Real Fiction Theatre as Drama Education

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the potential for the qualitative practice of ethno-drama to examine social issues in schools, such as social labelling, from a student perspective. I argue that the writing of 'real fiction' theatre, which involves observing and recording voices from the authors' experience of others, can work in the lives of students to understand and express their social situation (Welsh, 2014). Nine students and three teachers from a state government secondary school participated in the research. The thesis utilises an issue-based theatre-making theory to approach social issues in education. Labelling, explored throughout, is characterised as a naming language and this definition is built upon and expanded through the application of practice-led playwriting research methodology. The outcome of the research includes interview data with student and teacher participants exploring the social phenomenon of labelling, both in terms of students being labelled by teachers and peer to peer labelling in the school context. Raw data were collected and presented in the form of original student writings created in a classroom engagement and a dramatic play including conflated versions of student participants' monologues. This practice-led research impacts arts practice through its pedagogical engagement and education through its creative approach.

In the data collection phase of the research, student participants had the opportunity to express themselves through monologue writing and this practice in turn provided vital data about how they view and behave in their social world. Student participants commented, through the practice of monologue writing, that the labels that matter to them are the ones used in their social world, in the schoolyard as opposed to the classroom. By conducting research through the use of a specific, practice-led methodology, based on the writing of theatre applied to a drama classroom, this work makes an original contribution to the field of practice-based and/or practice-led research in education.

KEY TERMS: real fiction, practice-led research, social labelling, ethno-drama, qualitative practice.

STUDENT DECLARATION

I, Scott Stewart Welsh, declare that the PhD thesis entitled *Real Fiction Theatre as Drama Education: Rethinking Disturbing Labels*, is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, bibliography references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signature:

Date: 24-12-2015

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PUBLICATIONS by Scott Welsh MPhil

- Published paper, 'Real Fiction: Theatre as Creative Research ', presented at The 2009 *Material Inventions: Applying Creative Arts Research.* The paper explored playwriting practice as a research methodology. An edited version of the paper was published as a book chapter in September 2014.
- 'Fixation & Needle Fixation' in *Language & Psychoanalysis*, 3:1 2014, published paper based on a chapter from my Masters thesis.
- 'The Trouble with Writing Reality', published in the refereed *Conference Notes*: Popcaanz Conference Brisbane 2013.
- 'The Outcaste Weakly Poet as Ethno-drama', published in the refereed *Conference Notes*: Popcaanz Conference Hobart 2014.
- 'Death the Great Leveller' published in *The Society for Socialist Studies* Journal' Facebook page.
- Geelong Advertiser Short Story Competition winner 2009 with a story on 'The Newtown Birdman' from Sydney's inner-west.
- Wrote and conceptualized 'The No Teeth People', an original poem/real fiction radio documentary, in collaboration with producer Dusk Dundler and ABC Radio National.

PRESENTATIONS

- Presented a paper at the Popcaanz Conference, Australia and New Zealand Popular Culture Association, Hobart, 2014. The paper was titled 'The Outcaste Weakly Poet Stage Show as Ethno-drama' and is due for publication in the soon to be released *Conference Proceedings*.
- Presented a paper at the Popcaanz Conference, Brisbane, 2013. The paper was titled 'The Trouble with Writing Reality'.
- Presented a paper at *The Visual Imagination Across Boundaries Conference Assumption University*, 2010 in Bangkok. The paper was based on the use of multi-media methods in contemporary performance, including my own work as a practitioner.
- Presented a paper at the *Popcaanz Conference Auckland, 2011*. The paper was titled 'Real Fiction Theatre and the Biography of Voice'. It considered the writing of plays a form of biography.
- Presented a paper at the *Popcaanz Conference*, Melbourne, 2012. The paper was titled 'Real Fiction Research and the Editing Process'.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introducing real fiction

There have been numerous practice-based and practice-led projects that have engaged secondary school students in artistic practice as a way of reflecting on their social surroundings (Betzian, 2007; Freidman & Holzman, 2011). One example referred to throughout this research is the 'No Outsiders Project' (Atkinson & Depalma, 2009), using drama practice as a way of helping school children understand and accept different forms of family structure, sexual equality and social inclusion in education. My thesis describes a writing workshop for students, conducted in a drama classroom at a Victorian state government school. The structure and content of the workshop synthesised contemporary drama education and my own approach to theatre-making.

I believe a playwriting method can form the foundation of a student-centred drama education practice that interrogates and investigates labels in education and was practised in a school as a part of my research. In this thesis, I describe how I used this method with a teacher in a drama classroom, firstly to encourage students in an educational setting to create monologues using a particular practice. Secondly, the procedure was utilised to reinterpret the material created by students. The outcome of this is a play based on student perceptions of the theory and practice of social labels and labelling in education. The play data was written by me but is based on the creative input of students through their monologues. My thesis then describes and analyses students' experience through a research engagement in which data was collected in the form of original monologues by student participants. It also explores my practice in some detail – its origins and its application to a school environment.

In my work as a theatre practitioner, I articulate my practice as real fiction (Welsh, 2014). This problematic and paradoxical term is used to describe a form of social construction in which 'empirical reality'[i] and fiction are considered conceptual equals. They are united by our tendency to talk into existence what John Shotter calls 'conversational realities' (Shotter, 1993, p.11). What is psychologically and socially 'real' (Reiber, 1983, p.97) becomes contestable, a view held by social constructionists or conversational theorists such as

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Berger and Calabrese (1975) or Searle (1979) or, more recently and with an emphasis on conversational situations, the work of Shotter. In the context of Shotter's conversational reality, our understanding of experience in reality is reconstituted and negotiated through the medium of conversation. In conversation, participants' points of view are conceived by experiencing and speaking subjects, the meaning of words and concepts developed through a process of negotiation between the speaker and listener. Meaning is fluid in the context of conversation.

Therefore, when I speak of real fiction, I am contending that what we tend to perceive as reality is, like fiction, constructed and, in the case of theatrical plays, materialises in the realm of conversation. The theatrical play, its dialogues and/or monologues, is no more or less than a conversation, in which we are either speakers or listeners. In the creative process, such a conversation takes place in social reality between the writer and the subject of the writing. From this context, both dialogue and monologue are constructed through the observation of 'speech rhythms'. The idea of speech rhythms has a considerable relationship with Searle's 'speech acts', where speech 'tokens' ensure participation in conversation (1979, p.178). For example, in certain subcultures, explored at length in my practice, the use of slang 'I done x or y' rather than 'I did x or y' reveals to the listener the information the speaker wishes to disclose. Simultaneously, the speaker reveals himself as 'us' and not 'them'. The speech token grants him admission into conversational worlds from which he might otherwise be excluded.

According to Searle, speech acts can be 'carved up' into various constituent parts that provide a wealth of social and psychological data, including the unique tones and rhythms of a person's speech (Searle, 1979). The process of monologue writing is explained in considerable detail in this thesis, which ultimately describes introducing the practice of real fiction drama writing, or writing that uses speech rhythms drawn from social reality and experience, to a participant group of Year 11 high school drama students, and recording these original student monologues in a play.

My work, both as a practitioner and researcher, belongs to the category of ethno-drama (Saldaña, 2005) or 'Reality Theatre' (Perry, 2007) to which theatre-maker and theorist Johnny Saldaña refers in his work, involving 'real' participants in the process of making theatre. Much of Saldaña's work blurs the line between action-based sociological research and theatre. In the next chapter, I refer extensively to Saldaña's notion

of ethno-drama and consider myself to be working within a similar, though not identical, methodology. It is indeed my hope that the work I undertake as a practitioner and, in this thesis, as an educational theorist, like Saldaña's, will '…capture verisimilitude and universality through their primary sources for monologue and dialogue: reality' (Saldaña, 2005, p.3).

This thesis explores the notion of 'ethno-drama' and its relationship with real fiction research. It entails an assessment of the practice of social labelling in various environments including local and international examples of social and educational institutions. It uses a creative, student-centred and practice-led methodology to contribute to the literature on applied theatre, and the potential for drama education and monologue writing to comment on social and conversational practices in the schoolyard and the classroom, such as labelling of students both by teachers in the classroom and within the school system, as well as peer labelling in the adolescent social world (Thomas, 1997).

1.2 Thesis ontology

Ontology might best be defined as pertaining to being. Aristotle's account of the term refers to the notion that I might say 'I am a man' and the being of a man is therefore the substance of who or what I am (Aristotle 350 BC, trans. Benjamin Jowlett 1998, p. 19). Therefore when I speak of the ontological position of a piece of research, I am referring to the origins of the narrative voice in experience and in nature, where the author is situated in what the work supposes the author is made of – his substance. Whilst I do not intend to engage in a philosophical argument on the nature of substance, research such as this has many origins and a description of the origin of this work may be useful here to gain an understanding of the type of research contained in this work. I am not a professionally trained schoolteacher. I do not come from the classroom. Nor am I a psychologist. The origins of my work come from practice in the theatre as a writer and performer.

In 2001, I received a grant from the City of Greater Geelong to complete and present a theatrical script based on my study of mental illness and the family. The result was a play titled *There's a naked man in my lounge-room: An exploration into mental illness and the family* (Welsh, 2009). The play was well received by community groups and the local theatre audience who attended, and went on to be performed at Blackbox Theatre, Victorian Arts Centre as part of the 2001 Melbourne Fringe (Welsh, 2009).

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The central objective of the play was to explore and provide insights into the issue of mental health and the family. In this sense the theatre audience was secondary to the social context of the performance, not unlike The Laramie Project, a documentary play written in response to a gay bashing in a small American town (Kaufman, 2001). My ontological position, then, is as a theatre-maker using performance as a means of making social comment.

In 2002, I began researching another potential performance using a similar method, referred to quite extensively in my recent publications and presentations, dating from 2009 to 2014. *Barcode 30!!7 307* (Welsh, 2009) took between four and five years to develop and was based on my own experience, conflated to conceal identity, and on various characters I met through my foray into contemporary Australian crime and poverty. The work entailed a way of life I adopted for a period, becoming the character in the play, absorbing as much of his world as I could, ultimately altering myself in the process and recording this alteration in the form of an exploration into domestic violence and criminal behaviour, using theatrical conventions to describe the experience. This altered self, referred to in the play, is also recorded in my contribution to the collaborative *No teeth people: the autobiography of Scott Scary Teeth Welsh* presented on ABC Radio National in 2010 and repeated in 2012 (Dundler & Welsh, 2013).

As a playwright, I am interested in drama education because I believe that what we do inside the theatre has relevance outside the theatre, in society. My recent interest in drama education is grounded in negative labelling and labels, their disturbing quality and in understanding them from the perspective of students, all of whom I argue have the potential to be labelled. This comes from my own experience in the world as an alienated being in society and this has been the subject of much of my creative work. My work is often misunderstood inside the theatre because I do not use the conventional means of creation. My characters seem sometimes to alienate the audience because they come from outside the realm of their experience. My presence in the theatre and throughout the process is important so that the represented experience, belonging to the characters whom I have encountered during the process, can be conceived as research and the actors (as well as the characters often invited into the 'performance') as 'research participants'.

I recently contributed a chapter, 'Real Fiction: Theatre as Creative Research', to a book entitled *Material Inventions: Applying Creative Arts Research* (Welsh, 2014). In this chapter, I explain that, as with Willett's observations of Brecht's work in his 1978 book of writings and interviews, I view my work primarily as 'education' (Willet, 1974). As a playwright, I have argued with many colleagues about what theatre ought to be doing and that, rather than merely entertaining, it can also seek to invite a community contemplation of the issues a play explores. To this end, Peter Brook's argument against the form of theatre, and what he perceives as an over-emphasis on production concerns (Brook, 1972), in favour of the literary tradition of 'drama', plays with and shifts inherent power structures in contemporary theatre practice. In my chapter, 'Real Fiction as Creative Research' (Welsh, 2014), I argue, like Brecht that the purpose of theatre performance should be to educate 'consciously', 'suggestively' and 'descriptively' (cited in Willett, 1974, p.26). I provide an examination of similar literature in Chapter Two to contextualise my thesis regarding practice as research in drama education.

This claim regarding practice as education – my own foray into Brecht's thinking and its connection with my work – led me to the field of drama education, where I continue to apply the real fiction research method explored throughout this thesis. This method involves a consideration of a social issue and the use of drama and play creation to comment on such an issue. Two recently performed examples include *The Biography of a Battler* (Welsh, 2012) and *The No Teeth People* (Dundler & Welsh, 2008). Developed from this position, my research explores and criticises 'labels in education', using real fiction theatre-making.

My role in education is as an artist and not a teacher. I am also attracted to those educational theories that explore the social experience of students including those excluded from the system. Due to my position as an 'outsider' in education, I am critical of authority and question the necessity and motivation for using labels, such as 'disturbed' or even 'at-risk', to describe students. For it seems that the disturbance and/or risks are socially constructed in the relational dynamics between teacher and student or student and student, rather than being identifiable in one particular individual (Pica-Smith & Veloria, 2012).

My ontological position is expanded and elaborated in Chapter Eight of the thesis, where the personal experience of completing the research as a practitioner in an educational context is explored. The personal and emotional reflections contained in that chapter epitomise this consideration of ontological position. It

provides insight into the sensation of being an outsider in education – neither teacher nor student – and articulates this somewhat complicated component of the data collection process. It also offers an additional source of subjective or creative data that works alongside the student monologue data and theatrical play.

This notion of subjective, creative data is an issue in my research and has recently been articulated by theorists such as Hellawell (2006) explored in some detail in what follows, as well as Laing (1967) in the field of radical psychiatry, discussed in section 1.5 and St. Pierre (1997) in her exploration of 'transgressive data', explored in section 2.2 of the following chapter. My role in the classroom exists in the tradition of Hellawell's 'outsider research', which he describes as research '…where the researcher is not a priori familiar with the setting and people they are researching' (2006, p.484). Insider research, however, is where the researcher possesses an intimate knowledge of the community and its members. Hellawell's theory can also be considered in relation to playwriting practice (mentioned above and throughout this thesis), whereby participation in deliberate social conversation allows the playwright to observe and record both the characters as subjects of study, in terms of their speech rhythms, and their conversational surroundings. This insider/outsider concept is important, both to the practice that forms the foundation of this work – real fiction research – and classroom engagement with this work; its value to 'drama education'.

1.3 Thesis epistemology

There are several established fields of knowledge that this thesis could align itself with. For example, the thesis could be said to belong to the field of drama education, because it involves research in a school and utilises the practice of drama for the purpose of education. However, since such research is undertaken by a theatre practitioner and not a teacher, it could also be said to belong to the epistemological field of practice-based theatre research, or even a contribution to theatre theory or history. I will argue throughout that this research belongs to the broad, interdisciplinary field of practice-led research and might be be construed as practice-based work. I would, however, dispute this latter interpretation, since much of the practical or creative work to take place herein is done with a view to providing insight and revelation about the outcomes rather than the practice itself. It would therefore seem to belong to the category of 'practice-led' rather than 'practice-based'. That is, the ultimate goal of the thesis is not to produce a creative piece of work, but rather to utilise the various creative processes to store students' writings and experiences of the workshop, as well as contribute to the more general argument concerning labels.

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1.4 Practice-led research methodology

The research explores the potential for the qualitative research practice of ethno-drama to examine social issues in schools, such as labelling, from a student perspective. I claim that the writing of real fiction theatre, which involves observing and recording voices from the author's experience of others, can work in the lives of students to understand and express their social situation. Although a dramatic play is contained in the data, it works as a tool of the research, one among a few approaches, rather than the outcome of the research per se.

Using the real fiction method of creating theatre or ethno-drama and, with similarity to Saldaña, my work raises the following research questions for theatre, writing and education:

- To whom does any represented experience in the theatre belong?
- Does represented experience in reality theatre belong to the participants encountered along the way, those represented? The playwright? The actor?
- What does it mean to introduce a group of young drama students to these concepts? What can be gained by using an educational context to explore the politics of theatre that has been the concern of writers such as Brook and Saldaña?

When I consider the notion of drama education, I not only wonder how drama can be taught, but also what can be learned through the process of writing experience through the teaching and learning of drama. This practice has been characterised as 'affective theatre', concerned with using theatre practice to analyse and understand the world around us or comment – politically and socially (Haseman, 2006). This becomes more apparent through the data presented, both in the methodological analysis of the qualitative survey undertaken by students and teachers in this thesis, and in the student monologues, the product of a workshop devised and undertaken by myself in collaboration with the supervising researcher and classroom teacher. The data presented will examine labels and labelling in various social contexts and ask how drama practice in a drama classroom can reflect and comment on this broad social phenomenon through the practice of student monologue writing.

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1.5 Structure of the thesis

In the current chapter, Chapter One, I state the problem, being the use of 'real fiction' practice in the drama classroom, discussing the aims and scope of the thesis overview, exploring my own ontological and epistemological positioning.

In Chapter Two, I consider literature on Arts practice in education and various international Arts-based explorations and studies that have been carried out in educational contexts. Chapter Two also connects the theoretical foundations of the real fiction monologue writing process with contemporary practice-based and practice-led programs in education, drawing the connection between the construction of my plays from everyday language and the 'conversational' theories of Wittgenstein, Searle and Shotter (Wittgenstein, 1953; Searle, 1979; Shotter, 1993). Finally, in this chapter, I consider the question of what can be gained from introducing this practice to school students. This is articulated both in terms of the Year 11 work requirement of preparing and performing a monologue and also in more general terms of life education.

Chapter Three expands on the phenomenon of social constructionism, using it to present the notion of a practice-led theatre research method based on the practice I call real fiction. The idea of the speech act is connected with a component of my practice, which I call the analysis and reproduction of a character's 'speech rhythms'. This leads to a discussion of language construction and speech acts in society and education including the problematic social practice of labelling. It includes a multidisciplinary literature from law, criminology and psychiatry, particularly the radicals such as RD Laing (1967) and Jules Henry (1973). I then turn my attention to educational theorists writing in related fields including revisiting literature on 'practice-based' and 'practice-led' research in education. In addition, I address the relationship between my own practice and that from other fields, including documentary theatre, ethno-drama and other relevant forms, such as phenomenological and verbatim theatre.

There are some current drama writing programs for school students relevant to this thesis. For example, a recent after-school and holiday creative writing program claims to inspire creative approaches to teaching writing (Cohen, 2014). There are some similarities with my work in this program, including writing speech, as opposed to essay format and writing with a view to being performed ('Teaching Playwriting in Schools,' n.d.). 'The Young Playwrights' is an American organisation that encourages the writing of theatre,

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conducting an annual monologue writing competition and therefore also emphasising the importance of monologue to the creative process ('Young Voices Monologue Festival', n.a. 2014). However, these examples do not tend to emphasise the critical approach to social issues in schools that my project does. It is also important to note that this is an American organisation practising in American schools. I will include some monologues from my own practice and exploratory articulations of this practice, as well as social and theoretical implications for the work. This chapter concludes by posing the question of how a practice-led, as opposed to practice-based, research project can provide revelations regarding social labelling in education.

Chapter Three also considers literature on the theory and practice of social labelling in mental health, criminology and education. The purpose of the chapter is to contextualise the monologue data later collected from students on the broad subject of labelling from the students' point of view. Both the student monologues and the play appear in Chapter Eight and represent a contribution to this discourse on labels.

Chapter Four addresses the complex methodology of this research. Here, I explore and explain the purpose and aims of conducting a monologue writing workshop with drama student participants and how it formed the primary context for data collection. Because a considerable portion of the thesis is dedicated to 'creative' output, it would be understandable for a reader to interpret the thesis as practice-based. However, the process of workshopping the real fiction monologue writing method with drama students, and then conflating and constructing those monologues into a theatrical play, constitutes practice-led research into a student perspective on labelling rather than a practice-based research project, the primary outcome of which might be the play itself. It could be argued that this research is practice and that its primary contribution is the way in which 'play writing' is practised. However, I will argue that the contribution is the concept of labelling in schools, and the monologue writing and resulting play are merely a means to an end. It is therefore practice-led rather than practice-based research. The methodology will explore ways in which practice can affect learning and how theatre can act as a vehicle for knowledge.

In addition to students workshopping the method to create monologues, students and teachers were asked to complete a qualitative survey, providing further data on perceptions and understandings of the behaviourally or emotionally labelled 'disturbed student', 'troubled student' or even diagnostic labels, such

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as ADD, used in the literature to describe students' behaviour. The most prominent examples using the label 'disturbed student' are found in American educational literature. Some of the ideas proposed in a book titled *Educating Disturbed and Disturbing Students* will thus be analysed and criticised, particularly in relation to 'disturbed student' (Zionts, 1985). Student monologues, combined with the survey data, will be used to construct this practice-led, qualitative research exploring labels through drama.

The primary purpose of the qualitative survey data was to prepare and engage participants in the practical component of the monologue workshops. That is, students will be prepared for the task by having considered some of the issues explored in the workshop and through participation in the qualitative survey. Although teacher does not need to prepare in the same way students do, the qualitative survey informs teachers about the nature of the project.

The qualitative survey data from teachers give insight into how they feel about labelling and labels, where they label and how such a practice might be a positive tool or a potentially negative habit. For this reason, the participant group of 'teachers' was expanded beyond the scope of the classroom teacher participating in the workshop and also included consenting teachers, accessed through the researcher's networks, to provide greater scope in the data.

Chapter Five presents the results of a qualitative survey gauging student and teacher perspectives on labels and, as I explain, it also acts as a tool to prepare students intellectually, emotionally and creatively for the use of drama to address and criticise problems of social labelling.

Chapter Six will describe in detail the data collection process in terms of the writing data from student participants. I review the student monologues in their raw form. The chapter will also revisit questions of methodology and ethics, as well as the process of exploring and discovering student voices through the monologues. In attaining these monologues there is the potential for disclosure of unsavoury, perhaps even illegal facts. Indeed, the entire thesis is sensitive to legal considerations such as mandatory reporting, and whether or not there is anything particularly disturbing in the work presented by students.

The review of the student monologues is something of an ethical minefield for which the researcher must be prepared. A dilemma exists here in finding the students' voice, requiring an open and honest exploration of the self and its expression. However, this ought to be balanced with legal and ethical requirements. There are various examples of such dilemmas, including Zimbardo and St. Pierre, as well as the *No Outsiders Project* (Zimbardo, 1971; St. Pierre, 1997; Depalma & Atkinson 2009). In these projects, the authors are asked to weigh up the potential for and perception of exposing research subjects to dangerous ideas, and the need for social and political reflection and activism through practice.

A classic example is Zimbardo and his Stanford Prison Project, which explored the power of social situations and how people responded to them while playing a social role. The experiment set up a mock prison with some participants playing prisoners, some guards. The prisoners soon began to rebel against their status and the guards began to behave in an authoritative and oppressive manner, described as the 'tyranny of the guards' (Muson & Zimbardo, 1991). Zimbardo's project, which he abandoned prior to its expected conclusion, coupled with some of Laing's work, has been the impetus for contemporary considerations of research ethics. These concerns are an important part of my research, partly because I am collecting data through an engagement with minors and this alone presents a number of ethical dilemmas. In addition to this issue, the nature of the data is potentially personally and socially confronting for participants. Consequently, ethical considerations remain central to the entire investigation.

Chapter Seven explains and presents the synthesis of material from the student monologues into a dramatic play. This procedure involves a consideration of methodological concerns and questions, as well as a description and argument for the real fiction playwriting method and, of course, the writing of the play. The consequences of this process will be as meaningful to the research as the actual creative outcome, since the emphasis for real fiction theatre is the social learning that occurs around the process of drama creation as much as it is about the drama created.

Chapter Eight consists of various extracts from my edited journal detailing the process of creating this project and my own journey from playwright to drama education theorist. It documents my experience and illustrates the outsider/insider dichotomy identified by Laing and St. Pierre in her exploration of methodology in Deleuze's concept of the 'fold', roughly translated as a relationship of difference with itself

(Deleuze, 1993; St. Pierre, 1997). St. Pierre raises the issue of the fold in relation to her project that seeks to explore the lives of women from her hometown. Her ability to distinguish herself from her research subject is diminished and we, as readers, find ourselves in a folded methodology. Whilst my relationship with the research subject is perhaps less overtly dangerous in terms of dissolving objective and subjective categories or observations; the journal chapter reveals the conflict of a non-educator in an educational environment and how this impacts the research.

Chapter Nine concludes the thesis and presents various findings including the potential for Arts-based practice to act as social comment and education, using a set of criteria introduced in Chapter Two on the effectiveness of Arts practice in a classroom situation.

1.6 Disturbing Labels & Monologue Writing Practice

A recent article in a teacher education publication speaks of the tendency of teachers to name and ultimately label students, concluding that it often has negative consequences, suggesting it 'hides more than it reveals' (Dixon et al., 2004, p.53) and that the '…labels we [teachers] give our students may operate to their detriment.' (Dixon et al., 2004, p.53) This school of thought claims that: 'Labels are limiting. They offer a single lens concentrated on a specific deficit when what we need are multiple ways of seeing a child's ever-changing strengths' (p.11). This article seems to initially argue that there are some assumed advantages to teachers 'naming' students but that labelling involves a different and more potentially damaging process: one identified by the student participants in my research project and apparent in the monologue data from students presented in Chapter Seven of this thesis.

This thesis will argue that social labels such as 'disturbed student', 'disabled' or 'at-risk' are symbols in the language of education and/or welfare, and psychiatric or psychological contexts. The literature certainly uses these labels rather tenuously and many theorists indeed dedicate much of their work to a discussion of the relative nature of 'disturbed', or in the case of Kortman, 'disabled' (2004). However, others such as Wilson (1980) presented a paper titled 'Education of Disturbed Pupils' at the World Congress on the Future of Special Education, and seemed to use the term 'disturbed' without reflection (Wilson, 1980; Kortman, 2004). In one section of the book that followed the presentation, Wilson makes the overt comparison between 'troubled' and/or 'disturbed' students and adds that 'they' 'seem not to need something different

but more of what the child in an ordinary good family receives at all stages of development' (Wilson, 1980, p. 83). Similar assumptions were made in a publication produced by the Australian Council of Educational Research in 1949, a time during which, as a society, some students were labelled 'mentally defective' (Parker, 1949).

Even if such approaches to education have been recently abandoned, contributions from scholars, such as Wilson, make up the social and historical tapestry that constitutes contemporary students' social or cultural surroundings. I will claim that the language from which these terms emerge can be understood and critiqued by students of theatre through the use of the drama education monologue writing project, based on the practice of 'real fiction.'

When we read the monologues or the outcome of this practice-led research, we not only learn what students think about labels but also how such perceptions can be stored and expressed in the form of a dramatic play. Therefore, this thesis is not only about education but the potential for theatre-based practice to re-contextualise itself in the classroom. In this sense, I am interested in the potential for the use of 'real fiction research' in other social contexts such as welfare work or psychology and counselling. This thesis, however, is purely focused on classroom engagement. It seeks out a point of view from students expressed in a creative form. What is revealed through the process of this thesis, and the monologues of student participants, is that the student perspective on labelling in education is vastly different to conventional understandings in the literature. Students understand and articulate labels used by their peers, as opposed to teachers or those in authority.

CHAPTER TWO

ARTS PRACTICE & EDUCATION

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I lay the foundations for my practice-led research thesis based on real fiction monologue writing. This involves a consideration of the work both in terms of its context in practice-based theatre in education and its place in the discourse on labelling theory, the social subject being approached with the practice. Hence, this literature review accounts for the literature on practice-based and practice-led research, particularly in education, as well as social constructionist theory and, more particularly, discourse on the practice of social labelling in a variety of contexts including law and mental health.

I reason that the type of theatre that Saldaña creates and I also employ primarily consists of conversation between audience and performers about our social surroundings. This firstly involves a consideration of those surroundings, using the work of social constructionists such as Shotter (1993). I argue that theatre is essentially a social environment, and school is a conversational environment (Welsh, 2014). I then illustrate ways in which theatre practice has been used previously in educational contexts, as social research and contemplative practice with student participants. Finally, using an example from my practice, 'real fiction theatre' be used by students to contemplate and analyse the social practice of labelling in schools and in the adolescent social world.

2.2 Constructionism: Shotter and theatre

John Shotter explores the nature of 'things' in our everyday lives and perceives them as existing much less deliberately than in scientific conditions (Shotter, 2013). This understanding of everyday life is the context for my research as it is for others, including many 'practice as research' proponents, such as Bolt and Barrett (Bolt & Barrett, 2014). Shotter explains the ways in which these things depart from the 'specially prepared conditions of the experimental laboratory' (Shotter, 2013, p.2) and in this sense distinguishes

himself from Freud, for example, who had moments in which he set out to do just the opposite and prove the claim that psychoanalysis, or the 'talking cure', could be considered a 'science' (Freud, 1973, p.30).

Real fiction research does not confine its work to the (social) 'experimental laboratory' of the theatre and seems to depart from contemporary theatre theorists, such as Grotowski, who claims to be 'seeking to define what is distinctly theatre (and)…our productions are detailed investigations of the actor-audience relationship' (Grotowski, 1969, pp. 11-15). In the real fiction research (theatre), I am more concerned with those human relationships that take place outside the theatre. This thesis is an example of the way in which practice is not confined to the theatre; and the research recorded in the coming chapters shows ways in which real fiction can be translated to a classroom context, as well as the forms of learning that emerge from such an engagement.

Indeed, as Shotter points out, among our very first learning experiences are how to be '…a looker, listener, doer and communicator' (Shotter, 2013, p.2). This learning does not take place in a theatre or an educational environment but in the throes of human experience and social reality. As explained above, it is in this context that I use the term 'real fiction' to describe the communicative processes between writer and the subject represented in the writing, the voice of the character in the dramatic script or perhaps what McKenna might describe as the process of 'embodiment' (McKenna, 2003).

One of the issues raised by McKenna's work and one that I believe is important in my own research is this:

> I hope I have encouraged action therapy practitioners to move beyond the post-modern critiques of documentary through this praxis to move beyond a mere development of a sociology of life or the slice of life approach and thereby consider action therapies as a means of developing a series of expressions of artistic and soulful engagements (2003, p.10).

Ultimately, this methodology of action therapy and its usage appears to be a form of data that can be characterised alongside what St. Pierre has described as 'transgressive' data. In the data collection phase of my thesis, I make a note of the relationship between my own use of speech rhythms as data, and the work of this contemporary language and literacy theorist, who characterises transgressive data as 'emotional data, dream data, sensual data and response data' (St. Pierre, 1997, p.257). These categories

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themselves are not necessarily useful to my thesis, except they can all be considered subjective, as can my own work, and this draws attention to the broader philosophical question of the value of subjective as opposed to objective views of reality, a theme explored throughout this thesis.

The idea of subjective perceptions of reality, a concept explored by philosophers, such as Aristotle and Plato, or thinkers such as Descartes, essentially holds that reality, as perceived by human beings, is not something that is static and outside of human experience (Aristotle 350 BC; Descartes, 1647, trans. Benjamin Jowlett 1998; Zuchert, 2009). The notion of objective reality, for instance, holds that there is something outside the self that is set in stone, as it were, unchanging and not influenced by our perceptions. To view reality, ideas or utterances perceived as subjective is to suppose that they are influenced by the subject of experience. If I perceive something, then the fact of my perception alters and informs what the something is that I perceive. Therefore, I consider the notions of transgressive and subjective data as data that is influenced by the participant who perceives such data. For example, if the data is that it is a hot day according to person x, then this is more subjective than the data that is collected by saying that it is a hot day, compared to other days that are less hot, according to the temperature, as measured by a temperature gauge. The latter can be said to be objective, at least conventionally, where the former is subjective. However, even with the example of the temperature gauge, the question of who is doing the reading becomes problematic for claims of objectivity. The data in this thesis can be said to be subjective in these terms. However, a further question as to whether distinctions between objectivity and subjectivity are valid, necessary or even possible is raised by the very nature of the research contained in this thesis.

Literacy, life education and the scope of the project:
A recent movement in the education of literacy (i.e. encouraging students to learn literacy through the critical study of everyday texts) seems to have a significant relationship with this thesis (Barton, 2000). Titled 'Seeing and Hearing Students: Lived and Embodied Critical Literacy Practices', this study proposes we expand our understandings of what it means to read, write and comprehend to include performance in Johnson and Vasuden's definition of critical literacy (Johnson & Vasudevan 2012, p.35). This is an extensive field that has potential for significant influence on creative practice in schools, which has relevance to my practice-led research in the monologue writing workshop. This notion seems to show the

potential of drama to play a significant role in education. A consideration of real fiction in relation to drama education is almost analogous with the use of everyday texts in the education of literacy.

Barton and Lee have been concerned with everyday language uses and their potential in literacy education for some time. David Barton's studies of letter writing as a social practice (Barton, 2000). While Lee, a leader in the field of applied language theory conceives of interpersonal and inter-group relationships, as well as their expression in language, and this intercedes with several elements of my own research, including discussions of speech rhythms as language games peculiar to particular social groups. Barton and Lee speak of 'vernacular literacies' and everyday literacy practices, including online practices of adolescents and whether they are useful to literacy learning (Barton & Lee 2012).

Other proponents of this literacy movement, such as Elisabeth Johnson and Lalitha Vasudevan, claim that the current critical educational practice of studying everyday texts (e.g. billboards, menus, and clothing labels) recognises that texts have personal meaning and broad social implications in the world beyond school:

> Centring everyday texts is crucial to enacting responsive, relevant critical curriculum...everyday texts invite responses that exceed logical, rational verbal and written responses within a framework of critical analysis techniques (Johnson & Vasudevan, 2012, p.1).

This statement accurately describes the potential I perceive for real fiction theatre in the drama classroom. The everyday literacy movement advocates placing students' life experiences at the centre of the learning experience, with texts drawn from students' experience with money, family and the body as the impetus for learning. In the real fiction drama education monologue workshops, drama is understood or learnt through close attention to everyday conversation as a 'text' and the location for the conception of theatrical monologue.

The relationship between my idea of monologue creation and learning what is called 'social literacy' is profound. Social literacy, as it is described by these authors, invites and encourages the practice of social theatre in the classroom. Indeed, the authors use the term 'critical performance', identifying the individuality of youths in the study and the terminology they used to describe the process, such as 'speaking loud

enough to be heard', 'speaking open-mindedly' and 'having swag' (Pandya & Avilla, 2013, p.101). My research is concerned with the importance of language and students having their own language, that is, the labels they use about each other representing a micro-language similar to that described by Laing, Wittgenstein and conversational theorists like John Shotter (Wittgenstein, 1953; Laing 1967; Shotter, 1993). My thesis synthesises the work of these theorists as well as the work of the participant group of students in an approach similar to Johnson and Vasudevan's (2012) embodied critical literacy practices. For example, in the coming data chapters (Four and Five), I describe student understandings of labelling through survey data, monologues and short drama skits.

Research indicates that the labels most important (and potentially harmful) to students seem to be those used by other students, also called 'peer labelling' by some theorists (Thomas, 1997). According to their study, Johnson and Vasudevan identify one of the student's critical performative texts as being clothes: 'in her photo ethnography she took many photos of clothes and shoes when asked to photograph the popular culture texts important to her.' (Johnson & Vasudevan, 2012, p. 7) This study surmises that they (the young participants in the study) '…situate their understandings about critical literacy within the discursive practices of youth themselves' (Johnson & Vasudevan, 2012, p. 7).

2.3 Drama education and the practice-based research

I will firstly examine practice-based and practice-led research, their similarities and differences; and their relevance to my work. As I explained in the Introduction, the idea of practice being conceived as research is related to a recent multi-disciplinary collection of similarly purposed activities that, in the context of education, includes practice by educators and practitioners in education, both considered forms of knowledge transfer. Practice-based research is when the practice is the outcome of the work, such as research that leads to a painting, a play, novel or exhibition (Candy, 2006). In a recent book exploring the application of creative arts research, Bree Hadley introduces a third category, joining the dichotomy of practice-based and practice-led research: artistic research. She comments that

> performing arts practices can make a productive material intervention in the study of such performing arts practice, providing a site for knowledge-making, ideas and innovations that would not otherwise emerge (Hadley ed. Barret & Bolt, 2014, p.146).

The work that I call real fiction could be classified as practice-based research and that is certainly how it is considered in practice and in reference to its presentations in community contexts such as the practice-based consideration of violence and crime in *Barcode 30!!7 307* (Welsh, 2009). As opposed to this arts-based work, my thesis involves applying a form of practice in an educational setting and is therefore more appropriately classified as practice-led research. Whilst the writing of monologues and a play forms part of the research, in terms of data storage, it is not the objective of the work. Rather, the work asks what can be learnt from the processes involved in such a practice and what it can reveal about the social environment of 'the school'.

Tarquam McKenna, in his 'Seeing Beyond the Habitus', defines action methods in a therapeutic context as

...the therapeutic field which reconceptualise the interests of our patients and clients where we employ rituals that can hold them to a defined, confined or refined in a place of being through enactment or performance (McKenna, 2003, p.2).

McKenna claims that 'the embodiment of being and performance' ought to be viewed as 'ways of being and knowing' perhaps implying performance can be ontological and epistemological (McKenna, 2003, p.2). He describes his methodology as performance, that is, an action method or practice-based research. I claim, however, throughout this thesis and in other aspects of my practice, sitting and writing real fiction in fact involves reflecting on our personal experience and our engagement with the world. It could be considered mere journal writing, were it not for our attempt to hear the voice of an 'other' in the writing process and document this 'hearing' in a performance context, whether that be a theatre or a drama classroom.

Communication theorist John Shotter, whose work is connected with that of language philosophers Wittgenstein and Searle, to whom I refer below, thoroughly explores practice-based methods of enquiry in his recently drafted chapter 'Practice-Based Methods for Practitioners in Inquiring into the Continuous Co-emergent "stuff" of Everyday Life' (Wittgenstein, 1953; Searle, 1979; Shotter, 2013). In this work, he identifies 'unfinished processes' and 'expressive realisations' that occur in the 'hurly-burly of everyday life' as opposed to the 'prepared conditions of the experimental laboratory...' (Shotter, 2013, p.2). The work of contemporary Melbourne theatre-maker Lloyd Jones, for example, seems to involve a deliberate attempt to

obliterate the 'prepared conditions' of the theatre comparable to Shotter's critique of the 'experimental laboratory' (Marshall, 2002; Shotter, 2013). In conventional theatre the audience seems to know what to expect, what will occur, how the experience will play out. There will be a prepared script presented by seasoned performers to an audience all of whom will sit in particular seatings and behave in particular ways.

The work of Jones and Pina Bouche disrupt this notion of theatre as a sterile laboratory, containing only the experimental scientists, technical experts focused on the technical task of creating theatre. My work similarly subverts what we mean by playwriting, or indeed any kind of writing, and how we approach drama in the classroom. This is done by using drama writing to explore the social issue of labelling in schools and then to present the data from this engagement in the form of a dramatic play, incorporating both the process of drama education and playwriting methodology.

Social, affective theatre and real fiction practice-led research:

The importance of lucid, vibrant and meaningful Arts practice in education is broadly recognised in contemporary drama education literature (Ewing, 2010). In his article exploring the potential of practice-led research Haseman, considering 'reflexive practice', makes this assessment:

> The situations of practice – the complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflicts…are increasingly perceived as central to the world of professional practice. These are practice-based research strategies and include: the reflective practitioner (embracing reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action); participant research; participatory research collaborative inquiry, and action research (Haseman, 2006, p.3).

Haseman claims that 'these strategies re-interpret what is meant by 'an original contribution to knowledge.' They may not 'contribute to the intellectual or conceptual architecture of a discipline', however, according to Haseman, 'they are concerned with the improvement of practice, and new epistemologies of practice distilled from the insider's understandings of action in context' (Haseman, 2006, p.3). What Haseman and others identify is the place of arts-based and practice-based research, the distinguishing features of these practices and how they fit into the rest of the research landscape.

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In addition to Haseman, Anne Harris and Christine Sinclair have identified the importance of critical play and creative processes in social and critical theory (Harris, 2014; Sinclair, 2014). Harris, for example, claims:

> If we consider that the writing of the play is an act of inquiry (playwriting as method) then we can begin to see embodiment itself as methodology, a system of thought and set of tools (Harris, 2014, p.12).

This notion of playwriting as methodology is pertinent to my study and the importance of these methodological observations by the authors will become apparent as we proceed. Their privileging of the playwright's work and their study of classroom culture intimately connects this research with my own. This work, however, was done with university students, not secondary pupils. Also, the authors insist on claiming the classroom represented in their work is fictional, whereas I very deliberately use the term 'real fiction' to acknowledge both the active student contributions in the form of their writing and the passive contributions in terms of the surveys completed on-site.

The practice-led methodology of my research deals directly with some of these notions of 'uncertainty', 'complexity', 'instability' and 'uniqueness', all of which are exciting for the creative practitioner but problematic in a research context. The reinterpretation of what constitutes 'research' is still a relatively new area and is explored in this thesis because it is central to the nature of my data. From the monologue writing workshop in a school to the dramatic play based on the findings, this work is what has been described by others as 'transgressive' data, or at least a 'messy' methodology similar to that of St. Pierre and her work in her home town as an insider/outsider (St. Pierre, 1997; Ferguson & Thomas-McLean, 2009).

Practice-led methodology is distinguishable from practice-based methodology in that the former is work in which the 'main focus of the research is to advance knowledge about practice, or to advance knowledge within practice' ('Creativity & Cognition,' authors unknown, 2013). Alternately, practice-based research seeks to achieve an artifice, a play, painting or novel as the outcome and evidence of the research. The 'Creativity and Cognition Studios' define practice-based research as 'an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice' ('Creativity and

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Cognition,' n.a. 2013). My work in this thesis constitutes practice-led research because it advances knowledge about and within practice rather than by means of practice, which might more accurately describe my practice as a playwright, as explained in my introduction.

I claim that 'affective theatre', when used in a drama classroom of a Victorian state secondary school, can enhance the process of monologue performance, a Year 12 Drama work requirement. The assessment requires students to prepare a ten-minute monologue presented as a performance in examination conditions. Whilst the monologue work requirement is conventionally the presentation of an established writer's work from a list of plays, I believe the process of writing a monologue to be beneficial for students' understanding of the origins and processes involved in making theatre and drama. This not only includes understanding the origins and playwright's intentions in the process of making drama, but the importance of drama in society, how it comes to be written and performed – why we do it!

This process has been a subject of interest to me for some time and, to some degree, is the subject of the chapter 'Real Fiction and Creative Research', in which I claim that theatre is constructed through a series of conversational encounters, including that between the 'real' character in social reality and the writer, the conversational encounter between writer and director, director and actor, actor and audience (Welsh, 2014). In the process involved in this thesis, there are the additional conversational encounters between playwright/researcher and teacher, as well as that of teacher and student and then playwright and student participant.

A new context for real fiction practice:
In this thesis, I consider the importance of social labels in the context of a school and their effects on students. I also advocate a contemporary drama education 'intervention', or consideration of, the theory and practice of labelling. The use of what has been labelled 'social theatre', acts as a tool of social analysis for student participants, both in my research and the work of others (Milenczakowski, 1995). A recent Masters course at The National Institute of Education in Singapore summarises 'drama in the classroom' as exploring Asian texts (e.g. *Attack of the Swordfish* (Lim, 2005)) and Western texts (e.g. *Antigone* reinterpreted and re-contextualised, considered in terms of issues such as power and state) as vehicles for creating drama. These practitioners also explore 'drama in the community' for what they term 'socio-

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political interventions', exploring issues such as cigarette smoking and teenage pregnancy. Finally, they explore and perform 'drama in therapy' and the author mentions a particular context of 'drama in prisons' (Chow, 2013). Such broad contexts for drama illustrate that its purpose has gone well beyond the theatre.

Similarly, a body of literature has also emerged, concerned with the ethnographic potential of theatre and drama practice. In addition to Saldaña (2005) – a key reference and inspiration for this work – Eva Bendix Peterson has recently written about the form her critical practice takes in 'Cutting Edges: An Ethno-drama in Three Acts' (Peterson, 2013). Peterson claims that ethnographic drama is 'an interesting form of post-foundational scholarship in that it is both (or neither) data and analysis' (Peterson, 2013, p.39). Claudio Moreira makes similar claims in 'Tales of Conde Auto-ethnography and the Body Politics of Writing' (Moreira, 2011). Through the practice of his performance auto-ethnography, he claims to '…decolonize academia and enquiry, interrogating forms of knowledge production and experience, method and theory to deal with social justice in the lives of human beings' (Moireira, 2011, p.586). Michael Ungar also speaks of 'the congruence between the goals of qualitative research and the performance of writing fiction' (Ungar, 2014, p.290).

These methodological problems are addressed both in my practice and in Chapter Four of this thesis. Like Peterson (2013), I claim that the ethno-drama I created in collaboration with student research participants *is* the collection and presentation of data and analysis. This claim is argued using a practice-led methodology that conceives of both my own work and the students' creative work and testimonial writing as data. I claim that what is created through this process is a form of social theatre. This is a tradition that finds its origins in writers and practitioners such as Brecht and Beckett.

The view that Brecht and Beckett practised 'social theatre' is so common that the following quote appears among a collection of UK essays:

> Brecht called his modern theatre Epic Theatre; it was to be analytical and primarily concerned in analysing the social relations that determine bourgeois theatre ('Epic Theatre', n.a. accessed online 14-01-2015).

Elsewhere, Brecht describes acting as a demonstration of knowledge, 'of human relations, of human behaviour, of human capacities' and further that acting ought to be demonstrated 'consciously', 'suggestively' and 'descriptively' (Brecht, 1974, p. 26). By its nature, Brecht's form of theatre seems to inevitably enter any discussion of drama as an education tool and his work will be further explored throughout this thesis, particularly where the writing of plays is explained as 'creative research'.

Like Brecht's own description of epic theatre, my thesis emphasises his notion of theatre as education. The research project involved monologue writing by Year 11 and 12 students to create social theatre about labels. The comparison with Brecht is pertinent when one considers the context of his work *Life of Galileo* (Brecht, 1986). Brecht uses this historical account in a play to comment on the oppression of the masses in his own time (Willett, 1974). I argue that writing monologues will allow students to engage with practice-led research described above and will make a significant contribution to their drama education experience. My research follows Brecht's continuing theatrical legacy and the potential for monologue writing to contribute to drama education.

Using the real fiction writing method, a technique describing my playwriting practice, in which characters are established through listening and talking rather than reading and writing, I conducted a writing workshop in a classroom with a drama teacher, supervising researcher and students who participated in the research (Welsh, 2014). This method of creating drama is concerned with how language works, influenced by the work of David Crystal, who explores the origins and construction of language at its conceptual stage (Crystal, 2005). This also relates to Tarquam McKenna's work and discourse on 'Playback Theatre', in which he describes playback theatre-makers

> …like anthropologists or ethnographers who are faced this problem in seeking to understand the meanings of 'foreign tribes'. We can emulate these sociological disciplines if we let the truth reside in an interpretation of meanings for the stories we hear (McKenna, 2003, p.3).

The work of the playwright in the social conversational world, which I call real fiction, involves a close observation of speech rhythms and patterns. This is quite a technical process and relates to Chomsky's work on language, and the contribution of gesture and intonation of voice to meaning:

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There are significant respects in which the whole intonational contour of an utterance -- its stress patterns and pitch patterns -- is closely related to the discrete hierarchical phrase structure, and internal word structure for that matter, that reflects the rules of English grammar (Reiber, 1983).

The primary task for drama student participants creating theatrical monologue is to write speech. I introduced my method of speech writing to this process, which entails a rich understanding of the operation of language, founded on the theories of others, for example, Wittgenstein and Chomsky.

2.4 Practice-led educational research

Creative research, both practice-based and practice-led, has been applied to many schools of thought and fields of research including Literary Studies, Visual and Performing Arts and Education. A recent example of practice-led research in education is a project titled 'The No Outsiders Project', a drama workshop exploring acceptance of different forms of family with reference to sexuality and gender (Depalma & Atkinson 2009).

The research describes the project in a way that goes beyond the bounds of Arts practice, into the realm of social critique and commentary. As well as the original drama engagement, the authors sought

> …up to fifteen primary teachers in each year in developing and evaluating strategies for addressing sexualities equality within the context of the broader agenda of providing an inclusive education for all pupils, and an inclusive environment for pupils, parents and teachers (Atkinson, 2009, p.1).

The authors' stated intentions are to further understandings of sexual equality as well as to create and foster an inclusive environment for all pupils. This is achieved through the use of a practice-led methodology, in that the drama workshop (practice) is the impetus for the social analysis described above. The practice of drama then, in this context, is the foundation for critical thinking about issues that have a direct impact on our social and cultural lives, in this case, the social and cultural lives of young people and their teachers engaged in education.

More recently, the evolution of practice-based and practice-led research and the arguments surrounding practice, have led some to question its value. For example, a report on the 2010 'Creative and Practice-Led

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Research Symposium' comments on the debate over whether the more rigid Western educative function of universities should be adhered to, or whether students should be allowed to be self-directed (Burr, 2010).

Such debates lead to questions about what research is, who decides what constitutes good research, whether practice belongs in academic discourse and, if so, then where? How is it contextualised? How does it interact with other fields? Where does it belong? These questions regarding practice have been raised by creative theorists, such as Paul Carter and Estelle Barrett, in what appears to be a recent movement characterised as Arts practice as research and/or research as Arts practice. Saldaña could be said to belong to the same school of thought, except in specific relation to theatre and its transformation into social theory through the practice of ethno-drama (Carter, 2010; Barrett, 2007; Saldaña, 1999). Others view practice as merely another form of qualitative research and McKenna, mentioned above, as well as some parts of Saldaña's work, such as his article titled 'Playwriting with Data: Ethnographic Performance Texts', seem to adhere to the idea that practice as research or practice-led research is another form of qualitative data (Saldaña, 1999).

McKenna catalogues and compares the qualities of 'artful practice' as research as opposed to more conventional forms (McKenna, 2012, p.19). Through the use of a model, McKenna identifies criteria for assessing and understanding qualitative data collected through the use of a creative arts practice-led or practice-based methodology. He claims that artful practice is experimental, naturalistic, transformative, applied, interpretive, and an experience that involves learning about the self and others. McKenna's model creates useful criteria for creative arts practice-led research. Such a criteria may be helpful in assessing the worth of student writing, or any artistic creation, including my own interpretations and contributions to the data. In the concluding chapter, I use a refined version of McKenna's criteria to assess the outcomes of my practice-led research.

It is then a question of responding creatively to the work of the students and this can be done regardless of quality or otherwise of the original data. In this sense, McKenna's criteria are relevant. However, I am not so much interested in *whether* the work is transformative, applied or interpretative, as to the question of how to interpret and apply work in such a way, as it is transformative for both the research participants and research readers.

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For what is the play in the new contexts of the university essay, thesis, conference paper or lecture? What is the monologue when it is a work requirement for a VCE subject? The very substance of such work changes with these new contexts. Theorists such as Carter and his contemporaries Barrett and Bolt have been concerned with these questions and with the notion that when we watch a play or paint a painting; the thought processes experienced by the artistic researcher creating a piece of work is distinguishable from that of a conventional artist in the sense that the concern is with the theoretical potential for artistic endeavour (Barrett & Bolt, 2014; Carter, 2014; Welsh, 2014). These are concerns I share and I believe the work is not merely an artifice but a location for storing social and philosophical knowledge.

Saldaña's work then is perhaps distinguishable from other theatre-makers: the emphasis is on knowledge making and not necessarily creative output. Ultimately this changes the nature of both knowledge making and creative output. Brecht's reflections on his own practice also echo these sentiments and a description of his 'aesthetic' as 'revolutionary' in a recent thesis on his work seems to reinforce his concern with privileging social messages contained in his theatre (Squires, 2012). That is, even his concern with aesthetics is directed toward political and social reflection, what it can achieve and reflect politically (Willett 1974). The practice of these artists then becomes data and I emulate these processes in my own theory and practice, which has a significant relationship with documentary theatre.

2.5 Documentary theatre, real fiction and ethno-drama: creativity in education

In her review of Forsyth and Megson's *Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present*, Caroline Wake claims that documentary theatre 'both depends on and depicts history' (Wake, 2011, p.1). She supports Yvette Hutchison's contribution to the collection titled *Verbatim Theatre in South Africa: Living History in a Person's Performance* (Hutchison, 2010, p.209) and her claims regarding documentary theatre's potential to live history through performance and privilege 'personal narratives' over 'political narratives' in its articulation of history (Hutchinson, 2010, p. 210). The form, it seems, 'inevitably alters and augments it (history)' (Wake, 2011, p.1). This echoes the social psychologist RD Laing, referred to in the Introduction, and his claims regarding the effect of the observer on the social situation (Laing, 1967). Jules Henry also laments the impossibility of observing a social situation, without somehow influencing or at least creating it through interpretation and indeed through the presence of an observer: 'As scientists we are prone to

imaginatively project our own learning and understanding into our subjects' minds' (Henry, 1973, p.458). A simple example of this phenomenon, peppered throughout Henry's book, is when he offers to buy a hotdog for a subject (Mrs. Barnes), creating discomfort because the Metzes and the Barneses have a relationship 'where they account for everything exactly' (Henry, 1973, p.274).

Wake's claims regarding documentary seem to echo the testimony of Laing and Henry's human research participants and the effects of being observed (Wake, 2011; Laing, 1967; Henry, 1973).

Elsewhere, Henry speaks of factors such as 'custom' and 'strain', claiming that the presence of an observer, though the family may become accustomed to him, creates a strain where family member are 'on guard constantly' according to Henry (1973, p. 458). He claims, though the family may wish to 'protect' itself from the 'eyes of an observer', its members cannot remain constantly 'on guard' (Henry, 1973, p.458). This becomes an important consideration when it comes to the data collection component of my work and its methodology. The environment is not static. It does not consist of predictable subjects with standardised responses to questions. Rather, the environment is highly unstable and participants extremely unpredictable.

In Laing's (1967) work and even more particularly in that of Henry (1973), the idea of participation and non-participation of the social scientist in the social context is important. How can the context remain unblemished? How does the presence of an outsider affect the behaviour and interactions of a group of insiders, particularly an outsider who is there to observe or collect data in a conversational environment? This is pertinent to two significant discussion points imperative to my research. Firstly, my own role and position in a classroom context as a poet/ playwright/ researcher as opposed to a professional educator or teacher. Secondly, there is my actual physical presence in the classroom as an outsider, a non-participant, amongst a group of insiders or participants.

This inevitably changes the dynamics of the situation. Previously, everyone was either teacher or student in the classroom situation, where formal and informal boundaries, rules and established ways of being and talking exist. All present are aware of these dynamics and play their roles accordingly. The presence of an outsider, with new and unknown motivations changes the dynamics, just as Henry observes the change in dynamics due to his presence in the family environment. One of the primary tasks of my thesis is to position

myself, as a creative researcher, self-consciously in the classroom context. The results of the research then are recorded not only in the participants' responses, contained in the qualitative survey, reproduced in Chapter Four, and in the monologues that form the foundations of the dramatic play; these outcomes are also contained in my own observations of my position in the classroom situation, contained in my account of the engagement in the classroom and the extracts from my journal, presented in Chapter Eight.

Education and the Arts:

Recent educational literature has identified the importance of the arts and advocated expanding its use in education (Ewing, 2010). As a practitioner, I have always undertaken the experience and creation of works such as *Barcode 30!!7 307* (Welsh, 2009) and *The Biography of a Battler* (Welsh, 2012), considering them educational projects engaging with community. In this thesis, I describe my research in a school, contemplating a participant group of students encouraged to write a monologue loosely based on the real fiction method, to consider the issue of labelling in schools and among young people's social groups in what might be called 'peer labelling' (Thomas, 1997).

My thesis considers the potential of Arts practice by drama students to interact with and affect social dynamics in relation to social labelling in the classroom. John O'Toole has emphasised Arts in education for almost three decades. He has collaborated with Brad Haseman (referred to elsewhere in this thesis) and his titles include *Dramawise*, *Theatre in Education* and *Pretending to Learn* (O'Toole & Haseman, 1987; O'Toole, 1977; O'Toole & Dunn, 2004). Perhaps most interesting for my work is O'Toole's book titled *Cooling Conflict* (2005) in which drama and peer teaching are used to empower students to manage bullying and conflict in schools (O'Toole, 2005). The idea that drama exploration can have a direct influence on the social world of the student is central to my thesis. Recent literature has also identified problems with a tendency for both teachers and peers to label individuals in the school environment as 'bullies' and 'victims' (Griffiths, 2007, p.39). My thesis combines these two crucial contemporary areas from education: drama education and labelling.

O'Toole's claims regarding the importance of creativity and the Arts in education have recently been recognised by Robyn Ewing in the *Australian Education Review* (Ewing, 2010). In her article, 'The Arts and Australian Education: Realising Potential', she not only argues the importance of the Arts, but illustrates it

by using a fairy tale to make her point. She writes of a mythical time in which elders told 'wise stories' to young people and sang with them, not in a formal education process, but as a way of communicating ideas and values as part of everyday social life where 'models of the real world and other possible worlds…were brought to life by acting them out' (Ewing, 2010, p.iii). Ewing observes that:

> For the first time since European settlement, there is about to be a national curriculum for all Australians, and one which…mandates the Arts of dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts as a basic entitlement for all Australians (Ewing, 2010, p. iv).

Other theorists have taken the importance of creativity and its educational, even mystical, potential one step further. Among the various theories proposed by Al-Girl Tan, for example, is the notion of a relationship between 'psychoticism' and 'creativity' (Tan, 2007). She asserts 'that creativity is associated with an inclination to psychopathology most often hypomanic or mildly psychotic traits without full-blown illness' (Tan, 2007, p.86). This perhaps contributes to the perception that a form of creative practice that encourages a group of drama students to observe the speech rhythms of a real character to write a monologue could be socially dangerous.

Research has also been conducted in which drama becomes a means for intervening and affecting the educational and social environment of a school, where drama is used for the development of students' self-concept, social skills and even problem behaviour (Freeman, Sullivan, & Fulton, 2003). And others have conceived of drama programs with extremely diverse objectives, including conceptual learning in a science enrichment program using creative dramatics, while other authors have used drama to improve the English language skills of Mexican-American students (Hendrix, 2011; Hendrickson & Gallegos, 1972). Other research in England also found drama useful in the area of teaching and learning literacy while some more historical material makes claims regarding self-actualisation (Heinig, 1992; Huntsman, 1992). Others have even found drama can impact the retention of classroom material and, perhaps less surprising, affect self-esteem (Ingersoll & Kase, 1970; Kayhan, 2009; Jackson, 2000).

Other relevant research includes an exploration into the 'growth of moral judgement' through drama, a drama-based program of research conducted in a women's prison, and claims regarding the enhancement of fluent and flexible thinking through the creative drama process (McCambridge, 1998; Lazzari,

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Amundson, & Jackson, 2005). A recent review of drama-based pedagogy directly interrogates the effect of the field, concluding that the 'overall effects' of drama-based pedagogy were overwhelmingly positive in terms of social skills and attitudes including achievement, self-perception, motivation and attitudes toward others (Lee, Patall, Cawthon, & Steingut, 2015). As we shall see, my research does not seek to measure the effect of the drama education engagement, but rather seeks qualitative data in the form of creative output and monologues from the participant group.

In addition to literature on documentary theatre and the educational potential of drama and theatre processes is a recently emerging body of work on the 'mockumentary' (Davis, 2012). The television creations of Australian comedian Chris Lilley are relevant here, both in form and content. Lilley uses satire and comedy to approach the subject of students in schools labelling one another in his series *Summer Heights High*,, where the teacher, Mr. G, devises a play around the subject of labels in the students' world, such as 'slut', a label explored by my participant group. One question this raises is how does the context of a research question and the medium through which it is being asked govern its outcomes? Is it even the same question being asked by myself and Lilley or does the context, where the participants are not fictional but real, alter the similarities between the fictional Mr. G's project and the one I conducted in a real classroom with monologues by actual students?

This phenomenon is also apparent in a different way with The Laramie Project (see Chapter One, section 1.2) where the form of theatre is used as a source of healing within a community. When we ask, 'what happened?' in relation to this work, the answer goes something like: A young gay man was murdered by another man within the same community. A group of researchers set about documenting the event and a play was developed and performed within that same community (Kaufman, 2001). The play, then, is integrated into the sequence of events. It is no longer merely observing or recording history, it has become part of it and this is an example of Wake's claim about functioning in practice.

The general theory of documentary theatre includes a reference to social justice and is comparable to Augusto Boal, practising theatre in Brazil during politically turbulent times, who saw the potential of theatre to enact social change (Boal, 2000). His practice was based on the writings of Paulo Freire who, in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, emphasises the dialogical nature of the political situation for the oppressed

classes (Freire, 1970). Boal then uses the theoretical foundation provided by Freire and translates it into the language of modern political theatre that belongs with the work of Brecht and Beckett, where the political context of the work's creation and the work itself become intertwined.

Similar claims can be made in relation to some contemporary Australian work, such as that of Betzian, who identifies her work as the 'Living Newspaper Technique' with reference to 1930s Russia and The Federal Theatre Project in the United States, where she claims the generation of theatre of this type is comparable to the production of news and current affairs in a newspaper production house. The same may be said about the work of Lloyd Jones from La Mama Theatre, Melbourne (Betzian, 2007; Marshall, 2002). Jones tends to utilise theatrical improvisation and performance processes to reflect and make comment on social issues. And in *drama as education*, Bolton asserts that 'what drama does is to create an opportunity for coming to know something from the inside' (Bolton, 1984, p.184). He elevates knowledge gained through drama, asserting that it can be socially tested and modified through the medium of public language and action. This relates to recent work by Dan Freidman and Lois Holzman, who claim that:

> Educational theatre has come to refer to both the use of theatre as an educational tool in schools and the use of theatre to educate an audience outside the frame of formal educational institutions (2011, p.5).

Phillip Taylor has also written extensively on the potential to examine issues from within a community generating theatre (2002). His work explored a government housing body in which 'The Centre for Applied Theatre' examined issues such as domestic violence, racial discrimination, teenage crime and ways of combating apathy among residents. This work has a significant relationship to my practice and its monological application to the notion of labelling in education from the point of view of the student.

Recent relevant applications of Taylor's work include 'The Teachers' Monologues' by Mindy Roberta Carter, who utilises the practice of monologue writing to record educational data in terms of teachers' experiences (Carter, 2013). She views drama and monologue writing as a useful method of conducting research and storing data. This work is similar to mine in that it values and privileges the artistic practice of monologue creation as a source of social revelation. However, it experiences a significant departure when one considers the method of monologue writing and the subject being asked to write.

Carter's subject is the teacher. The monologue seems to be recorded directly by the researcher and then conflated through a process which she labels a/r/tography (Carter, 2013). This fusion of theory and practice is pertinent to both Taylor's work and my own. However, in the case of my work, as opposed to Carter's, I am seeking to raise the students' voice through a practice of writing. This becomes particularly problematic when one considers Carter's reference to an absence of censorship. That is, she seeks to have no censorship and observes the barrier to creativity that censorship can represent. I have also noted this phenomenon in the ethics component of this thesis, where the students' welfare needs to be considered alongside any creative activity.

For example, the following description of the benefits of creative writing not only shows the articulation of pain, but also illustrates the need for students to be allowed to speak unimpeded:

> Translating painful history into beautiful art then becomes transformative. One teenager was so angry and withdrawn that he would not talk to anyone. He began to sing in our Hip Hop Harmony group. It was the first time in years that he was able to express his feelings. It was as if the floodgates had opened (Brown, 2013, p. 2).

This delicate 'transformative' process of translating 'painful history' into 'beautiful art' may require dealing with uncomfortable content but the value of such an exercise cannot be understated. Such content potentially has legal ramifications, particularly when considered alongside Victorian law such as mandatory reporting. Sometimes opening the 'floodgates' can have unintended consequences (Brown, 2013).

In other work on this subject, Balfour has questioned the potential for applied theatre to act as an agent of social change. Balfour explores the etymology and history of the term, as well as the potential for practice engaging in applied theatre to remain objective, truly executing the objectives of the practice. Balfour claims that it is not possible for theatre to truly act as an independent agent of social exploration or 'intervention' because it is 'informed by the need to learn the language and discourse of the social context in order to both understand and be accepted (and funded?) by its constituents' (Balfour, 2009, p.3).

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Balfour's argument is that once practitioners become 'insiders', they are compromised and the theatre fails to provide a critique or reflection on its social context. Rather, it becomes a part of that social context and, therefore, ceases to fulfil the potential of applied theatre in the idealised form proposed by Taylor and others whereby the 'traditional values of alternative theatre were troubled by new political perspectives' (Balfour, 2009, p. 3). Rather, theatre sought out new territory and found itself contextualised in refugee camps, schools, hospitals and, in the case of Balfour's work, even prisons. What Balfour argues in his article, and my own experience concurs with this, is that using theatre as a tool of social analysis becomes problematic because once theatre practice is relocated in other social contexts (e.g. prisons or refugee camps); it is influenced by these surroundings. In my work in this thesis, the research has had to adapt to the social context of the classroom/school, subject to ethical and even legal concerns. This is explored in more detail in the methodology and journal chapters where these constraints impact the process of taking an established idea or creative practice like real fiction, and applying it undiluted to a classroom full of current secondary students. Ultimately, the work may appear to be compromised. This is not necessarily a negative, merely a part of the process of applied theatre.

In addition to Taylor, mentioned above, others who have contributed to the movement of applied theatre since the 1980s include Jackson (2000) and Anna Deavere Smith claims to walk, s in the voices of America like the poetry Walt Whitman. Taylor writes about theatre and the 'tension' between its potential as education on the one hand and art on the other (Jackson, 2000, p.1). Others include Nicholson and Kershaw, who Balfour describes as comparing theatre with litmus paper because of the way in which it adapts to and engages with the social situation (Balfour, 1992; Nicholson, 2006; Brown, 2009 Through this process of adaptation and engagement, the ability to question and critique is perhaps compromised. This is addressed throughout this thesis in my observations of myself as a non-teacher – an outsider in education. That is not to say that my position remains any less affected or corrupted than a drama teacher in the system. I am just as bound by the rules, regulations and ethical concerns as any teacher inside a school, perhaps more so *because* I am an 'outsider'. This is a consistent theme throughout the thesis and in descriptions of the research engagement that follow in chapters six and seven.

A recent project in a NSW school has similarities with my work. This project involved secondary students tackling the problem of racial stereotypes through playwriting, and encouraged students to use playwriting

and performance as a vehicle for articulating their experiences and feelings in relation to racial stereotyping. Participants were from diverse cultural backgrounds and drama became a source of articulating the personal journeys of these students through playwriting ('Playwright makes Dramatic Impact', n.a. 2012).

This is significant for theatre inside and outside educational contexts. For both Brecht and Boal, theatre is a deeply and politically potent expression of pain and of some experiences considered inexpressible in other contexts (cited in Willett, 1978). Real fiction theatre takes words and tones of voice, speech rhythms from conversations, and uses them in the construction of theatrical dialogue and monologue (Welsh, 2014). It has a significant relationship to reality and the experience of its subject, like documentary and verbatim theatre, and uniquely expresses pain and what might be called inexpressible language, such as in the work of Brecht, discussed in greater detail below. Similarly, Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* has a particular relationship with the idea of exploring labels in education through the use of drama and particularly real fiction theatre, to make a significant contribution to the meaning and operation of 'disturbance' and labels in education (Boal, 2000). For example, Boal's *Torquemada* is about the systematic use of torture in prison (Boal, 1971). It illustrates his quest to explore the political potential of theatre and utilise the art form, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, to contribute not only to the development of theatre but also to society.

The technique of monologue involves a social comment from within the voice of another character familiar to the author, but not the author. This has much in common with the work of Saldaña, referred to above, who identifies the ethical issues concerned with the collection and dissemination of data in the form of ethnographic performance (Saldaña, 2005). Saldaña's work describes his ongoing relationship with the subject of his study over a long period, his interaction with the real character portrayed in his ethnography, and various other dilemmas, including the reaction of the audience to the revelation that the character before them is in fact the real subject of representation. By considering an approach to labelling in schools using a theory of artistic creation established in the realm of theatre practice, I intend to contribute to, and indeed question, the notion of social labelling in an educational environment.

My thesis then not only considers the potential for drama education through the use of real fiction styled creative research, it also explores the expansion and potential of practice-led research, building on the

recent work of Haseman (2006), Taylor (2002) and Carter (2010). As stated above, Carter's work expresses teachers' experiences through the use of theatrical monologue and claims to belong to the field of practice-based research. Similarly, I conceive of my work as engaging with the education of secondary school students to contribute to the field of practice-led research. By participating in this process, I argue, students may find a new way of seeing the world around them and exploring the sociology of school, primarily to understand the contribution that drama can make to understanding and articulating their experience (Chapman, 1986).

2.6 Saldaña and real fiction: crafting participants' experiences

Saldaña describes ethno-theatre as the utilisation of the traditional craft and artistic techniques to portray participants' experience and/or researchers' interpretation of data. This is where the technique I call real fiction research is inserted into the process. The portrayal of participants' experience and researchers' interpretation is recorded and stored in the speech rhythms of the character incorporated into the playwriting method. This process has a relationship with Saldaña's definition of research, 'to investigate…can be conducted by artists, scholars, even participants themselves' (Saldaña, 2005, p. 1). It finds its origins in some forms of experimental anthropology, credited to anthropologist Victor Turner, who questions the nature and form of traditional data collection, like some contemporary work on qualitative research (Turner, 1967). Saldaña's work, for example, the process called real fiction research/theatre 'consists of dramatised significant selections of narrative collected through interviews, participant observation, field notes, journal entries and/or print and media artefacts' (Saldaña, 2005, p. 2).

Saldaña then explores the question of ethno-drama as an appropriate presentational mode for ethnographic research. This issue is expanded upon by Saldaña's reviewer Jen Tarr:

> This touches on one of the primary concerns raised by performative social research, that of quality criteria. While most social researchers have well-honed skills in judging what constitutes a good piece of traditional research, the majority are novice artists (Tarr, 2008, p.2).

With regard to my project, the form of the monologue, contextualised inside a dramatic play and used to store student data on labels, is an ideal vehicle for participants to respond because it represents both a safe forum for expression and a preparation activity for school assessed coursework in the Year 12 drama

syllabus. Saldaña's process involves social encounters. For example, 'Chalkboard Concerto' originated as a conference paper and presented by an educational researcher, Charles Vanover, was viewed by Saldaña and then developed into a performance in collaboration between Saldaña and Vanover (Vanover & Saldaña, 2005). Participants in my research project will not only be asked to speak their words in the form of survey or even performance data, but will write their responses in the form of a dramatic monologue. These monologues will be situated in a play and the entire process is described in considerable detail in Chapter Seven. However, the question of the quality of the play, an issue that is continually addressed in Saldaña's work, is secondary to the processes involved in creating it, particularly since there is no planned public performance of the material.

The development of the students as writers, the monologues themselves and ensuring that participants actively create social comment are questions that take priority over the quality of the work as theatre; much like Saldaña's work seems more concerned with telling participants' stories through performance than with the performance itself (Vanover & Saldaña, 2005). However, as Saldaña contends and I agree, the form real fiction, as well as Saldaña's ethno-drama, are foundations for the creation of theatre, not merely an educational exercise. Therefore, in arguing for real fiction and encouraging participants to use this approach, applying it to the presentation of results in the form of the fragments of a play in chapter seven, I am also claiming the importance of the creative work as research.

According to both Saldaña and Given, ethno-drama (the written script), and ethno-theatre (the staged performance), are engaging and perhaps subversive ways of presenting research, which involve '…the transformation and adaptation of ethnographic research data' (Given, 2008, p.1). Saldaña (2005) identifies the forms of data collection used in ethno-drama as including interview transcripts, participant observations, field notes, journals, documents and statistics. Tracy Sanders explores the potential of ethno-drama in a higher education setting to store and disseminate student experiences, emphasising the authenticity of such a method (Sanders, 1995). Like my own method, she encourages participants to reflect and recreate the unfamiliar experience of others, as well as reflecting on their own experiences. She distinguishes this social component of her methodology and engagement with research participants from the work of other ethno-dramatists, such as Mienczakowski (1995), an ethno-dramatist whose objective seems to be to collect participants' own direct experiences using what might be described as ethno-dramatic methods,

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such as monologue writing and survey participation. This latter method, unlike my own and Sanders, does not necessarily provide participants with the opportunity to themselves reflect on and criticise their social surroundings. Rather, this final component is considered the domain of the researcher. Therefore the idea that one participant might record another's experience as a part of the data would not be consistent with her methodology; however, it would be perfectly consistent with my own or even Saldaña's that includes using traditional theatrical means to construct the ethno-theatre.

In this work, I set out to build upon and expand the practice of ethno-drama. Johnnie Saldaña, a pioneering practitioner of ethno-drama, speaks of the role of monologue in the construction of ethno-drama/theatre and refers to Alan Haehnel, who conducted workshops in schools eliciting monologues from high school actors for performance. He explains that the quality of the work is written not spoken, noting that it is 'not verbatim' but is 'an authentic text written by an adolescent that was adapted and edited as necessary by an adult playwright.' (Saldaña, 2011, p.64).

In other writings, Saldaña speaks at some length of his privilege. In 'This is not a Performance Text', he writes in verse and reflects on this somewhat transgressive form, claiming he writes in such a way simply because he can (Saldaña, 2006). A similar sentiment is found in Laing, who at various moments very deliberately disrupts the form, writing in verse in *Knots*, for example (Laing, 1971). Other parts of Laing's work raise ethical questions that might be applied to the potentially subversive nature of my work, though, as observed above, the ethical component of the research is partially complicated by the fact the data is being collected from minors. Saldaña's work on 'autoethno-drama' and reality theatre has a particular relationship with my work because Saldaña, like me, is questioning the limits placed upon the theatrical form (Saldaña, 2005, 2008). What does it do? What is it capable of? Those who have followed him have also expanded upon Saldaña's work. Helen Nicholson, for example, has written on the subject of 'Research as Confession' in the field of applied theatre (Nicholson, 2006).

Subversion is common to these and my own writings, as explored in both the chapter titled 'Real Fiction and Creative Research' and the essay written in collaboration with Dusk Dundler, published in the Conference Notes at the Popcaanz Conference 2013, 'The Trouble with Writing Reality', reproduced in Appendix II of this thesis (Welsh, 2014; Dundler-Welsh, 2013). The 'creative research' chapter in the Bolt

and Barrett collection, for example, deals with the way in which my work and the form it takes disrupts and troubles conventional theatre, by its adherence and loyalty to the experience or the natural habitat for conversation from which theatre and performance is drawn rather than its presentation (Meece & Soderman, 2010). The essay, 'The Trouble with Writing Reality', however, speaks to some of the ethical issues surrounding the practice I call real fiction.

The question of subversion in my work is not as deliberate as Saldaña. As noted above, he makes his privileged position very clear. I would argue my work, its origins and its application to the school context does just the opposite. My voice is not one of authority. I do not write poetry because I *can* but because I *must*. This is the best way to represent the experience before me, because I do not know another way to speak. This is not intended to be a criticism of Saldaña's practice and indeed, I see it as necessary to my work, because it creates a space in which my voice can speak – a space that otherwise may not exist.

The ethno-drama, as described by Saldaña, involves the preparation of fieldwork for theatrical production. He cites Sylvia Drake, who challenges writers to consider the appropriateness of the story's medium (Saldaña, 2005). Here I claim that the use of real fiction research best be described as the 'preparatory fieldwork' for a theatrical monologue. The real fiction research monologue involves an emphasis on conversational experience, where meanings of words are contested, negotiated and subject to the context of their usage (Shotter, 1993, p. 93). Participants are invited to explore their day-to-day experience of labels in a theatre/monologue writing exercise.

Saldaña explores the practice and role of the playwright, comparing him/her to the qualitative researcher writing a report. This has also been a feature of my practice and will become more apparent in later chapters when I approach my own methodology and present various results from the research in the form of the dramatic play. Saldaña's notion of ethno-drama involves employing dramatic techniques to represent social research. According to Saldaña, ethno-theatre or 'dramatizing data' entails: 'the reduction of field-notes, interview transcripts, journal entries and so forth to salient, foreground issues – the juicy stuff for dramatic impact' (Saldaña, 1998a, pp. 184-185). There are various similarities and differences between the practice I classify as real fiction and Saldaña's ethno-drama.

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A recent study of adolescents' 'affective' engagements with theatre reveals the way in which drama can function, changing the social attitudes of young people. Matt Omasta invited participants in his research to complete a survey before and after viewing a piece of theatre to gauge the influence of the spectacle on the values of young people (Omasta, 2011). Not surprisingly, he found that theatre could significantly affect our values and beliefs. This study involved the viewing of theatre, and therefore its conclusions relate only to 'passive' engagements with drama as an education tool (Bolton, 1984). I will construct an active and student-centred approach, as advocated by Bolton. Bolton was a contemporary and colleague of Dorothy Heathcote, who was considered a drama revolutionary because she saw and articulated 'a conscious employment of the elements of drama to educate' (Wagner 1976, p.8).

The Victorian Certificate of Education (the final year of schooling in the state of Victoria) curriculum administrative handbook lists Theatre Studies as part of the drama curriculum and describes the importance of students engaging with a variety of theatre-making techniques from ancient Greek theatre to the performances of today, emphasising the importance of students developing an understanding of the 'collaborative' nature of 'stagecraft' (Learner, 2013). As I have previously stated, in my practice, the constitution of stagecraft I call real fiction is radically altered by the attention given to the social context of the drama and its creation. In this thesis, I claim that 'real fiction research' constitutes one such style of stagecraft, at the same time, acting as an affective form of learning. In this situation, learning occurs as a result of emotional engagement and transformation through the practice of drama that ultimately causes participants to question and reassess ingrained attitudes. This interplay between emotion and attitudes is specific to drama, and particularly the real fiction process. Such interplay recognises the potential of the Arts to create a shift in attitudes through engaging emotionally with text and performance.

2.7 Wittgenstein, language games and real fiction

The work of Wittgenstein, as well as that of Shotter and Searle – theorists who make many claims regarding the nature of reality and its relationship with language – is concerned with what Wittgenstein calls 'language games' Among Wittgenstein's claims is the idea that language creates a picture like a sudden light in a world of darkness.

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Firstly, the idea of a language game, the nature of which Wittgenstein claims has been thoroughly misunderstood since the time of classical philosophers such as Augustine. Whilst Augustine sees language as a naming tool (i.e. helping to represent an existing reality); Wittgenstein argues that it is far more complex and operates like a game of chess, according to various rules and protocols helping us constitute reality. Ultimately, Wittgenstein's theory is about the way in which we use language to constitute our world. For example, he explains at some length the difference between when one says 'I mean (or meant) this' and 'I thought of this', claiming the latter is akin to 'It reminded me of…' (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.217).

Secondly, my thesis, like Wittgenstein's work, is concerned with the relationship between language and reality or language and experience. I claim that the practice of a playwright involves observation of this interplay between language and experience akin to Wittgenstein's philosophy. In contrast to Wittgenstein, I also claim that the nature of the language game involves much less agency, that the subject's 'choice' to say 'I mean this' or 'I thought of this' when this was said, is influenced by social and cultural factors seemingly beyond our control, though we are all participants in conversation and social construction. This view of Wittgenstein responds to Bertrand Russell's dismissal of Wittgenstein, claiming that he uses words to argue there is 'knowledge not expressed in words' (Russell, 1940, p.322). According to Russell, this is nonsensical. Wittgenstein himself questions the logical validity of private language or 'knowledge not expressible in words' (Russell, 1940, p.322). However, I believe language operates to create images, ideas, thoughts and emotions in the listener that do not necessarily have a direct relationship with what is being referred to or described by the speaker. Rather, the listener has an experience when hearing the words of the speaker that is only partially based on the words being uttered by the speaker.

An example that immediately springs to mind from my practice is in the play *Barcode* where the character M1 says: 'I been inside. I been outside meetin' mates from the inside. I been in graveyards. I been the fucken grave-digger' (Welsh 2009). In this example, reproduced in full below, the character is not only describing his empirical experience but his experience within what Wittgenstein would call a language game in which he denotes that he is powerless, labelled 'the grave-digger' and at the will of a seemingly unstable authority, at least from his point of view. He is not only trapped inside the criminal culture he describes. He is also confined within the limits of the language used to describe it, the vernacular or 'speech rhythms' and words that belong to his social and cultural context. Such ideas are important to the

primary task of this thesis: to explore labels from a student perspective by engaging student participants in this specific way of making theatre and monologue writing.

Wittgenstein seems to perceive language as a setting, a background for our own unique experience: 'At these words, *he* occurred to me.' What is the primitive reaction with which the language game begins? What can be translated into these words? How do people get to use these words?' (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 218). Perhaps words are chosen by the rhythms governed by the voice sounds of the character, a view already explored in this thesis, and further expanded in chapter seven containing the exploration of the dramatic play and characterising my research as practice-led.

2.8 Monologue writing: using real fiction, ethno-drama and ethno-theatre to speak and hear marginalised voices

In this section, I provide an example from my own creative work. This will lay the foundations for the engagement with the participating students constituting the primary source of my data collection. Part of the premise of this thesis and the monologue data being collected is about sourcing and recording marginalised voices, from society and from the drama classroom. This is even significant in relation to our thoughts on labelling. Who is labelled? How and why? What do the labelled individuals say? How do labelled individuals speak? This has been a concern of mine in social theory and artistic practice. One example of such a marginalised voice, constructed using the process of 'real fiction theatre-making', can be found in my play *Barcode 30!!7 307!* , written from the interaction between my own personal experience and real characters' speech rhythms (Welsh, 2009).

The example may appear to be extremely confronting material but it is an ideal illustration of describing and recording speech rhythms. The relationship to the work with students in this thesis, elaborated below, exists in the intricate recording of speech rhythms and the way in which they articulate the human subject in a social situation, and act to reflect cultures and sub-cultures, fundamental to the process described in chapters four and five, explaining the work with student participants.

The context of this work – street kids in a regional Australian centre – means that the work may alienate some readers. On this subject, I would like to make a very brief note on the use of swearing or offensive

language in the extract. The purpose of this is both to be true to the character's speech patterns and identify swearing as an integral part of this contextual language of a particular subculture. Indeed, recent sociological research has claimed that '…the pragmatic functions of swearing in everyday talk are mainly to express emotions, verbal emphasis, group solidarity and aggression respectively' (Wang, 2013, p.72). The offensive language in the extract below identifies the speaker as belonging to a particular social world, governed by the character's 'speech rhythms'; the language expresses the situation for a member of a sub-culture (Welsh, 2014, p.132):

> Anyway, I'm doin' this CBO. I'm a gravedigger. I'm *the* grave-digger. I'm turnin' soil from a distance when I seen this dead guys head (Light on fathers head) sort of turnin' around in the dirt and…orh, shit! It reminds me of me son, me little tiny baby…
>
> She was due that day. Me bitch, that is. She had a beautiful face, I'm tellin' you mate. (**pause**) Me bitch, that is. (**pause**) Orh, shit, I'm just sort of rememberin'. (**pause**) How is it that everything always ends up so fucked?

[**Father walks on stage. Mother sits on chair**]

> It's like being inside this very dark world. It's like what you call dreams I call nightmares. It's like how I saw that face on that CBO. [**Lights up on father's head, it's like a Shakespearian image**] That face turning in the dirt. That's my world. That's your world. The Looking Glass is filthy fucking dirty and I'm on stage in a theatre and this is the fucking middle class and I'm an impostor. BUT YOU ALWAYS KNEW I WAS AN ACTOR, AN ARTIFICE. What? And now you're gunna tell me you find it strange that I snuck the truth in under me arm?

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[Lights up on Rebecca]

Bitch!

Bitch!

Bitch!

Come on, push! Push harder! So I scream at the doctor, 'Give us ya gloves, cunteyes!' And he looks sort of scared so I take a few seconds out to roar at him like me bitch is doin' right in front of me face. And when I look I see the blood pourin' all over the fucking white as snow sheet and I say 'What? What the fuck is wrong? What the fuck is goin' on? What are you doin' to me bitch, Cunt? What are you doin' to me baby, cunteyes?

That's when I seen him. That's when I seen his little legs danglin' down. Man, if you could imagine those little tiny feet dangling like Christmas decorations and the blood's drippin' off the end of his tiny toes and they called it a breach birth. A what? I say.

Father: A breach birth.

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M1:   Did you see it, though? His little legs, man? Did you see 'em?

Father: Yes.

M1:   And what did you call it?

Father: A breach birth.

(Welsh, 2013)

2.9 *Barcode* & the language game

Using the above example from my practice, I will now consider the extract as a language game in terms of both Wittgenstein (1953) and Searle (1979). The locutionary or actual ostensible meaning of saying *I have been inside* might be taken to mean that one is an insider in the way that RD Laing (1964) speaks of insiders and outsiders in *Sanity, Madness and the Family* (Laing, 1964). Whilst we know this to be inaccurate because the context tells us that the speaker is speaking of having actually been in prison, the ostensible meaning connected to the Laing idea is not untrue. Indeed, the character 'M1' is an 'insider' in the prison system, the disturbed family and the various rules and language games associated with these contexts. He has been 'outside' these contexts but then meets insiders (mates) that drag him back into the game by compelling him to play by the rules. It is apparent that this interpretation is ostensible and not in fact true once it is apparent that the speaker has in fact spent time in prison and his reference to 'inside' 'outside' is in fact a common slang/euphemism for prison. This is the illocutionary or real, intended meaning. However, it would not be accurate to dismiss the ostensible meaning on this account and would in fact be true, incorporating both Wittgenstein and Searle, to combine the ostensible and real, intended account to give an accurate picture of the 'perlocutionary' meaning of the utterance, which is what the audience of the play are ultimately confronted with.

The extract exemplifies the process which I describe elsewhere as observing or disseminating speech rhythms. It is the foundation for the practice of applied theatre being brought to the classroom in the monologue writing workshop. That is, just as this character is formed from the interaction between my existence as an author and the character as a person in social reality; the students will be asked to observe a classmate's speech rhythms and I will conflate the monologue, using similar techniques to those used in this example. The theatrical monologue then represents a reflection of the world of the other through the imagined speaking subject or character.

The main character here is confined to a way of talking, which is necessarily social and proceeds to shape the world in which he lives, acts and speaks. The voice of the character also becomes a tool to criticise, analyse and respond emotionally to his social surroundings. The question of whether this constitutes transgressive data will be a significant one in my thesis and certainly raises ethical concerns, such as the

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artistic ownership of student monologues, how this is dealt with, and whether student writing is directly reproduced or conflated to protect the identity of these vulnerable young people.

The idea of transgressive data also reaches into the more general concept of transgression, a term explored almost universally by philosophers such as Kant and Kazarian. Kant describes transgression as every action contrary to duty and declares it a vice when an intentional transgression becomes a principle (Kant, 1785, p.153). Kant speaks of transgression as crossing over or exceeding bounds or limits. When I speak of transgression in this thesis, I am melding these two concepts together. Swearing in the classroom, for example, is an action contrary to duty laid out in the school rules. By swearing in the classroom, students might be said to be exceeding these bounds or limits.

Elsewhere in the thesis, I refer to transgressive behaviour labelled by teachers and other students. Here, it is not necessarily transgressive because it breaks a rule or exceeds a limit. Rather, it is a process of naming that which is deemed to be a transgressive principle as disturbed or at risk (Cuban, 1989). I claim then, like Kant, that transgression seems to require a name but not necessarily a clearly stated boundary that has been exceeded or law that has been broken. Therefore, when I speak about transgression I am referring to that which stands outside conventional experience, much like St. Pierre's 'transgressive data', consisting of subjective material from dreams and emotions, standing outside of what we conventionally understand as data (St. Pierre, 1997). I explore my own sense of transgression at length, being a non-teacher and non-student in a school, participating in education.

However, my research also examines the potential for drama to educate and it could be argued that all creative activity in a classroom context raises these ethical concerns over 'ownership'. Just as the question of agency emerges in relation to the language and words we use to describe particular situations and sensations; the notion of ownership: of creative ideas, of our own speech rhythms and voices, indeed ownership of our very selves becomes an issue when we engage in collaborations, particularly ones with vulnerable young people in a classroom context.   The problem seems to be amplified by the nature of the work as 'research' carried out by a non-teacher in a school/classroom environment rather than simply educational practice. I argue, however, that the work, along with other such engagements, contributes to the evolution of the classroom as a two-way (perhaps three-way), dynamic learning environment. In this

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context, theatre becomes a vehicle for a genuine, educational conversation about labels and labelling in what Gallagher describes as a 'democratised classroom' (Skidmore & Gallagher, 2005, p.1).

Outside the classroom, I claim that theatrical monologues are not necessarily created or made by their author, but found in the voices of characters and their speech rhythms, encountered through conversation and everyday experience (Shotter, 1993). For example, the extract from the play *Barcode* above involved various social and conversational encounters gathered and presented in the recognisable theatrical form of monologue. In this case the character is not one voice from social reality but a collection of conversational encounters recorded in the form of monologue. For example, the story of the 'breach birth' was born from a story I was told by a friend of the character from whom I developed the voice of the character, the speech patterns and rhythms. Therefore the one character is actually two (and possibly more) voices and in the creative process I have inserted these voices in one character's story.

John Searle claims fiction represents lies and that speech acts, such as the example from my practice above, contain their 'locutionary' or actual, ostensible meaning, illocutionary or real, intended meaning and 'perlocutionary' meaning, referring to an utterance's actual effect, whether intended or not (Searle, 1979). The subjective nature of the speech act means this type of investigation can be characterised as perhaps belonging to the field of hermeneutics or the science of interpretation, a theoretical position that operates in relation to, or in comparison with, the objectivity of the scientific method (Dilthey, 1996).

In addition to recent literature exploring the tendency of teachers to name and perhaps ultimately label students; writers in the field of education such as Jan Hunt have raised questions about the validity and use of 'objective' and 'subjective' labels (Dixen et al., 2004; Hunt, 2013). Hunt explains, in some detail, the difference between what can be considered 'objective' and that which is subjective, explaining that 'objective' is 'having actual existence or reality' whilst 'subjective is 'proceeding from or taking place in a person's mind rather than the external world' (Hunt, 2013, p. 1). This dichotomy of internal and external perceptions of reality is an intrinsic philosophical question that has been the subject of the classical works of Descartes and Freud. And indeed this is one of the primary concerns of Laing in several of his works, including the ethnographic *Sanity, Madness and the Family*, referred to above, where he examines the intimate exchanges of families in their own homes (Descartes, 1647; Freud, 1973; Laing, 1967). However,

his other works, such as *The Politics of Experience* and *The Divided Self,* also dedicate considerable weight to the question of subjective and objective perceptions of reality that in turn can be used to examine the question of labels: a concern I share with Hunt.

For the purpose of my thesis, writers such as Wittgenstein and Laing provide a way of understanding the playwriting process called real fiction with which I am concerned throughout this thesis. For Wittgenstein, as stated above, language seems to be the foundation of our reality and how we use language directly affects how we experience human reality, what experience means to us. This will constitute part of the workshop I developed and deliver to the student participants in the data collection phase of this research, as well as laying the foundation for the creative approach to data analysis, involving the writing of a dramatic play based on the monologue data from student participants.

2.10 *Barcode* as meta-fiction

Waugh describes a phenomenon in meta-fiction of examining 'fictionality' in texts through 'the thematic exploration of characters "playing roles" within fiction' (Waugh, 1984, p. 116). One of the most rudimentary examples of this is perhaps Hamlet and his use of the play within the play (Shakespeare & Hubler, 1987). In *Barcode*, the daughter is presenting a poetry reading, the son is an artist posing as a criminal, who at one point explicitly refers to himself as an actor on a stage, even pointing to a possible Marxist interpretation:

> I'm on a stage in a theatre and this is the fucking middle class and I'm an impostor. But you always knew I was an actor, an artifice. What? Now you're gunna tell me you find it strange I snuck the truth in under me arm (Welsh, 2009).

The idea that, 'play is an important and necessary aspect of human society' (Waugh, 1984, p.34), is common to 'post-modern' theories including meta-fiction. The fictionalisation of everyday communication and social interaction, or viewing the world as fiction, is also proposed by Barthes and others. Real fiction theatre-writing or research views the social world as fictionalised and is concerned with eroding the distinction between signifier and signified.

The concept invoked by a word and its sound image are less distinguishable than in other social environments or critical practices. The signified, the concept invoked by the word, is intertwined with
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signifier, the sound of the word or what I have called elsewhere the speech rhythms. In the case of real fiction, both the signifier, the sound of the word, and the signified, the image invoked by the word or what it refers to, work to inform us about the character and the character's social world. This is ordinarily the subject of the investigation in the context of my creative work. The subject of the thesis, however, is the introduction of this process to a Victorian state school classroom. In this sense, these theoretical questions are perhaps less important than the ethical concerns regarding this context, finding the best way to motivate student participants to produce the monologue data, and ultimately how to use the real fiction writing method to make a social comment on labelling in education.

Real fiction as metalanguage:

Much of the work that student participants will undertake in this research involves a complex process of language construction that might be conceived as metalanguage. Patricia Waugh, describing metalanguage, explains it takes another language as its object or refers to another language (Waugh, 1984, p.4). The relationship between this concept with the practice I call real fiction would seem obvious here in that the writing process I describe involves an observation of speech rhythms denoting another's world or reality. She goes on to invoke Saussure and his distinction between the signifier and the signified, claiming that the signifier is 'the sound-image of a word or its shape on the page…the signified is the concept invoked by the word' (Waugh, 1984, p.4). We might claim that the idea of writing plays based on the speech rhythms of people's voices intersects the signified and signifier. In the case of what I call 'real fiction research', the writing process to be practised by the student participants in this research, the signifier is the signified because the sound image is the concept, the speech rhythms that form the subject of the playwriting.

2.11 Inexpressible language and real fiction

In this section, I explicitly articulate the real fiction monologue writing process which, I believe, has a significant relationship with Wittgenstein's 'language games'. I also connect the practice of real fiction theatre creation with the concept of 'private language', which Wittgenstein claims is impossible. It is at least feasible that the type of language we are considering when, as playwrights, we approach characters that belong to Wittgenstein's concept of 'saying inwardly'. When we write characters for theatre, we are exploring the language in which a character thinks, what he says 'inwardly', a rather complicated practice,

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as Wittgenstein explicitly states when he says that '…*hidden* is the wrong word here for it is hidden from me, it ought to be apparent to him, he would have to know it but he does not know it; only, the doubt which exists for me does not exist for him' (Wittgenstein, p.221). In one way, I consider the writing of characters' voices to be attempting to imagine what a character might be saying inwardly, to him- or herself, about his or her world, using his or her speech rhythms as a foundation for understanding Wittgenstein's 'hidden', 'inward' speaking. What the character says is based on how the character sounds or the sounds a character makes (perhaps like a dog's bark):

> Ergos: No, true. I was walking down the street, out the front of the train station, saw Jesus and his girlfriend Mary. And I was healed. But only after he scabbed a cigarette off me. He's a terrible scab, that Jesus! But, anyway, I was healed. Not a mark on me. You said so yourself (Welsh, 2012).

Ergos gives the appearance of being a toothless, homeless schizophrenic and this is apparent in his speech, the rhythms with which he talks. It is from inside these rhythms that the playwright exercises his or her craft, seeing imagery in the sounds of the words and crafting poetic language from the actual talking of the real-life character or person.

My creative work is related to Wittgenstein's writings on language games and the idea that drama writing is sourced from speech rhythms in social reality, one of the primary foundations of my thesis (Hertzberg, 2010, p.41). In no. 43 of *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein explores the word 'meaning' in a way that both explains his theory and acts as a tangible example. He says that the 'meaning of a word is its use in language' and this can be applied to my claim that meaning is generated through the operation of speech rhythms and patterns. The work of John Shotter (2014) is also important here. His recent enquiry into practice-based methods questions the idea of 'meaning' existing independent from experience. Meaning cannot exist without some form of experience: words acquire their meaning from their context and the context of the words used in the development of the characters in my plays is social reality.

Through the practice of writing a play, it seems that the meaning of a person, called a 'character' by the playwright, is enacted in his/her relationship with language. This resonates with Wittgenstein, who claims that we are all always speaking and, in the act of speaking, creating various languages or 'language-games'. One such language game is where we point to an object, give it a name and then use it in a sentence. Wittgenstein's example, which he attributes to Augustine, is of a builder and his tools. So the

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words 'slab' and 'hammer', for example, are given meaning in the process of conversation that names these things in the context of their use. This notion of meaning being created in the language game is distinct from merely giving a name to various objects: the 'hammer' or the 'slab'.

My understanding of Wittgenstein is that he privileges the to-ing and fro-ing of conversation over its actual content. The asking for the hammer, then, what is said about the hammer, and what occurs between the asking and getting of the hammer is as important as the hammer itself, if not more important, in defining what is going on. Where Wittgenstein's characterisation of Augustine appears to present a completely practical theory of language and its use, Wittgenstein himself seems to view the human situation as the conversation that goes on around the action of building a house, for example.

Following Wittgenstein, conversational theorists, such as Shotter, have expanded upon this idea, claiming life is constructed through language and human experience takes place in a series of 'conversational realities' (1993). As I stated at the outset of this thesis, these notions have consequences for theatre and drama education. By viewing theatre as a conversational reality, I believe we can enhance the teaching and learning of drama, particularly monologue writing.

Now what has this to do with real fiction? And, perhaps more importantly, what has this to do with the playwriting practice as drama education? I believe there are a number of relationships between Wittgenstein's theory of language and the practice of what I call real fiction research. This observation portrays the nature of conversation as being about the speaking subjects rather than the object being spoken about. This is important because it describes, in part, the situation for the playwright in conversation. In the practice of real fiction, I collect speech rhythms in conversation and apply them to particular subject matter, for example, mental health or domestic violence (Welsh, 2010).

2.12 Writing speech and everyday language

Real fiction can best be described as a form of creative research that writes plays from the experience of the other and, as previously stated, is expressed in speech rhythms from social reality. I have previously described real fiction as a form of listening rather than writing, as discovered in the speech rhythms that operate in our daily lives (Welsh, 2014). One issue that is immediately apparent to me, as a practitioner in a

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school context, is that we are bound by particular 'rules of invention' (Carter, 2010, p.15) that differ from the ones to which we must adhere in the theatre where, as playwrights, Brook (1972) declares that 'few men are as free (as the playwright)' (p. 60).

In my conversational playwriting, Wittgenstein and Shotter's argument in favour of a contextualised language in which the meaning of words is created by their use is incorporated into my process. It is the way in which a character uses spoken language, his or her tone, emphasis, syntax and verbal grammar that gives us their view of the world. For the listener, it almost seems that the content of the spoken word could only fit into the emphasis and punctuation provided by the character's speech. And so it is that the real-life conversation, from which the voice is sourced, provides the foundations for the poetic perspective later layered over the rhythms by the writer. In one sense, this may be an argument against this claim, made by an author in the *New York Times*, articulating the writer's process of observing speech:

> Like Ms. Baker and Ms. Herzog, Mr. Liska and Ms. Copper are not just interested in everyday language for its own sake, of course. They are intrigued by how people recollect and process experience through speech (Isherwood, 2013).

This speaks of 'the rough beauty of everyday speech' and how mundane, ordinary, everyday speech is not in and of itself interesting. According to this view, there must be something else, some stylisation, and some embellishment. And both these claims are true of my work. I consider it a situation where the subject matter and form of expression have a wedge driven between them by the author and his practice.

The conversation, in its natural habitat, has its own purpose, its own meaning, and it's already there for a reason. But supposing the playwright has another agenda? Supposing he wants to use your telephone conversation with the phone company to discuss masturbation on stage? In Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, he speaks of a 'script' (Part 1 no. 4) in which letters are used to stand for sounds '…and also as signs of emphasis and punctuation…' He then makes a statement that immediately grabbed my attention when I read it: 'A script can be conceived as a language for describing sound patterns.' This appears in brackets. However, for my purposes, it is perhaps the most significant extract from his work. This notion, very simply stated by Wittgenstein and reiterated in a recent *New York Times* article discussing the use of real conversation in the creation of drama, is essentially the subject of my work (Welsh, 2012), in

which I claim that speech patterns in social reality are foundational tools for the playwright in performing his/her social comment.

My thesis is closely related to the theories of Bolton and McKenna, heavily influenced by their work with Dorothy Heathcote, they seem to perceive drama *as* education (Bolton, 1984; McKenna, 2003). My research encouraged students to question and analyse 'social labels' used in education and in students' own social worlds. This not only advances the potential of drama to act as an education tool but the outcome of the research in the form of a dramatic play, to which I referred at the beginning of this chapter, advances the potential for practice-led research, where the practice is used at two separate stages of the research.

Firstly, the playwriting practice is used as a tool to generate data (like 'ethno-drama') in the form of teaching a particular way for students to write monologues, using the 'real fiction research' method. Secondly, it is used in collating and presenting the data in the form of a dramatic play by the 'creative researcher'. In this sense, it contributes to both the field of drama education and practice-led research in terms of advances to the body of knowledge and methodology. The outcome of this thesis then will belong to both the field of drama education research and also the domain of practice-led research.

The real fiction research method, introduced to Theatre Studies students in order to create and collect data for this thesis, is about exploring a person's world, their lives and culture through the sounds of the human voice. This is where Crystal's work on language is important, as well as a cursory approach to the current Victorian school curriculum, where the subject of English Language Studies is offered as an alternative to traditional English. By considering these contemporary approaches to learning alongside a drama education project, the potential exists for significant advances for both.

2.13 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered literature relating to language, creativity and education. I have then located my own creative practice in relation to these ideas. In doing so, I present my practice as critical writing, utilising creative techniques particular to theatre and drama. I claim that my work, real fiction, has a significant relationship with ethno-drama. In what follows, I explain the specific social issue to be explored

by student participants in the research. I then describe, in detail, the application of my practice to an educational environment and the outcomes of such a process using a creative methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

LABELLING THEORY & SCHOOLS

A DISCUSSION OF THE LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I engage with some literature relevant to social labelling in various contexts. It includes analysis of material from the fields of radical psychiatry, criminology and finally considers ways in which labels operate in educational contexts. This notion of labels was intended to be the subject of the affective theatre engagement in the classroom or the content of the student monologues. However, as I explain in Chapter Seven and in the conclusion, the students do not view these labels as significant in their social world. This is not too much of a departure from standard sociological ideas on labelling and its operation. As Crossman (2014, para 1) explains:

> Labelling theory is based on the idea that behaviours are deviant only when society labels them as deviant (Crossman, 2014, para 1).

For an understanding of precisely what is meant by social labelling – the purpose it serves – it might be useful to consider this hypothesis offered by Henley, Ramsey and Algozzine (2010, para 3):

> Imagine how ineffective scientists would be in raising money for cancer research if they had no name for it (Henley, Ramsey, & Algozzine, 2010, p. 1).

They offer a balanced analysis of labelling practice. It is critical of negative labelling in schools, where teachers may classify students as 'slow', 'lazy', 'unmotivated' or having a 'behavioural problem'. Labelling is described as a 'classification process' that 'affects the school experience.' Other theorists have made similar assessments, including Dara Shrifrer (2013), who makes the somewhat radical though hardly surprising claim that students engaged in special education and other sometimes well-meaning methods of grouping students limits rather than expands their opportunities:

> Labelling theory partially attributes the poorer outcomes of labelled persons to stigma related to labels (Shrifrer, 2013, p.462).

In students' perceptions of society, it seems what their peers consider normal, deviant or outside the 'norm' is what matters to them. Furthermore it is this sense of normality or abnormality that attracts labels among students in the schoolyard. David Hargreaves' (1967) study of labelling found that the academic streaming of students affected their sense of self-worth. And subsequent theorists, such as Nell Kellie (1971), have discovered that the positive and negative labelling of pupils by teachers could become a self-fulfilling prophecy, where students responded by organising themselves into social cultures according to their labels. Others have found that 'streaming' students in terms of ability can label them 'for life' and lead to significant issues in terms of self-worth (Benn, 2011).

Other contemporary research on racial labels grapples with the cultural issue of self-labelling suggesting that, in some cases, it can contribute to a sense of self-worth (Ghee, 1990). For some young people, struggling with various issues, including identity, the idea of being inside a social category might provide a sense of belonging. A classic example, and one that has attracted volumes of literature and social myth, is that of the bikie gang, such as *Hell's Angels*, immortalised by Hunter S. Thompson. In the book, Thompson describes the inner workings of an outcast social subset, the band of outlaws, enjoying a rare camaraderie. For example, he says of the social subset labelled 'Hell's Angels':

> The outlaws are not articulate when it comes to the strengths and weaknesses of the world they function in but their instincts are finely honed. They have learned from experience that some crimes are likely to be punished and some aren't (Thompson 1966, p. 182).

Momentarily leaving aside the issue of self-labelling, what is happening when we use terms such as 'emotionally disturbed student' in our schools (NICHCY, 2013)? What does such labelling indicate about the nature and operation of language in these social environments? Who is disturbed by so-called disturbing behaviour? How does the introduction of a term such as 'emotionally disturbed student' (Tibbetts, 2013), which I claim is a counter-productive label, contribute to and reveal the operation of a language of power relations at work in the sociology of our schools?

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Educational sociologist Michael Apple claims that 'educational questions are moral questions' (Apple, 2004, p.118). He comments that:

> The labelling process, thus, tends to function as a form of social control, a 'worthy' successor to that life line of mechanisms in schools that sought to eliminate disparate perceptions and use supposedly therapeutic means to create moral, valuative and intellectual consensus (Apple, 2004, p.120).

He speaks of a basic set of assumptions that underpin the labelling process, remain unspoken and are not explicitly formulated, commenting that the 'basic rules are so much a part of us they do not have to be expressed' (Apple, 2004, p.120). Those who break the 'basic rules' are then labelled using what Ungar identifies as very limited linguistic tools at the disposal of educators whereas a 'real' linguistic, according to Ungar, would take into account 'the potent notion that our basic perspectives often hide our 'real' relationships with other persons with whom we have real and symbolic content' (Apple, 2004, p.122).

This seems to echo some of RD Laing's work on the symbolic and empirically real family members in the psycho-social situation of the family, referred to in the previous chapter (Laing, 1967). Apple claims that 'labelling is the end project of our modes of placing value on our own and students' actions.' (Apple, 2004, p.123) The idea that labels are applied in what can only be described as a volatile and subjective social environment where, like Laing's family, the empirically real and symbolic players in the social situation come together in the social situation of school. Apple claims that these situations can, at times be described by educators who are 'not immune to hiding profound interrelations between persons through use of a neutral commodity language' (Apple, 2004, p.123).

Using Shotter's work on conversational realities, I claim that labels such as emotionally disturbed student (Lawrinson, 1984) or troubled student (Elliot, 2004) act as a unit of currency in conversational transactions between teachers and students, resembling the work of RD Laing (1967) on the nature and origins of schizophrenia. In some of his writings, Laing questions the existence of the mental disease schizophrenia in any one person. He argues instead that a process of 'scape-goating' occurs in the disturbed interactions within the family (Laing, 1972, p.31). This scapegoat then is 'labelled' and plays the role of schizophrenic in the disturbed conversational reality of the family.

The use of labels by teachers denotes their position of authority in the social environment of school. Labels, in different social contexts, used by different social players, such as students to students, changes the nature and effect of the label, as my research will indicate, and this is tied in with aspects of Wittgenstein's notion of the 'language game'. When students apply labels to self or other, they follow or break one or more articulated or unarticulated 'rules'. An example is the label of 'slut'. The label has a number of connotations and meanings that alter according to its use. In one conversation, it may mean the perceived sexual promiscuity of a woman and in another it may refer to a defiled social outcast, akin to a leper in ancient times and still in some parts of the world today (Tsutsumi, Takishi, Islam, Maksuda, Kado, Wakai, 2007).

Clearly, whilst teachers may agree on a generally accepted, albeit vague, definition of what it means to be 'disturbed', for example, or a 'high achiever' or 'low achiever', these definitions are bound to vary from place to place and person to person. And they involve aspersions about the nature of social reality and how it is experienced by social participants. Indeed, a recent document produced by the Australian Council for Educational Research describes the process of establishing standards of performance by which students are ultimately judged and named or, as my thesis claims, labelled.

> Standards, or the performance considered to be satisfactory, are then established through consultation with panels of experts considering each item near the boundary and judging whether or not it represented a satisfactory performance: a process referred to as an empirical judgement technique (Ainley & Gebhardt, 2013, p.15).

Tellingly, this document also claims that words or labels used to describe those on the scale of satisfactory or unsatisfactory performers vary from context to context. What this suggests is that the way in which we name achievement or underachievement can reflect our cultural context. In one school, for example, we might call an underachiever 'lazy', in another 'troubled' and this may have nothing to do with the students themselves but rather the teachers as people and social agents, people in authority or the school and its image.

The process and notion of 'othering' students in schools and indeed 'others' in society have been the subject of considerable discourse including some work on homo-normativity, hetero-gendered identity and the practice-based drama workshop, such as 'The No Outsiders Project', to which I refer throughout this

thesis. These ideas echo those of Goffman (1990), who explores 'stigma' in a more general sense, exploring normality and abnormality through the collection and analysis of primarily testimonial evidence or direct narratives, from participants.

My thesis also draws on literature related to what is known as 'labelling theory', borrowed from sociology and the ongoing radical psychiatry movement, where criminologists such as Wellford (1975) have questioned the value of 'labelling' patients with mental illness and particular criminals who commit certain crimes. A prominent example of a theorist from this field is RD Laing, referred to above; whose controversial research questioning the existence of schizophrenia has formed the foundation of many studies (Laing, 1967).

My thesis seeks to raise awareness of the consequences of labelling as a social act, and explore the potential of drama to act as an agent of social change in the school and student context. I use Laing's ideas to question some theories and practices in education that tend to use labels that may seem negative to describe the behaviour of particular students (Merton, 1968). Sociological material exploring various issues in society and education identifies 'symbolic interactionism' and 'labelling theory' as operating in education (Blumer, 1969; Merton, 1968). Whilst these two terms are not necessarily interchangeable, they do have a significant and powerful relationship, pertinent to my research. Symbolic interactionism is a sociological theory that supposes meaning in human relations is established through interaction. Labelling theory, however, is related to stigma, attributed to Goffman (1990) and discussed above. Crocker, Major and Steele state that 'stigmatized individuals possess (or are believed to possess) some attribute, or characteristic, that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context' (Crocker et al., 1998, p. 505). The notion of 'social context' brings together 'symbolic interactionism' and 'labelling theory'.

It is not my intention to provide an alternative to the tendency of teachers and educational theorists to label students, even using pedagogical examples such as 'low achiever', 'high achiever', 'over achiever', 'slow', 'quick', 'gifted', 'struggler', 'troubled' or 'disruptive' (Stigins & Chapuis 2012, p. 275). Rather, my work contributes to the literature on labelling by seeking a response from students. It seems that sometimes the label achieves currency through use. Therefore, the use of the term 'low achiever' becomes an identity for the student and a potential expression of power for the teacher, transcending its origins as an assessment.

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Recent work has been undertaken in education seeking to ensure that aspects of educational practice adequately respond to students' needs such as 'The Power of Feedback' and 'Understanding Year 9 Students' (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). To this end, research into new methods of assessment and accommodating each student seems concerned with understanding students' potential strengths and weaknesses. This process, whilst well intentioned, contains a labelling procedure resembling that practised in mental health and other areas, identified by Laing (1967) and Goffman, and addressed elsewhere in this thesis.

A recent online publication by Lisa Küpper offers some practical tips to teachers in dealing with what she calls 'disturbed students', published by the National Dissemination Centre for Students with Disabilities (Küpper, 2014). Whilst this is an American organisation, it reveals a tendency in education: there is the Australian equivalent of the label in the form of the perhaps even more obscure and subjective label of 'emotionally disturbed'. Certainly, in a contemporary Australian context all these terms have been replaced by much less active labels, such as 'at-risk' further explored in chapters four and five of this thesis. This notion of 'at-risk' performs the function of attributing less blame, removes *some* of the negative connotations usually assigned to the students themselves and makes the label descriptive of a dangerous situation, rather than labelling a person. However, as one of the teachers in Chapter Five of this thesis comments, the label is somewhat absurd: at-risk of what? A risk to whom?

3.2 Labels in society

Over the latter half of the twentieth century, theorists from the fields of criminology, law and mental health seem to disagree on the subject of what is called 'labelling theory'. Questions remain as to the influence of labelling on criminal recidivism and the 'illness' of the 'mentally ill'. Whilst some in mental health theory, such as Link et al. (1987), concede labelling in mental health exists, they see it as almost insignificant to the diagnosis and relapse of patients with mental illness, whereas Laing (1967) sees it as paramount. I will explore this at length below; but the question of whether or not labelling has any significance at all is one that is the subject of rigorous debate.

Becker (1973) explores Lemert's labelling theory (1951), its symbolic interaction and theoretical background. He challenges the idea that certain behaviours can be labelled 'normal' and others 'deviant', claiming:

> Such an assumption (that deviance is the infraction of some 'agreed upon' rule) seems to me to ignore the central fact about deviance: it is created by society (Becker, 1973, p.92).

Becker's study finds its genesis in Frank Tennenbaum's 1938 studies of juvenile participation in street gangs in which Tennenbaum describes a process of 'tagging' delinquent youths to identify deviant behaviour as different among (so called) 'delinquents' and conventional society (Tennenbaum,1938). Becker divides deviancy into primary and secondary forms, claiming that the social deviant is created first (primary deviancy) by the act that sets the 'deviant' apart from his or her fellow citizens, and is reinforced and furthered by what he calls 'secondary deviancy':

> The process of being caught and labelled deviant by a person in a position of authority is the most crucial step on the road to secondary deviance (Becker, 1973).

Becker recognises four types of citizens labelled according to their deviant behaviour:

1. Conforming citizens: law-abiding and, according to Becker's theory, free of labels, though one might say this is never the case; normal is just as much a label as abnormal. In the school environment, such conforming behaviour can lead to students being labelled by their peers as a goody-goody or a teacher's pet. For example, a recent website, 'Meet the Students', introduces an entire fictional group of students, listing various details such as their 'age', 'grade' and, tellingly, 'label'. ('Meet the Students', n.a. accessed 16-05-2014) The labels listed include 'stoner', 'nerd', 'loner', 'jock', 'news-reporter', 'artist', 'class clown', 'popular', 'princess', 'hipster', 'raver' 'rebel', 'goody goody', 'Christian' and 'burnt out'. I have listed these at some length because there is a marked relationship with the types of labels that emerge from my participant group in chapters six and seven. This is, however, quite removed from my original conception of labels prescribed by authority in mental health and criminology.

2. The Falsely Accused: 'labelled' without breaking a rule. This exemplifies the problem with social labelling. Labelling occurs in language and is always accompanied with at least some contestability. The falsely labelled resembles the correctly labelled and both share the property of contestability. There

appears to be an inability to distinguish the false label from the true one, once it is used in language. Therefore, the use of the label tends to blend true and false.

3. Pure Deviants: those citizens that exhibit rule-breaking behaviour and are labelled deviants. This notion appears to be problematic. Supposing we take the example of a speeding motorist: it would seem extreme to label such behaviour or the rule-breaker in this case as a 'pure deviant'. An example that would seem more appropriate would be a paedophile or sexual deviant. Here, the labelled individual also engages in rule-breaking behaviour and is labelled deviant. However, for the 'deviant' label to be appropriate depends on the substance of the rule-breaking behaviour, not merely the fact of a rule being broken.

4. Secret Deviants: those who break the rules and avoid labelling. This again highlights the problem with the language act of labelling and its perceived injustice, particularly in environments like schools. Students can quite correctly wonder why they are labelled while others are not, though they both engage in the same behaviour.

Becker's work is of interest to my research because the said citizen subjects of his study might be directly translated to student subjects in my work. The problem with this is that it may be interpreted as perpetuating the very labels we hope to critique here. The same may be said of Becker's work and it is a timely reminder of the danger inherent in this type of engagement. This danger may be described in philosophical terms as the conflict between objective and subjective forms of knowledge, which I explore in more depth in the following section.

3.3 Labels in mental health

Research exploring the effects of labelling on recently discharged psychiatric patients being re-integrated into society found that their behaviour, rather than their stigmatised status or *label*, is a crucial factor in determining reasons for their social rejection. However, according to this research, the tendency of society to label shows little effect on the 'social distance scale' (Link et al., 1987). Link et al. observe that the social distance of mental patients is primarily determined by the perceived threat they pose and this varies not in relation to the patients themselves, but according to how others perceive them. It could then be argued that labels contribute to this phenomenon. These authors thoroughly explore the situation for mental patients beyond the more cursory approaches of previous research that has found no relationship between continuing symptoms and labelling. Consider the labels sometimes used by teachers in education, such as

'disturbed student', 'at-risk student' or 'troubled student'. Such labelling can cause social distancing within the school community and some exploration would be useful.

What is perhaps most interesting about this observation of patients' views of labelling processes is that:

> Systematically collected evidence concerning patients' views of stigma reflects considerable variability in their opinions (Link, et al., 1987, p. 1471).

Then this direct quote from a patient:

> I don't think it matters how often you come in (the psychiatric unit). Once you've been there, they know you've been there, they call you crazy or sick (Link, et al., 1987, p.1471).

The mental health labelling theory has its proponents and its detractors. Link and colleagues attempt to test whether the long rejected labelling hypothesis holds any weight at all and cite exchanges between Scheff (1975) and Gove (1975) as representing the conversational birthplace of an explicit labelling theory. Whilst these references may appear somewhat dated, a cursory exploration might set the stage for more recent work, both in mental health and education. In his article 'The Labelling Theory of Mental Illness', Scheff evaluates the effectiveness of the labelling theory in relation to mental illness (Scheff, 1975). He argues that criticism from other theorists, such as Gibbs (1972), who dismiss the effectiveness of labelling theory, due to its 'ambiguity', is more about the nature of the social sciences generally than about labelling theory. The detractors claim that labelling theory is not really a theory because it has no overtly scientific basis.

RD Laing (1967), to whom I refer extensively throughout this thesis, wrote and researched *Sanity Madness and the Family* in the 1960s which, whilst it does not necessarily focus exclusively on the notion of labels, implies that the words used to refer to those who disturb and the disturbed in the families of psychiatric patients need to be reconsidered. Laing also proposes that socially constructed 'labels' are at work in the process of identifying disturbance in the family, ourselves and others (Laing, 1967).

I focus on Laing because his work operates, in general terms, to identify and interrogate labels, and such an interrogation can be useful in my approach to labels and disturbance in schools. His methodology, whilst not practice-based as such, could be classified as dangerous and ethically questionable. Indeed, Laing in

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Knots and *Sanity, Madness and the Family* particularly questions his own and others subjectivity and the impossibility of an objective point of view (Laing, 1971, 1967). According to Laing, no person is an object and this disrupts and disturbs the psychoanalytic establishment, because Freud's stated aim in the invention of psychoanalysis was to create an objective human science (Freud, 1973). In contrast, Laing seems to accept the chaotic and decidedly unscientific nature of human experience, considering himself more a student of Sartre than of Freud. Indeed, Laing grapples with the notion of objectivity, making these observations in *The Divided Self*:

> If it is held that to be unbiased one should be 'objective' in the sense of depersonalising the person who is the object of our study, any temptation to do this under the impression that one is thereby being objective must be rigorously resisted. Depersonalisation in a theory that is intended to be a theory of persons is as false as schizoid depersonalisation of others (Laing, 1960, p.25).

Laing's methodology is of particular interest, and the way in which he records data often in the form of dialogues and interrupted interviews that seem to live by their own drama. This is a welcome departure from the monological approach of Freud and, as already stated, resembles Sartre's playwriting method (Satre, 1992). Though Laing does not call his work drama, it sometimes appears in the form of, and could be conceived as, doco-drama, which has a significant relationship with my work. For example, his ethnographic study in *Sanity, Madness and the Family* involves recounting interviews with family members that become 'dramas' of sorts, with families disrupting, interrupting and diverting the narrative in much the same way a drama on stage does. The purpose of this 'drama' seems to be to question the accepted 'labelling' of one or more of the small participant social group:

> Mother: Well I wondered if it worried you. A man broke into a girl's cabin.
>
> Daughter: I don't remember.
>
> Mother: And there was a dreadful struggle, and he tried to take advantage of the girl I believe, and at the time I did think you were rather disturbed.
>
> Daughter: Don't remember that.
>
> Mother: I spoke to one or two friends…we did think you were rather disturbed after that cruise (Laing, 1964, p. 82).

Notice the drama here, the speech patterns of implied guilt and false accusation from the mother and the simple, closed, repetitive responses from the daughter: 'I don't remember', 'Don't remember that.' In contrast, the mother's repetition of the word 'disturbed' and her introduction of the characters from off-stage, creating a plural 'we' to support her claims that her daughter is disturbed. The speech rhythms and poetics of the real interactions bring to life a drama that provides psychological insights communicated with language, word repetition and drama in concert. Similarly, in other works by Laing, the theatrical nature of his work is seemingly inescapable. In *The Divided Self*, Laing observes an argument between two patients in which one says to the other, 'You are arguing to have the pleasure of triumphing over me…I am arguing in order to preserve my existence' (Laing, 1964, p. 43).

This notion of mismatched communication seems to occur throughout Laing's work and has informed my own approach. And this mismatch is coupled with a reflection on recent drama education theorists and practitioners such as Tarquam McKenna (2012). His work reveals the affective (perhaps psychological) possibilities of drama practice. McKenna's primary focus is on sexuality, gender and identity but the revelations contained in his work are not restricted to these areas of social concern and encourage a consideration of all those in the education system who might be considered 'outsiders'. In the Laing example, we see how relativity in language and meaning can distort and disturb our social reality. In terms of the subject of my thesis, the communication process is affected by whether such communication takes place between the labelled and the labeller, or the labelled and the non-labelled or the labelled and the non-labelling authority. The label itself creates a disturbance and my thesis argues that real fiction monologue writing may create the potential to psychosocially process some of the residual negativity of a labelling culture, as well as providing a forum for responding to such a culture.

In this section, I have explored a selection of social labelling practices, which have an extensive history in social research. My practice, with secondary students, engages this literature by examining instances of labelling in the social context of students in a school, using a creative writing methodology to gain insight into the 'voices' of the students' world. This may then provide insights into, or at least empathy for, the inner narrative worlds of other labelled individuals in our society such as criminals and mental health patients. These insights will be shared by the researcher and research participants, enhancing the students' understanding of 'others', as well as providing data for the research project.

3.4 A practical application of Laing in a drama education context

The drama in RD Laing's work, containing moments of original literary theory and speculation as well as drama and psychological insight, reflects the theoretical work on language by Mikhail Bakhtin, particularly his exploration of stylistics, where he observes our tendency to view creations as the work of one creator and ignore the influences of one's social surroundings in the creation of artistic product:

> More often than not, stylistics defines itself as a stylistics of 'private craftsmanship' and ignores the social life of discourse outside the artist's study, discourse in the 'open spaces' of public cities and villages, of social groups, generations and epochs (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 269).

There is a relationship between his theories on the operation of verbal language, when it is privileged above written language or vice versa, and my own creative practice that involves the observation and recording of speech rhythms from the social surroundings of the author (Bakhtin, 1981). I believe that introducing this practice to the drama classroom could contribute to drama students' knowledge of how drama is written and created. In addition to this, as we shall see in chapters five, six and seven, it can afford students the opportunity to reflect upon their social surroundings and articulate their own experience within those surroundings.

In *The Divided Self*, Laing seems to directly confront the issue of labelling in psychiatry in a way that may be useful for my research into labelling in education. Laing asks,

> …how can I go straight to the patient if the psychiatric words at my disposal keep the patient at a distance from me? How can one demonstrate the human relevance and significance of the patient's condition if the words one has to use are specifically designed to isolate and circumscribe the meaning of the patient's life to a particular clinical identity? (Laing, 1959, p. 18).

In the work of some recent theorists and my own research participants, labels such as 'at-risk' or 'disabled' or even 'troubled' not only constitute descriptions but they have the potential to objectify students according to their deficiencies. Consequently, distance between the student and the teacher, perhaps even the school, is created. My research also investigates those informal labels used in the schoolyard by some students to describe others, using student testimony formed in theatrical monologues. These labels and the

monologue methodology are thoroughly explored throughout and particularly in Chapters Four, Five and Six of this thesis. In its entirety, though, my thesis can be described as exploring Laing's question through students' practice of drama and monologue writing in the classroom, so that it reads:

> …how can I go straight to the (student) if the (educational/welfare labelling) words at my disposal keep the (student) at a distance from me? How can one demonstrate the human relevance and significance of the (student)'s condition if the words one has to use are specifically designed to isolate and circumscribe the meaning of a (student)'s life to a particular (educational) identity? (paraphrasing/rewriting Laing, 1959, p.18).

In this sense, I am drawing these two bodies of literature together and approaching them with a practice-led methodology, with a view to both creative and socially educational outcomes for student participants.

Some theorists have recently become very interested in this problem of labelling and its effects. As a result, I have attempted to synthesise material from psychiatric, psychological and sociological fields and apply it to the area of education. In addition to these fields, there have been considerable contributions from educational sociologist Ray Rist (2015) on the subject of academic labelling (as opposed to psychological labelling), who argues, perhaps not surprisingly, that the label, once used, achieves a 'master status', determining subsequent reactions of others regardless of the labelled person's behaviour (Link et al., 1987, p.1462). Rist utilises the work of other labelling theorists, such as Link, and applies it to the educational experience, including 'success or failure in school' and interactionalist theory as a way of understanding social interaction in a school environment (Rist, 2015, p.50).

The existence of such material provides a potent social context for my research. It involves students themselves considering the use and application of social labels, in a school environment. A recent online video shows the powerful emotional and psychological damage that can be done by putting oneself in a social environment where one is subject to negative social labels (Silveira 2014). In this case, the young person stands in front of his school and recites a moving poem in which he says goodbye to a list of derogatory names he has been called over the years, significantly referring to these names as labels and subsequently disowning them. There are several examples of such material in social media and other media including Coyzhen's 'Lamb Chops' (Coyzhen, 2014) and teen film *Easy A* (Royal, 2010), both exploring and commenting on the social world of adolescence. Whilst such material represents a

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somewhat socially disruptive moment in particular students' lives and indeed the life of the school; my work will provide a social platform that encourages such expression through the practice of drama.

Through the use of drama education practice in the form of the monologue writing task, my thesis weighs into a social discussion of labels and labelling theory in education. However, as explained in the data chapters six, seven and eight, my own expectations in terms of what I believe labels to be and what labels I imagined would affect students were subverted in the student responses, which led into discussions of bullying and alienation in the students' own social reality, where parents, teachers and indeed 'society' are invisible. This directs my research to the realm of student-led, student-centred learning, where the 'world' of the student is all important and learning objectives and outcomes are decided by the student and according to his or her needs (Di Pilla, 2005).

Di Pilla describes student-centred learning thus:

> Student-centred learning includes a variety of active strategies that involve students in doing and thinking about what they are doing. Students are given the responsibility for learning. (Di Pilla, 2005, p.5)

Di Pilla's work illustrates how meaning making is engaged as part of contemporary educational practice and is used to approach and consider serious social issues. This is intimately connected with the practice of real fiction in the community, described above, and can easily be transported into an educational context, as my research indicates.

3.5 Labels in education and radical psychiatry

The questioning of existing labels and those who create them, advocating on behalf of 'the labelled' and criticising the structures that create and perpetuate certain labels, seems to be the main preoccupation of some theorists exploring mental health issues and surrounding power structures. Jessie Goicoechea claims that 'diagnostic vocabulary re-traumatises women with labels that fail to grasp the complexities of their experiences' (Goicoechea, 2013, p.107). This observation of the inadequacy of labels in specific relation to the complex experiences of women can be applied to human experience generally. That is, the 'diagnostic vocabulary' used to describe mental patients, school students or anyone who fails to conform to normality, is inadequate and 'fails to grasp the complexities of life.' This is a damning appraisal of 'diagnosis' or labelling as a way of communicating, as a form of language.

In addition to these labels, there is recent literature, primarily American, on 'disturbed and disturbing students' and in Australian contexts what has been called 'emotionally disturbed' and the 'disabling' of students (Zionts, 1985; Graham, 2006). There have also been psychiatric/psychological constructions, such as ADHD, that have recently led authors, such as Graham, to question and criticise the politicisation of the label or diagnosis (Graham, 2006). Graham's work explores the ways in which schooling practices and discourses themselves might be contributing to a perceived increase in diagnoses of ADD and ADHD. In this case then, the label was found to be somewhat self-perpetuating. In the case of my work, the social context for the research is an Australian school in the state of Victoria, and this allows for a consideration of some of the issues raised by authors like Graham such as the origins and uses of labels such as ADHD. Whilst the use of specific diagnostic language is perhaps a secondary issue here, it illustrates the power of language in the social situation, and this is central to both my monologue writing practice and its application in this context.

My thesis explores the use of labels in society and indeed in education. I draw on/refer to use Laing extensively in order to describe and explore a student's experience of non-being, of negation, those 'varieties of experience of lack', using drama and 'the monologue' as a social tool in a school context (Laing, 1967, p. 32). This work has a relationship with Laing's methodology, and also Jules Henry, who spent time with families of mental patients, collecting observations and writing sociological material based on his experiences with these families (Henry, 1973). The difference between these writers and my own work is that their primary concern is with collecting data for psychological exploration. My work, whilst it may share similarities both in the data and its methodology, is about the creative process and the contribution this thesis makes to collecting and disseminating data in the form of a dramatic play.

Social labels in education and in other fields are used and incorporated into a vocabulary, by those in positions of power and some theorists. The 'emotionally disturbed student' referred to above is one such example. My thesis questions the identification and use of the label 'disturbed student' by some theorists and practitioners in education. In contrast to this are the various formal diagnoses prevalent in the Victorian education system. These formal diagnoses, such as ADHD, oppositional defiance disorder and conduct disorder, to name a few, are the subject of much criticism, formally and informally. Something akin to a

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social script tends to play out in the social world of meaning. I will explore these issues in more detail in this chapter and chapter six, both in terms of the validity of all kinds of labels (such as ADHD) and the theatre creation method called real fiction (Cowling, McKeon, & Weiland, 2007).

Whilst theorists exploring the concept/label of 'disturbed' and 'disturbing' students, such as Paul Zionts, have noted the tendency of teachers and others in education to label particular students as 'disturbed'; the emphasis is ordinarily on understanding, articulating and identifying/naming disturbance, rather than questioning the label. Zionts does propose a classroom exercise exploring the effect of labels and labelling, outlining a process by which students divide themselves into labelled and labeller, experimenting with behaviours and 'how students feel about themselves' (Zionts, 1985, p. 417).

My work combines such controversial moments in international educational literature with the somewhat extensive criminological and mental health literature on labels. For example, the verbal act of labelling has seen some writers, such as Blumer (1969) and Merton (1968) referred to above, to connect social labels with theories of symbolic interactionism and deviance. Whilst this perhaps appears obvious, even to activists who may be vehemently opposed to the use of social labels in any form, the former asserts that labelling is an action in a social reality that is conversational in nature. It is one thing to name a deviant thing for which we have no name, it is quite another to name the person in whom the deviant thing is identified. In the first instance, we are labelling a phenomenon, and in the second a person.

My thesis asks precisely what might be meant by 'disturbed' or 'troubled', among other labels, and how this questioning of meaning can be articulated by students utilising their monologue writing process. Whilst monologue writing has a significant relationship with Zionts' process described above, my primary concern is with the application of practice as research, led by the process of monologue writing, working with young people. Though his process may have similarities to my own, Zionts is concerned with sociological knowledge in education.

3.6 Disturbing labels

In American discourse, several problematic terms have recently emerged in education: for example, the 'disturbed student', mentioned above, has been a concern for educators and theorists. Whilst in Australia

we seem to prefer terms such as 'behavioural' or 'emotional' 'disorders', both of which appear to be equivalent in operation and meaning to the American 'disturbed student' (Stoutjesdijk, Scholte, & Swabb, 2012, p.5). Consider the following description of students with emotional or behavioural disorders from the field of educational psychology, particularly concerned with identifying characteristics common to students identified as having emotional and behavioural disorders. Reid, Littlefield & Hammond focus on the effect such disorders can have on students' inclusion in education. They claim that:

> Problems such as aggressive, oppositional, defiant, and disruptive behaviours can be severe, persistent, and frequent enough to warrant clinical attention or diagnoses (Reid, Littlefield, & Hammond, 2008, p. 1).

This description of the vaguely labelled 'students with emotional or behavioural disorders', published in the *Australian e-journal for the Advancement of Mental Health* can be compared with the following description of the more overt label of the disturbed student used by Texan educators and psychologists:

> Tantrums, defiance, aggression, poor academic progress, poor social skills and passive non-compliance of requests (such as putting heads down on desks) can present a challenge (Ogonosky, 2011, p. 1).

For some theorists, such as Wendy Kortman, 'disability' is also viewed as a negative label and used to distort 'social realities and perceptions' (Kortman, 2004, p.222). Terms such as these seem to emerge somewhat inexplicably, perhaps akin to slang words that come in and out of fashion among teenagers and others. Like RD Laing and his radical social psychology, I join others in claiming that terms such as 'disturbed student' or 'emotionally disturbed', 'behaviourally disturbed', 'severe behavioural disorder', 'disability' and 'special needs' are socially constructed and ought to be questioned before they are accepted as legitimate categories analogous with doctors' or psychiatrists' diagnoses (Cowling, McKeon, & Weiland, 2007). These terms are all prevalent in current documents recommending approaches to students in Victorian secondary schools exhibiting what is often described as 'challenging behaviour' (Michail 2011). Students seem to be categorised primarily based on the harm or danger they may represent to others. These seem to be socially constructed labels that have a relationship with the function of labels in mental health, a subject of discussion in the radical psychiatry movement (Cowling, McKeon, & Weiland, 2007; Kirsner, 1996).

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3.7 Revisiting education labels

By introducing Laing into a creative discussion about labels in education, my thesis suggests a relationship between the intimate social world of the family and the socially constructed school environment. Both are socially constructed environments where young people perform and play various roles. Young people in the classroom play the role of students in the school, for example, as well as various social roles as the data from the participants in my research indicates, including roles within the family of sibling or child. This notion is analysed at some length in the data chapters, including an analysis of a qualitative survey, the student monologues and the play I have created for them to inhabit.

With respect to the 'family' context, Laing writes in *The Politics of the Family* of the internal and external influences on the behaviour of the self in his/her social world (Laing, 1967). He writes of the operation of various selves, the way they interiorise the external world, and the internal world is exteriorised by various family members. My thesis considers these processes of interiorisation and exteriorisation in terms of the school environment, as it is viewed by this participant group of drama students through their monologue practice. This stands alongside recent work by Jason Barr (2007) on the sociology of schools and others, such as McKenna (2012), referred to above.

3.8 Contemplating labels in criminology and beyond

Labelling theory is prominent in the field of criminology but the contribution of labels to the problem of recidivism is a subject for debate. For example, Charles Wellford's 'Labelling Theory and Criminology', published in the journal *Social Problems* (Wellford, 1975), observes a trend in criminology emphasising society's reaction to a crime in considering its nature and severity. And that this in turn is important to the perpetuation and intensification of criminal and delinquent careers. Labelling, in this context, forms a part of the whole social reaction to particular types of criminal behaviour.

'Labelling theory', according to Wellford, is based on a set of assumptions that I claim can be contextualised in other social environments, such as schools. Wellford lists the assumptions that combine together to formulate 'labelling theory' in criminology. The first of these is that 'No act is intrinsically criminal' but is made so by prevailing social values, which seem relative and subject to change. Therefore, the

nature of crime, what crime is, varies over time and according to relative social values. As we shall see in the data results section, the same theory can be applied to the sociology of the schoolyard, here expressed in the form of theatrical expression, utilising drama practice, particularly monologue. I will go into much greater detail in the data chapters but the nature of the label 'slut', how it came to be applied, to whom it is applied and what you must do in order to be labelled as such, varies so considerably that the meaning of the word is almost random.

In his more recent writing, Wellford explores the notion of labels more generally. His 2005 article, 'The Future of Labelling Theory: Foundations and Promises', thoroughly explores the origins of the theory and its application across disciplines including mental health and criminology. Wellford also delves the philosophical and social consequences of the theory's validity or otherwise, describing labelling as symbolic and an expression of 'an individual's perceptions…of other people's behaviour in the formation of that individual's behaviour' (Wellford, 2005, p.333).

It is here that the potential exists for drama to act as a vehicle for critically analysing the emergence and use of social labels, in much the same way that Brecht and Boal have used theatre and drama, to criticise and question their social surroundings. In the discussion and workshop explained in this thesis, the emphasis was on questioning the way in which we all use labels (which is honestly approached by the second teacher participant in the work), how we are socially positioned when we use them and how it feels to be labelled oneself. The data I have collected – creative expressions in the form of student monologues – involves students questioning and criticising the sets of assumptions involved in naming 'perceptions' of others' 'behaviour', also known as labelling. This confrontation with the self in society is recorded in the monologues, carefully constructed by the students and expanded, using a collaborative practice of real fiction.

3.9 Research into disturbing labels in education

Crime, mental illness and disturbance seem to have an element of elasticity, a certain relativity about them that creates extremely troubling social conditions, subject to the will of a whimsical and unstable establishment, who may find *x* disturbing today and *y* disturbing tomorrow. An educational establishment may be represented by teacher A who always finds *x* disturbing or sees student 'a' as 'at-risk' while teacher B finds y disturbing and sees student 'b' as 'at-risk' or 'troubled'. Teacher A is a representative of the educational institution today and teacher B tomorrow. Or perhaps they work side by side. Either way, there is a problem with the accuracy of labels used to categorise and denote what is disturbed, at-risk or troubled and what is not, by whom and how we identify the disturbance, trouble or risk.

Kaufman and Landrum (2002) have published extensively on what they term 'emotional and behavioural disorder' in young people both in the United States and Australia. Their work includes identifying 'characteristics' of emotional disturbance in young people, advocating reform in special education and suggesting particular methods of 'classroom management'. They comment that Australian Federal Government requirements only consider a student 'emotionally disturbed' if such disturbance directly affects learning:

> Federal language specifies that ED must adversely affect educational performance but does not specifically include social learning or behaviour as 'educational performance.' The definition has been criticized as vague and highly subjective (e.g., what is 'a marked extent,' or a 'long period of time'?), and an additional federal clause makes the definition self-contradictory (Kaufman & Landrum, 2002, Special Education: Current Trends, para 2).

There is a significant body of work relating to the problematic term 'the disturbed student'. However, it seems to disproportionately emphasise psychiatric disturbance. Even emotional disturbances are considered in relation to psychiatric illness. Jason Barr and Higgins D'Alessandro speculate that pro-social behaviours are intimately connected with the concept of empathy and that this can aide in the education of those students labelled with disturbance (Barr & Higgins D'Alessandro, 2007, p. 234). A recent article by Bowell and Heap (2010) examining the value of drama education advocates reflective conversation, inviting a discussion of social construction, a primary concern of my thesis.

Creativity has been seen by some theorists as a way to understand, treat and educate those students labelled disturbed (e.g. Whitaker, 1985). Mary Whitaker effectively claims that what we perceive and label as disturbed behaviour, particularly in relation to communication, is often a form of misused creativity. She advocates developing a positive self-concept for such children and, in this sense, seems to inadvertently identify the label and labelling practices associated with disturbance as at least part of the problem.

This labelling process appears to be based on the threat constituted by the labelled student and is supported by management strategies that can be undertaken. Mary Whitaker, for example, has constructed a creative educational program for 'emotionally disturbed' children (Whitaker 1985). Whittaker is concerned with the role of creativity in educating about disturbance, the operation of language in disturbance and conceives of practical interventions to 'treat' so-called emotional disturbance. Whitaker is very specific in her approach, identifies particular qualities or modes of behaviour which she assigns to the 'disturbed student' and claims that creative activity in the classroom can have benefits for this section of the student population. Among her observations, she claims that teachers of emotionally disturbed children have observed 'extraordinary creativity' in their behaviour. This 'creativity' is then 'expressed in inappropriate ways' and elicits 'adult negative responses' (Whitaker, 1985, p.18), reinforcing 'feelings of inadequacy' and causing students to become 'defensive' or 'worried about being the tallest, shortest, fattest, dumbest kid in the world' (Whitaker, 1985, p.18). These feelings, Whitaker claims, lead to 'poor self-concept' (Whitaker, 1985, p.18) and insecurity and therefore 'defensiveness increases' (Whitaker, 1985, p.18). It seems that if teachers are to know their students, they must engage in some degree of psychological analysis. They must ask: What makes this child tick? Why is this child doing this? What is disturbing to them? Therefore, there appears to be a contradiction between what teachers are told they are limited to and what in fact they must do.

The fear of being labelled also seems to be a concern for Whitaker who encourages teachers to use creative activity as a way of creating a safe space for those labelled 'emotionally disturbed'. This label would appear to be particularly counter-productive in cultivating a positive self-concept, unless the child is not aware of the label; perhaps the label is only spoken about in conversations between the teachers.

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Paul Zionts (1985) also discusses the origins of the label 'disturbed student', the nature of disturbance and what disturbance means, particularly when it is used as a label. This remains a problem for educators. Certainly, we can claim that disturbance can only be signified in relation to a status quo or normativity, criticised by other authors in relation to sexuality and often articulated in publications such as the DSM-V (*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*). Here, human mental phenomena are constantly being redefined and portrayed as new mental illnesses (Lenning, 2009, p. 45). What do we find socially disturbing? It seems that what disturbs is that which is different. In the school context it is the child who is loud, the child who is unruly or withdrawn. Even this brief consideration of what disturbance might mean uncovers vastly different notions of disturbance. My work will explore the potential for drama educators and students to respond to phenomena, such as social disturbance, and the labels used in school contexts to describe it.

The label 'seriously emotionally disturbed', referred to above, in fact describes people whose experience is outside the bounds of what is often considered 'normal' emotional conditions for a child in contemporary civilisation. For example, in *Unconditional Care*, Sprinston and Berrick (2005) describe seven-year-old Maureen, abandoned by her drug addicted parents, living in squalor with her five-year-old sister among needles and 'drug paraphernalia' These authors claim to bring together '…ideas from two intellectual traditions …', 'attachment theory' and 'learning theory' (Sprinston & Berrick, 2005, p. 5). They examine, among other things, the social situation for those students labelled 'disturbed' and interestingly the strengths as well as weaknesses exhibited by the young person labelled 'at-risk' or 'vulnerable'. Sprinston and Berrick sporadically emphasise the importance of language and language learning in approaching disturbance and this is particularly pertinent to my thesis. This illustrates the way in which our interaction with a labelled being changes when our labelling changes. If, for example, we view Maureen as 'resilient' rather than 'emotionally disturbed' or 'vulnerable' or 'at-risk', the whole nature of who she is to us alters and her social standing also adjusts accordingly (Ungar, 2014).

Parallel to this observation, Shotter (1993) claims that conversation plays a vital role in structuring our perceptions. Central to my work is the operation of conversation and speech rhythms, and how they denote and construct disturbance. This ought to be of particular concern to drama educators since, it seems, conversation belongs to the realm of drama. Drama is the space where conversation and action co-exist

and are mutually dependent, where conversation *is* action ('Using Theatre for Human Rights Education and Action', n.a. accessed 21-08-2014). It is because of this link between conversation and action that I believe the use of drama can lead to revelations regarding student notions of labels and labelling.

The association of language and disturbance is illustrated by the 2007 Virginia Technical College guide addressing the problem of disturbing writing, that is, writing that disturbs, and how it might be interpreted by educational professionals (Virginia Tech Dept. English, 2007). The guide provides an insight into what we mean by disturbing and what we might mean when we say 'disturbed'. It focuses on danger and harm. The fact that the evidence for this danger and harm (i.e. the 'author's mental state' and the possibility of social, indeed mortal catastrophe) is gleaned from a work of fiction, is addressed by the Faculty Guide.

The problem, which exists also in Kaufman and Landrum's work, is one of authority. Teachers are not psychologists, psychiatrists or social workers: they are educators. Therefore, how do educators, when confronted by a piece of writing or a set of behaviours, deem these not only disturbing to themselves or others but conclude that the author is disturbed? This raises further questions as to the role of educators: how qualified are they to identify disturbed behaviour? How do we deal with disturbed behaviour and how have we come, in the current social and educational climate, to label some students 'disturbed' or troubled? I claim that the 'disturbed student' can be understood using labelling theory, common in the fields of psychiatry and the law. That is, it seems our labelling of criminals and mad people sometimes resembles the way in which we label students in schools.

My work seems to have a relationship with the now classic text 'The Student as Nigger', an essay and book on the oppressive nature of education by Jerry Farber (1969), where he makes comparisons between the treatment of slaves and the operation of power in school environments (Farber, 1969). Students are made to wear uniforms, adhere to a system where their time is not their own and act subserviently towards a power ordained by the State. Farber's writings were published in 1969 but his observations are as true today as they were then, particularly when one considers that some authors continue to observe the use of labels in the language of education.

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An example of such an approach is the clinical teaching model, currently being taught at the University of Melbourne ('Focusing on the Learner: Charting a Way Forward for Australian Education', n.a. 2013). The clinical teaching model (De Voogd & Salbenblatt, 1989) combines clinical and classroom progress and 'wellness' in students but is perceived as deficient by some. It involves meeting the needs of each student according to where they are intellectually and psychologically, 'using data and evidence to meet the needs of individual learners' (De Voogd & Salbenblatt, 1989, p.6), rather than expecting them to keep up. The task of education, as it is described in 'clinical teaching', is to know each child, intellectually and psychologically, so as to tailor their learning according to their needs. Variations on this theory exist in other contemporary writing on education theory, such as Geoff Masters, who speaks of a 'growth mindset' in 'assessment' and advocates responsive and interactive teaching and learning (Masters, 2014). This approach is also apparent in what is called 'responsive' teaching and learning (King, Artilles, & Kosleski, 2009) and also some of the work explored above such as *The No Outsiders Project* (Atkinson 2009)*.*

Some recent research into the functioning of communication 'patterns' in the 'talk' of students with 'autism labels' immediately identifies and highlights the performance of labels in the social functioning of these children (Lester & Pauls, 2012). By emphasising the 'label' and 'labelling' in the study, the researchers invite us to explore our own reaction to that which falls outside the bounds of our 'normal' social experience, and the process by which we come to label such experience. The research includes the very interesting notion that studying the speech patterns of those with autistic labels can provide research data about what we consider 'normal' in this context.

Research on autism generally can inform my research or indeed any research interested in the use and operation of disabling and disturbing labels. A recent publication, titled 'Performative Acts of Autism' by Jessica N. Lester and Trena M. Pauls (2012), explores the ways in which 'normality' and 'abnormality' are performed, drawing upon critical notions of disability. Lester and Pauls use contemporary understandings of discourse and conversation analysis to challenge the broadly accepted construction of disability as a 'biological truth' and claim that '…disability, autism particularly, (is) inseparable from the cultural models that define it…' (Lester & Pauls, 2012, p.261).

These claims regarding autism are particularly concerned with the construct of 'normal' and the 'reading' of the embodied performance of the other, as either normal or abnormal notions with considerable relativity, and terms that can easily be dismissed or analysed as labels. This 'social relational model of disability', that seems to situate 'performance' at its centre, encourages a drama education approach where 'disability in bodies…require interventions at the level of social justice' (Lester & Pauls, 2012, p. 261).

> The construct of 'normal' is only made possible by comparing the object of one's study to something or someone else: that is, the embodied performance of another is 'read' as normal, abnormal, autistic, non-autistic in and through the process of cultural and discursive enactment (Lester & Pauls 2012, p. 261).

The paper then explains the nature of performance in society, not unlike the work of Erving Goffman, referred to above, and connects it to the construction of desirable identities for 'specific audiences'. The connection with Laing here seems unavoidable. He claims that the performative component of human beings manifests in the interactions between family members, and this contributes to formation of desirable and indeed undesirable identities, as individuals act and react in the social environment:

> I 'interiorise' your and his syntheses, you interiorise his and mine, he interiorises mine and yours: I interiorise your interiorisation of mine and his: you interiorise my interiorisation of yours and his. I 'interiorise' your and his syntheses, you interiorise his and mine, he interiorises mine and yours: I interiorise (Laing, 1969, p. 72).

3.10 Conclusion

It is into this field of study that my work enters, with a creative, practice-led research methodology that views the drama classroom as a self-reflexive space for social theatre that criticises and interrogates the social world of the students and classroom, using embedded practices of monologue writing from the subject Theatre Studies and the research area 'drama education'. Through the application of this combination of theory and practice in education, my research will elicit a response from a group of drama students in the form of a monologue, analysing 'labels', 'labelling' and the 'labelled'. The outcome of this will then be conflated into a theatrical script, thereby creating a contribution to the discourse in the form of creative, practice-led data.

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Labelling is a practice that takes place not only in the context of all forms of authority, but in all situations where we find human interaction, including the institution of school and the social context of the schoolyard. In this chapter, I have specifically explored and reviewed literature from various fields on the subject of labelling. Coupled with the last chapter, positioning my work as contributing to the field of practice-led educational research, these formative chapters set the stage for my creative research. It is the combination of these two conceptual chapters that sets the stage for a student-focused, practice-led investigation into the subject of social labelling in schools.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Practice as research: introducing real fiction to the classroom

The field of practice as research is a relatively new philosophical and methodological position exploring the role of artists as researchers and vice versa. Estelle Barrett observes the inevitable interdisciplinary nature of artistic activity as research. She emphasises 'the capacity of artistic research for illuminating subject matter of both the artistic domain as well as that belonging to other domains and disciplines of knowledge' (Barrett, 2010, p. 7). As stated in the Introduction, my research is best described as practice-led rather than practice-based research. The interest, then, is on what can be learned through the creative process rather than its outcome in terms of 'product'.

Fundamental to the application of this notion of practice-led research is frequent reference throughout this thesis to my own practice, which informs the practice/research activity of the student participants described in Chapters Four to Seven. Some confronting examples from published and performed writings have been used to illustrate the way in which the subjective voice of the character is utilised to express and describe that character's social surroundings. For example, at the end of Chapter Two, a quite confronting example was used from a play titled *Barcode 30!!7 307: An exploration into domestic violence and criminal behaviour* (Welsh, 2009). As I said above, the intention here is not to shock the reader but rather to discuss the playwright's construction of voice, and its potential to poignantly and accurately comment on real social world examples sourced from the writer's experience. It also shows how characters in plays can be used to generate social comment. This is what will be required from the student participants in the research, albeit in the less confronting context of the drama classroom.

Why monologue data?

My research involved devising a monologue writing exercise based on my playwriting practice to critique the use of labels in schools. The exercise was conducted with a sample group of students and considers how a monologue is *written* to accompany the Year 12 assessment task, which entails the preparation and *performance* of a monologue from a published play script (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority,

Theatre Studies, n.a. accessed online, 21/10/2014). As stated above, I have always considered my playwriting work as a way of critiquing social norms, questioning generally accepted assumptions, and analysing the lives of those excluded from society and the world (Farfella, 2012). In the case of this thesis I explore, through theatre, this notion of social exclusion in terms of 'labelling' in a Victorian state school drama classroom.

Unlike the fictional Mr. G, referred to above, my work is not satire but instead approaches students in a drama class as the source of the data, also focusing on contemporary labels in education and society. It is telling that one of the sources with similarities to my project comes from fictional satire. This says much about the form my work takes and some of the issues raised by Saldaña, my own work and that of others (such as Carter, 2014, or Barrett and Bolt, 2014) as to what may constitute data. What work is permitted as a source and what is not? Who decides this? These questions become even more telling in chapter seven, when I describe my engagement with the school, and some of the difficulties, dilemmas and ethical issues surrounding this work.

It is significant that this research took place in a drama classroom because of the manner and nature of the data, its collection and its dissemination. It was collected in the form of student monologues based on existing playwriting practise because it is a drama classroom and not a social studies classroom, for example. Students were encouraged then to practice monologue writing for the purpose of criticising social labelling in the classroom and the schoolyard, as well as expanding their drama practice to the writing of theatre. If this was a psychology thesis, for example, data may take the pure form of a survey or a session with a psychologist.

Since the context of the research is a drama classroom, I encouraged students to write drama and I have then presented the data in the form of play scenes and monologues. I believe this advances the field and builds on the work of Taylor (2002), Saldaña (2005) and McKenna (2003), to name a few who practice 'applied theatre'. In this case, the context in which the theatre was applied was a drama classroom.

Practice in classrooms:

There are numerous examples of practitioners entering a classroom context and using theatre practice as a research tool, a way of collecting and disseminating data, such as Haseman (2006) or McKenna (2012) or Atkinson and Depalma's *The No Outsiders Project* (2009), mentioned above in Chapters Two and Three. There are also some instances of practice in the community with a social or educational agenda and I refer throughout to *The Laramie Project* by Kauffman (2010), Melbourne theatre practitioner Lloyd Jones (Marshall, 2002) and other documentary theatre practices, constructed and performed with social, political or even psychological objectives in mind. McKenna, for example, refers to the healing potential of art practice (McKenna, 2012) and Brecht says his theatre ought to overtly 'educate' (Brecht & Willett, 1978, p.26).

I have often conceived of my practice as education and viewed its social function in the community as central, while its artfulness has always been secondary to me. That is, the work's quality as theatre or its place in the discourse of theatre is secondary to its social function. It is the observation and dissemination of speech rhythms, like Searle's speech acts or Crystal's discussion on the importance of speech as language, that constitute the primary outcome contained in a play of mine, rather than a performance for entertainment (Crystal, 2005). These are the foundations on which I classify my work as real fiction and it is the basis for my claim in this thesis that the practice can work in a classroom as a form of drama education.

4.2 Rationale

Above, I have identified my playwriting as a form of research as well as initiating a discussion of social labelling. This is quite distinct from the task of this chapter, in which I describe the methodology particular to this project which, as stated above, involves a practice-led engagement that introduces the real fiction writing method to a group of high school drama students. Thus, whilst the previous chapters have focused on the processes involved in producing my work as a practitioner, here I describe my work as a researcher. In this chapter, I will explain the rationale, purpose, context and procedure used to inspire, collect and collate monologues from a drama class, characterised as real fiction.

The purpose of this study is two-pronged. Firstly, it is an exploration into the meaning and significance of the creative act of writing for theatre or the writing of monologues and plays, called real fiction research. Secondly, through the practice of drama and monologue writing, I intend to establish an understanding of student perspectives on the use of labels in Victorian secondary schools and institutions by teachers, students and others in relation to student behaviour and identity.

This practice-led research is partially based on the hypothesis that much can be learned and expressed through the theory and practice of reality theatre (Saldaña 2005, p.1), both inside and outside the context of a Victorian classroom. My study attempts to teach a particular playwriting practice that exists in the theatre and examines how it can be utilised by drama students in a classroom. It also seeks to explore the social potential of such a practice, as well as providing valuable qualitative, observational data for my research. Students were encouraged to ask how drama can help them understand and express their social world as well as their position and feelings inside it.

4.3 Research context

The real fiction practice, explained in Chapter Two, formed a part of the data collection process. It is the basis for the activity of the students in the drama class I attended, in terms of their monologue writing. It also guided the method of my own conflation and treatment of the monologues, presented in a play script – a form of ethno-drama using the real fiction method of creation that will form a later chapter in this thesis. I then explore the value and transgression of the practice, in the collection of data (the student writers' monologues) and the presentation of data (the dramatic play based on the student writers' monologues).

The focus of the research is on the effectiveness of the creative process on a drama classroom environment, combining educational and creative processes. I also consider and touch upon the potential of practice to aid students' preparation for the specific educational work requirements of Victorian Drama/Theatre Studies. Whilst the VCAA (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority) work requirement involves dramatic performance, I claim the task of writing a monologue could be helpful in understanding the performance of a monologue. My role in the research is essentially as a practitioner and collaborator with an education professional. Gallagher's claim that drama 'democratises' the classroom not only politicises the drama classroom, by highlighting a social aspect that occurs as part of the learning

process, but distinguishes it from other more conventional classroom contexts. This is important to the methodology because it describes the research context and the volatile nature of the site of enquiry.

This chapter articulates some further theoretical background, building on the expositions in Chapters Three and Four, as well as the practical plan for this research, what I hoped would be achieved and how it might operate. The following chapter, however, will explain what actually occurred in the engagement with the drama class on the day. It will contain written survey data from teacher and student participants, analysis of this qualitative data and the dramatic monologues, their interpretation and conflation, illustrating their potential to store data in terms of the narratives collected from the adolescent participants.

4.4 The 'dramatic play' as data storage

What is the role of the researcher in making meaning and in what ways might this be different if you were writing a long essay? What processes of analysis will I use in putting the data together into the format of a play? What will determine my decisions about what things mean, how they can be used, and how I position them one against another in order to construct meaning?

The writing of the dramatic play will involve an application of the real fiction writing method used in the student workshop to elicit their monologues. The student monologues, with my own contributions and revisions included, will provide a platform for the development of this form of real fiction writing. My role in this part of the process will be to analyse the foundations of each student's voice, its form and content, according to their writing contribution. What is the tone of the voice? Where does it come from? Once this is ascertained from the writing, I will then continue to write the student's voice, expanding on the social statement.

 The participant's writing appears in a roman font while my elaborations appear in italics. For example:

> Student 7: My brother calls me fat. He's a li'l shit. I get in trouble for calling him a li'l shit *but how much damage is done by that compared to him calling me fat?!?!* It's not his fault. He's nine. *He probably doesn't even know what 'fat' is. Do I really know? Why does it hurt so much, being called 'fat'? I mean do I feel fat? Sometimes.*

In order to store this 'data' in the form of a play, it is necessary to hear the voice of the student in the rhythms of the writing, and attempt to slowly and subtly add and embellish the speech with content from the playwright/researcher's own writings and philosophical position, whilst remaining true to the character's voice contained in the monologue.

The purpose of using the play then, as a 'data storage' space is manifold. It allows the students' voices a safe place to speak that is appropriate to the form of the data, and allows for the diversity of subject matter and tone to be best utilised. It also provides layers of anonymity and depersonalises the process, in case any personal details remain in the students' work that they may wish to disown at a later date. This ethical issue was broached prior to and during the workshop engagement with the student participants and detailed in the next chapter, primarily around a discussion of consent. In addition to this it makes for an interesting and exciting method of disseminating information, one that seems appropriate to the context of the drama classroom.

The use of the dramatic play is distinguishable from the long essay or thesis because it is imagined as a sensory experience with an audience. This was discussed at length with the students as they prepared to write the monologue data. Theatre can be viewed and heard, as well as intellectualised and interpreted. The prominent role of the researcher in making meaning from the student voices is partially why the project can be viewed as ethically problematic. The fact that much of the material is subject to interpretation means that it is also open to multiple meanings and outcomes. Much of the data is dependent on the student participants' understandings of the task at hand. This needs to be recognised and acknowledged as the layers of meaning are added to the original testimony of the students.

The research emphasises the effect of the creative process on a school environment, the combination of educational and creative processes and the potential of practice to aid in the specific educational work requirements of Year 11 Drama/Theatre Studies students. Hence the curricular context in which this activity takes place does not directly call for the writing of voices, only their performance. However, I claim these two processes can and do interact and therefore the workshop, whilst focusing on writing also most certainly informs the performance of a monologue. As explored in the literature review, this resembles

various other methodologies including practice-led and practice-based research and Saldaña's ethno-dramatic processes and procedures.

My role in the research, like Saldaña in 'Chalkboard Concerto', is essentially as a theatre-making practitioner and collaborator with an education professional (Vanover & Saldaña, 2005). Below, I lay out the practical plan for this research, the processes that were engaged and some of the ethical and practical dilemmas of having the researcher present in the classroom. In Chapter Seven, I will explain what actually happened in the engagement with the drama class.

4.5 Subjective data

I previously discussed the notion of objective versus subjective forms of knowledge and I acknowledge that the outcome of my engagement in the classroom is highly subjective data -- creative monologues written by drama students in a very specific and unique context. As explored in chapters one and two, the nature of any work that might be deemed 'creative research' is highly subjective; its results do not necessarily prove universally applicable, nor do they always have objective outcomes. Rather, what is achieved is a body of qualitative data, subject to and requiring ongoing interpretation.

The data, student monologues and qualitative surveys, collected through the engagement and other teacher networks, is quite often descriptive. In addition to this nuance, the practice used to disseminate the data, a dramatic play, further subjectifies the data as it appears to become 'dramatised'. However, it also provides a platform for the students' writing and expression, providing them with the safety of anonymity, and the freedom of expression provided by theatre and identified in other studies of creativity and its potential benefits.

Al-Girl Tan (2007) claims that:

> Studies of creativity are truly scientific though the scientific method used to study creativity is not identical with that which is used to study other phenomenon (Tan, 2007, p. vii).

The instruction for participants in my study was to write either personal experience in one's own voice or the experience of another in one's own voice, or alternatively one's own experience expressed in the voice

of another. This is based on my own practice as a playwright and, as is apparent from the data that follows in the chapters six, seven and eight, it has the effect of further concealing the identity of the narrative and/or dramatic voice in the monologue. Whilst the monologues are anonymous, in the sense that there is no name attached to the writing, it may still be possible to discover personal information about students through analysing their work. By instructing students to write their own or another's voice, there is no way of telling whether their experiences or even the voice contained in the monologue is the student's own voice or that of another, whether it is an expression of one's own feelings or a moment of empathy, exploring another's voice through imagination. This also perhaps distinguishes the work from many examples of ethno-drama that seem to seek out participants' own voices (Sanders, 1995).

4.6 Research context

Proposal:

The context for my research was a drama workshop that took place in the classroom of a Victorian secondary college. Participants were drawn from the participant group of students enrolled in VCE Drama and some teaching and university research staff. It involved 10 active participants and the school counsellor was on hand, as a precaution.

My role was as both an observer in a drama classroom and a collaborator with the drama teacher and my research supervisor. Together, we encouraged and participated in a discussion aimed at inspiring a creative response from the students in the form of a written monologue. These monologue results were then recorded and discussed in scene 2 of the dramatic play script 'data' produced and discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis.

The process allowed students to develop their writing skills, using techniques established in theatre creation practice. It focused on speaking and listening as a form of writing, with reference to some of the conversational theorists mentioned in previous chapters. It also sought to inform the craft of character development and interpretation, not only within the boundaries of drama learning but learning through drama. It entailed explicit and focused attention on dramatic process, pertinent to preparation for solo or monologue assessment tasks in the Victorian Certificate of Education, by adding a rich level of understanding of the playwright's purposes, contexts and strategies (Learner, 2012).

Participant school:

The participant school was what I would describe as an avant-garde school. The uniform is reasonably casual and seemingly flexible. To the outsider, the shadow of authority seems hardly to linger, if at all. The school has a relatively artistic architectural design and the room in which the workshop is conducted is one that seems neither a classroom nor a theatre, but something wedged between these two forms. I was familiar with the school through a local film college located on the grounds. There is an argument for saying that the school then is neither secondary school or community arts organisation, nor a film school. Like the room in which the workshop is conducted, it is between these two (or three) identifiable organisations.

The context for this research is a Victorian State school drama classroom which is a volatile environment, explored at some length in the methodology chapter of this thesis. One student did not submit a contribution and it is my understanding that the reason for her non-participation was what she described as 'writer's block'. This illustrates what might be described as the transgressive nature of teaching and learning drama. By bringing the process of the theatre into the classroom, we compromise and question the conventional processes and authority structures of the classroom. Creativity allows for ebbs and flows in ways that other disciplinary areas do not.

An example of this is found in the data from the engagement and it seems useful to note that the real fiction monologue writing process I am proposing does not exist in isolation. It enters an already active and creative classroom and the students engaged with it using their established understandings of drama and drama creation. When I analysed the raw data from the engagement used to write the play, it was essentially in five parts:

a) The qualitative survey completed by students and classroom teacher prior to the engagement.

b) The monologues created using the real fiction monologue writing method introduced to the student participants by the researchers and teacher.

c) Student skits representing a combination of the subject of the monologue writing workshop and the conventional practice of this particular drama classroom. The student participants took what they had learnt in the workshop and expressed it in their usual drama practice in the classroom involving skits in groups of three or four.

d) The observations of classroom practice recorded by the student researcher in the form of notes.

e) Data in the form of edited extracts from my own personal journal, not only giving a unique and personal perspective on the data collection process, that might be described as ethnographic, but also offering the reader an insight into my own sense of being an 'outsider' in educational research. Both of these constitute forms of data in the context of this thesis.

All five parts are then combined to create the real fiction ethno-drama data reproduced in Chapter Six.

4.7 Procedure: action-based, practice-led methodology

John Shotter emphasises the importance of 'orientational learning' and 'orientational work' preceding 'deliberate, theory-driven inquiries into our everyday lives' (Shotter, 2013, p.3). This 'orientational learning' in the practice of real fiction playwriting ordinarily involves the observation of various characters' speech rhythms. These observations are then converted into a play, using somewhat conventional methods of plot development, stagecraft, lighting and performance.

In this project, the practice of observing and recording speech rhythms took place in the context of the monologue writing workshop. That is, the speech rhythms were delivered in the form of a written monologue, elicited from the student participants through involvement in the workshop. This orientational work and orientational learning – consisting of learning ways to express oneself in the monologue form – will ultimately lay the groundwork for a theatrical play. However this play, rather than being performed, becomes a data storage facility for the orientational work undertaken by both the researcher in the engagement and the student participants in the workshop. To this end, the dramatic material in the play almost appears as research report data, despite its creative quality as a play script, fragmented by social, educational and observational data.

Hence, the play will consist of various voices drawn from monologue data and also the data of the playwright/researcher's engagement in the classroom. This will be explored in greater detail in chapters 6, 7 and 8. However, it seems necessary here to offer a cursory explanation, so as to explain the process. In the play, there are various student characters, as well as a teacher character. Whilst the student characters are created from the conflated student monologues written during the workshop, the teacher character is

based on a conflation of several characters using the real fiction research method being taught to student participants in the workshop.

In order to initiate the process of constructing a monologue for student participants, I referred directly to my practice. Students were educated in the specific process involved in constructing a real fiction monologue. This exploration into labels and labelling has a relationship with 'applied theatre' (Taylor, 2005).

It was at first my intention to provide students with a practical guide as to the construction of monologue, what it means, and the relationship between the author's experience and the theatrical monologue that takes place inside the voice of a character. However, the context of the classroom and the school environment, as well as the age and experience of participants meant a more flexible approach was required. Even in the planning of the workshop, I sensed that the teachers and students had well established ways of working and wondered whether introducing my method, as a strictly structured practice, would be effective. Perhaps data, in the form of student monologues, would be more easily generated by being more flexible in terms of method. The data could then be reinterpreted using my own real fiction method.

A conversation with the classroom teacher refuted this assumption, and this fluid and fluctuating methodology seems consistent with Shotter's indeterminate and less deliberate view of knowledge creation. The teacher informed me that the students were likely to need the specific and certain direction of my original proposed approach. With this in mind, I constructed the following, including a detailed lesson plan below:

My playwriting method involves:
- combining the narrative voices of author and character
- writing from a series of conversations. Writing in this way then is an act of listening and speaking rather than just writing
- engaging with the voice of the character, encouraging empathy
- a theatrical understanding of voice where the voice of the character is also adopted by the actor. Workshops will involve:

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- o Reflections on the role of a playwright in the drama process
- o A form of method acting established in my practice as a playwright (Stanislavsky, 1976)
- o students and teachers drawing on the voices of real and familiar characters (familiar to them anyway).

In the workshop:

- students, teachers and researchers will be required to write a monologue based on these voices

- results will be collected and collated

- my observations through this process, combined with the creative research of the student monologues, will inform further qualitative research.

The survey data collection process:

The participant group contacted for the qualitative survey consisted of 16 Year 11 Drama students and three teachers working in and around the western suburbs of Melbourne. The three teachers were all female: one at the beginning of her teaching career, one mid-career and one nearing retirement. All lived and worked in the western suburbs as mentioned above. The data collection process in relation to the qualitative surveys was in the form of a written survey distributed to participants and completed off-site, prior to the engagement. It was sent to all participating students, plus some students from the class absent on the day. Three teachers, from the participating school and surrounding local education community were invited by e-mail and agreed to complete the written qualitative survey.

The school was contacted through a formal approach from the university. Written consent was sought and granted by all participants. Three teacher participants were gathered through the participating school and associated networks.

4.8 Data collected from monologue workshop

The data collected during the engagement with the participating school, described below, consisted of four varieties:

a) Qualitative survey: This served the dual purpose of collecting some information from students and teachers, as well as providing general background for the writing of the play in Chapter Six. The act of completing the survey also helped to prepare student and teacher participants for the process of writing a monologue based on the subject of labels and labelling. The qualitative survey got participants thinking about some of the issues I proposed they explore in the subsequent task of monologue writing.

b) Student monologues: This is the activity that constitutes the primary hypothesis of my thesis. Students were asked to write a monologue, based on their own voice or the voice of another person. As previously observed, it was envisaged this could help to maintain anonymity, but it also provides a medium for students to express themselves creatively and socially. In terms of data, however, it raises issues regarding the credibility of creative research. If we don't know whether the feedback provided by participants is 'true', then is it of any value?

c) Short drama 'skits' devised by the students: These occurred toward the end of the class and were a reflection on the monologue content, the outcome of the research. The drama skits, initiated in the classroom by the teacher and her students, constituted a response to the activity, a statement contextualised in the drama classroom, akin to Wittgenstein's 'language game' (the drama classroom itself being one such 'language game') or what John Shotter (1993) calls a 'conversational reality'. In this context, it seems drama can be understood as a way of talking.

d) A dramatic play written by the student researcher: In previous chapters, I identified the process involved in this thesis as 'practice-led', with the inclusion of a dramatic play, storing and disseminating data collected through the research. The procedure of 'conflating' the student monologues has been previously discussed and will be further explored in the relevant section of the play. The notion of 'transgressive data' is also a consistent theme throughout my research. The student monologues are transgressive, because they are not entirely true and cannot be classified as either qualitative research (in the same way that the surveys can be). They are based on a

creative process and constitute evidence of that creative process rather than containing factual details, as such.

The surveys were completed by the participant group of students and another small collection of teachers from both inside and outside the participating school. The monologues were written by student participants under the guidance of the research team and the classroom drama teacher. The dramatic play, written by the student researcher and reproduced below, consists of monologues produced by students from the participant group, conflated for creative and exploratory purposes, as well as observations collected in the classroom and conclusions based on the survey data.

In Chapters Five and Six the data is reproduced and analysed. In these chapters the two-pronged use of the real fiction writing process is evident: by student participants in the research through the monologue writing practice; then in my own conflation of the monologues, using the student monologues as a platform for social comment and analysis; and, finally, in the writing of a play, presented as qualitative research data and analysis, based on both the survey and monologue data.

The informal tone of these chapters reflects the nature of my approach, encouraging inclusiveness and also reflecting on the experience with an honest voice – almost testimonial. That is, whilst some of the ideas discussed above may seem at times abstract, this section of the research remains very much grounded in describing my social encounter in the classroom with both student and teacher participants. This inevitably affects the tone of the narrative voice and hence the nature of the thesis.

4.9 Ethical and methodological concerns

Ethics:

The use of school students as subjects or participants in this study of theatre and education raises several ethical issues for consideration. The idea of using minors as participants in a study of this nature introduces the possibility of exploitation and some questions of artistic ownership, as well as the 'role' played by these participants in the research (Corrigan & Tutton, 2006). It is a consideration I wish to foreground as we proceed with the methodological description.

Consent:

The following processes of consent were undertaken:

- Formal ethics approval was gained from Victoria University, the Department of Education and the school where the research was conducted
- Information sheets were distributed to students and their parents prior to the workshop
- The various risks associated with the project were discussed with students throughout, repeated several times, and the voluntary nature of the project was clearly expressed to all students and the teacher present
- Research participants were over sixteen years of age and all completed signed consent forms
- The work of the students has been significantly obscured to protect the anonymity of the student writers
- It is important to note that the work was completely anonymous. None of the work, either monologues or surveys, had names attached to it. Whilst, under ordinary circumstances, an argument could be formed to say that students might be identified through content, one of the techniques I encouraged with the student participants was the observation of others' speech patterns. Therefore, I imagine we can assume that some used this technique while others perhaps wrote from their own experience. This, coupled with my conflation of the work for creative purposes, I believe, sufficiently protects the identity of participants.

Member checking

One of the concerns this research raised was awareness of issues relating to creativity and ethics in drama students' creative writing practice. The proposal also had the additional ethical concern of artistic ownership and obtaining the ongoing consent of participants and their guardians. This will be ensured through a process of 'member checking' (Emerson & Pollner, 1988). That is, should the work have a life beyond this research, for which student participants gave written, signed consent then a further stage of contacting the

participants as a method of member checking shall be put in place to ensure students are comfortable with future representations.

The monologues in their raw form are available, if necessary, only to myself as the research student, the supervisory panel and the examiners of the thesis. Written consent was sought at the time of student participants submitting. If the monologues in their raw form are published, it will only be with the additional expressed consent from individual students and their guardians. This publication restriction includes the thesis to be submitted for assessment.

Throughout the process of this project, monologues directly created by and collected from the student participants were conflated so that the identity of the individual students were and remain obscured. If, for any reason in the future, it is deemed necessary to the research for any monologues from students to be directly reproduced in a context other than the thesis, this will be done with the understanding of restricted access and a second consent form will need to be filled out by the student and his/her guardian. The students and their parents will be sought out by the researcher through the avenue of the school.

Ongoing consent for participation from students and/or their guardians will be confirmed by a process of 'member checking', which can be broadly described as an opportunity for participants to check particular aspects of the interpretation of the data they provided (Carlson, 2010).
With this in mind, information sheets provided to student participants, their parents, teachers and other relevant authorities (such as principals) are available through the student researcher and reproduced as Appendix III to this thesis.

4.10 Conclusion

In previous chapters I argued that theatre is sourced from the social world and presented in the social world. The practice of monologue writing, a Year 11 and 12 drama activity in Victorian schools in Australia, is inherently and unavoidably social comment. Its teaching, learning, practice and presentation are all social acts in conversation. As I will investigate in the following chapter, the exploration of a subject such as social labelling in a drama class yielded unexpected results and forced a 'rethink' of assumptions as to what is important to students: what labels matter.

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The data was collected in a fluid and disruptive context, constructed through a series of volatile socially situated relationships, including those carrying various levels of authority, even legal responsibilities such as duty of care and mandatory reporting. Another component of the social world from which the data is extracted is that of the students and their relationships and interactions. This was touched upon earlier in this chapter with authors such as Barr and Higinns D'Alessandro (2007) examining at length the sociology of the school environment, empathy and pro-social activities. The data and the process by which it was collected, described at length in the following chapter, reveals an insight into the view of the school environment from the students' perspective. This is articulated in the students' monologue testimonials and the dramatic play which follows, thereby maintaining and illustrating how a practice-led methodology has informed this thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE

SURVEY DATA RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three, I explored the term 'disturbed student' as a label used by some theorists and educators, mostly in American literature but also in the work of some Australian researchers. I believe it is an interesting term to use as a tool of analysis to consider our reaction to various labels. And the way in which we use labels, particularly when we come to the qualitative survey, where students identify their own feelings about being labelled and how labels operate in their world. 'Disturbed' is such a relative term and 'disturbance' a relative phenomenon. It perfectly articulates the problem with any form of negative labelling, because what disturbs the labeller may not at all disturb the labelled. This is apparent in student participants' responses reproduced in this thesis.

Participants seemed to easily identify the label's limiting function in language: its operation as a stereotype, its philosophical presumption, its negative judgement and the linguistic poverty of its stereotyping. If the world were divided into the labelled and the labellers, participants were clearly empathetic with the labelled. This is a very positive outcome considering Jason Barr's (2007) advocacy of pro-social activity to improve adolescents' empathy. And, although we were yet to begin the drama component of this classroom activity, it seemed from the pro-social responses to the qualitative survey that drama was already on the minds of these student participants. They had already started to put themselves in the vulnerable space provided by performance, with the potential for self-exposure, criticism and growth (Goodeve, 2013).

5.2 Background to survey research

One of the stated objectives of this research is to gain a student perspective on the issue of labelling in education through the use of drama, specifically real fiction theatre, which involves creating/writing/presenting performance with a component of social reflection (Welsh, 2014). The student and teacher surveys, reproduced below, were undertaken with two goals in mind, both directed toward the primary objective of the entire thesis: to gain a student perspective on labelling through the practice of drama education.

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Firstly, the qualitative survey acted as a method of preparing students and teachers for the task of creating drama and monologues around the issues explored in the survey. Secondly, the surveys provide some further written responses from student participants to accompany the monologue data, and provide teacher and student perspectives beyond the scope of the specific engagement, all of which ultimately contributes to the dramatic play (used to store student monologue data). Furthermore, by using survey information to contribute to the creation of the play, it reinforces the authenticity of the project and introduces student participants to the nature of the process. Whilst the survey data is fascinating, I have only discussed what I perceive is the relevant information from the surveys in this chapter, that is, relevant to the process of writing the monologues, the primary task for student participants. The data in its entirety then is reproduced in Appendix I. I do not believe it necessary for me to take the reader through every response, its implications and meaning, as I will do later with the play in the form of notes in Chapter Six.

5.3 Introduction to the survey

The survey component of the research provides some insight into the general thinking of this small group of drama students and three teachers drawn from diverse backgrounds. Since it is qualified not quantified data, the size of the participant group is not a primary concern. I am more interested in constructing characters and stories around the 'findings' or 'makings' (Shotter 1993, p.24) than drawing general conclusions that might be formed from trends found in larger groups of participants. Shotter describes the process of 'making' as opposed to finding, by using the example of a poem and its influence in our world. And our language is such that it significantly contributes to our way of articulating our surroundings. A pertinent example in relation to my creative work is the encounter with character. The character's speech rhythms are not merely found and written into a play. They are the product of a conversational encounter between me (as author) and the character (from social reality) who becomes a voice in the play through a conversational engagement. This conversational engagement does not occur in isolation and has the potential to make or remake the character (or characters) explored in the writing.

Wittgenstein argues that: 'It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use' (Wittgenstein, 2001, pp. 241-242). This view on the nature of data and its collection is significant in my research, where the 'data' is subjective and/or creative. For example, the character of the teacher in the play and her interactions with the educational authority is partly drawn from the feeling that one of the teacher's answers to the survey seemed to be holding back and could be construed as defensive. When

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asked whether any of her students' involvement in welfare services affected their education, she answered, 'Can't answer this, non-teaching. Why should it? Fortunate to have the welfare support services.'

Whilst this may not mirror the fictional teacher in the play, the teacher's reticence to answer the question and her discomfort with the idea of definitively judging students does. This hesitation was not directly stated in her response to the question but implied, in her reluctance to provide a direct answer and in her use of the word 'fortunate', as if she were challenging me to think otherwise. Again, this data, which is akin to transgressive data, such as 'emotional data' or 'dream data' (St. Pierre, 1997, p.257) explored previously, is revisited in the portrayal of the fictional teacher from the play in Chapter Seven who has her own difficulties with authority and refuses to label her students. Hence, the data can be delivered in what is not said, what is concealed and in the expression of this concealment. Such data is then presented in the form of a dramatic script along the lines of Saldaña's characterisation of ethno-drama being 'playwriting as data'.

The process by which this component of the survey data is incorporated into the play offers some insight into what I call real fiction and distinguishes it from the creation of verbatim theatre, which takes the actual words of real people and treats them as the raw material for a script. My process involves observing the speech rhythms of a character encountered in social reality and embodying them in the writing. In this case, the core character had been pre-established and these observations were incorporated into the existing fictionalised character, sourced from an actual social encounter. The nature of this social encounter is the subject of my playwriting, whereby reality is negotiated by a social, conversational encounter (Shotter 1993).

Hence the qualitative survey provided a number of insights, recorded in the play in conjunction with the student monologues. In a sense, the survey acted as data for the student participants as much, if not more, than for me as the student researcher. As Appendix I indicates, students were asked to describe:

1. What a label is.

2. If they had ever been labelled.

3. To describe the difference between labelling and name calling.

4. Who uses labels?

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5. Whether it is right to use labels to describe people.

5.4 Research objectives of qualitative survey

As stated above, the survey had two distinct objectives: for the researcher and for participants. The objective for the researcher was to flesh out the information gathered through the monologue writing workshop, with the qualitative survey providing some background perspectives to be worked into both the character in the play, and the more conventional government and education departmental views. The objective for the participants – part of the purpose of the research – was to diversify their drama experience through a practice-led approach and, at the same time, lay the foundations for the ideas to be explored through the monologue writing research engagement as a tuning-in strategy (Kruse 2009, p.5). This meant that when they were asked to write a drama monologue exploring labels, they could easily imagine a range of relevant labels.

Conversely, the objective of the teacher survey was to gauge what is meant by particular labels and how those labels might be an impediment or otherwise in a student's education. The intention here was to incorporate this data into the dramatic play script being developed through the research. Therefore the characters (both the students and the teacher) would have the information gathered through the surveys and classroom engagement incorporated into their voices in the play.

For example, note the relationship here between the survey data and some of the dialogue in a scene from the play.

Extract from student statements:

Student 1: When you're walking down the street…

Student 2: And you find yourself out East…

Student 3: And you see the people casting eyes on you, telling you the way you are…

Student 4: Judging you…

Student 5: Because they're from the East and you're from out West. When you're out their way, you can tell they think you're a westie. You can tell they think maybe you're a junkie or a low-life…

These extracts from student statements are repeated verbatim in the play script, illustrating that some of the data stored in the play was gathered from the students' survey answers, one repeating the other,
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collated and disseminated into a dramatic form, given context so as to enhance the meaning and incorporate it into the play script. The play script almost mirrors the direct quotations. Observations from the survey data were used by the researcher as part of the creative process and by student participants to inspire content for the monologues.

5.5 Description of findings

Teachers:

One of the key findings here in terms of surveying teacher perspectives on labels such as 'disturbed student' is that the label is not broadly used by the teachers who participated in this study. As stated in Chapter Two, it is primarily an American term with a few notable exceptions describing 'emotionally disturbed students/children'. This term seems to be used by clinical and educational psychologists with scientific or experimental methodologies and normative agendas, such as Whitaker and the study undertaken by Urbis Australia, into 'the emotional and psychological well-being of children and young people' referred to in Chapter Three (Whitaker, 1985).

Instead, teachers described having been exposed to the less disturbing term 'troubled student' in the course of their work as educators. They also volunteered the terms 'at-risk student' and 'disengaged'. These are interesting terms, particularly the notion of a student being 'at-risk'. One can conceive of a relationship with the philosophical term 'moral panic', in which the idea of evil doings being afoot is described by the authors, concerned with the social construction of danger over issues such as drug-use, refugees and witches (Goode et al., 2009).

This somewhat philosophical notion of at-risk was explored by one of the teacher participants, implying that perhaps there is a moral panic in education over the possibility of some students adhering to what is essentially an abstract and imaginary notion (Giddens, 1999). Beyond this reflection by professional educators on welfare issues; teachers were asked to explore labels used by others to describe them and they began to seriously reflect on labels. This question elicited some emotional responses, describing teachers having the labels 'skinny' and 'soldier' attached to them and experiencing some social alienation as a result. Teachers seemed to find the exercise of reflecting on labels (used to describe them) particularly

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intriguing and an opportunity to evolve as an educator. This is an extract from one of the teachers' responses to the question: 'What labels have been used to describe you?'

> Ha! What a great question! I've been labelled the following; bossy, nerd, geek, brat, skinny bitch, dear-heart, baby/babe, love.

Students:

As observed below, the students' 'social world' appears to be quite contracted and enclosed. I had anticipated a response from students about labels in the broader social world, in relation to say 'homelessness' or mental health. Whilst this was touched on in our general discussion, which briefly referred to the label 'westie' and the students' own relationship to it, their main concern appeared to be with their own social world in terms of their friends, other adolescents and the labels used within these micro-social groups.

Initially students were asked to describe what is meant by a label. They responded using terms such as 'generalising', 'name-calling but bigger', 'stereotyping…categorising…into separate groups generally in a negative way'. One student described labels as 'necessary for some people (for) example, a person who has gender/ sexual persuasion issues, finds comfort in a label because they know what they are.' Another student described labels as the difference between 'you are' and 'you are like', a stereotype, describing/assuming/putting a name to something and '…is used to describe the way a person looks, acts and is.'

5.6 Labelling and the self

Students described the feeling of being labelled and this echoes Link et al's (1987) research exploring the labels experienced by patients admitted with mental illness as social stigmatisation. One student said she felt labelled all the time by 'the look people give.' Another offered this testimony of his/her childhood, 'as a young child I was weird and my whole year level called me gay and made the other kids believe it.' This provides insight into how some students may feel about themselves (weird), how they are perceived by society (represented as 'year level') and labelled by others ('everyone called me gay'). It also reveals how such social alienation operates not only in schools but in society generally ('made other kids believe it'). Several girls spoke of being labelled a slut, one because she had several 'guy friends', and discussed the

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injustice and sexism implicit in such a label (that 'guys' don't suffer from the same labelling process). This has been a subject for feminist literature in recent times with contributions from women writers such as Bronwyn Davies observing that labels such as 'slut' are applied to girls because 'hyper-sexualised, hyper-feminised discourses…are the only discourses through which girls can identify as girls.' (Davies, Gonick, Marnina, Gottschall, Kristina & Lampert 2013, p.8) This also speaks to the power of labels to represent deeply ingrained discourses or ways of understanding women and girls. My research brings labels and labelling language into this feminist discussion in an applied drama education context. Student participants were able to utilise drama to initatiate and process discussions of these somewhat complicated social phenomena and discourses.

Many students stated that labelling was inevitable and that it is a part of human existence, almost a problem associated with language. They suggested that labels are used to describe and understand what at first appears to be seemingly incomprehensible in the other. One student observed that the 'extreme' of labelling is 'bullying'.

5.7 Labelling and name-calling

Students were asked to explore the relationship and difference between 'name-calling' and 'labelling'. The idea here was to lead students to reflect on the ways in which labels are constructed and the relationship between labels and the notion of authority. Students immediately took up this notion and their work reflects the humanising and dehumanising potential of labelling, identified by the students in this section.

Students attempted to describe the power of the establishment from which it seems labels are generated. One student described 'labelling' as 'more permanent [than name-calling], it sticks' whilst others saw the social function of labelling as opposed to the anti-social function of name-calling: 'Name-calling is to deliberately hurt someone and labels are a generalisation.'

Another student described name-calling as having 'malicious intent whereas labelling can often be just describing terms.' I would raise the question here as to what such a description entails, and how such descriptions construct and contribute to feelings about the self. What these results actually represent are student participants' attempts to grapple with the meaning of the subject matter they will then embark on, represented through drama practice.

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Another student characterised labels as 'word(s) to describe someone in a mean way – 'fat', 'slut', 'gay'. Whereas, name-calling he/she characterised as 'nasty nicknames'. This student participant identifies the informal nature of name-calling and the very formal nature of 'labels'. This claim is restated by various students in different ways. One says name-calling singles out while labelling 'groups' people. Students' ideas of labelling were quite diverse and included an 'identifier', 'a guess', a 'personal categorisation', 'straight-out bullying', 'both good and bad'.

Whilst many student participants perceived name-calling as an insult, designed to offend, intentional, used to ridicule and degrade, some saw labelling in this way and name-calling as the converse. This reinforces the relative nature of the ideas with which we are dealing in this study.

The survey questions were distributed prior to the researcher's classroom engagement with the participants who completed the surveys off-site, without assistance.

5.8 Conclusion

The tool is a qualitative rather than quantitative survey. It is a qualitative survey that resembles a qualitative research interview, the process Corbetta (2003) describes as being no different from surveys because they 'attempt to collect data by asking people questions pursuing, however, the typical goal of qualitative research of exploring the participant's individuality and seeing the world through his eyes' (Corbetta, 2003, p.1). This perfectly articulates my overt objective in this research, not only with regard to the survey, but also the monologue data that follows below. Indeed, this notion of 'seeing the world through his eyes' has always been the objective of real fiction research and this educational instance (i.e. of it being in an institutional environment) is no different. The entire project seeks to examine participants' voices in conversation, to explore the world through the participants' eyes.

What I discovered through combining the anonymous information in both the surveys and the monologues is that almost all students had at some time felt labelled by their peers and that these seemed to be the labels that mattered to students. When asked to provide examples of labels that had been used to describe them, words such as 'slut', 'gay', 'weird' and 'bitch' were offered up by participants and the examples provided were entirely peer to peer labelling. Though many answered 'teachers' to the question, 'who uses labels?, none provided examples of labels used by teachers such as 'bad', 'troubled', 'remedial' or 'at-risk'.

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Rubin and Rubin state qualitative interviews:

> permit us to see that which is not ordinarily on view and examine that which is looked at but seldom seen (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. vii).

Myers and Newman state:

> The qualitative interview is the most common and one of the most important data gathering tools in qualitative research. What we find rather surprising, however, is the fact that the qualitative interview is treated as unproblematic in the IS (Interview Survey) research literature and in many PhD programs (Myers & Newman, 2007, p. 2).

The practice of the monologue workshop combined with the written qualitative survey serves the function these authors attribute to the qualitative interview, that is, '…permitting us to see that which is not ordinarily on view and…treated as unproblematic' (Myers & Newman, 2007, p.2). The implication here is that something is 'problematic' or transgressive about the data collected in the qualitative interview. Indeed, the information from the qualitative survey is collected completely separately from the monologues, serving to reinforce the anonymous nature of the data by not connecting one form to the other. There is no real way of telling who filled in which interview by virtue of the monologue data and vice versa. In the context of my work, the qualitative data was collected in the form of a survey, completed in writing prior to the drama workshop, is designed to 'warm' the students to the ideas and processes involved in the monologue writing workshop.

This is important because it denotes the kind of data we are dealing with. The survey was not used just to collect information but to prepare the student participants for the monologue writing task, to get them thinking about the issues that will be approached in the classroom. The completion of the survey encourages the student participants to contemplate labelling before writing a monologue exploring the subject.

Consequently, in this context, the practice of completing the qualitative survey is as important as the information contained in the documents. It means that when we begin to speak about labels in the

classroom and writing a monologue that reflects such labelling, the issue has already been partially worked through in the minds of the students. In contrast, the qualitative survey for the teachers was purely for the purpose of collecting information and this is reflected in the fact that the questions were more detailed.

In the workshop and via the surveys, what I ultimately discovered is that the students' world is insular and primarily concerned with other students, and therefore decidedly unconcerned with teachers and other authorities.

What have we learnt about student perceptions of labels and labelling that might be useful to our understanding of and reflections on the social world of school through drama? What have we learnt about the nature of labels – what they mean, who is labelled and how – through the students' survey particularly?

I anticipated an insight into how students felt/responded to being labelled by teachers and other authorities. There was some reference to this in the student participants' work. However, one interpretation of the data gathered in this research was that the students tend to be more concerned with their own social worlds than the figures of the teachers or indeed others, such as myself, as an outsider in the classroom. The teachers, however, were given the opportunity to participate in, reflect on and contribute to a series of questions exploring labels. For the teachers present at the workshop, they also helped guide and elicit a response from student participants. Participants could withdraw from the project at any time without penalty.

CHAPTER SIX

THE WORKSHOP WITH PARTICIPANT SCHOOL

6.1 Description of a workshop in a contemporary classroom setting

i) Beginning the work: Extracts from field notes recorded on the day of the workshop

The day began with a meeting with my supervisor in what resembled a rehearsal, in the sense that she read the monologue I had written for her, as an example of how the process is supposed to work. She was reading my monologue as an actor and in response I played the role of writer/director/theatre-maker. In a way we were all theatre-makers – research student, supervisor, teacher, school students – and, as Gallagher points out, theatre 'democratises' the classroom. The day unfolded as a strange disruption of social conventions (Gallagher, 2008). This somewhat strange experience denotes what creativity can do and why it represents a threat to some, particularly those in authority. My supervisor and I discussed this phenomenon and, it seemed, that this was going to be a strange and disruptive day….when I say 'disruptive' I don't mean destructively disruptive but rather deliberately unsettling the comfortable self for the purpose of creativity and growth (Northouse, 2015, p. 2).

My supervisor asked me what I was like when I was at school and I explained to her that I was not a great student. My school years were punctuated by defiance, absence and failure. However, I did like writing, so I might have participated in an activity such as this. There was one student in the participant group who reminded me of myself when I was younger. She was friendly and nice enough, chatted to her friend throughout and produced absolutely nothing, and more or less said, 'I'm not really interested and it doesn't matter what you say or do to me, nothing can shake me out of this feeling that I'm just not interested.' It would have been awful if all the participants had taken this stance; but I didn't feel like being the one, in these circumstances, to encourage her out of whatever she was going through, which may have been anything from laziness to a mental health issue, defiance or maybe she just didn't like the look of me. Whatever, I wasn't going to insist she do what I say.[ii]

My response to that particular student's non-participation provides some insight into my role in the classroom as an insider/outsider. The ethical clearance gained from the university specified that students and teachers participate of their own free will.[iii]

ii) Structure of the workshop

The teacher introduced myself and my supervisor to the student participants who were familiar with the nature of the investigation, having completed the written qualitative survey prior to the session. The class was essentially and loosely structured in three phases:

1. Monologue writing time

2. Semi-structured discussion of labels and labelling

3. The small group drama presentations or 'On Being a Westie'.

iii) Phase 1: Monologue writing time

Led by the teacher, student researcher and supervising researcher, student participants engaged in class discussion about the creation of theatre. Student participants were asked to consider how drama is written and how this form is different to the writing of an essay, or even other types of creative writing, such as the short story form. We discussed the importance of sounds, that is, hearing writing. There was one student who had previously written a film script and this became a springboard for discussion of the writing process, with the entire class participating and contributing. When we write a script, we write what we hear with the knowledge it will be heard, while we write to be read with a story or an essay or a book. There are examples of writing designed to be heard, rather than read from written 'Literature', including the work of Dylan Thomas and Walt Whitman, who use prose and free verse lyric to generate sounds and rhythms so as to stylise everyday language (Nagaraju & Seshaiah, 2012; Casale, 2010, p.203). The class discussed the way in which the writing of a script involves the observation of speech rhythms. This has also been a concern of some ethnographers, who consider the nature of their research to be collecting tones and modes of expression, perhaps rather than information.

Student participants were then asked to imagine the voice of a real character. They were informed that it could consist of their own voice or someone else's. We discussed in some detail the idea that this work was

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to be utilised to comment on the subject of labelling. I made it very clear that the process involved the writing of sound; we were writing with a view to being heard rather than being read.

This notion of 'voice' was taken by some present (teacher and students included), to mean *their* 'voice' narrative or social. There is a relationship here with what St. Pierre has at times described as 'transgressive data' (St. Pierre, 1997, p.176) in its four previously cited categories: emotional, dream, sensual and response data (St. Pierre, 1997, p.175). In my research, the inclusion of participants' own narrative voice becomes a form of transgression because the work attempts to articulate the voice of the other. To articulate the self or to speak in one's own voice is an act of rebellion in which some student participants indulged.

Whilst collecting the narrative voices of students themselves was not entirely consistent with my intention, it soon became apparent it could be incorporated into the process. As previously explained, real fiction involves using the speech rhythms and patterns of characters encountered by the playwright in social reality to express and articulate the author's ideas as theatrical performance.

The idea that the students articulate their own voice rather than that of another, whilst outside the scope of the workshop's objective, helps contribute to the protection of identity, and does not change the data in its raw form as monologue. There is no way of telling whether the students' work was based on their own or another's experience. Consequently, their choices of 'voice' effectively protected their anonymity.

There were a small number of student participants who were very engaged, continuously writing from beginning to end of the allocated 'writing time'. In fact, they all seemed very aware that this provided an opportunity to express themselves, even the one student who didn't write at all. To allow students the freedom to speak in their own voice, in another's or not to speak at all, I believe creates the necessary conditions for self-expression. The freedom not to write is as important to the students' right to speak or swear or use offensive language and images in the writing. It is in these conditions we are most likely to elicit authentic voices from student participants. The intent, from my perspective, was to induce an atmosphere, whereby we might create in the classroom as best we can, and Sartre's 'consciousness of being surpassing every inequality of condition toward a human world where any appeal of anyone to

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anyone will always be possible' (Sartre, 1992, p.285). In the case of the workshop, this includes the appeal of the student for silence, by refusing to participate, or for transgression by swearing in the monologue.

iv) Phase 2: Semi-structured discussion of labels and labelling

Here, student participants were encouraged to discuss what it feels like to be labelled, where labels come from, who labels and who is labelled. Student participants were encouraged to develop the monologues they began in the writing time, drawing on the discussion for additional material. Conceptually the idea here was to develop the monologues through drama practice, through hearing them spoken. However, the outcome in practice was a discussion of collective writing in small groups. It provided students with the opportunity to exchange and develop ideas from their own and others' work. One of the seminal ideas of the monologue workshops on labelling was to encourage an exploration of the possibility of giving voice to the voiceless and/or powerless. This group embraced this idea, both conceptually and in content. The content of my real fiction work often consists of references to feeling powerless (being 'outside') and the idea of exploring labelling in education was an attempt to translate the practice into this context. One student participant in 2014 wrote:

> …one thing I have noticed, no matter how many labels you hear they are all originating from the same people. The popular kids…

This is an example of the type of material I was looking for through this process, a theme identified through the literature review.

Some of the data perhaps reveals an insight into the operation of the adolescent social world, as well as a contemplation of the language process through which labels are formulated: what they are and how they come to be. Social labels, of the kind that are popularly used (not necessarily those endorsed or defined by some establishments), such as the use of the term psychotic in psychiatry, illustrate the way in which labelling processes represent a type of language. The word 'psychotic' is used by professionals to describe a disease as well as in ordinary language to describe the feeling we got from someone. Ideas such as these can be connected with notions of empathy and the problem of 'othering' of concern to some social and educational theorists (Barr & D'Alessandro, 2007, p. 234).

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I began this research with an exploration of the labels used by teachers to describe students. What was revealed through the workshop is that the labels that are really important are the ones students use to describe each other (e.g. 'gay' or 'slut') Particularly interesting is the idea, identified by students, that a label is what other people think of you and how they choose to articulate that impression, often influenced by social surroundings. What is also apparent from my research is that it doesn't matter where the label comes from or how much truth is attached to it. If there are enough people who believe the label, it can become realised for the person labelled and for those who surround them in their social context. It can be the truth in every way, except for perhaps how you feel or what you know about yourself, in your own privacy. In this sense, students had the opportunity to describe and discuss feelings of alienation and other social troubles, both in their writing and in the conversation that preceded and followed the writing.

There seemed to be a *they* in the conversation. When this or that happens to you or me, *they* will label you or me. What this seemed to indicate was that there was a real sense of trust between these students that they felt comfortable enough to speak of being made to feel x by 'them'. There was a sense that labels, like 'slut' for example, can emerge from the world of social conversation like a weather storm. The following quotes were collected in the context of group discussion, involving student participants, teachers and researchers under the general banner of 'labels'.

Student participant 1: Something will happen at a party. Like someone slept with someone. A girl slept with a guy at a party. Then it turns into a story that this girl slept with this guy and maybe another guy soon after. And you're labelled as a slut. But the story has to go round first. I mean sometimes two girls can go out and do the same thing but only one is labelled a slut.

Student participant 2: And it's not fair because if a guy does the same thing, he's not a slut.

Writer: Does anyone know what a mallrat [iv] is?

Student participant 3: Yeah, but I've never heard it called that.

Teacher: Have any of you ever felt labelled in society?

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Student participant 4: Sometimes when you go over to the eastern suburbs, you feel like, like they're judging you.

Writer: Why? How do they make you feel judged?

Student participant 5: You just feel it, like you're different and sometimes you just can't wait to get back to the West, where you're not judged…

Here is an insight into precisely what is meant by negative labelling, where it originates and ends. It often reflects how we feel about ourselves. Notice also that by the time the student participants discussed their own feelings of being 'labelled', they dropped the 'label' component and just talked about being judged. The discussion began with an exploration of the term 'westie' but it ended with a more general discussion of social judgement that went beyond the notion of the label, perhaps going some way towards explaining what is going on beneath the process of labelling and being labelled. For, it is the feeling of social alienation and indeed social superiority that is embodied in the label and its use.

v) Phase 3: On being a 'westie'
There is some material on the idea of a westie stemming from Sydney, NSW. Simic (2008) recognises that '…the westie stereotype crossed state borders and acquired national recognition' (Simic, 2008, p.223). The idea of the 'westie' seems to be unique to Australia and is a derogatory term used to describe people that live in a city or town's western suburbs. In the locations where it is commonly used, it also refers to someone considered to be lower class or poor. The discussion of this subject that emerged from the workshop at the school was particularly interesting to me, because it came from student participants themselves, as did considerable discussion of the term slut, identified by the group as a negative and unfair label. Here I will discuss these two subjects, pivotal to the conversation.

Participants described feeling strange and uncomfortable when in the eastern or northern suburbs of Melbourne, as opposed to their home in the West, '…like you're being watched and judged. You feel different when you're out there and you just can't wait to get back to the West, where you feel more

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accepted.' One girl described being on a bus and approached by a fellow whom she found scary and linked him to our discussion of mallrats. She described him approaching her and the sensation that perhaps she was about to be raped. She then said, with some relief, he only wanted to know the time. This was later re-enacted in one of three skits that emerged from the workshop and discussion.

This work represents an insight into life as a 'westie' and, as Simic (2008) points out, this transcends specific geographical locations. Things are a little bit more dangerous here, edgy. People are in some ways less friendly and yet they are more real. We are exposed to every kind of culture and lifestyle and carry that with us when we happen to find ourselves 'out east', where we inevitably feel weird and different or, as one of the participants put it, 'like you're being judged' (Simic, 2008; narrative from the research, 2014).

This sense of estrangement does not seem to come from socioeconomics, inferiority, clothing, education or values, although all these things seem to influence our class perceptions of East and West in Australian cities, particularly Melbourne and Sydney. When one imagines Footscray or Parramatta, the assault on the senses is inescapable. The colour of African clothing and the buzz of conversations in a variety of languages give an 'anything goes' sense, where one feels accepted, no matter who or what. These western suburbs school students seemed to be commenting on the presence of multiculturalism in the West and its distinct absence in the East. This sense of absence, emptiness and aloneness can perhaps be attributed to a combination of causes including socioeconomic affluence, conservative clothing in the sense that the colour and multicultural clothing of the West is 'absent'. By comparison, it seems, the participants found the East to be grey and colourless.

The participant group consisted mainly of Caucasian members. I claim that their comment on feeling discomfort in the East is formed from the absence of colour and multiculturalism that is a distinct and obvious presence in the West. I also note here that the student participants described being 'out East' where the ordinary colloquialism seems to be one describing oneself as being 'out West'. Their descriptions of feeling alienated in the East are Kafkaesqe and a timely reminder of the sterility of contemporary first-world affluence. Whilst this homogeny is partly what alienates the participant group in the broader 'community', it is felt by the participants as a state of 'being other'.

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Simic comments on the nature of historical data in terms of her study of the 'westie'. She claims it is an oral history:

> To best access how numerous social factors came together to alter specific suburbs, and to produce local identities, oral history is especially productive. Local newspapers, council records and oral history all attest to the rapid shifts in the population (Simic, 2008, p. 2).

However, the workshop's use of drama and particularly monologue writing to explore social judgement and labelling led students to express their own feelings at having, in some small way, incorporated the label of 'westie' into their social identity. This is a particular concern for Simic, speaking of particular suburbs in Sydney's West, like Parramatta or Liverpool, Penrith and Blacktown. It certainly seems the same can be said of Melbourne's West and this was not lost on the participant group offering their writing and social commentary for this project.

The same is true of the term 'mallrat' used to describe the local young people who hang out in the shopping malls and laneways in regional centres such as Geelong (Pearson, 2011). The history of such groups and insight into their behaviour, described by some sociologists as 'public deviancy', is perhaps less represented in academic journals or even official records than it seems to be in media reports and oral stories from the local community (Taylor & Taylor, 1973, p. 69). In fact in the Victorian rural centre of Ballarat, the term 'westie' is used to describe what the community in the Victorian regional centre of Geelong would class as 'mallrat', though like the Sydney westie, according to the urban dictionary, the Ballarat westie resides or presents in such a way as to make people believe they live in Wendouree *West* (Urban Dictionary, 2013). However, if we look to Wikipedia for a colloquial and contemporary understanding of the term in everyday use, the term has evolved to become an equivalent with the Australian slang 'bogan'. What emerged from the workshop was a description of how it feels to *be* a westie, not just the label. A cursory look at the emerging media and oral history of the Geelong mallrat reveals the dangerous and disturbing potential of such labels.

The Urban Dictionary, for example, describes Geelong mallrats as drug-addicted teenagers and even identifies them as attending Oberon Secondary School (Emminentfate96, 2011). Furthermore, a media report published in 2011 directly claims in the headline: 'Mallrats, not location' identified as 'the problem'

with bus exchange (Pearson 2011). Another media report claims that Geelong mallrats are being targeted by a shopping centre for anti-social behaviour (Mathieson 2009). Even the *Police Association Journal* makes reference to mallrats in 2008 in a discussion of crime on the local city streets (The Police Association Journal, n.a. 2008).

As part of the process building to monologue writing, the student participants completed the qualitative survey, described above. They then re-presented this survey data and some of the information provided, labels such as 'weird', 'gay' and 'slut', as well as the feeling of being labelled were transformed into the familiar form of workshopped drama skits in groups of three. The nature and content of these skits reveal the extensive discussion and contemplation of labels and labelling that preceded them.

 (*Note: the italics indicate that I am interpreting the student participants' work. Any stage directions or commentary appear in bold.*)

Skit 1: Slutism

Students were instructed to use drama to examine labels and one small group of students created the following skit. It explores the issue of a girl being labelled a slut due to a particular behaviour, and contextualised into a very specific social and conversational reality (i.e. the schoolyard). This was echoed in the group discussion that preceded the workshop, where the observation that the social construction of the scapegoat slut emerges out of particular environments where behaviour can be interpreted in a way that sometimes (but not always) scapegoats particular women according to this behaviour. Students observed and disseminated the arbitrary way in which the slut is selected, though her behaviour may be identical to the non-slut. This provides insight into the philosophical recent issue of moral panic explored by social theorists such as Erich Goode and above (Goode et al., 2009).

In the schoolyard the slut, real or imagined, is one of the 'enemies' necessary for moral panic to occur. Through the drama workshop, the student participants showed the way in which the social enemy of the slut is created, initially through gossip and rumour (Brennan, 2009, p. 24) and then as a scapegoat. An extract from the workshop articulates this phenomenon:

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Student 1: Don't go near her, she's a slut!

Student 2: Hey?

Student 1: Yeah, she was with Eric and then, Saturday night, she slept with Graham.

Student 2: What?

Student 1: But that's what she does. She's a slut!

Student 2: Oh, I didn't realise she was a slut!

Student 1: Yeah, she doesn't care what anyone thinks, so she's a slut!

(This is a really interesting criterion for defining 'slut', that is, the idea that she doesn't care what people think. Because she doesn't care what people think, because she is free and not constrained by society, this defines her as a 'slut'. This may or may not be connected with the sexually promiscuous behaviour or the consequent reputation that seems to accompany such behaviour that would ordinarily define someone as a slut in colloquial language.) (n.a. retrieved from 'slut' in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slut, . 11-02-2014 Note: Wikipedia is not being used here as an authority but to illustrate a common usage and understanding of the word)

Student 2: Here she comes!

Student 3 walks toward these two, realising something is not right:

Student 3*:* Stay away from her. She's a slut!

Skit 2: The Lads

Lads sitting in front of computer.

Lad 1: Those sluts, I don't understand how they can cheat on all those people all the time…

Lad 2: They should be sitting in front of their computers doing something useful like Dota 2

Lad 3: Do you know what this is?

Lad 2: Shut up!

They all morph, putting their 'hoodies' over their heads and they're suddenly spray-painting a wall…

Lad 1: Right…

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Lad 2: We're gunna spray these trains like there's no tomorrow!

The almost physical relationship between sitting in front of a computer and crouching to spray paint a train is emphasised by the acting. This social observation – that there is a similarity between the public statement of spray painting with the public statement of posting on social media – is expressed through the creative process of the workshop that has involved thinking through the writing of the monologue, the social class discussion, and finally the performance techniques involved in this skit.

Lad 3: See what Samantha was wearing yesterday?

Lad 2: Oh, she's so hot!

Lad 1: She's such a slut!

Lad 2: What?

Lad 1: Mate, I know personally, fair dinkum!

The scene transforms into the three guys on phones

Lad 1 (*playing a girl*): Wait on, I'm just gunna add Julie to the call…

Julie (Lad 3): Hey guys, have you seen those gronks who just sit and play computer games all day? It's just a waste of time!! And oh my god, they actually call us sluts!! Do you know why they call us sluts? Because they can't have none of this!! They can't have a girlfriend like us!!

Lad 1: Do you know what? I can't believe they can't even communicate with electronics like us. Who do they think they are?

Lad 2: Gronks.

Julie: You've got a bit of a cold there, your voice is a bit deep…

Lad 2: Yeah.

Skit 3: Social Judgement on the Bus

Three plastic chairs. A bus driver drives at the front. A boy sits with his head under a hood behind 'driver' and a girl sits further back. He gets up and begins to approach the girl at the back, who says 'Oh my god, oh my god what's he going to do? He's coming toward me, oh my god! Is he going to rape me?'

Boy asks girl, 'Have you got the time?' She gives him the time and he walks away.

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These skits, coupled with the monologues collected in classroom engagement and the survey data completed by all participants in the research, formed the foundation of the data stored and presented in the real fiction ethno-drama script reproduced below. The play data consists of conflated monologues from student participants and observations converted into the drama form, so as to accompany the monologues in the play. A detailed explanation of each section of the play is given in the exegesis dispersed throughout, and gives the reader further insight into the creative processes discussed with student participants in the research and also throughout this thesis.

6.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the ground covered throughout the course of this drama class included forays into sociology, psychology and various other forms of knowledge and education, not limited to performance. The cultural phenomena explored through drama practice expanded beyond the potential or perceived limits of creativity. In the following chapter, I will explore in more detail the data collected through the engagement. This includes student and teacher responses to the written, qualitative survey and the outcome of the monologue writing workshop, presented in the form of student monologues, conflated and reworked by the student researcher and then contextualised in a dramatic play.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A DRAMATIC PLAY BASED ON RESEARCH FINDINGS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will firstly consider the nature and form of some of the raw data collected from student participants before guiding the reader through the practice-led method of presenting the student monologue data in the context of a dramatic play, written in the form of real fiction, described above. The work then is documentary-styled with an emphasis on utilising experience in the social world of conversation and conversational encounters to construct real fiction theatre. In this instance, the subject matter is social labelling. The work is then co-written by me with the student participants and some of the subjects explored come directly from the work of the students.

Hitherto, the entire basis of my research and, specifically, its context as 'drama education' has been founded on the idea of an engagement, an encounter between drama education and the work I classify as real fiction, usually contextualised primarily in a disputed theatre (Welsh, 2010). I claim that the theatre is 'disputed' because the work of real fiction, perceived by others as theatre-making and playwriting, primarily takes place in social reality and is constructed in conversation between the writer and the subject of the writing. Therefore, I claim that the real fiction theatre is 'non-theatre' (Marshall, 2002), in much the same way as Saldaña's (2005) ethno-drama or ethno-theatre only belongs in part to the practice of theatre and might otherwise be considered ethnographic research, like the work of St. Pierre (1997) or Laing (1967). In this engagement, the claim is that real fiction theatre can act in a conversation with drama education whereby the real fiction engagement elicits responses from drama students, such as those recounted below. In contrast to the action based method (McKenna, 2012), my work primarily entailed secondary school students sitting and writing drama rather than performing drama though, as I describe in Chapter Six of this thesis, they also responded to the engagement with a series of workshopped 'skits' exploring the subject matter.

7.2 Rethinking Disturbing Labels: A Dramatic Play based on the practices of ethno-drama and real fiction in a Victorian classroom according to the creative practice 'real fiction research'

Introduction

The work below may be considered to have a relationship with some Socratic dialogues or some of Laing's recordings of his clients' conversations (Laing, 1967). There is a certain drama contained in the writings of Laing and they are recorded in the dialogical form between family members. And the Socratic 'stories' can be read as either an unfolding drama or as a philosophical text (Zuchert, 2009). The form resembles drama and may even adopt some dramatic life but the drama is not a priority for either of these authors. If drama exists in these texts, it is a procedural accident. Similarly, my concern here is not to seduce an audience or maintain their attention, where it may have been if the play were being written to be performed for an audience. Here, I am merely using theatre-making strategies to communicate and maintain information in a way that is appropriate to the data. An appropriate context for storing and presenting the student monologues appears to be the aforementioned forma dramatic play.

In this piece of 'real fiction research', the students' writing is in Arial Narrow font, my own narrative insertions and expansions are marked out by italics and the explanatory comments, stage directions and ongoing exegesis sections are in bold font. Whilst this may seem disruptive to what appears to be the primary narrative of the play, it ought to be remembered that the intention of this work is not to entertain an audience but to contextualise, expand upon and store the students' monologues developed in the workshops. Where I have expanded on the students' narratives, I have attempted to maintain, observe and reproduce their original speech rhythms and utilise them for further social comment on the subject of social labelling.

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7.3 Transcribing the Voice from Reality to Fiction

Applying Creative Practice

1. Opening teacher monologue and explanation

a) Introduction

In this monologue, I take the voice of an 'other' and insert my perceptions of the character, according to my encounter with her. Here, I am particularly interested in the sound of the other's voice and what can be inserted to express ideas about a particular subject. The philosophical foundations of this process are explained in detail in Chapter Two of this thesis and, more particularly, Chapter Three, where the mechanics of the procedure are described and characterised in descriptions of contemporary practice. By writing this character in this way, it provided an example, presented to the student participants, to introduce the playwriting methodology. This is consistent with the notion of practice-led research in that the real fiction monologue writing practice is communicated through an example of practice that the student participants were then encouraged to practice themselves. The method then was applied in the first instance through my own practice, by way of the example of the teacher's monologue and then practiced by the student participants in later scenes.

This also reintroduces the methodological question of the research as practice-based or practice-led research. Where the student monologues can be said to be practice-led, the outcome of a classroom workshop, this monologue can be said to be practice-based, directly applying the creative research practice real fiction.

b) Monologue Data

W1: Yeah, yeah, got that. (*this is to introduce the character and to provide the speech rhythms*) Yep, got em. (**maybe that's a blackboard duster**) Got them too. Oh, no! I forgot the white-board markers. Did I give them to you? Oh, that's alright they must be in my bag…I'll leave them for you. In my office. You can pick them up. Or, I'll drop them off, at reception and get Marg to hold onto them for you… **(hangs up the phone. Remember that we are working toward the snakes and coins. With this idea in mind, she starts searching for her whiteboard markers.)**… Bum! There they are! Right in front of me! (**she picks one up and stares at it at eye level, showing it to the audience)** What is this thing anyway? What do we

use it for? I mean, it's a texta, a whiteboard marker but not everyone sees it that way. If I was walking down a tunnel in Flinders St. Station on a Sunday morning at 4am, wearing a 'hoodie' and the police found this in my bag, I might be arrested under suspicion of making graffiti or tagging, they call it! But look, look at how many of these things I've got and because I'm a teacher and they're for teaching, that's fine, that's totally fine with the authorities! **(This is written from observation of the voice. It's a nuance in the subject's voice patterns that have a tendency to create this kind of exclamation. In terms of writing a character, it is observations like this that we write in to be maybe changed later or removed, it's just recording this nuance).**

I could probably walk into the university with a replica pistol, hold it up to someone on reception and make some sort of threat like 'Give me your money!' or 'Give me your academic records!' and no-one would bat an eye-lid**…(she's gathering whiteboard markers out of a large handbag and in between a whole lot of other stuff is retrieved, like tissues and…you know a girl's handbag…I can't think of much more stuff just now but the markers are pulled out in a very disorganised fashion!)**

So I've got her white board markers, her texta or taggers, depending on where you're from, or where you're going to. But I can't just give them to her like this! They'll end up dropping all over the place. They might end up in someone else's bag! Might never make to her and definitely never to the classroom! And they want their white-board markers in the classroom! There are a lot of things they don't want but whiteboard markers aren't one of them! **(She lays the whiteboard markers out on the ground, connects them all together and bends them like a snake-a slide of this image appears behind her. She looks at it for a second and then kind of ignores it, bundling up the markers and moving on her way.)**

I've got my own kids to worry about, anyway! Well, students…I've got my own kids to worry about too but the students come first. Or they're supposed to, aren't they?

c) Exegesis: Notes

As explained above, the play begins by introducing the character of the teacher. This character was created using the real fiction writing method explained throughout the thesis. That is, the monologue is based on the real speech rhythms of an actual character, as they were heard by the author/playwright. This

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process is described throughout the scene, with various attempts to describe the voice and speech patterns (as they appear in the piece) throughout. When she says, 'Yeah, yeah. Got that. Got em.', we are not merely talking about the whiteboard markers here. This shows the character's relationship with authority and, indeed reality. She is presenting herself to the 'authority' on the phone, while also presenting herself to the audience, with whom she is about to become much more familiar. We will remember how she straightens herself up to present herself to this authority later with whiteboard markers falling from her bag, ultimately a source of inspiration in this creative pedagogy.

We then have the opportunity to observe this character in the private world of her imagination. The observation of voice is a directive to the actor in their journey to understanding and directly follows the process outlined above, where I claim the process of play-making (or real fiction) involves a series of communicative or conversational moments or encounters: the conversation between writer and character, writer and director, director and actor. However, this section contains an instruction for the actor, a directive based on drama as exploration or enquiry,

> It's a nuance in the subject's voice patterns that have a tendency to create this kind of exclamation. In terms of writing a character, it is observations like this that we write in to be maybe changed later or removed, for now it's just recording this nuance.

This offers the actor an insight into the character purely through a technical consideration of the character's speech patterns. Referring back to some of my work on creative research, here is a moment of direct communication between the playwright and the actors and/or director. Whilst this seems to obey the convention of stage directions, it is not as direct in terms of action and, significantly, it is not written in italics. It is a part of the script to be absorbed for the sake of experience, rather than direction per se.

2. Teacher interaction with Students Scene

a) Monologue Data

W1: Hi everyone! Is everyone ready to do some drama? How is everyone? Okay, let's get started. Let's all get into pairs. Or groups of four. Or five. **(aside)**. Remember that we're all going to eventually join together so you'll only be in these groups for a little while. Okay, who hasn't got a group? Alright, well let's start a

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new group over here…What? What's that? What did Jeremy do? Now, are we all in groups of four or five? Who hasn't got a group?

(And it is here that the 'social risks' of drama education become acutely apparent and are perhaps more so than other subject areas. We are 'playing' here and we are playing both in the fictional social space of drama and the real space of interactive, conversational and social reality. Drama more than any other field, both with young people and adults, reminds us that we are dealing with the brittle social aspects of ourselves where we may feel excluded or unwanted? The work of a drama teacher is as much about dealing with these sensitivities as it is about representing or facilitating representation through classroom activity.)

What's that? The kids come up with stories about snakes and rings. I'm not bored, never bored. It's never boring. My job, that is. I don't get bored anyway! Boredom is not part of my repertoire. Getting bored is like being disturbed by noise. There's noise everywhere, all the time, and yet only some of it disturbs. And it only disturbs certain people too. Like snakes and rings. The kids are just brain storming. Snakes enter their world, their stage and then rings become a symbol in their game. They don't understand that to the Buddhists they're talking up eternity. For Freud, the ring, the hole is most likely an orifice. For Jung, the circle represented eternity. The snake pretty much meant the same thing to both of them**. (pause)** I don't need to tell you what that is.

W1: **(To students)** Okay here's what we're going to do today, I want everyone to write a monologue on labels and labelling, the labellers and labelled. Who makes labels and how?

b) Exegesis: Notes

The observation above refers to the social space of drama, the way in which student participants are perhaps more socially and emotionally vulnerable in the study of this subject as opposed to others is very briefly explored in this moment of the practice in which the teacher observes one child who 'doesn't have a group'. She also says, 'What's that? What did Jeremy do?' Here, we are seeing the world through the eyes of this one character but she is observing a continuing 'conversational reality' where all manner of social realities coexist.

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We could observe this scene from Jeremy's point of view entirely and rewrite it thus:

Jeremy: I hate school. Don't like school. Hate the other kids. All the other kids hate me and bully me. So I hate them. Hate drama worst of all because the teacher always makes us get in groups and I've never got a group. I don't know when the bullying started but now it's just like that's the way it is. I don't have friends at school I have enemies. When people talk to me, I don't believe them. I know they hate me and call me names. Usually, if they want to talk to me, it's a trick so they can be cruel!

Now when the teacher says, 'Who hasn't got a group?' or 'What did Jeremy do?' it takes on a completely different meaning.

The references to the snakes and rings provides a brief opportunity for the teacher to philosophise, to contemplate, in some depth, her conversational surroundings that primarily consist of interactions with children. Here, the character and the audience is afforded the luxury of contemplating philosophy and psychoanalysis. What might Freud have made of these snakes and rings? What would Jung have said about it? It is not comic relief but perhaps just the opposite, a moment of serious philosophical contemplation amid the somewhat comic nature of this character.

3. Teacher reading e-mail from authority
a) Letter
(Teacher on e-mail. Reading to herself.)
Dear Educator,

As a national research organisation we are committed to ensuring that students are provided with a state of the art education that is world-class and fulfils our obligations to these young and vulnerable people. As such, we request that students be divided into those we might label 'disturbed' and those we might class as 'undisturbed', in accordance with our charter to respond to each and every student's needs.

This labelling will enable us to charter educational programs that are cutting edge and that reflect the sociology of the contemporary school environment. By giving students a label, by classifying them as

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disturbed or undisturbed, we can provide better educational outcomes and further enhance the progressive educational environment on which we pride ourselves here in Victoria, Australia.

We would like to formally request that you divide your students into the following categories:

A) TROUBLED (ABNORMAL?)
B) UNTROUBLED (NORMAL?)
C) NONE OF THE ABOVE
Regards,

(walks to audience)

W1: Yes. Hello. I have just received this 'instruction' and I think perhaps there's been a mistake. You see, I'm a drama teacher...I understand that but I consider it my job to create and help the kids create. This correspondence is asking me to categorise students, label them troubled or untroubled. As far as I'm concerned human existence is disturbing. In this sense, we are all troubled. What is life but trouble? If it weren't for trouble, what would happen? But only some of us are labelled...Hello? Hello?

I can't classify my students as troubled or otherwise. How do I respond to this? What can I do to say I don't believe in this process, I don't agree. How do I tell them I will not fill in your form? It is not and cannot be mine. It doesn't belong to me or my process. It is somewhere else, for someone else, someone I don't know or care about. It is not drama. Drama has no forms attached to it, just the students. All drama needs is an empty space and the students. Wait a minute! They want a response from me, in my role as a teacher, labelling my students.

b) Exegesis: Notes
Primarily a plot device, the letter to the teacher and her response in the form of a telephone conversation positions her ideologically, overtly articulating what we suspected from the earlier conversation but from which the comic nature perhaps distracted. Here, she is asked to label her students and flatly refuses, articulating her position and her beliefs regarding drama education very clearly. This relates to the theory of

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practice as research and some of the contemporary drama education theorists, such as Haseman (2006) and McKenna (2003), explored earlier. It not only articulates content but engages in a debate on the importance of drama as an educational tool, using the play as a context.

The teacher's response is to conduct a drama class in which the students are asked to write monologues around the issue of labelling, explained in section 1.6 of the play. This replicates the workshop I conducted with the supervising researcher, classroom teacher and the student participants. My 'conflations' appear in the text in italics. Here, I will analyse in some detail each of the student participants' monologues, how they were conflated and my reasoning for conflating them in such a way.

4. Monologue data from workshop participants

a) Introduction

As described above, what follows are a series of monologues submitted from student participants based on a workshopped discussion during which I imparted the process of writing real fiction monologues. The students' work may be judged as varying in quality though, as I have argued throughout, this is not at all the concern of the real fiction practice. Rather, I was concerned with gleaning voices seemingly grounded in real experience and reflecting some insight into speech rhythms and sounds. Each student's work has been expanded by my own thoughts, interpretations and attempt to unify the voice, as I perceived it. This seems to have a relationship with Saldaña's practice where, in 'Chalkboard Concerto' for example, the work exists as a collaboration between two co-creators, one being the author of what started as an academic presentation, and the other being Saldaña as the ethno-dramatist (Vanover & Saldaña, 2005).

The student monologues are in fact collaborative works created by the student participants' response to participation in the workshop and my own interpretation of the work. By comparison with Saldaña's process, the student participants play the role of 'author' and I play the role of ethno-dramatist.

Just to reiterate, the students' writing is in standard font while my own additions/interpretations/edits are in italics and stage directions/general interpretations in bold.

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b) Student Monologue 1

Student 1: An average day in the life of me at school is filled with a lot of bullshit, a lot of lies. Labels tie in with this. One thing I have noticed no matter how many labels you hear they are all originating from the same people: the popular kids. *Just who the popular kids are, where they come from, what they've got that everyone else hasn't, that can change from day to day, hour to hour. Why should I be burdened by their thoughts? What makes their labels mean anything? Who says they mean more than me? What if I said your words about me mean nothing and I'll make my own labels? By doing this do I become one of them?*

Sure I've been labelled too. It doesn't matter what that label was. The important thing is that you know the popular kids made it. *Do we live in a world where, in order to believe in myself I need the endorsement of others? I'm glad I'm not one of them* (**to audience**) *I'm glad I'm not one of you!* Why is it that no-one labels them? Maybe they are the true faggots, wankers, weirdos (*this bit reminds me of that Joe Jackson song, Real Men, '…but now and then you wonder who the real men are??) Are we not all faggots, weirdos and, well, we're definitely all wankers. Freud named masturbation or wanking as the first and foremost addiction!! What does the word 'weird' mean? What does it describe? It is what I do not know. Or what I did not know yesterday. It is not a negative. Estragon says of Vladimir 'Everyfing seems black to him today', meaning of course bleak. But is black bleak? Is darkness death?* (**This is a very western, Caucasian view of the world which we have all adopted. If you are black skinned is blackness equal to bleakness? Perhaps then blackness equals beauty and whiteness is blindingly hostile? It's interesting that the sample participant group consisted primarily of white students, perhaps this is why the voice appears to be white)** *What might sleep bring but tomorrow in all its hope and splendour?* Who is to say who or what the normal ones are?

Popularity isn't about having friends, it's a state of being. And a state of popularity shouldn't give you the right to label others badly, it only makes the hard life of a weirdo even harder! We, who have been labelled by those who live in a state of popularity, will never try to change that label. We will accept it, embrace it*, walking proudly in this scarred and wounded skin, damaged by the perception of others.*

c) Exegesis: Notes

Student 1: The student monologue identifies school life as filled with 'bullshit' and 'lies', drawing the connection with 'labels' whilst maintaining the character's voice. He/she then makes an observation significant to one of the primary discoveries I claim to have made in this thesis; that the students' world consists of other students and young people. The labels that matter are the ones constructed by their peers or, as this participant puts it, 'the popular kids.' As a writer, I have then taken this notion of 'popularity' and used the monologue as a springboard for philosophical contemplation. What is popularity? What does it mean? Who are the popular kids/people and why do they matter so much? I have attempted to maintain the students' voice throughout this expansion while also generating some social discourse through the process.

> *Do we live in a world where, in order to believe in myself I need the endorsement of others? I'm glad I'm not one of them (to audience) I'm glad I'm not one of you!*

Here, I use the dichotomy and dimensions of the stage and the theatre to make a comment, with the audience in front of us. The monologue then drifts into a contemplation of various philosophical issues, including the quote from Beckett that raises the question of whether by equating black with bleak we are being racist. This question is recorded in the form of a stage direction and kept as part of the script/ethno-drama.

It is significant that this student talks about 'a state of popularity' as if it were a state of being and then the 'hard life of a weirdo', finally embracing the label, claiming 'we will never try to change it. We will embrace it, accept it.' This student is talking about labels as a state of being and the moment of being labelled as an existential crisis, an opportunity to take stock, experience self-acceptance and grow from the experience.

d) Student Monologue 2

Student 2: I've been labelled, sure, I mean who hasn't? Everyone has a label, good or bad, and everyone uses them. A lot of them are bad. We walk down the street and in our mind we label everyone we see. Is that bad? *I do it too. It's like, like a way of seeing the world that eases the mind and the eye, makes the world easy to understand. Maybe it's lazy to label people because I just can't be bothered looking at you or you or you, I mean really looking and understanding and knowing and telling you, 'This is what I think of*

you. I'm lazy, we're all lazy. We use labels because the alternative's too hard. To have a conversation with someone we don't understand would mean learning a new language, understanding and maybe accepting a new way of life, another way of being and that might mean changing our own and why would anyone want to do that? Whoever you are, whatever it is, if you don't get it, easier just to put a name on it, give it a label. I'm just guessing here but I don't think I'm the only one who does it. *We live in a world full of labels.* You can see people labelling others when you're just walking down the street. It's in their eyes. The judgemental eyes casting down on all the people we pass. *And the world evolves and unfolds into the touchables and untouchables, like the Indian Caste System. You know, the ones hanging on the street, the ones you pass on the street and you go to walk toward them and your parents tug at your arm and drag you back, nobody goes to the gutter for fun, no-one becomes a hobo for a holiday!*

You can see people labelling others when you're just walking down the street. It's in their eyes. The judgemental eyes cast down on the people as they pass. *We're all divided by the stares of those who make the world of 'us' and 'them'.* I'm one of 'us' **(to audience)**. *You're 'them'! Look at them! What are they? What should I call them? What are you? What should I say you are?* Some say this guy's a freak. Gay, faggot! Fat! Ugly! I know there're people who have thought all of the above but what do I care? I'd probably think the same if the situation was reversed, *if you were different from me and I felt threatened by your difference. I'd want to give you a name, just to make sense of you*.

Then there are the good labels I can see in people's eyes, *the ones you want to be known by, the labels you strive to hide inside like Dr. or maybe you'd like to be Mrs or Mr so bad, you don't care who it is that you're a Mr or Mrs. with. Or there're other positive labels too like 'winner' of this or 'achiever' of that. You know, like the Olympics. What is it? Maybe it's just a dude standing on a stage with a gold medal round his neck - would probably just look stupid if you didn't know what it was….I haven't been stamped with too many good or positive labels, most of the ones used to describe me have been bad, real bad, for me anyhow.* Sometimes it seems that a lot more other people have been given these, most of my family have been blessed with these. The label is in the eyes of those 'inside', *the insiders*. I get looks sometimes from my own family. Strangers look at me like I'm an outsider in my own family and sometimes I wonder if maybe I'm adopted and nobody ever told me. *If the world were divided into labelled and labeller, I would be everyone's everything!! And nobody's nothing.*

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e) Exegesis

Student 2: This student takes a philosophical approach to the task, reminiscent of Augustine's explanation of language, critiqued by Wittgenstein in his own language theory (Augustine trans. Pine-Coffin, 1961; Wittgenstein, 1953). This student presents a labelling theory of language, akin to the Augustinian picture, only Augustine refers to physical objects and tools as the foundations of language, the impetus for conversation. This student suggests that labelling is a way of interacting, common to humans as social beings,

> Everyone has a label, good or bad, and everyone uses them. We walk down the street and in our mind we label everyone we see.

This student is speaking of human separation, alienation and a sense of internal 'otherness.' It is very much in line with what I was looking for, it is what motivated me to undertake this project. It is notable that the writing in italics, my contribution to the monologue, attempts to colloquialise the writing to enhance it as a performance. The work of the student is certainly intellectually sound and well expressed, even adequate in the monologue format. However, I felt the piece could be further brought into the context of a theatre and a character talking to the audience by honing the language and how it is expressed,

> *We're all divided by the stares of those who make the world of 'us' and 'them'.* I'm one of 'us' (to audience). *You're 'them'! Look at them! What are they? What should I call them? What are you? What should I say you are?* Some say this guy's a freak. Gay, faggot! Fat! Ugly!

By using the audience in the communicative process, it defines the work as a monologue spoken on a stage and, further to the observation regarding language, it invites the audience to participate, albeit as a passive listener in a conversation, a speaker who doesn't speak back, who fails to respond verbally to the communication. The notion that we all label, and that this is human and cultural, introduced by the student, is elaborated in a theatrical context and a conversation between an active performer and a relatively passive audience. This reiterates a theme that I have maintained throughout this thesis: the idea of a theatre-making process in a classroom. That is, the monologue exists in the classroom: one voice speaking

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to an abstract and hypothetical audience or reader. My inserts re-contextualise the work inside a theatre on a stage to an audience.

This student's work provided the opportunity to comment on 'otherness', the sense that I am 'inside' and you are 'outside', or vice versa. This was done in a way that brought the material from the classroom into the theatre. In this student monologue, I inserted the comment on 'us' and 'them' to reintroduce a theme common to my work and because I felt it reflected some of the student's ideas. In addition to this, the material is confronting and disruptive to the audience's experience in a way that is quite common to other examples of my practice. For example, the extract from *Barcode 30!!7 307*, quoted in full at the end of Chapter Two where the character of M1 refers to 'being inside a very dark world, what you call dreams I call nightmares' Indeed, it articulates a similar sentiment and achieves the same effect, using the audience as a conversational participant.

f) Student Monologue 3

Student 3: People like labels. As much as some people deny it, people go out of their way to dress or behave a certain way just so that their peers label them as cool or depressed or uninterested. Don't you think? *(It seems here almost as though cool and depressed or cool and uninterested are the same thing. This is interesting because cool is 'out there' while depressed or even 'uninterested' are seemingly internal phenomena, though I suppose one can act depressed)* Take Molly, for example, have you seen the way she has started dressing? Her behaviour is all different and people have only just started to notice. They talk about her behind her back now, call her depressed and weird and I can tell she's loving it! She's an attention seeker, that's what she is. There's nothing wrong with her! She just wants sympathy. She isn't the only one though. All these guys that behave like dickheads in class. They know the teachers have labelled them as useless idiots and they love it!

(It is interesting that the student participant begins with a general consideration of labels and moves to the more specific instance of the girl and how she's started dressing. Here, the philosophical questions of who we are and how we are perceived are considered by the student. Her general question regards fashion and this has been a subject with which I have had some contact recently through the Popcaanz Conference, including fashion as one of its panels/general subject areas (Popcaanz, 2013). This monologue illustrates the philosophical importance of fashion and image creation to how one feels about oneself.)

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We not only exist as ourselves but in the gaze of the other. This has recently been a concern in the ethics and practice of my playwriting. This also seems to be important in this student's conception of how labelling and labels operate in the sociological world of school. Note the interaction between internal experience and external perceptions of the self.

g) Exegesis

On reflection, what is interesting for me is that I was looking for students' feelings or responses to being labelled by teachers. However, the responses had very little to say about teachers, parents or the 'adult' outside world. The student participants seemed to exist in their own social 'bubble', with themselves and each other and very few others. This perhaps gives us some insight into the devastating effects of bullying and how such processes operate for the student participants who, according to the monologue responses, are not concerned at all about labels that come from outside, from the broader social reality.

Student 3: This student makes a very interesting observation early on in the monologue that almost seems to equate being 'cool' with being 'depressed' or 'uninterested' and in doing so introduces a question relating to subjective and objective experience (Dundler-Welsh, 2013). He/she raises the question as to subjective and objective interpretations of experience. Laing's theory can be applied here: 'depressed' is an emotion or state of being whereas 'cool' is about how we are perceived or interpreted. This comes down to the distinction between self and image (Welsh/Dundler, p.2). That this student seems to be undertaking a preliminary exploration into these issues is very exciting and shows the scope of such drama and monologue writing exercises.

The student participant then expands the exploration to include observations of the social world of adolescents while, it seems, also maintaining a focus on this primary issue of self and image:

> Her behaviour is all different and people have only just started to notice. They talk about her behind her back now, call her depressed and weird and I can tell she's loving it.

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h) Student Monologue 4

Student 4: No-one knows what they're talking about. They're all stupid imbeciles who don't give a shit about their education and just want to do drugs and party. *I would like to know if there's anyone with any intelligence here! Hello! Hello! Is there anybody out there who thinks? Are there any philosophers left or are they all dead?* If you ask someone a simple question about physics they just take a wild guess that is completely wrong since they hadn't paid any attention in school. I can't even have an intelligent conversation with my own friends without it turning into a debate because they don't have a clue about any of the facts. Idiots…Idiots everywhere, I'm surrounded by them. Am I the only person with any intelligence in the world?

i) Exegesis

The process of collaboration between student participant and researcher/playwright is apparent in this monologue. The voice evolves from the student's observation of his/her intellectual surroundings to a dramatic 'cry', which Wittgenstein claims cannot be called a 'description' because the nature of the utterance is too 'primitive' (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 189). The translation from description to utterance occurs in several of the monologues and represents part of the work of this particular example of practice-led research in education.

This act of translation relates to the work of a playwright in the context of real fiction research. In these social surroundings, the work is delivered from everyday conversation into the theatre. The actor speaks in the rhythms of the character from 'real' conversation, reinventing the content to suit the intentions of the writer. In this context, then the 'cry' is the rhythm of the character's voice and the description is the content from the writer. Whereas the educational context of the work in this thesis involved reading the 'voice' of the student, contained in the outcome of the monologue task, and expanding on it through the use of techniques borrowed from playwriting practice.

j) Student Monologue 5

Student 5: I go by names. A label isn't a category unless you make it. Saying that you hate being labelled for what you are or what you're not is just you being a whiny carns because you walk down the street and

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judge and label everyone you notice because that's what people do. You notice, make observation, give label, walk off. *To label is a way of talking, a way of describing what you're seeing in the world, a way of communicating. Remember that, in the old Testament, God gave names to all the animals, they were labelled. In one of our founding myths, our way of understanding is through this idea of labelling but then seeing, labelling then walking away is precisely what some of us do, particularly in authority. Think of the case of psychiatric assessment. But is it enough to just name someone? Do we really know anything about something or someone just by knowing how to refer to it? How do we arrive at knowing what to call something, how to refer to it and once we do, do we really know anything more or have we just learnt to conform to what everyone else says and thinks about whatever we're looking at and labelling?* (**maybe this character can be looking at another person**).

Even the word 'label' is annoying. I mean, come on! Being bullied is being singled out and to feel like crap. Someone calling you a skank or bitch, asshole, whatever, is someone passing comment, judging you from the only perspective they know.

k) Exegesis

Again, the notion of labels as language or the Augustinian picture of language as 'naming' is introduced by this student here. The student finally questions the entire concept of 'labelling', suggesting that beneath the tendency to label is perhaps a more sinister tendency, to 'bully' and the sense of being objectified by a label becomes the sense of 'being bullied'. More generally here, the students are questioning their social surroundings and how labelling operates in the mundane, the everyday and the ordinary. I have tried to record these observations through my contribution to the monologues, written in italics.

l) Student Monologue 6

Student 6: *I am standing here, looking at you all, labelling you, every single one of you. But don't tell anyone, it's a secret. It's a secret even though it's what I've been taught to do ever since I could walk. Or before I could walk…ever since I learned to think. And, can anyone tell me when we learn to think? It is once I know who I am, who I am supposed to be in the world, in society, that I learn how to tell others what they are.*   Everyone labels, even if we don't say it out loud. *That's what thinking is, using your judgement, judging. And in a way learning is all about labelling. When we don't know what something is, we say,*

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'What's that?' And if you know the answer, well, then you're clever! I mean you look at someone who looks like a junkie and you assume they are. *You say 'What's that? And the answer you give, the answer you know and have been taught is 'Junkie!'* Straight away. It's an automatic thing. I mean I labelled them to make a point. You make a label to be able to describe someone/something. It's how we know what is what and who is who. *What I am really saying by calling you Junkie is that 'YOU ARE NOT ME!'* It's almost cruel in a way but we'd be nowhere without it. *I don't mean to be cruel, it's just how I was taught to be part of society and I see the grim-looking scab-faced, drawn, thin gaunt sick man before me, gnawing on his rotting teeth, falling from his mouth as he goes and he says to me 'I'm cold.' But I can't quite hear him. He says it again and this time I understand but I feel like I can't do anything, just stare at him like he's an object because he is, to me, he's a junkie. Like I said it's cruel but* I guess that's how our society will always work.

m) Exegesis

Student 6:

The student says:

'Everyone labels, even if we don't say it out loud.'

I say:

I am standing here, looking at you all, labelling you, every single one of you. But don't tell anyone, it's a secret. It's a secret even though it's what I've been taught to do ever since I could walk. Or before I could walk…ever since I learned to think. And, can anyone tell me when we learn to think? It is once I know who I am, who I am supposed to be in the world, in society, that I learn how to tell others what they are.

This work is a conversation between practising playwright and participants in drama education, teachers and students. I have attempted to take the students' work and respectfully reshape it according to my purposes, as well as my interpretation. Again, I have expanded on the idea of labels as Augustinian language game philosophically, without sacrificing the theatricality of the work.

n) Student Monologue 7

Student 7: My brother calls me fat. He's a li'l shit. I get in trouble for calling him a li'l shit *but how much damage is done by that compared to him calling me fat?!?!* It's not his fault. He's nine. *He probably doesn't even know what 'fat' is. Do I really know? Why does it hurt so much, being called 'fat'? I mean do I feel fat?*

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Sometimes. Am I really fat, though? I look in the mirror at myself sometimes and I can hear a little voice in my head saying 'Fat, fat, fat…' and then I've got him in the background right behind me and just as the imaginary voice fades out, I hear the little shit and see him smirking behind me in the mirror. So I'm not even looking at myself in the mirror. I'm looking at him! And maybe I'm seeing what he thinks!! He says I'm ugly but it doesn't matter because he's nine! He calls me lazy because I sleep til midday. *But one day he will grow and so will I and I will shed my puppy fat and see myself as beautiful. He will want to know me because I'll be very cool and I'll want to know him because I'll need my brother. But what if he's gone too far for me to love him anymore? What if I just can't trust him?* I get in trouble for sleeping so late. Nobody would even notice if he didn't bring it up! He knows this. He thinks it's funny. Because he's nine.

He's young, a child. But then so am I. Who isn't, anyway? When do we stop being children? Being called fat makes me feel so lonely, so lonely. I'm THE LONLIEST PERSON ON THE PLANET, WHEN HE CALLS ME FAT! He laughs. He thinks it's funny. What's funny about my loneliness?(starts squealing louder and louder and louder)Ha Ha! She's alone! HaHa! She's a monster, growing outward like an oil leak…FAT! FAT! FAT! How is that funny? I'm shouting but can anybody hear me. Does he know how much it hurts? It's only because I'm a girl that it matters **(Note: We do not in fact know whether the student participant was actually female. I have made this assumption and taken the opportunity to expand on it as an issue.)***. I'm already seeing myself as fatter than I'm s'posed to be. The last thing I need is the word being bleated by a nine year old sheep. But that's just it, who's he imitating?*

My brother calls me stupid, old but it doesn't matter because he's nine. It can't matter. If it did matter, my brother would be more damaged than me. *He's the one who's cruel. One day he will look in the mirror and he won't like what he sees. But h*e thinks it's a joke so it's a joke. His names don't hurt because he's nine.

It's me that does the hurting in my own thoughts about myself, not his names or labels. I remember being nine. I remember seeing my mother look at herself in the mirror, back when I was a child and she was a woman. Before I entered this, this age of uncertainty. Anyhow, she'd stare at herself and describe herself as fat, grab tiny handfuls of skin and call them flab, call herself ten-tonne Tessy when she was all skin and bones!! What I can't work out is when I turned from being nine and knowing the objective truth of what the image in the mirror looked like!

o) Exegesis

Student 7: In this monologue, I have taken the opportunity to explore the notion of body image, while also attempting to maintain the voice established in the student's writing. Also, the relationship between siblings is important in this monologue. It is her brother who calls her fat and what she sees in the mirror is coloured by his ideas.

The brother in this monologue is incorporated into the sister's mirror-image and, consequently, her self image affected by her perception of herself as 'fat'. He has become incorporated into her image and the way in which she perceives herself as being seen in the world by others.

Most of my work with the student monologues involved making them appropriate for a stage setting, enhancing the voice I heard in the monologue for the sake of an imaginary audience. I believe it was probably only time constraints from participants that prevented them from developing them themselves. As it was the foundations existed for some compelling material.

p) Student Monologue 8

Student 8: We live in a society where people are subjected to various environments and, because of these environments, a label is forced upon them, how they look, what they wear, where they live; what they have done in the past and what they do now. *Supposing I began to speak in another voice, what would you think of me? Supposing I told a different truth with a different sound like: She said not to worry, dat I wasn't in no trouble. It was a special program for da 'socially disadvantaged'. When she said dat, she even did dat fing wif her fingers, makin', what are dey called, quotation marks, yeah. At first, I got really mad, frew a chair, said 'Fuck you!'* It's easy to fit into a certain label, based on the way we look but at what point does the way we look define us as individuals?

Dat teacher just fucken looks at me! I say to her you fucken dog slut! She says she knows how I feel, that I am at-risk. She says she wants to 'elp me get by at 'ome and dat, which I spose is good, cept she don't know me dad. He gets real mad when do-gooders try and come into our place. 'e don't seem to like no-one, not even us!

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Why are we categorised into a genre? The answer is simple, it's just the way we run. We all use labels, even those who are a victim to it. Misunderstood. We hear it all the time and see it as a cry for attention – the misunderstood girl, the guy who his friends think he is but who he really isn't. Sounds like a movie plot.

q) Exegesis

This student quite eloquently analysed and articulated the issue of labels. To me, the student contributions here read as an excellent short essay on the nature of social labels. I have therefore taken the opportunity to use the ideas laid out by the student participant to practice my own form of real fiction by acquiring and then distorting the voice presented in the monologue so as to disrupt what I perceived as the formality of the writing. The outcome reads as a highly experimental collaboration.   You should acknowledge that the student may have purposefully adopted this tome as the voice of a particular type. That makes the counter voice all the more powerful. At the minute it reads like you think she was just writing a mini essay – I think the students were too smart for that.

Student 9 did not submit. Student 9 stands on stage throughout, entirely silent.
Teacher: Well? Well?

r) Student 9 (After a long pause): *Am I invisible? Have I become less than human? You say I am a slut but where is your evidence? What have I done that you have not, that you would not? Though I speak, you cannot hear me. Your mind is made up and the Court of Adolescent Law administers a cruel and irrational justice, made up of assumptions and conclusions…A slut is a free being, a witch in every sense, not merely because she is hunted but because she is free.*

Student 8: Stay away from her, she's a slut!

s) Conclusion to Scene 2 Student Monologue Section

This material is the product of a drama classroom engagement with a creative form of research, described throughout this thesis as real fiction. This monologue/playwriting form is used to analyse and address social issues using various ethnographic techniques and, in this sense, has a similarity to the way in which Saldaña engages with the co-creators and participants in his ethno-drama form. Therefore much of the
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approach in this scene can be described as ethno-drama. Because the ethno-drama here is being used to address the issue of labelling for students, this social problem takes centre-stage, so to speak. However, ultimately, the issue of social labelling is super-ceded by the creative process that allows drama practice to provide a platform to analyse such issues, not merely for practitioners but also for students in a drama classroom, as indicated in this chapter.

5. Scene between teacher and 'official'

a) Introduction

I have previously claimed that the objective of my work is not to entertain but, like Brecht, the primary objective of my work in the theatre and in the classroom is to 'impart knowledge consciously' (Welsh 2014, p.132). Both Brecht and I use the medium of theatre to achieve this outcome. Since the research is practice-led, it is both an attempt to contribute to the discourse on a particular subject, such as social labelling in schools, and advance the potential for the theory and practice of theatre to act as 'a conversational form of gathering knowledge' (Welsh, 2014, p.126).

In what follows, some of the data from the classroom engagement, gathered through both the qualitative survey and the student skits is melded into a social conversation about the nature and operation of authority within the school environment. This conversational representation echoes the work of ethnographers such as Laing (1967) and Henry (1973), who can both be perceived as contextualising data in a particular way so that it becomes politicised. For example, Henry describes a family excursion he observes as an 'as if phenomenon' that occurs in a 'dream' inside a research participant's 'head' (Henry, 1973, p. 27). Once the event is represented by Henry, it is his 'as if' event also.

In the previous section I presented the student monologues 'as if' they were ethnographic data though they were theatrical monologues in a play, changed and altered by my interpretation, somewhat like the work of Saldaña (2005). In this scene I am more concerned with the theatre of the work and the material from the students is inserted, at the appropriate time, as plot device in what is essentially a political statement in the form of a play scene questioning the structure of authority in the delivery of education.

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b) Play Scene

Back to teacher at desk

Enter Official 1and Official 2.

Official 1: Hello, Dr. McMurphy?

W1: Yes.

Official 1: It's good to finally meet you in person. This is my colleague, Michael. As you know, we've been trying to get in contact for quite a while. I think you know what it's regarding. We just wanted to have a sit down and chat about the situation, identify areas of difficulty and see if we can't all come to a resolution.

W1: Resolution?

Official: To the conflict.

W1: Conflict?

Official: Clearly there is an issue with your fulfilment of our request and we thought it best to have a frank and open discussion so that we can work through the various issues that have emerged in terms of your failure to respond to the instruction from the department.

W1: But I told you last week, my students and I created a series of monologues responding to the department's instruction and I told you on the phone that I am a drama teacher. My students and I have responded in the only way we can.

Official: The department cannot respond to a story. We have various obligations that must be fulfilled. One of those was for you to provide data in the form of labels for your students: disturbed, undisturbed or none

of the above. This data was to be used to provide for these vulnerable students. Without this data from you, we cannot complete our charter.

W1: But I provided you with material.

(**Knock at the door**)
Come in! (**shouting offstage**)   What's that? You don't feel like coming in. You don't feel comfortable. You feel judged.

Student 1: When you're walking down the street…

Student 2: And you find yourself out east…

Student 3: And you see the people casting eyes on you, telling you the way you are…

Student 4: Judging you…

Student 5: Because they're from the East and you're from out West. When you're out their way, you can tell they think you're a westie. You can tell they think maybe you're a junkie or a low-life…

Student 6: And they don't even hide it that they think you're a slut, it's how they perceive white trash…If you're a girl and you're from out west, that's a double whammy…you must be a slut!

Student 3: But then you label others yourself also.

Student 2: Like I'm sitting on the bus and this junkie is walking toward me and I'm like 'He's going to rape me!' It's just in my mind and I can see it in his face, his smile. I'm totally convinced of this as he walks down the aisle of the bus. And my heart starts beating with his step Boom, boom, boom, boom. He's going to rape me, he's going to rape me, he's going to rape me and he says, 'Ya got any smokes?' And I realise this is how the story goes for all the others when I'm the westie in the East. They see me and think 'I'm gunna

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get robbed or I'm gunna get killed and their fear is making their thoughts and labelling me. Because I'm from out West. Because I'm a westie. And that's why I carry a knife or so they think and I let em think it!!

W1 **(back talking to the official guy):** School is a micro-social world, a mini-society and the world for these students is contracted into the miniature world of their friends and classmates, where what matters is how you are constructed in their eyes, the image of the self belongs in this world, not in what teachers call them or how society sees them. It doesn't matter to them what you say, it matters what they say about each other…Whatever they're labelled by teachers means nothing to their reputations…Even so, I won't be the one to do the labelling.

Official: It's a noble sentiment you've expressed but we have a job to do. In terms of our role in the department, we have to report back with a list of labels useful to the categorisations to which we previously referred…

W1: Okay, what about slut?

Official: I beg your pardon?

W1: What about the label 'slut'?

Official: I don't think you understand the nature of the exercise. It's not about what the students think about each other, it's about you and I using our authority to behave like adults and, for the purpose of understanding, putting names to various tendencies, ways of being if you like. These will ultimately aid the department in better providing for these students who we see as vulnerable. We are not heartless. Our intention is to do good. We're talking about providing for the students.

W1: But they can't hear you, they can't hear me or their parents or anyone, really. They only hear each other. Their labels don't come from us. Not the ones they care about anyhow. They come from them! I gave you your 'feedback' in the only form we knew how, dramatic monologues, you'd do well to read them!

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c) Exegesis

This scene represents a confrontation between the teacher and the authorities expressed in theatre. It addresses the problem of creativity, not only in secondary education but as a method of reporting research findings and storing data. The drama teacher's methodology is deemed illegitimate by the authorities and, as a result, they come into 'conflict'. Ultimately, the scene is infiltrated by the students who verbalise the data from the discussion after the workshop. The idea of the 'westie' is reintroduced here in this creative format, with the students in the play describing the sensation of feeling alienated when 'out East'. As previously stated, this was directly sourced from student participants' testimony.

The students eclipse the scene here and the ideological position of the teacher, opposed to the 'Department', is expressed in an almost guerrilla-style theatre, only it is not social reality being 'invaded' (which may describe the usual practice of guerrilla theatre). Rather, it is the stage, the performance, its tone and rhythm being invaded with the real voices. That is, the conflict between the teacher and the authority is an imagined artifice, where the students' infiltration consists of words and sentiments directly sourced from the engagement in the school. Though not verbatim, as such, this section would still be described as documentary or ethno-drama.

The 'conflict' of which the official speaks earlier in the scene becomes a contrasting of education styles, a rejection of the creative methodology by the establishment, represented in the character of the official. This scene is essentially about the perceived limits of creativity and, ultimately its potential. It may also be interpreted as being about the way in which adults believing that the way in which they engage with young people will determine outcomes for those young people. However, the monologue data from the student participants indicates that how young people engage between themselves is as important, if not more important, than anything adults may do for them.

There is also a way of interpreting this scene by seeing creativity as a political threat that unsettles the established structures and acts as a social tool empowering the disempowered and voiceless students and creative people, like the teacher. The creative responses of the students are transgressive because they subvert established structures and ways of responding to communication from authority. The creative

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response represents a chaos threatening the established order and the teacher has encouraged such an approach.

6. Haunted by ghosts of education past present and future

a) Introduction

This scene use the technique of theatrical intertextuality (Rozik 2008, p.101) as a vehicle for completing the form of the dramatic play wherein the ethnographic data is housed adhering to the convention of ethno-drama, as explained above. This scene makes reference to the classic text *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, giving the audience a familiar form of entertainment through which to consider and analyse the data from the previous scene. This is not to say that the ethnographic data from the classroom engagement and qualitative survey is not in this section. It remains imperative throughout and even the direction of the text in this section is informed by my encounter with the student participants and the data they provided.

b) Play scene

That night the official is tormented by dreams of 'ghost of curriculum past', 'ghost of curriculum present'-Emma and 'ghost of curriculum future'

Official bunks down to go to sleep. There is a bump and lighting flashes.

Official: What? What was that? **(Gets up and walks to audience, looking at them searchingly)** What is it? What…What are you? (**This character is a straight out reference to scrooge!! Another noise, he's spooked)** What is it? What do you want?

Ghost of curriculum Past: I am the ghost of curriculum past…

Official shrieks.

GCP: Don't be too afraid. I'm not terribly old! I'm not from the bad old days, I'm not carrying a cane and I'm not Catholic! I'm from the seventies, the nineteen seventies…And it was during this time that we dared to

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dream. Gough gave us hope federally and we all just dreamt and dreamt everywhere we went! There was an ideal to create a public education for everyone, to make the choice of having a university education a right, not a privilege…

Official: Yes, I know, I know that.

GCP: You may know it but you've forgotten. You've forgotten how to think and just replaced your thoughts with an index or these indices that tell you what the world is so you don't need to look at what might terrify you! You were once a thinker, now you're just an administrator and Gough would be turning in his grave!

Official: But what can I…What should I…What do you want me to do?

GCPL Think!

Official: But why? I mean how? I mean I forget…

GCPL: Let me remind you. **(Pulls out a pair of rose-coloured glasses)** It's the 1970s and the era of mind expansion is well and truly underway! In Australia, we're taking the lead from the sixties in US and it's not long before we'll elect Gough Whitlam in a statement about the kind of society we want to live in. We were a politically thoughtful people, both federally and in the state of Victoria, where we started to genuinely view secondary education as a right of every child and began to see the passage to university similarly. In a free society everybody ought to have access to an education and an education is best defined as 'a means whereby young people will be able to achieve the full development of their spiritual, mental, physical and creative powers' (Blake 1973, p. 1353).

(Official suddenly wakes.)

Official: Oh, thank goodness. It was only a dream. No need to be concerned. No reason to worry. **(He opens book, Vision and Realisation)** Indeed we must ensure, *ensure* that tomorrow's citizens are not

only equipped mentally and physically to cope with the problems of life, but are infused with a set of ideals, a sense of social responsibility which will guarantee the future progress of this nation (Blake, 1973, p.1354).

Oh dear, it's time for me to sleep. It's time for me to give myself a cup of warm milk, knock myself out and forget about the education of our youth. If today's anything to go by it seems the contemporary teacher is merely telling the student to educate him or herself! Damn the rules to all Hell! Damn the principles on which teaching is based! Damn the bureaucracy that's spent years laying out the red carpet for this new royalty called the students!

Was I dreaming when I walked into that damned ridiculous classroom today? I tell you, if education were one long Shakespearean drama, that single small ten metre by ten metre space would be its living fool!

(Lies down to rest but is tormented by noise).

Official: Who's there? **(bang)** What was that? Who's there? What do you want? Damn and blast, what was that? Who's there? **(Walks to audience)** Ah, thank goodness, it's only you! I was terrified that it was a ghost!

Ghost of Education Present: Oh, but I am! I have come to speak to you of death and demise, shame and failure…

Official: The shame and failure of the students?

Ghost of Education Present: Oh no.

Official: What then?

Ghost of Ed Present: The failure is your own! And you ought to know the shame. Do you know it?

Official **(quietly):** Yes.

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Ghost of Ed Present: Come with me **(Takes him to the audience)** Now tell them what you have done.

Official: Failed their children.

Ghost of Ed Present: Don't tell me, tell them.

Official **(to audience):** I have failed your children.

Ghost of Education Present: How?

Official: Well, I don't exactly know. First I was too easy. Then I was too hard. First I taught them too much religion, then not enough then none at all. Finally it was banned before I was told to teach them all different types!

In terms of class, I have failed them. I have given the greatest education to those who need it least. I have starved the starving of access. I have judged and labelled, excluded those who can least afford to be excluded from a system of which they are in desperate need. I am guilty of these things. Because I am human. Because I am flawed. Because I do not know how to be otherwise. Because I have taken my flawed, scarred, disturbed self into the classroom and, consciously or unconsciously, I have imposed my disturbances onto these innocent children! And yet all I have ever done is strictly adhere to the rule of law, the departmental rules, the rules by which all schools, teachers and departmental staff must abide. When we have a system in place, specifically designed to protect students and other vulnerable people in the system, how can it be that we have done damage? It is like the story of Oedipus Rex. I have acted according to my own conscience at every turn and yet when the sum total of my actions is presented for me in view of my very own eyes, it is deplorable to my conscience!!

c) Exegesis/Conclusion

In the section above, I use an established motif, with an obvious reference to Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, this scene refers to a selective contemporary history of education, its ideological motivations and evolution

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through the various social revolutions of the twentieth century. This may appear to be stereotypical or based on clichés but the idea is to provide a sense of comic relief and entertainment, while also moving the plot along, after the rather intellectualised section using the monologues and the 'real' discussion between the official and the teacher.

The dream also represents a moment of internal growth for the official and is essentially the 'drama' of the play in terms of plot which, as I have said elsewhere was not the primary concern of this piece of theatre. Rather, it was created to generate a context for the presentation of the monologues. This section, however, is having a bit of fun in the process.

The same can be said for the following scene between the official and the authority. The authority is in a straightjacket to represent the way in which we become imprisoned when we are in positions of power and also that such positions are madness. This moment provokes some thought for the audience but the main focus must be the students' monologues. Therefore all these scenes are quite short and relatively simple.

The authority is obsessed with collecting the 'forms' and sends the official back to the classroom.

7. Scene with official in a straight jacket

a) Introduction

In this research, the dramatic play primarily serves as data storage. Therefore the sections above, where the student monologues and other data from the classroom engagement are presented, are the important sections of the dramatic play for the purposes of the research because they contain the monologue data contributed by the student participants. In what follows, various theatrical motifs are used in order to conclude the real fiction play script. These include a straight-jacket, a symbol of being silenced and hemmed in by authority. In terms of intertextuality, this echoes classical social theatre works such as *Marat Sade* (Weiss, 1964) and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Kesey, 1972). It is not my intention here to offer extended analysis of these texts. They merely provide a motif for the movement of the drama, the practice, rather than texts with which I am engaging.

b) The Play Scene

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The authority is in a straight jacket

Authority: Do you have names?

Official: Names, sir?

Authority: Names, labels, categorisations, ways that we can talk about these, these, well, that's just it, I don't know what to call them because there's no name, no label. Have you divided the disturbed ones from the undisturbed, worked out which is which, what the classroom teacher thinks, how much this is influenced by the school environment? Well? Have you?

Official: No, sir.

Authority: And why not?

Official: Because they would not, sir.

Authority: Would not?

Official: No, sir.

Authority: But who would not?

Official: The students and their teacher.

Authority: But they are ours! Students and teachers in this state belong to me! That was MY order! It came from my hand! The insolence of this teacher and her students! What in damnation does she teach? Rebellion?

Official: Drama, sir.

Authority: Ah, I see. Leave it with me. And at the end of all this, when all's said and done, we'll just see whether there'll be drama! And there will! I can promise you that…There'll be drama! There will be drama! So where are the forms the department sent them?

Official: The forms, sir?

Authority: Yes.

Official: With the labels, sir?

Authority: Yes.

(pause)

Authority: Please don't tell me you don't have them?

Official: Well, not exactly sir.

Authority: Not exactly? What does that mean? You either have them or you don't. Which one is it?

Official: Well, no. I don't have them.

Authority: There. I knew it. Your incompetence astounds me!

Back to teacher in classroom

Teacher: Okay, everyone, today we're all going to be frogs. So when we talk, we don't use words, we just say ribbit! And the tone of what you are saying is the most important part. Now, scientists have recently discovered that a frog hears through its mouth. Frogs are connected through sound. Now, we've all done gibberish exercises before. We speak in gibberish so there's no content in terms of words, only sounds. And we will establish meaning through sound. Drama is an art-form, a subject whereby meaning is made of

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action. There is very little theory in a drama classroom. We don't think, we do! Where, in other subjects meaning is made from words, every act has meaning in drama. Supposing I lift my arm and scratch my head. In everyday life, this can be done without the slightest thought.

There are body language theorists in the world and psychologists will tell you we make meaning with our every move but the actor knows this better than anyone.

c) Exegesis

The straight jacket here is a symbolic motif, being used very deliberately, almost transparently, to represent restraint and imprisonment by the educational administration, the character of 'The Authority'. This section of the play exists almost exclusively to resolve the plot I began to establish in order to create a space for the student monologues to be inserted. The entire play is less concerned with plot and plot devices than it is with creating storage space for the monologue data. I have also used the teacher's words in this section to contribute to the ongoing discussion throughout this thesis concerning creativity and research, particularly the value and applications of creative practice in research and educational environments. Here, the teacher character, a voice created using the real fiction creative process, argues the value of drama as a learning tool.

8. Classroom Setting
a) Introduction

This scene is set in the classroom, where the official approaches the teacher who is performing as a frog and will not allow the illusion to be interrupted, explaining that she cannot understand his language for she is a frog.[v] The official then finally undergoes a complete transformation, moving to the 'other' side, symbolised rather obviously by his response to the official, performing as a frog, just like the teacher.

Official: Excuse me?

Drama Teacher: Sorry?

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Official: Can't you hear me?

Drama Teacher: No!
Official: No? But…

Drama Teacher: But what?

Official: Why not?

Drama Teacher: Why not what?

Official: Why can't you hear me?

Drama Teacher: I can hear something, obviously, I mean I'm talking, I'm responding. I just don't know if it's you yet. You see, I don't have ears. But I have eardrums that are directly exposed or covered by only a thin layer of skin. I can hear sounds but I lack a cochlea, so it's difficult for me to distinguish one sound from the other. It doesn't happen automatically like in some mammals, such as your good self. I lack your cochlea and must use mechanical tuning to distinguish one sound from another.

Official: How then do you know when one of your students swears?

Teacher: I have no idea what you're talking about. **(pause)** Ribbit! Ribbit! Croak. Croak.

Teacher: I have no idea what you're talking about. You see, I'm a frog. **(pause)** Ribbit! Ribbit! Croak. Croak.

Official: So when, or how, can we have a conversation?

Teacher: Well, you could be a frog…Ribitt, rabbit.

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Official: And then we'd speak in the same language!

Teacher: There we are and all it required was a bit of absurdity!

Scene 7
Official and Authority

Authority: So what happened? Did you attend a class?

Official: They don't speak in any language that I think you'd understand.

Authority: How do you mean?

Official: The language of the drama student, the world they describe is in some ways removed

from what the rest might think or do. They are different. Even their parents let them be.

Authority: Let them be? How? Why?

Official: Why? Because for them, as for us, the world is make-believe.

Authority: You understand we cannot bend. We cannot yield. We mustn't show weakness or vulnerability. For the second we do, we'll be at their mercy. Make no mistake this *drama* education, it's a threat to our existence. It's an attack on our way of educating, not merely the system but its operation. Drama is not merely a subject, it's a way of being and speaking, one that challenges our own way of being and speaking because it sees the values we hold dear as mere stages on which a player may strut. We are not real to them. Our rules are not real to them. Our authority is not at all real. We are dead in this, this…social schizophrenia inspired by drama.

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Think very carefully about the words I am using: 'social schizophrenia'? Why do I say social schizophrenia? Is it because the drama student is taught, indoctrinated to hear voices in much the same way those madmen and women we call schizophrenics hear the same voices? Inspired by angels and demons, they lash out on their fellow men and women in such a way as they cannot be ignored. They sit listlessly in the gutter, with no inclination for this world or all it has to offer. They are filthy, they listen to voices that nobody else can hear and have friends that do not exist. Because they have failed for so long to adhere to society's rules and laws, the ones that we offer freely to them in their education, they brandish knives in one hand at their imaginary enemies and hold the other out to beg. This is what comes of drama.

Official: Because it makes no money?

Authority: No. Because it questions the meaning we attach to life as we know it. Rule, order. Put the people in straight lines not only so we know which line they belong to but so they feel comfortable, nurtured and like they have a place to be. Rap them on the knuckle when they fall out of line not because we are cruel or to punish them but so they learn the value of standing in the line. Drama is a problem, a disruption. It is bad, evil, devilish. It may have some purpose but is it worth sending our students to the gutter? Put a stop to it, today!

(Long pause. Official stares intensely. Authority is at first steadfast in his opinions but as the pause goes on he becomes terrified until he's absolutely beside himself with fear.)

Official: Ribbit! Ribbit! Ribbit!

Conclusion: Reflections on the Process

In *Life of Galileo*, Brecht (1986) creates theatre to comment on his social surroundings using the medium of historical discourse. Whilst he is telling the story of Galileo and the rigid structure of the Catholic Church, he also uses the medium of theatre to speak of the Nazi occupation of Germany. Brecht's idea of theatre as education is fundamental to my own claims on the subject articulated above and elsewhere in my work as a practitioner. In *The Biography of a Battler*, for example, I invented two characters of nurses loosely based

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on a combination of real characters so as to comment generally on perceptions of the mental health system, particularly for the people being treated. This departs from the rather detailed process described throughout this thesis, where there is a very deliberate attempt to represent each real, speaking character with a sense of authenticity, at least in terms of sound. However, moments such as those with the official and the authority in the play above or the nurses in the *Biography of a Battler* involve an imaginative process comparable to Brecht's method of representation. This is perhaps also where my work departs from someone like Saldaña, who maintains an almost verbatim approach to the participants' contributions. Unlike Saldaña, I deliberately introduce completely fictional characters and blend them with the work of the real participants. However, I do maintain the conversational tone, important to both Saldaña and my own work. That is, whilst the characters of the authority and the official (unlike the other characters in the play) may not be directly sourced from the research engagement, they are characters from social reality, integrated into the story using the real fiction method.

In conclusion, the primary purpose of the play contained in this chapter was to locate the monologue data collected during the classroom engagement. There are a few observations from this classroom engagement that I believe are fundamental to my research. Firstly, it illustrated the importance of the monologue writing to both drama education and social education through drama. Secondly, it provided a medium for students to articulate their views and feelings about labels and labelling. Finally, it introduced the practice of real fiction research into the drama classroom. These observations are recorded in the form of a play, not only providing a unique way to store and present data, but also advancing the potential for the creative form of reality-based playwriting, of which I am a proponent.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RESEARCH JOURNEY

8. 1 Introduction

This chapter documents my research journey, reproducing relevant extracts from a journal I have kept since 2012. It reveals my voice as the alienated 'other' in education and, at times, expresses frustration, both with the rigidity of the university's education school and the research environment generally. It perhaps provides some background to my motivation for undertaking this research, why I am interested in the idea of social labelling, and how my voice has been positioned throughout this thesis as an alienated other in the school and teaching environment. The journal describes moments of self-questioning, doubt, sometimes even expresses anger and certainly frustration at the wide-ranging barriers that often interrupted this research. Coupled with this is another very personal journey from real fiction playwright in the theatre to drama education theorist in a Victorian classroom.

The ideas of ethics and transgression, explored in the literature review and methodology sections of this thesis, are central to two chief concerns in this chapter: my voice being one of the alienated other in education and the journey from playwright to researcher. Each informs the other. It was along the continuum of the journey from playwright to researcher that the encounter with a secondary educational institution occurred. This raised ethical questions, experienced and documented in the journal form that follows.

The journal extracts illustrate some of the difficulties encountered in the course of conducting this research. It reveals the somewhat unconventional evolution of ideas consistent with a practice-led project that involves compromises with educational organisations such as schools. It also provides intimate insight into my own experience as a student researcher with a background as a practitioner. For example, below I describe my meetings and engagements with an educator, also a friend and artistic collaborator, who influenced the direction of the project, though ultimately she and her students were not participants in the data collection process.

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8.2 Social outsider/s

The following extracts from my journal have been edited in order to best illustrate what I consider to be my research journey.

April 7, 2012

Associate Supervisor: 'As a teacher, I'm wonderin' what is this playwright doin' here? What possible value can he be to my students? He can only do them harm.'

This comment by one of my supervisors, a qualified and experienced teacher, was followed by the suggestion that maybe we could do the work on education and disturbance with a welfare agency. This was given serious consideration and contemplation by all present. It made me wonder why it seems to be considered that those children outside the conventional education system and often labelled 'vulnerable' or 'at-risk' in welfare services, are sometimes somehow considered less vulnerable than those inside it? How does the work suddenly become less dangerous in the welfare service context?

Note 1

It ought to be noted here that the suggestion to work with welfare services was an informal one. The reasoning behind the notion that a proposal like mine was more likely to get through this system was based on the fact that the prevailing authorities in these environments tended to be less rigid and conservative. The outcome, however, is that it could appear as though there is less concern for those children in welfare services than those in the conventional education system.

END OF NOTE

April 8, 2012

I have been considering this notion of 'dangerous research.' Epstein and Sears (2013) classify dangerous knowing as the kinds of knowing that destabilise established common-sense world views. This is why they

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are considered dangerous. To this they add: 'meanwhile, teaching is only sometimes intended and what is learnt is different from that which is taught' (Epstein & Sears, 2013, p.2). This whole education scene reminds me of the last tutoring job I once did. The mother of the student was a teacher and she was utterly convinced of his deficiencies.

'He can't do this. He can't do that.'

Now, I am not a teacher. But I can read and write. The kid walks in with that nonchalant attitude and what seemed to be a kind of discomfort at being in his body, like his shoulders had grown too big for him and, in order to walk, he had to bring them down to his level. His mother had probably told him a thousand times, 'Don't slouch!' She's still listing all the things he can't do.

'He reads but he doesn't really comprehend it, do you (S)? And he has ideas but he doesn't seem to be able to express them. His work, like his room, is messy. And he doesn't finish anything! That part is almost pathological! He's behind in his reading and his handwriting, when he does any, is scrawled incomprehensibly and all over the page, like he's writing in Chinese!'

He just nods his head in agreement, as if the situation is so hopeless and inevitable, there's nothing anyone can do. We sit down at the table and I ask him where his book is. He says he left his book at school. I know he expects me to say, 'Well, there's no point in doing anything then.' But I don't really believe in the importance of any prescribed text. Would Socrates have said to the slave that, because we don't have the scroll of the laws of the Athenian governor, we don't know how to behave? No, he'd have drawn with a stone in the dirt to establish the general theories of algebra.

In many ways, I saw myself looking into a mirror when I looked at this kid. I thought what would I say to a fifteen-year-old Scott?

So I told him, 'Let's write something. A page. A sentence. A word. Anything. Make it about the book, if you want.'

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Then I saw the most disturbing thing I have ever encountered in education. He picks up his pen, looks up at me as if he's already doing something wrong, he's shaking so much he can hardly hold the pen. He looked like he was in pain. Suddenly, I didn't feel like a tutor anymore. It felt like an emergency. I just wanted to end this kid's pain. I felt angry that the world had wilfully put this kid in this situation and no-one had said, 'This is wrong. This has gotta stop. Don't worry about it. Let's just play snakes and ladders.'

I thought about my daughter. She's a high achiever academically but she likes ice-skating. She does competitions and ice-skating exams, all that kind of thing. I remember her first test. She was so nervous beforehand, so scared of failing, she was barely able to stand, let alone skate. Anyhow, we caught the train at five a.m. to get to this thing out in the suburbs, which was away from her regular ice-skating place. This increased her nerves and anxiety. I stood out the front smoking a cigarette while the skating mothers put their kids through their paces. All the kids were so nervous. Like they were scared of the ice, like the fear of flying or water. It was deathly cold in that place and all the teachers had this serious, snobby look on their faces, all the mothers looked at me like I was a threat and in a way I was. I would have liked to have been there with a pickaxe to smash the ice.

Anyhow, all the kids did their ice-skating thing and it got to my daughter. I thought she was pretty good, didn't fall over anyway. Then she was called over to the judges after her routine. They talked to her. Then I saw devastation on her face. She'd failed. She was crying for well over an hour, saying in the car, 'But I worked so hard. I tried. I really tried.' The powerlessness for me is indescribable. She hadn't been pushed into this (like some of the others there seemed to have been), she'd jumped. I couldn't have cared less if she'd just quit, there and then, just walked away and didn't care. As far as I was concerned she cared too much.

Looking at this kid gripping his pen 'til his hand went purple made me think of Elektra sobbing through her tears, 'What if I fail again?' and I said, 'So what? If you wanna do it, just do it. You might fail again and again but if you really love it, nobody can stop you.' Seeing her heartbreak and anxiety over something for which she'd received no outside pressure made me think how this kid must have felt. I simultaneously realised that I was like one of those cold-hearted examiners I saw that day on the freezing ice. This kid's

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scared of me! Scared of what I think, my judgement. I just thought this is insane. I wanted to call his mother back in and say 'Look at your son! He's scared of the shadows. Somebody let the light in!'

So I said to him, 'Look, there're no teachers here. This isn't for your Mum and Dad. This is for me and I can tell you now I couldn't care less. I haven't even read the book. Write what you want and don't worry about me or anyone else.'

Then he picked up his pen and just started writing. By the end, he had a page or so and I was really satisfied with my work. Then I got home and had an e-mail from the tutoring company, they'd removed me from the session by request of the parents.

May 9, 2012

Just went to get on the train at Footscray to go to Geelong. There was a woman on platform 4 yelling at uniformed officers on platform 3.

'Why don't ya fuckin come over 'ere now and I'll fuckin' smash yez! Yeah come on, cunt, show us yer fucken number, ya fucken weak cunt! After ya fucken molested me while I was on the other fucken platform…you're a piece a shit!' The cops eventually take the bait but only after a fair bit of abuse, it's almost as if she's taunting them, using the means of social reality. There is a consciousness on both sides that this is happening right out in the open, in public, every action being scrutinised, with meaning, like on stage. Neither side can get away with anything and both use it to their advantage. So the cops eventually come over. You can tell they don't want to. They do the routine. 'What's inside your bag? What are you doing? Where's your identification?' She does her routine. 'Fuck off! I told yez me name! Don't touch me fuckin' bag, cunt!' Then she claims one of them has touched her and she becomes more irate, flexing her muscles at them until they respond. Then she weakens. Then she cries like a little girl. Like a pathetic, hard-done-by little baby and they arrest her, once they've brought two female officers in and she's taken away with none of the bravado with which she began.

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In reality, I am kind of glad because it takes the attention away from me, even though I'm not doing anything illegal. I just look like a criminal and I have in the past been 'brought before the law', as Hunter S. Thompson puts it (2003, p.19). Then I feel bad for being so selfish. I mean if she hadn't created the drama, they probably would have come over to me, asked my name and address, asked for some ID, done a police check on the spot, asked me if I was doing anything criminal and moved on. Instead this poor girl, probably off her face on drugs, is tormented, emotionally traumatised and arrested; maybe it's her own doing and maybe she's not a criminal, or maybe she is. Either way, I shouldn't be feeling good just because her misfortune attracted attention away from me. I mean I'm not doing anything criminal and it probably would have been just as unjust had they approached me, maybe more, still it's a bit wrong to take pleasure in her misfortune!

Eventually, the police arrested her and she kicks and screams as she'd planned to all along, as if on cue…And they sort of reach inside themselves and pull out their big aggressive authoritarian act, in spite of themselves, like they don't really want to but they have to because that's what she's expecting, indeed demanding. It's their job, they've done it before, even when they didn't want to, like it's their role to play and they stand there playing it like Bob Dylan in that video where he holds the signs up, with nonchalance.

June 2, 2012

So I started to think about how this ethno-drama/study might actually work and I went back to my processes of creation, the speech rhythms thing and all that…the whole time with the voice of my supervisor in my mind. Now she's a kind of a teacher, been a teacher, you know? And I spoke to the teacher at the sample school earlier this week and got a little feel for who she is. What if I created a teacher's voice from these two, intermingled, married together and then spat out as the beginning to my real fiction exploration of disturbance in education? Then you have students' voices and I can document where they came from with the monologue thing.

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Disturbing labels and shifting the subject

June 19, 2012

Having been on drugs and now being clean, it's like waking up from a dream. It's like you've been asleep for a long time and now you're awake but somewhere the dream world still exists and you've…you're accountable for it. But here's the thing, it doesn't really feel like I ever took any drugs. I know it happened and I remember it...like when I had a needle at the doctor the other day and I saw the blood. But I don't think about that at all now in my day-to-day life and it's like it never happened. Then I'll come across someone from the old days and they'll mention something and I'll think, 'Oh yeah, I used to be that person.' And that person isn't completely unfamiliar to me. They might say, 'I remember you said x' and I'll think, 'Yeah, that's what I would say or would have said…' or else I'll think, 'Yes, I totally agree with that. If I was in that situation as a junkie or whatever, I would probably say x too'. But somehow, it still doesn't feel so much like me!

Spoke to a teacher friend of mine today also and it was a tense conversation. Why am I doing this? Could it just be a brief writing workshop with 'How can you call anyone disturbed? Write a page. Or half a page. Or two words. Or nothin'. I've had it! I'm sick of it…I don't even wanna go to school. I hate school! I hated it when I was there and I hate it now…Why did I even start this? I'm so sick of it!

8.3: Continuing ethical questions

July 22, 2012

This interaction with the old schoolteacher friend is referred to momentarily above. Below is the documentation of the conversation and a brief discussion.

I just phoned an actor/director friend of mine from Geelong, also a drama teacher, who is apparently very interested in the project. She raised questions regarding 'disclosure' and subjective and objective perceptions and experiences of disturbance. Just, in the course of our conversation, I heard her mind ticking over, walking down all the paths I've walked so far in this project and paths that are mapped out in the material I've read on ethical research. She mentioned, in different words, the subjective and objective

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perceptions of disturbance – brought up by Mammad at the colloquium. She also referred to a research project recently undertaken by a researcher from Latrobe on homophobia that collected data from the sample school (Jones & Hillier, 2012). She was particularly concerned about 'disclosure' and we had a great chat about the dangers of the project in a kind of free and comfortable way, because she knows me and my work, knows what I've been through due to the writing, and how it is created and presented, so I didn't even need to explain it to her. I just said 'Imagine real fiction in a school' and she knew what I meant.

So anyway I'm going to meet with her again soon, so we can discuss it further and we are thinking somewhere towards the middle of next year. We both thought it would be a good practice for the monologue project the Year 12s have to do. A better day for the research.

The last few days I've been thinking about the 'disturbing labels' dichotomy. How would you broach this subject with the kids? Maybe start talking about labels and then come across characters and voices that are shared in a writing process that both myself and the school community are participating in. The drama teacher seemed pleased with the idea of approaching the project as a community; teachers, parents, students participating in an out-of-school-hours research project. She also pre-empted the need for the school counsellor to participate which is, of course, something I have contemplated at length.

Note 2

The school counsellor played a significant but ultimately minor role in the project. In the methodology chapter, the idea of the school counsellor figures quite prominently and, indeed, it was important to ensure the emotional and psychological safety of the young participants in my research. Although the school counsellor merely made a cursory observation of the data collection activity on the day, I wonder what might have happened were there no such safety net. Would the project have been possible? Would the potential danger to the student participants have been far greater? And, although it seems there were no traumas suffered by the student participants, the availability of a professional counsellor provided a safe space for complete creative exploration.

July 23, 2012

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Describing this project conversationally, we can say that it consists of my conversations with the drama teacher, her conversations with the students and the work will consist of a documentation of these conversations. Here is a drama teacher who, by her nature is an artist, can conceptually imagine the project immediately and has the skills and position to enact the project.

However, even her history is completely fascinating for a researcher and much of this section relies on the Goffman and Shotter sense of conversational reality. There is a mythology attached to this school and that mythology feeds directly into the fact that the drama teacher is teaching there, even the reason for my approach.

This has the same dilemmas as Elizabeth St. Pierre's, whose notion of troubling subjectivities and transgressive data in one place primarily comes from working with the personal. To St. Pierre's four categories of 'transgressive data' (emotional data, dream data, sensual data and response data), we could add drama data which, in my theory, would consist of the reworking of speech rhythms from empirically real characters in a drama education context. St. Pierre describes the problems she encounters returning to her home town, studying the lives of women from this town, when she is indeed a woman from this town in the age group of the subjects in her study. Indeed, there is a question in St. Pierre as to whether she is the researcher or a result in the research. Whilst this issue is not as glaring in my work the problem of 'transgressive data' manifests itself in another way. The relationship between researcher and research subject has an impurity about it, but I would argue that it is not entirely impure, since the relationship that seemingly contaminates it is a professional one from the theatre.

St. Pierre's description of herself as an insider/outsider applies here to me and I think I can work with this. I just hope the university ethics committee lets it happen. I'm starting to feel very resentful of the establishment judging me unjustly. They may have a right to judge me but I'd prefer they did it directly and formally than with all these insinuations. They're saying, 'Oh, you can't go around asking questions that ought only be answered by psychologists and the like. We'll tell kids when they're crazy, how and why! You can't! 'What about them?' I say, and they all laugh and snigger…

The teacher at this school didn't like the idea of using 'disturbance' as the foundation of our investigation. Saying she 'didn't like' it is probably incorrect. It disturbed her, unsettled her, mostly because you could see her mind ticking over with a way of explaining it. 'Okay, so we're talking about disturbance. So, I'm at school and I'm walking across the courtyard to the principal's office. I walk inside and I say to him I want to run a writing workshop with the boys on disturbance, what disturbs them, what they find disturbing…umm…Then I say we can make the focus mainly on labels and you can hear her mind breathing a sigh of relief, we're out of the suffocating speechlessness of taboo and into the expressible world of hypocrisy. That's a world the principal will understand. Labels. Labelling. Being labelled. We all get that. That's a sellable idea.

And this process gives us an insight into the process of the whole project. We will not talk about disturbance. We cannot talk about disturbance. We know that there are secret little rooms around the countries filled with psychologists and select educators defining and building the concept of the 'disturbed student'. Outside those rooms, it is a label that certain people are entitled to use but allow the kids to talk about it in a drama project and we have a moral panic. We can't expose our kids to this! We can't bring this subject into the classroom! The teacher can't sell it to her principal. I can't sell it to an ethics committee but somewhere the discourse is being produced and developed, extended and expanded upon. The kids remain blissfully ignorant and drama must be silent because all hell might break loose if we take the disturbance, being drama, and infuse it with the power to critique what appears to be its function.

Note 3

This is something of a generalisation. However, it ought to be remembered that this section of the thesis consists of journal extracts, opinions and ideas that are not necessarily proven. Elsewhere in the thesis, I deal with the various labels, including disturbed and emotionally disturbed, but here I am permitting myself to indulge in the freedom of imaginative expression and description. What the paragraph above does is illustrate the foundations for my ideas, the origins of the thinking that finally led to this drama project on 'labels in education'.

July 26, 2012

I see what they mean about the ethics of this project being complicated. There are all sorts of stuff about conflicting interests and relationships that might impinge the research or power dynamics that might affect it. The weird thing is that these complications cut to the heart of the research. The reason it is ethically complicated to involve the drama teacher in the research is because we have a previously established relationship from the theatre, where all these other power dynamics are in operation, and that's always been my thesis: that these power dynamics from theatre conflict with the socially constructed power dynamics from the school: a kind of dictatorship in the 'democratised' classroom.

I think it's going to make a really interesting research project to have the two separate teachers and schools.[vi] One with whom I have a pre-established relationship, not unlike St. Pierre's description in 'In the Fold and Irruption of Transgressive Data' where she talks about the problem of subjectivity in her approaching a study of a focus group that she could be perceived to be a part of.

Another issue I have come across in my research is the relationship between labelling and teasing. This emerged because of the social environment of theatrical exploration and is fundamental both to the original objectives of the project and the content that has evolved. The real fiction theatrical process exploring 'labelling' is re-contextualised in the social construction of the school, a conversational reality where 'teasing' is a communicative motif. That is, anything becomes a potential weapon in this socially constructed environment.

July 29–30, 2012

This is what I wrote a little while ago:

Bec: You know, Scotty, I think you need to have a look at the ethics of the project you're considering… I mean what are you going to do? You've gotta understand that if you're gunna go into a school and get kids to do this stuff, you have to entice them. You have to make them wanna do it. Have you even thought about that? What about ethics? Have you even looked at ethics? Have you thought about the ethical implications of introducing these young vulnerable people to these ideas? See? You don't even know what you're doing!

If you're gunna do this stuff, you've gotta get the kids' trust! You can't just go in there and throw your ideas on them!

When we write plays, we don't write in written words, we write in spoken words. We write knowing that it is not writing but words to be spoken by another, by an actor. Do you think you can do it? Maybe? Maybe not? How do we start when we write a play? Where do we begin? What are we doing when we write a play? I have an idea. It might be a good idea or it might be a bad one. How would we know? I am not going to tell you that at the end of all this, you will be a playwright, but you can't be a playwrong. So it's worth a try.

Where do words come from? Do they come from people's mouths or people's pens? Which do you think?

In the teacher's playwriting handbook (Teaching Playwriting in Schools, n.a. accessed 29-11-2014), the author comments that a problem with student plays and the early work of playwrights is that all the characters sound the same. They have the intonations of the playwright, probably because they are most likely written with little attention to sound. One of the instructions in the manual is for student writers to listen to a one-way conversation on the telephone and imagine the responses on the other end. I would consider an alternative exercise of listening to the one voice and noting it down, looking at the similarities between that voice and your own voice, then working to unlock your voice from the piece by editing it out (Welsh 2012).

You will hear speech rhythms in the piece of writing that belong to the character but then others that obviously belong to your own voice. The latter needs to be removed and this in itself is a difficult task for an artist, as it requires a self-critical eye. It requires us to 'throw away' ideas, just when we were getting attached to them.

Activity 1

Identity words and phrases connected with a character familiar to you, whom you would like to write about.

Now back to the journal:

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My supervisor told me the other day about a drama workshop she did with some kids where they came up with the symbols of coins and snakes. Instinctively, I thought of Jung for some reason. When I checked it out, coins and snakes do have special significance. In a way they're interconnected too. The image of eternity, a snake feeding on its own tail, is a circle, while a coin is a filled-in circle.

So how can phenomena occurring in the classroom be expressed as a play, which is the nature of my task? The character of 'teacher' seems to me a useful starting place. It is she who experiences the subversion of expectations. Her task is quite practical, in many ways. She is required to attend the classroom and occupy the young minds before her for a prescribed period of time. So she plays this theatre game and coins and snakes emerge out of the game. One could argue that the whole experience is her 'dream', her unconscious encounter. In this case, the snakes and coins could represent eternal wisdom. The image of the snake eating its own tail is a potent symbol of eternity and the coins indicative of value. Therefore this becomes a story about finding meaning and value in drama education.

The primary character of the teacher is the source of the speech data. She's got a bluntness to her voice, a practical way of speaking and thinking. However, there is the sense in the sound of her voice that she approaches reality in this way only because her mind is so *impractical*. Therefore, everything always seems very simple but turns out to be very complicated. This is a perfect example of a very simple, straight-forward tragic hero. This means that when these symbols occur they are an interruption to the task of teaching and learning, which probably has boring daily requirements that can eclipse the genuinely exciting nature of the engagement. That's not to say this character is 'boring', quite the contrary. Her 'real' thoughts are so transgressive they must be tempered with a practical tone and, further to this, her engagements in daily life are more often than not of a practical nature. In this context, where tasks such as the borrowing of white-markers have an unordained urgency, the snake is a distraction, not unlike the biblical snake corrupted by evil, with the potential to bring the heavenly system down.

White-markers are borrowed in the interim, incidentally, and this perhaps contributes to the general surrealism I intend to construct in the making of ordinary conversational reality into a piece of drama.

Note 4

The above entry hints at the creative process. The reader will note that this entry was the foundation for the teacher character in the play produced in the previous chapter. This also indicates the relationship between my own process and the one I workshopped with the student participants in the research. This draws a practical relationship between the collection and presentation of data.

END OF NOTE

February 2, 2013

Had a call back from the teacher at the school yesterday. She seems quite enthusiastic about the research project and said we should make room for two double-periods rather than one and do the program with Year 11s toward the end of term 2. This is brilliant but it makes the other situation weigh even more heavily on my mind. What if I'm being sued while delivering these workshops? Does it matter? Or is it more valuable experience I might be able to impart to the kids?

And what about the separation of roles? What is the relationship between the real teacher in the classroom and the imaginary one I have constructed in the monologue that I am bringing to the workshop? How is this then a treatment of the situational reality recorded in the form of a script? The data then consists of a theatrical script or monologue with a pre-established voice based on a real character. It is a voice into which information can then be inserted as it reveals itself. There is an ideal example of this from *Barcode* (although I could probably cite any play!!) in which the characters of M1 and Rebecca had been established in the form of a script that had even been performed for a season. Then in the middle of the next phase of presentation, I witnessed a violent argument in the lounge-room of a friend and inserted this into the speech rhythms and context of the established characters of M1 and Rebecca.

February 6, 2013

Somewhere above I referred to student 'S', whose parents I felt were killing him with pressure and stress over Year 8 homework. Now I jumped up and down about this and told everyone I could that I felt the parents were damaging the poor kid emotionally and psychologically. I told my supervisors from uni and my

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bosses from the Tutoring Agency and I have discussed this situation with various professionals, including qualified teachers, and the general consensus has been that you can't interfere with people's choices about how they bring up their kids.

Now, here's another situation. A child and her mother who have grown up in a domestic violence situation: Mother 1 and Child 1 came to visit me the other night. Child 2, 3 and 4 are all living with relatives. Child 1 leads a vagrant lifestyle with her mother, marijuana being a part of their daily ritual. The child is 16 and, whilst this choice of lifestyle is not ideal, considering all the circumstances, it may be the best we can hope for her. She has had an extremely disturbed childhood up until now. Her father was physically abusive to all the children and the mother, imprisoning them all in the home, controlling them with violence.

The current period of her life is one of relative contentment, safety and security in the sense that she knows the threat has been removed. She would be smoking pot whether her mother joined her or not. If she were to be estranged from her mother, she would certainly be in more danger, exploring and practising her addiction in even more disturbing contexts, at least to those 'outside' the situation.

July 9, 2013

I had a strange experience today, a disturbing experience, an experience that disturbed me and that was strange because I'm usually the one doing the disturbing. My supervisor gave me some feedback where she suggested examples of labels kids might use themselves and incorporating this into the proposal. She mentioned 'emo', 'slut', 'slag' and 'nerd'. The thought of discussing the concept of slut with a classroom full of teenagers really unsettled me. What would I say? Well, I would try to think what Freud would say which is probably, 'What is this word slut?' And you might answer: 'Well it's a person who satisfies their desire, sexual desire, without a thought for social constraints.' And Freud would most likely say 'slut' is the ID, slut is what we all secretly wish to be, what we truly desire to be, what we are somewhere deep in our unconscious. Slut is not sex addiction but an overflowing of desire and impulse gone mad. Sooner or later we realise we're all sluts…But I can't say that to a room full of kids and yet it is why I think it's a label and a dumb one at that!

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NOTE

What's really interesting is that the slut label was introduced by the kids at the workshop. It is notable also that the 'slut' label is also the subject of fictional drama teacher Mr. G in a Chris Lilley skit, referred to earlier in the thesis.

8.4 Testimonial data collection

July 31, 2013

Yesterday, I completed the data collection component at a Victorian secondary school. The drama teacher was amazing, as was Mary-Rose. The importance of having open-minded people with a creative outlook was apparent right from the beginning. I needed people who would take my role if and when needed and they fulfilled that requirement and beyond!

October 1, 2013

I was going through the data and writing reviews of my methodology chapter and even looking at a few of the kids' monologues that I have conflated when I remembered my friend Christin, whose monologue work I really loved and encouraged her to give it to my friend Lynne Ellis from RMIT, a university in Melbourne with a penchant for experimental theatre presentations, to be performed by a student theatre group in the university. When we attended the performance, I could see that it was far removed from the voice of the author, whom I knew very well, and that she might be upset, even though the performance was quite brilliant in its own right and the actor was extremely passionate about the piece. This indicates how even a well-executed, professional interpretation of an author's own work can be emotionally difficult. When we are dealing with minors in a classroom setting, these 'emotional' concerns present ethical challenges. This has been explored in some detail previously in chapters four and five but some of the dilemmas associated with seeing one's own work presented on stage is a consideration for the students who participated in the workshop.

And this is something for consideration as I execute the interpretative monologue section of the work. The students were interested in a second engagement and potentially developing the work to a stage of public performance. If I went ahead and did this, which is outside the scope of my research anyway, what if they were unhappy with my interpretation? Or worse, what if they were disturbed, consciously or unconsciously,

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by what I had done to the work? There would be no way of telling without me approaching them first and this approach itself might create a disturbance similar to Christin's, only worse because here we are dealing with minors.

May 26, 2014

> So if the (intentional) speaker is the First Persona, and the (intentional) audience is the Second Persona, the Third Persona refers to the audiences *not* present, 'audiences rejected or negated through the speech and/or speaking situation' (Wander 369). This is the audience I referenced in the debate example. Because there is an *intended* audience, a 'you,' there must also exist a negated other, an it or a them (Hitt 2013).

I am afraid this is what I have unintentionally done to the kids from the workshop. By attempting to protect their anonymity, I have silenced them. And yet, if I were to offer them voice, by way of say identifying, crediting and, for example, inviting them to a conference with me, I may be turning them into a freak show. They are inevitably the 'third persona'.

This has been an issue in my practice, one I explored in a paper presented at the Popcaanz Conference titled 'The Trouble with Writing Reality' (Dundler-Welsh, 2013, reproduced below as Appendix II).

The moral significance of being negated through what is and is not said reveals itself in all its anguish and confusion in context, in the world of affairs wherein certain individuals and groups are, through law, tradition, or prejudice, denied rights accorded to being commended or, measured against an ideal, to human beings (Hitt, 2013).

8.5 Conclusion

As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, my journal extracts have been included to show my own, very personal research journey and, particularly, my journey from 'playwright/actor/practitioner' to educational theorist. In the background is yet another journey from beggar to postgraduate student. In a sense, this journey is documented in my creative practice and my previous research at Masters level on 'needle fixation' at Deakin University (Welsh, 2014). Some of the journal entries are deeply personal, others not so

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much. What is contained in the above is perhaps an explanation as to why the issue of social labelling is of interest to me, how my journey is both a personal and professional one, and perhaps why my own work is often considered socially disturbing or challenging. By including these journal extracts, I hope that I have shared with the reader the world from my point of view and that perhaps it describes not only the process by which this thesis has been constructed, but also my own personal journey, where some of the ideas in the thesis stem from in terms of my own experience, as opposed to the qualitative research project alone. In this sense, as stated in the methodology section, it constitutes data that gives the reader an insight into how this research came about, what motivated and inspired it, and how it connects with the author's life and work elsewhere.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

Whilst much of this thesis has been concerned with the creation and presentation of a creative work, in the form of a play script in Chapter Six, it has also constructed an argument that I believe is imperative to any kind of learning, anywhere, including drama education. It is essentially a social argument about labels, about the construction of subjects in their making and objects in their finding, in the world of school and the classroom. How do we understand labels? How important are they? What do they do? The data from the surveys with teachers indicates that labels can be useful but also may be insidiously damaging. Whilst the teachers' surveys were focused on the somewhat obscure and certainly subjective label 'disturbed student', the work with students explored the notion of labels more generally and in isolation.

By combining this with a particular form of writing practice in a drama classroom, the outcome was a unique insight into the social world of students. It highlighted the labels that matter to the students and provided a philosophical reflection from students on the social practice of labelling. Students were invited to consider and reflect on the sometimes authoritarian nature of education and its juxtaposition with the somewhat transgressive expression of creativity permitted in the education of theatre and drama.

Students provided their own, as well as others' voices through workshopped drama writing and this was embedded into a scripted format, which I believe is best described as a real fiction ethno-drama. The outcome, reproduced in Chapter Six, is a play that stores data relating to students' experiences and perceptions of labels, and their use of labels in the social world of school. As I have argued above, this characterises my thesis as both an exploration into drama education as well as a contribution to the field of 'creative research'. Whilst I claimed above that the work is practice-led rather than practice-based, it is possible to characterise it as both. I claim, however, that despite the fact that the research seems to result in a play, it is practice-led rather than practice based because what is important in this work is where the creative practice takes us, rather the creative outcome itself. Consequently, the chapter containing the play is interrupted by various sections and subsections of exegesis and explanation.

I argue that the play is not the outcome of the process but that several revelations are arrived at through the practice. For example, the teacher monologue that opens the play acted as an example for the students to understand the process, as well as introducing the tone of the work. The student monologues were not the goal of the work but rather the introduction of a process, a way of thinking, observing and criticizing the social world around us. For the student participants, this social world was school and, more particularly, their peers, their friends and the relationships that are formed in these social surroundings. *This* world is represented in the subject matter approached by students using the method I introduced, through the workshop, with the assistance of the classroom teacher and supervising researcher.

This provides yet another perspective on the significance of this research, which relates to Laing's insider/outsider dichotomy, referred to above. It also raises another issue that has been of significance throughout: introducing arts-practice and practice-led research into the classroom, particularly the drama classroom. The current, conventional approach to Theatre Studies in Australian education outlined in the VCAA Handbook (VCAA Bulletin 2012, n.a. accessed online 2015) includes exposing students to a broad range of diverse approaches to the practice of drama and theatre-making. One of the issues in gaining ethical clearance to conduct this research, which I have classified as a real fiction ethno-drama, involved the question of how student participants benefit from participation. Therefore, the project was tailored to benefit Theatre Studies and Drama Students. However, the idea that I was an 'outsider' was never really resolved. And it certainly wasn't necessary for the project that the students conceive of me as a 'one' in the classroom environment rather than an 'other'. Indeed, the fact that I appeared to be an 'other', perhaps because of the way in which my practice was explained and my 'position' in the classroom as an outsider, a non-teacher/non-student, may have influenced the nature of the work the students produced. One student asked me during the engagement if it was alright if he swore in his writing. I said 'yes', a little surprised at my new found authority in this strange environment. I don't know whether it would ordinarily be alright for him to swear in his writing but I think it is consistent with the nature of the educational space created through the engagement.

This questioned space in which we worked, which was neither exclusively educational nor was it a theatre as such, is reflected in the presentation of the data and some of my own observations of the course of the research in the form of a dramatic play. This was covered in some detail in the methodology, Chapter four.

That chapter describes the use and construction of the dramatic play in order to express what has happened or been observed during the writing process. This echoes the practice of Saldaña, referred to throughout, particularly the piece 'Chalkboard Concerto' (Vanover & Saldaña, 2005). Here a conference paper is converted into a performance piece because that is perhaps the best way to record and present some of the pertinent observations made during the process of its creation.

Saldaña's description of this monologue's creation resonates with the real fiction process and the relationship between the two processes is described at various moments throughout the thesis. This includes the practice of real fiction in Chapter Seven where, as previously stated, I present the cornerstone of this thesis, the play based on the school engagement and the student monologues. As I have claimed throughout, this mingles the practice of ethno-drama with real fiction. It then creates what I claim is a rather unique way of storing data in the form of student testimonies in the monologues. Combined with this is the real fiction playwriting practice used in the process of creating the teacher's monologue in the play, as well as reinterpreting and enhancing the student monologues, by emphasizing and expanding on their social comment. This is documented in the play and expands upon the movement of practice-led research, showing what can be learnt and expressed through the process of drama and, in this case, play/monologue writing. Issues of body-image, social construction and the uses and limits of language emerged from the work of the student participants. This testimonial evidence has been intertwined with the monologues in the play script, following the basic principles of Saldaña's ethno-drama and my own experience as a practitioner.

Finally, this work documents my journey from practicing playwright to educational, practice as research, theorist in the form of extracts from a journal kept throughout the process of collecting and presenting data in the form of a practice-led thesis. As I have argued above, it is practice-led and not practice-based because the practice involved in the research is a part of the enquiry rather than being an outcome of the enquiry. Instead, the play and the processes of its creation, including the creative playwriting practice real fiction, and the school engagement involving a playwriting workshop, encouraged the reader toward various conclusions. These findings consist of social observations, relating to issues such as labels in education. They also entail conclusions about the meaning and function of creativity, and creative practice in the form of a playwriting method. As explained, this practice is based on the observation of real characters' speech

rhythms, delivered to students in a drama classroom by a practitioner.

My interest was in finding the narrative and dramatic 'voice' of student and teacher participants and then to record these and incorporate them into a dramatic play. Therefore my main arguments were centred on the significance of creativity and creative practice in school and social environments. My thesis essentially asked 'What can the drama-writing practice I call 'real fiction' *do* in our social world? What can it do in the social world of a group of teachers and students?' These questions were asked using a practice-led methodology, the writing of monologues, providing a foundation for social and epistemological discussion among students and teachers in the group. What resulted then was a discussion of the students' social surroundings. Students spoke about their world and their place in that world.

Through the guise of labels and drama-creation, a discussion of the world and its relationship to language operation emerged and provided data pertinent to the ontological (being) and epistemological (knowing) foundations of this thesis outlined in the introduction. We are language in conversation, labels that occur as language in conversation. Students were encouraged to engage a conversationally-styled playwriting method based on 'speech rhythms', thereby encouraging a self-conscious, student-focused, practice-led application of real fiction in a drama classroom. Student participants were encouraged to respond to and criticise the social 'labelling' that inevitably occurs in conversation, whether in a school or any social environment.

This has consequences for drama education and contributes to the growing trend of using drama as a way of exploring our world and being It also uncovers the potential of practice and, in this sense, belongs to the recent and growing field of practice-based and practice-led research.

The work perhaps challenges some views on how we engage participants both in research and creative practice. It seems to belong as much to the research participants as the researcher and brings into focus some significant issues introduced by Shotter along these lines (Shotter, 2013). Any conclusions drawn by me in this thesis are not done through objective analysis of static data but through a live, conversational engagement with living, breathing, opinionated, flawed, insecure, bright, brilliant and unpredictable social beings. A pertinent example of this issue is the teacher's response to the question regarding the

educational effect of students being involved in welfare services. As I observed in my analysis of the survey results, her response could be construed as defensive or reticent or however one may. The important point here is that the data collection process has a conversational context and the very nature of the data is subjective.

In the context of my research, however, this makes the data more valuable not less. I am not interested in the truth or falsity of claims or comments made by research participants, but rather, in what can be made of the character behind such comments, the sounds and tones of their voices, as well as where such a voice comes from. As I have expressed throughout this thesis, this is a description of the playwright's practice. It articulates both the activity of the student participants in the research and my own contribution in the form of the dramatic play. This challenges conventional notions of truth and traditional forms of data, and belongs not only to the qualitative tradition, but also to a transgressive, creative form practised by the likes of Saldaña (2012), McKenna (2003) and Haseman (2006).

McKenna's requirements for creative research, referred to in Chapter One, can be summarised into three simple criteria for my purposes:

1. That it be artful (Artful is a word used extensively by McKenna, a visual and performing practitioner as well as theorist)
2. That it be interpretative
3. That it be educational, in the sense that it involves learning about the self and others
(McKenna, 2012, p.16).
Considering these criteria in terms of my own research described in this thesis, they might read:
1. The practice of real fiction described throughout defines the work as artful
2. The conversational approach and the collaborative engagement with student participants satisfied the interpretative criterion
3. The process of writing the voice of the other educates participants about themselves and the other. In addition to this, the interpretative process I engaged expanded this learning to include my observations of the participants and a further two way learning outcome operating in the research process between researcher and research participant. Note that you also saw yourself as 'other' in the journal.

In this thesis, I endeavoured to apply theatre-writing practice to a drama classroom so as to gain an insight into students' perceptions of labels and their use in an educational context. What I perceived from the student testimonials, collected in the form of written theatrical monologues, and through the survey and skits, is that students are less concerned about how they are perceived by their teachers and more concerned by the labels they might encounter in conversational interactions with their peers. Hence, they appear to be more perturbed by being labelled 'fat' by a brother or 'faggot' by a classmate in the schoolyard, than being labelled 'disruptive' or 'underachiever' by a teacher or co-ordinator.

Limitations of the study

In hindsight, perhaps it would have been more useful to at least link the survey material and the monologue, even if participants were not named. As it is, the author of both the survey data and the monologue is completely anonymous. Therefore any relationship to observations in the survey data and monologue output is made impossible by the process. It may have provided further potential to analyse the voice of the student in social reality and his/her narrative voice in their creative writing. However, I believe that it was the guarantee of anonymity provided by various safeguards, including the surveys without names and a similar arrangement with the monologues, which allowed participants a freedom to engage, that ensured quality data for my purposes. It was my intention to find voices among these student participants and write them into a play. By providing them with anonymity, it meant they felt free to write.

The students from whom the data was collected remained anonymous. This was not only to protect the identity of participants but to encourage an environment where they felt free to express themselves without fear of reprisal, or the pressure of having to own the ideas. They could simply contribute to a collection of monologues, without the need to explain themselves or judge others. However, this created limitations, including not knowing the gender of the voice, so we make assumptions based on our own judgements. For example, identification with the label 'fat' may mean a female voice, while 'faggot' might mean male. However, as explained above, the intention of this thesis was not to collect such data. The voice of the character is found in the reading of the speech rhythms, contained in the script. The script assumes the gender of the character will be discovered in performance.

Because the participants' answers to the survey were unable to be linked with their monologue contributions, the expanded character voices then were, at times, hybrid creations. They were sourced from the student monologue data combined with the qualitative survey data, although these two combined data sources may not have come from the same student. Although the data is not factual, it never set out to be factual, and this has been clearly stated all along.

Reflective notes

- The use of the monologue form in this qualitative research meant that students explored and discovered aspects of their own self that may not have been uncovered using more conventional means. It freed student participants to articulate and express ideas about their social world and respond to their conversational surroundings.

- Students understand labelling and other social phenomena in their own social world (i.e. peer to peer), through their friends and classmates rather than through their teachers and other authorities. Indeed, they seemed unaware or certainly nonchalant about any labels coming from teachers or other authorities.

- Students seemed very interested in articulating their own voice or one that might be attributed to them through the monologue writing process.

- Whilst students seemed not to be concerned by labels teachers may or may not have used in reference to them, they were very aware of social labels from outside school, such as 'westie', for example.

Final thoughts

What can be said about labels in the classroom based on this practice-led theatre-making activity? This question highlights the primary purpose of the thesis: using real fiction theatre to approach social issues in a classroom with drama students. A further secondary purpose was to understand labelling via practice-led theatre. Really, these two purposes are inter-linked. The problem of labelling in education and the classroom is the social issue being approached by the practice-led methodology – real fiction.

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How can drama become a tool of analysis for understanding student perspectives on labels? What effect does the practice of creating and presenting monologues have on student social learning? How can theories from theatre practice be introduced into the classroom in order to create qualitative data in the form of a play storing student monologues – the outcome of a workshop undertaken by a playwright with the assistance of educators in a school environment? My thesis concerned itself with these questions from the perspective of drama education theory as well as practice-led or creative research.

As previously observed, the qualitative survey functioned both to gather some preliminary data and to prepare student participants for the monologue task. The monologues reveal participants had considered the issues explored at some length prior to the workshop, and perhaps this was partly due to completing the survey. Either way, the survey added another dimension to the research and worked in conjunction with the discussion, monologue and drama 'skit' material. It is all this material combined that contribute to the 'creative' work and ultimately works to construct a unique perspective on labelling, sourced from a collaboration between students in their social world and my engagement with student participants as a playwright/researcher.

Ultimately, these methodological questions serve to enhance the argument about the social function of theatre and the processes of creating what I have called real fiction theatre, as well as the processes described by Saldaña (2005) in relation to ethno-drama, and Kaufman (2001) regarding *The Laramie Project*. These works not only used processes conventionally utilised by theatre practitioners. They also sought out knowledge using other qualitative means such as qualitative surveys, interviews and conversations. This raises questions as to what theatre and drama education represent.

Finally, this project has certainly offered me insights into what can be learned through this practice and, I believe, introduces the potential for further research into the role theatre and monologue writing practice might play in education, including building empathy in adolescent students between themselves and their teachers, for example. There were limitations and constraints in terms of working in schools and drama classrooms, as opposed to theatre and public performance contexts. This was particularly interesting for me, given my background. My early work was in pubs, where the concern is not about what's appropriate to present to an audience but whether they'll get bored, walk away, or start abusing you and throwing things.

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The school context was the opposite. The kids were there, whether they liked it or not, and the main concern was ensuring the work was appropriate to the audience. A secondary concern was ensuring they weren't bored, although this was still important.

In conclusion, what have we learnt about drama's potential to respond to labels in the classroom? Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, as I have already observed, the labels used by the student participants to describe each other are the ones that matter. It is much more concerning for them to be called a 'slut' by their peers than 'disturbed' by their teacher/s and this was universally true of all participants. It seems that in order to truly hear the voices of students in their 'world', drama, and particularly monologue writing, acts as an ideal activity. It is through this activity that we are able to view the world as they perceive it, through their eyes and their characters. Yes, the work the students were asked to produce was fiction, but it was fiction based on reality. Thus we can gain general understanding about the social world of students through the practice of producing monologues using the real fiction process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

COMPLETED SURVEY DATA FROM STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Raw Survey Data

Three teachers were surveyed and each student response is summarised here but will be collated in the section following this one. This is to ensure the process is transparent and to allow the reader the opportunity to dispute the conclusions drawn from the results.

1. Labels in the daily life of students and educators:

Teachers were asked to identify labels they used in their daily professional life as educators while students were asked to describe what they think a label is:

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Student(s): -name given to a stereotyped group of people

       -any generalising word/term to describe a person's physical and mental traits.

       -name-calling but bigger.

       -a type of stereotyping people and categorising them into separate groups,   generally in a negative way to most.

       -People label people to put them in a group

       -A label, for me, is necessary for some people. For example, a person who has gender/sexual persuasion issues, finds comfort in a label because they know what they are

       -The difference between 'you are' and 'you are like'.

       -Describing/assuming/putting a name to something.

       -A label is a stereotype.

       -A label is what people give each other to describe the way a person looks, acts and is.

2. Labelling and the self

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Teachers were asked to identify any labels used to describe them, while students were asked if they had ever been or felt labelled.

Student(s): -I feel labelled all the time, it's in the looks people give.

-…as a young child I was weird and my whole year level called me gay and made other kids believe it.

-Yes, as a slut because I have several guy friends

-Yes, I've often been labelled but it doesn't bother me so much anymore

-'Bitch', 'slinty eyes' –because I'm half Asian

-I have been labelled 'fat, with no friends' and given many names that offended and hurt me for many years.

-Everyone gets labelled, it's inevitable. I don't get bogged down by labels because I don't care, therefore it's not MY label.

-Yes but on a disconnected level. I have not felt labelled because labels can be wrong. It depends on what a person thinks of you but I don't believe it, so it's not me.

-Yes, labelling is something everybody is subjected to. Whether people take it to the extreme of 'bullying', making somebody a victim is a different topic.

3. Name-calling and labelling

Teacher was asked how he/she reacts to being labelled, she responded:

Student 1 on name-calling and labelling:

Student 1: Being labelled is different to name-calling in the sense that labelling is more permanent, it sticks.

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Student 2: Name-calling is to deliberately hurt someone and labels are a generalisation.

Student 3: Name-calling has malicious intent, whereas labelling can often be just describing terms. Maybe.

Student 4: Labelling is like a word to describe someone in a mean way: 'fat', 'slut', 'gay'. Whereas name-calling is giving people nasty nicknames.

Student 5: Name-calling usually singles out one person, labelling usually puts people into one group.

Student 6: Labelling is an identifier. Name-calling is an insult.

Student 7: Name-calling has the intention to offend.

Student 8: Name-calling is intentional; I'd say labelling is a guess.

Student 9: Labelling is a personal categorisation. Name-calling is ridicule.

Student 10: Name-calling can be jest, labelling is just straight out bullying.

Student 11: The difference between name-calling and labelling is labelling can be both good and bad, name-calling is used to degrade.

Students were asked to identify who uses labels to describe people:

Student 1: 'I think everyone at least thinks of labels.

Student 2: TEACHERS!

Student 3: People who are closed minded and don't see past behind the first part of the personality.

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Student 4: Most people do but often it will be positive words/messages like 'smart' and 'pretty'.

Student 5: Teenagers.

Student 6: Everyone uses labels

Student 7: Everyone uses labels with or without realising it.

Student 8: People use labels to describe people.

Student 9: People.

Student 10: Society.

Student 11: Everybody, people who are threatened, people who are 'out and about'.

5. Is it right to use labels to describe people? Why? Why not?

Student 1: Although I, myself, use labels I think using labels are bad, they are usually based on appearance.

Student 2: No, it's not. Because everyone is different.

Student 3: If someone is okay with the label then I think it's fine.

Student 4: It's nice when it's positive but can often inadvertently bother people. If you call someone pretty, a person who doesn't look like them may feel unpretty. It's a risky game. Labels like gay just seem unnecessary when not asked for, i.e. 'What's your sexuality?' It doesn't seem like an accurate word to me.

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Student 5: No. It hurts people, and those labels can follow them through life and torment them.

Student 6: Using labels can be good and bad, it depends on the context in how they are used.

Student 7: It's not right to but it's almost impossible to not. People shouldn't be put into a stereotype and everyone should be treated equally.

Student 8: It is because it's impossible not to.

Student 9: Sometimes you have to. If it affects or damages their life forever, it is not right.

Student 10: Depends on how you put it, how you say it. What you mean by it.

Student 11: Yes, but not label. Labelling is creating a profile on somebody, a personal interpretation is not who a person essentially is. When your 'label' becomes public; that is when name-calling comes about.

ADDITIONAL TEACHER QUESTIONS

1. What labels, if any, do you use in the course of your daily work as an educator?

Teacher 1: annoying, painful, crazy, obnoxious, happy, nice, sweet, kind, rude, ignorant, ignoramus

Teacher 2: I consciously try not to use labels. Although, being a positive kind of person, I will try to combat any negative self-belief systems I observe in my students by telling them they are strong, capable etc.

Teacher 3: Teacher, Student, Staff, Principle team, Coordinator, Welfare, Bully, Victim, Parent, High, Medium Team, dominant, weak, manipulative, confidant, friendly, contributor, non-contributor, resistant, resilient, trouble-maker, competent, inaccurate, needs assistance, at-risk, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, innocent, lazy, clown, disengaged. Sporty, Arty, Creative, Problem –solver, teacher's pet, annoyance, opinionated, biased, popular, all-rounder.

2. What labels, if any, have been used by others to describe you in the last twelve months?

Teacher 1: Forgetful, thoughtful, helpful, obliging, kind, willing, nice, listener, anxious.

Teacher 2: Ha! What a great question! I've been labelled the following; bossy, nerd, geek, brat, skinny bitch, dear-heart, baby/babe, love.

Teacher 3: Graduate, teacher, mentor, soldier, open, creative, intuitive, strict, fair, dramatic, competent, personable.

3. How do you react to being labelled? Describe your emotions and behaviour in response to being labelled.

Teacher 1: Grateful, annoyed, angry, anxiety, thankful, flattered, disappointed.

Teacher 2: I can take most labels on the chin when they're coming from my nearest and dearest, especially when they're said with love, or I might use the label as a chance to perform to that role and have a laugh, e.g. What do you mean I'm bossy?!! However, if I don't agree or find something offensive or worrisome I'll engage with the provocateur to try and understand where that label is coming from – why they see that as something they should label me with (their intention is key). I was pretty taken aback with the skinny bitches label that myself and a bunch of friends copped when we went to a friend of a friend's 40th birthday party. The women at the party (that weren't part of our evening group) apparently didn't like us being there. I sometimes take a while to cotton-on to that kind of thing. So even when we left the venue and I heard a roar of cheers behind us I just assumed that something cool must've coincidently happened when we left. The next day the nasty tone was made more apparent as I was told that we'd been labelled skinny bitches etc. I was really sad and perplexed about that. I think it has affected me on a subconscious level as I find myself not wanting to go to parties anymore (of people I don't really know), as I'm expecting some woman is going to dislike me and be mean.

Teacher 3: Often I feel a sense of encouragement when given a positive label such as personable or creative mentor. But when given the label 'soldier', it took me back at first and made me question my work ethic. I wondered if the label given accurately described me or the person I want to be. If it is not the label I want to be known as then I would process how to change this perspective to something more suitable that I can take ownership of. I don't think you can escape being called some kind of descriptive 'label' in the classroom; it is however how you choose to embrace or reject that label, and if this is seen in a negative or positive light.

4. How has the use of labels been effective in your work?

Teacher 1: Response, effective, interaction, connection, understanding, helpful.

Teacher 2: Labels are only effective in my work (education) when they encourage positive self-belief or as an exercise to highlight the damage that negative labels can cause. Negative and positive is very subjective of course. But it's been good to have philosophical discussions with pre-service teachers about the consequences of even using gender labels, e.g. we looked at baby Storm and why the parents thought it important to withhold gender identification from the community. The social construct often places many expectations and limitations on a baby/child according to gender.

Teacher 3: When using labels such as: High, Medium or Low student, this often refers to the student's ability to understand the content taught and moderate assessment for student reports. I feel that this can only be effective when coupled with constructive feedback for the student. An explanation of why the student is set with constructive feedback for the student. An explanation of why the student is set with constructive feedback for the student. An explanation of why the student is set with a label at a certain level. Positive labels always give encouragement to students and to parents. Often labels are used when speaking to parents. For example, Your son is a creative, confident individual but can often be disruptive to the class behaving like a clown.

5. Have you ever heard the term 'disturbed student'?

Teacher 1: No, 'troubled student' from time to time!

Teacher 2: No I hadn't heard of this before Scott started this research.

Teacher 3 : No, not within the school. My understanding of a 'disturbed student' is one that is not at ease with the system and policy the school employs. For example, following rules within the classroom environment are not adhered to and as a result can be damaging to the students' sense of self-worth and learning style. I would label this type of student as 'disengaged'

6. What do you think 'disturbed student' means?

Teacher 1: The student's life is in turmoil, confusion, dysfunctional family, neglected, mixed up, poor guidance.

Teacher 2: I think it might be akin to another label that is thrown about all too readily in schools at the moment and that is 'at-risk student'. It implies at-risk of failing, at-risk of falling outside the social norms. I've noticed that this term 'at-risk' has been embraced and given a positive spin by advocates for homeschooling and unschooling, to something inferring that the student is merely at-risk of rising above the bureaucracy and institutionalisation of education.

Teacher 3: A student that is consistently disengaged with the content taught be it by means of learning difficulties, behaviour troubles, interruptions to concentration by distraction. A need to be challenged in other areas, or a need to be guided specifically and mentored to achieve a more positive outlook for their education.

7. Would you classify and of your current students as disturbed?

Teacher 1: No, troubled in some way, home life, disability, intellect.

Teacher 2: No. I have observed that some students are currently attached to negative self-belief patterns though, or that they might operate a lot out of fear instead of love.

Teacher 3: Yes. Although I wouldn't use the word disturbed. In my understanding the student would be labelled as disengaged.

8. What, if any qualities are shared by these students?

Teacher 1: Can be patient, listen, polite, sweet.

Teacher 2: No Response.

Teacher 3: Hyper activity, low concentration, a need for ownership of their work, need for extra guidance, lack of understanding of the world outside the school walls. Passion for one main area – usually practical work.

9. Do you have any students using welfare support services?

Teacher 1: I believe there are in this school!

Teacher 2: Most probably. I'm currently teaching on a casual basis in a number of different schools.

Teacher 3: Yes. Co-curricular programs and positive enrichment programs are aimed at these students to work within the community and to take responsibility for planning and presenting positive events within the school.

10. How has their involvement in the service affected their engagement in education?

Teacher 1: Can't answer this, non-teaching. Why should it? Fortunate to have the welfare support services.

Teacher 2: No response recorded.

Teacher 3: It is really beneficial. Without these programs a high majority of students would not be attending regular classes and at high risk of dropping out/ developing social and emotional and intellectual learning difficulties. Higher rates of attendance at school, engagement with peers and teachers and responsibility for actions is at a greater understanding.

11. What role can 'drama' and 'drama education' play in affecting the lives of labelled students in social treatment services?

Teacher 1: Wonderful, self-confidence, concentration, satisfaction, appreciation, sense of achievement, escapism, healthy. Much to be learnt! Character-building, interaction, social skills, group participation.

Teacher 2: I believe that the performing arts can be beneficial for all students. A drama teacher colleague once spoke with me about the challenges of getting some boys (raised in refugee camps) to participate in her class. I imagined myself in their shoes, trying to perform in this new language that I was already feeling very self-conscious about, so I suggested that the students might enjoy the freedom of performing in their native tongue. They did this with an understanding of respect with the teacher. The boys were much more engaged in drama classes and their confidence grew in other classes and with their peers in general. It was really lovely to see.

Teacher 3: Drama education will develop a rich understanding of emotional, social and intellectual understanding of society and perspective on the world in which we live. A program that will engage

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'disturbed' students in areas that give them a great sense of achievement and inclusion within the school. Connectedness to peers teachers and the community.

12. How do you perceive your role as an educator? What can drama *do* in terms of disturbing labels?

Teacher 1: A great deal of the aforementioned and move of the aforementioned and move on to a better student/person with optimism and spirit.

PS My daughters excelled with their studies, doing music, dance and drama at school.

Teacher 2: As an educator I align myself with the original Latin meaning of 'to educate' as in to draw out. To me, this means seeing the beauty in each student, knowing them and their interests and facilitating their natural growth. I'm sure that the possibilities of what drama can do to disturb labels is endless. I believe it's important to always allow time for debriefing and reflecting. That might be where the real learning occurs.

Teacher 3: As an educator my role is to facilitate and foster a greater understanding of society and knowledge. Drama education allows students to infer information about a social, emotional or intellectual context. Drama education can give disturbed students the opportunity to look through a different perspective and explore the nature of a topic through a more practical medium that is interactive and collaborative. This allows students to take ownership of their ideas and question stereotypes or labels within society. Exploring characterisation or conceptual ideas within the drama classroom allows students to step into someone else's shoes, comprehending knowledge of difference through creative enrichment.

APPENDIX II

THE TROUBLE WITH WRITING REALITY

The Trouble with Writing Reality
By Scott Welsh and Dusk Dundler
Published in The Conference Notes from Popcaanz: The Popular Culture Conference Australia and New Zealand, 2013.

The Australia and New Zealand Popular Culture Association of Australia and New Zealand (Popcaanz) is an association dedicated to the theoretical articulation and continuing investigation into popular culture. It embraces contemporary artistic practice and its place within the academy. The following chapter is based on a paper that was presented at the Popcaanz Conference 2013 and is soon due to be published in the conference proceedings. Written and presented in collaboration with documentary maker Dusk Dundler (The No Teeth People, Radio National), it explains and explores some of the ethical issues involved in the process of creating and presenting what I call 'real fiction theatre'.

This also offers an insight into the issues of consent and other ethical considerations explored in chapter six. The students themselves seemed not to be concerned by the idea that, whilst they may offer their consent now, they may wish to disown the work at a later date. The knowledge I had acquired from my practice, outlined below, meant that I was particularly concerned about the welfare of the students and the potential for sensitive material contained in the monologues to create discomfort for them regardless of where or to whom they were made available.

Article: **The Trouble with Writing Reality**

The necessity for fiction was probably born of the problem of taboo on certain revelations. It was not only a need of the imagination but an answer to the limitations placed on portrayal of others. (Nin 1976: 155)

The primary ethical question of how one ought to treat one's neighbour becomes crucial when one is recreating the neighbour through a practice we call 'real fiction theatre-making'. This has a relationship with other forms of performance such as documentary theatre or verbatim theatre, both of which attempt to represent reality with an enhanced sense of authority. (Wake 2011; Mumford & Wake 2010) Where documentary theatre uses the conversational engagement to establish facts and verbatim theatre to collect quotations for use on stage, real fiction records and observes this engagement and considers it a form of theatre. 'real fiction theatre-making', whilst paying attention to factual detail, accepts that the creative product of the play is made from an engagement between the 'subject', or source of the represented experience, and the creator or inventor of the plot.

This notion of conversation and invention is considered at length in this article, as well as the ethical problem it creates. For this task we claim that the construction of the world as language, fundamental to the work of Wittgenstein, is crucial to an understanding of 'real fiction theatre'. The question of how we perceive the world and, consequently, how we behave in the world, both as writers and subjects, is contested in this paper, using Wittgenstein's theories of language and perception. And we will use Lacan's 'mirror stage' concept to view the unfolding of a real fiction play in its making and execution. We will further examine the background and context of real fiction theatre and by stepping through the process of a real fiction play we will investigate the challenges of representation, for the playwright and the character. And drawing toward conclusion we will also examine how the playwright/poet reacts to his own representation and the new ethical considerations this poses.

Lacan's 'mirror stage' needs some clarification here. The mirror stage finds its origins as a psychoanalytic concept, referring to a stage of the child's development where he/she recognises him/herself in the mirror. Quite suddenly he/she becomes conscious that the hand in the mirror is *his/her* hand. (Lacan 2001: 1285-

90) However, Lacan's 'mirror stage' concept has recently been used as a way of understanding the unity or disunity of the 'self' and the 'image' by creating the contrast of the self acting and experiencing as well the image that appears in the mirror. (Lynch 2008)

As writers, our engagement with the world objectifies subjects so as to represent them for our own purposes. The social subject in conversation becomes the character on stage. The philosophical distinction between the subject of the knower and the object of what is known is eroded because the writer situates him/herself at the centre of existence. When the writer enters your world, he becomes the knower and if the subject of your being takes his fancy, you become the object. He writes about you but when his writing is complete, it is not about you. You are recreated in his vision so that, in his world, you are *not* yourself. The problem with this is that you are yourself and you are real in your own context, in real social surroundings, quite distinct from the artifice invented by the author.

Real fiction should be viewed as an experience that is expansive, employing various creative approaches to an empirically real and genuine human experience. This also includes the documentation of the work, through radio and film, explored later in this article. In the wider sense real fiction takes stock from writers such as Hunter S. Thompson, The Beats, and representations of reality through Anais Nin and Henry Miller.

The process for making 'real fiction theatre', however, is quite specific. In the case of verbatim theatre, the idea of taking direct quotes and reproducing them in the context of performance is said to give the work more factual authority. Documentary theatre also collects and collates the facts of an event and proposes that theatre can give us social insight and understanding by presenting these on stage. (Wake 2011; Mumford & Wake 2010) As distinct from Documentary and Verbatim theatre, we claim the work of constructing 'real fiction theatre' involves creating and exploring 'conversational realities'. (Shotter 1993) The writing of real fiction theatre, which involves observing and recording 'voices' from the author's experience, can create original drama for popular culture audiences and also make a social statement.

> *The play is nine-tenths removed from the truth, at least nine-tenths removed from the truth…[But] the part describing the mental hospital, the 'judgement area' and the way it [the play] says that*

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you're brought in there drugged and in a gown and they're all there well-dressed, elegant surroundings or whatever, and, yeah, they're standing in judgement of you.(Interview accessed from 'man on mental health' You Tube 15/9/2013)

This is a direct quote from the subject of the play, *The Biography of a Battler (The Battler)*. He is speaking of the play's content. His comment on the play and its relationship to 'the truth' is borne from his recognition of himself and his family in the play. This quote is significant because it reveals the relationship between real fiction and 'the truth'. The events in the play have little relationship to the truth, except as a means of the author expressing specific observations about the character. However, the character is sourced from the speech rhythms of the real subject. Hence, the subjects' observation here that the play is '…nine-tenths removed from the truth…'

Realism is a bad word. In a sense everything is realistic. I see no line between the imaginary and the real. I see much reality in imagination. (Fellini, 1967)

What gives me the audacity to believe that I exist? How do I come to be the one who experiences, while the other is merely an object in my existence? Indeed, it is possible that the other does not exist. It is unlikely that you are a figment of my imagination but entirely possible. For whilst I can see you, touch you and hear you, I cannot truly be in your body nor can I think with your mind. I cannot smell through your nose or hear through your ears. In order to understand the phenomenon of your seeing, hearing, smelling etc., to know how it feels for you to experience 'x', I must be you. Even if I have experienced 'x' I cannot know what the experience of 'x' is for you.

Whilst this is not a philosophical investigation as such, Descartes' radical uncertainty has left its footprint on the social sciences in general and Lacan is said to describe a state of anxiety that comes from the awareness one can be viewed (Descartes 1647; Lacan 2001) And so the philosophy goes that I am not only myself but the image of myself. I exist along with my mirror image, a caricature distorted by the reflection process. (Lacan 2001) Perhaps the mirror glass is foggy or cracked and certainly Lacan describes the infant as not being alone. The importance of mother's presence as a prop (to hold the infant up to the mirror) is not understated in Lacan's view. He also mentions a libidinal encounter, suggesting both

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a social and traumatic interaction with the other. The existence of the other's gaze, according to Lacan, comes from a realization at the mirror stage that one is not only oneself and one's image but the being of the self can be viewed by the other, interpreted and given meaning that is not intentional and is perhaps not always one's own. We are not only ourselves 'being in the world', we are also the image of ourselves as we see in the mirror (or as we are seen by the other/mother).

Like the realization at the mirror stage that one can be seen, the experience of being written can produce the very anxiety of which Lacan speaks. This is associated with the realization that one has an external appearance as well as an internal experience. That is, the knowledge that one is an object in reality as well as a subject in one's own narrative. We claim that this phenomenon is experienced by the subject who encounters and is objectified by the writer.

The Battler is borne from the voices of real people, in some instances the words of these people have been directly inserted into the work, in others they have been symbolised by inserting imaginary characters. This is the beginning of a long unearthing process, between the writer and the subject(s), from which many different and extreme views can grow.

The real people are at first shocked that they had been represented in a work of fiction and then offended and distressed as they begin to see elements of themselves in the represented characters. When the author began to receive phone calls from the real people, claiming the play affected them in 'x' or 'y' manner; that they were being portrayed as a 'bad mother' or a 'mentally ill man'; or a victim of incest, it seemed impossible for him to explain the representation to them. And this is partially because he was talking to the objects of his creation rather than the subject of their experience. And, whether they were entitled to it or not, they felt they owned the work and by disrespecting their wishes, he was somehow abusing their trust. Not only did they feel the gaze of the other but they sensed the gaze was somehow sinister and threatening or disturbing.

Ways of Perceiving The Battler

In the program for *The Battler*, the author claims that the writing is not a play, not theatre, nothing vaguely resembling that art-form. This also tackles the process of contradictions that is real fiction, by attempting

not to be theatre, but something else operating with wider terms of reference in investigation. Inevitably though once it presented upon a stage it becomes and a form theatre. Despite the fact that it is programmed as a play in a theatre, the author considers it his job to authentically represent the experience of those characters. Using his own experience and observations of their conversational speech rhythms the author constructs a social statement circling around a critique of the mental health system.

The events themselves do not actually occur but the writing is like a painting of a scene or various scenes observed by the author. These include various interactions with mental health professionals; doctors and nurses. The author describes their behaviour toward the patient to be generally dehumanizing and an objectification. Therefore they are the objective voice of authority for the patient and revert to speaking subjects in their interactions with each other. This is represented in the play:

'Nurse 2: I'm a nurse. I believe this man is dying and his ailment is not physical. What am I if I simply let that happen?

Nurse 1: He's not dying of some imaginary ailment that is as you put it 'not physical' and, even if he was, it's not our job to do anything about it!

Nurse 2: Then what is our job?

Nurse 1: Sometimes I wonder about you, Julia. I mean which side are you on?

Nurse 2: What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

Nurse 1: Whatever the fuck you want it to mean! Let's give this loony his lollies so I can get home and watch the cricket on the telly.' (Welsh 2009)

Wittgenstein states that 'If you see the leaf in a particular way, you use it in such and such a way according to such and such rules'. (Wittgenstein 1953: 35) This articulates the transgression of the writer and the way in which the rules are broken in the real fiction research/creative process. Consider the context of a

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'conversation' between a medical doctor and a patient or a policeman and a criminal suspect, a welfare worker and a client. Such power relationships are subject to 'duty of care' laws in Australia and are defined by pre-established boundaries, in such and such a way according to such and such rules.

If you see this leaf as a participant of 'leaf shape' in general, you see it differently to someone who regards it as a participant of this particular shape. (Wittgenstein 1953: 35) How does Wittgenstein's statement relate to the practice of real fiction? Supposing the 'leaf' constitutes the conversation and the 'leaf shape' its speech rhythms as perceived by the writer. We claim that these relationships involve the objectification of one of the conversational participants. When one writes the real person, he/she says 'but I was just living, why can't you leave me alone?'

In the play, the protagonist has a mother. Both of these characters are based on real people but, in their new context, they *become* representations on stage. Indeed, this performance is reviewed as a piece of theatre. The reviews are then read by the real people who are shocked. They not only identify themselves but see themselves being psychoanalysed and/or criticised:

'Welsh makes it very clear in his script that the operational procedures for mental health in this country are failing. [0] [But he] is more interested in examining the intimate dynamic of the family, the suppression of unsavoury family secrets, and the cancerous effect of guilt and shame upon people who have no way of understanding and articulating these powerful human emotions. Central to this examination is the presence of Teddy Rose's mother. It is difficult not to conclude that her actions have been irresponsible, if not implicitly vituperative.' (Reck 2012)

In this extract from the review, the intention of the play is clearly stated but so is an implicit accusation toward the mother. To others this Freudian aspect may seem less overt. However, like the play, the review exists in public discourse. When the mother reads this and what follows, she becomes extremely distressed:

'As the play progresses it becomes apparent that within the Rose family, there has occurred an inherited stream of paedophiliac behaviour. Teddy's father was in the habit of rolling around on the living room floor

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with visiting neighbourhood children. Furthermore, this trait was absorbed and adopted by Teddy Rose himself, resulting in the sexual assault of his sister.' (Reck 2012)

From their perspective, the play was about them and everything that happened in the play was an accusation. While the real person on which the speech rhythms of the protagonist was based was aware of the plays content for quite sometime and knew it had been performed, it was not until a season was booked in his own city of residence and his mother became concerned, that the family became hostile toward the play. In actuality, two of the six characters were based on members of the family who made the serious threats of legal action: the mother and son. The character of the sister was entirely fictional and based on research relating to incest survivors. This research was both conversational and library based.

The problem here comes from the primary practice real fiction research. That is, taking the voices of people from empirical experience and using their speech patterns to comment on a social issue. In this instance, the real person seems to understand the process well enough to see himself in the fiction, but also as removed from his own experience. The mother seems unable to do so.

This may constitute a further revelation or insight into being the mother of a man in the mental health system, or indeed being a mother in general. Once the creative process unveils this revelation, the ethical question of how the author ought to respond becomes the focus of the work and the task of putting on a play becomes 'not putting on a play'. The social comment becomes about the sense of guilt a mother feels and the response is *to not* shine a light on such issues. The writer's gaze is translated in the mother's world as a threat of surveillance. She feels the extent of the threat to be so painful as to respond with legal action should the play be remounted. To continue with this work against the will of the subjects of its inspiration would be against the ethos of creating the work.

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The No Teeth People & Wittgenstein on Time and Meaning

Wittgenstein says 'when I heard this word, it meant x to me' (Wittgenstein 1953: 174), claiming this refers to a point in time (the 'when') and a way of using or perhaps even hearing the word. Wittgenstein then refers to time and action and says that 'essential references' of an utterance combine with the context (time and way of talking) to create meaning. When we say to someone 'I have no idea what you are talking about' (though I hear you and understand your language), it means we are hearing the content in the context but are not familiar with the 'essential references'.

The No Teeth People (Dundler & Welsh, 2008), as an audio piece, travels between the different genres of documentary, poetry and play. It also has several guises in its changing contexts, though the content remains essentially the same. Those contexts include the streets from which the data is sourced and the subjects/characters to whom *The No Teeth People* refers. There is the context of the work in its street book form, being the origin of the work. It remains on the street but also becomes a reflection on the culture it describes, the world in which the reader walks. The 'no teeth people' exist primarily as beings, as subjects that are objectified to a degree by the small street poetry book. Then Radio National makes a documentary seemingly objectifying the author of the book. The writer, who has experienced having no teeth, transforms from a person into the object of the 'no teeth people'. The objectification that occurs as a result of the writer's gaze in *The No Teeth People* backfires, when the poet, Scott Welsh, is objectified by the de-contextualisation of himself, through his representation in the radio piece.

The idea that one is being viewed, and in this case heard, objectified and that this objectification alters the subject is consistent throughout the process. By claiming the voice of the 'no teeth people', Scott 'scary Teeth' Welsh (now the character) in fact takes the same voice away. By identifying himself as a 'speaking subject' all the rest become objects. The producer edits the prose poem, overlays it with interviews, adds dramatic atmosphere to create the malleable subject with its various voices. The final work directly or indirectly objectifies Welsh, so that his voice is taken from him, he becomes one of the 'no teeth people' of which he speaks. He is no longer the writer of the text but the subject matter for a documentary, a specimen being observed rather than being the observer.

The producer acknowledges the writer's resentment at being portrayed as a 'homeless man' rather than a poet, on the ABC program's webpage when the piece is re-aired. (360documentaries 20 May 2012) The writer has no control over how he is interpreted or portrayed. What is at issue for this writer is not the idea that he has experienced periods of homelessness but that he is stigmatised as a 'homeless man'. A stark comparison exists with the subject in *The Battler*, who sees his identity eclipsed by the portrayal of himself as 'a mentally ill man'.

The notable difference between the objectified subject of *The Battler* and Scott 'scary Teeth' Welsh is that the former is inescapably contained in an identity, a skin he wishes to shed. Whilst the latter, Welsh, himself a poet and artist, is able to embrace and willingly participate in his own objectification. In this sense he is also re-subjectified by participating in the creation and promotion of the documentary in which he is objectified. Whether he likes it or not he will be perceived as one of the 'no teeth people'. He accepts these perceptions as part of his 'working conditions'. While the subject from *The Battler* is also scarred by the creative process, to a degree he recognises it as a platform for his views and sharing of experience within the mental health system. (See interview accessed from 'man on mental health' YouTube 15/9/2013)

In real fiction both writer and subject of the writing find themselves in the same social world with remarkable similarities in experience. This phenomenon ought to create empathy but this is not always the case. It still lingers, this whisper of how one is seen and perceived by the other. This complex social world is the site of inquiry for the playwright's investigation and rarely presents itself as a simple and cohesive narrative. Rather, it is delivered through the chaotic and painful world of human experience. The problem of how one reconciles the ethical challenges of what one ought to write, with what one must write if one is to be truthful, remains the single most difficult task for the writer of plays and documentaries.

APPENDIX III

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

The following information was provided to participating school, through the drama Department and its staff:

Monologue writing Workshop

Location: Victorian State Secondary School in western suburbs of Melbourne

Context: Year 11 Drama Class

Duration: 120 minutes (Double-period)

Objectives

- To engage creatively with secondary students in an educational environment.
- To encourage 'social theatre' in student monologues.
- To collect student perspectives on social labelling in monologue form.

    Goals

- To attend a double period of drama at the participating school as a researching playwright.
- To observe and participate in the classroom activity of creating dramatic monologues with an element of social reflection.
- To collect and collate the outcome of the workshop in the form of student monologues to be written by the researching playwright into a dramatic play.

Processes and Considerations

With the above goals and objectives in mind, I will attend a drama class in which the teacher will guide a drama class in the writing of monologues based around the issue of labelling students in education. I will then collect the monologues, using their content as primary, subjective data; analysing them as student perspectives and identifying students' voices in the work. Once these

subjective voices are found in the original writings of the students, I will use them as prompt material for a dramatic play.

This drama, while inevitably subjective, will be imagined as objective data. In the same way that medical data is divided into 'subjective' and 'objective'; the former what the patient relates about their own body and the latter what is observed by doctors, the data collected in this thesis will be divided into the subjective of the students' voices expressed in their monologues and the 'objective' of what is written by the playwright. The question of objectivity, its possibility or impossibility, its use and misuse is central to the conduct and analysis of this study.

Reproduced here is the lesson plan for the engagement with the participating school:

Real Fiction Lesson Plan

Objective: To elicit a monologue from students that is original and based on their personal experience, exploring the subject of labels.

Time: 40-60 minutes

Materials: Notepads and pens, computers if applicable.

Procedure:

Preparation: Participating students and teachers will be given surveys/questions to complete prior to the engagement.

1. Explain the process of writing real fiction monologues from experience and 'speech rhythms' on issues and social subject matter, with the example (perhaps utilising Mary-Rose). Encourage questions and discussion.
2. Explain the procedure to students. The play consists of the character of the teacher and the monologue I have developed for her. What I will be requiring from the students are monologues on labelling to be inserted into the work. The students will have this task explained to them.
3. Gibberish conversation exercises in pairs to inspire rhythms from which students can write (5-10 minutes).
4. Give students 15-30 minutes writing time (15-30 minutes). Students will be instructed to write about labels, labelling, being labelled and the consequences of being labelled. Students will be asked, in their writing, to either to speak for themselves or to speak for someone else, considering the example presented. Students will then be instructed to consider a label they may have heard used or may have used themselves, that may have been used to describe them or someone else.

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5. Encourage students to get back into pairs and swap monologues (students read one another's monologues and offer feedback). Students have the opportunity to act as writers and actors here, and work with each other to develop script/monologue (20 minutes).
6. Brief group discussion on monologues and what they collectively say about labels.

Homework: If necessary, students may have the opportunity to finalise monologues before submitting to student researcher through teacher at some later date.

Social labels for students to choose from: Homeless person, troubled or disturbed student, mentally ill, boat person, 'client', 'mallrat'.

Other labels for students to consider: emo, slag, nerd.

Note: *In this section, I will discuss whether these can be considered 'labels'. How is the idea of a label affected by where it comes from? If it is in the school yard, is it a label? What is the difference/relationship between labelling and teasing?*

Students will be asked if they can think of any labels commonly used in their own social world.

What makes us apply these labels? What is the relationship between the 'label' and the 'labelled' individual?

Students will be asked to consider 'labels from their own social world, at school or with friends, from which they can write their own monologues if they wish.

Some of these are descriptions, such as 'single mother' or 'homeless'. One of the things to consider and discuss is the difference between a genuine description of a person's situation and a label.

Social Labels: Monologue prompts – first sentence

Homeless person: I wandered round for so long, me wanderin' became a way of life. I sleep in Salvation Army shelters and eat where I can but what bothers me most is the way people look at me…

Troubled (disturbed) student: Learning can be a tricky thing, for anyone. I thought I was doing okay until they put me in a special class for 'troubled kids'. Then I said to the teacher, 'What does that even mean?'

Mentally ill: I found it hard to keep clean and pay me bills and for me ills they gave me pills. I never heard voices though, except the ones that called me schizophrenic…But no-one ever asked what made me so…

Mall rat: So I'm sitting in the middle of the town, though nowadays they call it a city. I'm sittin doin nothin because I'm young and there's nothin' to do here and the people invent a name for me and others like me. They call us mallrats…
(http://www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/article/2010/11/10/224591_news.html)[vii]

Client: So I go into the place. It's my first day on the program and I ask the ones behind the counter what it's all about. And they say, 'Are you a worker or a client? When I say client they whisper to each other and silently point me to another door…

Barton, & D. (2000). *Letter Writing as Social Practice*. Amsterdam,
The Netherlands: John Benjamin's Publishing Company.
Squires, A. (2012). *The Social and Political Theatre of Bertolt Brecht.* (Doctor of Philosophy),
        West Michigan University, West Michigan.   (126)

APPENDIX IV

RETHINKING DISTURBING LABELS: PLAY UNINTERRUPTED

W1: Yeah, yeah, got that. (this is to introduce the character and to provide the speech rhythms) Yep, got

em. (maybe that's a blackboard duster) Got them too. Oh, no! I forgot the white-board markers. Did I give

them to you? Oh, that's alright they must be in my bag…I'll leave them for you. In my office. You can pick

them up. Or, I'll drop them off, at reception and get Marg to hold onto them for you… (hangs up the phone.

Remember that we are working toward the snakes and coins. With this idea in mind, she starts searching

for her whiteboard markers.)… **(1.2)** Bum! There they are! Right in front of me! (she picks one up and

stares at it at eye level, showing it to the audience) What is this thing anyway? What do we use it for? I

mean, it's a texta, a whiteboard marker but not everyone sees it that way. If I was walking down a tunnel in

Flinders St. Station on a Sunday morning at 4am, wearing a 'hoodie' and the police found this in my bag, I

might be arrested under suspicion of making graffiti or tagging, they call it! But look, look at how many of

these things I've got and because I'm a teacher and they're for teaching, that's fine, that's totally fine with

the authorities! (*this is from observation of the voice. It's a nuance in the subject's voice patterns that have*

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a tendency to create this kind of exclamation. In terms of writing a character, it is observations like this that

we write in to be maybe changed later or removed, it's just recording this nuance).

I could probably walk into the university with a replica pistol, hold it up to someone on reception and make some sort of threat like 'Give me your money!' or 'Give me your academic records!' and no-one would bat an eye-lid…(she's gathering whiteboard markers out of a large handbag and in between a whole lot of other stuff is retrieved, like tissues and…you know a girl's handbag…I can't think of much more stuff just now but the markers are pulled out in a very disorganised fashion!)

So I've got her white board markers, her textas or taggers, depending on where you're from, or where you're going to. But I can't just give them to her like this! They'll end up dropping all over the place. They might end up in someone else's bag! Might never make to her and definitely never to the classroom! And they want their white-board markers in the classroom! There's a lot of things they don't want but whiteboard markers isn't one of them! (She lays the whiteboard markers out on the ground, connects them all together and bends them like a snake-a slide of this image appears behind her. She looks at it for a second and then kind of ignores it, bundling up the markers and moving on her way.)

I've got my own kids to worry about, anyway! Well, students…I've got my own kids to worry about too but the students come first. Or they're supposed to, aren't they?

W1: Hi everyone! Is everyone ready to do some drama? How is everyone? Okay, let's get started. Let's all get into pairs. Or groups of four. Or five. (aside). Remember that we're all going to eventually join together

so you'll only be in these groups for a little while. Okay, who hasn't got a group? Alright, well let's start a

new group over here…What? What's that? What did Jeremy do? Now, are we all in groups of four or five?

Who hasn't got a group?

(And it is here that the 'social risks' of drama education become acutely apparent and are perhaps more so

than other subject areas. We are 'playing' here and we are playing both in the fictional social space of

drama and the real space of interactive, conversational and social reality. Drama more than any other field,

both with young people and adults, reminds us that we are dealing with the brittle social aspects of

ourselves where we may feel excluded or unwanted? The work of a drama teacher is as much about

dealing with these sensitivities as it is about representing or facilitating representation through classroom

activity.)

What's that? The kids come up with stories about snakes and rings. I'm not bored, never bored. It's never

boring. My job, that is. I don't get bored anyway! Boredom is not part of my repertoire. Getting bored is like

being disturbed by noise. There's noise everywhere, all the time, and yet only some of it disturbs. And it

only disturbs certain people too. Like snakes and rings. The kids are just brain storming. Snakes enter their

world, their stage and then rings become a symbol in their game. They don't understand that to the

Buddhists they're talking up eternity. For Freud, the ring, the hole is most likely an orifice. For Jung, the

circle represented eternity. The snake pretty much meant the same thing to both of them. (pause) I don't

need to tell you what that is.

W1: (To students) Okay here's what we're going to do today, I want everyone to write a monologue on

labels and labelling, the labellers and labelled. Who makes labels and how?

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(Teacher on e-mail. Reading to herself.)

Dear Educator,

As a national research organisation we are committed to ensuring that students are provided with a state of the art education that is world-class and fulfils our obligations to these young and vulnerable people. As such, we request that students be divided into those we might label 'disturbed' and those we might class as 'undisturbed', in accordance with our charter to respond to each and every student's needs.

This labelling will enable us to charter educational programs that are cutting edge and that reflect the sociology of the contemporary school environment. By giving students a label, by classifying them as disturbed or undisturbed, we can provide better educational outcomes and further enhance the progressive educational environment on which we pride ourselves here in Victoria, Australia.

We would like to formally request that you divide your students into the following categories:

A) TROUBLED (ABNORMAL?)

B) UNTROUBLED (NORMAL?)

C) NONE OF THE ABOVE

Regards,

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(*walks to audience*)

W1: Yes. Hello. I have just received this 'instruction' and I think perhaps there's been a mistake. You see, I'm a drama teacher…I understand that but I consider it my job to create and help the kids create. This correspondence is asking me to categorise students, label them troubled or untroubled. As far as I'm concerned human existence is disturbing. In this sense, we are all troubled. What is life but trouble? If it weren't for trouble, what would happen? But only some of us are labelled…Hello? Hello?

I can't classify my students as troubled or otherwise. How do I respond to this? What can I do to say I don't believe in this process, I don't agree. How do I tell them I will not fill in your form? It is not and cannot be mine. It doesn't belong to me or my process. It is somewhere else, for someone else, someone I don't know or care about. It is not drama. Drama has no forms attached to it, just the students. All drama needs is an empty space and the students. Wait a minute! They want a response from me, in my role as a teacher, labelling my students.

Scene 2

DATA FROM WORKSHOP/STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

The students' writing is in roman font while the writer/student researcher's additions/interpretations/edits are in italics.

Student 1: An average day in the life of me at school is filled with a lot of bullshit, a lot of lies. Labels tie in with this. One thing I have noticed no matter how many labels you hear they are all originating from the same people: the popular kids. *Just who the popular kids are, where they come from, what they've got that everyone else hasn't, that can change from day to day, hour to hour. Why should I be burdened by their thoughts? What makes their labels mean anything? Who says they mean more than me? What if I said your words about me mean nothing and I'll make my own labels? By doing this do I become one of them?*

Sure I've been labelled too. It doesn't matter what that label was. The important thing is that you know the popular kids made it. *Do we live in a world where, in order to believe in myself I need the endorsement of others? I'm glad I'm not one of them (to audience) I'm glad I'm not one of you!* Why is it that no-one labels them? Maybe they are the true faggots, wankers, weirdos (*this bit reminds me of that Joe Jackson song, Real Men, '…but now and then you wonder who the real men are??) Are we not all faggots, weirdos and,*

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well, we're definitely all wankers. Freud named masturbation or wanking as the first and foremost addiction!! What does the word 'weird' mean? What does it describe? It is what I do not know. Or what I did not know yesterday. It is not a negative. Estragon says of Vladimir 'Everyfing seems black to him today', meaning of course bleak. But is black bleak? Is darkness death? (This is a very western white view of the world which we have all adopted. If you are black skinned is blackness equal to bleakness? Perhaps then blackness equals beauty sand whiteness is blindingly hostile? It's interesting that this is) What might sleep bring but tomorrow in all its hope and splendour? Who is to say who or what the normal ones are?

Popularity isn't about having friends, it's a state of being. And a state of popularity shouldn't give you the right to label others badly, it only makes the hard life of a weirdo even harder! We, who have been labelled by those who live in a state of popularity, will never try to change that label. We will accept it, embrace it*, walking proudly in this scarred and wounded skin, damaged by the perception of others.*

Student 2: I've been labelled, sure, I mean who hasn't? Everyone has a label, good or bad, and everyone uses them. A lot of them are bad. We walk down the street and in our mind we label everyone we see. Is that bad? *I do it too. It's like, like a way of seeing the world that's eases the mind and the eye, makes the world easy to understand. Maybe it's lazy to label people because I just can't be bothered looking at you or you or you, I mean really looking and understanding and knowing and telling you, 'This is what I think of you. I'm lazy, we're all lazy. We use labels because the alternative's too hard. To have a conversation with someone we don't understand would mean learning a new language, understanding and maybe accepting a new way of life, another way of being and that might mean changing our own and why would anyone want to do that? Whoever you are, whatever it is, if you don't get it, easier just to put a name on it, give it a label.* I'm just guessing here but I don't think I'm the only one who does it. *We live in a world full of labels.*

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You can see people labelling others when you're just walking down the street. It's in their eyes. The judgemental eyes casting down on all the people we pass. *And the world evolves and unfolds into the touchables and untouchables, like the Indian Caste System. You know, they call them mallrats, the ones hanging on the street, the ones you pass on the street and you go to walk toward them and your parents tug at your arm and drag you back, nobody goes to the gutter for fun, no-one becomes a hobo for a holiday!*

You can see people labelling others when you're just walking down the street. It's in their eyes. The judgemental eyes cast down on the people as they pass. *We're all divided by the stares of those who make the world of 'us' and 'them'.* I'm one of 'us' (to audience). *You're 'them'! Look at them! What are they? What should I call them? What are you? What should I say you are?* Some say this guy's a freak. Gay, faggot! Fat! Ugly! I know there're people who have thought all of the above but what do I care? I'd probably think the same if the situation was reversed, *if you were different from me and I felt threatened by your difference. I'd want to give you a name, just to make sense of you*.

Then there are the good labels I can see in people's eyes, *the ones you want to be known by, the labels you strive to hide inside like Dr. or maybe you'd like to be Mrs or Mr so bad, you don't care who it is that you're a Mr or Mrs. with. Or there's other positive labels too like 'winner' of this or 'achiever' of that. You know, like the Olympics. What is it? Maybe it's just a dude standing on a stage with a gold medal round his neck - would probably just look stupid if you didn't know what it was….I haven't been stamped with too many good or positive labels, most of the ones used to describe me have been bad, real bad, for me anyhow.* Sometimes it seems that a lot more other people have been given these, most of my family have

been blessed with these. The label is in the eyes of those 'inside', *the insiders*. I get looks sometimes from my own family. Strangers look at me like I'm an outsider in my own family and sometimes I wonder if maybe I'm adopted and nobody ever told me. *If the world were divided into labelled and labeller, I would be everyone's everything!!*

Student 3: People like labels. As much as some people deny it, people go out of their way to dress or behave a certain way just so that their peers label them as cool or depressed or uninterested. Don't you think? (*When did cool and depressed become the same thing? This is interesting because cool is 'out there' while depressed is internal)* Take Molly, for example, have you seen the way she has started dressing? Her behaviour is all different and people have only just started to notice. They talk about her behind her back now, call her depressed and weird and I can tell she's loving it! She's an attention seeker, that's what she is. There's nothing wrong with her! She just wants sympathy. She isn't the only one though. All these guys that behave like dickheads in class. They know the teachers have labelled them as useless idiots and they love it!

(I like how she begins with a general consideration of labels and moves to the more specific instance of the girl and how she's started dressing etc. Here, the philosophical questions of who we are and how we are perceived are considered by the student. Her general question regards fashion and this has been a subject with which I have had some contact recently through the Popcaanz Conference, including fashion as one of its panels/general subject areas. This monologue illustrates the philosophical importance of fashion and image creation to how one feels about oneself.)

We not only exist as ourselves but in the gaze of the other and this has recently been a concern in the ethics and practice of my playwriting. This also seems to be important in this student's conception of how

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labelling and labels operate in the sociological world of school. Notice the interaction between internal experience and external perceptions of the self?

What was interesting for me is that I was looking for students' feelings or responses to being labelled by teachers. However, the responses had very little to say about teachers, parents or the 'adult' outside world. The student participants seemed to exist in their own social 'bubble', with themselves and each other and very few others. This perhaps gives us some insight into the devastating effects of bullying and how such processes operate for the student participants who, according to the monologue responses, are not concerned at all about labels that come from outside, from the broader social reality. This was not what I expected!!)

Student 4: No-one knows what they're talking about. They're all stupid imbeciles who don't give a shit about their education and just want to do drugs and party. *I would like to know if there's anyone with any intelligence here! Hello! Hello! Is there anybody out there who thinks? Are there any philosophers left or are they all dead?* If you ask someone a simple question about physics they just take a wild guess that is completely wrong since they hadn't paid any attention in school. I can't even have an intelligent conversation with my own friends without it turning into a debate because they don't have a clue about any of the facts. Idiots…Idiots everywhere, I'm surrounded by them. Am I the only person with any intelligence in the world?

Student 5: I go by names. A label isn't a category unless you make it. Saying that you hate being labelled for what you are or what you're not is just you being a whiny carns because you walk down the street and judge and label everyone you notice because that's what people do. You notice, make observation, give

label, walk off. *To label is a way of talking, a way of describing what you're seeing in the world, a way of communicating. Remember that, in the old Testament, God gave names to all the animals, they were labelled. In one of our founding myths, our way of understanding is through this idea of labelling but this notion of seeing, labelling then walking away is precisely what some of us do, particularly in authority. Think of the case of psychiatric assessment. But is it enough to just name someone? Do we really know anything about something or someone just by knowing how to refer to it? How do we arrive at knowing what to call something, how to refer to it and once we do, do we really know anything more or have we just learnt to conform to what everyone else says and thinks about whatever we're looking at and labelling? (maybe this character can be looking at another person).*

Even the word 'label' is annoying. I mean, come on! Being bullied is being singled out and to feel like crap. (sic.) Someone calling you a skank or bitch, asshole, whatever, is someone passing comment, judging you from the only perspective they know.

Student 6: *I am standing here, looking at you all, labelling you, every single one of you. But don't tell anyone, it's a secret. It's a secret even though it's what I've been taught to do ever since I could walk. Or before I could walk…ever since I learned to think. And, can anyone tell me when we learn to think? It is once I know who I am, who I am supposed to be in the world, in society, that I learn how to tell others what they are.* Everyone labels, even if we don't say it out loud. *That's what thinking is, using your judgement, judging. And in a way learning is all about labelling. When we don't know what something is, we say, 'What's that?' And if you know the answer, well, then you're clever!* I mean you look at someone who looks like a junkie and you assume they are. *You say 'What's that? And the answer you give, the answer you know and have been taught is 'Junkie!'* Straight away. It's an automatic thing. I mean I labelled them to

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make a point. You make a label to be able to describe someone/something. It's how we know what is what and who is who. *What I am really saying by calling you Junkie is that 'YOU ARE NOT ME!'* It's almost cruel in a way but we'd be nowhere without it. *I don't mean to be cruel, it's just how I was taught to be part of society and I see the grim-looking scab-faced, drawn, thin gaunt sick man before me, gnawing on his rotting teeth, falling from his mouth as he goes and he says to me 'I'm cold.' But I can't quite hear him. He says it again and this time I understand but I feel like I can't do anything, just stare at him like he's an object because he is, to me, he's a junkie. Like I said it's cruel but* I guess that's how our society will always work.

Student 7: My brother calls me fat. He's a li'l shit. I get in trouble for calling him a li'l shit *but how much damage is done by that compared to him calling me fat?!?!* It's not his fault. He's nine. *He probably doesn't even know what 'fat' is. Do I really know? Why does it hurt so much, being called 'fat'? I mean do I feel fat? Sometimes. Am I really fat, though? I look in the mirror at myself sometimes and I can hear a little voice in my head saying 'Fat, fat, fat…' and then I've got him in the background right behind me and just as the imaginary voice fades out, I hear the little shit and see him smirking behind me in the mirror. So I'm not even looking at myself in the mirror. I'm looking at him! And maybe I'm seeing what he thinks!!* He says I'm ugly but it doesn't matter because he's nine! He calls me lazy because I sleep til midday. *But one day he will grow and so will I and I will shed my puppy fat and see myself as beautiful. He will want to know me because I'll be very cool and I'll want to know him because I'll need my brother. But what if he's gone too far for me to love him anymore? What if I just can't trust him?* I get in trouble for sleeping so late. Nobody would even notice if he didn't bring it up! He knows this. He thinks it's funny. Because he's nine.

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He's young, a child. But then so am I. Who isn't, anyway? When do we stop being children? Being called fat makes me feel so lonely, so lonely. I'm THE LONLIEST PERSON ON THE PLANET, WHEN HE CALLS ME FAT! He laughs. He thinks it's funny. What's funny about my loneliness?(starts squealing louder and louder and louder)Ha Ha! She's alone! HaHa! She's a monster, growing outward like an oil leak…FAT! FAT! FAT! How is that funny? I'm shouting but can anybody hear me. Does he know how much it hurts? It's only because I'm a girl that it matters.[vii] *I'm already seeing myself as fatter than I'm sposed to be. The last thing I need is the word being bleated by a nine year old sheep. But that's just it, who's he imitating?*

My brother calls me stupid, old but it doesn't matter because he's nine. It can't matter. If it did matter, my brother would be more damaged than me. *He's the one who's cruel. One day he will look in the mirror and he won't like what he sees. But h*e thinks it's a joke so it's a joke. His names don't hurt because he's nine.

It's me that does the hurting in my own thoughts about myself, not his names or labels. I remember being nine. I remember seeing my mother look at herself in the mirror, back when I was a child and she was a woman. Before I entered this, this age of uncertainty. Anyhow, she'd stare at herself and describe herself as fat, grab tiny handfuls of skin and call them flab, call herself ten-tonne Tessy when she was all skin and bones!! What I can't work out is when I turned from being nine and knowing the objective truth of what the image in the mirror looked like!

Student 8: We live in a society where people are subjected to various environments and, because of these environments, a label is forced upon them, how they look, what they wear, where they live; what they have done in the past and what they do now. *Supposing I began to speak in another voice, what would you think of me? Supposing I told a different truth with a different sound like: She said not to worry, dat I wasn't in no*

trouble. It was a special program for da 'socially disadvantaged'. When she said dat, she even did dat fing

wif her fingers, makin', what are dey called, quotation marks, yeah. At first, I got really mad, frew a chair,

said 'Fuck you!' It's easy to fit into a certain label, based on the way we look but at what point does the way

we look define us as individuals?

Dat teacher just fucken looks at me! I say to her you fucken dog slut! She says she knows how I feel, that I

am at-risk. She says she wants to 'elp me get by at 'ome and dat, which I spose is good, cept she don't

know me dad. He gets real mad when do-gooders try and come into our place. 'e don't seem to like no-one,

not even us!

Why are we categorised into a genre? The answer is simple, it's just the way we run. We all use labels,

even those who are a victim to it. Misunderstood. We hear it all the time and see it as a cry for attention –

the misunderstood girl, the guy who his friends think he is but who he really isn't. Sounds like a movie plot.

Student 9 did not submit. Student 9 stands on stage throughout, entirely silent.

Student 9 (After a long pause): *Am I invisible? Have I become less than human? You say I am a slut but*

where is your evidence? What have I done that you have not, that you would not? Though I speak, you

cannot hear me. Your mind is made up and the Court of Adolescent Law administers a cruel and irrational

justice, made up of assumptions and conclusions…A slut is a free being, a witch in every sense, not merely

because she is hunted but because she is free.

Student 8: Stay away from her, she's a slut!

Back to teacher at desk

Enter Official 1and Official 2.

Official 1: Hello, Dr. McMurphy?

W1: Yes.

Official 1: It's good to finally meet you in person. This is my colleague, Michael. As you know, we've been trying to get in contact for quite a while. I think you know what it's regarding. We just wanted to have a sit down and chat about the situation, identify areas of difficulty and see if we can't all come to a resolution.

W1: Resolution?

Official: To the conflict.

W1: Conflict?

Official: Clearly there is an issue with your fulfilment of our request and we thought it best to have a frank and open discussion so that we can work through the various issues that have emerged in terms of your failure to respond to the instruction from the department.

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W1: But I told you last week, my students and I created a series of monologues responding to the department's instruction and I told you on the phone that I am a drama teacher. My students and I have responded in the only way we can.

Official: The department cannot respond to a story. We have various obligations that must be fulfilled. One of those was for you to provide data in the form of labels for your students: disturbed, undisturbed or none of the above. This data was to be used to provide for these vulnerable students. Without this data from you, we cannot complete our charter.

W1: But I provided you with material.

(Knock at the door)

Come in! (shouting offstage)   What's that? You don't feel like coming in. You don't feel comfortable. You feel judged.

Student 1: When you're walking down the street…

Student 2: And you find yourself out east…

Student 3: And you see the people casting eyes on you, telling you the way you are…

Student 4: Judging you…

Student 5: Because they're from the East and you're from out West. When you're out their way, you can tell they think you're a Westie. You can tell they think maybe you're a junkie or a low-life…

Student 6: And they don't even hide it that they think you're a slut, it's how they perceive white trash…If you're a girl and you're from out west, that's a double whammy…you must be a slut!

Student 3: But then you label others yourself also.

Student 2: Like I'm sitting on the bus and this junkie is walking toward me and I'm like 'He's going to rape me! It's just in my mind and I can see it in his face, his smile. I'm totally convinced of this as he walks down the aisle of the bus. And my heart starts beating with his step Boom, boom, boom, boom. He's going to rape me, he's going to rape me, he's going to rape me and he says, 'Ya got any smokes?' And I realise this is how the story goes for all the others when I'm the Westie in the East. They see me and think 'I'm gunna get robbed or I'm gunna get killed and their fear is making their thoughts and labelling me. Because I'm from out West. Because I'm a Westie. And that's why I carry a knife or so they think and I let em think it!!

W1 (back talking to the official guy): School is a micro-social world, a mini-society and the world for these students is contracted into the miniature world of their friends and classmates, where what matters is how you are constructed in their eyes, the image of the self belongs in this world, not in what teachers call them or how society sees them. It doesn't matter to them what you say, it matters what they say about each

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other…Whatever they're labelled by teachers means nothing to their reputations…Even so, I won't be the one to do the labelling.

Official: It's a noble sentiment you've expressed but we have a job to do. In terms of our role in the department, we have to report back with a list of labels useful to the categorisations to which we previously referred…

W1: Okay, what about slut?

Official: I beg your pardon?

W1: What about the label 'slut'?

Official: I don't think you understand the nature of the exercise. It's not about what the students think about each other, it's about you and I using our authority to behave like adults and, for the purpose of understanding, putting names to various tendencies, ways of being if you like. These will ultimately aid the department in better providing for these students who we see as vulnerable. We are not heartless. Our intention is to do good. We're talking about providing for the students.

W1: But they can't hear you, they can't hear me or their parents or anyone, really. They only hear each other. Their labels don't come from us. Not the ones they care about anyhow. They come from them! I gave you your 'feedback' in the only form we knew how, dramatic monologues, you'd do well to read them!

That night the official is tormented by dreams of 'ghost of curriculum past', 'ghost of curriculum present'-Emma and 'ghost of curriculum future'

Official bunks down to go to sleep. There is a bump and lighting flashes.

Official: What? What was that? (*Gets up and walks to audience, looking at them searchingly*) What is it? What…What are you? (This character is a straight out reference to scrooge!! *Another noise, he's spooked*) What is it? What do you want?

Ghost of curriculum past: I am the ghost of curriculum past…

Official shrieks.

GCP: Don't be too afraid. I'm not terribly old! I'm not from the bad old days, I'm not carrying a cane and I'm not Catholic! I'm from the seventies, the nineteen seventies…And it was during this time that we dared to dream. Gough gave us hope federally and we all just dreamt and dreamt everywhere we went! There was an ideal to create a public education for everyone, to make the choice of having a university education a right, not a privilege…

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Official: Yes, I know, I know that.

GCP: You may know it but you've forgotten. You've forgotten how to think and just replaced your thoughts with an index or these indices that tell you what the world is so you don't need to look at what might terrify you! You were once a thinker, now you're just an administrator and Gough would be turning in his grave!

Official: But what can I…What should I…What do you want me to do?

GCPL Think!

Official: But why? I mean how? I mean I forget…

GCPL: Let me remind you. (Pulls out a pair of rose-coloured glasses) It's the 1970's and the era of mind expansion is well and truly underway! In Australia, we're taking the lead from the sixties in US and it's not long before we'll elect Gough Whitlam in a statement about the kind of society we want to live in. We were a politically thoughtful people, both federally and in the state of Victoria, where we started to genuinely view secondary education as a right of every child and began to see the passage to university similarly. In a free society everybody ought to have access to an education and an education is best defined as '…a means whereby young people will be able to achieve the full development of their spiritual, mental, physical and creative powers…' (Blake 1973, p. 1353)

(*Official suddenly wakes.*)

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Official: Oh, thank goodness. It was only a dream. No need to be concerned. No reason to worry. (*He opens book, Vision and Realisation*) Indeed we must ensure, *ensure* that tomorrow's citizens are not only equipped mentally and physically to cope with the problems of life, but are infused with a set of ideals, a sense of social responsibility which will guarantee the future progress of this nation…(p.1354)

Oh dear, it's time for me to sleep. It's time for me to give myself a cup of warm milk, knock myself out and forget about the education of our youth. If today's anything to go by it seems the contemporary teacher is merely telling the student to educate him or herself! Damn the rules to all Hell! Damn the principles on which teaching is based! Damn the bureaucracy that's spent years laying out the red carpet for this new royalty called the students!

Was I dreaming when I walked into that damned ridiculous classroom today? I tell you, if education were one long Shakespearean drama, that single small ten metre by ten metre space would be its living fool!

Lies down to rest but is tormented by noise.

Official: Who's there? (bang) What was that? Who's there? What do you want? Damn and blast, what was that? Who's there? (*Walks to audience*) Ah, thank goodness, it's only you! I was terrified that it was a ghost!

Ghost of curriculum present: Oh, but I am! I have come to speak to you of death and demise, shame and failure…

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Official: The shame and failure of the students?

Ghost of Education Present: Oh no.

Official: What then?

Ghost of Ed Present: The failure is your own! And you ought to know the shame. Do you know it?

Official (quietly): Yes.

Ghost of Ed Present: Come with me (*Takes him to the audience*) Now tell them what you have done.

Official: Failed their children.

Ghost of Ed Present: Don't tell me, tell them.

Official (to audience): I have failed your children.

Ghost of Education Present: How?

Official: Well, I don't exactly know. First I was too easy. Then I was too hard. First I taught them too much religion, then not enough then none at all. Finally it was banned before I was told to teach them all different types!

In terms of class, I have failed them. I have given the greatest education to those who need it least. I have starved the starving of access. I have judged and labelled, excluded those who can least afford to be excluded from a system of which they are in desperate need. I am guilty of these things. Because I am human. Because I am flawed. Because I do not know how to be otherwise. Because I have taken my flawed, scarred, disturbed self into the classroom and, consciously or unconsciously, I have imposed my disturbances onto these innocent children! And yet all I have ever done is strictly adhere to the rule of law, the departmental rules, the rules by which all schools, teachers and departmental staff must abide. When we have a system in place, specifically designed to protect students and other vulnerable people in the system, how can it be that we have done damage? It is like the story of Oedipus Rex. I have acted according to my own conscience at every turn and yet when the sum total of my actions is presented for me in view of my very own eyes, it is deplorable to my conscience!!

The authority is in a straight jacket

Authority: Do you have names?

Official: Names, sir?

Authority: Names, labels, categorisations, ways that we can talk about these, these, well, that's just it, I don't know what to call them because there's no name, no label. Have you divided the disturbed ones from the undisturbed, worked out which is which, what the classroom teacher thinks, how much this is influenced by the school environment? Well? Have you?

Official: No, sir.

Authority: And why not?

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Official: Because they would not, sir.

Authority: Would not?

Official: No, sir.

Authority: But who would not?

Official: The students and their teacher.

Authority: But they are ours! Students and teachers in this state belong to me! That was MY order! It came from my hand! The insolence of this teacher and her students! What in damnation does she teach? Rebellion?

Official: Drama, sir.

Authority: Ah, I see. Leave it with me. And at the end of all this, when all's said and done, we'll just see whether there'll be drama! And there will! I can promise you that…There'll be drama! There will be drama! So where are the forms the department sent them?

Official: The forms, sir?

Authority: Yes.

Official: With the labels, sir?

Authority: Yes.

(pause)

Authority: Please don't tell me you don't have them?

Official: Well, not exactly sir.

Authority: Not exactly? What does that mean? You either have them or you don't. Which one is it?

Official: Well, no. I don't have them.

Authority: There. I knew it. Your incompetence astounds me!

Back to teacher in classroom

Teacher: Okay, everyone, today we're all going to be frogs. So when we talk, we don't use words, we just say ribbit! And the tone of what you are saying is the most important part. Now, scientists have recently discovered that a frog hears through its mouth. Frogs are connected through sound. Now, we've all done gibberish exercises before. We speak in gibberish so there's no content in terms of words, only sounds. And we will establish meaning through sound. Drama is an art-form, a subject whereby meaning is made of action. There is very little theory in a drama classroom. We don't think, we do! Where, in other subjects meaning is made from words, every act has meaning in drama. Supposing I lift my arm and scratch my head. In everyday life, this can be done without the slightest thought.

There are body language theorists in the world and psychologists will tell you we make meaning with our every move but the actor knows this better than anyone.

Official: Excuse me?

Drama Teacher: Sorry?

Official: Can't you hear me?

Drama Teacher: No!

Official: No? But…

Drama Teacher: But what?

Official: Why not?

Drama Teacher: Why not what?

Official: Why can't you hear me?

Drama Teacher: I can hear something, obviously, I mean I'm talking, I'm responding. I just don't know if it's you yet. You see, I don't have ears. But I have eardrums that are directly exposed or covered by only a thin

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layer of skin. I can hear sounds but I lack a cochlea, so it's difficult for me to distinguish one sound from the other. It doesn't happen automatically like in some mammals, such as your good self. I lack your cochlea and must use mechanical tuning to distinguish one sound from another.

Official: How then do you know when one of your students swears?

Teacher: I have no idea what you're talking about. (pause) Ribbit! Ribbit! Croak. Croak.

Teacher: I have no idea what you're talking about. You see, I'm a frog. (pause) Ribbit! Ribbit! Croak. Croak.

Official: So when, or how, can we have a conversation?

Teacher: Well, you could be a frog…Ribitt, rabbit.

Official: And then we'd speak in the same language!

Teacher: There we are and all it required was a bit of absurdity!

2.1

Scene 4

Official and Authority

Authority: So what happened? Did you attend a class?

Official: They don't speak in any language that I think you'd understand.

Authority: How do you mean?

Official: The language of the drama student, the world they describe is in some ways removed

 from what the rest might think or do. They are different. Even their parents let them be.

Authority: Let them be? How? Why?

Official: Why? Because for them, as for us, the world is make-believe.

Authority: You understand we cannot bend. We cannot yield. We mustn't show weakness or vulnerability. For the second we do, we'll be at their mercy. Make no mistake this *drama* education, it's a threat to our existence. It's an attack on our way of educating, not merely the system but its operation. Drama is not merely a subject, it's a way of being and speaking, one that challenges our own way of being and speaking because it sees the values we hold dear as mere stages on which a player may strut. We are not real to them. Our rules are not real to them. Our authority is not at all real. We are dead in this, this…social schizophrenia inspired by drama.

Think very carefully about the words I am using: 'social schizophrenia'? Why do I say social schizophrenia? Is it because the drama student is taught, indoctrinated to hear voices in much the same way those madmen and women we call schizophrenics hear the same voices? Inspired by angels and demons, they lash out on their fellow men and women in such a way as they cannot be ignored. They sit listlessly in the gutter, with no inclination for this world or all it has to offer. They are filthy, they listen to voices that nobody else can hear and have friends that do not exist. Because they have failed for so long to adhere to society's rules and laws, the ones that we offer freely to them in their education, they brandish knives in one hand at their imaginary enemies and hold the other out to beg. This is what comes of drama.

Official: Because it makes no money?

Authority: No. Because it questions the meaning we attach to life as we know it. Rule, order. Put the people in straight lines not only so we know which line they belong to but so they feel comfortable, nurtured and like they have a place to be. Rap them on the knuckle when they fall out of line not because we are cruel or

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to punish them but so they learn the value of standing in the line. Drama is a problem, a disruption. It is bad, evil, devilish. It may have some purpose but is it worth sending our students to the gutter? Put a stop to it, today!

(Long pause. Official stares intensely. Authority is at first steadfast in his opinions but as the pause goes on he becomes terrified until he's absolutely beside himself with fear.)

Official: Ribbit! Ribbit! Ribbit!

ENDNOTES

i) Or reality that can be perceived and understood through our daily lives or experience; unlike Kant's conception of 'freedom', for example, which he claims can only be understood independent of experience (Kant, p.8). Conversely real fiction is directly sourced from experience, as far as this is possible, and understood through the observation of a character's speech rhythms in the course of conversation.

ii) This student participant would later attend a play in which the researcher performed and explained that she was suffering from writer's block on the day. Further to this, it is my understanding that she also acted as one of the 'voices' in the work of her fellow students. That is, she was the inspiration for one of the other monologues. Therefore, she cannot genuinely be classed as a 'non-participant'

iii) The teacher in the classroom had established methods of working with the kids that transgressed my charter of 'voluntary' participation. She had her own ways of making the students do as she had planned and naturally or unconsciously employed these methods for this project: 'Oh well, if you don't participate, you won't get to be involved in next week's project which I know you're gunna love.' This illustrates the ethical complications of this project. It is not my role to interfere with the educational methods used by this teacher in her classroom, but I am also obliged to ensure that participants in the research do so of their own free will. This speaks to the problematic nature of this research.

iv) Whilst the term 'mallrats' is the title of an American film, it is also a term used by the Geelong community to describe the local youth who hang around the town's centre. This has recently gained local and national media attention but the online reference provided above is rather interesting as the article is accompanied by a debate with locals giving their opinions and testimonial experiences of so-called 'mallrats', as well as

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some first-person narratives from 'mallrats' describing their experience of the label. Some are proud of the label and embrace it, others find the connotations of the label offensive.

Despite the article seeming to describe contrary, the 'deviancy amplification' that seems to be the origin of the label 'mallrat' is not specific to Geelong or even regional centres in rural Victoria. Indeed, such a phenomenon is described by Taylor and Taylor with reference to the gangs of Glasgow in Scotland. Published in 1973, where the scholars observe that the street gang called 'the Untouchables' were placed at further risk by being officially labelled, neutralising 'the bind of the law.' (Taylor and Taylor, p.80) This can be seen in the online conversation, where the 'us' and 'them' mentality is implicit in the division between the 'mallrats' and those complaining about the 'mallrats'.

What processes of analysis will you use in putting the data together into the format of a play? What will determine your decisions about what things means, how they can be used, and how you can position them one against another in order to construct meaning? What is the role of the researcher in making the meaning and in what ways might this be different if you were writing a long essay?

iv) This reminds me of a time I was playing a hobo *out the front* of a theatre, so that the audience believed the illusion was real. I had gotten myself good and drunk for the show but the stage-manager had not been informed that I was a performer and he was asking me to leave and to pour my drink out and I was fighting with him and telling him where to go but under my breath saying 'Leave me alone. I'm performing.' This section is about the 'real' world failing to understand artifice, about drama education not being considered as seriously as some other subjects.

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vi) As is apparent from the data chapters, the idea of collecting data from two schools was difficult to realise and I believe unnecessary for the ultimate outcome, being a sample group of Year 11Year 11 students and their original monologues on the subject of labelling. I believe, however, the idea of collecting data from two

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schools and some of the ideas explored in this section of the journal are vital to the research, because they show the ideas that led the process.