alt theatre
cultural diversity and the stage
Volume 14, No. 1 *$8*

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Founded in 1998, *alt.theatre* is published three times per year by Teesri Duniya Theatre – an intercultural theatre company with a mandate to produce socially engaged theatre that reflects Canada's social and cultural diversity. *alt.theatre* is indexed in the MLA International Bibliography.

Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales Du Québéc/Library and Archives Canada ISSN 1481-0506

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alt.theatre: cultural diversity and the stage
is published triannually by

Teesri Duniya
THEATRE
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We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, which last year invested $157 million to bring the arts to Canadians throughout the country.

Nous remercions le Conseil des arts du Canada de son soutien. L'an dernier, le Conseil a investi 157 millions de dollars pour mettre de l'art dans la vie des Canadiennes et des Canadiens de tout le pays.

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Matt Jones is a writer, dramaturge, and doctoral student at the University of Toronto. His dissertation, *The Shock and Awe of the Real: Political Performance and the War on Terror*, is a transnational study of theatre, live art, direct action protests, and new media installations that addresses the recent conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond. Recent dramaturgy includes *The ASMRTist* (2017), *A Moment of Silence* (2016), and *Death Clowns in Guantánamo Bay* (2013).

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Victor Porter, Program and Research Analyst, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, is a Vancouver, BC, resident. An Applied Theatre practitioner with over thirty-five years of experience, Victor came to Canada as a government-assisted refugee after being released from prison, where he was kept by the Argentinian military dictatorship for four years for his activities against the dictatorship. Victor has worked with a wide variety of communities using theatre to explore issues and organize/strategize to effect change, including unions, youth, immigrants, refugees, street people, and other marginalized communities.

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Editorial 14.1

Protest and Performance

BY MICHELLE MACARTHUR

"I see what he's done as art. I believe that art is seeing the world that doesn't exist. A lot of people excel at creativity—making TV, movies, painting, writing books—but you can be an artist in your own life. Civil rights activists are artists. Athletes are artists. People who imagine something that is not there."

– Filmmaker Ava DuVernay on NFL player and activist Colin Kaepernick in GQ

Football player Colin Kaepernick started his peaceful protest over a year ago, in the 2016 NFL pre-season, to draw attention to the systemic discrimination and violence enacted against black men and women in the US, and his decision to take a knee has subsequently grown into a hashtag, a movement, and a controversy. As I write this, the fervour surrounding Kaepernick and his fellow players' actions has slightly lessened, momentarily overshadowed by other stories taking centre stage in the 24-hour news cycle, but the issues at the core of Kaepernick's protest and his status in the NFL remain unresolved. In its November 2017 issue, *GQ* named Kaepernick "Citizen of the Year"; but three months into the current football season, he is still a free agent without a contract.

If, like me, you found yourself wading through news reports and social media posts to figure out where this all began and why the POTUS was targeting football players in both his political speeches and late-night Twitter rants, here is a quick recap. Kaepernick, a quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers at the time, began sitting during the national anthem in the 2016 NFL pre-season as a gesture of protest against the oppression endured by people of colour in the US. After consulting with former player and army veteran Nate Boyer, however, Kaepernick and those teammates joining him in his protest decided to kneel rather than sit, which they agreed was a more respectful option. As 49ers player Eric Reid recently described in an op-ed for *The New York Times*, "We chose to kneel because it's a respectful gesture. I remember thinking our posture was like a flag flown at half-mast to mark a tragedy." While Kaepernick's protest has been reframed in many ways—as I will discuss shortly—he was always careful to communicate his specific reasons for kneeling and to challenge the media's simplification or misinterpretation of the issues at hand.

Despite Kaepernick's openness and the growing solidarity shown by other NFL players, the backlash was fast and furious. Kaepernick and others who decided to take a knee were called unpatriotic and disrespectful of the flag, the military, and their country. By the end of 2016, 49ers jerseys were used as doormats and kindling for bonfires by disgruntled fans, and a poll showed Kaepernick to be "the most disliked player" in the NFL (Willingham). (However, the results of the poll were divided along racial lines, with 42 percent of black respondents saying they liked Kaepernick "a lot.") Kaepernick's contract with the 49ers was not renewed after the end of the season, a move many see as an attempt to silence him rather than a reflection of his performance on the field.

The POTUS weighed in several times during Kaepernick's protest. As early as August 2016, during the NFL pre-season, Trump told a Seattle radio station, "I think it's a terrible thing. And, you know, maybe he should find a new country that works better for him. Let him try. It won't happen" (qtd. in Love). Trump's threats grew by the following March, when at a rally in Kentucky he gleefully made reference to a report that NFL owners were reticent to sign Kaepernick in fear of political backlash and a "nasty" tweet from the president. Trump's bullying continued this past September, when, at a rally for Alabama Republican Senate candidate Luther Strange, Trump encouraged team owners to fire players for taking a knee. His condemnation of the players' "unpatriotic" behaviour was particularly significant given his reaction to the recent events in Charlottesville and his reluctance to denounce the alt-right's involvement.

The POTUS's reaction was also a key factor in shifting the conversation about Kaepernick away from the issues at the centre of his protest. Trump's September 2017 remarks not only forced Trump himself into the centre of the issue, but forced NFL players, owners, and coaches to pick a side. Whereas earlier in the movement, many were hesitant to join Kaepernick (and this was also divided along racial lines), Trump's words had the opposite of their intended effect. Participation in the #takeaknee movement in the NFL and beyond grew exponentially, as many teams opted to challenge the POTUS's assumptions about patriotism and to assert their rights to freely express themselves. Yet, this increased support did not translate into a new contract for Kaepernick, nor did it magnify issues of racial injustice and systemic discrimination. Instead, the majority of participants in the movement presented themselves as fighting for free speech and unity, and as Willingham points out, those who spoke out were also generally careful to frame their remarks by confirming their patriotism and "American-ness."

As these events unfolded, I was reminded of Donna-Michelle St. Bernard's final piece in her Principles Office series in *alt.theatre's* Volume 13. In "Being the Fifth Bear," St. Bernard points to the frequency with which marginalized bodies are asked (or forced) to move out of the way and give up space. She offers some examples from her own experience in which her presence was seen as burdening or causing discomfort to others, and examines the implications of her compliance or non-compliance in each situation when she was told to move. Her and Kaepernick's acts of protest claim a space for marginalized bodies that are seen as intrusive, threatening, or expendable. In their purposeful and defiant stillness, they stand in for others before them who were forced to move and imagine a different future for those coming after them. St. Bernard concludes by stressing how current acts of agency and resistance are connected to "proximate and progenitorial" communities and social movements (34). Reflecting on her past experiences, she writes, "I see my then-self's narrow shoulders and I urge them to become broad and strong, so that someone might someday hope to stand on them. I urge myself to keep standing still, if only to offer a steady platform to others. I try to remember that standing still is also moving, when done with purpose" (35). By taking a knee, Kaepernick provides such a platform for others, but also stands on the shoulders of those who came before, both outside of the sports arena and within, where his actions are preceded by those of Jackie Robinson, John Carlos and Tommie Smith, and Mohammad Ali, to name just a few. (Incidentally, when we were preparing to publish her piece, D-M sent us several photo suggestions, including one of Kaepernick kneeling, for which we unfortunately could not obtain the rights.)

In these ways, gestures of protest, whether moving or standing still (or both), are performative in that they invoke performance strategies and in that they *do* something. Dance scholar Anusha Kedhar reminds us of this fact in two 2014 articles about the centrality of choreography, movement, and gesture in the politics of protest. Illustrating her discussion with the "Hands-up! Don't shoot!" and "I can't breathe" slogans of protest and their respective gestures and choreography, Kedhar underlines the power of performance as a way to draw attention to the impact of state violence on black bodies. The lifting of activists' hands in solidarity in "Hands-up! Don't shoot!" in response to the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, writes Kedhar, "takes those same bodies that are surveilled, disciplined, controlled, and killed and infuses them with power and a voice. It resurrects those dead bodies left lying in the street, and asks us, compels us to confront the alive-ness of the black body as a force of power and resistance" ("'Hands-up!'"). "I can't breathe," which references Eric Garner's last words but also the broader suffocation of black lives by systematic oppression, is accompanied by a staged "die-in" that points to the ultimate power of the state over black bodies. Implied in Kedhar's argument is the second meaning of performativity—to effect an action—wherein careful staging and choreography do something: they empower participants, remember bodies, and confront audiences. In Ava DuVernay's words that preface this editorial, protests and activists are art because they "see the world that doesn't exist." They are performative because they also make that world.

careful staging and choreography do something: they empower participants, remember bodies, and confront audiences.

Kedhar argues that performative strategies are key components of protest because they impact audience understandings of the issues at its centre. To develop the theatre and performance analogy further, the evolution of the #takeaknee movement prompts us to ask what happens when the communication between performers/protesters and audiences/witnesses are intercepted. What does spectatorship entail in this instance? What does it mean to be a witness or an ally to performative protests? If theatre and performance are continually shaped by internal and external factors that influence the meanings produced, then those who join the protest, watch it, or talk about it bear responsibility in how it takes shape and its ultimate impact. Participating in the #takeaknee movement at this moment means educating ourselves about its beginnings as well as "proximate and progenitorial" movements; it also means doing the work to ensure its message about systematic oppression remains centre stage.

This issue of *alt.theatre: cultural diversity and the stage* features several articles that look at the power enacted by the state on marginalized bodies, and how performance offers spaces to resist and challenge these systemic acts of oppression. Lina de Guevara reflects on a community-arts project addressing the fraught relationship between police and immigrant communities. Preeti Dhaliwal meditates on how law lives in the body and how we embody law; her use of poetry to develop her discussion reflects a focus on performance in both content and form, and we are excited to host an audio-recording of Preeti reading her piece on our website. Our new series for Volume 14, "A Return to Place—Embodied Story Practice," curated by Mariel Belanger, unpacks the theories and practices underlying the 2017 UBC–Okanagan Indigenous Art Intensive. Running across all three issues of the volume, "A Return to Place" begins with two pieces by Mariel on how cultural identity connects to oral history and performance practice. As we publish this, our last issue of 2017, we also look forward to *alt.theatre*'s twentieth anniversary next year. We have some plans in store to mark the magazine's role in providing a unique space for artists, scholars, and activists to create dialogue about the many intersections of diversity and the stage. We are also excited to usher in this new era with a new look, and welcome Kinnon Elliott, our new designer, whose work illuminates the words on the pages that follow. We hope you enjoy!

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WHERE POLICE AND COMMUNITY MEET

BY LINA DE GUEVARA

"I feel fortunate and moved to participate in this event. As a mother of five brown young men, I live in fear of what could happen to them if they have an encounter with the police. The police have a lot of power, and we as parents can only hope that they exercise that power with responsibility"

–
SANDRA ANGUS-VINCENT, IMMIGRANT FROM HAITI, DIVERSE COMMUNITIES PRESENTATION, MAY 2016

All photos © Lina de Guevara, by Sid Emmanuel. Left and Opposite page: Performers and police volunteers. Right: Discussion groups, "Performers and Diverse Communities." Victoria, BC, 2016.

In this article, I describe two related community-arts projects in Victoria, BC: "Police and Community: A Theatre Exploration" (2013) and "Police and Diverse Communities: Anti-Bias Training" (2016). Funded respectively by the Province of British Colombia's Welcoming Communities Program and the Ministry of International Trade, these projects were a collaboration between the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA); the Saanich and Victoria police departments; the Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee (GVPDAC); and two theatre and community engagement specialists—Victor Porter and myself.

Both projects included research workshopping with police officers and immigrant refugee communities to gather information and stories, which became the material for dramatic scenes developed and rehearsed together with participants. The projects culminated in separate theatre presentations for police officers and community members, as well as other presentations that brought both groups together. The overall purpose of these projects was to improve relationships and create dialogue between immigrant/refugee communities and their local police departments, and to look at the critical issues that affect those relationships, such as cultural differences, racism, profiling, negative experiences with police in their home countries, and ignorance on both sides.

Over the years, similar undertakings had been proposed but never happened. As PUENTE Theatre's artistic director, I had been involved in some of these failed attempts in Victoria, BC. My co-facilitator Victor Porter had the same experience in Vancouver, where he resides and works as an Applied Theatre practitioner. The obstacles to launching such projects are many. Using arts-based methods to achieve results of any kind is unusual in these environments; they are deemed inappropriate because theatre is usually considered entertainment. It isn't uncommon for theatre practitioners to encounter scepticism and negativity when trying to work with the police. The police, moreover, have more urgent preoccupations and it often seems impossible for them to include these activities in their busy, complicated schedules.

Our success in these most recent attempts can be partly attributed to our community partners. ICA's participation was essential. ICA is the lead agency of the Community Partnership Network (CPN), a network of businesses and organizations created in 2009 with the goal of building an inclusive, diverse, and welcoming community in our regions. Since its founding, the CPN has grown to include more than two hundred institutional partners, including the Greater Victoria region's five police departments. It has explored in depth the needs of its members, developing trust and knowledge. This association strongly supports and encourages initiatives that address discrimination, welcome newcomer immigrants, and improve relationships across diverse communities.

The cooperation of the police in both the 2013 and 2016 ICA projects was also essential. The 2013 project, involving the Saanich PD, was lucky to find a champion in Staff Sergeant Douglas Newman. Providing a positive model for his colleagues, he energetically supported the project, becoming one of the actors in our final presentations. Newman was also instrumental in including the Saanich 911 dispatchers in our work, bringing their unique perspective as first-line emergency responders. The success in the first project made it easier to organize the second one in 2016 involving the Victoria Police Department. Many of the Victoria Police officers attended presentations of the Saanich Project, intervened in the forum and image theatre activities, participated in the discussions, and experienced first-hand the positive effect of our work.

Besides having contacts with the police force through CPN, ICA has a strong Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program (LINC) with over five hundred immigrant newcomers coming for English classes every day—thus assuring the participation of a large number of recent immigrants. Three evening classes joined us for the Diverse Communities Research Workshop and over one hundred students from the LINC classes attended each theatre presentation. ICA also promoted the events on their website, social media, and newsletter, all with a strong ethno-cultural reach/readership.

Also significant to our success was our personal connection to the immigrant and refugee communities in BC and our intimate knowledge of the challenges of adapting to a new culture. Victor and I came to Canada escaping from corrupt, oppressive regimes, in Argentina and Chile respectively, where the police served as instruments of abuse, torture, and murder. We have a visceral knowledge of the fear and mistrust that many immigrants feel at the prospect of interacting with police. As professional theatre artists in our countries of origin, we were familiar with the work of Augusto Boal, renowned Brazilian theatre director and creator of Theatre of the Oppressed. Boal developed an extensive body of work that uses theatre to explore social issues and search for solutions to problems such as exploitation, racism, family violence, and bullying. Together with Tanzanian-born Paulina Grainger, former general manager of PUENTE Theatre, now the coordinator of ICA's Arts and Outreach Program and the projects' producer, we have worked on this type of endeavour for many years.

In the late 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, Victor and I trained with Boal, attending several of his workshops in Canada and the US. PUENTE Theatre was invited to participate in the 1991 Theatre of the Oppressed Festival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the 1997 Festival in Toronto, where we presented a theatre forum scene on family violence, and intervened in workshops and discussions with other practitioners from all over the world. Boal

was interested in our work as Latin Americans living in Canada and asked us to keep him informed about its development and progress. He remained a great mentor and friend until his death in 2009.

Over the years, Victor and I have used many Theatre of the Oppressed techniques in our separate careers. Following Boal's principle of flexibility, we adapted some of the techniques to suit local realities and the character of the people we worked with. Our workshops use a range of innovative theatre-based learning tools—Image Theatre, Forum Theatre, playback and non-blocking improvisation techniques—to identify and explore cross-cultural interactions leading to inequitable treatment, conflict, and misunderstanding. Our projects encourage community dialogue and initiative to come up with strategies that reflect cultural sensitivity. We are aware of the systemic causes of many of the problems we discuss (like the fact that we live in a capitalistic society interested in profit and not in community), but we believe this type of theatre is strong and effective in finding some paths to change.

In this article, we describe and reflect on our approach to our police community projects and the presentations they yielded. Our process and findings suggest the importance of shifting our understanding of "expert" or "specialist" knowledge when engaging with complex social issues and attempting to find solutions. We gather information about the issues we deal with from the people who take part in our research workshops, a source that is sometimes neglected. Police and recent immigrants to Canada are the ones living with these problems, they are the ones directly affected by systemic and procedural errors and deficiencies, and therefore they are our best source of information. Over the years, we have developed methods of using theatrical techniques to gather stories in a way that is effective, nonthreatening, respectful, and sensitive. We share our practices and reflections here in hopes that they might benefit those undertaking this kind of work in other contexts.

METHODOLOGY OF THE PROJECT

RESEARCH WORKSHOPS

The research has to be facilitated in an open, easy and relaxed way, and not conducted by people who think they have all the answers. Participants are thus motivated to tell their stories in their own way, and are given clear "how-to" guidelines that help them tell their stories and listen carefully to the stories of others.

Activities such as games and creating images are valuable not only as warm up exercises, but also as a way of helping people to recall moments of discovery in their working lives, to establish new ways of relating to co-workers, and to break behavioural routines. We start most of our workshops by removing the tables from the room, leaving space free for movement and conveying right away that this experience will be different. Participants soon realize that theatre exercises are an effective way of learning. They can use theatrical tools to express something about themselves, the trials they've gone through, and their significance. They begin to comprehend the purpose of the workshop and how it relates to them personally, which leads to understanding and sharing.

Providing an environment of freedom and trust helps us to gather stories that will constitute the core of the scenes we will show to an audience. One of our work's basic principles is that the material comes from the participants, and that the scenes developed and presented must represent their truths. We do not make assumptions or impose our own opinions. We get stories directly from the community about what they have personally experienced, and check in with people frequently about the situations they describe to make sure that they are correct in every detail.

The objective of our research in both projects was to find out how police and immigrants relate to each other in the wider community. We conducted research workshops with each of these groups separately to prevent fear and intimidation of any sort. Our team included a scribe and a photographer, who carefully recorded every aspect of the process.[1] Confidentiality was assured: no stories were used or pictures taken without permission.

We started the workshop with an exercise called "The Timeline," asking participants to line up according to how long they have been in Canada. Those born in Canada were asked where their parents were born, their grandparents, their great grandparents, etc. Once the line was completed, we asked participants to state where they came from and how long they and their ancestors have been here. The Timeline thus is an effective icebreaker—audience members stand up, get up on stage, and share something about themselves, which prepares them for the participatory activities to follow. And at the same time, the exercise provides an image of Canada's diversity, showing how most people in this country relate to the immigrant experience.

After the Timeline, we proposed simple "Image Theatre" exercises, leading participants towards appreciating the expressive power of images and the fun involved in making them. But the exercises also reveal how images—sometimes humorous, sometimes dramatic and always meaningful—can relate to our own experiences. For example, participants in the projects created frozen images of what it means to be an immigrant, of confrontations between themselves and the police, and of how they struggle with the language barrier.

The next activity in the workshop process is storytelling. As a warm-up, participants choose a partner and share the story of their name: who gave it to them, what it means, how they relate to it. Soon everybody is sharing their stories. We discuss the importance of this oldest art form and propose a clear and simple story-telling protocol: (1) stories will be short; (2) stories will be personal; (3) the teller will not be interrupted; (4) stories will end with the line "And this is my story"; and (5) the only accepted comment at the end of each story will be: "Thank you!" Most participants in the project told us how relieved they were to have a structure to conform to, and to know that they would not be forced to judge or be judged.

Participants were then asked to share, in small groups, personal stories of a moment when their interactions with the police (or, in the case of police, with immigrants or diverse minorities) have not turned out well—when they have felt uncomfortable, disillusioned, scared, or oppressed. While the participants also shared many successful interactions, we explained that the overall intention of the projects is to focus on problems that must be recognized and addressed—and in this way resolved.

Each small group chose one of the stories to be shared with the group at large, and then the floor was opened to anybody who wanted to share a story. All the stories were named and noted, and general comments and evaluations kept to a minimum. In the project workshops, these first stories included a case where loud mourning rituals alarmed neighbours who then called police; a story in which immigrants expected the police to extort bribes; and a story of a police officer's frustration when she suspected that an immigrant woman was being exploited but couldn't find sufficient proof.

The point of this exercise is to gather as much information as possible, not to evaluate the quality or the drama of the story. People must feel free to share what they want. The topics and actions referred to in the many stories we collected at this point became the core of the scenes created later in Theatre Forum events.

THE SCENES

The next step is selecting the content and writing the scenes to be staged. These must have a powerful, deep content that provides sufficient material for the examination of important issues. Scenes are not chosen simply for their potential theatrical effect, but also for their relevance to the issues at hand. Moreover, they must not just lead to the exposition of a problem, but also provide opportunities for the audience to show solutions. Boal teaches that scenes for forum should denounce unjust events, but only at a moment of possibility of a change of direction. As facilitators, we have to deal with difficult situations but not create hopelessness and despair.

The scenes we wrote covered many moments of conflict between the police and immigrants / visible minorities, moments that arose for many reasons: due to ignorance and misunderstanding of religious and cultural practices; in the course of intervening in cases of family violence; as the result of profiling and prejudgment based on ethnicity and appearance; due to the challenges of intervening when children need to be protected; over misunderstandings when dealing with traditional family structures; and in the course of winning the trust of people scared by the presence of the police.

One scene, for example, titled "Don't call the Police," related to an issue that was significant to both projects. The scene depicts a large immigrant family that has come from a country where the police are dangerous and corrupt. Two young men in the family are attacked at a bar, and one of them is left with a badly

Performers in "Performers and Diverse Communities." Victoria, BC, 2016.

Above: Performers and police volunteers in "Performers and Diverse Communities." Victoria, BC, 2016.

Opposite page: Discussion groups, "Perfomers and Diverse Communities." Victoria, BC, 2016.

injured eye. When they get back home, a younger member of the family urges them to call the police, but other family members are afraid that this will put the whole family in danger. They also are afraid of going to the hospital for medical attention. This scene, which was used in both projects, led to diverse and revealing interventions, showing the complexity of mediating in these situations—in particular, how tact and sensitivity are essential to providing appropriate support and advice.

THE REHEARSALS

Professional actors were hired for both projects—four for the first and six for the second—from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and connected with the immigrant experience. One police officer and a reservist participated from the Saanich PD, and two police officers and a reserve constable participated from the Victoria PD. Their presence was essential to give authenticity to the performance, and to demonstrate to the audience the commitment of police to open discussion of complex issues such as discrimination, cultural understanding, and crime prevention.

Not every actor can be a positive performer in a theatre forum event. Personal biases might interfere, and inexperience, insensitivity, and lack of clarity about the purpose of the process can greatly affect the quality of the presentation and achievement of its objectives. During interventions by the audience, actors in Forum Theatre must always be aware of their character's feelings, whether the crisis situation has worsened or improved with the intervention, and when the interaction with the audience must become more or less demanding, according to the objectives of the presentation. All our actors received special training for the demands of this kind of theatre. We rehearsed many possible interventions, until the actors felt at ease and demonstrated a firm understanding of the purpose of the event.

The members of the PD participated courageously in this process. Going from police officer to actor is a big challenge, and these officers accomplished it with enthusiasm and generosity. They kept us on track about police procedure happenings out in the field. They gave many hours of their own time to attend rehearsals, and collaborated unreservedly. They expressed their belief in the value of the project and became true members of the ensemble. I believe their rigorous training as members of the police gave them a solid base to conform to the demands of theatre.

FACILITATORS

Facilitation in Forum Theatre is a complex and challenging role with very strict ethical requirements. It demands experience and knowledge. Boal describes in detail the conduct of the facilitator, called "Joker," in his text *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. One of the most important rules, in my opinion, is the first: "Jokers must avoid all actions which could manipulate or influence the audience" (232). This principle guides all of the Joker's actions.

As Victor Porter and I live in different cities, we don't always work together, but when Paulina Grainger (our producer) and I were planning our first police project we agreed that it needed a male and a female facilitator. Victor, given his life experience and his extensive background in this kind of theatre, was the perfect person to take on this project, and he and I took turns in the facilitation. We discussed each scene and possible approach in detail, allowing us to identify and resolve any disagreements before the event and to avoid confusing or damaging the audience.

THE PRESENTATIONS

After the scenes had been rehearsed, we began to shape the presentation into a whole composed of many coherent parts. The audience must be prepared to participate whole-heartedly in the discussion and search for solutions to problems that affect their lives, happiness, and security. We were addressing very complicated topics that could become controversial or emotional, or lead to dissension, accusations, and misunderstandings. Being asked to perform in front of an audience is a great challenge for most people, so careful and gradual preparation was required. The presentation has to be paced so that the level of risk gradually increases and the audience starts to act almost without noticing it.

We realized that the forum scenes did not cover all facets of the topics proposed by the participants, so we added four other modes of expressing more completely what we had discovered during our research: the first was "Image Theatre," in which still poses reveal essential aspects of the problem; the second was "Discussion Theatre," which allows the audience to analyze in depth a conflict's solution; the third was "Immigrant Voices and Police Voices," an exercise in which a variety of aspects about participants' complex relationship could be shared; and the fourth mode was "Thank You Postcards," in which immigrants expressed appreciation for the police work.

CONCLUSIONS

VICTOR

Three elements emerged for me as interesting and valuable outcomes of these two projects.

The first was that the workshops, rehearsals, and presentations provided ample opportunity for the participants to take a moment to reflect on their stories, to reflect on their assumptions and how they understood their reality and the reality of the other—the other being the unknown immigrant or refugee, or the all-powerful police officer in uniform. By working together on a project, we demystified each other's experiences and created a familiarity that could not have been created in any other way. The presentations of the scenes and the event as a whole, although focused on serious and painful experiences, created an environment of laughter, solidarity, and humanization of the protagonists.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

"I think it has been especially powerful for members of the newcomer community to see the police in a non-crisis setting up on stage as actors, and there were many comments from the crowd to that effect. I think it has been very valuable to bring the two groups together to have a conversation that would not likely have occurred in daily life—in particular, through Forum Theatre and through having them share messages they have for each other through Police and Immigrant Voices."

"I truly believe a lot of growth, respect, and trust have been created between the two groups. Even in myself, I now find myself wanting to say hello to police officers on the street. I think a conversation has been started, one that will hopefully spread throughout the community."

"I was so surprised to see police acting and challenging their status quo. Bravo! They are reaching out to the community. The seminar addressed very sensitive issues in a very safe way. Everyone could feel included, acknowledged, and respected. I love the initial image of Canada made out of immigrants. That was touching and grounding!"

"I especially appreciated the points in the enactments where participants, who were very confident that they could solve the situation quickly, realized that it is not that simple. The actors and facilitators were able to demonstrate different perspectives well and were very supportive in acknowledging that the processes and challenges faced by both newcomers and police are not easily solved."

Performers, facilitators, and police volunteers in "Performance and Diverse Communities." Victoria, BC, 2016.

The second outcome was that immigrants and refugees participating in the presentations left with a clear understanding of their rights as residents of Canada—the notion that the police is a public service in place to support them in living safely, not an ominous enforcer of tyrannical rules.

Third, police officers participating as actors and those attending the presentations had the opportunity—perhaps for the first time in their careers— to dig deeper and understand why immigrant and refugee populations fear police. They heard stories of persecution and oppression by police in foreign countries, and of the challenges newcomers face during their first years in Canada, alone and away from their extended families. Police left this experience with a renewed understanding of the communities they serve, and a sense of pride for daring to engage beyond their comfort zone and divested of all authority in the unpredictable realm of a Forum Theatre event.

LINA

Our final report on the Victoria Police Department project included three pages listing ideas for improving relations between police and diverse communities: for example, the need for more multicultural training for police and more education for immigrants about Canadian laws, customs, and rights; and the need to promote more interaction between police and newcomers to Canada. We pointed out that respectful, compassionate, and flexible manners can ease communication between police and immigrants, and also highlighted an issue relating to the lack in Victoria of appropriate childcare in cases of family violence. These considerations and many others came directly from our presentations where audience and police interacted, exploring and discussing issues using our transformative theatre tools.

Our projects also generated some practical approaches to these issues. More presentations of our performances have been requested and are in preparation. The Saanich dispatchers shared a services protocol with ICA (e.g., when is it appropriate to phone 911 and what information needs to be conveyed). The Victoria Police Department and ICA's Training Coordinator set up a schedule starting this fall for police officers to give talks to newcomers and ESL students on topics including traffic rules, procedures when stopped by the police, the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act, the use of force, and safety issues.

These initiatives are very useful, of course, but I believe now that inspiring active participation is the most important achievement of our events. To encourage as many people as possible to engage in the search for solutions, to discuss issues, and to listen to those who have different perspectives is a positive process of learning, a truly democratic approach. There are no specialists telling other people what to think and how to behave. The ground is richly prepared for individuals to think for themselves. Through active participation in proposing solutions, mistakes, impracticalities, or impossible suggestions become evident and participants themselves see the need to find other avenues.

In this type of event, the audience is respected—its contributions are considered and it is empowered. Dialogue contributes to finding practical solutions, and resentment, anger, and other negative emotions are not nurtured. Actors and facilitators in a theatre forum event are appreciated by the audiences, who realize the dedication, vulnerability, and openness this work requires. They respond in kind by allowing themselves to be put in difficult situations, trying out something they've never done before.

The introduction of "Discussion Theatre" in the last project was a positive innovation. It allowed the audience to discuss in depth a complex situation, and afterwards listen with respect to a series of opinions and experiences that were not necessarily accepted by all, but had to be considered as part of the diversity of our society. And concluding the event with a "Thank you postcards" scene directed towards the Victoria Police corresponded to a reality we found in our research. New immigrants wanted to talk not only about the negative aspects of their encounters with the police, but also the positive encounters. They wanted to make quite clear that they were grateful to them for a variety of reasons.

I continue to reflect on these projects, trying to assess their significance and their scope. We hear so much negative news about interactions between police and the community, and yet we need the police and call on them when we're in danger of any sort. I believe it is very important to find means of relating in a positive, open way—as human beings with weaknesses and errors that need to be continually revised, on all sides—so that we can achieve constructive relations. This can only be accomplished by trying new ways, as the authoritarian, hierarchical methods are not working anymore—if they ever did.

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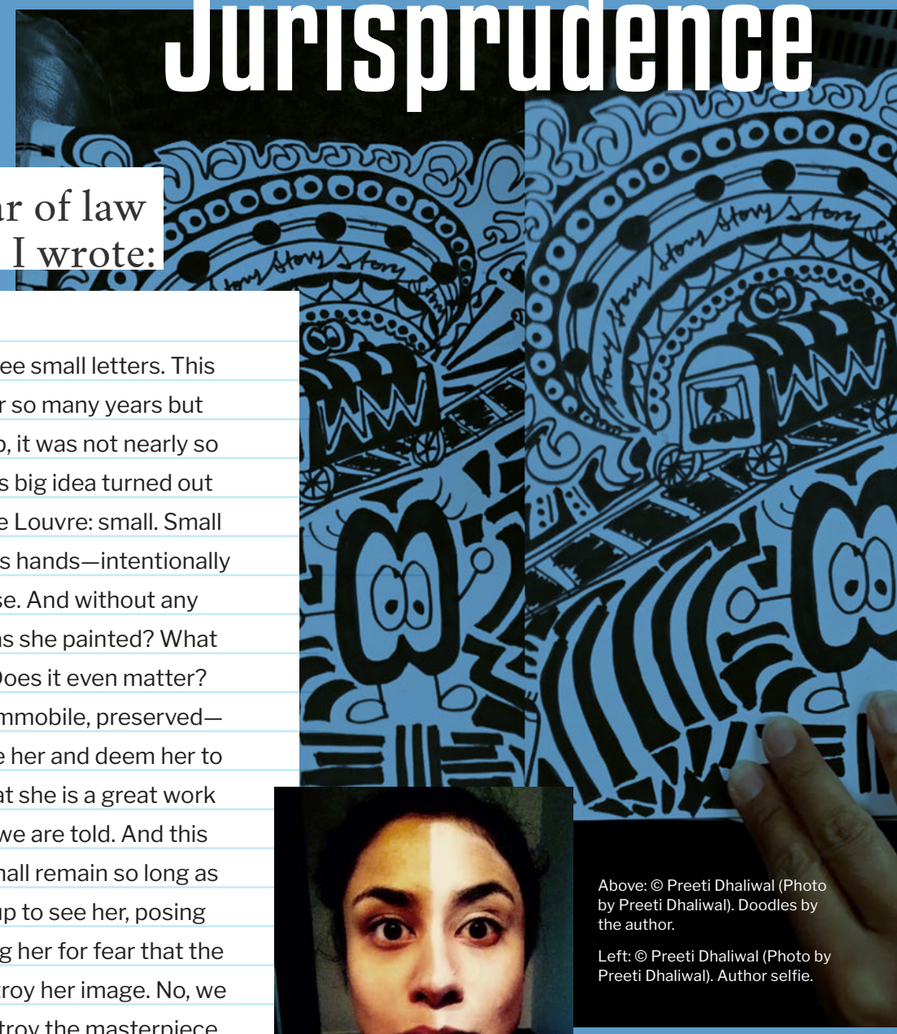
Notes

1. The scribes were Valeria Cortés and Jaimie Summer; the photographers were Ilya Stavinsky and Marius Langeland.

Re-embodying Jurisprudence

BY PREETI DHALIWAL



Above: © Preeti Dhaliwal (Photo by Preeti Dhaliwal). Doodles by the author.

Left: © Preeti Dhaliwal (Photo by Preeti Dhaliwal). Author selfie.

In my second year of law school at McGill, I wrote:

> Law. This big idea lives in three small letters. This big idea lived in my mind for so many years but when I arrived at its doorstep, it was not nearly so grand as I had imagined. This big idea turned out to be like the *Mona Lisa* in the Louvre: small. Small and far away from the people's hands—intentionally kept at a distance, of course. And without any emotive expression. Why was she painted? What was the artist's intention? Does it even matter? We see her now—stagnant, immobile, preserved—restored by those who revere her and deem her to be important. We believe that she is a great work of art because that is what we are told. And this legend—fiction if you will—shall remain so long as the people continue lining up to see her, posing next to her but never touching her for fear that the oil on their fingertips will destroy her image. No, we can't have that. We can't destroy the masterpiece. It hangs on the wall only to be seen—to peer upon us through still, unblinking eyes.

How can we bring law closer to the people's fingertips?

Theatre. Theatre allows us to tell, embody, and share stories with an audience, a community of listeners—observers: spectators. It holds the potential to *affect* an audience, to inspire, sadden, awaken, change, disappoint, excite, alter them in some way. This relationship is mutual: audiences *transform* as do the performers. As people change, so too do the stories we tell and the way we understand the stories we are being told.

So when pondering the age-old jurisprudential question of "What is law?", theatre is part of the answer. While dictionaries define jurisprudence as the theory or philosophy of law and law schools offer syllabi filled with theorists and philosophers, our experiences, perceptions, and narratives are also part of the answer. Law does not have to be handed down by a legislator. It is something we, as humans, can find within ourselves: localized, embodied, adaptive. Theatre—embodied stories—is one way of locating and reconnecting to law.

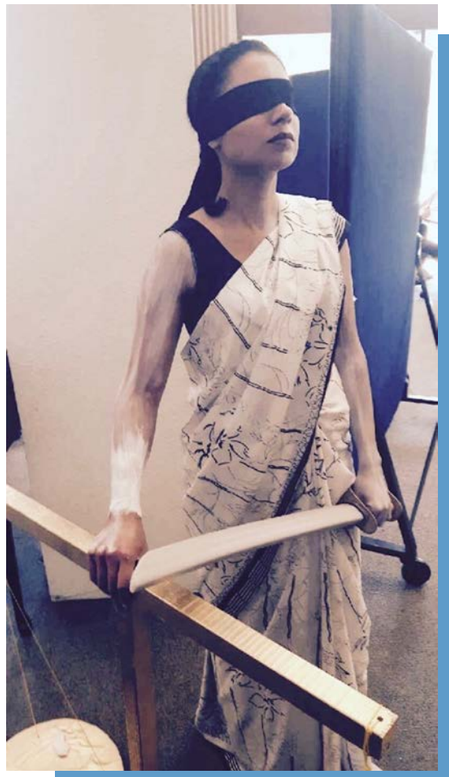
I want theatre to be studied as law so that society may develop capacities to approach law with an artist's sensibilities, understanding law as multiple stories, narratives, and worldviews. Play texts, particularly when performed but even in written form, offer an alternate, embodied archive, a jurisprudence that transmits itself through bodies, memories, and retellings.

Embodiment and performance are crucial to understanding how law lives in our bodies, consciously and unconsciously. Law passes down through stories we want to hear, images we want to see and experiences we want to have. But it also travels in stories we had and have no choice in being subjected to—ones we don't remember but that nevertheless impact our actions and lives through daily silences, ignorance, privileges, and pain. My work asks readers, spectators, and participants to interrogate those spaces while questioning justice and re-embodying a personal, transformational, and critical jurisprudence.

This new jurisprudence is performative and doesn't rely "on an ideal of neutrality" or text alone but on the body, experience, and the fraught realities of legal and historical oppression (Matsuda 8). Understanding how law lives in the body and how we embody law forces us to delve inward, into the fictions not only of neutrality in Canadian law but also of equality in contemporary society. If we begin understanding how law performs through stories, we can also begin understanding how those stories live within us and re-enact themselves through us. We can then begin changing them by telling and embodying new stories.[1]

The following poem is adapted from the final chapter of my Masters' thesis. In writing this thesis, part of my purpose was to believe that law can be creative, healing, beautiful, and accessible. You see, the legal world was a site of fragmentation for me—in ways I hadn't previously experienced (despite a fair amount of adversity while growing up). It's a place where expertise, authority, and a lone worldview are valued at the expense of creativity, reflection, and connection. While law permits testimony and certain forms of representation to be expressed within its container, it also delimits the ways in which trauma and stories can be expressed, understood, and responded to. This narrowing determines which experiences are privileged and recognized, and which are erased. Such legal ways of thinking created a place where my heart couldn't find space to exist, let alone speak (I often imagined it in a cage, or leaving it outside the Law Faculty). I wrote my thesis and this poem because I want multiple ways of seeing, knowing, understanding, and practising law.

While I identify as a writer, I do not identify as a poet. I recognize, however, that poetry allows us "to reconnect our selves to loss, conscious and unconscious hurts that manifest in our relational interactions," and that it "offers interpersonal scholars" and "educators" such as myself "other ways of understanding" without fear of right or wrong (Faulkner 207). I also believe that "[p]erformative writing expands the notions of what constitutes disciplinary knowledge" (Pelias 417). The poem that follows thus exposes my pursuit of scholarly interests while making the personal political and the political personal. Most importantly, using writing that is performative, academic and poetic allows me to invite you, the reader/spectator, to reflect with me about what it means to be a practitioner, learner, subject, victim, holder, adjudicator of the law.



© Preeti Dhaliwal (Photo by Syed Hussan).
Performance art.

This is jurisprudence: we are the ones we've been waiting for[2]

To hear an audio recording of the author performing her poem, visit **alttheatre.ca**.

This story is jurisprudence

Jurisprudence
as a word or concept
has been
taken away
from the people.

As a lawyer
trained at an elite
conservative law school,
and then an elite
boutique litigation firm,
(both of which advertise themselves as progressive)
and then an elite
federal judicial institution
I understand what jurisprudence is,
what law does.

I know what law does to the body.

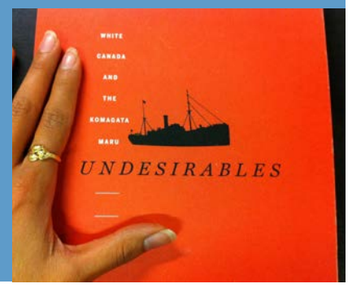
As a lawyer
who acted in plays and musicals
from the ages of 10 to 17
then facilitated theatre of the oppressed workshops
then took physical theatre classes
then minored in theatre during her law degree
in a brown woman's skin

You see,

I have read
Hart
and Fuller
and Austin
and Raz
and Dworkin
and Holmes
and Foucault
and Weber
amongst other white male philosophers

and Lord Denning
and Chief Justice McLachlin
and Chief Justice Lamer
and Chief Justice Dickson
and Justice Beetz
and Justice L'Heureux-Dubé
and Justice Wilson
and Justice LaForest
and Justice Sopinka
(and even Justice Scalia)
amongst many other white judges

and took from all of them
and their theorizing
thoughts, questions and criticisms
that arose in me,
while also acknowledging those which bored, excluded and
hurt me.



© Preeti Dhaliwal (Photo by Preeti Dhaliwal). The author's copy of Ali Kazimi's *Undesirables: White Canada and the Komagata Maru*.

I read and hear that
law is legislated
jurisprudence is written
constitutions are democratic
that law is made by the people

So...

"A case comment?"
I frown, sigh and think, "boring"
A "fact pattern?"
I frown, sigh and think, "again?"
A "close reading of the legislation"
I just sigh because I'm tired

These are not the only legal texts!

At bedtime,
when my father
tucked me in and
told me tales of *chirri* and *kaan* (crow and sparrow)
This (story) is jurisprudence.

At the temple,
when everyone
cleans everyone's shoes
eats on the same floor
serves one another food
This (way of being) is law.

On the road,
when my cousin pulls his hood over his turban
while driving an expensive car
and the cops pull him over
This (act) is law.

On the stage,
when actors
embody Ajmer Rode's story
about the *Komagata Maru*
This (performance) is law.[3]

On the internet,
when an image of a child
drowning
causes governments to open borders
This (image) is law.

On the page
when Sharon Pollock
writes a story
about William Hopkinson, race and the *Komagata Maru*
This (text) is law.[4]

In the news,
when an image of a boat
is paired with the word terrorist
and the Canadian government subsequently detains
the boat's passengers
without reasonable cause
and without evidence
This (lie) is law.

How dare they reserve law for those in law school
How dare they confine law to cases, legislation and codes
How dare they call something law when it has been taken
away from the people

It angers me—
how texts rule through:
constitutions
judicial decisions
legislation
contracts

how these texts
can preserve:
power dynamics
social structures
inequality
oppression
and legal monopolies

Films, media, pop culture, plays and performances
are legal offerings
documented in new forms
telling us who can and can't do what
what is and isn't acceptable
what rules we should obey
what unstated rules are already in place.[5]

Love, solidarity and civil disobedience,
performative interventions
and desires for collective self-determination
now rival law—if not the state itself.

When movements like

"Idle no More"

and

"Occupy Wall Street"

and

"The Leap Manifesto"

and

#NODAPL

entered our everyday media and conversations
I smiled and thought to myself:

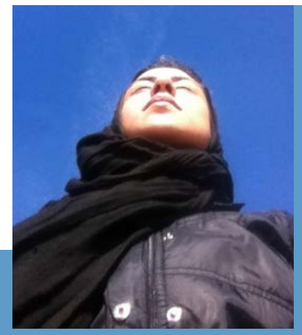
"Good.
People are finally catching on—
We are not powerless
We are powerful"

And remembered:
"We are the ones
We are the ones we've been waiting for."[6]

Opium for the masses

Unlimited rule hidden by power
In service of an elite
Hegemonic class.

This is not the only law!
This cannot be the only law.[7]



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So I wrote the first draft of a play
Wait
Not just a play. This play will become
a jurisprudential text
a subversion
a legal document.[8]

And I performed a piece of art
Wait
Not just performance art
This performance was—is
a living legal archive
law embodied
jurisprudence performed.

Theatre is therefore not just a play and not just a performance
but also a legal text and legal embodiment
living
in bodies, in stories, in text, in memory.

Yes, a play is a jurisprudential text.
And a performance is law (re)embodied.

One lives permanently in written form—
not just a play,
It is a jurisprudential text.

The other is transmitted
through memory, movement, story, witnessing
not just a performance
It is an embodiment of law.

Both, whether read or performed,
engage you in judgment.

You are not simply reading words
or hearing an actor speak aloud
or watching a body repeat an action

You are judging
words that provoke
words that subvert
or words that make you aware
of previous and unknown assumptions

You are judging
a body that provokes
a gesture that subverts
or a stillness that makes you aware
of previous and unknown assumptions

Lawyers and law-makers do not get to determine
what laws and rules emerge
from pop culture, performance and art.
Nor do they solely determine
what laws and rules emerge
from state law, case law or unwritten convention.

These determinations are a right
and the work of
the storyteller
the playwright
the director
the poet

the musician
the producer
the painter
the artist

and of course,
the people
the public
an audience.

You see, I have also read

Patricia Williams
and Mari Matsuda
and Richard Delgado
and Frantz Fanon
and Linda Tuhiwai Smith
and Sherene Razack
and Kimberlé Crenshaw
and Chandra Talpade Mohanty
and Angela Davis
and Joshua Takano-Chambers Letson
and Anna Deavere Smith
and Devon W. Carbado
and Mitu Gulati
amongst other critical race, feminist and performance theorists

and Toni Morrison
and Ta-Nehisi Coates
and Junot Díaz
and Tracey Lindberg
and Sherman Alexie
and Eduardo Galeano
and other writers who tell stories about power and race

and Justice Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré
and Justice Corinne Sparks
amongst (the few) courageous, race-conscious judges

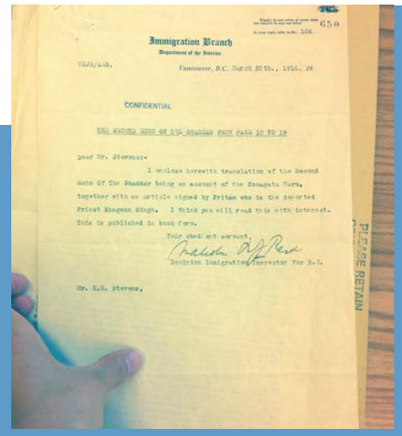
and learned from them,
and their theorizing
to ask questions, to speak up, to challenge the status quo
because my ways of being and seeing are valid too
because my ways of thinking and storytelling are not novel
but necessary.

Ask how
language
personal and collective identity
memory
history
law
and social roles
are created.

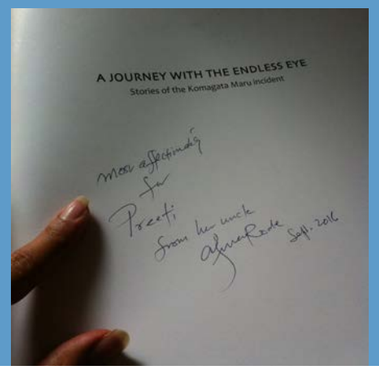
Create meaning
Imagine the possible
Intervene with performance
Construct your own humanity,
social groups
and identity
Transform, shift and change
the world,
how you think,
your relationships:
This is law.

Invite participants,
vulnerable
marginalized
searching for meaning
looking for hope
to share
their visions
their logic
their rhetoric
their values
their ways of being:
This is the basis for a jurisprudential text.

© Preeti Dhaliwal (Photo by Preeti Dhaliwal).
The author's self-portrait in pastel.



© Preeti Dhaliwal (Photo by Preeti Dhaliwal).
Archival documents pertaining to the *Komagata Maru*, photographed at the Vancouver City Archives.



© Preeti Dhaliwal (Photo by Preeti Dhaliwal). The author's copy of Ajmer Rode and Jarnail Singh's *A Journey with the Endless Eye: Stories of the Komagata Maru incident*.

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Go ahead,
use
law
legal text
jurisprudence
jurisprudential
legality
as if the words
belonged only to you
sprinkled sparingly
amongst the elites
in the legal classroom
in the courtroom
around the firm on Bay Street
so exclusive
yet ubiquitous
omniscient and reaching
the status of each of us
all of us
every one of us.

But know that I
and many others
will be protesting
contesting
listening
scowling
subverting
interrupting
objecting
thinking
creating
re-embodying
Because we know these are not the only legal texts.

Those with too much money in their pockets have
misdirected the love in their hearts
and their time (ticking on their dockets)
in want of something
particular
predictable
certain
definitive
one-size fits all
powerful.

They argue about what law is and is not—
for them
and for others.

Yeah, right…

But when Martin Luther King Jr. says:

"Power at its best is love implementing the demands of Justice. Justice at its best is Power correcting everything that stands in the way of love."

This I understand
(knowing that some are more love-abiding than others).

As for me,
I will take back the power
I was taught to hold
special
sacred
infinite
reserved
for all: story
through text and also performance.

In search of law that is
just
loving
personal
contextual
embodied.

So this project examines plays & performance as law
legislating
recording
reiterating
reiterating
recording
creating an archive without
court headers
signatures
rubber stamps of authentication

analyzing
documenting
and revealing
how bodies create
records of resilience
spaces of possibility.

Performance is a way
the state comes into being,
inscribing labels
immigrant!
citizen!
non-citizen!
refugee!
illegal!
in and on bodies

Performance is also a way
the people can rehearse
for social change[9]
relate to the past
engage lived experience
bridge present and imagined future
represent invisible legal frameworks
place adjudication in the hands of the people

Because jurisprudence is
written,
embodied,
performed,
lived

© Preeti Dhaliwal (Photo by Preeti Dhaliwal). Author selfie.

Notes

1. The formation and articulation of my research questions and argument took many conversations and iterations to reach. I owe much gratitude to my friend Darcy Lindberg, my supervisors Gillian Calder and Monica Prendergast, and the lecturers of an Indigenous Legal Theory course I audited—Val Napolean, Rebecca Johnson, Tracey Lindberg and Hadley Friedland—for their support and knowledge-sharing.

2. The structure of this poem is modelled on Johnny Saldaña's "This is Not a Performance Text." In his (rather sarcastic) poem, Saldaña expresses his distaste for the academy's use of the words *performance* and *performativity* and argues that words on a page do not constitute a performance text. While I do not adopt Saldaña's definition of performance, I have adopted the format and structure of his poem to argue what I believe law and jurisprudence are.

3. Ajmer Rode's play *Komagata Maru* was serialized in 1982 in the *Indo-Canadian Times*, a Punjabi weekly newspaper published in Surrey, British Columbia; published in 1984 in Punjabi by Nanak Singh Pustak Mala; and produced in July 1986 as a short radio play in Vancouver by co-op radio station FM 102.7. The Canadian government turned away the *Komagata Maru*, a ship filled with Indian passengers, at the Burrard Inlet in 1914 on the basis of racist legislation. To learn more, see Chapter 3 of my thesis.

4. See Sharon Pollock's play, *The Komagata Maru Incident*.

5. The content of these stanzas is inspired by Orit Kamir's argument as laid out in the introduction of *Framed: Women in Law and Film*.

6. June Jordan, "Poem for South African Women" in *Passion* (1990), www.junejordan.net/poem-for-south-african-women.html; Hopi Elders, "We Are the Ones We've Been Waiting For" (23 August 2010) *Awakin.org*, www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=702.

7. See Kamir 3.

8. *Eustitia* (2017), www.preetidhaliwal.wordpress.com (Password: jurisprudence).

9. See Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*.

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A Return to Place:

The University of British Columbia–Okanagan 2017 Summer Indigenous Art Intensive

BY MARIEL BELANGER

Waiʔ, x̌ast sx̌lx̌ʕalt. Inca isḵʷist Cen cen, kn tl nkʼmaplqs uɬ nʼsisʼoolax̌ʷ. Hello, good day. My name is Mariel Belanger. I come from the head of Okanagan Lake at Dry Creek in the unceded Syilx territory now called British Columbia.

I introduce myself to you in my Syilx language to articulate personal governance and to locate myself in relation to where I come from on the land. In my creative practice I explore how cultural identity can be rebuilt through oral history and performance practice. As a researcher, I work through the lens of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being, Customary Law, Indigenous Feminism, and Performance Theory. I approach "Identity" from a French Canadian Syilx Okanagan status Indian perspective—I always start from *Who am I?* and *Where do I come from?*

EMBODIED PROTOCOL

When I am with others, I embody the performative gesture of "location and family introduction" in the language in order to model the protocol of the Syilx people to visitors in our territory. I would normally include the names of my parents and grandparents to my formal introduction. I usually orient myself in the direction of home when I speak my introduction to groups of new people. Our language was not originally a written language. It was embodied through the activities of our every day.

I have been practising this protocol as a visiting academic since I began my Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of British Columbia–Okanagan. Curating this series of special sections on the 2017 Summer Indigenous Art Intensive for *alt.theatre* gives me the chance to reflect on how I have embodied my practice in ways that are both similar and different in community and academic contexts. These summer Indigenous intensives—bringing together Indigenous and allied artists, performers, and academics—have used Indigenous methodologies and worldviews in blending and breaking down the lines between "artist," "academic," "academy," and "community." While these intensives have gathered on several territories since 2012, my practice has a parallel history to their specific presence in Sylix Territory.

Summer Intensives Timeline – 2011 to 2017

YEAR	PLACE	THEME	FORMAT	OTHER NOTES
2017	*UBC Okanagan/ Kelowna*		*keynote speakers* *core resident artists* *visiting artists* *courses*	
2016	*UBC Okanagan/ Kelowna*	*O K'inadas—walking on the land, walking on Canada*[1]	*4 core artists* *16-20 visiting artists and students* *courses* *interventions from O K'inadas collective*	*The first Intensive* "to really investigate the relationship between Indigenous and primarily racialized non-Indigenous people." *(Ayumi Goto)*
2015	*UBC Okanagan/ Kelowna*	*Pedagogy of Place*	*coursework and directed study*	Pedagogy of Place, coordinated by Tannis Nielsen—"local practice and the land" (Ayumi Goto)
2014	~~~~~~~~ *"fallow"* ~~~~~~~~			
2013	*Thompson Rivers University/ Kamloops*		*12 artists:* *6 Indigenous/ 6 non-Indigenous*	
2012	*Shingwauk Centre, Algoma University, Sault Ste. Marie*		*conference with extended artists' residencies* *gatherings afterwards*	*A* "retreat for artists and academics and the artists stayed and created things, which the academics envied!" *(Ashok Mathur)*
2011	*Kamloops*		"a very small group of Indigenous artists and writers" *(Ashok Mathur)*	"…then after that [playwright, actor and incoming NAC Artistic Director, Indigenous Theatre] Kevin Loring [Nlaka'pamux] suggested we needed incubation space to really think these things." *(Ashok Mathur)*

[1]See "O K'inadas: Where Ayumi Goto and Peter Morin Do Not Talk about Reconciliation" in *alt.theatre* 13.3.

MARIEL'S PRACTICE

I realized I had more of a performative story to share in my first Indigenous Studies class, "*Enowkinwix*." This was the name of the course, as well as of the process described by Dr. Jeannette Armstrong in her dissertation as a dialogic practice that institutes a type of decision-making that includes living within the requirements of the land to fully regenerate. This course was offered through the 2013 Summer Graduate Institute at the Enowkin Centre in Penticton, and Dr. Marlowe Sam was my instructor. Dr. Sam had us create personal identity models that reflected how we were connected to the land and culture. I related my work directly to *N'sis'ooloxw*, Dry Creek, the place I was born and raised, and grew it to include areas of the territory that were new to me.

I missed the Summer Indigenous Intensive's first UBC–Okanagan edition in 2014, as I was completing my undergraduate degree, feeling I'd had enough of school, and dreaming up elder and youth art projects for my community including *Pulling Threads*,[2] a protocol-inspired land-based interdisciplinary performance gathering in my home community, Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) #1. While the Indigenous intensive was bringing artist scholars and mentors to the university, fellow Sylix artist creators Dean Louis (BFA) and Robyn Krugar (BEd, MFA) and I were collaborating on how to bring youth, artists, and elders to places we had yet to walk on. I had this natural inclination to want to bring importance to place and as a community-based artist, creating

© Mariel Belanger (Photo by Sierra Belanger-Lee). The author holding tules used to construct a tule mat lodge, 2017.

site-specific happenings. I had no idea my little land-based project would have a common thread with the 2015 Summer Indigenous Art Intensive.

Pulling Threads was to be a collaborative mentorship using ephemeral sculpture, storytelling, song, and performance to locate self-in-relation-to-land. Elders and youth shared stories and gestures, which would become the embodiments of self-in-relation-to-land on three significant mountain locations in the northern part of Syilx territory. Working from within our home community, Dean, Robyn, and myself met to scout locations that resonated with our intention to reintroduce ourselves to what to us were recovered places, and get a feel for these lands. Many of these places had been forgotten by myself and others because they are located close to military training sites from World War One. Goose Lake range and the mountain between Vernon and OKIB #1 are littered with unexploded bombs. We had Dean guide our caravan up to Eagle Rock and our second stop over looked OKIB#1 and my home. We brought elders Madeline Gregoire and Barbara P. Marchand, and parents including Ruby Alexis and my own mother Hilda Belanger, to help guide discussion in language and song to reflect on how they connected to the land as children and to witness our intentions.

© Mariel Belanger (Photo by Dean Louis). *Pulling Threads* participants on the mountain at Eagle Rock singing to the four directions our love for the land, Sylix Territory, 2014.

Participants in both the intensive and *Pulling Threads* worked to create contemporary land-based art; in our case we created a travelling song in the n'syilxcen language from our mountain adventure. This travelling song consisted of words of the animals and landforms we saw in relation to our artistic outings. I encouraged the participants to ask themselves key questions before going out onto the land. If you have a song you want to sing in the mountain, bring it. Be prepared to ask yourself:

Who am I speaking to when I speak to the trees?

Who hears our voices with the berries?

How do we honour our ancestors by singing and dancing in the mountains?

What symbols do we leave behind?

© Mariel Belanger (Photo by Mariel Belanger). *Pulling Threads* participants, Sylix Territory, 2014.

During *Pulling Threads* in the northern part of Sylix territory, we employed these performance and community arts-based methodologies to emphasize the importance of contextualizing where we are on the land. These arts-based methodologies, I would later learn, affirmed a part of my regular performance practice in understanding visitor protocol and the importance of giving full traditional introduction in the language in a community setting.

THE INTENSIVE

In 2015 I came to know the Indigenous Art Intensive personally as a participant. I had grown immensely as an Indigenous artist scholar since that first class with Dr. Marlowe Sam in 2013, and I had come to realize I had already been embodying research, as my practice has always been related to community land-based art resistance projects.

The theme of the 2015 summer intensive was "Pedagogy of Place." It was coordinated by UBC–Okanagan lecturer Tannis Nielsen who described the program content this way:

> "A Pedagogy of Place as Principle Element in Indigenous Art": Over the duration of this ten-day intensive, students explored the concept of Place by actively participating in an Indigenous pedagogy that utilized the teaching modalities of visual arts, performance, and oral storytelling.
>
> The final assignment in this course asked students to focus on researching their own indigeneity, familial ancestral history and create or perform an art form that speaks toward their own land-based subjectivity under a colonial history.[3]

My particular performance, which I called *The Gamble*, was a response to James Luna's master performance class.

The Gamble was an unrehearsed telling of collected cultural and contemporary objects and their significance to me being present in a time of transforming sqilxw people. It was while being mentored by Tannis and spending time with artist scholars like Luna at the 2015 summer intensive that I began to understand the terminology used by the academy to describe the Indigenous actor creator in me. Using academic terms has its limitations from an Indigenous artist's perspective; quite often it is not specific enough and excludes multiple scopes of engagement.

© Mariel Belanger (Photo by James Luna). The author performing *The Gamble*, Summer Intensive 2015.

Through this work I also came to understand that my

way of knowing follows a syilx-centric epistemology that when we observe the natural world, we are given instructions on how to survive in that world. In a syilx-centric epistemology the land is governance, and story is protocol for navigating *i? stə4ta4c –* the Truth Way as the means of *self*-governance. In order to grow and maintain a solid sense of connection to land in a society that seeks to assimilate and erase Indigenous culture, we must cultivate *indigeneity* in society through the shared love of nature. Just as traditional syilx storytellers must know every landmark and all the changes in territory, my goal is to embody this knowledge for future generations and support their capacity to evoke *i? stə4ta4c* through the same land formations, waterways, and magnetic anomalies as the language records. Within this process (and others) is centred the idea that core teachings can be embodied as governance through *captikʷɬ*, or oral land-based histories, and other performed methods (see chapter 3 of Armstrong).

My work with artists and mentors at the 2015 intensive also confirmed my experience that Indigenous culture, even when modified in practice with contemporary measures, still benefits an Indigenous person at any life stage, more positively than when they are restricted in their access to cultural practice through over-scheduled Western expectations. From my understanding, embodied storytelling is the performative action required to "learn the instructions held within the land."[4] Through cultural research and my connection to the colonial beginnings, I have come to build a practice that sits in the continuum between the polarities of Indigenous and Western history, industry, politics, culture, loss of culture, and their effects on Indigenous women and children.

This past summer I was fortunate to return to the UBC Okanagan Summer Indigenous Arts Institute, this time as a graduate student supervised by Ashok Mathur, director of the intensive and professor of creative writing (UBC–Okanagan). As a performance major, I was particularly excited to engage again with James Luna's master performance class, with Peter Morin's Indigenous Performance Methods class (see "Expert Time Traveller" in this issue), and to devise a few of my own performances, including constructing a tule mat lodge with Dr. Shawn Brigman (see next issue, 14.2 *Ed*.), transforming the lodge into a tattoo school while being traditionally tattooed by Dion Kaszas, and creating the performed happening *Undoing the I Do*. In a parallel event to the Summer Indigenous Art Intensive, I participated with senior Indigenous artists at the *Performing Vocalities* retreat, a project of Dr. Virginie Magnat's also at UBC Okanagan.

It was exciting to return to the summer "birthplace" of my artistic scholarship, and to experience new communities of participating students and artist mentors bringing the place alive with Indigenous creativity. As well as devising and witnessing performances, I had the honour of listening to the sage words of respected Indigenous scholars such as Chris Creighton-Kelly, France Trepanier, Dr. Jeannette Armstrong, Shawn Wilson, Graham Hingangaroa Smith, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, James Luna, and Alex Janvier, among the other visiting artists. These guests provided significant teachings in presentation, Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, perseverance, and singing as prayer for our arrivals and gatherings as offerings to the land. As guest curator I look forward to sharing the performance-oriented practices, provocations, and propositions of intensive participants and guest contributors to this volume of *alt.theatre*.

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Notes

1. Earlier versions of the intensive had taken place at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops and Algoma University/Shingwauk Centre in Sault Ste. Marie; this was the first intensive at UBC–O in Kelowna.
2. Funded by First Peoples Cultural Council (http://www.fpcc.ca/).
3. Description was provided by Tannis Nielsen in a personal communication to the author.
4. Richard Armstrong, from a talk during the *i? stə4ta4c —The Truth Way Canoe Journey*, 2016.

Peter Morin: *Expert Time-Travel Conductor*

BY MARIEL BELANGER

He pulled us into the black-walled studio with Indigenous hand drums lying face up on the floor, sticks resting across their tops. There were many, I didn't count, and he spoke about the drums as having pieces of him made into them, as he had a hand in making each of them. There was a story for all and he told us a few, like the ones that were made with two hides stitched together. Those ones resonated most with me.

A crystal sat in the centre of the drums on a bag from the Canadian Mint.
These would become the implements to conduct our travel through time.

This was Peter Morin's time-travel machine.
It runs on drum power.
Someone had to be the time traveller.
There would be five of us.

He had us all gather in the centre and pick up a drum. There were more drums than people so he set those ones off to the side. The time traveller picked up the crystal.

I haven't decided to time travel yet, so I become part of the machine.
I pick up the drum that called to me. It has a stitch of sinew up the centre of it. It reminds me of the drums Marcel, my dad, has. He's French Canadian but has lived on my rez for almost fifty years. He has played the life out of many of his drums, causing the skin to rip. He is a stick gamer. They are performers.

So I pick this drum with its cedar-wrapped drum stick and face south. We all have drums in hand and are ready for his command. The time traveller situates herself, cradling the crystal in her hands, and we begin the machine.
It winds up and down at his command.
Feeling the force of the drum in my hand following the command of the collective, I knew the energy was whipping around us.

I needed to see for myself, what the time-travel objects would show me.
He called her back and I took the crystal from her and stood facing slightly northwest, the direction of ***N'sis'oolxw,*** "Dry Creek," the place I was raised, my home. I closed my eyes and began to think. I was thinking of the places I would go and the things I would see. My eyes were closed but I could hear the beat of Peter's feather fan as it conducted the drummers.

I began to hear the murmurs. They were all around me, circling through the vibrations of the drummers. Their energy transporting me to the time before time, when the world was in darkness. They were talking about what to do for the People to Be. That is us. I time-travelled back there and heard their whispers in the time before light. I am reminded we must talk about what to do for the People to Be.

It took me back to 1978, when my grandmother Mary Abel told a story to a then young archeology student, Wendy Wickwire, about a healing dream she had where her grandparent instructs her to go into the mountains to find peace.[1] I had the symbols of that story etched into a cuff on my right wrist during the 2015 summer intensive by Dion Kaszas. Dion and I had arranged to complete my cuffs in the tule mat lodge later during the intensive with him. It felt like I was being guided from place to place in the galaxies of my mind and in how my activities were going to fit together as performed resistance.

He called me back and I smiled.
Oh yeah, we are still here in
Studio 144.

© Mariel Belanger (Photo by Mariel Belanger).
Peter Morin and his time machine, 2017.

Notes

1. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL40E3E66923568961

Checking into Carmen Aguirre's *The Refugee Hotel* in Montreal

BY PRIYA NAIR

A Canadian, a Chilean, and a Syrian walk into a theatre.

The Chilean asks, "¿Cómo entenderemos?"

The Syrian asks, "كيف لنا أن نفهم؟"

The Canadian waits for the play to begin.

Sorry, there is no punch line.

1

Several Syrians arrived late to our production of *The Refugee Hotel* after a miscommunication with the taxi driver. One Chilean family arrived with their refugee immigration documents, pointing to themselves and the document, asking "ticket"?

In the bilingual city of Montreal, language is an everyday barrier for some communities. Teesri Duniya Theatre has always prioritized building intercultural relations as a key part of its mandate, and in our 2016 production of Carmen Aguirre's *The Refugee Hotel* (2009) we sought to do this by working outside of this French–English hegemony. Aguirre's play is about Chilean refugees resettling in Vancouver after the 1973 Chilean coup; we adapted the story by setting our production in Montreal to situate it within the local context. We used Spanish surtitles and employed an Arabic translator for post-show discussions to meet the needs of our diverse audience. We were able to bring a large number of Syrians to this play thanks to a unique Welcome Refugees grant provided by the Canada Council for the Arts and Sun Life Foundation. Given the current refugee crisis, the theme

of the play and the attendance of Syrian newcomers fostered a sense of shared experience across culturally diverse communities.

Language is a prominent theme throughout *The Refugee Hotel*, speaking to the challenges faced by refugees and the process of integration. Given that the play is written in English, the use of Spanish surtitles ensured that the production of the play itself did not recreate the same linguistic obstacles depicted within *The Refugee Hotel*. Although the play's dialogue is in English, the interaction between the characters makes it evident that the Chilean refugees don't speak English, and neither their social worker nor the receptionist at the hotel they are housed in speak any Spanish. The only "gringo" who speaks a bit of Spanish is a Québécois named Bill O'Neil. His poor command of Spanish is comically illustrated through his broken English. When juxtaposing Bill's broken English to the Chileans' fluent English (illustrative of their fluent Spanish), the script subtly uses language to problematize how we imagine the "cultural other."

However, the play also shows how one can share one's culture and connect with others despite such language barriers. In one scene, Jorge, a Chilean refugee, asks the receptionist if they can use the record player to play *El Aparecido* by Victor Jara. The receptionist fails to understand what Jorge is saying but eventually understands through Jorge's gestures. The Chileans and the receptionist listen in rapture to the record, the music uniting them in solidarity; despite not understanding Spanish, the receptionist is moved to tears by the beauty of the song. The moment portrays how art can transcend linguistic barriers and showcases the connection that can be fostered through sharing one's culture.

Producing a play like *The Refugee Hotel* in Quebec is particularly relevant in today's climate. This play explores the trials and hardships of forced exile and resettlement—a reality that Syrian newcomers are facing at this very moment. Not only do they bear the brunt of exile from their homeland, but they must also answer to a world where Islamophobia is on the rise. Such divisive ideologies must be superseded by attempts to build intercultural relations and foster understanding. Theatre has the ability to do this not only through performance on stage, but also through dialogue created with the audience offstage.

However, Montreal and Montreal theatre still largely operates within a bi-cultural and bilingual hegemony. The integration of cultural "others" and the promotion of greater social and political dialogue are all forced through the official language, French, or English. Moreover, Quebec has a long, controversial relationship with multiculturalism. Concerns around Quebec's cultural preservation have been placed in opposition to multiculturalism, be it through stringent language laws, ongoing reasonable accommodation debates, the proposed Charter of Values, or xenophobic attitudes expressed in popular culture. Diametrically opposing these two issues risks forcing newcomers to forsake their own identity in exchange for asylum.

Our production sought to bridge this divide by creating a space of shared belonging where cultures and languages could intersect to create a harmonious diversity—where a Chilean could easily engage in a socially and politically conscious conversation with a Syrian or Canadian, and where a contentious discussion could give way to community building. The audience at any given show reflected the diversity that is Canadian society and echoed with the murmurs of whispered translations. The presence of an Arabic translator during post-play discussions allowed many Syrian newcomers to raise pertinent questions and be actively involved in talking about issues such as language barriers during resettlement, the effects of trauma, and the particular struggles of women during forced migration. Our production demonstrated that it is possible to host enriching social and political discussions without confining them to two languages. It allowed Chileans, Syrians, and Canadians alike to actively engage in a dialogue, crossing a sea of differences with sentiments based in the universal human experience.

Photo 1:
© Teesri Duniya Theatre (Photo by Jean Charles Labarre). Background, L-R: Gilda Monreal (Flaca), Pablo Diconca (Fat Jorge), Charles Bender (Bill O'Neill); foreground, L-R: Shanti Gonzales (Christina) and Braulio Elicer (Manuel) in Teesri Duniya's production of Carmen Aguirre's *The Refugee Hotel*, 2016.

Photo 2:
© Teesri Duniya Theatre (Photo by Jean Charles Labarre). Background, L-R: Shanti Gonzales (Christina), Mariana Tayler (Manuelita), Gilda Monreal (Flaca), Juan Grey (Joselito); foreground: Vera Wilson Valdez (Calladita) in Teesri Duniya's production of Carmen Aguirre's *The Refugee Hotel*, 2016.

Theatre Review

REVIEW OF

HAMLET ON THE WIRE / HAMLET SUR LE FIL

BY JOYCE BORO AND FIONA RITCHIE

Written by **William Shakespeare and Louis Patrick Leroux**
Featuring: **François Bouvier (tight-wire) and Joel Mason (sound)**
June 10 – 11, 2016
Running time approximately 7 minutes
Atrium Le 1000, Montréal, Québec

Hamlet on the Wire is a short performance and sound installation that was staged in Montreal, Quebec, as part of the city's celebrations of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. The piece was created by Louis Patrick Leroux with a soundscape designed by Joel Mason, and it starred tight-wire artist François Bouvier, a graduate of Montreal's National Circus School. Four performances took place on June 10 and 11, 2016, in the Atrium of 1000 de la Gauchetière, a high-rise office building in the centre of the city.[1]

The nexus of this tight-wire performance and sound installation is a stripped-down French translation of the most iconic part of *Hamlet*'s "To be or not to be" soliloquy. Leroux calls his adaptation a "resonant translation" of Shakespeare's language. He offers up a dense palimpsestic layering of Shakespeare, Gabriele D'Annunzio's *Le Martyre de saint Sébastien* (1911), and Leroux's earlier play *Rappel* (1995) translated from French into English as *Apocalypse* (2010). This rich poetic translation is overlaid with sounds that evoke the wire that is central to the performance, as well as excerpts from the "Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I" soliloquy, which together introduce and reinforce the theme of theatricality.

Spectators arrived in the Atrium to find a scattering of chairs surrounding a solid-looking tight-wire 5.5 metres long and 1.5 metres off the ground in the light and glassy large open space of the lobby of the Atrium. A young man in his twenties enters, dressed in contemporary casual clothing: burgundy-coloured jeans and a navy blue t-shirt. He appears to be part of the crowd of spectators or the general public. He contemplates the wire in front of him as the lines "Am I a coward? / Who calls me villain? Breaks my pate across?" are spoken in English by Mike Hughes on the soundscape recording. We also hear metallic noises that suggest objects and bodies coming into contact with the wire and its subsequent reverberations. Bouvier's voice speaks the French text in the recording that forms the core of the soundscape, but he does not speak live during his performance on the wire.

In the performance, the tight-wire comes to symbolize the thread of Hamlet's consciousness. As the opening of the famous "To be or not to be" speech begins, Hamlet approaches the wire. He spends some time sizing it up before he mounts it, steeling himself for the challenge. As he grapples with the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," he starts to walk the wire, moving back and forth along it. At other moments he squats or even lies on the wire. When he begins to contemplate sleep and death, his confidence falters and He is both deeply implicated in and disconnected from the speech. Bouvier both is and is not Hamlet. This gives the audience the sense that we are observing Hamlet's internal struggle but, as his words surround us, we feel that Hamlet is part of us too.

The opening line of Leroux's translation of the central speech signals his playful departure from Shakespeare. He abandons "Être ou ne pas être," the iconic and highly recognizable French translation of "to be or not to be" in favour of "Être, n'être pas." This grammatically awkward phrase puns on the verb "naître" (to be born) so that the monologue begins with an existential investigation into birth and existence, which is developed in the second line's questions about the value of past and future existence: "Ne pas avoir été; n'être plus." The soliloquy does not translate Hamlet's rhetorical questions, but expresses a feeling of being overwhelmed by questions ("Trop de questions me taraudent") and a desire to inhabit a life without questions ("devant la calamité d'une vie / Sans doutes, sans questions"). This is typical of Leroux's methodology. He preserves the key images and themes of the soliloquy as he rewrites the text.[2]

> the alliterations, repetitions, and parallelisms reflect the movement on the wire—forwards and backward, side to side—as well as simultaneously projecting the wavering of Hamlet's thoughts.

All photos: © Louis Patrick Leroux (Photo by Maxime Bachand). Performer François Bouvie in *Hamlet on the Wire/ Hamlet sur le fil*, 2016.

he wavers, the physical movement echoing his mental processes, as does the jerking repetition of the soundscape. Following this, Hamlet begins to reappropriate the wire, taking control of it and starting to show off his skills. At this point, a Québécois reel starts to play and Hamlet tests the limits of the wire as the English actor's voice asks, "Who would fardels bear?" and muses over "the undiscovered country." Hamlet then completes an audacious leap on the wire in order to demonstrate his skill, but this virtuosity can only be achieved once he has contemplated the alternative to suffering. Finally, Hamlet descends from the wire and elegantly slides away from it as the soundscape becomes distorted.

Although there are moments where language and action thematically complement each other, the tightrope choreography does not literalize the spoken text. Rather, the alliterations, repetitions, and parallelisms reflect the movement on the wire—forwards and backward, side to side—as well as simultaneously projecting the wavering of Hamlet's thoughts. There is a fundamental quality of tentativeness in the way the artist walks. His movement is hesitant, non-linear, troubled. He takes risks not through flashy stunts, but by pushing moments of disequilibrium and catching himself just in time. Crucially, the movement evokes a sense of disconnection from the self, of seeking, of the messiness of Hamlet's indecision. Indeed, as the performer tests the limits of the wire, he embodies Hamlet who likewise tests his limits and bounces between emotional extremes. Accordingly, Bouvier's relationship to the tight-wire shifts throughout the performance, fluctuating between intense aggression, affection, and indifference. The tightrope is both dangerous and sustaining; it suspends the artist in the air as the pull of gravity limits his flight. Ultimately, it highlights the play's preoccupation with performance and pretence, disorder and disequilibrium. It simultaneously foregrounds Hamlet's tentative, indecisive attempts at negotiating his complex social and emotional reality.

The tightrope is both dangerous and sustaining; it suspends the artist in the air as the pull of gravity limits his flight.

Concentric spheres of sound are interwoven live by Mason in response to the fluctuations in the pace of Bouvier's movement; this aural collaboration creates idiosyncratic, unique performances. The different sonic undulations surround the performer and the audience and converge visually upon the tight-wire. The wire and the French soliloquy are, taken together, the core of this intimate performance. In contrast with this intimacy, the audience remains aware of the cavernous space of the Atrium and the noise of its fountains. This clash between privacy and openness highlights how the pressures of the outside world affect Hamlet's interior state. This conflict was particularly evident in the Friday performances, when office workers passed through the Atrium on their lunch breaks, some pausing to watch the performance, some looking on briefly from the mezzanine or as they rode the escalators, some snapping a quick photo or video clip on their phones before continuing on, and others walking past without a glance or a care for Hamlet's predicament.

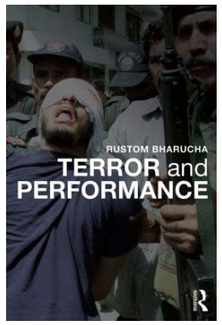
There is a rich tradition of Québécois adaptation of Shakespeare in French. Shakespeare's status as a linguistic and cultural other enables Québécois playwrights to approach his work in a spirit of irreverence and experimentation, an attitude also evident in *Hamlet on the Wire*. For those who chose to watch, the performance had the effect of bringing to life a soliloquy that can seem to be moribund because of its overfamiliarity. The speech was revivified as the dynamic thought processes in which Hamlet engages were rendered highly physical through Bouvier's expert movements on the tight wire. The soundscape allowed a rich inner world to be created for the character so that we grasped both his physical and mental engagement with the issues inherent in the speech. Furthermore, the artist's physical prowess echoed the virtuosity that is demanded of Shakespearean actors when they deliver these famous lines, which have become a set piece that is in many ways detached from the play. The familiar lines of Hamlet's "To be or not to be" speech are often used to invoke Shakespeare's cultural capital in contemporary advertising, popular music, film, television, and political discourse, with little attention to the play from which they are excerpted. They are an efficient shorthand for invoking Shakespeare with scant regard to their context. By contrast, here the script, soundscape, and action worked together to position the soliloquy as a microcosm for the play as a whole; *Hamlet on the Wire* serves as a provocative entry point to the play, inviting spectators to explore its broader thematic and political concerns.

Notes

1. The show was staged on Friday, June 10, 2016, at 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm, and on Saturday, June 11 at 1:30 pm and 5:00 pm. While this review is primarily of the afternoon performance on June 11, it also refers to the June 10 noon performance. We also viewed video footage of an abridged version of the piece assembled from all performances.

2. We are grateful to Patrick Leroux for sharing a draft of his script with us.

Book Review



REVIEW OF

RUSTOM BHARUCHA. *TERROR AND PERFORMANCE.*

New York: Routledge, 2014. pp. 236.

BY MATT JONES

The first surprising thing about Rustom Bharucha's book on terror and performance is its setting. Rather than lead us down a well-trodden path through the hotspots of violence that have held the world's attention for the last decade and a half, Bharucha has a more meditative itinerary in mind, one that takes us from a theatre in Manila to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Rwanda and South Africa and concludes with a discussion of Gandhian non-violence in India. By expanding the space and time in which the debate around terror is conventionally framed, as well as widening the scope of what is usually considered performance, Bharucha is able to offer a fresh and somewhat peculiar perspective on the issue.

While he weighs in on some of the subjects that have caused the most ink to spill in politics and cultural studies—Islamophobia, state and anti-state terror, the performativity of violence, and the debate over 9/11 as art—these discussions amount to only half of the book. In the first half, Bharucha takes issue with the way that terror—and violence more broadly—has been theorized in performance studies (Richard Schechner, John Bell) and critical theory (Terry Eagleton, Paul Virilio, Jacques Derrida); but the second half turns to strategies of reconciliation. Thus, although his title highlights terror, Bharucha reveals that his more pressing concern is thinking about peace. His approach is an earnest attempt to grasp the connection between terror and performance through the lens of ethics in the hopes that understanding violence might contribute something to reconciliation, de-escalation, and conflict resolution.

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This task is complicated by Bharucha's deep-seated ambivalence about the way performance theory has dealt with such questions up to now. In particular, he takes issue with the notion, defended by Richard Schechner, that acts of terrorism invoke a similar logic to avant-garde performance. He is skeptical that performance theory can be used in regards to the dead, and this distrust means that for long stretches of the book he departs from discussing performance at all, bringing it back only to show his measurable distaste with those who do try to apply performance to understanding violence. In this sense, the book becomes an exploration of the limits of performance theory at the same time that it tries to expand the realm of the field by bringing it closer to politics. This tension may seem paradoxical but it frequently produces valuable insights.

Bharucha arrived at the subject of terror by accident, he tells us in his introduction, when he learned that a theatre in Manilla had mysteriously burnt to the ground only three days after the closing of a play (*The Maids* by Jean Genet) he had directed. While the fire was suspicious, it was unlikely an act of terrorism. Nevertheless, the play had gone into rehearsals in October 2001 and the 9/11 attacks weighed heavily on the minds of the creators. Indeed, the spectre of terrorism seemed to haunt the production, which included a reference to arson, making the fire seem all the more uncanny. How might theory help understand this situation? The fire made Bharucha think of Virilio's claim that "the elements of destruction are already factored into the technology of any apparatus" (qtd. on p. 1), and he was reminded that theatre is not immune to this law. While in an earlier essay, Bharucha had compared theatre's capacity to strike consciousness to an act of terror, that metaphor now seemed overblown and callous. Bharucha decided he needed to think through the notion of terror more rigorously.

He glosses Derrida's characterization of the rise of al Qaeda as a product of American "autoimmunity," that bodily process whereby a body's cells turn on it to destroy its own immunity to disease. Playing on the connection between a common cold and the Cold War, Derrida points to how the Afghan mujahedeen that became al Qaeda was a product of a security apparatus designed to protect the US from attack. Bharucha thinks it is not enough to level such criticisms only against political opponents so he brings the idea back to the immunity of the theatre, wondering whether the field of performance studies similarly immunizes itself against criticism in its always already liberal/radical postures. Could such attempts at ensuring immunity also be fueling theatre's destruction?

One reason Bharucha moves away from the conventional topography of terror is his desire to escape the monopolizing of the term by the US-led discourse of

anti-terrorism, which often portrays terror as something uniquely directed against Western democracies by fanatical outsiders. Expanding his scope across Asia and Africa is a way of acknowledging that terror is experienced in "multitudinous, palpable, and infinitesimal ways across the world, where ordinary people live with terror on a daily basis" (3). Bharucha spends a few pages rehearsing arguments about Western double standards towards violence, but his real interest lies elsewhere. While earlier in his career he was content to restrain his comments on terror to pointing out the excesses and hypocrisies of counter-insurgency operations (he refers to a 2003 article in which he wrote he was fighting "terrorism by countering counter-terrorism"), he now finds that this position was "somewhat too buoyant in its uncomplicated radicality" (2). Instead, Bharucha feels a need to grapple more deeply with the idea of terror itself. This involves, first, separating the notion of terror from the discourse of terrorism and, second, engaging with strategies to overcome terror. The latter is what takes him to Rwanda, South Africa, and India to analyze practical methods that have tried to move on from cycles of violence. In a sense, he is making a turn towards a certain brand of political realism that is grounded in actually existing models as opposed to the failed utopianism of the Left and the historical avant-garde.

In particular, Bharucha wants to take on the avant-garde's rather sullied history of conflating the aesthetics of performance and terror over the past century—one thinks of Antonin Artaud's incendiary associations of theatre with destruction, cruelty, and violence; André Breton's lauding of mindless killing as the purest surrealist act; Jean Genet's sympathies for the Red Army Faction; or composer Karlheinz Stockhausen's notorious pronouncement that 9/11 was the "greatest work of art there ever has been" (qtd. on 59). Contrary to that tradition, the central ethical claim that Bharucha is intent on making in the book is that, "terror itself, to spell out a critical point as bluntly as possible, is not a performance" (27).

Here, he is careful to insist on the difference between metaphor and reality, especially in regards to Artaud, whose Theatre of Cruelty, Bharucha reminds us, "has nothing to do with 'blood' or actual violence" (61). He deploys Artaud against Stockhausen, accusing the composer of "the worst kind of 'masterpiece' syndrome," which is precisely what Artaud wanted to use violent aesthetics to break out of. Responding to a number of scholars in *Theatre Journal* who saw in 9/11 a parallel with Artaud's declaration that the purpose of theatre is to tell us that "the sky can still fall on our heads," Bharucha stresses that for Artaud that notion was always a metaphor and a strategy to revitalize theatre by injecting it with an apocalyptic energy; to read it in reverse, as performance theatricalizing life, undermines its basic sense (48). Moreover, he argues, Artaud's point is about our terror that the sky *may* fall on our heads in the future. It is a terror of potentiality: the metaphor breaks down if we imagine the sky has already fallen in the form of a plane hitting a skyscraper.

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Whether or not 9/11 can be called art, it was a transformative moment for the performance of everyday life for many communities around the world, especially Muslims. Bharucha looks at the performative dimensions of post-9/11 Islamophobia, especially the way that Muslim identity became attached to (not always reliable) visual signifiers such as beards, turbans, and hijabs. "Once marked," he concludes, "'the Muslim' assumes a hyper-real significance, regardless of whether or not it is linked to a mistaken or real identity" (80). So, in an ironic reversal of the phenomenon of "passing," non-Muslims might find themselves caught up in Islamophobic violence by virtue of how their appearance allows them to "pass" as Muslims. Bharucha then tries to concretize this analysis by outlining the history of communal violence that led to the attempted genocide against Muslims in Gujarat.

He is extremely wary of bringing performance theory into this arena and shifts to a more historical register, offering a factual outline of Muslim-Hindu relations in the state. Nevertheless, he returns to performance theory as a way to explain violence. He takes up Arun Appadurai's argument that in an age of social and material uncertainties unleashed by globalization, killing offers the prospect of "dead certainty" (98). In this context, performing ethnic violence becomes a way of forging identity (96). While categories of identity—especially ethnic identity—are notoriously unstable, for Appadurai the act of killing becomes "one means of satisfying one's sense of one's categorical self" (qtd. on 100).

This idea is too essentializing for Bharucha, however, who stresses instead the diversity of ways that ethnicity and violence are played out throughout the world. Moreover, he sees the willingness to commit acts of violence not as a primordial force but as distinctly linked to the "terrifyingly banal truth that the perpetrators of this genocide were fully aware that they would get away with their crimes" (101). The failure of justice, then, brings the discussion back to questions of politics. What these arguments mean for the relevance of performance theory is left unclear, though undoubtedly there is much to be unpacked about the performativity of government actions towards violence that are intended to signal tacit support for it.

Performance plays a more central role in Bharucha's reading of how violence may be overcome, as he leads us into a discussion of the dramaturgical setup of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) in post-genocide Rwanda and post-apartheid South Africa. Though acknowledging the impressive scope of these commissions (particularly in Rwanda) and their important "transformative potentiality," he questions their long-term efficacy. While individuals were called upon to "perform themselves" at the tribunals, he is reticent to understand this in the way that Richard Schechner describes performance as "restored behaviour." (For Schechner, performance is something that repeats a form of behaviour that has happened before.)

Continuing his suspicion of violence as theatre, Bharucha wants to deny the genocide the status of performance. Describing the tribunal as a performative space makes him uncomfortable with the way that "behaviour" comes to stand in as a euphemism for atrocities. "The actual frenzy of violence," Bharucha claims, "challenges the normative underpinnings of what is understood by 'behaviour' in the first place" (113). The term, he discovers, is too broad to be useful. However, it is not only behaviour that is problematic in the TRC but also the nature of what is being restored in its truth-telling. As participants told the Commissions stories of atrocities they participated in or were victims of, it became apparent that certain kinds of truths about such behaviour were being produced (rather than restored). These stories were edited by often-authoritarian state actors in a way that worked to bolster nationalist myths about transitioning to a just state rather than ensuring justice was served.

These comments are worth bearing in mind in Canada, where the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had significantly less teeth than those in Africa and was decisively oriented towards creating a new national narrative of postcolonial reconciliation. While the Commission in South Africa noted that "multiple truths" would be generated by the tribunals, they prioritized the kind that can be empirically documented, while claiming, somewhat patronisingly, that narrative or personal truths could offer "healing potential" (132). Bharucha wonders whether the sidelining of subjective truth undermines the performative value of the tribunals, and particularly their claims to be based on traditional indigenous forms of conflict resolution. He also worries about the compulsion to speak (participation in Rwanda was mandatory for all citizens) and wonders whether for certain victims of violence remaining silent may have been a political choice, motivated by anger or dissatisfaction with the terms of participation.

Is there another way the TRC could have been dramatized? Bharucha is self-conscious about how he poses the solution to this question in the figure of Mahatma Gandhi, whom he views as a "one-man Truth Commission" (149). One advantage of Gandhi's politics, Bharucha claims, is his emphasis on respecting the "other" as they are. Identity, for Gandhi, is fixed and stable, rather than eternally hybrid and in flux as postmodern thinking would have it. Yet this apparent conservatism has the advantage of allowing Gandhi to demand that people respect each other as communities that are fundamentally different. He looks at Gandhi's fasts for peace and his Salt March as masterful performative actions that struck a chord with the population because they were part of movements deeply embedded in local culture and values. As such, they were successful, for a time, in convincing warring communities to cease fighting. And though they involved violence, it was violence applied to the self, never to the "other."

What do these models of non-violence have to do with terror and performance? In answering this question, Bharucha returns to the question of immunity and insists that theatre is not always removed from sites of violence. He points to Jenin's Freedom Theatre in Palestine, which is routinely targeted by the Israel Defence Forces, and to theatres in Iraq and Afghanistan, where putting on theatre means risking your life. Not only is theatre not necessarily a safe space, he goes on to say, it is not intrinsically non-violent. We need to acknowledge "the ways in which we are complicit in larger scenarios of terror, which would appear to be distant from the protected confines of theatre" (172–73). Performing in state-sanctioned spaces allows for business to continue as usual, offering a camouflage of free speech to states that participate in creating terror. Instead of continuing to be complicit with this state of affairs, he wonders how non-violence itself might enter into "the imaginary of theatre and performance practice" and calls for underground, disruptive models of theatre that transform the violence of censorship and surveillance into the subversive language of theatre (173).

Although he sees the task of fundamentally overcoming terror as impossible, he is impatient with people like Derrida who think about justice as something that is always "to come" in an ever-postponed dream of a just future. He tries to maintain faith in law as a tool that the powerless can hold onto, but is only too aware of the unevenness of access to law, its unenforceability by corrupt police forces, and its instrumentalization and asymmetrical use by powerful states. Bharucha's realism has him in a bind between Derridean utopianism and postmodern pessimism. Nevertheless, he sees hope for the future in small acts of political activism by the powerless, including actions that involve self-harm as a way of asserting dignity, and in efforts by researchers, activists, and journalists to cast light on terrors made invisible by government censorship and media disinterest. Performance, in other words, has a role to play in helping us think of new ways of living together that do not depend on constantly terrorizing each other.

If this conclusion seems weak, it is perhaps to be expected in a subject of such monstrous intensity, but the book's value lies less in the solutions it proposes than in the ideas it surfaces (which is somewhat paradoxical, given Bharucha's intent to focus on actually existing models). It is perhaps best thought of as a rumination on terror, non-violence, and performance theory, and its meandering journey through global crises illuminated by a litany of thinkers seems less like a structured thesis and more like a bricolage of often fascinating and original ideas. As such, the book makes a claim—albeit a muted one—that performance theory, used in the right way, might offer valuable tools for seeing politics differently and beginning to think our way out of the crisis of terror today.

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