir igualmente incluídos e capazes de compartilhar. Ao invés disso, procuramos encorajar todos a olhar mais profundamente para si mesmos, para entenderem melhor como chegamos a essa definição e à identificação de quem somos, e a olharmos para a fluidez dessas definições. O playback nos liberta de quem somos e de como nos apresentamos e talvez possamos usar isso para continuar explorando a imensidade da humanidade como um encontro entendemos a superficialidade das definições da diferença.

Nossa jornada para criar espaço para as histórias dos sulafricanos chegou ao seu terceiro ano. Já recitamos histórias de centenas de pessoas. Cada história acrescenta um pouco a nossa, enquanto seguimos crescendo e desafiando a maneira que definimos nós mesmos e os outros.

* não é seu nome real. Thulani significa “fique quieto” em Xhosa.

References
3. Por enquanto, os brancos não conseguem falar muito, ou quase nada, do idioma que os novos membros são fluentes.


Traduzido por Sheila Donio
我想你會對成立這個劇團背後的故事感到興趣,這個故事的開端,是我作為一個南非白人的身份及這個身份所承擔的責任。

我是南非人。我是一個女人。我是一個戲劇治療師。我是白種人。以上每一個身份識別符號均帶著我和你對這些身份的假設,以及關於這些身份的事實;而這些假設及事實也是我要說的故事的重要元素,它們亦構成了我創立及領導野火劇團的這個選擇。

大部份人都應該聽聞過南非的種族隔離政策,你應該已知道,這是一個透過法例確立種族之間的分離的法律體系;你可能已知,在這個政策下,有一個稱為「班圖人教育法」的教育系統,旨在壓逼其畢業生只會服務社會,卻永遠不會做到領導者。你可能也聽聞過「集團地區法」—這些法律把白種人定為南非唯一的公民,而其他所有種族則長期處於一種過渡及不屬於這片土地的狀態——為了生計須於城市工作,卻又被逼要在鄉間生活的一種懸浮狀態。關於種族隔離的文獻及其所引致的後果已有很多記述,我希望在這裡呈現的,是我如何在這個經由暴力所分化化的社會中誕生,以及過去三十年,我如何在這個分化中成為特權受惠者。當我開始對這件事有多一點的了解後,我因著這種特權的毒害而感到厭惡,而如今,我正慶賀著在種族隔離後,能夠治療我的社群和自己的機會。

人類學家瑪利沙史泰爾對白種性有很清晰的定義,主張白種性這個概念的建立,是相對於非白種的「他者」,白種成為了「較好」的同義詞,而黑種人則成為了所有「白」人覺得很難接受自己擁有，想要分開的部份的容器，而基於這種「純淨」的身份,白種人就得以因為他是「較好」的一群而享有特權。這些特權經由法律確立,並且透過肉體及心理上的暴力去維護。為了不讓這個身份被實質的挑戰,白種南非人利用集團地區法把效忠於國家法律的黑種南非人分隔開來。要意識到我的身份建構,表示我必須承認為了維持我的特權身份而對「他者」造成的傷害。與此同時,我亦必須承認因著失去了接近「他者」的機會而對自己造成的傷害——正如小說家奇蘭達西在《繼承喪失》內所寫的一樣：「孩子不應因著其父親的罪行而受到譴責……那麼,孩子是否應該享用父親利用不合法手段所得來的利益？」

成立野火劇團給予我一個渠道,去回應因為自己這個身份所承擔的責任。劇團的遠景是希望可以提供一個空間,探索南非的一個新論述，一個跨越種族與社會經濟分化的論述。透過一人一故事,我們可以遊玩於身份之間,進出大家的處境,互相扮演。這樣,我們便不得不被逼用另一個角度看自己,不能再相對於「他者」來定義我們自己,而是要從整體中的一部份來看。於是我們開始分享我們的故事,也是南非的故事,而不是講述基於恐懼、偏見和無知而成的關於分割的故事。

為了進行改革身份的工作與及挑戰當中所涉及的權力平衡,我們需要從身為創立——個人與劇團本身。在南非,種族的融合並不會自然發生,而必須經過刻意的安排。我知道野火劇團要盡可能地代表所有南非人,就得讓觀眾/分享者可以在講述屬於南非的故事時,選擇是否找一個跟他們外表相近的演員來飾演自己。然而,在我們開始孕育這個劇團時,我們的成員比例離我們理想的多元性還差太遠呢！這個「我們」是一群白種同胞,而事實上,看這個全白人的組合,就已經看到今天在南非依然存在的種族鴻溝。這個「我們」是一群對戲劇,即興及形體劇場有興趣的人,縱然我們多次嘗試吸引有色人種加入,這件事還是不可以自然而然地發生。因此,我們開始朝成立一個正式的南非劇團的方向走,依循正規法則,我們舉辦遴選,並強調我們正尋找有色人種加入我們的劇團,第一批成功加入的團員是兩名黑人男士。至此開始,真正及真誠的融合所帶來的挑戰才正式開始。

第一關是地區及語言的問題,兩名團員都是住在之前特別劃出來,在開普敦以外的黑人區,雖然只是幾千公里的距離,但是從很多不同的層面看來,實在就像是另一個銀河一樣遠。這兩位黑人演員每次都得往我們這個方向走來,遠離自己的家園,走向白人的社區;抵達之後,還得說比較主導的語言——所有白人都很流利的語言,他們被迫說英語。這些條件都顯示了新成員的雙重弱勢——在語言方面的弱勢,以及學習一個新的、艱深的演藝模式的弱勢,由於其他人都已有了一年的一人一故事劇場經驗,對新成員來說就更為困難。即興的形式在時間上是很緊張的,演員必須快速地思考,黑人演員們掙扎著迅速地去利用英語表達自己,有時甚至猶豫自己是否可以表達意見——一些與白人演員們截然不同的意見及想法,他們覺得很難不認為自己的意見會被視為錯誤的想法。
白種人及西方文化較具優勢，這個具優勢的文化定下了一個標準，而所有事得按這個標準被量度。我們的目的是希望可以挑戰這個具優勢的文化，然而，我們就是具優勢的文化本身，而這些黑人演員就處於一個幫助白人團員改變的位置，承受著莫大的壓力，這是不公平的。

可是，還有甚麼辦法呢

我們開始創立一個大聲地宣告「黑」和「白」的文化，而不再只是輕聲地竊竊私語或隱晦地影射，我們說：『白人這樣』和『黑人那樣』。我們引起挑戰，邀請大家打破種族定型，並開始把從前不能拿來開玩笑的事拿出來開玩笑及反轉變換大兜亂。我們利用戲劇治療的練習，開始慢慢地建立信任，讓每一個都feit地脆弱，透過扮演轉換權力關係，並強化大家對這些新角色的容忍度。

同年稍後時間，兩名黑人女性加入了劇團。四位黑人成員當中，有兩位很年輕的朋友已經是在民主南非的教育制度下長成，第三位成員在海外接受教育，只有第四位成員傅藍尼*經歷過班圖人教育制度，而他跟其他團員有著極大的鴻溝，我們很努力希望可以打破這個隔膜，我們嘗試，但我們失敗。傅藍尼在一年多一點之後就離團了，他指出其中一個離開的原因，是因為他不能在劇團中完全地發揮他的潛質，而且也不能完全地做他自己。

我們不得不問自己：從頭再來的話，我們可以做甚麼呢？可以有甚麼不同呢？我們感到失望。我們不得不重新審視我們的價值觀與期望，並看出即使我們的意圖是希望共融，實際上這一切是如何地排外。然後時間一路過去，我們經歷著其他劇團都會經歷的挑戰，可是當我們處理這些問題時，我們發現原來從不同的層面及角度，這些問題都跟種族、共融與排外有著千絲萬縷的關係，解拆不來。

其中一個讓我明白這個挑戰的方法，是看看團內的親密度以及在溝通上的互信程度。例如，當一位團員需要遲到或是臨時有時間表上的調動，其實是可以早一點向其他人解釋及另作安排的，但由於大家的關係不夠親密，而且缺乏信任，很多時候成員個別在生活中的重要事情並沒有在團中分享，於是因為這些事情而對團隊活動有影響的話也沒有辦法一起商議。我向團員解釋，這個問題其實是關於誰感到可以舒坦地分享他們生活上的問題及難處——誰覺得自己是「圈中人」？誰覺得自己是「圈外人」？而這些界線大部份都劃開了不同的種族。團員之間的關係的深度受到互相了解及相關經歷的限制，這讓我再一次看到，雖然我們的意圖是共融，但是融合其實不能止於邀請『他們』來加入『我們』，而是需要大家一起向對方邁步，而我最大的挑戰，就是如何促成及引領這個過程。

一人一故事劇場本身就是一個方法，我們借助各人的故事來排練，而透過這些故事，我們互相認識，我們互相了解對方的文化與經歷。我們開始講述關於我們和對方相處的故事，而分享這些故事成為幫助我們縮減大家之間距離的重要環節，並建立了親密感。顯而易見，當我們的互信開始提升，大家對講重要個人故事的舒適感亦相對提高，我們拓開了一個可以分享個人故事的文化，我們會分享關於改變生命的故事情，也會分享日常生活逸事。這個過程中，我們發現我們的相似與差異，漸漸地，尊重與信誼亦日俱增……最終我們變得更親近。我們學習到，我們需要能夠分享及聆聽那些挑戰我們對自己的看法，或別人如何看待我們的故事。

作為團長，我發現我需要跟團員保持個別的聯絡，亦得透過團隊的合作去觀察小組動力，繼而提供一些練習去推這潜在的能量有一個安全及具建設性的途徑得到釋放，有時我們會一矢中的，有時我們會經歷阻礙，然後，我們慢慢有了轉變。

劇團的發展過程中，我曾經需要考慮利用多種不同的方式，而我的戲劇治療訓練就成了一個很重要的資源，我利用戲劇治療過程作為一個很重要的熱身環節，鼓勵大家作個人的探索及提升個人意識；而透過一人一故事劇場，我們則經驗著身體的互動和靠近，還有貼心的分享。藉著練習，我先設定了一些人工化的親密感，讓我們可以進行不同的實驗，而這些漸漸會引領小組自然和有機地親近起來。

另一個讓我們之間變得更為親密的事，就是當我們到外地演出的時候，能夠在排練及演出以外的時間有交流。我們在一起生活、吃飯及清理帳目，這些經驗可能是打破我們彼此之間的隔膜及增加互信的最重要的部份。在外地巡迴時，我們得以實踐及測試彼此對雙方的了解，並強化我們的關係。身為南非人，我們首先被地區而分開，我們那些在種族隔離年代成長的，一直都與我們同時代的異族人住得很遠，經由在同一屋簷下生活作息及同桌吃飯所造成的親近是非常具代表性的，並且對於挑戰我們心底內對另一方所存的偏見或信念有著深遠的影響。

=> p. 10
在其中一次外地演出時，我們花了點時間去探索彼此的家庭世系，藉著這個過程，我們得以真真切地設身處地，代入彼此的處境及家庭之中，這對團員之間的關係起著深遠的變化，而在這過程中，我們有著很罕有和寶貴的東西——時間——也就是建立真正親密感的關鍵成份。此對雙方及自己的定義的同時，亦豐富了我們劇團的故事。

當我們踏入共同合作的第三年，我回顧一路走來，一群白人如何從希望講述屬於南非故事開始到現在，傅藍尼逼我們看清我們的盲點，並接納我們的限制，我們承認：縱然我們的渴求有一種逼切性，現實中，要建立一個種族融和的劇團實在需要更長時間。

到現在為此，我們還未可能做到「完全正確」，好讓團隊裡各式人種及階層的團員能夠在任何時候都感到平等融合並得到充權，取而代之，我們鼓勵每一個人都看清楚自己多一點，了解自己如何達至自己的身份確認及定義自我，和以一個更為有彈性及包容的角度去看這些定義。一人一故事劇場讓我們從「我們是誰」和「我們如何展示自己」的限制中解放出來，也許，我們可以在了解到差異的表面定義的同時，繼續以此去探索無邊際的共通人性。

現在，我們這個建立南非口述新空間的旅程已經有三年了，我們曾經演繹的一人一故事已累積過百個，分享的人亦已逾百，每一故事，在我們繼續成長與及挑戰彼譯者：鍾勵君，香港社區文化藝術發展組織啦啦隊藝術隊長，一人一故事劇場工作者，戲劇研究碩士，自1999年參與一人一故事劇場，2004年紐約一人一故事劇場學校畢業，服務對象包括兒童、青少年、婦女、藥物誤用者、精神病復康者、智障人士、自閉特色人士及各種不同能力社群。

野火劇團於2005年十月在南非開普敦市正式成立，是一個以一人一故事劇場為基礎的劇團。
Itan Taa Ti E Ni?
Yiiyire eya ati idanimo wo ni Orile South Africa

Itan kan lo bi fiiti egbe tuntun egbe wa lole; mo si lero wi pe e o fee mo itan naa. Itan na je mo idanimo mi gege bi okan lara awon ojuno orile South Africa (Guusse Afirika) ati ojuse ti je mo idanimo naa.


Pupo ninu yin gbodo ti gbpo nipas roro oyeyameya. E o r i i eto kan ti o ni i se pelu yeya awon eya sote labe ofin ni. E le ni i pe eeto kan wa a ti n je, iyen Eto Eko Bantu, eyi ti o kan wa fun lati teri awon to wa ba yege ninu re ba, ki won ma ba le doga. E le ti gbpo nipas raya yi ti n je Ofin ti Amunisin (The Group Area Act) — ofin y i ni pe awon alawo funfun nikan ni omo orile-ede Guusse Afirika nigba ti awon eya yooku ni orile-ede naa ko si ni i bi ti won le pe ni orile-ede ti won, to o wa je pe awon eya yooku yoo sise ni igboro, won si a si lo fori pelu awon ebi won ti o di tulaasi fun lati maa gbe ni awon ilu kerejereere. Opolopo akosile lo wa lori ororo oyeyameya ati awon iyiorisitse re. Ohun ti mo gber o lati se ni lati se ahifian bi a ti bi mi sinu awujo tu ifiarafar pin sotooto, ti o je pa lati be gbogbo odun le seyin ni mo ti j n je anfaani oyeyameya. Bakkan naa ni okan mi ti gbpo ojuno eto eyedere yiwale ni nipas re mo jen ni n y je mi daadaa. Bayii mo ni yayo pe awon ona atunse atunulara wa fun awuwo mi ati emi gan-an.

Onimo asa ati isesi, Melissa Steyn, tumo “funfun” daadaa nigba ti o so pe funfun ni ohun ti o yato si “iyooku” ti ko funfun. O wa je pe funfun tumo si eyi ti o dara ju iyoku lo. Awon dudu wa di eni n gba yi ti funfun ko fe. Nitoriri-ara eni ni “mimo,” awon funfun wa bere si gbpo awon eto wa tu fun “awon to dara ju awon eya yooku Lo.” Awon eto woriwi wo wa inu iwe ofin; won wa di ohun ti aipfa muse ati ohun ti n ko idamu oka baa won kan. Ki oreyeyameya le baa fidi mule lasi atako, awon iyioriyan funfun wa n da gbere loto ni ibamu pelu “Ofin asegbegbe fun awon alawo funfun.”

Mimo nipa isedan idanimo mi tumo sip i pe mo gber o da ose ti idanimo mi se fun awon yooku ki n le baa maa lo amo idanimo mi ti o wa lori ojusasu. Bakkan naa, mo gber o da ose ti o se emi gan-an nipase alaba awon eya yooku se, ni ibamu pelu ohun ona oko okonke eni-aron-olo geere, Kiran De-sai, ti o so nipa Jiye Ejide Adamu: “Sugbon ono lo mo egbe koo jebo oriwar ti baba da. … Sugbon nje o wa je ki omo jere aisisedede babaa?”

Dida ile-ise Egbe Tiata Bonfire fun mi ni anfaani lati se awon ojuse ti je mo idanimo mi. Oye mi fun egbe naa ni ose lati pese eyi fun ona ibanisoro tuntun ni Guusse Afirika; oro nipas yoo fi opini si oyeyameya, aibara-eni-see, ari ipin aje dogba. Nipa si eyi, a le fi oro idanimo sere, ki a a gbge oju ese le oju ese elomiliran, ki a a ara wa ido elomiliran ninu ire tiata atunse, ki elomiliran fi ara re si ipo wa ninu ere tiata atunse. Nipa ase bayii yi o yoo di ibẹrẹdẹ dan fun lati wa ni ara wa yato si bi a ti wa; a ko si ni yara wa sote mo; a o maa ni ara wa gege bi okan lara. O y a a bere itan Guussse Afirika, itan ti yato si onipa nnkan-imi-imi ti o da le oril oril ojusaye, irenirin, aitomakan.

Oro ara-eri-ereta ki o afi ere ise ida yira-eri-itase mo pada ati aipin ase — yila ti kan ondani tabi ti ajumi.

Ibasepo awon eya ko le deede waye ni Guussse Afirika na asiko yi, ayafy ki o ni ati leyin. Mo mo pe Egbe Tiata Bonfire ye ki o ni iruwa-ogiri wa omo Guussse Afirika gege bi omo egbe, nitoriri igba ti o a ba so si otori so idanimo awon osere ti o oj o won lati kopa won ninu ere. Sugbon nigba ti a n gber o ati egbe yila sile, ki o ni oriisiirin elosi yoo laran rara lati je isere wa. “Wa” nibi tumo si kikidi da eniyan funfun. Wi pe a ile a tikida tikida funfun ni egbe yilo yoo tumo si onipas-imi-imi ti tun wa ni otori otori idanimo Guussse Afirika; oro nipas yoo fi opini si oyeyameya, aibara-eni-see, ari ipin aje dogba. Nipa si eyi, a le fi oro idanimo sere, ki a a gbge oju ese le oju ese elomiliran, ki a a ara wa ido elomiliran ninu ire tiata atunse, ki elomiliran fi ara re si ipo wa ninu ere tiata atunse. Nipa ase bayii yi o yoo di ibẹrẹdẹ dan fun lati wa ni ara wa yato si bi a ti wa; a ko si ni yara wa sote mo; a o maa ni ara wa gege bi okan lara. O y a a bere itan Guussse Afirika, itan ti yato si onipa nnkan-imi-imi ti o da le oril oril ojusaye, irenirin, aitomakan.

Awa sinji, Melissa Steyln, tumo “funfun” daadaa nigba ti o so pe funfun tumo si eyi ti o dara ju iyoku lo. Awon dudu wa di eni n gba yi ti funfun ko fe. Nitoriri-ara eni ni “mimo,” awon funfun wa bere si gbpo awon eto wa tu fun “awon to dara ju awon eya yooku Lo.” Awon eto woriwi wo wa inu iwe ofin; won wa di ohun ti aipfa muse ati ohun ti n ko idamu oka baa won kan. Ki oreyeyameya le baa fidi mule lasi atako, awon iyioriyan funfun wa n da gbere loto ni ibamu pelu “Ofin asegbegbe fun awon alawo funfun.”

Ona Abayo Wo Lo Tun Wa?
A bere si da si so awon oro “Dudu ati Funfun” soke. A ko fi oro sabe ahon so tabi ku je a pe e so. A so pe, “Eniyan funfun ni yi, “eniyi eniyan dudan” —onata lori ijia, ona lori ti opini si ojoo ji wa kun awon agbaye kan, a bi a ti n ni awon nnkan ti awon eniyan ki a ti seere tele seere. Niyon, niwon a bere si tiata atunilure ni okun eni oju gbaga-eni-gbo, nipas yipyi ipo pada lona ti lokalokura a ti ni ifaragba bi awon eya, ti iyipopada ninu ere si wa bi ifarafara ipo tuntun.


Oro na wa maa re pe, “Kin ni koye ki o se atunse re?” O je pa ni tanmo-on. A bere si wo awon nnkan daadaa wa ati awon ohun ti a ni ojoo sun ati bi awon nnkan wonyi se wa je iyawo omo dipo ti gbogbo-gbo ti ni o kan. Bi ojoo ti n je gori oje, a koju awon isoro miiran ti ko se ajeji si isele ni egbe tiata niki. Nipas y i o di ojoo ko awon isoro naa, a ri pe won lo ma ara won lona kan tabi omiran ti o ni i se pelu yeya tabi oro “mo wa nibe” ati “n ko si nibe.” => p. 12
O wa di diandan fun wa ki a dahun ibeere pe Kin ni a ki ba ti se lona oto? A di eni ti a ja ni tanmon-on. Ooro yio sun wa de ibi ki a ye awon nnkan ni a lero pe a n se daadada wo, ki a ye ohun ti awon eniyin n fe wo, ki a si wa wo boya ohun ti a se yato si ohun ti awon eniyin n fe, lejin gbgbo akilt yan wa lati n pe a te awon eniyin lorn. Bi ojo ti o gori ojo ti asiko n gori asiko, a tun duojo ko awon isoro miran ti ko yato si iru awon ti ile-ise egbe osere ori-itage ma n koju. Nigba ti a doju ko awon isoro naa, a ri pe awon naa ni i se pelu oro eleyameya lona kan tabi omiiran. Banaa naa, won ni l se pelu ara wa ni ati ara wa ko.

Ona kan ti ipenijin yii gb aye mi ni nipas wiwo irepo ari iju ilokan-tan’ra-eni ti o wa ninu oro isoro. Fun apeere, lopo igba, bi omo egbe ba pe ki o to de tabi o yi adehun wiwa pada lojii, awon alaye asotele wa, ti yoo fun egbe laaye lati wa woroko se ada. Aisii-repo ati ifokatan’ra-eni le tumu si pe awon nnkan pataki o ti se olo si ikun ohun ni omo egbe ko de etigbo egbe. Nipa bayii, egbe ko ni le jiroro awon nnkan naa, ki o si gbe won le ori awon adawole re (egbe) lati mo boya aiwa Inpi lori adawole re (egbe). Mo ri yii bi isoro ti o ni i se pelu awon eni ti o finufindo si ope isoro-ise won, ti won si ri ara won gege bi “ara egbe” ati “ajeji.” Oro eleyameya ni eyi ji le mo lopo igba. Agbaye ati ini ni le o so irun asepo ti yoo waye. Lee kan si, o ye ki a se koja eronjaa wa lati mu awon miran (eyya youku) dara po mo wa; o ye ki ilemitan’ra-eni wa ninu a-n rekojaja-sodo-ara-eni. Olori isoro mi ni wiwa ona lati ri epo e se waye.

Ere ori-itage ti je tun-un-se ni ona abayo. Itan ara wa ni a lo lati se igbaradi. A ko nipas ara wa ati irir ara wa. Nipase awon itan naa ni a ko ti ake re ara wa. A bere pelu siwo aso awon itan ti o ni l se pelu iriwa ni ara ara wa. Siso itan wonyin fun wa ni anfaani lati di alofo ti o wa laarin wa, ki a si sikun lajamize o ti yaran. Anni-ani ko ni si, emi sinfinfulindo-soton berere pereu. Bee ni si fidi asa ki a maa sota ara-eni mule. A n so itan ranpe ati awon eyi ti o yoo ayendi de ki ibi tabi egbe aye. Nipase eyi, a royee pea won nnkan kan so wa po, bee ni awon nnkan kan yawan a sooto – eyii mu wa bowo funara wa, o si je ki a mimo nipas ara eni ati ibera-enise se tubo fidi mule laarin wa. A ko pe o ye ki a le so, ki a le feti si awon itan ti o le pe ohun ti a gbin sokin nipas ara wa ati ohun ti oju ti awon elomilar in ni woj ni wa ni nja.

E je ki n so itan kan: O je isoro lati o kan ara lopa lama oro egbe wa lati wa ba soro. O da bi pe eni naa kile se akiltin lati je ki egbe mo boya yoo loye ni aaye, bee ni idakureku ni o se nigba ti a ba n se igbaradi fun ere. Nibi igbaro, o so itan ipo ti o wa fun wa. Nunu itan obiyanr irin, o so nipas bi a ti mo nipas iju egbe (tabi aburo) re okunrin. Fun idi kan, o wa rorun lati mo abalo abajo aisedede de dipe, dipe ki a se alaye lori enu fun oga tabi owo awon osoro egbe.

Gege bi olori egbe, mo ti ri epo o ye ki n maa kan si awon oro egbe begebebe ati ipinle igbaradi fun ere bi se awon osoro lati ri bi awon nnkan se ni peso ati bi won ti n seda nnkan awon idanrawo ti yoo mu awon nnkan wonyin waye daadada. Pelu asiseede, a n ni iriri nipas ilodisi. Nipase bayii, a le se rora maa se atunse.

Lasiko ti egbe n guber, mo ri i pe o ye ki n si ase gbeleyowo oninuuru ona imuse. Eko ni nipas ilif-tiata-ti-ni-lara je ona orinrun kan ti se e fowo wa. Mo lo ilif-tiata-ti-ni-lara gege bi ona kan pataki lati gbaradi, lati se amulo ati ilemi lori ijawari ati ajasepo ti o ni nipase etieta ti n je tun-un-se. Nipase awon idanrawo wonyin, mo le se agbelero bi a ti le sun mo ara-eni, lona ti yoo se okunfa ajumose gidi laarin egbe.

Ona miran ti a fit un so ara wa po ni nigba ti jojo ti a jo kiri lo. Nipa eyi, a le yi wo inu ara wa ninu igbaradi ati ninu sise ganaran-an. Lasiko yii, a je bogi, a se jo je, bakaa naa a si ri si imototo. O da bi pe sise bee je awon iriri pataki ti o mu aula kuro, ti o wa ni emi igbari-egbe-egbe mule. Lasiko ikinna, a le fi awon nnkan ti a to si nipas ara-eni damo wa, lati mu ibasepo laa wa laarin wa. Gege bi omo Guusu Afirika (South Africa), ilugbe je ohun akoko ti o ya wa yato. Awa ti a se ewe wa nigba oro eleyameya gbe ibi ti o yato si ti sibe eleyameya gbe iba wa yoo yooku. Ibasepo ti o wa ninu gbigbepo, jijio, ati jijo sun ni oju kan naa labe orule kan nipas ara se pataki. Bakaa naa ni o si se okunfa losodo si awon osoro mu a le sunmu gbigbo nipas ara-eni (etieta ati). A lo okan ninu asiko irinriwa wa lati toju bo awon iran nipas amulo awon iriri o ti o doju nu ninu ebi. Sise eyi je ona kan pataki: A ni anfaani lati fi ara wa sipo elomilar tabi miran eyi. Sise eyi je ona kan pataki: A ni anfaani lati fi ara wa sipo elomilar tabi miran eyi. Sise eyi je ona kan pataki: A ni anfaani lati fi ara wa sipo elomilar tabi miran eyi.

Gbara ti egbe ti de apo apo meta, mo boju wo eyin lati ibere egbe nigba ti egbe je kikida funfun fun wa. A gi a le wo awon ibi ti a de lati ija gbiyi, Thulani je ki a ri awon asise wa, ki a si gbe pa ese wa yoo yolo lawon ona kan. A wa ni l pe e fun wa laa sunse ti o to, lati mu ki gbgbo omi egbe lati inu gbgbo egbe tabi ipin gbgbo ni emi pe bakaa naa ni omo n se ori, pe ohun ti o to si Gbada lo to Ajon naa lo to Ojo nigbakukugbogbogbo. Ohun ti a kan se ni pe ki a gba’a lero lati fun elomikan ko nitori lati je re wo daa, lati ma boju boju a ti n jo ni wo ara-eni a ti n jo ni ara-eni a yato, lati ma boju boju a yato. Nipa ayewa go won itumotu, lati ma boju boju a yato. Baga a lopa akoko ti e ftetu bo a renu a yato, lati ma boju boju a yato. Nipa ayewa go won itumotu, lati ma boju boju a yato.

Baiyi, a ti pe odun meta nini irin-ajo wa lati seda awon itan Guusu Afirika lotun. A ti se ogoore eyi ije ise olopo awon eniyan eniyi. Olori itan kan naa si si afeukon si itan wa bi a ti n gberu, bi a ti n pe awon ona ti a fi n tumo ara wa tabi okoko awon wa ni ja.

Translation by OMOLOLA BAYO. Note—no diacritics or accent marks in translated version as technology did not permit them.
Rasa Urbsiene reports on innovative work in Lithuania combining arts and social work that has attracted support from the EU foundation in Lithuania.

Failure is not the enemy, but a life-changing experience.
It is a human experience, and it prepares the way for us to grow and transform our lives.
Sobonfu Some

Cultural activities are supposed to be as a meaningful tool for life quality development, social integration and social change in Europe cultural and social politic more and more. Culture and social fields tend to integrate. Projects combining arts and social work are a new and innovative thing in Lithuania and other new EU countries.

Playback theatre is making the first steps in Lithuania. This year our company has attained the support to introduce and to develop an innovative social impact’s tools and methods for increasing the social integration possibilities for the people living in social isolation. In the project are integrating traditional teaching methods (theoretical material, lectures and discussions) and to make learning process for target group more efficient – methods and elements of expressive arts and Playback Theater.

The support from EU Structural Funds for Lithuania in 2004-2008 is provided under the Single Programming Document for 2004-2008 (hereinafter – the SPD) approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and by the European Commission. The SPD established five investment priorities: development of social and economic infrastructure, human resource development, development of productive sector, rural and fisheries development, and technical assistance. Our project fits in to the second SPD priority “Human Resource Development”.

Main goal of the our project ”Implementation of the New Social Methods for Strengthening of the Drug Addicts’ Work Integration” is to increase the possibilities of the integration in the labour market for the drug addicts and to stop the formation of young people’s addictive behaviour. The activities of the project are directed to fulfill the needs of the target group members to get knowledge and practical experiences in the work search, to develop social competences, self presentation skills and perception of the others.

Playback theater’s and expressive arts’ tools are useful and efficient for an establishment of the safe and creative environment for participants where they can share their individual experiences and mutual ideas in the particular field of learning. The project has started with the session of 6 seminars for 30 people this autumn. Psychologists and social workers of our organization together with methodological work expert Rasa Urbsiene offer new forms of social integration work in Lithuania and hope that this project will show how meaningful is Playback Theatre for life quality change.

Rasa Urbsiene is from the Studio of Self-Awareness and Self-Realization in Vilnius, Lithuania Playback Theatre is just starting in Lithuania and Rasa identifies herself as a very new playbacker in a wonderful Playback Theatre family. She has been to the School of Playback Theatre and also trained with Veronica Needa (UK) & Hannah Fox (US).
Dialogue in Playback Training

Bev Hosking

Over the past ten years New Zealand playback theatre pioneers Bev Hosking and Christian Penny have developed a specialist approach to learning and social dialogue through the playback method. Bev Hosking reflects here.

In January this year Christian Penny and I led the New Zealand Playback Theatre Summer School (NZ PTSS) for the tenth year. Since 1999 there has been an evolution in the shape, the content and the approach we take when sharing our playback theatre practice with others. Our workshop method emphasizes play, voice, artistic sensitivity and form, and the quality of relationships amongst participants on and off the stage. The strong focus on the conductor, the stage and the audience is approached in direct and indirect ways.

In this article, I describe the way in which we work with the cultural context, participant diversity and critical reflection to create a group environment for social dialogue using playback theatre.

Background & influences

During more than twenty years of playback practice and teaching, particularly at the various playback theatre gatherings in NZ from the mid-90’s, and in the work I conducted with Mary Good in the south of India, I became aware that at certain moments in some groups, stories that have strong social and cultural resonances could emerge to powerful effect. I began to see the impact that the weave of the personal with the social and cultural in a story could have on strengthening a community’s sense of itself and on opening out relevant core questions and concerns. This thinking shaped the framework of ‘Playback Theatre and social change’ workshops we ran as part of our NZ PTSS program for several years and included three specific areas of focus: the inclusion of more sociodramatic elements; a serious enquiry into the conditions needed to create an opening for difficult-to-tell social stories; and the understanding that a community is having a conversation with itself through the telling of stories.

More recently, my participation in the International Fellowship ‘Recasting Reconciliation through Arts and Culture’ at Brandeis University and in the dialogue training program ‘Storytelling in conflicts’ led by Professor Dan Bar-On have further informed my thinking and greatly assisted me to build on this work.

My collaboration with Christian Penny is one of the most exciting and generative I have experienced and it is an integral aspect of the work itself. Christian is Maori, of Tainui descent, and he stands with both feet in the theatre world. He brings skills and experience as an actor, director and teacher of theatre and his long-lived interest in arts, culture, and leadership to the training.

Development of the NZ PTSS training approach

Ten years ago Christian and I decided to offer training that was situated in our own cultural context. We began by offering a program of specific skills training in Playback Theatre in a series of short workshops over 10 days for New Zealanders (and possibly Australians) interested in playback theatre - in fact from the beginning we have consistently attracted participants from a wide range of countries. After seven years, we decided to re-shape the program from the short course structure into one ten-day workshop. This decision came from our desire to deepen the exploration in which we were involved and to offer a more substantial learning experience for participants. The trajectory of this ‘place of learning’ has been full of surprises and is still evolving as over time our interests and our questions have changed and the focus of the work of the NZ PTSS has followed these.

The way in which we work has evolved over time. In the early workshops I became excited by some of what I observed both theatrically and in terms of what stories were able to be told, listened to and worked with in the life of the group. I was often struck by the particular quality of exchange – one that opened out rather than narrowed down. As workshop leader, I had experiences of being part of conversations that explored many issues, such as difference, prejudice, relationship to past injustices, sexuality, leadership, citizenship; unfolding explorations that I had wanted to have for a long time and that I had not experienced in other places. This drew me to further investigate the work of creating social spaces where a group/community can address significant issues of interest and concern, and to further involve myself in developing processes that might better enable these social spaces. In today’s world there is an urgent need to create new and different ways of coming together, to create new forms of meeting. The work of the NZ PTSS has influenced my thinking and also reflects my thinking in this area. Recently, with this purpose in mind, Christian and I decided to make a definite shift away from a specific training focus with an eye to performance, to a group-based exploration in situ. In essence, we apply playback as an approach to creating a dialogue in a community, in this case the community is the participants of the NZ PTSS each year. This approach sees us work together – leaders and participants – to uncover and progress the conversation that we are having as a group or that we want to have at a particular point in time. Essentially, as our practice has progressed we have developed an emergent, group-centred process that uses playback theatre. Here is just one participant’s response that reflects this:

The Summer School invites the questioning of one’s own perspectives and offers the challenge of having to re-orientate and adapt my paradigms and understanding of the world (participant reflection).

Phases in the Process

Within this process there are particular phases that we are now able to identify and work with more intentionally. Key elements include:

- **Taking time**
  - Working with difference
  - The value in multiple perspectives
  - Staying steady and staying in relationship
  - Opening out the space
  - The balance of feeling and thinking
  - Working locally

**Taking time**

With the longer workshop we have become aware of a change in the orientation to time and a large sense of spaciousness. There is a freedom associated with not being in a performance context and with a learning process not driven by the requirements of the pace and rhythm of performance. We do not have a value that everyone must tell a story instead we promote the practice of staying longer with what is told and allowing ourselves to be affected by each telling. The playback enactment already assists us with this as we create shapes, sounds and images that we can reference time and again. We regularly work with a structure of warm up, an enactment, reflection, re-enactment and extended sharing. This
creates an environment where there is less pressure to “get/master/understand” things quickly and allows for the possibility to stay with and open out the complexities of particular situations both on the stage and in the life of the group. With time the quality of the listening expands and deepens and the telling is less reactive. Importantly there is also space for silence and stillness and what emerges from these.

**Working with difference**

As we moved to the 10-day Summer School, we have noticed that being together for this length of time, including living and eating together, makes it more possible for differences to emerge and for the excitement, discomfort, challenges and questions that follow. The noticing, encountering, enquiring, exploring and working with difference have become a major area of focus for our work and we have observed the strength of the meetings that are possible when we establish a group culture that allows for the possibility that we do not ‘have to be the same’. We have had to work hard to challenge prevailing norms of harmonizing – in my experience, when these occur prematurely or are allowed to dominate, the reach of what is addressed can be narrowed and some realities are not worked with.

The mix of languages and cultural and performing backgrounds creates an environment where there is less pressure to “get/master/understand” things quickly and allows for the possibility to stay with and open out the complexities of particular situations both on the stage and in the life of the group. With time the quality of the listening expands and deepens and the telling is less reactive. Importantly there is also space for silence and stillness and what emerges from these.

**Opening out the space**

In the training there is an emphasis on learning about what is involved in the invitation to tell and opening out a space for telling and listening, as well as giving attention to the subtle and the not-so-subtle ways that this can be closed down. We know it certainly is not just a matter of saying, or even repeating that ‘all stories are welcome’, as what can be told, listened to, and received is constantly being tested by individual group members and the group as a whole. There is a strong sensitivity to the questions like ‘what is ok to tell?’ ‘what can I tell?’ ‘what will I tell’ and there are multiple assumptions and variations to the “not-me” response that can quickly surface. This generates a restrictive culture; things like – ‘not the right story, not the right sort of story, not the right time, not the right teller’. Then there are the moments when the desire to be inclusive tips into creating pressure on a particular teller or sub-group.

This is not outcome-focused work and we are not oriented to ‘problems’ or solutions. We want to convey that we are in a process of exploration and that the overall process of dialogue is open-ended. We believe it is necessary to resist the pull to ‘get somewhere in particular’ although the pressures around this are considerable and we need to be alert to the different forms these pressures can take.

**Balance feeling and thinking**

Over recent years we have identified a need to balance feeling and expressiveness with more comprehensive thinking about our playback work and in particular to address questions of purpose. This has felt very challenging and we have met with considerable resistance. We are committed to modeling a practice that takes time to ask questions and to critically reflect on what is emerging. This has become foundational to our training approach and demands that we do not go along with the persistent pull to ‘always be in action’ to more stories, to doing more playback. The entry to this aspect of the work begins with our brochure, the application process, and the setting of small research tasks prior to arrival. For example, the new brochure works intentionally to create a more textured warm up to what we are offering, layering in the different elements we are working with, and placing the thematic areas in front of participants well in advance of arrival time. Reflection periods are threaded throughout the 10 days and in the weeks/months afterwards.

**Working locally**

The Maori rituals in the beginning and in the end created such a special space of mutual respect and honoring and opening space to more than can be seen! I felt the immeasurable worth of these traditional rituals. Thus I like to express my appreciation to all of you and to those who I do not know, who took the decision not to forget but to remember, to learn and to bring it alive anew. (participant reflection)

Christian and I both very much enjoy the teaching we do outside New Zealand, and at the same time it has been a constant source of pleasure and satisfaction for us to invite people to join us in New Zealand, to work on our home ground for this training. What we are developing through the NZ PTSS feels very much to be ‘of this place’. From the beginning we have used elements of traditional ‘tiaki Maori’ (indigenous custom) as foundation elements of the work we are doing. Pohiri, pōporerē and karakia - rituals of welcome, farewell and thanksgiving continue to provide a strong framework and facilitate a depth of engagement and relationship.
Conductor training in Finland’s Tarina Instituutti (Institute of Stories) follows a rigorous process of artistic and personal development. In this report founder of Finnish Playback Theatre, Päivi Ketonen reflects on the history and describes the details of her training strategy.

Playback Theatre in Finland

Playback landed in Finland for the first time in May 1990. We got to know it through adored Deborah Pearson. Ever since her visit Finnish playbackers have been committed to learning how to make best of it. It hooked me in the early years and my psychodrama training helped me in my work with groups even though I did not know much about it.

Keen to practice further we formed the first Finnish group – Magic Mirror and asked many trainers to teach us. We began with a six week course in my institute. Some of us took bankloans to pay for it. We developed a solid base with Deborah visiting many times along with Cristina Hagelthorn, Mary Good, Robyn Weir, Robert Schenck, Chardi Cristian, Marcia Karp and Rene Marineau. From the beginning we worked seriously with our own personal stories through art and therapy. We also tried to develop our artistic language on the stage. Now we run with more than 30 performing groups, are constantly training practitioners and are starting to do research.

Support & Creation

In our land of the midnight sun, big forests and thousands lakes we organized the International Playback Conference in 1993 at my course center Kasvunpaikka in my home village Rautalampi. This event had a strong effect to our journey with playback. I want to thank my ex-husband, village people in Rautalampi, Ari Muttonen, Sirkku Aitolehti and all who were with us. Many more-experienced playbackers supported the Finish Community to create this event. Those who came from all over the world will remember this tiny place and the stories we shared as together, we created bigger picture of playback in the world. The longest quests was from Brazil – two old women who had not worked with playback before. I still remember their adventurous spirit and carried it with me as I journeyed to Brazil last summer to participate in the conference there.

Playback is part of my main work. From the very beginning I had a vision to develop it in Finland so that there was a balance between true art and therapy. Rene Marineau helped us in this with yearly psychodrama retreats and encouraging me to develop further training.

Developing my Training Vision

I started first to teach acting in 1994. I created a co-working relationship with a big nearby institute where I led training seven times. These four-month residential courses were designed as to get to know playback theatre. In Finland at this time training was paid by state and by this meant that a large number unemployed people took part in this programme.

At this time I began training conductors while continuing my own development. I was with Theatre of Spontaneity International, studying with Jonathan Fox School, working with my psychodrama TEP degree, and finishing my supervising and consulting training in the University of Helsinki. From these bases I initiated a two-year training course for playback theatre conductors based around visiting international teachers.

The first course produced the pioneers of Finnish playback theatre many who are still working with playback. In Helsinki I was able to establish the playback conducting as part of the teacher training. Having the two programmes running alongside each other and has since been open to people from different backgrounds and been self-supported. Early on, as a junior trainer I struggled, made many mistakes, and sometimes faced difficult questions from Finnish colleagues about the training. During these years Jonathan supported me sometimes in spirit and at other times with supervision. Even though I was qualified as a psychodrama trainer and had graduated from The School of Playback Theatre it was a process of developing my own authority and expertise as a playback trainer.

I have now been teaching playback acting and group leading skills for five years in Helsinki polytecnic for performing arts. Our department focuses on applied theatre and drama studies and playback as one of the subjects. Students study for four years and graduate as theatre expression instructors. I have successfully established playback in the curriculum with the help of Rene Marineau (even though he does not know about it), Marja Louhija, Chardi Cristian, Robyn Weir, and Bev Hosking.

Playback training expands

The conductor training course I developed is based in the Institute of Stories (Tarina Instituutti) and is organized by my firm Kasvunpaikka co-working with Ihmissuhdetööry. Currently I work with old members of my playback group, Foxtrott including Reijo Rautiainen and Tarja Laaksonen. In future I hope to expand and further develop the team of trainers in the near future to include Katarina Ylä-Rautio-Vaittinen and Riitta Harilo. There is other conductor training is available with Airi Pyykkö is also running a training programme.
The curriculum at Tarina Instituutti is still (and hopefully will always be) developing but I am really happy with the structure that I have now. Trainees also acknowledge the value in the extensive curriculum, one said:

“This training has been planned in a very professional manner, different aspects and roles of playback are studied and practised. Studying over two years make it possible to mature slowly.”

The basic training builds over six terms with the first term focuses on acting, the second on the wider playback community, storytelling and personal growth, and the third on conducting. The fourth shifts focus to leading the group, with the fifth creating structures for trainees to question their learning and deepen their relationships with the wider playback community thorough participating in the European gathering and giving a workshop or performance. During this term students also participate in a week long psychodrama training for personal growth. These two terms demand a more critical engagement by the trainees and as one acknowledged, “there is a strong emphasis on reflecting.”

In the sixth term students conclude the training by writing about applying playback in their work or by studying a question or a viewpoint in playback that interests them. The six terms of basic training is equivalent to 320 hours (40 days) of “close teaching” plus their individual work and work in peer groups – representing a further 80 hours of specialist training. In addition to this students are required to accrue 200 hours of acting practice in their own groups or in training workshops to have ”deepening experiences” in classical theatre and therapy of a further 100 hours. By the end the group has strengthened and this supports the learning further. As one trainee wrote:

“This is a process where the story of the group and your own story are in the focus. Playback is a method that makes the individual as well the group to be heard and seen for you and for the group. Group is the carrying strength and in the supporting spirit it is mirroring one’s ways to act and be. This process is participative ... you have to face yourself and others [and] you have to dive into it.” (student in 6th group).

If people want to continue training they start to lead their own group in supervision (70+30 hours), they participate in seminars, and they conduct a group or a performance and get feedback, after which they attain certification from the Institute of Stories. Some go on to do a further year linking playback to action methods through psychodrama and graduate with the ”assistant level” degree. This level of intensity is appreciated by students, as one said:

“I have learned that it is worth while to know yourself before you start conducting” (feedback from student in 6th group)

My own emphasis in this training in this phase of my life is to:

- to support people to be deeply themselves and have a good grounding in their own being;
- to help individuals and the group as a whole to enjoy the core of creativity;
- to challenge people to realize the power of the process and find tools to work with and dance with it;
- to teach people basic skills as well the history and philosophy of playback and philosophy;
- to encourage trainees to find their own vision for playback as part of their life story.

“What would I say about this training? It is experimental learning, it is reading books or better it is absolutely participative, quite little of practising acting, practising conducting, group leading, group making, studying about group dynamics, intensivity, innovations, creating, putting Yourself up front, tiring, therapeutic, heavy, lovely, safe, laughing, comic, selfirony, crying, sadness, and compassion and lots more.”

Respect in Learning

Finland respects training and learning in our culture. Playback is a very challenging method and we are fortunate in Finland that training and learning is so respected in our culture. I have taken most of my professional life to get to my current understanding and am proud to be involved in offering excellent training for the next generation of playback practitioners in the region. Next steps for me – after years of refining my understanding of the therapeutic and artistic sides of playback I am now focusing on how to apply playback theatre in pedagogical contexts.

Päivi Ketonen is a founder of Finish playback. A long time psychodrama and playback trainer she works as a private trainer and business consultant in her firm Kasvunpaikka. A teacher of applied theatre in Finland she has founded three performing groups: Magic Mirror, FoxTrott and Acts. www.kasvunpaikka.fi

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European Playback Theatre Conference
13—15 June 2008

Päivi Ketonen & Kasvunpaikka in cooperation with The Finnish Playback Theatre Network invite you to

It’s Time

Pre Conference June 11 & 12/ Post Conference June 16 & 17

Pieksämäki, Central Finland

Central Finland, about 4 hours north from Helsinki. See www.kasvunpaikka.fi and www.tarinateatteri.net for more information.
In summary
In its present form the NZ PTSS is like a crucible within which an exciting and stimulating process of exploration and discovery occurs. It is highly experiential learning with all participants and the leaders actively involved. In the process we are grappling with the intricacies of playback theatre, building the skills of listening, imagination, group work and leadership, as well as developing capacities such as acceptance, courage, and resilience. These are all central to the work of creating a meeting place where important social and cultural matters can be addressed and where we can begin to contemplate our most complex experiences.

Bev Hosking has been a teacher of playback theatre for over 20 years. With Christian Penny they run the New Zealand Playback Theatre Summer School.

Opening Intercultural Spaces
Rea Dennis

Playback practice is frequently situated in the artist’s own culture and this also requires particular attention to cultural details. Bev Hosking (in this issue) speaks about the value of integrating cultural analysis into playback practitioner training. Working with Maori theatre practitioner Christian Penny in their home-country New Zealand/Aotearoa over the past ten years she incorporates elements of traditional ‘tikanga Maori’ (indigenous custom) including rituals of welcome and thanksgiving as a way to raise questions about inclusion and belonging and to facilitating engagement.

South African playback practitioner Paula Kingwill places a different intercultural question at the centre of her practice. Inside this issue she discusses her experience of working to create a company that might somehow mirror the community within which it performs. Her focus is on the racial and social diversity in her embryonic company in post apartheid South Africa. She concludes that the actors’ very different social, political and educational backgrounds are a tangible barrier in her dream for coherence in the company and critiques her own privilege as a way to better understand how the intercultural tension in her company inhibits coherence and collectivity.

Beyond the culture of nation and race playback is intrinsically intercultural. The playback theatre performance’s intercultural potency is situated in the tension it holds between risk-taking and care-taking by performer and audience member. It offers a place of resistance; a place of intercultural dialogue where history can be made visible alongside the present. It is a way for all sorts of people to contribute to cultural production and becomes political through the way in which it gives attention to the personal in the public domain. History is told and retold within the personal narratives of participants. Participants act as playwrights – retelling, rewriting social histories; the enactment represents a live translation enabling new ethnographic accounts to be ‘written’. In the Australian story this means that the reality that colonisation/invasion is our history can be present alongside the intercultural conflict and racial and ethnic oppression that it is our present (6). Playback facilitates a space for the two versions of the Australian story to exist side-by-side; a place in which the nation can hear and tell the second story of our history. This space for daring; for the participant to tell the much harder stories helps to cultivate spaces in which stories from the centre are present alongside stories from the margins; a space for intercultural meetings.

Notes
1. See Susan Bennett’s study on theatre audiences, 1990 p.98.
3. Ibid, quotes from page 63 & 70 respectively.
4. The global consumption of (other) cultures and the corporatization of theatre is further examined in Gilbert & Lo (2007), Performance and cosmopolitics:
   Cross-cultural transactions in Australasia, Palgrave
5. Interplay X11(3), p2

Rea Dennis is Editor of Interplay. A performer and teacher of playback, she also works as a drama lecturer at the University of Glamorgan, UK.
ArtInScena 2008

MEETING BETWEEN ART & PLAYBACK

June 28th /July 2nd  - Val Masino (Sondrio) ITALY

Five days for exchange, training, artistic expression, performance but also vacation, relax and thermal in the Middle of the Alps

Artsinscene is a five days meeting of the various arts that we can integrate to the Playback Theatre. It is a opportunity to develop arts, and to share our personal stories during the performances, healing one self enjoying the thermal and living in contact with the wonderful nature in the middle of the Alps.

Where - Hotel terme Bagni Masino
San Martino near Sondrio Italy - two hours by train from Milan.
See www.bagnimasino.it

What—5-days of Artistic Workshops & Performances
With— Italian and foreign experts in artistic language and Playbacktheatre.
Cost (including accommodation and meals, 25 hours of artistic workshop & 4 evening performances)
Before April 30th : € 372  After April 30th : € 402

Information and reservation - Nadia Lotti: info@playback-theatre.it

Certification— by the Italian School of School of Playback
www.playback-theatre.it
Elena Roncoroni &

Meta Playback Theatre (Italia) e SOG Theater (Austria)

Il primo passo è fatto...

Questo è un breve report scritto da Meta Playback Theatre e SOG-Theater a proposito di un incontro di tre giornate che si è tenuto a Vienna dal 5 al 7 Ottobre 2007 tra questi due gruppi.

Meta Playback Theatre è un gruppo italiano e SOG. THEATER è un gruppo austriaco. Entrambi propongono interventi formativi e operano a livello professionale. Quando ci siamo conosciuti, noi del Meta Playback Theatre e Margarete Meixner, la "capa" del SOG. THEATER, abbiamo sentito che dovevamo esplorare i nostri stili di fare teatro e i rispettivi metodi, oltre i campi in cui attuiamo. L'incontro, organizzato in Italia, proprio da noi del Meta, era il secondo European Playback Gathering. Questa idea ha portato alla realizzazione di incontri, collaborazioni, meeting caratterizzati da una certa intimità con altri gruppi.

Lo scopo di questo tipo di incontri circoscritti è quello di consentire una conoscenza reciproca più profonda tale da facilitare una reale condivisione di prospettive di stile e di metodo, così da promuovere un mutuo scambio volto sia ad arricchire l’esperienza professionale sia a metter le basi per la costruzione di progetti condivisi in Europa.

Dopo un anno di regolari scambi di e-mail e aggiornamenti reciproci SOG ha invitato Meta a Vienna per un incontro di tre giorni di lavoro comune con lo scopo di arricchire le nostre rispettive esperienze professionali.

Durante questo incontro i nostri due gruppi hanno avuto la possibilità di:
- essere condotti da un formatore “esterno” in un training espressamente rivolto a noi sul tema della narrazione basata sulla tecnica del cantastorie
- di condurre alla pari varie fasi di lavoro nel corso delle diverse giornate
- offrire una performance pubblica condotta da Margarete nella quale il rituale ha previsto l’entrata continuamente alternata in scena di attori di SOG, di Meta e di gruppi misti Meta-SOG
- di realizzare una tavola rotonda per debriffare l’esperienza e progettare passi successivi.

Una sintetica valutazione di questa prima esperienza ci porta a metter in luce l’arricchimento reciproco che è scaturito dalla conoscenza delle rispettive prospettive e dall’accrescimento della consapevolezza di ciascuno dei nostri due gruppi in merito al proprio stile sia formativo che performativo.

Tutti noi abbiamo potuto apprezzare la calda atmosfera e l’attitudine matura che ci ha consentito di discutere approfonditamente e di darsi reciprocamente dei feedback che riteniamo supportino la crescita professionale e umana persino più che un generico e diffuso apprezzamento reciproco.

Questo livello di simpatia e empatia che troviamo così diffuso nel mondo del Playback è certamente un elemento basilare, la fondamentale base sicura per incontrare l’altro ed essere riconosciuto. Tuttavia questa modalità rischia di chiudersi in sé e non evolvere in alcuno sviluppo che passa anche attraverso la critica.

Il rispetto personale e il riconoscimento del modo di lavorare dell’altro è la base per ogni cooperazione e su questa base riteniamo fondamentale lo scambio di feedback onesti e realistici, necessari per migliorare la nostra pratica.
Ein erster Schritt...


Wir folgten der Idee, in einem kleinen Rahmen eine intensive Begegnung unserer Gruppen zu ermöglichen. Das Ziel ist ein tiefes, gegenseitiges Verständnis, indem wir die Perspektive des anderen wahrnehmen und uns dadurch zu neuen Denk- und Betrachtungsweisen anregen lassen. Gleichzeitig wird man sich erst in der Betrachtung des Andersartigen der eigenen Identität bewusst.


Das Treffen bot Platz für folgende Programmpunkte:

- Das Training wurde jeweils von einer Gruppe angeleitet.
- In einem gemeinsamen, öffentlichen Auftritt, geleitet von Margarete Meixner, spielte zeitweise META Playback Theater, zu Teilen das SOG.Theater und szenenweise eine aus beiden Gruppen spontan zusammengewürfelte Truppe.
- Eine abschließende Besprechung ermöglichte es, die Erfahrungen der vorangegangenen Tage zu reflektieren und weitere Schritte der Zusammenarbeit zu planen.

Rückblickend war dieses erste Treffen sehr bereichernd. Es hat die Perspektive verändert, in der wir auf unsere Arbeit blicken, und das Bewusstsein über unsere Wirkung und unseren persönlichen Stil gestärkt.

Die warmherzige und respektvolle Art und Weise der Begegnung erlaubte eine tiefgehende Diskussion und fruchtbares Feedback - Dinge, die unserer Meinung nach professionelle und menschliche Weiterentwicklung ermöglichen.

Weitere Schritte:

Durch dieses Treffen wurde uns die Wichtigkeit bewusst, Rückmeldungen von anderen über den eigenen Arbeitsstil zu bekommen und sich selbst mit dem anderer auseinanderzusetzen.

Nun planen wir ein weiteres Treffen im Sommer kommenden Jahres in Italien. Auch die Gruppe T!ing aus Thessaloniki (unter Petros Theodorou) soll dazu eingeladen werden.


Klein aber fein
Meta Playback Theatre (Italien) und SOG. Theater (Österreich)
Voneinander lernen und miteinander entwickeln

Above—Elena Roncoroni, is one of the four of Meta Playback Theater group who organized the II european gathering in Longiano, Italy in September 2006.
professionale. Questo incontro ha dato la sensazione di essere pronti per andare oltre, di chiedere, ricevere e sostenere severi feedback nell’ottica di una crescita di stile, metodo ed esperienza.

**Passi ulteriori:**
Convinti di quanto sia importante per un gruppo confrontare il proprio modo di lavorare con quello di altri, stiamo pianificando di incontrarci di nuovo in primavera/estate in Italia coinvolgendo anche T!ng, il gruppo di Playback di Salonico condotto da Petros Theodorou, con il quale meta ha costruito negli ultimi anni un approfondimento, ricca e intensa relazione umana e professionale.

L’idea è che ognuno dei tre gruppi possa offrire un workshop agli altri al fine di fare sperimentare il proprio stile particolare. Una tavola rotonda potrà poi consentire una rielaborazione dell’esperienza.

Davvero crediamo che questo tipo di incontri, coinvolgendo un numero relativamente ristretto di persone, rappresentino una vera opportunità di scambio e di approfondimento tanto delle relazioni interpersonali e professionali, quanto di tutti quei temi con i quali i gruppi professionali si confrontano nella loro pratica.

Seguendo questa prospettiva siamo interessati a connetterci con altri gruppi che utilizzino il Playback Theatre variamente abbinato ad altre metodologie in diversi contesti professionali.

Se siete voi e siete interessati a costruire occasioni del tipo descritto contattate info@metapt.it o office@sog-theater.at

E ora qualche parola a proposito di Meta Playback Theatre e SOG. Theater:

**Meta Playback Theatre:** siamo un gruppo di quattro formatori, due donne e due uomini. Proponiamo un approccio di lavoro di gruppo con i gruppi utilizzando il playback theatre e i metodi di azione in una sintesi creativa con altri linguaggi e strumenti formativi e artistici.

Il nostro gruppo nasce nel 2002 da una unione di intenti e passioni che fanno leva sulla dimensione creativa e sullo sviluppo delle potenzialità espressive individuali e di team. Ogni elemento del gruppo possiede una propria identità personale e professionale di partenza (psicoterapeuta, laureata in filosofia, psicodrammatista, psicomotricista), identità strutturata e aperta all’incontro con le altrui personalità e competenze professionali.

Interazione, circolarità, ritualità e rigore metodologico sono alla base dei nostri interventi, sia formativi che performativi. Nel 2008 lavoriamo particolarmente sulla linea di confine tra autobiografia, antropologia e creatività.

Durante i nostri workshop, seminari e performance le narrazioni di vita e di vita professionale sono spesso sollecitate dall’uso di materiale stimolo in un’ottica di antropologia del quotidiano.

Una domanda supporta e orienta il nostro fare: come stimolare storie profonde ed essenziali?
Info: [www.metapt.it](http://www.metapt.it) a breve anche in Inglese

**SOG. THEATER** è un team di animatori teatrali, attori, misicisti, clowns, formatori, counsellors e psicoterapeuti situati a sud di Vienna.

Dal 2003 facciamo Playback Theatre. Accanto al Playback lavoriamo anche con il teatro dell’oppresso di Augusto Boal (Brasile) e Reminiscence Theatre* di Pam Schweitzer (Gran Bretagna).

Regolarmente organizziamo o partecipiamo a workshop concernenti tematiche di genere e generazione come demenza, disoccupazione, dipendenza, violenza etc. sia in contesti pubblici che in seminari rivolte a organizzazioni non profit e ditte.

Nel 2008 lavoriamo soprattutto sul tema dell’incontro tra culture, storie sul partire e l’arrivare, essere accettati o esclusi sono rispecchiate attraverso il Playback Theatre. Lo scopo non è l’integrazione ma l’inclusione.

Se siete interessati ad altre informazioni [www.sog-theater.at](http://www.sog-theater.at) (per il momento disponibile solo in Tedesco ma speriamo a breve anche in Inglese)
Wir halten diese Art und Weise des Zusammentreffens – mit einer recht beschränkten Zahl an Teilnehmern – für den richtigen Weg, eine tiefe Begegnung und Auseinandersetzung mit den Themen zu ermöglichen, mit denen wir als Gruppen konfrontiert sind. In diesem Sinne richten wir uns auch an andere Gruppen, die an solchen Möglichkeiten interessiert sind: Wir würden uns über Rückmeldungen freuen, unter: office@sog-theater.at oder info@metapt.it

Abschließend ein paar Worte zu Meta Playback Theatre und SOG.Theater:


Interaktivität, Rückbezüglichkeit und Ritualität stellen für uns sowohl im Training als auch bei Aufführungen zentrale Punkte dar.


**SOG. THEATER** ist ein Team aus Theaterpädagogen, Schauspielern, Musikern, Clowns, Trainern, Beratern und Psychotherapeuten.


Von uns organisierte bzw. mit Theatermethoden unterstützte Workshops bieten interaktive Auseinandersetzung zu geschlechts- und generationenspezifischen Themen wie Demenz, Arbeitslosigkeit, Sucht, Gewalt, etc. – bei öffentlichen Veranstaltungen sowie für Gemeinden, Schulen, Organisationen und Unternehmen.


Nähere Informationen gibt es auf unserer Homepage, die bislang leider nur in deutscher Sprache verfasst ist – was sich aber bald ändern wird: [www.sog-theater.at](http://www.sog-theater.at)
This story is about two groups from two different countries who spent three days sharing practice in Vienna.

It was October 2007— Meta Playback Theatre, a professional Italian group and SOG. THEATER a professional Austrian group gathered for a 3-day event. The meeting emerged from the first time we (the Meta Playback Theatre group and Margarete Meixner, leader of SOG. THEATER) met at the 2nd European Playback Gathering (organized in Italy by Meta). We felt a common need to explore our respective styles and methods concerning Playback and the different way each of us worked with groups in different fields.

Step by step during the past year we've been exploring the idea that "little is beautiful". The idea that—from time to time, an intimate meeting or encounter or collaboration with other Playback groups or people builds practice.

The purpose of this kind of meeting has been to build deeper reciprocal knowledge, to share perspectives style and method, to promote mutual exchange both to enrich experience and to build common projects through out Europe. After one year of regular e-mail interactions SOG invited Meta to a three days meeting in Vienna as a starting point to know each other better in order to grow and enrich our perspectives.

During this meeting our two groups had the opportunity:
- to be conducted by an "external" trainer, exclusively adressed to our two groups together, who gave us a workshop about the topic of "fairytales and myths".
- to lead a part of the rehearsal
- to offer a public performance leaded by Margarete which provided ritual entries on stage of the Austrian group, of the Italian group and of the mixed Austrian/Italian group
- a round table to debrief the common experience and to plan further steps.

Making an evaluation of this first intimate meeting we have to say that we really enriched our perspectives and each one of the two groups increased its awareness about its personal, particular impact, style, method, energy.

We appreciate the warm atmosphere and the mature attitude that allowed deep discussion and feed-back which, we think, support professional and human growth even much more than the "we love each other so much" style. This one is only one, of course the basic, fundamental sure base to meet and to be recognised. It seems now we are ready to go further, to ask for, to welcome and to bear honest, severe feed-back in mind. What we mean is that personal respect and the appreciation of one’s way of being and acting are, of course, the fundamental base for cooperation. On this basis we are interested in honest feed-back which is necessary to improve our professional work.

Further steps:

As we realize how important it is for a group to confront its own way of work with one of others, we are now planning to meet again next spring/summer in Italy - also involving the T!ing group from Thessaloniki leaded by Petros Theodorou, with whom Meta has already a deep, strong, professional and human relationship.

The idea is that each of the three groups will be offering a workshop to the others to experiment on its own particular style. A round table will give the possibility to debrief this experience. Actually we believe that this kind of meeting - involving a comparatively restricted number of people - really gives us the opportunity sharing and going into deep concerning different topics that professional groups deal with in their practice.

Following this perspective it would be glad to know other professional groups which work in Playback Theater and are interested in building such occasions as the ones described. In this case please contact info@metapt.it or office@sog-theater.at

And now some words about Meta Playback Theatre and about SOG. Theater: Meta Playback Theatre: we are a group of four trainers and we propose a team approach working with groups, in a variety of professional contexts.

We are people of different human and professional experiences (philosopher, psychotherapist, psychodramatist, psychomotricist) and since 2002 we have been working together attempting to work
with “difference” as a possibility at its most, and with the dynamic tuning as the peculiarity of our approach in working with groups.

We take the challenge to grow in the plural, to be a microcosm that stimulates, supports and develops connection among individuals, groups and communities starting from ourselves. Interaction, circularity, rituality are our milestones, both in training and performance.

2008 will be working especially on the border line between autobiography, anthropology and creativity. During workshops, seminars, performances stories about private rituals building autobiography will be explored through objects belonging to material anthropology. A question will support and orient our work: how to stimulate deep/essential stories?

More information on www.metapt.it (English version under construction)

**SOG. THEATER** is a team of theatre educators, actors, musicians, clowns, trainers, consultants and psychotherapists, situated south of Vienna.

Since 2003 we are doing Playback Theatre. Beside playback theatre we are also working on "Theatre Of the Oppressed" by Augusto Boal (Brasil) and "Reminiscence Theatre" by Pam Schweitzer (GB).

We regularly organize or take part in workshops concerning gender and generation topics like dementia, unemployment, addiction, violence, etc. - as well in public events as in seminars for public and non profit organisations or firms.

2008 we will work especially on the topic of the “mix of cultures” – stories about leaving and arriving, being accepted and excluded, will be reflected by the method of Playback Theatre. The aim is not integration, but inclusion. Further information at www.soq-theater.at (German only, english coming).
During January, I had the privilege of traveling for 6 weeks in Thailand. Before I went, I tried through the IPTN and Centre for Playback Theatre to locate experienced playbackers, without success. But for me, one of the pleasures of travel is to introduce people to playback. It is often challenging to teach playback to people who have gathered for other purposes, and this article is my reflection on the experiences I had in two very different settings.

My trip began with 8 glorious days at Ko Yao Yai, an island which is not heavily developed for tourists (yet), as part of an international faerie gathering. What’s a faerie gathering? Impossible to describe … but here’s part of my favorite definition, written by Sister Constance Craving: “The faeries are both gay men, and men who prefer to use any other moniker that might describe them, as well as women who wish to be a part of the group, and people who choose not to be called men or women, and beings who choose not to be called people. Faeries are organized as a group attempting to create community out of ritual and cooperation, except for faeries who are attempting to create community out of subversion of process and structure, as well as some faeries who wish to create chaos, often celebrating it, often not admitting it.”

At the 5th annual Tropical Paradise faerie gathering, there were about 30 queer guys from all over the world – a very rich mix of cultures and styles. I’ve led playback workshops at faerie gatherings for years, all over the USA and twice in Europe, so I’m very familiar with harnessing the wild energy of these events and finding the focus required for playback. It helped that I arrived with a reputation in the faerie world for leading successful playback workshops at faerie gatherings for years, all over the USA and twice in Europe, so I’m very familiar with harnessing the wild energy of these events and finding the focus required for playback. It helped that I arrived with a reputation in the faerie world for leading successful playback workshops, so it wasn’t difficult to get the it a try. Also, a major component of these gatherings is a daily (well, almost daily) “heart circle”, in which a talisman or “talking stick” is passed around the circle, and the holder of the object speaks from the heart, while the others practice deep listening. With this foundation, many of the values needed for good playback are already part of the group ethic.

The first session was held on a gorgeous late afternoon, in a clearing surrounded by coconut palms, 20 yards from the beach. We did warm-up games, fluid sculptures, and pairs, stopping between exercises for a 5-minute appreciation of the glorious sunset. By their nature, the pairs brought up difficult personal issues, and to see my new friends taking risks both in telling and in enactment was very gratifying to me.

Two days later, there was interest in continuing, but also a desire to keep it light. We did some great games, and then enacted several longer stories. A former model of high-end clothing told of being with a group of very sophisticated models in Dubai for a photo shoot. They all ate green curry at an evening reception, and then were hit with extreme diarrhea the next morning at work, ruining their incredibly expensive designer clothes. Our group really coalesced around this, and the raucous laughter was heard for miles (er, excuse me, kilometers)! In addition, one of the audience members felt the impulse to jump up into the stage area as the photographer (a role I had not cast), and took lots of great pictures, one of which is shown here.

On our last evening together, we did a few more funny stories. The wonderful hours we spent doing playback together were definitely a great addition to the gathering, and helped greatly to bridge the differences in our diverse cultures.

Three weeks later, my travels wound down with a “Sustainability Study Tour”. A group of 17 adults and 1 child visited rural communities that are thriving examples of living “close to the land” – growing organic food, constructing buildings from natural materials found on or close to their sites (such as clay, straw, and bamboo), sharing tasks and decision-making, etc. My plan was to try to interest some of the tour group (all English speakers) in learning playback techniques, and then employ playback as a rich way of interacting with the rural Thai people who we were visiting.

At the end of our first day together, I gave a short description of playback, and then proposed a sound/movement game of sharing our names. I met resistance immediately. The evening was unseasonably cold, and people seemed more comfortable sitting bundled up at the tables, rather than standing in a circle. So we did it from our seats. One person was very shy and went off to bed, but all the others participated, and it was great fun. The energy had shifted, and at this point, several people said they were ready to get up and try more. I explained the “machine” theatre game, inviting anyone to become a machine part. About six people chose to participate. Then I introduced fluid
sculptures. Four actors did two fluids, to play back two participants’ memories of their high points of the day. After each fluid, as I usually do, I gave a bit of coaching, adding more layers to the actors’ technique (such as breaking up a straight line, and going for multiple levels rather than everyone standing). When I asked if anyone wanted to replace an actor, to my surprise, four other actors got up, and we did four more fluids. The next day, several people told me that these activities helped to warm the group up to each other, and those comments were very encouraging.

Then we had some very long days, and by evening people were too tired to continue. On a free day, we agreed to meet at 4PM for playback, but again I felt a huge degree of resistance in the group. Around 4:30, I led three theatre games, and then explained the form of stories - four actors were willing to try it out, but no one wanted to tell a story! After a long wait, two stories emerged, and the enactments were good. But the resistance continued throughout the trip, and although I offered many more times, we never found the right occasion to practice. So my goal of using playback to gather stories from local people did not reach fruition.

It’s interesting to compare these experiences, to try to identify the elements that allowed for such varying degrees of success. Here are some factors I consider relevant:

We had lots of free time at the faerie gathering, but not at the study group.

• At the faerie gathering, we had a common basis of shared experience through our “heart circles”. At the study group, there was no formal sharing in that way.

• I had several allies at the faerie gathering to help me spark interest in playback – people who had seen playback in the past, or who knew of playback being done at other such gatherings I’d been to. At the study group I enlisted a close friend who’s seen playback (but not for about 10 years) to help me get the group engaged, but I wish in retrospect that I had been more focused on our first days together to include others in planning playback activities. In particular, one of the group members had experience with improv and a bit of Theatre of the Oppressed, and I wish I had involved him right away in leading games and creating the vision together.

• The sustainability tour was by definition a “study” group. We were interacting as fellow students. I do think this contributed to the resistance to playback, since people weren’t all that comfortable sharing deeper parts of themselves. Also, as I got people into a circle at the start of the second session, and asked them to hold hands for a moment (just to get the circle to form better, since it was kind of a glob before that), I realized with a shock that this was the first time we had held hands as a group. Physical touch just wasn’t our style of interacting, and that also had a negative impact on the ease with which we could do playback forms.

• After the challenging second playback session with the sustainability tour, I solicited lots of one-on-one feedback. One person thought it would have worked better if I had talked more about playback theory and history (again, the “study” focus), giving more examples of how it is used to encourage social change. Also, rather than wait half an hour for the group to get focused, I could have asked how people were feeling about doing playback, and discussed the resistance openly. Another person praised my facilitation at the first session, and said that trying to meet again on our free day, when we all needed a big break from our intense schedule, was doomed from the start. She said the group tried to support what I wanted to do, but that it began to feel like my personal agenda, and that sparked a bit of rebellion. She felt I could have done better if I had introduced group games whenever possible, become known as the game guy, and then moved gradually to playback forms. But I must say that we really didn’t have time for group games until the last few days of the trip, and that these times tended to be after dinner, with lots of strong beer being passed around – not a great environment to teach playback. I realized more deeply than ever that there is a huge difference between casual theatre-style games and the focus, active listening, and vulnerability that are essential to playback theatre.

• In summing up these experiences, despite some personal disappointment, I have been careful not to be too hard on myself. Reading a group dynamic, and trying to steer a group into a direction it hadn’t planned to go, is not an easy thing. I’m interested in hearing from others who have attempted to introduce playback to groups that come together for other purposes – feel free to contact me at mountaine@gmail.com.

Mountaine is a founding member of Asheville Playback Theatre (North Carolina, USA), and is the Treasurer of the IPTN.
**Playing With Endless Potential—a personal view**

Tanisha Jowsey

“It’s amazing, you have to check it out!” my sister urged. Many moons ago I was a theatre sports performer/instructor and I thought I knew what this was going to be about. I had never seen a show and had just missed the introductory workshop due to travelling, but my sister had already told the playback company about me and they graciously allowed me to attend the six post-workshop follow-up training sessions. I didn’t feel too nervous when I walked in that night because I thought I basically knew what it was going to be about. We did some warm up games, which confirmed my suspicions. And then something foreign occurred. Four of them jumped up, listened to a tale of somebody’s day and then performed a snapshot of it. It was confusing, Mesmerising, Wondrous. And it left me with a peculiar feeling; like I’d just been slapped in the face by a parallel universe of endless possibility. I had no idea what had just happened. But before I could process it they did another one. And another! I wanted to find the remote and press pause while I figured out where they were hiding the Wizard of Oz. There was a method to these fluid sculptures, but it remained a marvellous mystery to me as sculptures dazzled and glittered before me.

So to my surprise, my first experience of playback was much more than I had anticipated; it struck a psychological chord that demanded my full attention. I was captivated by the honesty of both the story tellers and the performers. I found myself engaging with other people’s experiences in a sincere reflective way that I had never done in theatre sports and only occasionally in my drama studies. And I found myself disarmed as I revealed my own stories to virtual strangers, who then performed them back as my brothers and sisters. Fascinating! And this fascination continues.

As a medical anthropologist, my research interests in dementia have usually centred on the notion of self and identity; with particular interest in the intersubjectively negotiated narration of oneself. What I find intriguing is this; that people spend their lives establishing their identity and becoming comfortable with a certain projection of themselves to society (for better or worse). But dementia is like a pulled thread that slowly unravels this creation; ultimately robbing a person of that sense of identity they spent so long perfecting. I agree with such theorists as Nigel Rapport and Michael Jackson, in believing that the person I am is largely comprised of the stories I tell. Sure it is my actions and thoughts and beliefs; but when I retell my actions, thoughts and beliefs to others it becomes more real to me. It is like an image that exists in my head but when I draw it onto paper then it is much more real to both myself and others. The more I tell the same story (perhaps in different ways) the more it becomes part of my identity – my location of self and my experience of life. It takes on new meanings and it helps shape my thoughts about other experiences, people, ethical issues, and so forth.

“So, what has this got to do with playback?” I hear you ask.

Well it all started a few months ago when the Canberra Playback Theatre Company was asked to perform for an audience of people with moderate to severe dementia and their carers. And that’s when there was a collision of particles in my brain! I wondered whether there might be room for research on the potential Playback has for people with dementia in
helping them to renegotiate their identity through both the telling and viewing of their stories. Are there already systems in place for people with dementia to help them renegotiate their identity? Can someone with moderate dementia find meaning and pleasure in their daily living through Playback? Is there a possibility that Playback performers will learn more about themselves and refine their Playback skills through performing to people with dementia in a way that is unique?

The performance went well. We learned that people with moderate to severe dementia don’t tell stories so much as snippets; and that this required some alterations to the way we generally perform stories. And I learned that as dementia progresses life seems simpler; you have to hold on to the essence of an experience so much more earnestly. So in a way, the task of performing short forms was made easy for the players as the story tellers got to the important parts of their experiences very quickly (although sometimes so quickly that we didn’t have much detail to go on!). I also enjoyed the feeling of connection as our performance came to a conclusion. Looking around the room I saw some faces that reminded me of how I suspect my face looked the first time I experienced Playback.

Now I am toying with the tantalising madness of exploring these insights and questions for my doctorate. Specifically, I am interested in what kinds of programs are currently available to people with dementia and their carers, as well as how they are tested for efficacy. Ideally, I would like to create a playback program for this target audience and then determine on what grounds we can gauge its impact on things like narration of self and quality of life. It is possible that Playback Theatre may be an ideal vessel through which people with dementia can recreate their experiences, identity and quality of life.

I was introduced to playback in February 2007 and we did this performance for people with dementia in September 2007. This experience certainly has been a whirlwind for me - being introduced to Playback and then seeing it combined with my favourite research interests! Who knows what will be over the horizon? (Not me, but I’m sure it will make for one heck of a great story!)

Ms Tanisha Jowsey BA (Hons) MA
Tanisha is a medical anthropologist currently working in health policy research at the Australian National University. Her previous research experience has addressed social aspects and implications of dementia, breast cancer, alcohol-related harm, and pesticide use. Tanisha also dabbles in drama and painting.

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FROM THE BOARD

Membership Renewal

The new membership cycle for groups, practitioners and regular members begins July 2008 for two years.

Regional membership secretary will be in touch to prompt you to renew your membership and update your details for the new directory.

It is a good time to let any new PB friends that you know, about the IPTN and invite them to contact their regional membership secretary. In this way they can join the IPTN as well and become part of this global community that is growing every year.

To contact YOUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY see details page

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Art and Health International Network

For more information contact Rasia Friedler
saludarte@netgate.com.uy
An Audience Perspective
Stig Seig

First published as Silver City Scene, in The Ink, September 2007 (New Mexico)

To me, good improvisation is magic. At its best, it’s when someone takes a sideways look at life, extracts what is beautiful and ridiculous and holds it up for everyone to see. In my eyes, that’s what took place several months ago when Tucson Playback Theater visited Silver City.

Throughout the evening, the troupe’s members asked for stories from the audience and then wove them into improvised pieces. Some were in-depth scenes, others, abstract vignettes. But always, you could see the heart of what was shared. As I watched, I was moved by seeing all our experiences given so much respect. I rushed home after and told my father all about it over the phone. It was like a group healing, I remember saying.

That was also the night I really met Richard Mansbach, a Silver City resident who’s been involved in Playback around the country. Though we had never spoken much, I had a new appreciation and curiosity about him after that. A few weeks ago, as I was getting ready to pull up stakes here in Grant County, it felt right to interview him. I wanted to talk to someone who built so much around seeing the spark in life.

Soon after, we were sitting on his porch, and I had a jarring realization that this was going to be one of my last big experiences before leaving New Mexico. I was ready to glean whatever advice I could from Richard. When he started talking about all the times he had picked up and moved, I started asking questions. “Why does it work out?” he asked back. “It just does.”

With sparkling eyes and real vitality in his voice, he told me about his life. Born in Baltimore during WWII, he spent most of childhood moving around the country. He was in the South when the schools were being integrated, and then moved to Salt Lake City for high school and college. “Every part of the country had its issue,” he noticed, even as a youngster. “I think that was healthy for me.” Later, he went into the service and saw an entirely different, European perspective. Fresh into the real world, he was faced with the fact that “it’s not just the United States that has hopes and dreams and opinions.” He spent much of his younger years like most folks, trying to sort everything out. He worked with computers, moved around, got married. “I didn’t turn hippy until my 30s,” he said, laughing, adding, “counterculture, I’d rather say counterculture.” He explained that the older he became, the more he moved in that direction. As he went through a period of extreme searching, the whole country seemed to be doing the same. Est, intentional communities, Canada—those were all a part of his life.

A while after the end of one marriage, he embarked on another, which would last 25 years. Along with his new partner, he joined the Hunger Project, a global organization. During one of its benefits, he took the stage and started performing a song he’d made up. There was a professional band behind him, and he remembers one of the musicians leaning over to him mid-song and saying “Let it go.” For one of the first times in his life, he did, and went into “full boogie.” It was as though he was finally given permission to express himself. “I was high or days,” he said. “I can’t remember how he got into the improv track, but somehow, after a few classes and experiences in amateur theater, it came into his life. Instantly, he felt comfortable with the idea of accepting offers and building scenes. “For me,” he said, “improv is as easy as falling off a log.” About a decade ago, this took a new shape for him when he was teaching theater at the Fellowship Community, group in New York that lives by Rudolph Steiner’s teachings. After class, an elderly man told him about Playback Theater. “Richard,” he said, “if you like improv, there’s an improv I know that makes a difference.” He started off taking basic courses. The more into it he got, the more enamored he became. Since becoming involved, he’s had hardly taken a break.

Before finding Tucson’s troupe, he’d joined several companies, started a few of his own and brought Playback into situations one might not expect, including a men’s group and a prison. Hearing him speak about the form, one thing is obvious: how deeply he cares. “It’s invigorating, and it’s exciting theater. And it’s an honoring of the storyteller and the audience,” he said. “It’s about deep listening and then going in with your heart.” For him, being part of the process and being present is what’s important. “It’s not about going for laughs. It’s about going for the essence of the story,” he expressed.
“Watching people come alive, realize they can give the gift back—it’s very exciting.”

After a long while, we left the topic of Playback and wandered into specifics about his past. We spoke about his children, his careers, his wife’s death, his discovery of a new partner. And while all of those stories are special and important, instead of trying to explain his life, I’d rather describe his attitude toward it. Improv, he feels, is a way of looking at something bigger than himself, of getting perspective on his own drama. I think he just trusts that if he’s working it, in theater and in life, that it will be okay.

Especially in this moment, I think that’s awesome. It’s a few days before I take off, and I’m thinking about all that I have experienced out here. The joy, the embarrassment, the love, the loss, and the opportunity to be creative—I’m in such deep appreciation of all of it. Now, as I get ready to venture into the world, I’m thinking of Richard, choosing to step out first on stage. Often, he said, he doesn’t know what to say, but trusts that it will come. Though it’s taken a lifetime to let himself go, he knows he can. “It’s just who I am,” he said, smiling.

Tucson Playback Theater performs regularly at the Silco Theater in Silver City.

This article was submitted by Charles Sharr, IPTN Board Member and actor with Tucson Playback Theatre

What’s been happening?

What—Global Human Rights Performance
When—Sunday night, November 18, 2007
Who—Playback for Change
Where—Philadelphia

Eric Brunner (USA)

Playback for Change is no stranger to themed performances on human rights issues. It has done performances commemorating Martin Luther King Day, The Issue of Race, Sheroes (Women as Heroes) and Listening, Speaking Out, and Taking Action. On the day set aside for the Global Playback Theater performances, Playback for Change was ready and willing. Who knows if it was the cold, a Sunday night, or just the pre-Thanksgiving desire to stay in the house that affected the turnout because the audience was small? I’ve learned over the years to never underestimate a small audience and this night was no exception.

Sarah Halley conducted and warmed the group up for stories. The first story came from an older adult and one of our regular audience members, Regina, who shared her story of being fired for a government job in the early 1950’s for attending Paul Robeson concert and demonstrating against Jim Crow Laws. The second story was a tightrope walk for the conductor because as the teller stated, it was a story about someone else. But, as many of us know, it is always a story about the person telling even if they don’t think it is. The story was about a couple that had adopted an infant and that after six months of parenting, the baby was taken away by the adoption agency and given to another set of adoptive parents. The third and final story went to another level of depth. A long-time Human Service worker told a story of his early career when he had to pick up a youth from a juvenile detention center and take him home to his parents. The hitch was that the youth had been in the detention center because he had molested his little sister. While the youth was hoping to return to a normal life, when the teller went to drop him off his mother said she did not want him to live in their house any longer. The youth was 18 and therefore, not eligible for services because the system considered him an adult. The teller tried to get the young man to think of another relative to stay with, but the young man’s mother had spread the word among the family not to take him in. Finally, the teller called his supervisor and asked what he should do and the supervisor told him to, “Just leave him on the corner with his suitcase and drive away.” The story ended with the young man standing alone on the corner with his suitcase as the teller drove away.

The red thread of unwantedness weaved its way through the evening. Injustice was felt and understood. The audience was clearly moved by the last story with the teller choking back tears and saying that he had not thought of “Trevor” in years. Human Rights were on each audience member’s mind as they left the show. Yes, it was a small audience, but they filled the room with big stories. Playback for Change played them back and left their hearts on the wooden stage floor. A musical interlude between the last story and the closing washed us clean after the listening, but none will soon forget the stories that were told.

Eric Brunner is a Learning & Development Consultant Elkins Park, PA. A former member of Playback Philadelphia he is currently a member of Playback for Change and teaches at Temple University’s Human Resources Department and has recently published, Improvisational Skills: Achieving Workplace Success published in The Best of Active Training II: 25 One Day Workshops Guaranteed to Promote Involvement, Learning, and Change, Edited by Mel Silberman, Pfieffer PuA blishing, 2007. Eric.brunner@temple.edu
In late summer, over a long weekend, representatives from Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, Serbia, the UK and the USA gathered to meet with Jonathon Fox for a workshop on using playback theatre in response to civil and natural emergencies. The meeting took place at the delightful Biofalu Ecovillage Centre in Mariahalom about an hour south of Budapest hosted by an equally delightful group of Hungarians including Jozsef Paradi and Aniko Kaposvari who organised the event. The impetus for the workshop had been the PT response to the catastrophic effects of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath in New Orleans in 2005. This resulted in the formation of the NOLA Playback Theatre Company to provide a forum for those stories to be told. We were very fortunate to have a member of NOLA PT present, Enchante Franklin, who lives in New Orleans and shared some of her experiences of that time with us.

What was intriguing was Jonathon’s approach to the workshop as being one of an evolving understanding between us all, which emphasised the collaborative rather than the purely didactic. The result being one of caution and a developing understanding, in order to consider how to provide playback theatre safely and ethically in difficult and challenging situations. Crucially, Jonathon shared some of the learning from the PT response to Hurricane Katrina with us.

Some of the artistic and ethical challenges that could be expected include:

An outpouring of stories requiring courage and integrity to contain tellers and audience while being able to give the destructive force sufficient power for both teller and audience, in a way they can accept. The importance of not imposing a “happy ending” and the strong red thread that one story might be completed while others are likely to still be in process. The essential necessity was noted for playback companies to have space to tell their own stories (in rehearsal), both deepening the bond between members and creating the psychological and emotional space to receive the kind of stories that could be told.

The need for background information and cultural awareness was stressed and the importance of the audience being able to see themselves among the performers – always a challenge in multicultural societies and on other subtle levels too. The limits on connection with the audience should also be considered. The appropriate timing of any response is also a factor and it may be worth referring to some of the models of bereavement that can be found for guidance. (See references) It is later, when the initial reactions of shock and anger may have begun to subside, that the need to tell the stories and see them re-enacted may be best served.

The workshop concluded with an outline plan for future action including the establishment of a network for Emergency PT and the election of a committee to organise and ‘hold’ the concept as a reference point. In the meantime, a representative from each country present volunteered to be the initial contact person in their areas, so that action can be co-ordinated and cross-referenced and a resource base can be built.

Austria: Aniko Kaposvari ‘aniko.kaposvari@gmail.com’
Denmark: Nike Brandt Poulsen ‘nike@tdcspace.dk’
Finland: Helena Linna ‘helena.linna@espoo.opn.fi’
France & Germany: Daniel Feldhendler ‘feldhendler@em.uni-frankfurt.de’
Hungary: dr József Paradi ‘paradi@drparadi.t-online.hu’
Israel: Shirley Legum ‘shir-lee@inch.com’
Lithuania: Rasa Urbienes ‘rasaspr@yahoo.com’
Serbia: Tamara Klichek ‘tamara.klichek@yahoo.com’
UK: Brian Tasker ‘briantasker@hotmail.com’
USA: Kate Powers ‘KPowers@sustainablechange.org’

If you are interested in Emergency PT and would like to be kept informed of developments, please contact one of the people listed above or the Centre for Playback Theatre. You may also wish to become part of the network and volunteer to be the initial contact person in areas not listed above – contact the Centre for Playback Theatre: playbackcentre@hvi.net.

Brian Tasker (UK)

Brian Tasker is a haiku poet, dancer, a founder member of Stroud Playback and loves to travel to meet and play with other playbackers as the perfect holiday. He works as a counsellor and groupworker in an addictions treatment centre.
“...Hay un elemento educativo definido aquí sobre validar experiencia, sobre narrar, sobre actuar, sobre inclusión, sobre tomar riesgos, etc. tanto a través y alrededor de las historias...” Jonathan Fox. Acts of service.

Introducción:
El presente relato muestra el tránsito de personas del sur del mundo y su llegada al playback teatro. A través de una narración sencilla pretende compartir el recorrido hasta la experimentación y el trabajo con comunidades.

En el camino amarillo: Tránsitos hacia el Playback Teatro
En el año 1996 comencé mis estudios de psicología y de teatro, formando parte del elenco de teatro vocacional Universidad de Santiago de Chile con el que comencé a viajar por Chile facilitando la llegada del teatro popular a comunidades alejadas y de difícil acceso compartiendo y encontrándonos a través del lenguaje teatral.

Hacia el año 2000 apareció en mi vida, el primer puente de integración de estos dos caminos: Dramaterapia, conformándose posteriormente un grupo de experimentación que luego se transformó en el primer proyecto de compañía de teatro espontáneo en Santiago de Chile, llamada Impromptu haciendo honor a la compañía de J.L. Moreno. Es en este espacio encontre en el trabajo de Maria Elena Garavelli en el que se hacía una referencia al trabajo de playback teatro de Jonathan Fox.

En esta experiencia hubo aspectos metodológicos que abrieron una puerta en mi corazón: el rescate de la tradición oral, el que nosotros mismos nos transformamos en un puente para un ritual, la estética teatral... y la magia de transformar los relatos en teatro facilitando tránsitos por la vida misma.

Mis vuelos se dirigieron hacia el movimiento latinoamericano ya desarrollándose desde los años 80, tuve la posibilidad de apoyar proyectos de trabajo con diferentes comunidades y grupos, conocer y participar con en talleres e intervenciones con Maria Elena Garavelli (Argentina) Rasia Friedler (Uruguay), Moysés Aguiar (Brasil), entre otros, de quienes me encuentro profundamente agradecida, puesto ayudaron a que cientos de personas en Latinoamérica conociéramos un teatro ritual que llega a la comunidad para y por la comunidad, un teatro inacabado e imperfecto como la vida misma.

Siguiendo el camino en Chile Impromptu -la compañía- se disuelve en 2004 y con un grupo de colegas en el mismo año conformamos TransHumantes con enfoque eminentemente social trabajando con comunidades educacionales y grupos vulnerados en sus derechos.

En 2005 ya de viaje a Francia gracias a una beca de asistente español me descubrí participando en congresos y encuentros profesionales sobre la línea de trabajo arte teatral- salud, en teatro del oprimido y playback teatro. En taller con la compañía Théâtre du Bouche à Oreille dirigida por Yves Postic, aprendí diversos matices de la metodología observando líneas diferenciadoras y comunes al teatro espontáneo. Es aquí, a través de fotografías que conocí la red internacional de playback, un mundo nuevo, recuerdo ver los rostros, las esculturas, los coros, las escenas y observar las diversas corporalida des, nuestras diferencias nuestras similitudes.

Volvi a Chile el año 2006, el movimiento de teatro espontáneo había cruzado totalmente la Cordillera de los Andes, fui parte de la organización del primer encuentro de teatro espontáneo en Santiago de Chile, fue tiempo de partir de Transhumantes, para profundizar en playback teatro e intentar que esos tránsitos de la Europa aterrizaran también en Chile.

Es en este momento que surge ALAS espacio-taller que cada año busca transformarse en escuela, teniendo como iniciativa principal el compartir una experiencia de profundización en Teatro Espontáneo y su vínculo con el Playback persiguiendo la experimentación artística y la multiplicación de grupos.
que se interesen en llegar a las comunidades y potenciar sus encuentros.

Hacia finales de 2006 surge la compañía Vuelo, luego de la realización del taller Alas, con quienes decidimos viajar al IX festival internacional de playback a realizarse en Brasil 2007, jugábamos con la metáfora del mago de OZ, que íbamos por el camino amarillo, era importante poder saltar con nuestras Alas desde Sudamérica al norte, trascender también barreras del idioma, diferencias socioculturales y económicas para encontrarnos, compartir, conocernos y dialogar.

Es en este Festival que me descubro el día de la finalización, en un instante, sentada en la silla del narrador, con tres tradutoras, Magda (Brasil), Rasia (Uruguay) y Rea (Australia) conectando mi escena, eligiendo a Baba (Australia) quien me representaría "estamos aquí" decía el, mientras Rea pedía que mis compañeros de Vuelo se pusieran de pie para ser aplaudidos por estar ahí, todas y todos yo miraba desde la silla, esos rostros del mundo ya no eran los de las fotografías en Francia estaban ahí sonriendo.

Luego en el Taller con Jonathan Fox, su forma de trabajar y suavidad de su conducción, nosotros pudiendo integrar el énfasis que se le da a la historia, que es ella suficiente, la importancia de poder recorrer nuestras propias historias para no temerlas, cada lugar y la confianza depositada en el compañero, las diferentes formas de abordar las estructuras de representación de cada compañía, la entrada del ritual, su desarrollo y sus cierre, lo esencial del playback teatro.

Rescribiendo mi tránsito hacia el playback teatro, pienso en casi diez años, en diversos grupos, niños en circuito de calle, profesionales con burnout, personas con enfermedades crónicas, mujeres víctimas de violencia intrafamiliar, personas con depresión, trabajo en escuelas, niños, jóvenes, adultos, adultos mayores, salas, gimnasios, desde el norte a sur de Chile, participando con compañías en Latinoamérica, grupos en derechos humanos, en prevención de consumo de drogas, enfermedades de transmisión sexual... rostros, sonrisas, historias transitando una transformación: teatro, un ritual, un encuentro con nosotros y nosotras mismas en nuestras propias historias.

"...aprendimos a escuchar profundamente y a encontrar el valor de actuar sin estar seguros de captar la historia correctamente. Aprendimos la importancia de un marco ritual en el cual entretejer nuestras efímeras historias, un marco de elementos familiares...”

Jo Salas Improvisando la vida real.

Vuelo la Compañía.
(Extracto artículo Wetripantu: el nacimiento de una compañía, entregado en Brasil)

El viaje de la compañía Vuelo comienza en Diciembre de 2006, con la intención de realizar un trabajo arduo, serio y profesional. Nosotros y nosotras interesados en la vinculación de las diversas áreas de intervención sociocomunitarias y el arte, buscamos establecer puentes estéticos entre la tragedia y la belleza de lo humano por medio de un salto metafórico que nos permita recorrer historias y facilitar el dialogo entre las comunidades.

Esta estética va apareciendo de los rincones de nuestro trabajo, de nuestros encuentros, de las comidas compartidas, de los e-mail que se vuelven poemas co- construidos, de nuestros ensayos y presentaciones. Eslabones estéticos que se han ido convirtiendo en colores y formas, en miradas sobre la escena, la narración, el actor, el Ser compañía que se concretiza en Zapatos de Colores, elección de líneas metodológicas, formas diversas y múltiples de poner nuestros pies en tierra para empezar a volar.

En el transcurso de este viaje, Vuelo esta siempre preparándose para dar el salto, ese salto a la metáfora viva, al relato que se mueve en la escena. Volviéndonos participes de un proceso de transformación colectiva. Donde en el momento del relato, nosotros ejecutantes-actores y la audiencia publico-protagonista nos volvemos acróbatas metafóricos, acróbatas andando en bicicleta en una cuerda floja, sin saber si lo lograremos. En esta búsqueda estética singular y propia intentamos que en cada historia que alguien nos regala, atrapar esa corriente interna del narrador y juntarla con las nuestras para devolver una mezcla que llegue al público intentando poner en nuestra escucha, humildad, simplicidad, regalarnos con verdad sintiéndonos como acróbatas metafóricos, acróbatas andando en bicicleta en una cuerda floja, sin saber si lo lograremos. En esta búsqueda estética singular y propia intentamos que en cada historia que alguien nos regala, atrapar esa corriente interna del narrador y juntarla con las nuestras para devolver una mezcla que llegue al público intentando poner en nuestra escucha, humildad, simplicidad, regalarnos con verdad sintiéndonos como acróbatas metafóricos, acróbatas andando en bicicleta en una cuerda floja, sin saber si lo lograremos. En esta búsqueda estética singular y propia intentamos que en cada historia que alguien nos regala, atrapar esa corriente interna del narrador y juntarla con las nuestras para devolver una mezcla que llegue al público intentando poner en nuestra escucha, humildad, simplicidad, regalarnos con verdad sintiéndonos como acróbatas metafóricos, acróbatas andando en bicicleta en una cuerda floja, sin saber si lo lograremos. En esta búsqueda estética singular y propia intentamos que en cada historia que alguien nos regala, atrapar esa corriente interna del narrador y juntarla con las nuestras para devolver una mezcla que llegue al público intentando poner en nuestra escucha, humildad, simplicidad, regalarnos con verdad sintiéndonos como acróbatas metafóricos, acróbatas andando en bicicleta en una cuerda floja, sin saber si lo lograremos. En esta búsqueda estética singular y propia intentamos que en cada historia que alguien nos regala, atrapar esa corriente interna del narrador y juntarla con las nuestras para devolver una mezcla que llegue al público intentando poner en nuestra escucha, humildad, simplicidad, regalarnos con verdad sintiéndonos como acróbatas metafóricos, acróbatas andando en bicicleta en una cuerda floja, sin saber si lo lograremos. En esta búsqueda estética singular y propia intentamos que en cada historia que alguien nos regala, atrapar esa corriente interna del narrador y juntarla con las nuestras para devolver una mezcla que llegue al público intentando poner en nuestra escucha, humildad, simplicidad, regalarnos con verdad sintiéndonos como acróbatas metafóricos, acróbatas andando en bicicleta en una cuerda floja, sin saber si lo lograremos. En esta búsqueda estética singular y propia intentamos que en cada historia que alguien nos regala, atrapar esa corriente interna del narrador y juntarla con las nuestras para devolver una mezcla que llegue al público intentando poner en nuestra escucha, humildad, simplicidad, regalarnos con verdad sintiéndonos como acróbatas metafóricos, acróbatas andando en bicicleta en una cuerda floja, sin saber si lo lograremos. En esta búsqueda estética singular y propia intentamos que en cada historia que alguien nos regala, atrapar esa corriente interna del narrador y juntarla con las nuestras para devolver una mezcla
Playback Theatre in Chile – a personal view

Loreto Campusano

“...there is an educational element defined here about the validation of human experience, about telling, acting, including, taking risks, both in and around the stories...” Jonathan Fox. Acts of service.

I. Introduction
This text details the way some people from the south of the World arrived to Playback Theatre. We are trying to share our experience on the path that led us to our experimentation and our work with communities.

On the yellow brick road: A Path toward Playback Theatre
I started studies in psychology and theatre in 1996. I joined the teatro vocacional Universidad de Santiago de Chile and I started performing throughout Chile. We brought theatre to communities that were far from urban centers and difficult to access sharing experiences using the language of theatre.

In 2000 I encountered Dramaterapia experimental theatre group that was a bridge, enabling me to integrate two roads that had been separate for me up until that time. Dramaterapia became the first Compañía de Teatro Espontáneo at Santiago de Chile. We called it Impromptu, in honor of J. L. Moreno’s company. During this time I discovered María Elena Garavelli’s work and a reference to Jonathan Fox and Playback Theatre.

Methodological aspects of the playback method spoke to my heart: the rescuing of the oral tradition, the fact that we ourselves become a bridge to facilitate the ritual, the theatrical aesthetics, and the magic of transforming the stories in theatre, a celebration of transitions in real life. Since then I made links with the extensive Latin American playback world (developing since the 80s) working with different communities and groups and met and share workshops with María Elena Garavelli (Argentina), Rasia Friedler (Uruguay), and Moysés Aguiar (Brasil), among other practitioners who have helped hundreds of people in Latin America to find this ritualistic theatre that is created from and for the community, an form of theatre that is both incomplete and imperfect, just like real life!

When Impromptu was dissolved in 2004 I joined with colleagues to create TransHumantes, a company with a social focus working with educational communities, and groups whose rights have been violated. It was in France in 2005 where I was based to teach Spanish, that social theatre opened more for me as I assisted in theatre and health projects, with Theatre of the Oppressed and with Playback Theatre. One workshop led by Yves Postic from Théâtre du Bouche à Oreille, introduced me to many of the nuances of the different methods and helped me to better understand the similarities and differences between Playback and other forms. Here I also found out about IPTN which was a new world for me. I remember watching the playback, looking at the faces, the sculptures, the choruses and the scenes, and thinking about the similarities and differences with my own work.

On returning to Chile in 2006 the Teatro Espontáneo movement had crossed the Andes Mountains and I was involved in organizing the first Teatro Espontáneo meeting in Santiago de Chile. It was at this time that I left Transhumantes and turned my attention to Playback Theatre. The company I belong to - Vuelo - was formed at the end of 2006. I also wanted to bring my European experience to Chile and initiated the ALAS workshop with the main aim being to share experiences in Teatro Espontáneo and Playback Theatre. Alas stresses artistic experimentation and the creation of new companies that have an interest in bringing these...
Playback Theatre in Chile – a personal view

Cont from p.35
theatre forms to different communities.

Member of Vuelo decided to go to the IX International Playback Meeting in Brazil 2007. Using the the Wizard of Oz “yellow brick road” metaphor we felt it was important to us to transcend language barriers, and sociocultural and economic differences and to share, to meet others and to create a communication between the south and the north. At this international event I found myself on the playback stage, sitting in the teller’s chair, surrounded by three translators: Magda (Brasil), Rasia (Uruguay), and Rea (Australia), and poised to tell my story! I chose Baba (New York) to be me in the story. During the enactment Baba announced, “We are here”; others from my company were in the audience and Rea the Vuelo company members to stand – we received an ovation just for being there. I sat watching from the chair, I could see all those smiling faces from all over the world, not in pictures as it was when I was in France but in that very room.

After the International Congress we did a workshop with Jonathan Fox where we learnt about his way of working and how soft his conducting style feels. We were able to grasp the emphasis we must put on each story, the importance of ‘visiting’ and of not being afraid of our own story. We learnt about the trust we must have in each other, the different ways to use the different forms and the about the ritual – how it develops and how to close the performance. We learned the essence of Playback Theatre.

As I revisit my path toward Playback Theatre in this paper I remember the ten years of working with different groups. I remember homeless kids, professionals experiencing burnout, chronically ill people, battered women, depressed people, the children, the young people, the adults, the older people. I remember our work with other companies, with groups working on human rights, on drug addiction prevention, on sexually transmitted diseases. I remember faces, smiles, and stories in transformation: the theatre, the ritual, and an encounter with us and our own stories.

“…we learnt to listen deeply and to find the value of action without being sure about how accurately we captured the story. We learnt the importance of a ritualistic frame in which we can weave our ephemeral stories, a frame of familiar elements…” Jo Salas Improvising Real Life.

Vuelo the Company
(Extract from Wetripantu: el nacimiento de una compañía, Brasil 2007)

The Vuelo company started in December 2006 with the goal of doing hard professional work. We are interested in using art to bridge several areas in the community; to establish aesthetic bridges between human tragedy and beauty using metaphors that allow us to walk through stories and facilitate the dialogue between communities.

Our aesthetics has grown slowly from our work, our meetings, our shared meals, the emails that become co-created poetry, our rehearsals and performances. We have discovered aesthetic links in colors and forms, in eye contact during scenes, in narrative, in the company as a whole, in colored shoes, in the methods we use, in the way we have our feet on the ground so we can fly.

Vuelo is always ready to jump; to jump to the metaphor, to jump to the narrative that transcends the scene. We believe we become part of a process of community transformation. Listening to the stories we feel that together, actors and audience are poised on a bicycle high on a tight-rope wondering if we’ll make it to the end. We enter a quest to find the unique and personal aesthetics of each story we receive as a gift. We seek the internal flow in the narrator’s story and mix it with our own, and reshape it into a product that touches the audience. We hope we are simple and humble in our listening as we try to feel our way as theatre makers.

Through this continuous quest we opened our wings and traveled to Sao Paulo for the IX International Playback Theatre Network Congress and to Valparaiso to the II Latin American Forum of Teatro Espontáneo.

Vuelo are committed to working with several groups and in non traditional spaces to reach different communities and their stories. We are:
Carlos Chico Ramos (psicologist, psicodramatist);
Karem Reyes Vega (journalist, theatrical pedagogist);
Liliana Quijada Garrido (Musician, Music terapist, Dramaterapist, psicodramatist);
Loreto Campusano Saravia;
Magdalena Rivera Becker (physician, sex therapist);
Nadia Gómez Espinoza (Actress, theatrical pedagogist) and
Rodrigo Palacios Baza (lawyer, dramaterapist and counselor).

Loreto Campusano Saravia is a 31 year old Chilcan woman. She is an accomplished Clinical Psychologist who works in Public Health and Family Violence. An actress and conductor with VUELO Theatre Company she is a specialist in Theatre-in-Health settings. She has experience in Vocational Theatre (Universidad de Santiago de Chile), Teatro Espontáneo, with Psychodrama, dramatherapy, playback theatre, theatre of the oppressed, and as a group coordinator and Hospital Clown. Zircular@gmail.com
How can Playback Theatre respond to the needs of diverse communities in the UK?

Celebrate the diversity of the growing Playback Theatre movement in the UK.

Recognize to development of new companies with very specific visions –
True Heart in London, a young Chinese group
Breathing Fire, a Black women's group, in Bristol
Tarte Noire, an all women's group based in Devon

A long weekend of Playback workshops and performances with friends from across the UK and beyond in this wonderful waterside location.

When: Thurs 30th October – Sun 2nd November
Cost: £180, some bursaries available.
Venue: The Mount Batten Centre (fully accessible) 20 mins. from Plymouth Airport.
For more information:
Arnet Donkin
email: mirrormirrorplayback@yahoo.co.uk
Telephone: +44 (0)1752 269695

The weekend will be a mixture of workshops led by some of the UK’s leading Playback teachers, performances and discussion.

Perform with the 2008 Gathering Playback Company as a part of the Plymouth Respect Festival.

4th UK Playback Gathering 2008
Playback Theatre: a method for intercultural dialogue

by Daniel Feldhendler

Abstract - As a particular form of interactive theatre, PT strives to encourage dialogue and create connections among people. In his article, the author introduces the method’s basic forms and practical implementations as employed in his teaching at the J.W. Goethe University in Frankfurt/Main (Germany). A brief historical overview highlights the paths of his own practice-based research. The article shows how, through action methods, active self-reflection can encourage autonomy and self-determination in post-secondary education. Moreover, the author investigates how PT can be useful both for mediation and for sensitization in multicultural situations. Further examples show how these innovative forms can be implemented in teacher training and EU projects in order to foster the development of democratic participation in linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic education.

For full article go to http://epu.ucc.ie/scenario/2007/02/feldhendler/04
Introducing New Membership Secretaries

There have been some changes in those people managing membership business in some regions. The Board wants to thank the outgoing membership secretaries Antonio Ferrara, Michele Chung, Josef Paradi, Riitta Harilo and Christina Samy who have now finished their term in this role. They have made an important contribution and given significant time to this job.

At the same time, we want to welcome the new membership secretaries Magda Miranda, Anne Chua, Aniko Pogany, and Maria Oivo to wish them a very fruitful time that will no doubt be full of activity. Anne Chua will also be the membership secretary who now covers the region that includes India, Nepal, Sri Laka, and Bangladesh.

To date the work of the IPTN on is done on a voluntary basis and we very much appreciate all that volunteering work that many of you are doing to keep the PB community well connected across the world. A special thank you at this time to all membership secretaries for your effort and time.
International Recognition—Jonathan Fox

IPTN President Reflects

Aviva Apel-Rosenthal

Adapted by the editor from the speech delivered during the ceremony in Kassels, 30 April 2008.

On behalf of IPTN I was honored and exited to take part in the ceremony to honor Jonathan.

In Playback Theater we offer and are offered the chance for unique dialogue. We don’t have to agree with every point of view present in each story, but we can listen to the voice of the teller, the heart of the story, to embody the experience, and by doing Playback for each other, we can begin to build bridges across difference and provide healing, tolerance, comfort, compassion and to build trust.

The recognition by the Faculty of Education and Humanistic Science at Kassel University honors and affirms all of us who practice playback theatre internationally.

This recognition honors the humanistic values and tradition that are at the heart of Playback method.

In the Jewish tradition they say that Tikun Olam – ‘repairing’ the world – is done ‘bit by bit’ and that each of us is called to do this in our own way. Playback has become a way of ‘Tikun Olam’ – bit by bit, story by story.

I would like to share a story – a short moment from that day. It was the 30th of April the Memorial Day in Israel for the victims of the Holocaust. As part of the ritual of this day, I lit a candle in my hotel room in memory of my lost family, and then I went to celebrate with everyone at an event to honor Jonathan’s – Tikun Olam – his contribution to a better world. I also wish to express my deep appreciation to Prof. Heinrich Dauber from Kassel University and his way of Tikun Olam – repairing the world.

The ceremony was accompanied by a beautiful music and ended up late in the evening with drinks, buffet and spontaneous playback performance with Veronica from London, Josef from Hungary, So from Stockholm, Alfred from Kassel and Eve from France performing, with esteemed co-founder, Jo Salas conducting.

Thank you Jonathan for giving us the gift of Playback Theater, and thank you Prof. Heinrich Dauber and the Faculty of Humanistic Education for ensuring that the story of Jonathan and Playback Theater will be heard and Jonathan Fox will join the inspiring chain of Scientists, Artists, Philosophers the great teachers of our time.

Thank You Jon, Jo & the ORIGINAL COMPANY

Next Issue

a full report by Prof Heinrich Dauber

Photos by Aviva Apel & Markus Huhn. For more photos and film footage go to www.projektpurpur.de

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