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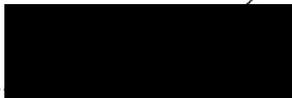
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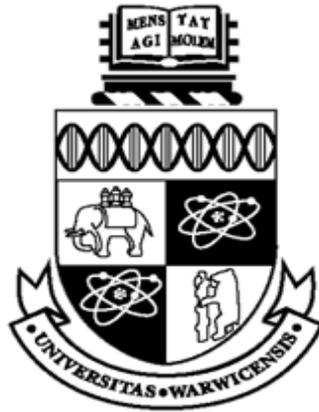
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At the nexus between Theatre and Education:

A study of theatre artists' teaching practices

by

Noorlinah Mohamed

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts Education

University of Warwick,
Department of Drama and Theatre in Education
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ABSTRACT

In Singapore, there is an increasing presence of theatre artists as educators across varied sectors of the educational institutions. However despite their active engagement with education, research on what and how they do their teaching is limited. This thesis sets out to investigate the theatre artists' teaching practices in education settings. The literature reviewed as part of this inquiry point to an identifiable system of pedagogy in the theatre artists' teaching practices. As such, one of the key strands of this research is to identify and name what is distinctive about theatre artists' teaching practices. But more than just identifying characteristics, I am interested in understanding if there is an overarching philosophy that guides these practices. To that end, I conceptualised a framework, which examines the theatre artists' teaching practices as inhabiting a nested nexus of two distinguishably separate fields: Theatre and Education. Each with its own variegated influences and systems of knowledge and values that govern practices.

Working with an overarching Bourdieusean theoretical framework, in particular *habitus* and *field*, as well as invoking Lyotard's notion of *differend*, the study relies on interdisciplinary theories to aid explication of key concepts related to the study.

The study also employs a melding of ethnographic case study and reflective practitioner as its methodology. Additionally, it works with "critiquing across difference" (Lather 2008) as a means to challenge and destabilise the reflective practitioner lens. This is achieved by structuring the research into two phases. Phase I involves researching in England. Working with four theatre artists, I examine how each assumes their position as educators in various education settings both within and beyond the school environment. The opportunity gained from this experience informed Phase II research in Singapore, the main focus of this inquiry.

The findings suggest that to understand theatre artists' teaching practices require an examination of contexts influencing their teaching acts. This includes their layered histories of both artistic and teaching experiences as well as the relationship they have with the school culture and the objectives and needs of their teaching projects. Additionally, in examining their teaching moments, the study discovers a pattern of doing the same approaches or strategies, differently. Working from the data, an overarching world view guiding the construction of their teaching practices is eventually proposed.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my original work and has not been submitted for any higher degree in another university.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Research Aims

The purpose of this research is to investigate the practices of theatre artists as educators. It is not an impact analysis of their approach in the classroom, or contributions their presence have on student achievements and/or their appreciation of drama or theatre. Nor is this a deficit argument against the practices of trained teachers of drama. My inquiry seeks to understand the politics of practices, negotiations and adaptations that may happen when theatre artists traverse from an **artistic space** into an **education environment**. It is a research designed to explore and understand the process of doing theatre education from the vantage point of theatre artists.

The topic is researched through a twin process of reflective practitioner and ethnographic case study. Although the study is on Singapore theatre artists and their practices, an initial phase was carried out in the UK. The research done in the UK offered a space of distance and difference aimed at raising critical questions of my identity as a Singaporean researcher/theatre artist/educator and the presuppositions that may otherwise be obscured within the context of familiarity. It raises the stakes of my ‘insider’ reflective practitioner perspective through, borrowing Patti Lather’s term, “critiquing across difference” (2008, p. 223). While the investigation is localised within a Singaporean context, the implications from the research findings contribute to global conversations surrounding artists in schools and the ways in which their teaching can be researched and understood.

This introductory chapter charts the beginning of the reflective practitioner and ethnographic case study research. It offers my motivations for the research. It also

frames the philosophical and theoretical foundations of the terminology used in the thesis and guides the reader with chapter synopses.

2. Motivations For The Research

Paul Connerton (1989) remarks,

[O]ur experience of the present very largely depends upon our knowledge of the past. We experience our present world in a context which is causally connected with past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects which we are not experiencing when we are experiencing the present (p. 2).

Although this inquiry is not focused on a historical analysis of theatre artists' teaching practices, it echoes Connerton in recognising the significance of memory and the past in constructing ways of being and doing in the present. However, rather than tracing history for an origin or source of a concept, the process of working with history in this research is to identify significant events from the past that illuminate the way the present is affected. It is as Foucault (1984) argues that an invocation of the past "must record the singularity of events outside of any monstrous finality" (p. 76). The reading of that history examines how each event interlocks as,

accidents, the minute deviations—or conversely the complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals and the faulty calculations that give birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us (p. 81).

The pertinence of history also reflects a Bourdieusean concern. For Pierre Bourdieu's relational analysis, history is an important principle in the "structured, structuring" property of *habitus* (1990). History, within his formulation, is identified as an embodiment of socialised values, beliefs and principles "internalised as second nature" and are resources that guide present and future actions, determining membership and group alliances and type of social and economic position within a given field (ibid., p. 58–66). From a Bourdieusean perspective, an understanding of practices is relationally understood against the logic of historically acquired *habitus* and their negotiations with ideological, spatial and temporal variations in practices. Consequently, an understanding of the complex and dynamic background of each

theatre artists, particularly what they deem as pivotal moments in their artistic and pedagogic development, is suggested here as an important component in the research.

I further submit that an understanding of the separate domains within which theatre artists inhabit when engaged in teaching, or *fields* in Bourdieusean logic, is equally necessary. Accordingly, I consider the theatre artists' teaching practices as a relational interaction between two fields identified here as 'theatre (field) /artistic (practices)' and 'education (field) /teaching (practices)'. Through the examination of 'how' theatre artists teach, the borders and boundaries, influences and negotiations, tension and affordances between and betwixt these fields are interrogated.

Before we delve into the heart of the inquiry, let me first unpack my reflective practitioner lens. In the spirit of dialogism and reflexivity, I explicate my motivations, agendas and interests in this introductory chapter to initiate a conversation between my position and voice, as the mediator of the object of inquiry; the research participants' narratives; and the readers' responses to this inquiry. I turn to key events from my past that inspired my research journey, herein grouped into three categories. The first, as mentioned in the preceding paragraph, is my professional experience as a theatre artist and educator. Second, two significant events encountered with colleagues at different points of time. Finally, it ends with a reading of educational philosophy and the arts. It challenged my understanding of what arts education serves to achieve and the importance of critical reflection and the act of doing.

2.1. Professional experience

My professional life is a melding of professional theatre work and arts education. I enjoy more than two decades of successful professional acting career, and continue to find the stage a compelling space to inhabit. Yet parallel to this acting journey is my involvement as an educator with young people and adults, both in schools and the community. My interest in the conjoined identity of artist/educator developed into a leadership role. I led arts-related community and educational projects in collaboration with other artists. I co-founded in 2001 the Association of Singapore

Actors and, a year later, the Singapore Drama Educators Association (SDEA). With the latter I was its President from 2005–2009. Crucially, my focus while with the SDEA was professional development for artists and teachers as well as fostering artist–teacher partnerships in schools. Consequently, I developed projects in that direction. Increasingly the projects revealed a need to understand and theorise the principles or ethos of theatre artists’ teaching practices, and reflect on how best they may effectively contribute to arts education. What I have accounted thus far paints the intimate relationship I have with both the theatre and teaching communities in Singapore. It follows then that I am embedded within the research. This investigation is as much on the practices and identity of other theatre artists as it is a critical reflection of my own.

2.2. Two significant events

My research journey was also inspired by two significant events. The first was my encounter with Professor Jonathan Neelands in 2003. That was his first visit to Singapore, upon the invitation of TheatreWorks (Singapore) Limited as part of its education and outreach programmes.

I digress at this point to offer a snapshot of the landscape of theatre education in Singapore at the time of Neelands’ visit to highlight the significance of his workshop. At the start of the 21st Century, few Singapore teachers were trained in drama, and those who were had little prospect to teach drama in schools. There were opportunities for in-curriculum drama education work, but these were few and often schools engaged theatre artists to lead them. A large part of what was available in terms of drama or theatre was offered as extra-curricular activities, or in Singapore termed as ‘co-curricular activities’ (CCAs). These are non-academic activities offered as part of the Singapore Ministry of Education’s vision of a holistic education (<http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/secondary/cca/>). The description offered here is brief, but serves as a preamble to a later more expanded discussion on the Singapore arts education context offered in Chapters 2 and 5.

Prior to Neelands’ workshop, there had been few professional development courses relating to drama or theatre education. The earliest workshop in my recollection was

in 1991. It was a Theatre-in-Education workshop, led by Alan Lyddiard and Tony Graham of T.A.G Theatre Company. It was offered by TheatreWorks (Singapore) Limited, with the support of the British Council. In that workshop, only theatre artists and dancers attended. I was one of them. As such Neelands' workshop was significant in that both teachers and artists were present, indicating not only a growing interest among teachers in using drama, but also an awareness of the need for drama in Singapore schools.

At the workshop Neelands led, theatre artists who were present found connections in conventions they experienced in their rehearsal rooms but made different by the terms used to define them. For example, the convention 'still image' Neelands offered was recognised as 'tableau' by the theatre artists; hot-seating, experienced as a device to illicit as well as offer information through role-playing, was not far removed from how directors used it as a strategy to help shape the actors' connection with their characters during rehearsals. Conventions notwithstanding, it was perhaps Neelands' employment of performance theory as a means to elucidate drama pedagogy that brought the strongest connection for the theatre artists in that room.

At break time, several theatre artists and I began discussing the experience. Several questions were raised: What similarities and differences exist between the work done by theatre artists and drama teachers in the classrooms with young people? Is there a definitive approach or form to doing drama and/or theatre education? Following that, what is the difference between drama and theatre education? Or is this distinction a concern experienced only in England but not Singapore?

The second key moment was a discussion with an expatriate lecturer in drama education at the National Institute of Education (NIE). In my interaction with her, she highlighted tensions arising from theatre artists' presence in schools. She raised issues of theatre artists' lack of pedagogical knowledge and consequently the inappropriate management of students. Theatre artists were collectively portrayed as only interested in serving artistic endeavours rather than the educational experience of young people. Such criticisms are not without merit. There are, as with most professions, questionable practices. However to flatten and homogenise theatre

artists elides the differences in experience and expertise that exist between them and the possible contributions they can add to classroom engagement.

This incident raised several issues. Firstly, it questioned the right(s) to teach, drawing distinctions between drama teachers and theatre practitioners. It also highlighted, borrowing Deborah Britzman's phrase (2003), "the conflicting visions, disparaging considerations and contesting interpretations" that surround theatre artists' practices in schools (p. 26). Correspondingly, it drew attention to the importance of examining the relationship between "history, mythology and discourses of institutions" (ibid.) that frame theatre artists' work and the lived subjectivities of their own identities and practices.

Secondly, it raised issues of constructed knowledge bound by specific historical, ideological and social context. This relates to the question of drama and theatre education as predominantly theorised from a Western point of view, specifically, English, Australian and American-centric practices. What is the role of localised cultural and historical experiences and how do they square off against the influences of more established theories and concepts of Western canons? How do these Western established concepts and theories become appropriated, integrated or adapted in the local context?

The questions sparked by these two key events are not intended to generate a polemical and post-colonial dialectic between West and East. Instead my aim is to be reflexive of our (both the Singapore theatre artists included in this research and mine) experiences with the Western tradition. As such my reflexive undertaking attempts to disrupt the layering of practices, the conflating of experiences and collision of histories that take place through these globalised interactions and to search, if at all possible, for the 'local' experience.

2.3. Philosophical writings of Maxine Greene

My continued quest for answers brought me to my last inspiration—the philosophical writings of Maxine Greene. My first encounter with her writings was *Variations on a Blue Guitar* (2001). Several ideas stood out for me. One of them is

her philosophy on education, one that recognises the proper place of the arts in the curriculum. Not as a “decorative devices in education, intended either to improve or to motivate”, she argues (p. 19), but one, which offers an education of “a wide-awake attending” (p. 37). She terms it aesthetic education as opposed to arts education. The latter she associates with the disciplined learning of forms, while the former

is a process of initiating persons into faithful perceiving, a means of empowering them to accomplish the task from their own standpoints, against the background of their own awareness (p. 45).

Underlying her ideas is her belief that teachers and artists share a responsibility to fight for a proper place for the arts in schools. To that end she advocated professional development, for both teachers and artists, most of which were held in New York at the Lincoln Centre.

Parallel to her ideas of an education of wide-awakeness is transformative action. Particularly the sense of agency and urgency against the taken for granted and the silencing of voices from those with a different story to tell. She argues that the self, like education, is incomplete and in a process of becoming (p. 118). But the knowledge of that becoming is only realised through action. Drawing from Hannah Arendt, Greene advocates action as “taking an initiative, embarking on a beginning, setting something in motion” (p. 119). It seems obvious to me then, in order to be the educator that uses my artistry to encourage young people “to make of themselves who or what they are” (p. 118), I too needed to make space for my own self-realisation. I needed to respond to the various “shocks of awareness” (p. 116), as Greene puts it, generated from the encounters I had in my professional practice as a theatre actress and educator. I needed to find those answers, or more questions, which nagged at me from way back in Neelands’ workshop and the conversations with a colleague that provoked me to examine my practice as a theatre artist in school and the role of history and cultural specificities.

Hence this is where I am now. The reflective practitioner research is then a fitting choice, given my experiences. As Greene (1996) suggests, such a research relies on “the judgements of practitioners asked to think about their own thinking” (p. xv), and by extension, their own doing. In that regard, I am working with my ‘insider’

experience and knowledge to collaborate with others like me to critically examine the work we do. It is a difficult terrain, as it will be argued in the chapter on literature review, with limited published research to offer insights on the topic. It is precisely because of limited published resources that my research endeavour is an important and timely one. Timely, in the wake of greater funding as well as access for theatre artists in schools. Not only in Singapore, but elsewhere in countries where theatre and drama education is more developed and recognised. Important, because it platforms the voices of theatre artists who teach, not as a homogenous entity, but in all their complexities and multiplicities.

3. Framing ‘Drama’ And ‘Theatre’

Before proceeding to map out the structure of the thesis, I would like to discuss how the terms drama and theatre are applied in the thesis. In *Performance Theory* (2003) Richard Schechner acknowledges the slippery and often difficult task of defining terminology. Eschewing the choice of coining new terms, which he claims “no one will pay attention to”, he advocates instead being precise with the use of existing terms (p. 70). Contrary to Schechner’s experience, however, my aim of discussing theatre and drama is not to offer specific definitions. I will instead frame an understanding of the terms through the philosophical and theoretical traditions of how they are applied.

This consideration draws from Helen Nicholson’s (2010) proposition that the interactions between theory and practice are not linear. Instead, she suggests turning to history to understand that “aesthetic decisions, theatrical experimentation and political, educational or social change are inter-dependent” (ibid., p. 152). I would also add that within an increasingly globalised world, a framing of terminology will need to consider the layering of *different* histories, experiences and cultures and how they impact local forms and practices (Beck 2002). This is particularly important for a study that is located in a small postcolonial nation-state such as Singapore. As Charlene Rajendran (2006) observes, formal education for Southeast Asian post-colonial states such as Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore, are modeled after “non-indigenous systems that were established during colonial rule

and continued to gain prominence post-independence” (p. 4–5). As such, much of what is taught about theatre through formal education is undoubtedly conceptualised or constructed from the experiences and histories of ‘other’ locations.

As a student and educator of theatre, I experience the struggle to balance an understanding of Western theatre history and practices with that of Asia, and in particular Singapore. The ideas generated from the English context, as well as the US and Australia, have critical currency within the walls of the Singapore higher education. This is apparent in the course outline of the Drama and Theatre Education programme established at the NIE that nurtures future teachers including future drama teachers. Additionally, living in the UK and engaging with the discussions on issues pertaining to drama and theatre within the Masters in Theatre and Drama Education programme offered at the University of Warwick, it has been impossible for me to ignore the debate surrounding the understanding of drama and theatre that have dominated the English practices. As such my attempt at making sense of how theatre and drama is used in this thesis is bound up by a discussion that referenced both the English (Nicholson 2009, 2010; Neelands 1984, 2009; Heathcote 1982) and Singapore (Le Blond 1986; Seet 1999) contexts.

3.1. The English perspective on ‘drama’ and ‘theatre’

In *Making Sense of Drama*, Neelands (1984) outlines 11 conditions to doing drama in the classroom. In summary, the conditions involve the presence of play; element of ‘what if’; the suspension of disbelief; the invention of role/character; the commitment to the fictional world; the relationship between the ‘imagined reality’; the ‘actual situation and self’ and their connections with emotion; the social and interactive nature of working in drama and the importance of affecting change in perspectives (pp. 83–85). To a theatre performer, these conditions resonate with those present in a rehearsal process. Indeed, as Neelands highlight, “in drama, the imagined experience is controlled by the conventions of theatre as well as by the conventions of the game” (p. 83). As such, from the perspectives of the conditions Neelands outlined, theatre is implicated within the practices of drama education.

However, he stresses, the difference between drama and theatre lies in terms of their

objectives. His discussion of 'role' is a good example. Neelands explains that in drama the concern should be on "the quality of the *experience* of a role for the child rather than with the quality of the *presentations* of the role" (p. 73. Italics in original). The distinction he makes suggests that theatre is concerned primarily with form, presentation, skill and hence product and that drama is that of learning, experience, change and hence, process.

Neelands' explication of the distinction between drama and theatre in this 1984 text echoes Dorothy Heathcote's (1982) thinking in *Signs and Portents*. To Heathcote, acting resides in the domain of the "actor in the theatre", with the attending prospects of being 'stared at' (p. 20). She draws further differentiation on the level of participation that drama affords the students. Drama, according to Heathcote, "endows the class with the power to influence, not only watch" (p. 26). Accordingly Heathcote frames drama as a process of complex social encounters where students engage in a meaningful action of 'rebuilding' as opposed to (an actors' preoccupation perhaps?) "sharing someone else's materials" (p. 27).

The contrast drawn between the students' experience with drama and the actors' engagement with theatre reflects the sentiment of the English drama and theatre education community at a specific age and culture. Historically in England, there was a stigmatisation of commercial and mainstream theatre with its marquee tradition as an elitist concept associated with cultural privilege and class division (Nicholson, 2009, p. 59). This was in part, as explained by Nicholson, a result of the progressive and more socially inclusive spirit that swept educational reforms in England in the post-war period (p. 13).

But as Nicholson's observes "[t]erminology, does not of course, stay still" (2010, p. 152). Development within contemporary English theatre practices, which is increasingly concerned with social action, draws closer to the 'progressive education' ideals of the 1960s and 1970s. In fact as Nicholson argues, the work of contemporary theatre is now welcomed as a resistance against the tide of "target-setting, personalized learning, and school league tables" that depict the education system of the 21st century UK (2009, p. 12).

Indeed, the evolving and developing nature of terminology is evidenced in Neelands' later works in which he establishes a greater connection between drama and theatre. Deepened by his exploration of ensemble building, an inspiration he drew from his most recent work with the Royal Shakespeare Company, he notes, "[t]he ensemble serves as a bridging metaphor between the social and the artistic, between the informal uses of classroom drama and professional theatre" and "unifies drama education models of all kinds with the world of professional ensemble theatre" (2009, p. 182). There is then a meeting of drama and theatre and a blurring of the divide that concerned his earlier work and that of early English drama educators.

3.2. The Singapore experience with 'drama' and 'theatre'

Discourse explicating drama and theatre as applied in Singapore is limited. My research led me to critical analyses of Singapore theatre in the 1980s by Max Le Blond and K.K. Seet. One of the reasons for the lack of critical writing on Singapore theatre is the importance placed on practice over critical discourse. Max Le Blond (1986) observes that the day-to-day concerns of theatre practitioners surrounding the making of a sustainable Singapore theatre was deemed more urgent than the analyses and discourses about theatre. Le Blond's observation of the absence of critical discourse on theatre making in the 1980s is applicable to drama and theatre education practices as well. As lamented by Alvin Tan (1996),

Space for arts education or theatre forums is limited and difficult to come by. It is peculiar how the arts is seen to need sponsorship and support to start up. Yet nurturing the development of practitioner and audience in terms of critical discourse seems relegated, for some reason or another, to a lower priority (p. 8).

The interest to unpack and analyse what it means to be doing theatre in schools, ruminating on the historical genesis, tradition and influence of the practice had little significance in the course of 'bringing up' theatre education in school, especially between the period of the 1980s up till the end of the 20th century. This is exacerbated by the limited resource and support the educational ministry offers for drama and theatre education within the school curriculum.

Nonetheless, inferring from the early writings on Singapore theatre, the terms drama

and theatre are used interchangeably when referring to the Singapore English language theatre development (Le Blond 1986; Seet 1999). Le Blond acknowledges that “drama is not purely an art of language, but a *mimetic*, a *performing* art meant to be enacted on a stage” (p. 112). Within his discussion, ‘drama’ is acknowledged as a written form. Yet distinct from other literature, drama possesses elements that are actualised through theatre. From this perspective, drama and theatre are seen as interdependent. Beyond these early writings, there is little else to anchor a discussion on the distinction made between drama and theatre or evidence to suggest that the Singapore practitioners themselves articulate such a distinction.

However, as mentioned earlier, with the establishment of the Drama and Theatre Education degree at the NIE, there is a need to access local forms and practices in order to compare, critique and reflect upon the available discourses from beyond Singapore. I observe how specific modules at the NIE where I occasionally teach, are differentiated as *Drama-in-education* and others as *Theatre* education. From this observation, I offer two points for consideration. The first, I suggest, has to do with the influence of expatriate lecturers, those with experience and connection with international discourses and research on drama and theatre within education. Their experience and connection with international practices inform the direction the Institute takes vis-à-vis drama/theatre education in Singapore. Second, that despite the proclaimed erasure of the distinction between drama and theatre within education internationally, there is still a symbolic resonance of drama education as associated with teachers, school and pedagogy, and theatre, with artists and performance.

Inferring from these developments, I suggest that there is a heterogeneous conception of drama and theatre in Singapore. For some the divide offers a clear direction to their purpose, while others, a syncretism of the two terms prevails. It is as Schechner admits, after constructing his “taxonomical delineation” on drama, script, theatre and performance, that his effort is at best arbitrary, where boundaries constructed on paper, are often challenged by the practices that vary between different situations, age and cultures (Schechner 2003, p. 70). Perhaps the seemingly eclectic mix of application of the two terms signal a developing phase in Singapore’s engagement with the drama and theatre education enterprise. As such, future research on on-the-ground practices of educators and theatre artists may offer us better insights on what

they mean to those who practice them.

My way of working with the terms ‘theatre’ and ‘drama’ in education, while acknowledging global debate and histories that inform their use, focus on the possibilities of the interdependence of both drama and theatre. I propose that at the heart of it, both drama and theatre are as much concerned with the artistic as well as social issues, and with performance as well as education. It is for convenience that I use theatre education as an overarching term in this thesis as well as privileging the theatre artists who are the participants in my research. What is essential to leave the reader with is how theatre education as implied here in this thesis is not definitive. The term(s) used will continue to be contested and complicated through practice by both theatre artists and drama teachers.

4. Those Who Can: Defining The Theatre Artist

The previous discussion on ‘theatre’ and ‘drama’, which charts the difficult terrain of their consonances and resonances in practice can also be applied to define and frame the term ‘artist’.

According to Paul Willis, Western society’s perception of artists is narrowly defined. They are perceived as “special creative individual[s]”, whose livelihood is centred on perfecting the chosen art form (1990, cited in Trowsdale 1997, p. 43). Because being an artist requires specific training to produce artworks that are appreciated by the knowledgeable few, their artistic specialisation elevates their engagement with the arts to lofty heights unachievable by the ‘average’ person. With this framing of ‘artists’, it follows that art-making is deemed elitist, an endeavour of the selected few and consequently irrelevant and least connected to society. Earlier, I made mention of Nicholson’s account of the historical development of theatre in England (2009). She stresses that this perception of elitism is compounded by the practice of marquee-type performances where only the lead actors or actresses are often celebrated, thereby separating those who can, from those who cannot.

Willis and Nicholson’s writings on the place of art and artists in society echo an

earlier observation offered by Raymond Williams in *The Long Revolution* (1961). In it he explains,

In modern industrial societies, particularly, it came to be felt that art would be lost unless it was given this special status, but the height of the claim ran parallel with a wide-spread practical rejection and exclusion (p. 37).

The solution to counter this detrimental development was to offer that art and creativity is in all of us. Williams writes,

The arts, like other ways of describing and communicating, are learned human skills, which must be known and practiced in a community before their great power in conveying experience can be used and developed (p. 38).

These observations reflect what Bourdieu underscores as the social construction of “cultural and intellectual consensus”, extolling the “common principles of vision and division” on the meaning of the world and word (1996, p. 95). But this consensus is not a universal enterprise. As Bourdieu further indicates, it is constantly evolving and challenged by those who are in agreement and those who are left out of the discussion. But what determines this consensus is the achievement of appropriate capital to persuade, convince and evince cultural and intellectual categories that affect practices.

In this research I embarked on operationalising ‘theatre artists’ by what and how they do their teaching practices, and supported by their artistic training (either formal or informal) as well as their present or past professional artistic engagements. By ‘professional’, I defer to their connection to theatre as an occupation, either solely or as part of other parallel enterprises. Yet within this operational framework of theatre artists, questions are left unanswered. When the names of the theatre artists were mentioned to colleagues, there were varied responses. Their responses relate to the varying degree of ‘artist-ness’ in some of them. One of my conversations with one of the research participants is indicative of other considerations that affect their artist identity.

Joan:	<i>Do I think of myself as an artist, ah? I don't know (laugh). I mean if you ask me if I am performer, definitely, yes. A stage performer, yah. Erm. . .</i>
Noorlinah:	<i>What is the difference to you then, an artist and a stage performer?</i>

Joan: *Erm . . . for me . . . (laughs) very good question. I guess if you are director or a playwright, it is very clear that you are an artist because actually you are one of the primary creators. [. . .] Of course as a performer I . . . value our work a lot. Right. Er . . . so to that extent yes, that it is an artist, you know. [. . .] There is a lot of creativity involved, sure if that is the definition, sure. [. . .] other people ask me, [. . .] for example there was one project which H was doing and I had to write something about being an artist and all that . . . I don't want to have to defend anything, I don't want to convince anybody of anything at my age, cause I am very comfortable and happy doing what I am doing, you think what you want, you like what I do that's fine. You think I am an artist that is fine and if you don't think I am an artist that is fine also, doesn't matter. (DS050111).*

Her ambivalence in identifying herself as an 'artist' reflects Williams, Willis and Nicholson's observations on the binary that exists within and beyond the arts world such as high/low art; creative practitioners/artists; artists as creators/actors as executors; and artistic/less artistic/not artistic work. For instance, the perception of 'artist-worthy' varies between those who do mainstream, musicals, avant-garde, community and educational theatre. Those whose art is exhibited have more artistic cache in the eyes of arts funders than the ones who sell their artwork commercially. In that respect, the idea of 'artist' is a slippery and contested one, which defies easy definition.

In this research, the use of the term 'theatre artist' recognises the complexities that are bound up within it. I lean on Bourdieu's relational social theory, which argues that identities and practices are social constructions. They are symbolic of position taking, capital acquisition and struggles for legitimisation and recognition within a field of cultural production (1996). To identify oneself, and correspondingly to be identified as a 'theatre artist' is to locate one's position within a field and in doing so demarcate boundaries of one's difference set against others within and beyond the field. To stake that claim, one needs to amass the possible social, cultural, symbolic, and economic capital associated with the identity. As such, any definition offered is subject to critical reflection on the conditions in which artists construct and are constructed as such.

5. Outline Of The Thesis

The thesis contains 7 chapters.

Chapter 2 offers a discussion on the literature supporting the research. In it, I

highlight the scarcity of research on theatre artists' teaching practices within general education as well as that of theatre and drama education scholarship. Thereafter, I discuss the available related research on the topic, as well as how my research contributes to the inquiry on theatre artists in schools. Chapter 2 also includes the theoretical and conceptual framework that underpins the study.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology. Here, I argue that the key tools to doing interpretive research paradigm are being reflexive, iterative and dialogical with the methodology, data collection and analyses. This proposition was forwarded after having experienced two pilot projects. Further, I submit that working with the three key tools highlighted earlier, engenders researcher sensitivity, receptivity and vigilance to the emerging demands and needs of the research participants and situation. Consequently, the impact they have on analyses, coding and ethical considerations was also examined.

Chapter 4 offers the findings of the data constructed with the four English theatre artists. I trace their influences as well as the various conditions affecting the English theatre artists' transition into an education setting. The findings discussed in Chapter 4, have bearing on the research design in Singapore and consequently the findings in *Chapters 5* and *6*. Focusing on Singapore, the two chapters examine the questions raised in the English research sites as well as other emerging issues that surfaced during my fieldwork in Singapore. With Chapter 5, I deepen the investigation of examining the theatre artists' artistic and pedagogic knowledge, their influences and the politics affecting their practices. To do this, I concentrate on unpacking their in-situ teaching moments. Following that, in Chapter 6, I propose a confluence of principles affecting the participating Singapore theatre artists' teaching practices.

Chapter 7 draws the discussions to a close. I summarise the key findings, offer the implications and challenges, as well as the prospects of future research stemming from this present study. I conclude with reflections on the reflective practitioner and ethnographic case study endeavour.

6. Summary

This introductory chapter offers the context of this research. It uses a historical lens to discuss my motivations for embarking on this doctoral journey as well as the framing of select terms applied in this thesis. What this chapter suggests is that a study of the larger global practices on drama and theatre cannot be isolated from an understanding of local experiences. In the chapter to follow, I will identify and discuss the literature that ground the theoretical and conceptual framework of this research.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUALISING THE RESEARCH

1. Introduction

Evidence of artists' involvement in education is plentiful. Yet, within the many arts education research, a focused look on how theatre artists teach is limited. If at all, they concentrate on visual artists and musicians (Tickle 1987; Kind, *et al.* 2007; Pringle 2009; Reiss & Pringle 2003; Nethsinghe 2011), which support the established status music and visual arts have in the school curriculum (Bamford 2006).

Although perspectives from visual arts and music are useful in offering the prevailing tensions, challenges, possibilities and contributions of artists as 'educators' in schools, they do not match the specific needs and teaching practices of theatre artists. Where theatre artists are mentioned, the focus is on the arts organisations they work for or represent (Downing, *et al.* 2002); impact assessment on student achievement (Fiske 1999; Upitis & Smithrim 2003; Rich 2005); artist-school partnership models (Oddie & Allen 1998); the administration, funding, training and policy of the artist-teacher/school partnerships (Bumgarner 1994a & b, Winston 1998; Cheung 2004); as well as professional development opportunities for teachers in partnerships with artists (Winston 2003; Kind, *et al.* 2007; Griffiths & Woolf 2009; Andrews 2010), to list a few.

My contention is that there is very little in theories and ideas around drama and theatre education, which considers the presence of theatre artists and their teaching practices as an object of study. I further argue that knowing so little about how theatre artists 'do' arts education limits how they may improve and benefit from their processes as educators. My study, therefore, attempts to address the aforementioned

limitations in theatre artists' involvement in schools

1.1. Structure of the chapter

To set the context of global discourses surrounding artists in education as evidence of their increasing presence in education, I begin with a wide lens. I examine global perspectives on arts education through the practices of countries with a history of learning in and through the arts.

The lens subsequently narrows to focus on studies with theatre artists as an object of inquiry. Six studies have direct impact in this section. They include research by Jo Trowsdale (1997, 2002) in England; Joe Winston on theatre artists in France (1997); Darrell Dobson (2005) in Canada; Katherine Donelan's (1999) doctoral research in Australia as well as Thomson, *et al.* (2010) on Learning Performance Network of the Royal Shakespeare Company. The available literature suggests identifiable characteristics of theatre artists' teaching practices, some of which are purported to be 'suitable' when they connect with prevailing educational practices, and as a 'disjunction' when they are different.

The empirical literature review ends with a synthesis of my present research contributions and locates my research interest within the field. Subsequently I offer a conceptual and theoretical framework of my research. Pierre Bourdieu's social theory of practice, and in particular his concepts of *habitus* and *fields*, is employed as an overarching theoretical analytical tool. There is also a discussion of key concepts engaged in this research. They are pedagogy; reflexivity; the concept of multiple worlds; as well as embodiment and the body in knowledge making.

This chapter concludes with an overview of the arts education landscape in Singapore.

2. Surveying The Empirical Literature On Artists In Schools

2.1. Global reports of arts education initiatives

In this section, I present a selection of the available arts education reports. The purpose is to identify how the artists and their contributions to arts education are positioned within these reports.

Admittedly, the list I compiled for review is only as comprehensive as the limits of the selection criteria. The first criterion is historical and developmental. I examined documents within a span of 10 years to track developments in research of artists in schools in general, and theatre artists' teaching practices in particular. Second of all, I narrowed reports that examined or positioned artists as 'partners' in the arts education process. Positioning artists as 'partners' would suggest them as equal, if not one of the key contributors, in school-based arts education. Following this logic, I searched for significant consideration given to their teaching practices, well-being and/or their professional development. Thirdly, I explored the conditions in countries like England, USA, Canada and Australia, where frequency of research and impact on discourses of arts education are relatively higher and more visible than Singapore. Value was also placed on reports whose visibility is demonstrated in their high citation frequency. For instance, *Champions of Change* (Fiske 1999) was cited in 6 of the listed reports. This is perhaps indicative of the valency its cumulative research and findings have on global arts education discourse. The final list is appended below.

- *Champions of Change* (Fiske 1999); *Partnering Arts Education: A Working Model From Artsconnection* (Rich 2005); *Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education* (Seidel, et al. 2009); and Teaching Artist Research Project report, *Teaching Artists and the Future of Education* (Rabkin, et al. 2011). All based in the US.
- Canadian national assessment report on arts education *Learning Thru the Arts* (Upitis & Smithrim 2003);

- *Evaluation Of School-Based Arts Education Programmes In Australian Schools* (Bryce, *et al.* 2004) and Australian Education Review of *The Arts And Australian Education: Realising Potential* (Ewing 2010).
- Reports (Kendall, *et al.* 2008) and articles (Hall, Thomson & Russell 2006; Hall & Thomson 2007; Galton 2008) on UK Creative Partnerships generated between 2006–2010 (<http://www.creative-partnerships.com>); the Henley review on cultural education in England (Henley 2011); and the report for Arts Council England by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) on *Raising The Standard Of Work By, With And For Children And Young People: Research And Consultation To Understand The Principles Of Quality* (Lord, *et al.* 2012)
- Anne Bamford’s 2006 study on arts education in over 40 countries.

2.1.1: Summarising the main themes of the reports

In summary, these reports suggest that there are benefits to artists’ inclusion in schools. Their presence not only benefit the sustenance and integration of the arts in educational institutions but also contribute to students’ well-being, such as aiding the development of self-esteem and positive attitudes towards school and attainment standards (Fiske 1999; Upitis & Smithrin 2003; Bryce, *et al.* 2004; Rich 2005; Kendall, *et al.* 2008). An example on transferability to academic attainments is Robert Horowitz’s longitudinal impact study (Rich 2005, pp. 32–48). He writes, “In classrooms with the most effective instruction and collaboration by artists and teachers, students were more likely to demonstrate cognitive skills” (p. 46).

Elsewhere, the reports draw attention to the acceptance of diversity, which is purportedly an inherent feature not only within the arts education practices but also the artists’ teaching practices as enhancing the inclusive agenda. Artists are perceived as agents of inclusivity with their empathetic pedagogy in creating a ‘positive’, ‘safe’ and ‘encouraging’ environment for students (Bryce, *et al.* 2004; Siedel, *et al.* 2009; Ewing 2010). Additionally, there are identifiable economic benefits for the artists involved in education (Bumgarner 1994a; <http://www.creative-partnerships.com>).

The reports also advocate partnerships with artists, suggesting it as a way forward in establishing good arts education practices (Upitis and Smithrim 2003; Rich 2005; Andrews 2010; Seidel, *et al.* 2009; Rabkin, *et al.* 2011). As Anne Bamford (2006) states in her concluding remarks of her global research on arts education, “[q]uality arts education tends to be characterised by a *strong partnership* between the schools and outside arts and community organisations” (p. 140. Italics my own).

While these reports are backed by positive evidence to support their claims, there are several issues, which I wish to highlight.

2.1.2: Limitations of the reports

The reports offer a cursory glance to the teaching practices of artists in general, and theatre artists in particular. As such, much of what have been claimed lacked the on-the-ground practical understanding of how these ‘benefits’ are achieved.

Secondly, much of the focus has been on how the artists aided existing educational standards. As such, their successes have been measured, as what Elliot Eisner (1988) considers, valuing the arts prized “on the basis of their contributions to non-art outcomes” (p. 32). Such impact measures, though valuable to champion the arts in education, often over shadow other aspects such as the quality of teaching as well as the intrinsic value of learning the arts. Despite Eisner’s argument, impact analysis set against the yardsticks of ‘non-art outcomes’ continue to dominate research in arts education with little focus on the actual artistic teaching practices that are said to contribute to these measurable developments.

Thirdly, as argued by Christine Hall and Pat Thomson (2007), there is limited critical discourse on ‘inclusivity’. An area highlighted by Hall and Thomson (*ibid.*) is “transgressive or critical form of inclusion”, through which existing school culture and traditions of teaching practices are challenged, and “children are afforded practices and knowledges that support real change” (p. 327). However to engage with their suggested notion of ‘inclusivity’, I argue that an in-depth interrogation of artistic teaching practices, as well as the conditions which may either challenge or advance their engagement with educational structures and processes, is necessary. Such focused interrogation not only aids an understanding of how they do what they

do in schools but also better serve future partnerships between schools and artists.

Presently, partnership issues get little theorisation and are “narrowly focused on an aspect of managerial working relation between artists/cultural organization” (Choe 2010, p. 304). While these documents, as well as other studies (Reiss & Pringle 2003; Thomson, Hall & Russell 2006; Maddock, *et al.* 2007), consider the politically complex and mutable social interactions that at times erupt as the “clash of cultures” (Galton 2008, p. 70) within partnerships, they neglect or rarely challenge the fact that much of the ‘partnership’ endeavours have been top-down initiatives. As such personal commitment, buy-in and an embodied understanding of partnership processes at ground and practical level as a fruitful collaborative experience between artists and schools may be absent or ignored. I argue that the lack of attention given to explicate artists’ approaches in the classroom would further hamper the development in this direction.

2.1.3: Defining who and how the arts are to be taught

Current discussions on this issue identify three key players: specialist art teachers, generalist teachers and teaching artists. Proponents of sustainable arts education in schools argue for specialist art teachers, such as visual arts and music teachers, and generalist teachers incorporating arts in the teaching of other subjects (Seidel, *et al.* 2009). Advocates of teaching artists suggest that as practising professional artists, they offer an ‘authentic’ arts experience. The ‘authentic’ is suggested in terms of offering experiences gained from professional artistic practices (Galton 2008; Ewing 2010). In other words, artists are said to possess the appropriate ‘subject knowledge’.

Here, I deviate to an article by Andy Kempe (2009) on a group of secondary school drama teachers and their perceptions of necessary knowledge in drama teaching. In his study, Kempe differentiates “subject specialist knowledge (e.g. knowing a lot about the subject of drama, e.g. plays, theatre history, practitioners etc.)” from “technical knowledge (e.g. knowing how to direct, design, light, costume etc.)” and “drama pedagogy (i.e. knowing what it is that children learn through drama and how; applied differentiation, assessment techniques etc.)” (p. 418). The three separate categories he constructs, I suggest, underline a pertinent difference in the perception of theatre education between drama educators and theatre artists. The difference, I

propose, resides in the understanding of the phrase ‘experience of’, which according to Kempe is “seen to be the priority” within the practices of drama in education in England (p. 415).

While Kempe’s article did not elaborate what is meant by ‘experience of’, I attempt through my research to offer the theatre artists’ position on the ‘experience of’ as the embodied knowledge of the ‘making of’. In other words, theatre artists’ perception of theatre education comprise “*knowing about* and *knowing how to* [. . . and] *knowing through*” theatre (Kempe 2009, pp. 411–412) whose subject knowledge is a combination of both specialist subject knowledge and technical subject knowledge that Kempe categorically separates. There is also, as we will later discover in the chapters dealing with the data analyses, a consideration of the motivations of making theatre with life.

Knowing the theatre artists’ position and lens on theatre education, I propose, aids the understanding of how theatre artists conceptualise their teaching. Consequently, knowing how theatre artists teach would enhance future professional development in this area, which is reportedly lacking (Henley 2011; Lord, *et al.* 2012). But more importantly it would help conceptualise professional development that considers how *they* perceive and negotiate educational practices.

2.2. Available literature on theatre artists in education settings

Six studies focusing on theatre artists in education settings are reviewed here. Two by Jo Trowsdale (1997, 2002) in the UK, and one each by Darrell Dobson (2005) and Katherine Donelan (1999) in Canada and Australia respectively. I also include a 2010 study on Learning Performance Network (LPN) of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). From this LPN research, I focus specifically on its discussion of a teaching approach drawn from theatre-studio rehearsal practices. I end with a discussion of Joe Winston’s 1997 research on theatre artist–school partnerships in France to draw attention to an alternative model of collaborative work in the classroom. Drawing from these readings, I locate three central themes that relate to my inquiry. The first considers the form and skills of the theatre artists, the second, the constellation of heterogeneous influences and the third, the perception of

difference.

2.2.1: Form and skill in theatre artist pedagogy

Throughout this discussion, I will highlight in bold and draw the reader's attention to the features of the theatre artists' approaches as identified in these studies.

Trowsdale's 1997 participant observer research with Indian theatre director Badal Sircar notes that the **values** the artists bring to the teaching environment are crucial to a successful learning and teaching experience. She concludes that a process centred on the "**social value** of theatre, particularly in terms of community making and building" (p. 44), which **supersedes specialised skills** or knowledge in theatre, is most suitable in an education setting. Such a process, she suggests privileges **inclusivity, active participation of every individual in the group** and the development of trust and communal spirit. She further suggests adopting **a reflective practice** as a necessary process in their teaching. Citing Donald Schön (1983), Trowsdale (2002) argues that artists who are more predisposed to reflect on their creative process, and able to account for and communicate the process to the learner, make better educators (p. 190).

Meanwhile, Darrell Dobson's (2005) research spotlights on actress, Ella, who, after a successful career in musicals, becomes a teacher. He cites Connelly and Clandinin's narrative inquiry, with attention to "personal practical knowledge" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1986, pp. 296–297, cited in Dobson 2005, p. 330) as his research methodology. From Ella's narratives, he interprets her approach as offering an "educational experience that re-established student motivation and meaning making" and to "encounter new content in a manner that establishes or uncovers a familiar connection for the respondent" (p. 336). Dobson attributes this approach to Ella's effective understanding of the "**aesthetic dimensions of education**", which includes but transcends the,

performative role of the teacher and emphasises the pedagogical role of storytelling, being 'on', nuance, discovering the familiar in the new, and drama as a methodology" (p. 328).

All of which, Dobson determines, are **constructed from Ella's interpretation of**

her professional practice and artistic training. Dobson makes an additional point relating to “aesthetic dimensions”. He argues that aesthetic dimensions are not new to teaching. In fact, they are innate in good teaching but are often dwarfed by concerns of high-stakes competencies and standards. Illuminating how artists teach, he proposes, would balance the aims of education by imbuing it with the value of aesthetic experience and meaning for teachers and students.

In Katherine Donelan’s (1999) study of drama as intercultural education, her collaboration with the visiting theatre artist from Africa, Jean, and the latter’s pedagogy form the basis of her ethnographic research. As with Trowsdale and Dobson, Donelan’s research surfaces similar themes of theatre artists’ approach: **social inclusion, bridging and extending learning beyond the classroom into the larger social realm, student-centred teaching, primacy of stories, reflective practice and aesthetic dimension in pedagogy.**

The similarities in the characteristics of the theatre artists’ teaching practices in the literature reviewed above indicate an identifiable system of pedagogy in their classroom approaches. Identifying features of theatre artists’ teaching practices is one of the key strands of my research. More than just identifying characteristics, I am also interested in investigating the structure of influence that shaped their pedagogy. For example, in the LPN study, the “philosophy of ensemble” and its corollary the “rehearsal-room pedagogy” involving “facilitation and improvisation” is perhaps one way of articulating the theatre artists’ teaching practices (Thomson, *et al.* 2010, p. 14–16). It attempts to offer an overarching framework to draw the various characteristics identified in the theatre artists’ teaching act. Within this “philosophy of ensemble”, the characteristics include those identified in Trowsdale, Dobson and Donelan, as well as expanding the list to include **drawing on one’s lived experiences, creative experiment, role of physical action and a commitment to possibilities.**

One of the findings of interest to me in the LPN study is the “dilution effect” relating to the transferability and sustainability of artists-led pedagogy in school practices (*ibid.*, p. 32–34). Among various suggestions to implement the ensemble and rehearsal-room pedagogy, the report notes that long-term school support and

commitment, as well as sustained guidance from the lead RSC practitioners are required for effective transferability of knowledge and skills (p. 32). Two points can be inferred from the report's discussion of the 'dilution effect'. The first is the school culture and the question of synergy with artistic models of teaching. Given the dominant educational policy demands on attainment standards, measurable output and curriculum goals affecting the role of the teachers and the philosophy of instruction, there are challenges to teacher engagement and commitment to sustaining an artistic model of teaching. Secondly, the discussion alludes to the embedded 'difference' between the artistic model of teaching and other teaching practices in school. These points suggest the need to consider the place and role of theatre artists' continued presence as educational partners in the development of arts education in schools.

2.2.2: Constellation of heterogeneous influences

With reference to the literature, and concurring with Donelan's observation, I submit that there are indeed "different cultural reference points" reflected in the pedagogies between those trained and established in education and those with artistic background (1999, p. 106). Additionally, the types of artistic training theatre artists receive are not homogeneous.

In her later research of 2002, Trowsdale offers that "the way in which an artist works, devises, trains and was trained" (p. 190) shapes the values theatre artists bring to education. Artists who are more 'schooled' in specialist training are more inclined to emphasise the acquisition of skills. Those who are 'self-directed' in their training experiences are more receptive to operate collaboratively, drawing upon participants' strengths and experiences. She concludes that not all artists share principles that may fit well in an education setting. As such, she submits that tracing theatre artists training history and professional practice may offer an understanding of what constitutes theatre artists' teaching practices.

However what interests me in Trowsdale's 2002 research is the spectre of ideological tension on what counts as 'suitable' pedagogical approach in an education setting. This is evident in Donelan's reflective account of Jean's position in her research.

I believe that I colluded with the confusing messages that Jean was receiving from the school regarding their expectations of the work. She was employed as a ‘performing artist in residence’ yet was given timetabled classes as though she was the school’s drama teacher. It was expected that she would deliver a drama curriculum and yet there was no written curriculum and no other specialist drama teacher in the school (1999, p. 106).

Donelan (1999) highlights the contradictions between the school’s explicit acknowledgement of the artists as ‘different’ and its implicit expectation of sameness (p. 106). These contradictions affect the artists’ teaching practices. It follows then that an analysis of teaching practices implicates the embedded politics within and between the boundaries of theatre and education communities. These include the explicit and implicit expectations and contradictions, ideological and cultural differences as well as conceptions of knowledge as social control. Accordingly, focusing only on tracing theatre artists’ training histories and professional artistic practices, while neglecting other constellation of influences, may be detrimental to the research process.

2.2.3: The perception of difference

On the possibility of emphasising and respecting ‘difference’ in collaborative approaches in the classroom, I turn to Joe Winston’s research on artist–teacher partnership advanced in France called the ‘*partenariat*’ (Winston 1997). It offers an alternative strategy on partnership between teachers and artists quite unlike those practised in the English-speaking world. According to Winston’s research, in France the teaching of theatre as a subject is assumed to require the expertise of, and hence the division of labour, between two practitioners from the two respective fields, theatre and education.

At the heart of the *partenariat* is the acceptance of difference between teachers and artists. Each brings with them different histories, experiences and practices. Their distinctive role is therefore an essential element in the partnership: “The teacher retains the role of pedagogue and theoretician whilst the actor retains the role of artist and practitioner” (p. 47). Such a philosophy, which grounds ‘difference’ in the *partenariat*, affects every element—teaching, administration, funding, including joint training days—in the artist–school partnership (pp. 47–48). Winston’s study on the *partenariat* points to a need of respecting what is distinctive in the practices and

skills of both theatre artists and educators. Recognising and respecting distinctive qualities in practices and skills is not aimed at exclusion, but as engagement with the possibilities of enriching the ‘different’ ways students may benefit from alternative teaching practices.

2.3. Summary of the review of empirical literature

The discussion thus far suggests an increasing artists’ presence in education. But the issues on how best to incorporate them into education have not been fully resolved. The reasons discussed are:

1. The lacunae in research surrounding artists and their practices, especially theatre artists, are attributed to the continued marginalisation of the arts in schools, despite the mounting evidence of their benefits. The marginalisation, as some have argued, centres on who should teach the arts (Seidel, *et al.* 2009). If the arts were to be taught by artists, it is likely to remain in the periphery. However arts specialist teachers are few and generalist teachers lack the expertise to teach the arts. In the meantime, professional development in arts education in general, and teaching artists specifically, though recognised as urgent is blighted by lack of research and limited resources.
2. For the artists, the position of marginality is complicated by the ambivalence towards them as educators. By their professional association with the practice of art making, they are perceived as experts, yet, considered as outsiders whose legitimation and recognition as pedagogues are questionable. As such, there is a tendency to view artists as instrumental to jumpstart an absent arts education in schools or to enhance expertise in teachers, with little consideration for their needs as educators.
3. Equally problematic is the perceived ambivalence of policy makers to the position of artists in their arts education mandate. As suggested in the literature reviewed, the motivations for advocating artists–school partnerships seem to be rooted in economic and instrumental goals. Attempts have been made to document the tensions that may exist in artists–school partnerships. However, more research is needed to ascertain the social and

political dynamics by privileging the constituents of both the theatre and education worlds as ‘cultures’ with their defining characteristics. This suggests examining and respecting ‘difference’ in perspectives on pedagogy; the corollary of which would benefit arts education in general.

4. Finally, funded research on arts education attends to the educational impact and effects on teaching and learning in schools. There are few with the view of critically explicating the theatre artists’ teaching practices.

Deborah Britzman’s (2003) comment on learning to teach is applicable here. She reminds us that teaching “is a social process of negotiation rather than an individual problem of behavior” (p. 31). Considering Britzman, I suggest that while the literature reviewed offers starting points to consider, an investigation on theatre artists’ teaching practices should include an examination of individual skills, forms and pedagogies, including contradictory constructions of school and artistic cultures, knowledges, practices as well as identities. Accordingly, I propose that theatre artists bring with them ‘different’ teaching approaches that disrupt the existing pedagogic structures as practised in educational institutions. It is in these moments of rupture, I suggest, that power and authority forged within divergent ideological constructs of education, and by extension knowledge, is revealed. How are notions of (un)suitability conceived and how are they negotiated? What constitutes the theatre artists’ practices that fall outside the accepted perimeters of school teaching culture? To that end, my research attempts to trace the specificities not only in the forms necessary for theatre artists to teach but also those that count as different in their teaching.

3. Outlining The Theoretical And Conceptual Framework

What follows now is my proposal of a conceptual and theoretical logic that examines theatre artists' teaching practices in schools as a socially negotiated and constitutive relationship between the 'theatre/artistic', and 'education/teaching' fields, practices and identities. A negotiation of 'theatre/artistic' and 'education/teaching' recognises that each domain inhabits different ideological constructs structuring teaching practices, but whose boundaries are not necessarily hermetical.

The proposed conceptual and theoretical framework offers the possibility of enacting Jean Francois Lyotard's (Lyotard & Thébaud 1985) philosophy of *differend*, which I suggest, privileges 'dialogism' and 'reciprocity'. Such a consideration appeals to multiple theoretical discourses as well as 'intersubjectivity' to interpret the lived experiences in both myself as the researcher and my research participants. I will elaborate on 'dialogism' and 'intersubjectivity' in the methodology chapter (see section 3.1.1, p. 67). For now, I highlight my application of intersubjectivity and dialogism resonates with 'difference', 'heterogeneity' and 'plurality'. As such, while Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and *fields* are overarching theoretical constructs in this research, I supplement his theories, where necessary, with other theories, some of which are detailed in this chapter. However I have also chosen to situate other theoretical concepts in the later chapters, in particular chapters 4, 5 and 6, to draw a tighter focus with the discussion that the theories support. I end this chapter with a discussion of Singapore's arts/theatre education landscape, offering the reader an exposition of the complexities as well as the possibilities of a theatre education practice in the country.

3.1. The conceptual framework of the study of theatre artists' teaching practices

3.1.1: Nested negotiations of interrelated influences

A visual example of 'nested' is the Matryoshka or Russian Doll, a set of wooden dolls of progressively decreasing sizes, with the smaller dolls nestled in the larger ones. The metaphor of 'nested' as depicted in the Matryoshka Doll relates to the presence of boundaries. Each boundary delineates one entity that is nested within another. With the outer and larger boundary encapsulating the other smaller ones,

‘nested’ also hints at linearity and hierarchy. However the model of nested which I am proposing offers the possibility of a multi-directional analysis that is dialogical and less hierarchical, and hence the boundaries are hermeneutically porous. To elaborate, I turn to the Social Ecological Model (SEM), an ecological systems theory that studies behavior as a nested social construction.

I acknowledge different versions and adaptations of SEM exist (Hawley 1950, 1992). However Urie Bronfenbrenner’s formulation of SEM (1979), with his five different levels—microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem—is adopted here. His formulation offers three key elements: the first is ‘environment’; second, agentive participants as “active, growing human being”; (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 21) and the third, perception (p. 23).

Bronfenbrenner conceptualises ‘environment’ as a complex array of five different settings. Each setting has its own “objective properties”, yet, open to interconnections between settings “as well as to external influences emanating from the larger surroundings” (1979, p. 22). As “active” beings, participants are conceptualised as “dynamic” and “developing” entities. They negotiate between and within each setting, “restructure” and “accommodate” the settings, an interaction which Bronfenbrenner characterises as “reciprocity” (ibid.). Inherent in the negotiatory interactions between participants and environment is the third element of perception. According to Bronfenbrenner, perception is socially constructed through experiences within a given setting and activity. I interpret the development of perception as a cyclical social process. With each interaction experienced, perceptions (of both self and others) are developed, affecting future interactions and experiences and thereafter, affirm, or develop new, perceptions.

Bronfenbrenner’s ‘nested’ social ecology model resonates with the nested framework found in Carspecken’s (1996) critical ethnography research model (site, locale, setting and system), which I utilised in my research methodology. I will elaborate on Carspecken’s formulation in a later chapter on methodology. Bronfenbrenner and Carspecken’s ideas structure nested as levels of interrelated systems that account for movements across different time and space. While Bronfenbrenner offers five levels of analysis, Carspecken rests his methodology on four.

In this research I narrowed Bronfenbrenner's levels to four, aligning them with the analytical framework of the fieldwork methodology. This adaptation takes into consideration Bourdieu's conception of *habitus* and *fields*. As a preamble to an extended discussion later, I suggest that *habitus* is intimated within this conceptual structure, borrowing from Loïc Wacquant, as a "*mediating category*" (2004, p. 391) straddling between each 'nesting'. My attempt at bringing ideas from Bronfenbrenner, Carspecken and Bourdieu together is not to locate an exact fit or similarities between the three. The adaptation is aimed at generating links and opportunities of interplay between their concepts as analytical tools for this research. Table 2.1 offers a matrix that shows the possible relations I propose between Bronfenbrenner, Carspecken and Bourdieu.

Descriptors	Micro-nesting	Meso-nesting	Exo-nesting	Macro-nesting
Bronfenbrenner	Microsystem: roles and interpersonal relations in one setting given eg: home or day care or playground.	Mesosystem: interaction between two or more settings. For example the relationship between home environment and school. There is movement between settings where different experiences affect perceived understanding of reality.	Exosystem: one or more setting(s) that do not directly involve the participant. However the exosystem affects and influences the participants' actions. For example, the exosystem of a child might include his parents' network of friends and how they impact and influence the behavior of the parents on the child.	Macrosystem: the larger society with its attending ideological, political, economic and cultural exigencies affecting and are affected by the individual perception and action.
Carspecken (research methodology)	Site: the specific location of the research. In my research: the classroom.	Setting: interactions between subjects not restricted to a specific space/site.	Locale: expanded geographical space beyond the classroom and the school.	System: impact of the larger socio-economic-political-cultural on the preceding three.
Bourdieu	Early socialisation habitus: family and kinship. For Bourdieu, this forms the historical foundational habitus.	Interaction between fields and the negotiation and generation of new <i>habitus</i> .		The wider sociocultural, political and class structures that impact and are impacted by the socialization of the preceding three.
Temporal and movement.	Spatial and temporal relations are more immediate and closely related to the subject. Relating to the values constructed in the now.	The spatial and temporal boundaries enlarge, to encompass historical and newly acquired values and attitudes.	The spatial and temporal boundaries cut across the theatre and school environment. The cultures of the school for example, impacting on the teaching act.	The conceptual space/time is largest, relating to the negotiations of larger structures on practices such as ideological concerns

Table 2.1: Matrix of the conceptual, theoretical and methodological framework

3.1.2: 'Differend' and the incorporation of multiple theories as analytical lenses

As earlier discussed, my discomfort with what I believe is a limited reading in the existing literature on artists' teaching practices in schools relates to the concept of 'difference'. Indeed as Eric Booth (2003) states, artists "use teaching approaches and techniques that differ from the ones typically used by school arts specialists, classroom teachers, and those who teach "about" the arts" (p. 8). The statement draws a divide, between those within the ambit of education and those from the professional artistic community. It raises more questions: What is this *different* pedagogy which artists use? What shapes the *difference*? Would an understanding of theatre performance praxis, illuminate this *differend* paradigm of teaching?

Working from linguistics and discourses, and with a particular emphasis on language games, Lyotard (Lyotard & Thébaud 1985) explores the unfairness caused by an imposition of one determinant over two seemingly different discourse structures. He argues the imposition may end up favouring one discourse over the other and subject the second to an unjust attention to conform (ibid.). In his explication of *differend*, he argues against a singular rule or discourse as dominant or legitimate against the multiple variations, additions and interpretations that may be present (ibid., p. 33). Considering Lyotard in the study of theatre artists' teaching practices in schools therefore requires "heterogeneous genres of discourses", which reflect the variegated experiences of both their artistic and teaching practices (Lyotard 1988, p. xiv). This means offering readings from different theoretical perspectives, including performance and educational theories.

To elaborate further, I turn to Hall, Thomson and Russell's ethnographic study of three artists' pedagogies in a British primary school (2007). They analyse the artists' approaches using Basil Bernstein's models of 'competency' (learners are self-regulating and active; focus on learner-directed development) and 'performance' (teacher-regulated evaluation; focused on learner output of specialised skill) pedagogic practice (pp. 607–608). In their study, they observe differences in the three artists' approaches to teaching and the resulting tensions that exist between teachers and artists vis-à-vis the teaching practices both groups undertake. Hall, Thomson and Russell conclude that artists with *performance model* pedagogic approach are more suited to school practice.

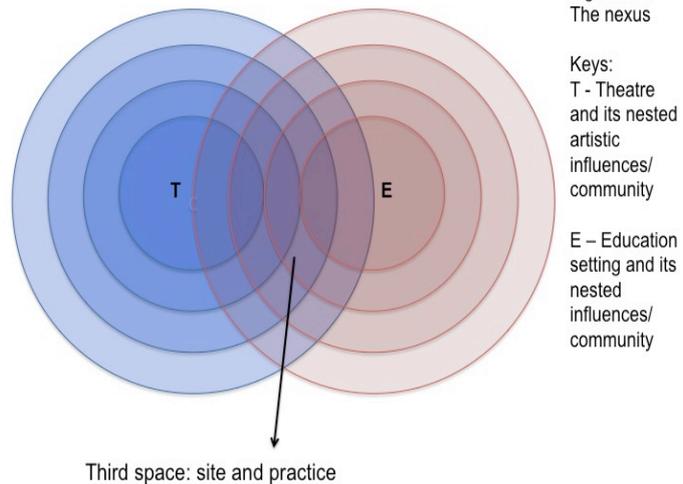
I acknowledge the usefulness of Bernstein’s models as analytical constructs to understand teaching practices. However, unpicking arts-led approaches solely on the basis of a non-artistic pedagogic tradition limits the scope of analysis. An expansion of their lens, afforded by the inclusion of aesthetic theories for example, may offer different perspectives on artists’ pedagogy and suggest a critical understanding of the tensions arising from different teaching approaches.

3.1.3: Analysis within a ‘nexus’

Invoking Lyotard’s *differend* necessitates examining the theatre artists’ teaching practices as a ‘nexus’ of the constituent parts of theatre *and* education. The nexus is a socially negotiated ‘third space’ in which both the site (classroom/hall/workshop studio) and the teaching practices are explored. The concept of ‘third space’ suggests the possibilities of a dialogical

construction of hybrid practices. Conceptually, the idea of hybridity, drawing from Homi Bhabha’s (1994) post-colonial theory, does not imply a reconstruction of multiple cultural histories in one subject. Rather, it connotes the opportunity of germinating “new signs of identity, and innovative sites of

collaboration and contestations” (Bhabha 1994, p. 2). In that sense, the ‘third space’ conjures two images. One, ‘disturbances’ and the other, ‘imaginative possibilities’. As ‘disturbances’, the ‘third space’ is a site of resistance and subversion, perceived as the ‘othered’ practices with the potential to rupture the established pedagogies. By extension, I argue that the artists’ presence in schools is potentially subversive not only for the larger established educational culture as highlighted earlier, but also within some quarters of drama and theatre education practices (Brahmachari 1997; Powell and Heap 2005).



As a space of ‘imaginative possibilities’, the ‘third space’ holds the promise of new ideas on teaching the arts through potentially fruitful collaborations between teachers/schools and artist/theatre. It celebrates conjoined experiences and acknowledges the existence of artistry and pedagogy within and between the two fields of theatre and education. It rests on the ideals of accepting ‘difference’ and is reflexive of the socio-economic-political demands of theatre artists and teachers in schools. It is from this conceptual position of ‘nested and nexus’ that I identify key concepts underpinning this research.

Bourdieu's relational theory of social practice as an overarching theoretical concept

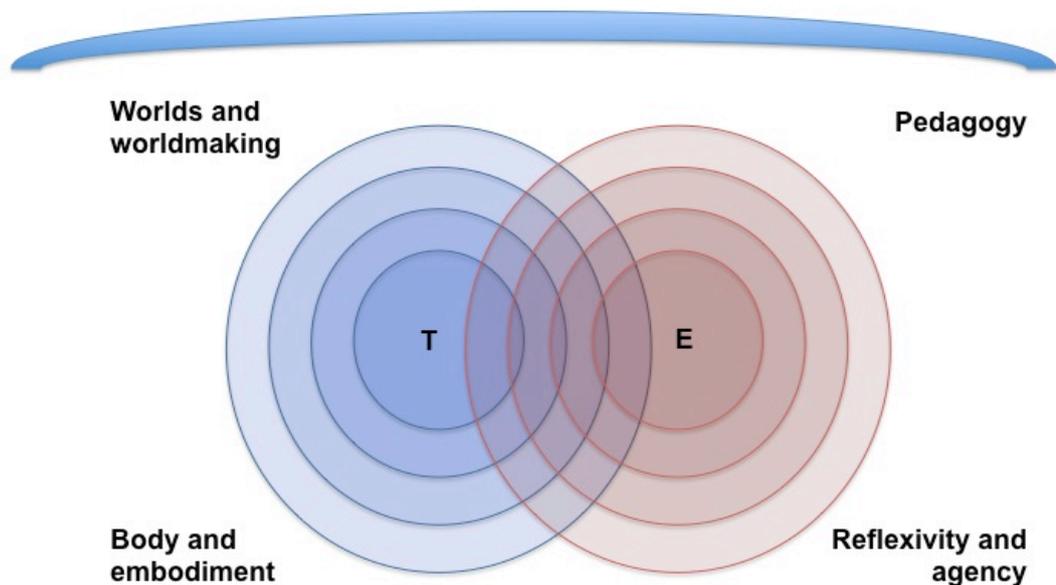


Figure 2.2: Key concepts involved in the research

I now proceed to explicate Bourdieu’s relational theory of social practice, the logic of which accounts for practice as a struggle for selected capital (economic, cultural, symbolic and social) within and beyond a given *field*, as well as the seemingly ‘unconscious’ *habitus* that influence it. However, while Bourdieu’s relational constructs are useful, they are not sufficient and will be supplemented by other theoretical perspectives. This is particularly needed in response to issues surrounding the body and embodiment as a central notion of knowledge generation, which I will later argue as vital in the theatre artists’ teaching practices. Also a contentious debate which has yet to be resolved when discussing Bourdieu is the degree to which

agency interrupts, and hence reflexivity, affecting a ‘conscious’ reformulation of habitus or disposition, especially in the face of Bourdieu’s concept of foundational *habitus*.

To that end, I have placed Bourdieu’s work in conversation with other theories, which may illuminate these areas. Two in particular are prominent: Maria Shevtsova’s interpretation and operationalisation of Bourdieu’s theories in *Sociology of Theatre* (2002) and Margaret Archer’s formulation of human agency and reflexivity in practice (2000, 2007, 2010).

3.2. Bourdieu’s social theory of practice

Richard Jenkins (2002) describes Bourdieu’s social theory of practice as a business of knowing from doing: “Only insofar as one does things is it possible to know about things” (p. 69). Indeed, Bourdieu spent years formulating his logic of practice ethnographically on the ‘activities’ of two communities, the Kabyles in Algeria and his hometown village in Béarn, France (Wacquant 2004, p. 388). As Wacquant writes,

[Bourdieu’s method of a] living laboratory to cross-analyze the other enabled him to discover the specificity of the ‘universally prelogical logic of practice’ and to initiate the decisive break out of the structuralist paradigm by shifting his analytic focus ‘from structure to strategy’, from the mechanical mental algebra of cultural rules to the fluid symbolic gymnastics of socialized bodies (ibid., p. 389).

From the above, I unpack several elements pertinent in his relational social theory of practice to the study of theatre artists’ teaching practices in schools.

1. Bourdieu’s logic of practice underscores the role of personal will. At the same time, he avoids forming a phenomenological understanding of practice based solely on “primary experience and perceptions of individuals” (Bourdieu 1993, p. 3). He posits the objectivity of the subjective where “aspects of social life are inseparably intertwined with the material conditions of existence, without one being reducible to the other” (ibid., p. 3).
2. Working with Bourdieu, the question asked of practice is not ‘**what** is practice’ but ‘**why** and **how** is practice constituted’. Practice is therefore contextualised

in time and space demanding a critical and systematic analysis of the conditions of practices; the role of individual agency; and the rules governing such practices. Bourdieu's analysis recognises objective structures and subjective agencies as socially negotiable and constitutive of each other.

3. The element of 'social' embedded in Bourdieu's conception of practice goes beyond labour (associated with accumulation and production of economic capital). Practice involves a struggle for the accumulation of **capital**, which includes *economic* (monetary, property); *symbolic* (bestowed or achieved prestige, status, recognition); *cultural* (reproduction of knowledge in books, art, media; cultivation and internalisation of codes such as tastes and practices; institutional practices); and *social* (importance of social networks and relationships) capital (Bourdieu 1986). Each of these four forms of capital (economic, symbolic, social and cultural) is independent of each other (Bourdieu 1993, p. 7).

4. Practice is situated in a **field**, a site of **struggle** or competition for **power**, **recognition** and **legitimacy** (Bourdieu 1996a). A field is "a network of objective relations between positions" (ibid., p. 231) governed by "the distribution of the capital of specific properties which governs success" (Bourdieu 1993, p. 30). Agents or subjects position-take within and beyond a field according to their accumulated capital, and the perception they have of themselves in the field in relation to others along the various positions available within the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 101). For example, in the field of performing arts, the position of a corporate funded and internationally acclaimed theatre company is perceived differently from a small nationally funded and occasionally reviewed one. Consequently, actors associated with the respective companies are perceived differently and find themselves in different positions (translated crudely in terms of 'respectability'; 'celebrity status'; and/or 'popularity') within the field of performing arts. Each field, characterised by distinguishable rules and specific schemas governing practices, is "non-reducible", meaning distinct and separate (Shevtsova 2002, p. 35).

5. Also implicit is the body as an ‘unconscious’ embodiment of practice, constituted by sedimented histories of past socialisation. The body is presumed ‘unconscious’ in its “forgetting of history which history itself produces by incorporating the objective structures it produces in the second nature of habitus” (Bourdieu 1977, pp. 78–79). Here, Bourdieu emphasises history and in particular familial socialisation, as the ‘durable’ foundation of embodied dispositions or habitus.

3.2.1: A dialogical engagement with Habitus and Field

From a Bourdieusean perspective, *habitus* is defined as “systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (1991, p. 72). The assumption here is that *habitus* generates the practices within a field and at the same time, limited by the internalised and sedimented histories of past socialisations, *habitus* also struggles to negotiate and accommodate the structures within the field (Shevtsova 2002, p. 57). In that respect, *habitus* mediates between the larger “structural principles” of fields, the “structural principles as the property of practice[s]” and itself as “a structured embodiment of those principles” (Nash 1990, p. 434).

If Bourdieu’s definition of *habitus* seems vague and open, it’s perhaps to accommodate the generative quality, the implicit “of the more or less” that Bourdieu accords the logic of practice in a social world (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 22). This indeterminate feature of *habitus* is reflected in Bourdieu’s last book *Pascalian Meditations* (2000). There, he argues against treating it as having a mechanical effect or predisposition of finality. He writes, “[h]abitus change constantly in response to new experiences” (p. 161). But Bourdieu does not end there. Changes in *habitus*, he adds, “are subject to a kind of permanent revision, but one which is never radical, because it works on the basis of the premises established in the previous state” (ibid.).

Critics argue that Bourdieu’s binding of history on *habitus*, particularly early childhood socialisation, underestimates human agency, is reductive and inapplicable in explaining social change (Giroux 1983; Nash 1990; Archer 2000). The limitation of Bourdieu’s construction of *habitus* is perhaps understandable given that it was

formulated within a specific context and time. As such citing *habitus* beyond its spatial and temporal specificity raises questions on its applicability.

If, as Bourdieu outlined it, ‘durability’ is a key element in *habitus*, can it adequately respond to urban and globally responsive dispositions, which requires greater flexibility and hence less enduring, to meet the demands of a rapidly changing and unpredictable world? And in the case of theatre artists, whose performance practices have been described as “unstable, subject to contestation” (Richards 2004, p. 53) “not uniform” with “immense variety of styles, approaches and attitudes over and above their differences as individuals” (Shevtsova 2002, p. 44), do history and familial socialisation continue to be the bedrock of their “durable and transposable” *habitus*? Or do we need an expansion of *habitus* to suggest a stronger sense of its ‘improvisatory’ logic and the power of reflexive agency?

Shevtsova offers that Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* refers to three possible dispositions. The “dispositions of individual social agents . . . of social agents taken as a group . . . and . . . incarnated in or interiorized by the practice of a field” (p. 57). She then explicates Bourdieu’s notion of a *field* into 3 circles: the immediate field of practices (here referring to artistic and teaching); the group or community field; and the institutional field (policy). This corresponds with *habitus* that is generated at the individual level (personal values, early socialization patterns); the group identity (professional affiliations); and the institutionally constructed habitus (discourses, practices) (p. 57). Seen from this perspective, *habitus* mediates within and between fields, change and are affected by the different positions as well as position-takings that occur within fields. This means that the interplay between historically set dispositions and the newly acquired ones are more complicated and less linear. *Habitus* is subject to changes that may be more radical than Bourdieu himself could perceive. One possible scenario of the changes occurring is when individual dispositions are challenged, or affirmed, by the network of other individual dispositions within the practice of a given field. Shevtsova’s circumvention invokes Bakhtinian dialogism that privileges cross-referencing, both in terms of symbolic signs, texts as well as action (Bakhtin 1981).

Her interpretation of *habitus* as a nested and dialogical mediation between *fields* suggests an adaptive and resistant constituency in *habitus* layered with overlapping as well as competing dispositions. A further extension of Shevtsova's logic is to unpack the notion of *fields* as hermeneutically unsealed boundaries from which agency operates. It is here, in the migration between familial and professional memberships and affiliations (position taking within and between fields) that we see agency operating and making sense of *habitus* (Archer 2000, 2007).

3.2.2: Human agency and the role of reflexivity

Margaret Archer's formulation on reflexivity and human agency is critical of Bourdieu's conception of *habitus*, particular to what she perceives as *habitus*' deterministic limits to history, familial structures and routine actions as its foundation (2010). Against *habitus*, she champions the imperatives of reflexivity in responding to the rapid changes that globalisation has rendered the social world which *habitus*, she argues, is no longer able to accommodate. While I agree that *habitus* has limitations, I am unconvinced to delete its existence from practice, especially in the light of the possibilities offered in my earlier discussions on Shevtsova's contribution to *habitus*. There is limited space to further engage with Archer's complex debate on *habitus* here¹. However her ideas on reflexivity and its interplay with human agency are nonetheless vital to my discussions of the theatre artists' negotiation of their artistic *habitus* in the educational environment.

According to Archer, reflexivity is a "personal emergent property" (2007, p. 97). The assumption here is that reflexivity is a skill developed over time, one that is negotiated and further grows out of challenges and engagement with the politics inherent in practice. Further, it is an ability to consider,

¹ Within the discussion of agentive subjects there is an assumption of passive ones. The social world is inhomogeneous and by correlation, not all subjects are predisposed to agentive capabilities at all times. There are possibilities of underdevelopment of our 'social selves'. The development of 'social selves' is the bedrock of Archer's framework of agency and onto which reflexivity is activated. However, her discussion has limited engagement with issues of inequality. In cases of oppression or unequal access to resources (economic, cultural and political), development of social selves may be upended and as a consequent affecting the activation of agency. Further, when enabled agentive subjects engage reflexively to destabilise and reconstitute a *new habitus* to guide social negotiations, the reconstructions are not necessarily devoid of traces of past dispositions. Rather, it is a hybridised construction that accounts for a trace of the past in the embodied 'shock' experienced in encountering the new. This hybridised layering of old and new *habitus* is suggested by Andrew Sawyer in his 2010 article "Reflexivity and the habitus". As a critique on Archer's challenge to *habitus*, Sawyer suggests a stronger connection between reflexivity and *habitus* in guiding actions as competent member of society.

an object in relation to itself, bending that object back upon itself in a process which includes the self being able to consider itself as its own object (p. 72).

According to Archer, three essential elements are required for reflexivity to be shaped: active agential interventions; their concerns; and the contexts they are in (ibid., pp. 96–97). This suggests that reflexivity arises out of a need to negotiate the challenges to issues that are of importance and cared about, and is activated by those who have ascendancy over their lives. Additionally, reflexivity is realised through internal dialogue or conversations, or self-talk in which humans reflectively interrogate the social world (p. 63). The internal conversation mediates talk about self in relation to the means with which they encounter and negotiate the “structural and cultural emergent properties of the social” (p. 64).

As such in Archer’s formulation, reflexivity and agency are interconnected. They rely on the presence of the other for their co-existence. In the context of the theatre artists, I propose that reflexivity and agency are present in their organisational literacies of both the artistic and educational domains. Joseph Blase (1984) defines organizational literacies as the knowledge, skill and value base teachers acquire to make “informed action” to resolve organizational problems (p. 186). They are also put to task when their artistic *habitus* is challenged in the nested nexus of theatre and education.

3.2.3: *Habitus in relation to the concept of worlds and worldmaking*

[I]f there is but one world, it embraces a multiplicity of contrasting aspects; if there are many worlds, the collection of them all is one. The one world may be taken as many, or the many worlds taken as one; whether one or many depends on the way of taking (Goodman 1978, p. 2).

Nelson Goodman’s (1978) pluralistic view of the world suggests there are as many worlds found as they are made. Four organising principles exist in the way worlds are made: composition and decomposition; weightage; ordering; deletion and supplementation. But what is central to the making of worlds is the “ways of describing whatever is described” (p. 3. Italics my own). Only through our means of describing what it is “imposes structure, conceptualise, ascribe properties” to it (p. 6) and are therefore affective, perceived and hence, real. Goodman’s example of the two statements about the sun is instructive.

“The sun always moves” and “The sun never moves” (p. 2)

The statement depicts two different systems/worlds of knowing from which to understand the presence of the sun. Both share the object in question—the sun—but both see it from different hermeneutical systems. Because these worlds are part of the larger real world there will be commonalities. However, the experience of the commonalities may resonate and impact individual engagement and sense-making processes differently. Yet, Goodman also highlights that because of the commonalities, there is fluidity and flexibility in these worlds whose boundaries are porous with members able to traverse between ‘worlds’ (p. 4).

But to Bourdieu (1989), Goodman’s worldmaking is the exercise of symbolic power. It is the power to persuade through language, or ‘performative utterance’ as J. L. Austin (1975) suggests, where words assign and construct social practices. More than just utterance, it is also the power of representation. World(s) are made through alliances and associations generated by the presence of representatives of the said world(s). Without representation, that ‘point of view’ fails to exist.

This is where I believe Goodman’s agentic worldmaking meets Bourdieu’s transformative capacity in symbolic power. Where they differ is in the notion of Bourdieu’s symbolic capital. To Bourdieu, symbolic power is dependent on two conditions. The first is based on reality. The second condition is the possession of symbolic capital, the asset “granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in the position to impose recognition” (1989, p. 23). As such, Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic capital relies on external ‘conferment’ of status and hence it is a status ‘achieved’.

In contrast, Goodman’s (1978) philosophy of ‘worldmaking’ concentrates on how the worlds are made, the relations to each other and the structure of description through language and symbols representative of a system of knowledge. It is a knowing that is not “primarily a matter of determining what is true” but an “increase in acuity of insight or in range of comprehension” (p. 21). The organisational decision rests on the interaction between people, communicating, influencing and

influenced by the operations of choice. It rests, I submit, upon the principles of pluralism and agency in manipulating language and symbols. In that respect, while recognition may play a role in affecting influence, it is not a condition of such influence. Goodman's philosophy on 'worldmaking' asserts the idea of human possibility, and is therefore humanistic in its ideals and resonates with Archer's conception of human agency.

Incorporating the notions of 'worlds' adds another layer to understand how a nested nexus of the artistic and education fields may be perceived beyond political, economic and cultural struggles but on the level of the philosophical idea of being. That is, living between and betwixt the comforts of existing ways of knowing about the social worlds, as well as the disheveling encounters with worlds that may rupture the elements of comfort. These ideas resonate with the artistic predilection to heterodoxy, privileging multiple perspectives and an empathy with difference (Greene 2001). As such, embedding worlds as a concept within the larger framework of Bourdieusean fields considers the symbolic and ideological tensions that may exist or are perceived by theatre artists when they migrate from one field into another.

3.3. Defining pedagogy

Discourse on pedagogy reveals the challenge in pinning down a definitive understanding of its meaning. As Patricia Murphy (1996) states, "[i]n different cultures at different points of time in history, the meaning and status of pedagogy have shifted" (p. 9). The diverse conceptualisation of pedagogy ranges from a focus on teachers, teaching processes and contexts (Watkins & Mortimore 1999); the inclusion of classroom engagement and the role of the learner (Murphy 1996; Hall 2008); and teaching as an improvisatory art (Eisner 1979). They direct our attention to the challenge in conceptualising pedagogy against its contested permutations and interpretations by researchers, policy-makers, school leaders and teachers (Watkins & Mortimore 1999).

Robin Alexander (2001) distinguishes pedagogy from teaching, in that, "teaching is an *act* while pedagogy is both an act and *discourse*" (p. 540). To him, pedagogy

encompasses more than just “theories, beliefs and controversies” to include “culture, structure and mechanism of social control” (ibid.). His definition of pedagogy resonates with the idea of teaching as ‘practice’ which, when taken against the yoke of social theory, considers pedagogy as an act of doing contingent upon the complex interplay of social, economic, political and ideological imperatives. Beyond the issues affecting inequality and power, Neelands, Goode and Pring also highlight the importance of an overarching philosophical framework that guides and forms the basis of the teaching act. The philosophical frameworks influences and affects the selection and structure of the teaching strategies and conventions and the means with which they are employed (Neelands & Goode 2000; Pring 2004). The concept of pedagogy assumed in this thesis considers the perspectives of Alexander, Neelands and Goode and Pring as a politically contested ‘practice’ of strategies and emphases that is guided by a philosophical framework. Such a consideration of pedagogy, I suggest, is resonant with the work of Maxine Greene’s educational philosophy.

3.3.1: Maxine Greene and the artistic–aesthetic informed education

Greene’s version of education values the **imaginative** propensity of the individual to gain **freedom** through **self-creation, self-development and transformation**, and an awareness of their **embodied agencies** to form **communities** to affect **social change** (Greene 1978, 1988, 1995, 2001). For Greene, the aim of the educational space is “to enlarge one’s experience with a multiplicity of perspectives and, at once, with the spheres that can open in the midst of pluralities” rather than being limited with one conclusive answer (1988, p. 29). Her notion of dialogic learning is not only cognitive but also experiential. She highlights the body as knowledge generating through what she terms as ‘shocks’, drawn from Schultz who defined it as “a radical modification in the tension of our consciousness” (1967, p. 232, cited in Greene 1977, p. 287). It alludes to the bodily reaction to certain events (historical, situational or personal) connecting the emotional response with the intellect, reflexively. Reading Greene’s depiction of ‘shock’ conjures Helene Weigel’s 1951 image of Brecht’s *Mother Courage’s* ‘silent scream’, where the alienation of the ‘gestus’ brings the audience to a “new province of meaning” (Greene 1978, p. 101). That is, to move beyond catharsis to a critical reflection of the social injustice and thereafter, action.

The teacher's role is essential in Greene's vision of teaching. Like Freire, she eschews the "banking system" (1996, p. 62), where students are deposited copious information to be regurgitated. Teachers, according to Greene, are not the sole authority of knowledge. They are there to "launch the student on his own journey, to goad him to his own action and his own choice, to confront him with possibles" (1974, p. 84 cited in Null 2011, p. 73). Education should, in her opinion, develop an autonomous being, with "a sense of agency", realised in part by the support of an equally self-understanding teacher "who has to live in a kind of tension simply to function as a free agent, to make choices appropriate to the often unpredictable situations that arise" (1978, p. 248).

Her writings on educational philosophy draw inspirations from literature and the arts as vital "to a recapturing of our authentic perspectives on the world" (Greene 1978, p. 119). Repeatedly she turns to arts practices, especially to the lens of artists in the process of making and presenting art, as exemplars for which teachers and students could achieve the goals explicated above. Accordingly, she pursued connections for teachers and students to learn through and with the arts and artists. She suggests that teachers and students may be challenged to view the classroom engagement differently through the artistic-aesthetic lens (2001). Greene's writings suggest a distinctive approach to teaching that artists specifically invoke. But what is this 'distinction'? Or phrased differently, is there a 'signature' or 'dominant' pedagogy attributable to theatre artists' teaching practices?

The idea of a 'signature' pedagogy is associated with teaching and learning disciplinary ways of thinking. As Calder (2006) suggests, signature pedagogy discloses important information on "what practitioners in the field are doing, thinking, and valuing" and almost perhaps, one could describe it as "its total world view" (p. 1361). Knowing the distinctive ways of doing things enables the 'novices' to be inducted or sign up to the 'integrity' of that tradition (Shulman 2005, p. 52; Cicione 2011, p. xv).

Drawing from the discussions thus far, meaning pedagogy in general, along with Greene's artistic-aesthetic imbued education and signature pedagogy, my concern would be to explore the possibility of identifying and articulating this 'distinctive'

theatre artists' teaching practices. The attempt at articulating the work may open up new ways of engaging with theatre artists' teaching in schools. It will also inform professional development of future artists (novices) who may be interested to develop themselves as educators in parallel with their professional artistic practice. I submit that in this respect, I aim to explicate pedagogy as practice in two ways. The first is philosophical or as Calder suggests, **world view**, and secondly, **strategies**. I attempt to do that by asking what philosophy guides the theatre artists when they migrate into an education setting and how it affects the strategies employed in their teaching practices. I shall not explicate these two concepts here, but choose to return to them when I analyse the data from the research sites.

3.4. Beyond ensemble-based pedagogy

As indicated in the LPN research, a possible feature of a theatre artist's approach to teaching incorporates a philosophy of the ensemble and a rehearsal-room pedagogy. Neelands (2009, 2010) suggests that the ensemble approach, based on his observation of the Royal Shakespeare Company's (RSC) rehearsal-room practices, has the following characteristics:

- uncrowning of the authority of the teacher/director
- mutual respect amongst players
- a shared commitment to truth
- a sense of the intrinsic value of theatre making
- a shared absorption in the artistic process of dialogic and social meaning making (2009, p. 183)

The emphasis here is the ensemble's 'pro-social' elements. The ensemble-based learning, as Neelands writes, is a "social metaphor" for living and working together, negotiating the differences through the recognition of a common goal (Neelands 2009). It is a pedagogy that focuses on the "power of collective human agency", acting upon a "commonality" rather than be obstructed by "technical surfaces of differences" (Neelands 2010, p. 138).

Theatre students reading Neelands' will find his explication of a 'pro-social' ensemble reminiscent of a devising and collaborative model of theatre detailed in the

writings of Antonin Artaud (1965), Joseph Chaikin (1972), Anne Bogart (1995), Peter Brook and Bertolt Brecht (Mitter, 2000) among others. In these theatre-making conditions, both the director and actors are collaborators. Many would acknowledge the editorial leadership the director eventually holds. Nevertheless, there is an acceptance that a balance is constructed to enable each member of the ensemble to develop, contribute, make and own the theatre-making process, ‘collectively’. Not only is a balance created to seemingly ‘uncrown’ the director’s mantle, there is also an emphasis on the ensemble as a learning process. This relates to what Joseph Chaikin terms as “a laboratory, a workshop, a floundering around in order to develop” (Blumenthal 1984, p. 57). Chaikin’s remark signposts the ensemble as a product and process of creative experimentation; a project of risk-taking and mistake-making, with participants who are sentient to the powerful yet different possibilities through collective imagining. Chaikin’s ideas of ensemble from theatre practice, I argue, have many parallels to the learning environment that Dewey, Greene, Freire and Neelands advocate.

I concur with the ‘social’ implications of Neelands’ argument. Nonetheless, I propose to refract the notion of the ensemble from a different perspective, which may help us articulate a more expansive understanding of theatre artists’ teaching practices.

3.4.1: The ‘I’ in the ‘Ensemble’

In many of Neelands’ writings on the ensemble, he focuses on the “power of collective human agency” and the advocacy of “commonality” within it. I suggest that the ensemble, while attempting to achieve a collegiate space of consensual living, struggles to avoid generating a group-think (Blumenthal 1984, p. 57). It does so by highlighting ‘differences’ as a dynamic feature of the ensemble. Therefore, I propose decoupling the individual from the group. In doing so, while retaining its pro-social considerations, this perspective observes the presence of ‘difference’ and the tension that exists in balancing the development of the individual with the social possibilities of the group practice.

Perhaps Anne Bogart’s (1995) analogy of a snowflake best describes it. To Bogart, the actors in the ensemble are like snowflakes, each is uniquely shaped, offering the

‘differences’ that is vital in a creative process. Indeed, her idea of the ensemble as a negotiation between the ‘individual and/within the group’ connotes ‘differences’ as a dynamic and necessary feature of the ensemble. The ‘different’ individual does not subvert the collaborative possibilities of the larger group, nor is the individual subjugated to the group. Instead, the ensemble emerges over time, out of a process and is a space of negotiating identities and community-forming. It negotiates betwixt and between the independent and the collective. It achieves diversity and unity, not as polar opposites, but as a dialogical relation strengthened by the synergistic *differences* of the self/group and their contributions to a common cause, be it the making of a theatrical production or the critical understanding of a text, subject or issue.

I am not suggesting that Neelands negates differences altogether. His essays on the ensemble discuss ‘differences’, but offer a sense of overcoming them in favour of the power of the ‘collective human agency’. Evocative of Kathleen Gallagher’s response to the management of conflicts in her urban school project (Gallagher 2007, p. 142), I submit that there is a possible *pedagogy of multiplicity and diversity*. In it, ‘differences’, much like Gallagher’s view on ‘conflict’, is charged with creative possibilities. Not to be managed away, but to be harnessed and respected, whose divergent perspectives are necessary to constantly remind us of the availability of alternatives to the status quo. Much like Richardson’s (1997) notion of crystallisation, ‘difference’ is not necessarily an oppositional binary. Instead, it is refractions of the same object from a different prismatic angle. Identifying ‘difference’ is one of the strands in this inquiry. As such, in researching theatre artists who teach, I may offer a different perspective to theatre education.

3.5. The notion of embodiment

Connected to the earlier discussion on the ensemble is the primacy of the ‘body’ as a vessel of individual and collective knowledge and it is through the body that the ‘collective human agency’ is enacted (Mitter 1992; Blumenthal 1977 & 1984; Herrington 2000; Quinn 2003; Neelands 2009 & 2010). The body is positioned here more than just a vessel for expression, or a physical tool engaged in an activity. I draw upon Les Todres (2007) and his statement on the body:

“[O]ntology, epistemology, and ethics meet, is primarily located in our bodily being: that embodiment cannot be considered separately from being and knowing” (p. 1).

3.5.1: The body as a heightened sensory organ

Among the many strategies mediating ensemble-based approach, there is a dependency on a trinitarian connection of the body, object and space. This is experienced

- in the deployment of physical games;
- in spatial awareness exercises and morphing of physical space;
- through transformation and appropriation of space into aesthetic space;
- and physical vocabulary construction as well as an emphasis on the development of empathy and sensitivity to the physical ‘rhythm’ both of oneself and that of others in the space (Blumenthal 1984).

Each strategy is aimed at developing an actor/participant’s, what Phillip Zarrilli refers to as, ‘bodymind’ (Boyette & Zarrilli 2007). The assumption here is that the body has an ability to achieve a ‘heightened state of being’, where the ‘whole person’, meaning the mind, body, emotion and spirit (Shevtsova 2003, pp. 6–7) attends to, with ‘open awareness’ the different encounters between self and others and the environment (Boyette & Zarrilli 2007, p. 74).

3.5.2: The body as thinking, feeling and knowing organ

Indeed, the body as an actively sensing, feeling and seeing element is also the subject of Jacob Liberman’s (2011), a holistic optometrist, research. Erstwhile, science attributed the brain as the only organ that possessed messenger chemicals known as, ‘neuropeptides’. However recent discoveries, as Liberman suggests, indicate that the body is made up of interconnecting and interdependent organs, each possessing “neuropeptides” as well. In other words, other organs have the ability to send signals, or be able to think and feel much like the brain does. As such while the eyes navigate, the means to action involves multiple signals from a confluence of different organs within the body, hence supporting the notion of ‘embodied’ response.

3.5.3: The body as the embodiment of a reflexively transformative agency

Pushing the boundaries of the sensing body further is Archer (2000), who posits a social theory of practice that positions the body as the embodiment of a reflexively conscious human being actively engaged with the world. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, she argues that “[w]ithout the body, we have no modality of presence in the world, and without its activity, none of the properties of reality can be disclosed” (p. 128). The adage ‘practice makes perfect’ comes immediately to mind. But it is not the perfection of just doing the task, but repeated “embodied encounters [that] instill the sense of self and otherness” (p. 8). To Archer, practice is social. As such, our physical memory of a practice makes our future practices better. In so doing, it affirms or (re)constructs our sense of self and otherness and hence our place in the world. She further argues that to be conscious of self implies a development of thought. That is, the ability to reflexively think and reason that the “differentiation of a sense of the self”, both personal (the ‘Me/involuntarily assigned) and social identities (the ‘I/voluntarily sought), is non-contradictorily embodied within one and the same being (p. 124). Such ability is also developed through practice, in as much as through action that a person develops both physical and mental consciousness of who he is. Therefore, according to Archer’s logic, practice and hence the (active) body is primary in the development of both self and thought, and its corollary, agency.

Closer to the field of study, I draw on drama and theatre pedagogy of Augusto Boal (1979) who in his book *Theatre of the Oppressed* positions the body as an essential tool in theatrical production. He writes,

[T]he first word of the theatrical vocabulary is the human body, the main source of sound and movement. Therefore, to control the means of theatrical production, man must, first of all, control his own body, know his body, in order to be capable of making it more expressive (p. 125).

For Boal, being theatrically expressive is not a mere act of exhibiting craft, but one that is able to recognise the agency for action and consequently transformation.

3.5.4: The body as symbolic of cultural specificities

Jennifer Parker-Starbuck and Roberta Mock’s (2011) work on researching performances expands on Archer and Liberman’s ideas of the body further. Parker-

Starbuck and Mock view the body as “interpretable and flexible, yet materially and culturally specific” (p. 211). In other words, body-centred practice research rests on the nexus of the body as adaptable interconnected beings in the world as well as those that are indistinguishable with cultural specificity. Embodiment is therefore,

[a] sense of being in a body or having a body, a conscious engagement with the materiality of sensing bodies, or the experience of practices that are physically manifested. With embodiment, the body functions not only as a source but also as the product of symbolic cultural construction and inscriptions (ibid., p. 212).

This suggests that the body is connected to sensory histories in all its specificities and variations, which include a dialogic relationship with habitus, practice, experience and feeling in breaking down the boundary between body/mind, body/text, and by extension, body/structure (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2005).

This research’s concept of embodied practice consider the discussions of embodiment begun earlier: as a “cultural construction and inscriptions” (Parker-Starbuck & Mock 2011); a metaphysical unity of motion, emotion, mind and spirit (Boyette & Zarrilli 2007; Archer 2000; Shevtsova 2003); and as a medium for action and transformation (Boal 1979). In theatre education, the body is an ‘embodiment’ of multiple brains (Lieberman 2011) where being and knowing are inextricable (Todres 2007). A body that is able to reflexively and consciously respond, project, engage and create with the self and different bodies in the space, that constructs as well as is constructed by inter and intra socio-cultural-political-historical dispositions. Such a conception of embodiment offers a wider conceptual net for artistic and teaching practices, and may be the key to understanding the persistent emphasis on the ‘doing’ and ‘on-the-floor’ experiences that theatre artists seem to privilege.

4. Summary

In summary, my proposed conceptual framework consists of a nexus of two nested systems: theatre and education. Acknowledging that the research straddles between these two traditions, I argued that the analytical task ahead would be to privilege heterogeneity, dialogism and reciprocity. As such, while the overarching theoretical

framework chosen is Bourdieusean relational theory, in particular the concept of *habitus* and *field*, other perspectives from education, philosophy, post-colonialism, theatre studies and performance would enhance the examination of the key concepts employed in this research.

5. The Singapore Arts Education Landscape

I end Chapter 2 with an exposition on the Singapore arts/theatre education landscape. It is written from a perspective of distance and intimacy reflecting what Eelka Lampe refers to as the “paradox of the circle” (1995, p. 159). The closing of a circle signals the possibility of opening up, and the points of both opening and closing is ever shifting. In that respect, my travelling back and forth from Singapore, a place of my birth, and the UK, a historicised trace of colonial legacy, during the three-year research period is the movement of that circle. Each journey informs how both are reflective of the other. My endeavour is made more difficult with the limited academic or reflective discourse on arts, and particularly theatre, education in Singapore. As such, a heuristic analysis is exercised through the readings of Singapore’s cultural studies, performance and theatre discourses that are more developed than arts education. Hence the ‘reflexive character of the reflective practitioner’, a frame I return to throughout the research, admits my writing on the Singapore arts education at this juncture is incomplete. My intellectual and imaginative engagement with the topic, limited by material, spatial and temporal resource, may require further reflection.

5.1. Singapore: a foundation of socio-cultural engineering

It has been argued that arts practices emerging from the mid 1980s to the present must be considered against the backdrop of a pragmatic and utilitarian construction of Singapore, promulgated by the one-party government of the People’s Action Party (PAP) (Chang 2000; Wee 2001 & 2003; Chong 2003; Rae 2004). This approach is applicable to an understanding of arts education, considered as a subset of the larger arts practices. I begin with an overview of the political and economic construction of Singapore.

Singapore's economic success as one of the most capitalistically developed nations in South-east Asia has been attributed to the PAP's politics of pragmatism, an administrative ideology that grew out of a story of survival (Sim 2001). I turn to Chua Beng Huat's definition of pragmatism. In his 1997 sociological lens on Singapore politics, he refers to pragmatism as an,

ad hoc contextual rationality that seek to achieve specific gains at particular points in time and pays scant attention to systematicity and coherence as necessary rational criteria for action (p. 58).

The 'specific gains' in Chua's definition refers to purposes and goals, often on economic and developmental grounds. It is Chua's version of pragmatism that I infer to when the term is used in this section.

Singapore gained independence in 1965. It is a largely Chinese populated city-state, surrounded by larger Malay and Muslim Malaysian and Indonesian neighbours. According to the population statistics captured in 2011, Singapore with a landmass of 714.3 km² has a population size of over 5.1 million people (<http://www.singstat.gov.sg/stats/keyind.html#popnarea>). Without natural resource or a sizeable domestic market, it is the necessity of survival that the government painted a "have little choice but to do what is necessary" (Chua 1997, p. 59) stoic attitude, privileging the ethos of unquestioned doing. Through the narrative of survival, it has been variously argued that the government enacted the strategies of "standardisation", "sanitization" and "erasure" through its political, social, cultural, material, ecological and economical structural transformation (Chua 1997; Lawson 2001; Wee 2001; Yuen 2004).

An affective standardisation is the establishment of a new Singaporean identity involving a homogenisation of the various ethnic groups into four institutionalised racial categories. The four racial groups are marked as Chinese, Indian, Malay and Others (CMIO). Fuelled by political and capitalistic interests, the social relation of the four races is further 'standardised' through the 'benefits' of the English language as *lingua franca*. The mobilisation of the English language is a double-edged sword. As a connector, it effectively bridges domestic multicultural relations as well as global multi-national interactions. At the same time, it portends the erasure of its pre-

modern spaces, images and voices and filling them with what poet Alfian Sa'at considers as a "history of amnesia" (2001), of forgetting ethnic languages, identities and practices (Teoh 1997; Wee 2001). The tensions of advocating the English language within a non-native English language cultural environment are keenly felt resulting in its varied and hybridised usage and proficiency in the multicultural Singapore society (Alsagoff 2010). As Paul Rae and Kaylene Tan observe, "[i]n Singapore, English is the lingua franca and the first language of many, but never the 'mother tongue'" (2012, p. 1).

The effects of pragmatism and utilitarianism, as illustrated through the adoption of the English language as the language of business and administration, permeate much of other policies including that of education. In post-colonial educational experience, arts education had a stronger emphasis on Western art forms, of which, arts practices from England had significant ground. According to Sylvia Chong (2008),

In the absence of any recommended syllabus, English songs, literature, poetry, and dances were often taught in schools and presented during performances and exhibitions (p. 23).

However, the tide changed when vocational and technical education became the focus of the education policy of the 1970s (ibid.). Education as an essential tool in the pragmatic construction of Singapore in the period of 1970s–1980s had little room for arts education, with the exception of music and visual arts. Indeed, in a survival-driven (1970s), efficient-driven (1980s), and subsequently, ability-driven (1990s) (Goh & Gopinathan, 2008) education system of Singapore, the arts were relegated as 'extracurricular' or 'outer subjects', whose contributions were deemed insignificant to the attainment standards (Quek 2009; Chong 1988).

5.2. Changes in the Singapore education system: possibilities of an inclusive education

But in the last 15 years, changes in the education policy with the "devolution in educational governance" in the early 90's (Gopinathan & Ho 1999; Gopinathan 2007) and the 'Teach Less Learn More' and the 'Thinking Schools and Learning Nation' initiatives (Ng 2008; Gopinathan 2007 & 2012) paved the way for a more 'inclusive' vision of the Singapore education system (Hargreaves 2012). With these

changes, the education landscape witnessed a development of varied education pathways. More academic subject options were offered. Additionally, independent and specialised schools with independent curricula directions were also established.

Specifically in the area of the arts, a secondary level School of the Arts (SOTA) was established in 2006. It admits students, at the age of 13, who are ‘talented’ academically and artistically. In 2011, the first undergraduate level music conservatory in the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music was established within the National University of Singapore. Elsewhere, tertiary and higher education in theatre are served by the LaSalle-College of the Arts, National University of Singapore’s Theatre Studies department, Singapore Polytechnic’s diploma level Applied Drama and Psychology, as well as the Interdisciplinary Theatre Institute (formerly Theatre Training and Research Programme). The National Institute of Education at the Nanyang Technological Institute has a teaching degree offered in Drama and Theatre Education. Also significant is the inclusion of drama offered as a Cambridge International Examinations, International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in 2007. As an elective IGCSE, drama is offered in eight secondary schools (Stinson 2010). Parallel to the introduction of drama at secondary level, three more junior colleges joined Victoria Junior College, which had a long history of offering theatre studies at ‘A’ levels.

Concomitant to greater investment in drama in schools is professional development for teachers. In 2009 the Academy of Teachers was established (Hargreaves 2012) and in 2011 Singapore Teachers’ Academy for the aRts (<http://www.moe.gov.sg/media/press/2011/07/launch-of-the-singapore-teachers-academy-for-the-arts.php>) followed thereafter. Reviews on education were also undertaken in 2008–2010 such as the Primary Education (PERI) and the Secondary Education (SERI) Review and Implementation. The receptiveness to change experienced in the last two decades in the education landscape has been attributed to the uncertainties and demands of a “fast-changing, globalized world” (PERI 2009, p. 3). The education policy makers recognise “flexibility, creativity, innovativeness and network abilities” (SERI 2010, p. 17) as traits and skills necessary to meet such demands. Accordingly, PERI and SERI highlight an inclusion of social, emotional and character and citizenship development, especially in secondary education.

Among the many strategies offered to achieve these new developments, drama was highlighted as one of the recommended experiential pedagogies that simulates reality, inspires creativity and develops students' social and emotional awareness, builds self-confidence and enhances conceptual understanding (PERI 2009, p. 63).

Contributing to the growth of arts education in schools, in particular drama/theatre, is the development made in the cultural front. Arts and cultural policy, absent in the first two decades since independence, emerged with the 1989 Report of the Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts² (Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts, 1989). The establishment of the National Arts Council (NAC) in 1993, under the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (later Ministry of Information and The Arts), concretised the recommendations of the cultural policy of the 1990s. Critics describe much of the policy initiatives as instrumentalist and functional (synonymous with pragmatism) with an emphasis on the economic as well as nation building priorities rather than the arts' intrinsic values (Chang 2000; Wee 2002; Lo 2004). For example the goal of positioning "Singapore as a key city in the Asian renaissance of the 21st century and a cultural centre in the globalised world" (Renaissance City Report I 2000, p. 4) led to the country's heavy investment in infrastructure or "hardware", outweighing the human capacity or "software". These developments, prompted comments from cultural observers T.C. Chang and T. Sasitharan to conclude, that the positioning of the arts for global consumption is inimical to the needs and development of local artistic endeavours (Chang 2000, p. 823).

Nonetheless, I submit that the speed with which the arts in general, and subsequently arts education in particular, developed is partially a result of the pragmatic focus of these cultural policies. Funding was set aside to generate arts education projects. For instance, the establishment of the NAC in 1991 resulted in the development of the NAC Arts Education Programme (NAC-AEP) in that same year. Its mandate was to administer, fund and market arts education developed by artists and arts organisations. To encourage school participation, the Singapore Totalisator Board³

² The cultural policy direction came about with the 1989 Report of the Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts and subsequently the country's efforts with transforming Singapore into a global city of the arts through its Singapore Renaissance City initiatives.

³ Established in 1988, the Singapore Totalisator Board holds legal rights to operate betting and gaming activities in Singapore. It utilises surplus gaming revenues for grant-making to aid activities relating to the arts, community development, social services, education and sports.

Arts Grant was established, which subsidises 60% of the total cost of the NAC-AEP programme capped at S\$15,000 annually. This led to theatre, dance and new media having a greater presence in the schools. With subsidies, demand for arts education in schools grew. The increasing demand paved the entry of commercial enterprises as arts education providers. Their entry further expanded the market for arts education.

In 2001, to create a separate tier within the NAC marketed arts education portfolio, the Artist-in-School Scheme was established. The difference between the AISS and the NAC-AEP rests on the former valuing artist-led initiatives. The AISS funds bespoke “whole-school approach” learning with and through the arts involving “practising Singaporean artists” in partnership with the schools (http://aep.nac.gov.sg/artist_in_schools.aspx). Artists as educators are positioned as the connector between schools and the larger arts community to serve the audience base development and expansion of the arts ecosystem cultural policy mandate (Renaissance City Report III 2008, p. 22). I argue that the direction taken for the AISS seems to suggest a concerted effort to promote, single out and separate what is identified as ‘artistic’ arts education from the wide ranging programmes under the NAC-AEP banner. We will look at the artists’ role in the AISS in Chapter 5 when discussing the Singapore theatre artists’ experiences in schools.

5.3. Challenges of the arts/theatre education in the Singapore schools

However the initiatives outlined above are not without their challenges. The fundamental focus in schools is on a “culture of effort and excellence” (Gopinathan 2012). Still high on the agenda are educational successes measured against the growth and development of student attainment. As such while the arts are in the educational radar, it has not produced large-scale ground level implementation.

The recent development of the Student Development Curriculum Division (<http://www.moe.gov.sg/about/org-structure/sdcd/>) covering development of “the formal curriculum and co-curricular programmes in the four areas of student guidance, arts, physical education and sports, character and citizenship education” (<http://www.moe.gov.sg/about/org-structure/sdcd/>) augur possibilities. Under this

division, the newly formed Arts Education Branch resides. And within it, drama is recognised as a separate unit within the Singapore Ministry of Education (MOE) arts education remit. This bodes possibilities of effecting significant change in the growth and development of theatre education in schools.

However a recent conversation with teachers on arts education reveals that the MOE faces the challenge of deploying sufficient teachers trained in the arts. Once again, the pressing need for professional development asserts itself not only for teachers but also artists. There is to date no statistical data on the number of artists engaged in education. From conversations with the National Arts Council as well as artists involved in education, I am tempted to suggest that there is a limited pool of artists working in education. This assumption is made given the ground level indication of increasing demand and work opportunities for artists in schools. Seeing that there is a limited pool of artists available to serve the schools' needs, the NAC, like the MOE, has begun exploring ways to develop the teaching skills of artists who are interested in and able to teach. In 2012, the NAC collaborated with the NIE in creating a Specialist Diploma in Arts Education for artists.

There are also questions raised on the sustainability of arts education in schools. Within the current system, funding for AEP and AISS are disbursed and managed by the National Arts Council. What happens if the arts education funding is reduced or removed? Would schools continue to engage artists and expand arts education to include different art forms? Are there other funding avenues established by the Education Ministry to ensure a continued investment in a well-rounded arts education for students in public schools? Is there a development in corporate philanthropy in the area of arts education? These questions raise issues of equal partnership between the education and the cultural ministries, as well as social responsibility, accountability and shared stake in the development of arts education in Singapore, which are yet to be examined.

What is also missing amidst the rapid development in arts education infrastructure is the lack of research to examine, understand and unpack the construction, successes and challenges of the envisioned arts education praxis. Indeed, limited research in theatre education practices in Singapore, especially of artist-school partnerships and

artist educator development has resulted in a near absence of concrete data to inform the construction of future projects. As a result, artists and schools lack the benefit of incremental knowledge to further enhance and deepen their conceptualisation of arts education.

The arts education landscape in Singapore is undoubtedly expanding. But with expansion comes greater need for resources to support arts educators and artists' development. In that respect, this study on theatre artists is one such effort to contribute to the praxis of the Singapore English language theatre education practices.

CHAPTER 3: (RE)TRACING THE METHODOLOGICAL JOURNEY

1. Introduction

Two parallel processes are involved in the research methodology. The first process engages with the question: What does it mean to work within the traditions of qualitative research, in particular, ethnographic case study and reflective practitioner? Responding to the question involves unpacking and reconstructing concepts associated with these traditions. The second process considers embodying the practice of doing research. I explore the ways the body acquires, makes sense of and operationalises the research tools. Reflecting on a bodily or embodied practice of in-the-field research reveal multiple and at times spontaneous changes made to the research design. These changes suggest the thinking, doing and writing of research designs, are fluid, dynamic and responsive to the contextual imperatives of research. In this chapter, I attempt to account for the two simultaneously braided and intertwined processes described above, each affecting the other in an iterative, reflexive and dialogic manner.

1.1. Structure of the chapter

There are three parts to this chapter. In **Part I**, I examine the theoretical arguments for considering an interpretive qualitative paradigm and a research methodology that twins ethnographic case study with reflective practice. In the discussion, I examine the challenges, in what Denzin describes as the crisis of “representation, legitimation and praxis”, of qualitative methodology (Denzin 1997, p.3). In response to these challenges, I turn to Patti Lather and Laura Richardson’s poststructuralist defense of qualitative research as a resistant logic to positivist validity.

Part II explicates my attempt at implementing what is *taught* about methodology and the actual *doing* of it through the experience of the pilot projects. Drawing from the lessons of the two pilots, the fieldwork is redesigned, key questions reformulated and research strategies reconsidered. As a consequence, a key element in the research method, that is, a reliance on “critiquing across difference” (Lather 2008) emerges.

Part III offers the analytical process, involving the structure and system of sieving, coding and analysing the data. As Harry Wolcott points out,

The critical task in qualitative research is not to accumulate all the data you can, but to "can" (i.e. get rid of) most of the data you accumulate. This requires constant winnowing. The trick is to discover essences and then to reveal those essences with sufficient context, yet not become mired trying to include everything that might possibly be described. (1990 p. 35, cited in Stake 1995, p. 84).

Following Wolcott, this section examines the process of “constant winnowing” of the data sets gathered from the ethnographic fieldwork. I consider the various methods suggested for data categorisation and the iterative coding cycles as a process of data reduction during the analysis. Throughout this chapter, I attempt to demonstrate how my understanding and application of these methodological theories are complicated and deepened as I engage, borrowing the title from David Gray’s book on research methodology, “doing research in a real world” (Gray 2004). In doing so, I argue that being in the field as a reflective practitioner calls for not only theoretical preparedness but also alert and creative intellectual resources, and an engagement with reflexivity, dialogism and an iterative process in research.

PART I

2. Navigating Methodological Theories: The Benefits Of Qualitative Research Methodology

Norman Denzin (1997, 2003, 2008) posits that qualitative research is a continuously evolving tradition and much of how it is done is yet to be known. This concept of ‘yet to know’ underscores a developmental, evolving and experimental logic in the qualitative approach,

[T]hat in the doing transforms the very theory and aims that guide it . . . one inevitably takes up “theoretical” concerns about what constitutes knowledge and how it is to be justified [and] are linked in a continuous process of critical reflection and transformation (Schwandt 2003, pp. 294–295).

Schwandt’s explanation illuminates why some would argue that the qualitative inquiry is a “uniquely humanistic, interpretive approach” to the study of social reality (Atkinson & Hammersley 1994, p. 249). Meanwhile, early anthropologists like Malinowski (Stocking 1983, cited in Woolgar 1988), Boas and Radcliffe-Brown (Atkinson & Hammersley 1994, p. 250), have espoused a scientific stance in its practice. Yet others have championed a more critical direction (Lather 1993; Carspecken 1996; Britzman 2003, Kincheloe & McLaren 2003, 2011; Gallagher 2008). The diverse ways in which the qualitative methodology is perceived in research have also spawned many different approaches (Atkinson, Coffey & Delamont 2001) such as case studies (Stake 1995; Yin 2003); grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1994; Charmaz 2005) ethnography, ethnophenomenology, ethnomethodology (Patton 2002) duoethnography or trioethnography (Sawyer & Norris 2012) and critical ethnography (Kincheloe & McLaren 2003). Nevertheless the thread that ties these varied approaches together is its in-depth study of a social phenomenon in a given situation (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 2008; Creswell 2009; Denscombe 2010).

Cohen, *et al.* (2007) write that the social world is a “messy place, full of contradictions and disjunctions. It is multilayered” (p. 167). Their argument that the

‘messy’ and ‘multilayered’ social world is too complex to be explained quantitatively struck a chord when I attempted my first pilot. Initially, this inquiry began with a base-line pilot survey targeted at all artists to elicit responses to the question: Is there a correlation between type of artistic training background and the kinds of educational practice each artist undertakes in Singapore schools? It soon became apparent that an all-encompassing base-line survey was operationally ineffective. As I was based at the University of Warwick, monitoring the questionnaire’s dissemination in Singapore became an issue. The dissemination points were limited to known access such as the National Arts Council (NAC) and the Singapore Drama Educators Association (SDEA). The NAC is a policy-making and funding body governing the arts in Singapore, while the SDEA, is the first theatre artist/drama teacher led professional development association. Apart from these two organisations, the questionnaire was disseminated by emails from one artist to another without any means of tracking its path. The exact demographic was hard to determine. The eventual respondents, n=30, consisted of 25 theatre artists and 5 artists from other fields. When sieving through the returned responses, questions relating to ‘why’ and ‘how’ as well as ‘structures of past experiences’ emerged that the survey was unable to answer.

Nonetheless, the first pilot was effective in framing the scope of the investigation. It highlighted that an inquiry into a social phenomenon requires a research methodology that privileges experience to unpack and understand. Social inquiry, as Bourdieu (1977) explains, places the “science of the social world against the implicit presuppositions of practical knowledge of the social world” (p. 4). Resonant in Bourdieu’s proposition of practical knowledge is Donna Haraway’s “situated knowledge” (1991) and Clifford Geertz’s investigation of “normalness” within the detailing of “particularities” (1973, p. 14), all of which, I suggest, are key elements of the qualitative endeavour.

My experience with my first pilot crystallised my research interest to an understanding of the particularities of the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the teaching practices of a group of practitioners (7 theatre artists); within their respective school settings; and thereafter reflecting on the broader discussion of a particular culture of a social group (theatre artists) and their role within the field of study (theatre or

drama education). The qualitative methodology I have chosen to work with is a melding of case study and ethnography.

3. Case Study

As argued in the preceding chapter (Chapter 2, section 2.2.2, p. 28), an understanding of theatre artists' teaching approach requires more than an examination of their past artistic training and artistic practices. It includes an assumption that the contextual conditions—meaning socio-political environments of both the theatre and education fields, as well as the sites in which the study is located—may affect how theatre artists construct their teaching practices. Accordingly, exploring contextual conditions requires a research strategy that accommodates varied and complex layering of variables generated from multiple sources of evidence (Yin 2003). Case study offers such a research strategy that fits the purpose of this research.

According to Sharan B. Merriam (2002), a case study approach is applied when an inquiry concentrates on contemporary phenomena or entities. It is a strategy for the “how” and “why” research questions investigating a real-life context, “especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident” (Yin 2003, p. 13). A case study research seeks to understand and “develop as full an understanding of that case as possible” (Punch 2005, p. 144). To do that, it focuses on the process of how the research is conducted and demands a careful identification of the unit(s) of analysis, the rigour of data collation and analysis (Yin 2003).

Yin (2003) offers three categories of case study: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (pp. 5–7). For this research, I argue that the boundaries between the three categories are not hermetically sealed. This research threads an exploratory approach with an acute and critical description leading to an eventual explanation of the phenomenon by way of developing a theory. As explained in the previous chapter, the conceptual framework of a nested nexus between the education and artistic fields situates the understanding of the theatre artists' teaching approaches

within the specificities of the sites in which they are observed and simultaneously considers the impact the larger fields have on their practices. Such a design focuses on the cases not in isolation, but as multiple case studies, cross-analysed between and betwixt them with the eventual aim of theory proposition.

3.1. Operationalising the case study research

Case study has been criticised for its lack of rigour, validity, reliability and generalisability (Yin 2003, p. 10). Yin argues, unlike quantitative research, generalisability in the qualitative paradigm reflects not of frequency, but analytical generalisability. In other words, the goal is to negate, generalise or develop theories (ibid.). As such, for this research, I adopt a theoretical shift in perspective when dealing with the issue of generalisability and validity. This is explained in a later section of this chapter by invoking a poststructuralist perspective.

With respect to rigour in research, operationally this is achieved through various strategies. One of the strategies employed is to design the research as a multiple-case study. Multiple cases make it possible to generate patterns of similarities and contrasts. Additionally, triangulation of data between multiple and varied evidence enrich and make the research findings more robust (Yin 2003). I wish to highlight in brief at this juncture that I am working with crystallisation as a strategy (see section 6, p. 74) in place of triangulation and this will be explained in detail later. The preference for a multiple-case design, however, does not deny the distinctive rationale and necessity of a single-case study. Ultimately, the choice of either multiple- or single-case design is made on the basis of the research needs and contexts “to maximize what can be learned in the period of time available for the study” (Tellis 1997). While multiple-case design offers the research the possibility of achieving greater rigour, it has its own disadvantages. According to Yin (2003), one of the main difficulties would be the extensive resources and time required and as a consequent copious amount of data is generated from which to sieve and make sense of. One way to navigate the expansive terrain is to identify and delimit the boundaries of the research.

Indeed, one of the distinctive characteristics of case study is its bounded system. It enables boundaries, be it “temporal, geographical, organizational, institutional” as well as roles and relationships between subjects, to be drawn and marked as cases (Cohen, *et al.* 2007, pp. 253–254). Understanding the boundaries aid in identifying what the units of analysis are as well as the perimeters of the inquiry. In this research, the multiple-case design is identified as layered or embedded multiple-case study. Nested within the larger two cases, meaning the two geographical sites of England in Phase I and Singapore in Phase II, are seven theatre artists identified as seven cases. The units of analysis within the seven cases are their respective theatre education projects and the different conditions and contexts within which these projects are situated.

The second strategy is the adherence to the replication logic. Replication in a multiple-case study is an attempt to duplicate the same conditions of the first case, or be conscientiously vigilant to the alterations made to subsequent cases as a result of the discoveries made in the first (Yin 2003, p. 47). The replication procedure is most urgent in a comparative case study. However, the research direction undertaken here is not a comparative study. It positions the English sites and the respective theatre artists within it as reflective theoretical cases for the Singapore research.

During fieldwork, while attempting to follow the replication logic, I was struck by the specificities of each case. I found abiding rigidly to the replication process a challenge. Indeed, as Winston highlights, “a key tension at the heart of case study is the relationship between the uniqueness of its terms of reference and the generalizability of its results” (Winston 2006, p. 43). While there was an attempt to maintain the replication logic, I allowed the variations to surface and guide the research process. Accordingly, I chose to archive the similarities and differences, as well as the contrasting and emerging data, during the analysis to achieve a holistic interpretation of the findings. These are accounted for in sections II and III of this chapter.

4. Ethnographic Case Study

Ethnographic case study has been frequently used in educational research. In such a research methodology, case study is used to inform the framework of research, while ethnography informs data collection (Merriam, *et al.* 2002; Negis-Isik & Gursel 2013). Ethnography offers an immersion “into close and relatively prolonged interaction with people (one's own or other) in their everyday lives” (Tedlock 2001, p. 456). Its valuing of sustained in-situ observation and emerging data, enables an interactive exploration and understanding of the social, personal, cultural and political complexities surrounding theatre artists’ teaching practices. One of the central aims of this research is privileging the voices of the theatre artists; a position which I have argued in the previous chapter as lacking in present scholarship on theatre education. As such ethnography, with its emphasis on emic observations, that is, privileging the perspectives of the participants as experts as well as co-creators of the research narratives, is advantageous for this research (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007; Merriam, *et al.* 2002; Conteh, *et al.* 2005).

One of the assumptions underlying the investigation of theatre artists’ teaching practices is an embedded struggle of legitimacy, recognition and credibility between practitioners in the same field and between fields and how such struggles affect their teaching practices. The extract taken from an email discussion between two theatre artists in an online arts community forum in Singapore is a testament to that struggle.

Memo, 17 March, 2011

C: “I believe that theatre practitioners are meant firstly to create and practice theatre, and then to share experiences and hence teach. We really shouldn't be taking over the job of drama teachers . . .”
(Wed Mar 16, 2011 1:40 pm)

L: “[W]hat happens if I practice my theatre creatively through teaching? Or what happens if my theatre practice is teaching drama? Is there a real dichotomy between a theatre practitioner and a drama teacher?”
(Wed Mar 16, 2011 3:52 pm)

I offer this extract to highlight two points. First of all, it demonstrates inhomogeneity in theatre artists’ perception of their practices and role in education. Secondly, the email exchange sparks questions relating to theatre artists’ teaching practices and identity. What are the conditions affecting theatre artists’ teaching practices in

schools? How do artists perceive their education work beyond what they do artistically? Do these considerations affect how they teach?

Such questions necessitate, what Kincheloe and McLaren (2003) posit, a methodological approach that is “dialectically concern[ed] with the social construction of experience”, and the unearthing of “the discourses and power relations of the social and historical contexts that produced them” (p. 435). Consequently, the ethnographic case study approach invokes not only an interpretive influenced paradigm in understanding theatre artists’ teaching practices but also a critical one. Specifically, it is not about the employment of critical theory per se but the understanding of how criticality informs *how* the data is collated and interpreted. I turn to two key texts (Britzman 2003; Gallagher 2007) that inspire much of how criticality informs my ethnographic gathering, reviewing and analysis of the research data.

5. Being Critical In Ethnography: Enacting Dialogism, Intersubjectivity And Reflexivity In Research

Two critical ethnographic research projects are informative in my investigation. Deborah Britzman’s (2003) and Kathleen Gallagher’s (2007) research acknowledge the context of teaching as being fraught with political ideologies, where being in school means “coming to terms with particular orientations toward knowledge, power, and identity” (Britzman 2003, p. 33). Their concerns with power extend beyond data collection but also the eventual interpretation and analysis which make up the report.

In my reading of both Britzman and Gallagher, three elements emerge as key tools in sharpening the criticality needed in this ethnographic case study research. The first two are *dialogism* and *intersubjectivity* through privileging the multiple perspectives and heteroglossic structure of research and writing (Britzman 2003). To that end, while focusing on their respective participants (beginning teachers for Britzman; students for Gallagher), the researchers enlarge the circle of influence to include other participants that may affect the research outcomes. They privilege

‘multivocality’ and limit an either-or reading of a given situation. Thirdly is the notion of *reflexivity*. Reflexivity challenges how the *idea* and the on-the-ground *feel* generate an understanding through praxis. As Phil Carspecken reflects, praxis deepens “just after the doing” (Carspecken 1996, p. 123). It follows then that the essence of reflexivity as a condition of praxis in research is an embodied understanding and it is gained on hindsight, having had the luxury of time, space and prior events, or experience, to reflect upon.

5.1. Dialogism and intersubjectivity in critical interpretation

To understand the notion of dialogism and intersubjectivity as found in Britzman and Gallagher, I traced them back to Han-Georg Gadamer’s hermeneutics (Delanty 2005), particularly his hermeneutic circle and the fusion of horizons (Taylor 1971; Kincheloe & McLaren 2003). I also reflect on Mikhail Bakhtin’s formulation of dialogue and heteroglossia (Morson 1983; Holquist 1990).

According to Gadamer’s hermeneutics, understanding is an interpretive social endeavour and is value-influenced (Delanty 2005). In other words, humans whether they like it or not, arrive at interpretation from frames of experiences with their historical, social, political, cultural traces, or what he terms as ‘horizons’. Understanding is achieved through the ‘hermeneutical circle’ (Taylor 1971, p. 6). It is a frame within which the object is understood by appealing to other readings, or the web of a ‘fusion of horizons’, that impact the interpretation of the same object (Kincheloe & McLaren 2003). Kincheloe and McLaren helpfully summarises it as sense-making through a process of interacting between “parts in relation to the whole and the whole in relation to parts” (2003, p. 449). It is within this interaction of parts and whole that ‘dialogism’ and ‘intersubjectivity’ are to be understood.

A Bakhtinian sense of dialogism respects the potential of “mutuality of difference” (Holquist 1990, p. 41). It is a respect for dialogue that does not demand a final resolution based on agreement, and places much “stress on connections between difference” (ibid.). Bakhtin proposes ‘heteroglossia’ described as a complex web of languages and world view that is always contextual and is understood relationally to the perspectives of the ‘other’ (ibid., p. 69). Or as Shaun Gallagher (1992) espoused

in his application of hermeneutics in education, interpretation, and consequently understanding, is achieved in the in-between state of familiarity and strangeness. Our encounter with and an attempt to understand something strange are mediated with some likeness in our resource of experiences. Conversely a situation of familiarity necessitates some form of alienation to motivate interpretation (ibid., p. 124). Inherent within the enactment of dialogism is the respect for a poly-perspectival condition, which relates to the concept of intersubjectivity—a term which reflects much of the same plurality and relational logic in understanding.

As the thesis progresses, both ‘dialogical/dialogism’ and ‘intersubjectivity’ as explained will recur in the discussions and arguments forwarded in the subsequent chapters.

5.2. Reflexivity in reflective practitioner lens

It has been argued that reflective practice is inherent in the logic of art making (Eisner 2001, cited in Grushka 2005, p. 355). It is an essential orientation “between the affective self, engagement with their medium and their socially discursive constructed ways of knowing” (Grushka 2005, p. 354). In theatre training, the development of the ‘third eye’, the eye that simultaneously previews the audience/stage, actor/character, person/society and self/family, involves much of the same process (Dennis 1994; Nemiro 1997). The third eye develops a strong internal landscape that engages in a dialectical cycle of creation and reflection-and-creation involving edits and refinements of the position to be communicated (Carreri 1991).

But as Phillip Taylor (2000) subsequently argues, reflective practice, following the artists’ experience, is more than just a strategy for making art. It is a way of life. It considers how both the world outside the creative process as well as the world inside the creative process (meaning, ‘environment’) dialogue with each other. Neelands suggests it is an ability to see both the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ that demands “self-knowing and other-knowing” (Neelands 2006, p. 17). Taylor’s and Neelands’ reflections on reflexivity echo Archer’s (2000, 2007) conception of it as a critical ‘internal conversation’. Archer’s work on reflexivity has been discussed in detail in

the preceding chapter. It is however useful to revisit the central characteristics of Archer's conception of reflexivity:

- as a mediatory and enabling tool; harnessed by
- agentive subjects to dialogue with, take themselves apart from and critique the context as well as themselves existing within it; and
- reflexivity enables transformation through the possibility of self-governance.

Internal dialogue expands reflection beyond the immediate focus on task and implicit knowledge inherent in Schön's (1983) 'reflect-on-action' to include a larger nested layering of the politics of practice which include a critical understanding of the relationship between self, environment, tasks and the interaction with others.

The emphasis on interiority is further developed in Bourdieu's submission of a '*reflex reflexivity*', defined as a sensitising of the 'eye' and 'feel' during research (1996, p. 18). He argues that without a reflexive feel, researchers may enact symbolic violence upon those who are being researched. In the case of my ethnographic research, the possibility seems more acute driven by the emancipatory interests informed by the lens of criticality. The value orientation of the ethnographer needs to be viewed with some suspicion to avoid imposing researcher values onto the findings (Britzman 2003; Gallagher 2007; Lather 2007). Additionally, the intrusive quality inherent in research inadvertently creates an asymmetrical status in relations between the researcher/initiator and the researched/recipient, with the researcher accorded a higher position in the social hierarchy as the 'objective' investigator of knowledge. The hierarchical distortion, Bourdieu suggests, is compounded by "the extent and the character of the distance between the objective of the enquiry as perceived by the respondent and as viewed by the investigator" (1996, p. 19). A means to reduce this distance is social proximity and familiarity of the researcher with the researched participants and their world.

Narrowing distance between researcher and subject as Bourdieu suggests offers a counterpoint to the 'insider inquiry' concerns expressed by John Hockey (1993) and Thomas Newkirk (1996). What this means is that the tension between researcher distance/proximity and inside/outside inquiry is not a dialectical position of

either/or, but a continuum that requires negotiation and balancing. Translating the idea to research means keeping the methodology porous (Gallagher 2008), attentive to the emerging experience of a research-in-progress, its environment and multi-site influences that affect the research, in other words ‘context’. As Gallagher warns, there are obstacles in research and they,

ask us to read, with exacting attention, our research contexts, to engage in complex research relationships, and to hold ourselves to the difficult and always imperfect task of representation (ibid., p. 4).

Accordingly, the methodological challenge of qualitative research begins while in the field and continues with its writing. It requires a constant reflexive critiquing and sensitising of what emerges from contexts “are situated in social worlds; they come out of worlds that exist outside of the interview itself” (Miller & Glassner 2004, p. 131). In other words, a self-conscious awareness and transparent audit of influences that may manipulate the research endeavour.

Concomitant to a dialogic, intersubjective and reflexive enterprise, I am my own critical friend, raising questions on how I approach my research, see the fields, and negotiate the emerging data with the theoretical framework. I also rely upon an ‘outer’ circle of critical friends—supervisor and colleagues—as well as acknowledge the expertise of the participants as co-constructors of the research. In doing so, I attempt to position artistic teaching practices from their lens bringing to relief the complications they experience during their migration from artistic spheres to education settings.

6. Questions Of Objectivity, Validity And Generalisabiity In Qualitative Research

Questions of “representation, legitimation and praxis” are not only directed at qualitative inquiry from the positivist camp but prevail as central concerns within the qualitative research community (Denzin 1997; Silverman 2004). Inheriting the legacy of early 20th century anthropology bound up in the politics of the colonial gaze of the ‘primitive’, qualitative inquiry is constantly re-imaging how it puts across the representation of the ‘other’ as well as the ethics of knowledge acquisition

(Woolgar 1988; Denzin 1997; Vidich and Lyman 2003). Whose story is it? Who is telling it and how has it been (re)constructed? To whom is it told? How does one verify researcher presence of being ‘there’ and the veracity of the written account that describes the ‘there’ and the ‘truthful’ nature of the process?

The strategies to validity, authenticity and legitimacy in qualitative research are varied. From rigorous method of collating and analysing multiple sources of data (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007; Creswell, 2009); triangulation (Denzin 1978; Bryman 2004); to achieving inter-reliability through peer reviewing (Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton, 2002) and community consent (Britzman 2003). However, I draw from Patti Lather (1993, 2007) and Laurel Richardson (1997, cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2008), and the influences of poststructuralism to offer a transgressive logic to counter what they define as the rational-led scientific imposition on validity and reliability.

6.1. Qualitative research as a resistant logic to positivist concept of validity

Where positivist inquiry fascinates on obtaining objectivity, Lather suggests that objectively acquired truth in knowledge is an impossibility. According to Lather, in the absence of truth and objectivity, research offers its second best, a simulacra, “copies without original. . . to mask the absence of referential finalities” (1993, p. 677). She proposes, therefore, the impossibility of a value-free lens to the act of inquiry. Lather (2007) describes ethnography as a methodology of “getting lost”, by addressing the problem areas without “any assured ontology of the ‘real’, of presence and absence, a postcritical logic of haunting and undecidables” (p. 6). I argue validity, and in particular Lather’s ‘catalytic validity’ (1993), is the *possibility* of the transformative effect on the respondents, context of study as well as the researcher and the discovery of the new. The effectual link between findings and the research field is not about immediacy and tangible transformation, but one of empowerment through criticality, awareness and the possibility of effecting change.

Meanwhile, Laurel Richardson (1997, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 279) destabilises objective validity with her use of the crystal as a metaphor. As a ‘transgressive’ form of validity, the crystalline problematises the flatness of

triangulation, a positivist-related term, and offers an alternative frame for an intersubjective engagement with the data, research participants, researcher, theory and research materials.

I propose the central imaginary for “validity” for postmodernist texts is not the triangle – a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. What we see depends upon our angle of repose . . . and crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know (ibid.)

The three-dimensional refractive crystal/prism resonates with the complex and dynamically fluid situation in the research field. An experiment with a ray of light cast on the prism illustrates Richardson’s concept. Depending on the aspect from which the light is shone, different results is produced on the other end. Applying this logic to research, an understanding of the field is therefore dependent on the angle from which it is studied.

Invoking Lather and Richardson in this research means validity is linked with possibilities. It oscillates between what is proposed in response to the onslaught of positive critique and the resistance to positivist determinism of what counts as validity. Indeed, the question of achieving objectivity, validity and generalisability makes qualitative inquiry a challenging methodology to work with. Earlier, I touched on various means to heighten the rigour in case studies, which include multiple-case studies (section 3). Additionally, I attempt to implement Lather’s spirit of “counter-practices of authority” (1993, p. 674). I also take on board Richardson’s prismatic understanding of the research field in challenging the need for an overly rigid employment of tools to defend validity in qualitative research. I also propose ‘integrity’ of research practice as part of the equation. I suggest that a means to invoke ‘integrity’ in research “involves intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods” (Creswell 2009, p. 5) that affects design, data collation, analysis as well as ethical practice.

These theoretical perspectives formed the foundation of my research. Yet crucial ‘on-the-job’ lessons from the pilots reveal that despite the theoretical understanding

and preparedness, there is an improvisatory and experimental logic to the application of the research strategies on the ground. As Part II demonstrates, questions, concepts as well as the research design experience continual shifts. The thinking and doing of the research undergo a pendulum-like swing, iteratively and reflexively, between research field and its conceptual framework.

PART II

7. Lessons From The Pilots And Consequences On Research Design

As Linda Evans (2002) writes, defining and stipulating the frame of the various concepts employed in the research is crucial in establishing construct validity. Construct validity involves clearly spelling out terms that guide both the researcher and the participants engaged in the research (Cohen, *et al.* 2007; Evans 2002). Yet again, I emphasise ‘guide’ indicating the ‘incomplete-ness’ of definitions and frames.

7.1. The operational framework of ‘theatre artist’

Informed by the first pilot, I defined the purposive sample of theatre artists as such:

1. Theatre artists who are involved or have had a history of involvement with professional artistic work. ‘Professional’ is defined as possessing, not the sum but a combination of, economic exchange in favour of the artistic services provided. It also takes into consideration recognition of the artistic community; and the theatre artists’ personal identification with the practice as their occupation, though may not be the sole occupation, which they may hold. The involvement with professional theatre work is an important variable to explore how such an engagement impacts the artists’ identities.
2. Theatre artists who have a minimum of 10 years or more of sustained and continued experience with young people in an education setting. The research targets theatre artists with significant experience working with young people in a school environment. It explores their perception of education and impact on their understanding of theatre making, theatre education as well as themselves as artists and educators as a result of sustained experiences in schools.
3. Theatre artists who have had formal or informal training in theatre in any creative aspects, either as a director, actor or playwright.

7.2. Second pilot: theatre artist ‘John’

The second pilot, focused on theatre artist, John who at the time was working on his doctoral fieldwork research in a school in Warwickshire. He has over 40 years of theatre acting, producing, directing and scripting television and radio drama background prior to research and teaching young people in a school environment. My intention of administering the second pilot was to test out the data collection methods: pre-observation semi-structured interview, observation of classroom practice, post-observation interviews.

In this pilot, the pre-observation semi-structured interview, conducted two and half weeks prior to the observation, explored a) the participant’s artistic and pedagogic background, b) the experience of working in a school, c) the intention, motivation and experience of designing the lessons as well as d) the aims of the work with young people. The interview lasted 65 minutes and was transcribed prior to the observation.

My observation of John’s session on 19 April 2010 began with a school tour that ended at the drama studio. The observation was of John teaching Personal, Social and Health Education (PSE) using Shakespeare. Below is an extract taken from a memo written of the visit. It offers a glimpse of the situation.

Memo, 19 April 2010

We arrived at the drama studio 5 minutes early (the ‘replacement’ room). 67 students, aged between 14–15 years, arrived. They filed in two rows outside the drama studio, a room that was not the designated space, but a space, which the artist had to negotiate with the administration and the teachers. The change in room was made upon John’s request as he felt the initial room, the hall, was not appropriate. This was mentioned to me as he took me on a tour of the school. The class could not begin on time, as the drama teacher was working with her drama students on an assessment and they were running late. The drama teacher popped her head out twice to apologise and once, behind the slightly opened door, told the students to “be quick, there is another class waiting”. She then left the studio to return 5 minutes later. Eventually the artist, 67 students and myself entered the drama studio, 10 minutes later than the scheduled time. *(Prior to arriving at the drama studio, the artist highlighted to me that this studio is the drama teacher’s designated classroom. “It is her room, so I am in her turf, so to speak. This is her room”, John commented.)*

7.2.1: Observation record mechanism

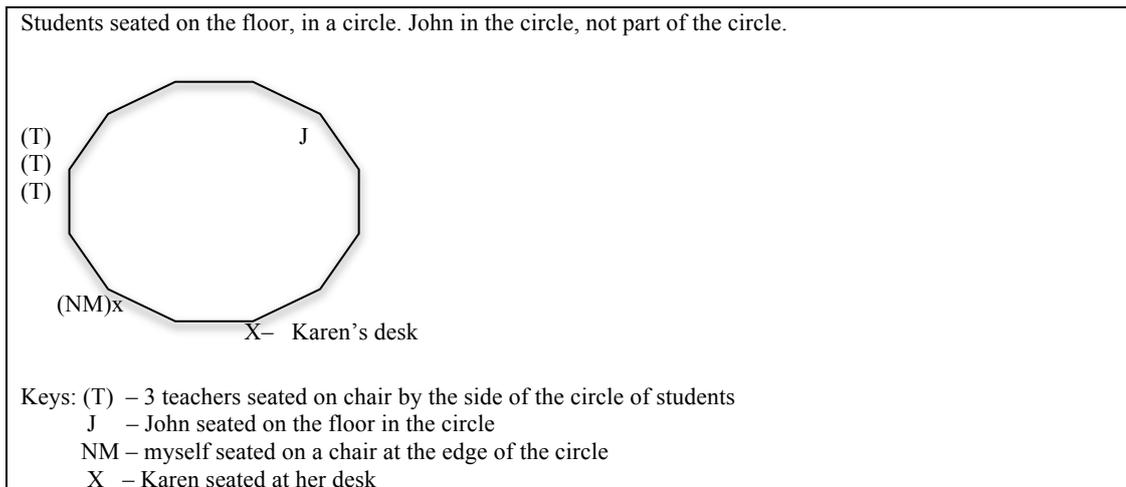
I adapted Van Maanen’s (cited in Eisenhardt 1989) approach to note-taking observations. He designed a two-column structure which tracks a stream-of-consciousness commentary on the goings-on, reflecting the ‘sub-text’ or inner

dialogue that exists whilst observing the activities and the analysis of them during observation. Consequently the researcher is encouraged to write post-reflection notes. My adaptation works with a three-column structure, taking into account the observation, the simultaneous researcher reflections during observation, as well as the post-observation reflections a few days after. The three different columns run parallel to each other to ease analysis. It offers a comprehensive look at the observation record along with the reflective and reflexive accounts of the researcher's thoughts. Table 3.1 illustrates the adapted observation record structure.

Table 3.1: Adapted observation record

Time	Observation of activities Dated: 19 April 2010, Monday Venue: John's host school	Reflection in observation	Reflection on observation (31 April 2010)
1148 hrs	John begins. He introduces the new topic: Sex Education & Relationship. Powerpoint on screen: recapitulation and reminder of the rules for the class (3 items listed). He reminds the class of the 3 rules. He highlights the importance of generating and experiencing 'real knowledge' as opposed to 'rumours'. He tells them that they need to be aware of the facts on sexually transmitted diseases. He highlights facts: he read that sexually transmitted diseases are on the rise in the UK, indicating that few are practising safe sex. He announces that experts will be coming to work with them—nurses, youth workers, policemen to offer more information. He adds, "We think you are ready for this. That you are mature enough and responsible enough to work on this topic" – John.	<p><i>Students are seated on the floor, in a circle. John is in the circle, not part of the circle.</i></p> <p>See enlarged spatial arrangement in Table 3.2.</p> <p><i>John's tone: encouraging, gentle, almost deferring to students. Performing mid status—apologising when realising his back faces one of the students. He tries to engage the students and when they hesitate, he refers to Monday being the first day out of the Easter break as a reason for the slow start. He attempts to create a friendly atmosphere, as if distinguishing himself as a non-teacher.</i></p>	<p>1) His interaction with the administrator when we first entered the school. The conversation was an interesting one about the daughter of the administrator who started school extremely shy and now nearing the end of her Form Six, she is confident and writing suggestions to the city council. The administrator's exchange with John centred on how she thought that his work may have contributed to it.</p> <p><u>Action to follow:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why, how and what impact does this have on his work? - How does the school administrative and teaching staff perceive him? Is there a status difference?

Table 3.2: Spatial arrangement in the drama studio



This 3-column approach became the structure with which all subsequent observations were archived. This was accompanied by post-observational interviews for clarification on the observed teaching sessions. Although it proved useful as a means to retain and separate information between observation, researcher reflections and follow-up actions, nonetheless, there were emergent challenges.

7.2.2: Challenges experienced in pilot 2

During the observational phase, I became increasingly aware of my subjective imprint and selective receptivity on what I observed (Gallagher 2007). In Gallagher's ethnographic study of *Theatre of Urban*, she noted how differently each researcher read the same sequence of observation, nuances in behaviour, movement, atmosphere and speech.

The advantage of having several researchers is the ease in comparing and cross-referencing observation records to produce a composite image of the observed situation. However being the only researcher in the field, such comparative analysis is not possible. Furthermore, being new to the space, I am left with only the artist as the compass to the environment. For instance in the pre-observational interview, the artist (John) emphasised the issue of ownership of the space. He also mentioned the complicated relationship he had with the drama teacher (see Appendix 1). This may explain the residual tension that affected his relationship with members of the

teaching staff. However, a crucial question to ask is: What impact does this information have on my research undertakings?

Memo: 21 April 2010

Does the perceived or real complexity of the relation between artist and teacher have an affect on a) the way the artists teach b) the perception of artists on teachers and school at large c) impact the perception of their identity within the school and d) the perception of the value of their work in the school? To what extent should this be primed, as something the researcher ought to be sensitive to? To what extent were these iterations John's perception of what he thinks I need to hear? Is he speaking to me as a fellow artist whom he thinks may be sympathetic to his experience as the 'outsider' in the school? Is he highlighting what I should be sensitive to? Has my role as a fellow artist, PhD student and researcher aligned myself to him, and by association, his concerns as well? Did what he say affect the way I observed the classroom? Should I have done the observation first before the interview? Perhaps I should include Karen in the research process, interview her to offer her a means to voice her perspective? Is this necessary to understand how he teaches?

I began to question the notion of an asymmetrical relation in favour of the researcher. The direction of the hierarchical distortions that Bourdieu (1996) points out is not fixed. While I may be the initiator of the research, at times, I am the 'recipient' of information that is catered for my researching ear. The willing participant, in this case John, with limited prompting, was comfortable to offer me information on the school.

I also questioned Newkirk's (1996) suggestion of the researcher's "act of seduction" on their research participations. Newkirk refers to 'seduction' as the process by which research participants are persuaded into the research. This occurs when trust is gained because of the implied researcher knowledge of community membership, assumed expertise as well as the backing of prestigious research or academic institution. My response to Newkirk's claim is that 'seduction' is not a one-way process. The reverse may be true. The research participants, in narrating their personal accounts, may elicit empathy or evoke resonance in the researcher. As the memo reflected, there were moments where the sympathetic researcher in me may have been susceptible to the hypnotic resonance of the difficulties John, as a fellow artist, faced in school. Consequently, this may affect the means with which I observe and write the accounts. As such, acknowledging the possibility of 'reverse seduction' demands a heightened sensitivity to my reflexive researcher 'eye' and 'feel'. I am alerted to remain critical but not prejudicial of the participants' accounts.

There was also my mistaken assumption that someone with a theatre background would automatically teach drama. In John's situation, his directorial and acting background nor the use of Shakespeare meant little to the class he was teaching. His focus was the use of Shakespeare as a context to examine morality. Much of what was happening in class was discursive. It left me with little means to analyse nor discuss how he used his previous theatrical and directorial experience to bear on his teaching. Upon reflection, I attributed the problem to what Linda Evans (2002) defined as an issue with 'construct validity'. As such, the operationalisation of 'theatre artists' needed revisiting for clarity.

The final challenge is the negotiation of the language of reflection and a critical understanding of what is deemed as a subjective judgement. An example is offered in Table 3.3, where the stream of consciousness response (*italics*) is appended in the heading, 'Reflection in Observation'. The subsequent review and discussions with my supervisor highlighted the tension between my subjective imprint and intersubjective inquiry on the observed.

Table 3.3: Observation field notes with supervisor's comments

Time	Observation of activities Dated: 19 April 2010, Monday Venue: John's host school	Reflection in observation	Reflection on observation (31 April 2010)
1148 hrs	<p>John begins. He introduces the new topic: Sex Education & Relationship. Powerpoint on screen: recapitulation and reminder of the rules for the class (3 items listed). He reminds the class of the 3 rules. He highlights the importance of generating and experiencing 'real knowledge' as opposed to 'rumours'. He tells them that they need to be aware of the facts on sexually transmitted diseases. He highlights facts: he read that sexually transmitted diseases are on the rise in the UK, indicating that few are practising safe sex. He announces that experts will be coming to work with them—nurses, youth workers, policemen to offer more information. He adds, "We think you are ready for this. That you are mature enough and responsible enough to work on this topic" – John.</p>	<p><i>Students are seated on the floor, in a circle. John is in the circle, not part of the circle.</i></p> <p>See enlarged spatial arrangement in Table 3.2.</p> <p><i>John's tone: encouraging, gentle, almost deferring to students. Performing mid status: apologising when realising his back faces one of the students. He tries to engage the students and when they hesitate, he refers to Monday being the first day out of the Easter break as a reason for the slow start. He attempts to create a friendly atmosphere, as if distinguishing himself as a non-teacher.</i></p>	<p>1) His interaction with the administrator when we first entered the school. The conversation was an interesting one about the daughter of the administrator who started school extremely shy and now nearing the end of her Form six, she is confident and writing suggestions to the city council. The administrator's exchange with John centred on how she thought that his work may have contributed to it.</p> <p><u>Action to follow:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why, how and what impact does this have on his work? - How does the school administrative and teaching staff perceive him? Is there a status difference? <p>2) John offered the history of the school as well as his connection with the place. He talked about how he has offered his time to the school, to repay for their kindness in accepting his project and hosting his PhD research.</p> <p>How does this relationship impact teaching practices?</p> <p>3) He talked about the teachers who were supposed to assist him. But now that he is more familiar with the kids, he is able to manage them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is his relationship with the rest of the teaching staff? - What is missing from my observation? <p>Teachers' lounge interaction between John and the rest of the teachers Follow-up: Make a list of questions post-observation interview.</p>
1152 hrs	<p>John asks students to raise their hands if they have an opinion on which is more important: Sex or Relationship. When John said 'Sex'—students are hesitant to raise their hands. I see some students giggling, and some whispering to each other. A boy nudges his friend, another boy. Another boy shifts his hand, as if to raise it, then stops, smiles, and turns to his friend. Some students turn their faces away from the centre when John says, "come on now is your time to be honest. Say what you really feel". No reaction. He offers "Relationship" and more hands are raised, almost everyone.</p>	<p><i>Wonder if asking the question at the start meant anything to the work. How could honesty play its part at the start of the session? Students warming up? They may be uncomfortable. There were more than 60 students (and teachers present too) in the room.</i></p> <p>Supervisor's response: Problematic. Subjective imprint.</p> <p>Researcher's response: Would it be better if phrased and followed up with more questions later? What is the role of honesty in this class?</p> <p>It seems important, why is it? What shapes that emphasis?]</p>	<p>How does this relationship impact teaching practices?</p> <p>3) He talked about the teachers who were supposed to assist him. But now that he is more familiar with the kids, he is able to manage them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is his relationship with the rest of the teaching staff? - What is missing from my observation? <p>Teachers' lounge interaction between John and the rest of the teachers Follow-up: Make a list of questions post-observation interview.</p>

Language in this instance was a challenge. How the statement was written reflected not just the situation but also revealed my judgement and subjectivity. John Allen

(2003) points to the complexity of expression as historically and ideologically constituted; that the moment of expressing what is being observed implicates past knowledge. Recognising the discursive constraints bound within the act of communication in this instance was an important lesson learnt and a good reminder of reflexivity.

8. Redesigning The Research

The challenges above forced me to evaluate my position of close intimacy and knowledge of the field of research as an experienced theatre practitioner who also teaches. The ‘proximity’ accorded me the sensitivity of shared experience with the participants. This is strongly felt in the first pilot when theatre artists were more willing to support the research rather than artists from other fields. Yet this familiarity is also a double-edged sword that complicates the observation process of the second pilot. The challenge is *not* how to reduce objectification but to be mindful in thinning the layered lens of presuppositions that I inevitably wear. Reflecting from these lessons, several amendments were made to the case study research design.

8.1. Amendments to construct validity

In addition to the existing three criteria identified for the purposive sample (section 7.1.), I added two additional constructs:

4. Theatre artists participating in the research have existing projects where theatre education is at the heart of their approach.
5. Theatre artists’ projects relate to youths between the ages of 13–16. The age of the student sample was identified to offer a means to compare and contrast between each purposive sample.

8.2. Amendments to research questions

The research question framing the second pilot was: What happens when theatre artists teach in school? However, the experience with researching John in the school he was attached to challenged my earlier proposed research question. It lacked the

complications of power, interests and multiple perspectives. I reformulated the key research questions as such:

- **What do theatre artists bring to their teaching practices when they migrate into an education setting?**
- **How does the understanding contribute to the larger conversations on theatre education?**

The construction of these two questions assumes the meeting of two fields, the 'theatre' and the 'education' fields, each with their distinctive values, trajectories and histories. The school and the classroom, in which the meeting of these two fields take place, become the 'site' that informs this study. The theatre artists' teaching practices therefore is assumed as an 'other' to the existing practices within education. The investigation attempts to understand, perceived as 'outsiders' or 'others', how theatre artists negotiate their presence within the school culture and work with their theatre making expertise, educationally. Consequently, other sub-questions are generated to sharpen the research focus.

1. What are the influences that shape theatre artists' teaching practices in schools? This question examines the historical and present experiences with the artistic and teaching practices.

2. What other conditions and considerations affect theatre artists' migration from the artistic into the field of education? This question relates to considerations of extrinsic factors such as school culture, relationships with teachers and students, pedagogic knowledge, and awareness of education policies and curriculum guidelines, if any.

3. How do they negotiate their artistic traditions and pedagogic needs when working in schools? This question attempts to trace possible differences in perception of 'education' and how this may challenge their teaching practices.

4. What impact does the research have on theatre artists' development in theatre education? The final question explores the possible implications of the findings.

9. **Compensating Excessive Identification: A 2-Phase Multiple-case Study Research Design**

I submit that the difficulty of doing an ethnographic case study research from a reflective practitioner position is being lost and overwhelmed by the “blind spots of understanding” (Lather 2007, p. vii). “Blind spots” may arise from excessive identification with the research topic and subjects and may pose “questions of accountability and responsibility [which] are ethical and social” (ibid., p. 2). A way of compensating excessive identification is, as Lather (2008) opines, is to critique one’s lens by subjecting it to a different milieu, “across differences of history, geography, languages, disciplines, identity positions, and theoretical investments” (p. 119).

Her suggestion requires one to “live in a de-authorized space”, to find oneself challenged in the strangeness of the other (p. 224). To engage in the unfamiliar is to decentre one’s discourse and to question prior knowledge that has been created. Or in Bourdieu’s (1996b) lyricism, to immerse in

the *spiritual exercise*, aiming to obtain, through *forgetfulness of self*, a true *transformation of the view* we take of others in the ordinary circumstance of life (p. 24. Italics in original).

The spiritual exercise of forgetting ourselves, as I interpret it, is to view ourselves and our own way of perceiving the world differently. There is much synergy between Lather’s ‘de-authorized space’ and Bourdieu’s ‘spiritual forgetfulness of self’. Both allude to a position of challenge, discomfort and dis-ease.

Lather (2007), citing Britzman (1997), further suggests that we are better served by ethnography if we are receptive “to be wounded by thought as an ethical move” (p. 8). Britzman’s idea of being wounded suggests that doing research, especially one with a critical lens, is not only difficult, painful and at best transformative for the researched, but also, and potentially more so, for the researcher. Following Britzman’s logic, doing research, offers the researcher the promise of a (re)generation of both self and knowledge.

What then are the issues of accountability and responsibility, both socially and ethically, for researchers who are intimately related to the field of investigation? How would they engage with their “blind spots” knotted in the position of familiarity and the taken-for-granted?

9.1. Outline of the new research design

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, my experience as a theatre artist as well as an educator in Singapore makes me an ‘insider’ of the Singapore arts education landscape. In the process of working together on various artistic and educational projects, the three Singapore theatre artists and I have layered relationships as artistic community peers, project collaborators as well as friends. However, with this doctoral research, our relationship is placed in a different relational context and experience; a situation and space of difference and ‘dis-ease’ as we encounter each other’s teaching practices with a ‘critical’ lens.

Considering both Lather (2007) and Britzman (1997, cited in Lather 2007) the intimate knowledge and relationship I have with these three theatre artists in Singapore as well as my beginner researcher position may be the ‘blind spots of understanding’ that need ‘troubling’. Such layered connections that bind us together complicate how I might critically and ethically represent them (as research participants) and their work in an academic research. A strategy undertaken to achieve this is to select criterion-based multi-site cases, with sufficient similarities and differences as counterpoints to each other or as Miles and Huberman term it “criterion sampling with confirming and disconfirming cases” (1994, p. 28 cited in Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

I devised a two-phase research process, where the first phase (November–December 2009 and May–August 2010) was spent in England (Warwick, Coventry and Birmingham). The aim of the research in England is not to compare teaching practices, though some elements of comparison between sites are unavoidable. Instead, I structured the English research as the possibility of critiquing across social, cultural and historical ‘difference’ (Lather 2008; Hladki 2003). It sets out to

complicate and challenge my reflective practitioner assumptions and preconceived knowledge about working in contexts and practices that are familiar and intimate.

The second phase (August 2010–March 2011 and July–August 2011) sees me returning to Singapore, the main focus of this study, hopefully with a much better sense of negotiating the potential “blind spots”.

Table 3.4: Outline of research time-line

November – December 2009	Phase 1: Participation as co-facilitator in the first English theatre artist’s project in school and the arts space: Creative Arts project (Reese)
19 April 2010 – May 2010	Pilot 1: Questionnaires sent to Singapore Pilot 2: Observation of John in school.
May 2010 – August 2010	Phase 1: Observation of the second, third and fourth English theatre artists in their respective sites (Rita & Viola; Rona; Rita & Reese) All English theatre artists were interviewed once after their projects ended.
August 2010 – September 2010	Transcription, coding and analyses of Part 1.
16 August 2010 – 20 September 2010	Phase 2: Research in Singapore with Olivia and Sandra. The research suffered a slight set back when the third theatre artist dropped out because of unavailable project. Invitations were sent out to secure the third Singapore theatre artist.
20 September – 1 November 2010	No observation in Singapore because of school examinations. Research continued with the theatre artists in their respective theatre communities. Olivia directed both Joan and I in a theatre project.
1 November 2010 – 12 December 2010	Phase 2: Singapore school observations resumed and interviews continued. Joan joined as a research participant with her project in one school.
November 2010 – January 2011	Transcription, coding and analyses of Part 2.
January 2011 – March 2011	Phase 2: Singapore school observations resumed with the new school year.
March 2011 – May 2011	Transcription, coding and analyses of Part 2 continued.
July 2011 – August 2011	Phase 2: Continuation of observation and interviews with final theatre artist in Singapore, Joan.
August 2011 – October 2011	Transcription, coding and analyses of Part 2 completed.
November 2011	Writing up stage.

Initially there was a mix of gender among the theatre artists invited for the study: five female theatre artists and one male. The intention was to understand how gender may affect teaching practices. However as the only male theatre artist had no suitable project to fit the research criteria (section 8.1), another round of invitations were sent out. The final respondent, a female theatre artist whose teaching schedule and practice matched the research criteria, agreed to participate in the research. The eventual outcome resulted in seven female theatre artists. Table 3.4 offers a summary of the background information of the seven theatre artists involved in the research.

Pseudonyms	Age range	Formal Theatre Training	Formal Teacher Training	Projects observed in research	Site(s) of observation	Estimated duration of engagement
Rita (UK)	40–49 years	No. Spent many years with youth theatre; taught drama predominantly.	Yes	Two projects. In two separate sites. On two different occasions. Both projects were with young people aged 14–18 years old.	In a school hall as well as in a purpose-built arts space, outside school	60 hours
Rona (UK)	40–49 years	Yes (at higher education (H.E.) level); also a theatre making professional, as actor and director, creator.	Yes	Two projects in the same site with two separate groups of students aged 11–16 years old.	In a purpose-built arts space.	4 hours
Reese (UK)	20–29 years	No. But was active with the university's theatre groups. After graduation, she worked with a youth theatre company as well as established her own theatre company.	No	Two projects in two separate sites. On two different occasions. Both projects were with young people aged 14–18 years old.	In a school hall as well as in a purpose-built arts space outside school.	55 hours (of which 30 hours was shared with Rita)
Viola (UK)	40–49 years	Yes. At H.E. level performing arts school.	Yes	One project, which she co-facilitated with Rita with 14–16 years old.	Same sites as Rita's	30 hours was shared with Rita
Sandra (SIN)	40–49 years	No formal, mostly informal training through workshops. Worked professionally as director. Also school teacher in Singapore and abroad; taught drama predominantly	Yes	Three projects in the same school.	In a classroom as well as in a purpose-built arts space in school.	30 hours
Olivia (SIN)	30–39 years	Yes. Director and playwright.	No	Three projects in three different schools.	In a school hall and school auditorium.	30 hours
Joan (SIN)	40–49 years	Yes. Mainly actor though some experience in directing.	No	Two projects in the same school.	In an auditorium as well as in a classroom.	30 hours

Table 3.5: Background information of the theatre artists in both England and Singapore

10. Developments In Phase II: Lessons From The English Sites

Phase I research conducted in England included observations, supplemented by one interview with each English theatre artist. I was an archivist for two out of the three projects in the research. In that capacity, I documented the projects by video and audio recording. I will not dwell on the specificities of the research methods employed in England/Phase I. Instead, they are weaved into the discussion of the data collection method used in the Singapore research/Phase II.

10.1. Data collection method for phase II

Drawing from the experiences in the English Phase I research, I made further refinements to the research process. The methods of collating data remained the same. For example, interviews as a method of collating data was used throughout the inquiry. But the interview protocol was amended from a ‘structured’ interview to ‘semi-structured’. These refinements, as highlighted by Yin (2003) are necessary signaling the challenges of working with the replication logic in a multiple-case study methodology as explained earlier.

10.1.1: Unstructured interviews

The earlier work with semi-structured interviews in the second pilot was less responsive to the theatre artists’ predilection to narrativising their experiences. This was a realisation I encountered when conducting the research with the English theatre artists. The interview schedule was consequently amended to respect the participants as ‘experts’ and hence offer them space and time to explicate how they make sense of their world(s) (Clandinin & Connelly 1989; Bruner 1991; Eakin 1999).

Correspondingly in the Singapore sites, I adopted what Holstein and Gubrium (2004) term as an “active interview” process. It recognises the tacit experience (now made explicit in the writing of this thesis) of the interviewer and respondents’ “constitutive contributions to the production of interview data” (p. 142). The interview was conducted in a talk-like fashion (Baker 2004), often as a dialogue with the

respondents explicating their approaches. Only the opening or lead in question of each interview was planned

Additionally, unlike the pilot, I began with the in-situ observations, interacted with the theatre artists as fellow practitioners and had informal conversations prior to the actual process of a formal interview. This process assumes that the respondents are clearly aware of their positions as active contributors and constructors of meaning and hence knowledge. They are complicit through their agreement of being key respondents to the entire meaning-making enterprise. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

However to help me discipline each interview session, a framework was created. To develop the framework, I returned to the key and subsidiary research questions from which 4 categories of questions emerged (Table 3.6). The ‘active interview’ process offered the participants leeway to highlight areas of concern, which would otherwise have slipped my attention. Together with the four categories of questions, and signposting from the respondents themselves, the interviews offered richly layered narratives. Thereafter, I cross-analysed these narratives with the observation records, field notes and memos.

Table 3.6: Four categories of interview questions

Categories	Descriptors
<i>Influences</i>	Influences and history of participants’ artistic and pedagogic training or experience.
<i>Negotiation of working environment</i>	The strategies and considerations undertaken when working in a school environment.
<i>Embodied experience of their influences and negotiations with the environment</i>	Observing how the theatre artists explicated and implemented their artistic practices during teaching. Thereafter questions were formulated to probe and understand the practices further.
<i>Artists’ responses, questions as well as narrative chosen by them</i>	Areas in which they wish to expand and highlight upon not suggested by the researcher.

10.1.2: Additional interviews with teachers and students

Although the main interviews were primarily conducted with the theatre artists, I also arranged subsidiary interviews with the teachers and students. I approached the teachers who had intimate knowledge of the theatre artists’ work. These were teachers who either collaborated with the theatre artists in teaching the class or were present as observers when the theatre artists were teaching the students. The aim was

to solicit possible alternative ‘eyes’ and ‘ears’ in the hope of sharpening my reflexive lens. Four teachers responded to the request for interviews. The teachers also assisted with a random selection of students for the focus group interviews (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Background information of teachers and students who were interviewed

	Theatre Artist	Role	Years of relationship	Gender	Students (focus group)
Teacher 1	Sandra	Collaborating teacher	More than 12 months	Female	8 female students in a drama class
Teacher 2	Sandra	Collaborating teacher	12 months	Male	N.A.
Teacher 3	Olivia	Main teacher in charge of drama club	6 months	Female	6 mixed gender students from the drama club
Teacher 4	Joan	Main teacher in charge of drama club	More than 36 months	Female	5 mixed gender students from the drama club

10.1.3: Observation: understanding classroom teaching

Giddens (1979) claims that power prevails in every social action and varies only in the gradation of power that each act contains (cited in Carspecken 1996, p. 129). To fully understand the dynamics of power in social interaction, I employed Phil Carspecken’s (1996) 4 elements of critical ethnographic research—site; setting; locale; and social system—to conceptually map the observation. The observation was divided into two layers. The first is macro-perspective and the second is microscopic classroom setting

a) The macro-perspective

To Carspecken, a ‘site’ is a temporal and spatial boundary of the object of enquiry.

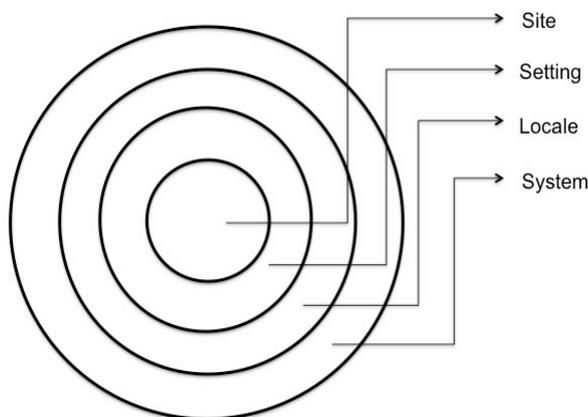


Figure 3.1: Diagramme of Carspecken’s 4 elements of observation and analysis in critical ethnography

For this research, the site(s) locate the artists within the premises in which they work. This could be in the theatre, a school or an open space. The ‘setting’ refers to a situation, a specific encounter and moment between the characters observed. Meanwhile, the environment surrounding the

site is described as a **‘locale’**. An example is the neighbourhood of a school. In the case of this research, the locale is the professional theatre community and past artistic and teacher training, experiences and influences. Finally, the **‘social system’**, which relates to the social, political and cultural network that affects the theatre artists’ work. In this highly connected age of global network, the social system would also include the tacit and obvious understandings of the cultural knowledge and dynamics of power relations both locally and internationally that affect the development of the artist.

Carspecken’s model was useful as a skeletal framework to bind the research together. However for the detailed analysis of each observation, I needed specificities to microscopically focus on the interaction between the theatre artists and the students within the classroom environment.

b) Micro-perspective: observing the classroom / site engagements

I initially constructed a classroom rubric with adapted elements from Muijs and Reynolds observation of teacher performance (2005); the University of Warwick’s Postgraduate Award (PG Award) in the Teaching of Shakespeare, in collaboration with the Royal Shakespeare Company; as well as Newmann, *et al.* (1996) US study of critical thinking as authentic achievement. However, implementation in the English sites proved difficult. The rubric was too rigid and could not effectively capture the more improvisational and fluid quality of the theatre artists’ teaching practices.

Drawing from the experience gained in the English research sites, I amended the observation rubric. I focused on specific points of reference, which were open enough to capture broad descriptions. This amended rubric, comprising of 5 items, was the eventual framework used to observe the Singapore theatre artists at work. They include:

1. Talk: specifically ‘classroom talk’ developed between artists and students. To ground the observation and analyses, Robin Alexander’s (2005) study on classroom talk, specifically on ‘instructional talk’, was used as a reference.

2. Body: I noted the theatre artists' bodies in action. I noted their posture, stance, physical distance and proximity as well as gestures used during communication and non-communicative states as well as the frequency of bodily-inclined activities employed in the classroom.
3. Space: examining how artists and students negotiate, utilise, and are affected by, appropriate and transform space in theatre education.
4. Artefacts: examining the materials or resources used in the teaching moments such as texts (both published and devised); visual images (projected; printed); properties (props; smaller objects), sets (larger scenic properties), costumes, lights and sound.
5. Strategies: I noted the different strategies, conventions or 'forms' employed (Neelands & Goode 2000).

In addition, to offer more insights into the approaches of the theatre artists, follow-up post-observation interviews were also conducted. The interview questions were generated based on the observations. They sought to achieve clarification with a focus on motivations (why), intentions (objectives) and choices (strategies) made during the sessions. Below are three overarching questions that guided the post-observation interviews.

Observation questions:

- What are the distinctive patterns of knowledge as displayed by the artists?
What are their influences?
- What challenges exist in the theatre artists' engagement with young people?
- What and why are changes made during teaching?
- Are there differences between types of teaching projects and the strategies employed?

10.1.4: Video assisted situational recall

The experience of working with videos in the English sites continued in the Singapore research/Phase II. Working with video recording offers the technical support to ease recall and retrieval where repeated viewing to uncover nuances previously missed is made possible (Dufon 2002). For the Singapore research, the

recording was done on a digital camera, with good quality visual and audio capabilities. With it, conversations and instructions offered by the artists as well as the responses of the students were captured. It generated good material for transcription.

Although the videos proved useful, there were also limitations. Mediated by a third eye, I was working with a perspective circumscribed by the video lens. This was a limitation experienced in the English sites. As the objective of archiving was to capture the students' responses and creation in the workshops, there were moments when I missed recording the interactions between the English theatre artists or the discussions that took place in the background. In addition, the 'focused frame' of the camera captured what it was aimed at, missing other 'wide angle' opportunities that the naked eye could achieve. As such in the Singapore sites, I relied mainly on observation and field notes, augmented by the occasional use of video recording for the purpose of the *video assisted situational recall*.

In *video assisted situational recall*, the observations recorded on video were used as a resource to generate a feedback loop with the Singapore theatre artists. The theatre artists reviewed and selected 2 moments from the observations recorded and discussed their teaching approaches. I began the discussion with two open-ended questions, leaving room for the theatre artists to construct their narratives with limited researcher framing. The two questions were: a) Why were the two (or more) moments selected? b) What would they wish to elaborate about the videos? *Video assisted situational recall* was chosen to heighten intersubjectivity. It offered opportunities for alternative narratives and points of views and added to the prismatic perspective (Richardson 1997, cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2008) of the interpretive paradigm. It also assisted in undermining the subjectivity of the researcher and platformed the 'artists-as-collaborator-and-co-creator' in generating a rich and layered account of their 'lived experience' (Gallagher 2007, 2008).

10.1.5: The multiple projects approach

Again, the experience in the English sites revealed the need for contrasting projects to enhance interpretive rigour. Having multiple projects offered the possibility of cross-referencing and comparison of data within each theatre artists' portfolio of

projects. The logic behind it is to allow for a generation of a body of evidence where patterns can be identified thereby increasing the rigour and strength of the findings (Yin 2003; Miles & Huberman 1994). As such in Phase II, I shadowed the Singapore theatre artists in as many projects available within the researching period. For example, Sandra had three different classes. Though all three classes were in the same school, the possibility of seeing her at work doing three different “types of drama work”, as she explained, would allow for a comparative analysis of her work.

PART III

11. Analysing The Data

Taking on board Miles and Huberman’s suggestion of “ongoing analysis and coding” (1994, p. 66), I began jotting notes on paper during the interview process. The aim was to capture the essence of what was being said by listening to the participants and noticing nuanced facial and gestural expressions. I then transcribed the recorded audio files. After which, I read it in its entirety. Taking on board the notes I made during the interviews, I began preliminary coding. I worked instinctively in generating one-word or short-phrase codes. This iterative and simultaneously parallel journey of data gathering and coding was the start of my analytical journey. At this early stage, coding guided my next course of action, how and what questions to ask and what data I would need.

Once data gathering was completed, the coding and analysis process intensified. I employed two strategies in the final stages of data coding and analysis. The first was data reduction to manage the large volume of data generated. The second was further reduction of the interview transcriptions specifically through content analysis and coding cycles. I generated five sources of data (figure 3.2). They offered multiple perspectives aligned with Richardson’s “crystallization” (1997, cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2008, p. 279), a strategy for qualitative validity, which I had elaborated earlier in this chapter.

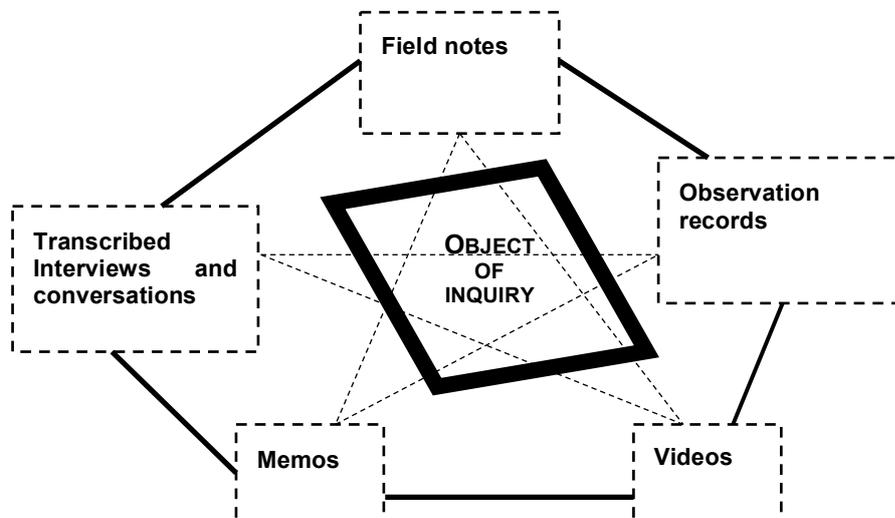


Figure 3.2: Crystallisation of data source

Each data source was independently coded and analysed. They were then cross-referenced with the datasets from within each source as well as the data from different sources to offer a multi-dimensional reading of the situation. The objective is to make dialogic connections with each data source in order to surface patterns, conflict and tensions and formulate categorisation.

11.1. Data reduction

Data reduction (Miles & Huberman 1994) is a process of “selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions” (p. 10). It is deciding which data is essential to the story the researcher wishes to tell. In this research, data reduction was targeted at the interview transcripts and observation records. With over 20 hours of interviews with theatre artists from England and Singapore and observations of 90 hours each in England and Singapore, data reduction helped to sort them out into categories for analysis.

11.1.1: Interview transcriptions

I grouped the interviews transcriptions into three categories created out of the different periods the theatre artists were interviewed and the topics of discussion. The three categories are:

1. Artistic and teaching histories
2. Discussions from post-observation of teaching practices
3. Perspectives on theatre education and education

11.1.2: Observation records

I grouped observation records according to the rubric of observation, which I elaborated in section 10.1.3. Here, I highlight the key elements of the rubric of observation again. They are:

1. Language/talk
2. Body
3. Space
4. Artefacts
5. Strategies

The observation records were read several times in their entirety. Prior to the reading, I had prepared questions to ask of the data.

- What are the distinctive patterns of practice displayed in the classes?
- Do the theatre artists use different approaches and/or style in different school projects, with different groups of students and different schools?
- Why do they do what they do?
- What challenges exist in the theatre artists' engagement with young people?
- How do the students respond to the strategies employed by the theatre artists?
- How does artistry display itself in the course of their work?

My preference was to work manually (Miles & Huberman 1994). I highlighted the texts by circling and at times pencilling thoughts in the margin as they emerged from the reading. They were later referred to during cross-analysis with the categories generated from the interview transcripts.

As indicated in the previous section, following the observations, discussions were conducted with the theatre artists. I raised questions that were aimed explicitly at understanding their process, particularly on choices of activities and objectives. These were transcribed and grouped as part of the interview transcriptions. They were then examined against the observation records to relate intention with practice.

11.1.3: Field notes

Field notes were taken as descriptive accounts of the site and setting. They recorded, through thick description, what I saw in the school, felt or heard. They also described the architecture of the school premises as well as the classroom, studio space or school hall. I had adapted suggestions made by Bogdan and Biklen (1992, cited in Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 61) to organise my thoughts and to focus on the specifics when making field notes.

- a) Content/Setting: general information on the surroundings that allows you to put the study in a larger context.
- b) Perspectives of the situation: how people understand, define, or perceive the setting or the topics on which the study bears. This is gleaned from conversations heard or participated as well as from behaviours witnessed.

- c) Process: sequence of events, flow, transitions, and turning points, changes over time.
- d) Activities: regularly occurring kinds of behaviour.
- e) Events: specific activities, especially those occurring infrequently or out of the ordinary.
- f) Strategies: ways of accomplishing things; people's tactics, methods, techniques for meeting their needs.
- g) Relationships and social structure: unofficially defined patterns such as cliques, coalitions, friendships, enemies and so on.

I used the same list, to pick out elements that point to signs of conflict, tension or contradiction that may not be apparent in the interviews or observations.

11.1.4: Memos

Working iteratively between data sources offered a multi-dimensional perspective to the object of inquiry. New ideas and issues surfaced which I tried to make sense of through memo writing (Miles & Huberman 1994; Charmaz 2006; Saldaña 2009). I had begun memo writing during preliminary analyses concurrent with the process of data gathering and continued working with it post data collection. The memos were a means for me to locate, retrieve and store past and present ideas and connections made between raw data, codes and the theoretical and conceptual frames. A sample of a memo is offered in the detailed coding comparison and memo writing section 11.3.3 (p. 108).

11.2. Content analysis and coding of interview transcriptions

I used content analysis as a strategy for analysing the interview transcriptions. Content analysis is a systematic and replicable way of generating categories through coding of texts and visuals. There are several ways of generating categories: by quantifying words (enumerative); identifying patterns and relationships (thematic) or a combination of the two (Bryman 2008; Grbich 2007). In this research, I used thematic content analysis for the interviews, which focused on how and why words are used by the interviewees and their relations to the context of the interview

process (Grbich 2007). Working thematically also surfaced new ideas and point to further readings that framed my analysis.

Of value to my beginner coding experience is the work of ethnographer Johnny Saldaña (2009). Coding, as defined by Saldaña, is “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/or evocative attribute” to the language or visual data (p. 3). He highlights that coding process is heuristic and context specific. In that respect, the *how* and *what* to code will depend on researcher ‘filters’, meaning “level of personal involvement”, “the types of questions you ask and the types of responses you receive”, as well as identities and values of both researcher and participants (p. 7). A way to negotiate the ‘filters’ is to code iteratively, through a series of cycles, with the first as a listing of all possible codes and then subsequently in the second cycle reducing the list into a few categories (Miles & Huberman 1994, Carspecken 1996; Coffrey & Atkinson 1996).

11.3. Coding method

From Saldaña’s (2009) manual of different coding methods, I selected In Vivo Coding. Also known as Verbatim Coding, it codes what is being said by lifting the words “rooted in the participants own language” (ibid., p. 6). I chose In Vivo in an effort to lean on the participants’ intention and work with their vocabulary as co-constructors of my research process. Saldaña further suggests that working with In Vivo demands sensitivity to words which are highlighted as important by the speaker, through repetition, turn of phrase, metaphorical language or even vocal emphasis (p. 75). In Vivo therefore demands not only that I read the transcripts but also listen attentively to the recorded interviews. I attended to the pauses (marked by ‘. . .’); pace and stress (marked by highlighting the words in bold); emphasis as well as tonal quality of the words (italicised and explained) and added them into the transcriptions. An example is shown in an extract taken from Joan’s interview transcript.

J: *Not just from the teachers so that was an interesting discovery for me . . . (5: 15) even though I have always been consciously building it but watching it I, yah that's what I like and I need and, and cause you are so alone (emphasised) right otherwise in the school . . . I mean there are the teachers in charge but its different ah? **They are not going to be operating the sound or going to get your prop for you.** I mean, it's different. So that was very very nice . . . So it was more like what I (laugh) thought of when I saw the video (laugh throughout last 7 words). Yeeyah (dragging, thinking). (20 August 2011 / DS400098)*

Subsequently, when I reconstructed and edited the narratives for brevity to be included in this thesis, I employed [. . .].

The interview transcriptions underwent two cycles of coding. The first cycle focused on theme generation. My entry point to generating themes, as Dey (1993) suggests, came from the categories of interview questions derived from both the key and subsidiary research questions (Table 3.6, p. 92). The second cycle aimed at reducing the different thematic-based codes by comparing between different sets of transcriptions to produce umbrella categories.

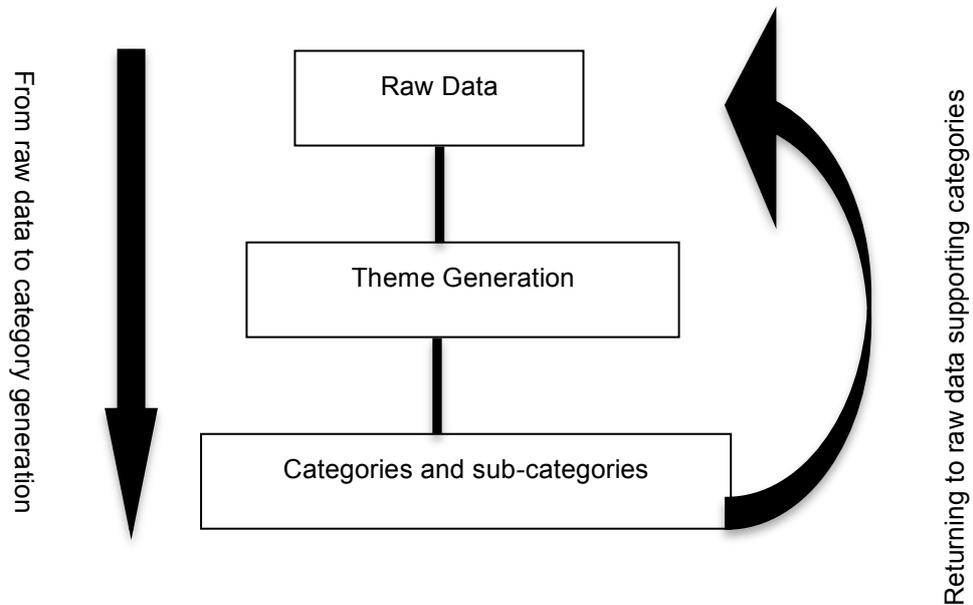


Figure 3.3: Coding process

To illustrate the discussion on the coding cycles and the writing of memos, I will offer the process of coding two interview transcripts (Olivia and Sandra) under the category of artistic and teaching histories.

11.3.1: First cycle coding

In the first cycle, I concentrated on one interview transcription at a time. I sieved line-by-line the various elements highlighted by the interviewee in response to the variables I identified earlier. Sieving, termed as ‘splitting’ by Saldaña (2009), puts the data through a “fine-grained” scrutiny to capture “a more nuanced analysis” (p. 20). Fine-grained splitting was undoubtedly time consuming and it was often overwhelming. But I felt it was necessary to limit my own researcher filter and offer the first cycle an opportunity to surface concepts and ideas beyond the variables identified from the research questions.

Table 3.8 demonstrates how Olivia’s interview transcript was given the first cycle treatment. In this first stage, I listed any word or phrase that seemed important to the interviewee. The first cycle was done at least 3 times. There was a tendency, as the coding got underway, to start identifying themes. I did that by adding numbers to the codes. Each number represented a theme as it emerged from the transcript. Alphabetical codes were added to note the sequence and repetition of words or phrases as I combed through the transcript.

Table 3.8: First cycle coding: identifying codes
Theatre Artist: Olivia

Categories of codes: 1. Theatre Training / 2. Impressions / 3. Mentors		
Names	Transcription	Codes
NM	We begin with the first question, the historical journey, your training and if there is any pedagogical training or workshops which you have attended that has allowed you to engage in arts education. What is that journey for you, that history?	
O	Erm . . . for me I think it ¹ started with erm, erm, theatre studies in junior college. It was the first encounter by ^{2a} chance with theatre. Erm, then ah, and then the ^{2b} first big impression that er . . . may or may not be the one, apart from the ones, you know well, for other reasons, for being very strict or whatever, was ^{3a} BB. So erm . . . and I still . . .	1. J.C. 2a. “chanced” upon theatre 2b. “big impression” 3a. Mentor #1: BB
O	Ahm, he was, he was very ^{3b} exacting and he was ahm . . . (sigh) . . . first of all I think he . . . ^{2c} the way I got to know him was unique in that I wasn’t you know supposed to be doing theatre, I was in Science and then I switched over. I just came to check out the theatre studies class and . . . he just asked me to like you know hang out, join in. So he was already ^{3c} bending the rules at that time now. I look back I know what a ^{3d} rebel he was. And he noticed two things. Number 1 ahm . . . that I had, he asked me to get involved in like an improvisation, like I said I was in Science and I had to switch over, erm . . . so he noticed that he saw that ^{2d} I was really in my element.	2c. “unique way - supposed to be doing theatre, I was in Science and then I switched over”. 3b. “exacting” 3c. “bending the rules” 3d. “rebel” 2d. “I was really in my element”

With each fine-grained reading, new themes emerged and previous themes were either grouped together to form one larger theme or found no longer significant in the light of new interpretations. I then generated a table to itemise all the codes and the corresponding themes. In this way I was able to track codes with their respective themes. Table 3.9 offers a brief extract of a longer table of thematic codes.

Table 3.9: First cycle coding: categorising codes into themes
Theatre Artist: Olivia

Codes	Themes
1a “theatre studies in Junior College” 1b “A very good American college” (<i>nb: she avoids detailing this period</i>) 1c “LaSalle”	1. Artistic Training
2a “First encounter by chance” 2b “First big impression”: teacher 2c “Unique – not supposed to be doing theatre, I was in Science and then I switched over.” 2d “I was really in my element” 2e “I was still interested, still doing it”	2. Chance encounters
3a “BB” 3b “exacting” 3c “bending the rules” 3d “rebel”	3. Influential people (also perception of influential people)
4, 4a, 4b “freelancing” 4c “teaching drama” (“bad stuff that you have to kinda go through”)	4. Teacher training or teaching experience
5a “It was important for me” 5b “It was the community of people” 5c “we made things happen”	5. I and We
6 “an older theatre person saw something in a younger person” 6a “he made an impression on me” 6b “he opened this world of theatre” 6c “he saw my interest and passion”	6. Older person(s) making impression

Once I have completed the first cycle treatment on Olivia’s transcript under the category of artistic and teaching history, I then moved on to Sandra’s interview transcript within the same category. The same approach of first cycle coding was applied on Sandra’s transcript and subsequently on Joan’s.

This same coding method was applied on the interview transcripts collated from the research done in England. In fact, I began initial coding with the English set first prior to moving on to Singapore. I eventually produced 6 tables of thematic codes. I worked with Pattern Coding to compare and contrast the thematic codes and identified larger umbrella categories. This cross-table analysis using Pattern Coding constituted the second cycle.

11.3.2: Second cycle coding

In the second cycle, categories were created using Pattern Coding, which sought similarities from first cycle codes and grouped them into categories for further analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994; Saldana 2009). I compared the categories between different sets of interview transcriptions to look for patterns and similarities to generate larger, overarching umbrella categories as illustrated in Table 3.10. In the second cycle, I returned once again to the transcribed narratives of the theatre artists. While not invoking narrative inquiry as a methodological approach, I found some of its principles useful when managing the narratives in the interviews. Bruner's (1991) note on viewing "particulars of narratives" as tokens of larger meanings was useful (p. 6). In that regard while the coding unpacked the 'particulars', I returned to the transcripts to extract the narratives in which the particular is embodied. This particular-narrative, or as Bruner puts it, "part-whole interdependence" (ibid., p. 8) formed much of the second coding process, leading to the final identification of sections of narratives as representatives of the codes featured in the later chapters.

11.3.3: Code comparison and memo writing

As the analytical process deepened in the second coding cycle, theoretical implications emerged. For instance, I picked up on Olivia and Sandra's emphases of how their interactions with theatre as well as its community of practitioners were pivotal in shaping their practice and identity as theatre artists. I noted statements indicative of the importance of those early moments (Table 3.10). The importance they placed on 'learning as social' was subsequently reflected in a memo. Memo writing was undertaken to work through the links offered by the codes. Below is an extract of one such memo, written after coding Olivia's and Sandra's interview transcripts on artistic and teaching histories.

Memo, 11 January 2011

Jo Trowsdale's research points to training as a crucial factor in determining the artists suitability for school engagement. This remains to be a slice of a bigger picture. Olivia's and Sandra's transcripts refer to a process of continual learning. They talk about picking up experiences along the way. This then challenges Jo Trowsdale's argument of artistic training as deterministic. Artistic training does offer directions but professional development helps to shape philosophical perspectives on how to teach. It is a dialogic experience between past training, present professional experience and their own construction of their learning experience. Also, more than just the training programme itself, the data identify 'influential and older' persons as well as significant and memorable 'teaching moments'. These are also influential in shaping their world view/values/paradigm on the 'training' or 'education'. There is a sense of the training experience as a community or world (Goodman?) made up of persons (older persons/teacher; students/peers), memorable moments (not limited to schools but also with other members of the theatre making community), and the experience of the learning they received from institution, persons and moments.

A significant discovery in the initial coding process was the presence of communities. The first was made up of older and "respected" teachers, spotting, supporting and nurturing younger talents. The second set of community was peers who were committed to doing something "out of nothing". These communities were impactful in the way memberships in them generated knowledge and values about theatre making principles as well as about life at large. This emerging theme pointed to further readings on values as a constellation of action guiding ideas (Appiah 2006). This directed me to Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (1991), and Goodman's *worldmaking* (1978) as well as Clifford's Geertz *world view* (1973).

12. Ethical Considerations

Miles and Huberman (1994) posit that qualitative research's evolving and emerging quality with an "emphasis on multiple realities and researcher interpretation" requires a "personalistic, nonsystematic approach to ethical issues" (p. 289). The

inference made on their point is that ethical considerations of ethnographic research goes beyond the technical requirements of permission, approvals, privacy and data protection. They are relevant to construct a procedural researcher/participant relationship. But these contractual terms are limited in offering answers to the more slippery ethical questions that may surface in fieldwork. Miles and Huberman (1994) citing Deyhle, Hess and LeCompte's (1992, cited in *ibid.*) offer five general theories, which I have adapted for this research:

1. Teleological: emphasising the presumed value of knowledge derived from the research as primary ends.
2. Utilitarian: weighs the cost, benefits and consequences of the research approaches.
3. Deontological: a reflexive take on the actions undertaken in the research, positioning self as one of the research participants.
4. Critical: questions the benefits the research offers to better the participants' conditions and situations.
5. Covenantal: judges actions congruent with agreements made prior to the start of the research. The emphasis is on the trusted relationship forged between the researcher and the participants.

Of the five theories listed above, I took on board the deontological, critical and covenantal approaches to ethics, which I interpreted as conversations between reflexivity, criticality and integrity and an ethic of care. Rooted in the feminist research on ethics, the ethics of care is a normative ethical theory concerned with the transformative qualities and the achievement of a just community through sensitive interaction (Held 2006). The braiding of deontological, critical, covenantal with the feminist conception of an ethic of care outlines the connection ethics has with validity and knowledge construction in social science. As Lincoln and Guba (1993) observes “[t]he *way* in which we know is most assuredly tied up with both *what* we know *and our relationship with our research participants*” (p. 281).

Intersecting ethics and validity further echoes Lather's position on validity as “a space of constructed visibility of the practices of methodology” (1993, p. 676). A constructed visibility that is reflexively aware of the socially complex ways in which

the participants and researcher are inextricably linked to the object of inquiry. Hence validity hinges upon ethical negotiations both the researcher and her participants make in the context of research. Effective negotiations rely upon a relationship of trust. However trust is not something that is a given within a relationship. Nor is it binding according to some *a priori* agreement to research participation within a stipulated given time. Trust, as Helen Nicholson argues, “is dependent on context and is continually negotiated and re-negotiated in action, as performative acts” (2002, p. 81).

An example of the negotiatory condition that ethics is based upon is found in the participants’ and my experience with issues of privacy, confidentiality and recognisability. On three occasions, the interviews encroached on sensitive topics surrounding gender, race and religious identities. The first participant was surprised when the topic of sexuality surfaced. While she continued talking about it she reflexively commented as a postscript: “I am sorry I am talking so much about this. We are digressing from the topic. This is not relevant to teaching (laughs).” The second participant broached the issue of religious affiliation of one school and how it curtailed her creative freedom. She explained how the school’s decision to ban a particular play script offered her no space for dialogue: “I mean when it’s a religious and its quite a . . . old school conservative standpoint, there is no point. You can’t argue with those . . . it is not logical (laughs).” While the third indirectly alluded to both these topics when they came up as something she wished not to dwell on. I weighed the value of rephrasing my interview questions to get a response from her, against what Patton states as, “potential distress for the respondent” (2002, p. 415). I chose to omit the question and protect her confidentiality, and attend to her remaining responses to track what she deemed were important.

I erred on the side of caution for the third participant because I doubted the efficacy of anonymity to ensure privacy. While pseudonyms were used, questions of recognisability still surfaced, especially for a research that examined lived experiences of practitioners within a small geographical population. How unrecognisable will they be to their colleagues? How much of the information can be reported and if so how do I report them to reduce recognisability? Are they aware of the implications of their revelations? Or perhaps they may feel empowered through

the recognition the revelation offers (Patton 2002, p. 411)? How would I know that? I acknowledge that these considerations may limit the variables added to the research. However, in all research there will be losses and gains. As Mauthner and Doucet (1997) write,

The best we can do then is to trace and document our data analysis processes, and the choices and decisions we make, so that other researchers and interested parties can see for themselves some of what has been lost and some of what has been gained (p. 138, cited in Lutrell 2010, p. 258).

I felt protecting them and the institutions they were working with was a more important consideration. In that respect, while gender, race and religion were culturally recognised out-of-bound markers within the educational context of one geographical site, there may be other issues which slipped both my and the participants' attention. I felt it was the responsibility of the researcher to raise the complexities of confidentiality and anonymity to the respondents.

I chose two strategies to work through sensitive issues. The first was to offer the data to critical colleagues for analysis and interpretive reading to identify the level of importance the 'sensitive' information may have on the integrity of the data. For that I relied on supervisory support and a research colleague to lend a critical 'feel' and 'eye' to my data. The second strategy relied on member checks (Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 293; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2007, p. 149) where preliminary findings were extended to the respondents for checks on anonymity as well as validity of information. Reviewing the findings with the participants was an important process of respecting their positions as co-constructors of the research. I returned completed chapters of this thesis to the participants. I offered them time to read their interview transcripts used as data and invited comments on how they were analysed. Comments made on the data as a result of the feedback by some participants are then reflected in the thesis.

13. Summary

I began this chapter forwarding an argument that the essential tools in a qualitative research is an embodied understanding of being reflexive, dialogic, and iterative. I demonstrated how my understanding of these tools deepened through my dialogic negotiations with the theories; methodological challenges; ethical considerations; and engagement with the circle of critical friends and participants as co-constructors of the data. While I made explicit my position and identify the methodology and the philosophical framework that best suited my research (Patton 2002), in practice the reality of the fieldwork forced me to remain creative and improvisatory. I consequently traced how methodological amendments were informed by the reflexive considerations of the ‘insider’ role of the reflective practitioner. Finally I submitted my considerations on ethics, and its connections to validity in qualitative research.

Leaving methodology behind, I will present the findings from the fieldwork in the next three chapters. I begin with the findings from my research in Phase I in England. It will examine what it means to view the English theatre artists’ teaching practices through the lens of a Singaporean theatre actress and educator and discuss the impact it has on the research process in Singapore.

CHAPTER 4: THROUGH THE REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER LENS: ANALYSES OF THE DATA FROM THE ENGLISH SITE

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the data generated from the first phase of the research in England involving four theatre artists—Reese, Rita, Rona and Viola⁴—in four separate projects. All worked with students between the ages of 13 and 18 years old. Two had direct contact with the school staff and had part of their delivery within a school environment. All projects involved a theatre education experience in a purpose-built creative space. Almost 90 observational hours of their respective teaching practices, and four interviews (one per participant of 60–75 minutes each) were conducted.

1.1. Structure: from the external environment to internal perception

The analyses cross dialogically between the field notes, observation records and memos relating to the nested environments the teaching practices were situated in (Carspecken 1996), and the theatre artists' narratives or the “picture[s] of their lives” (Bruner 1991, p. 67). The latter included their perceptions of self, others as well as their journeys in their respective artistic and teaching practices. The aim of the analyses is to bring to relief two parallel strands in the research methodology and how each strand affects the other, as illustrated in figure 4.1.

⁴ The names of the research participants in both England and Singapore have been changed to ensure anonymity.

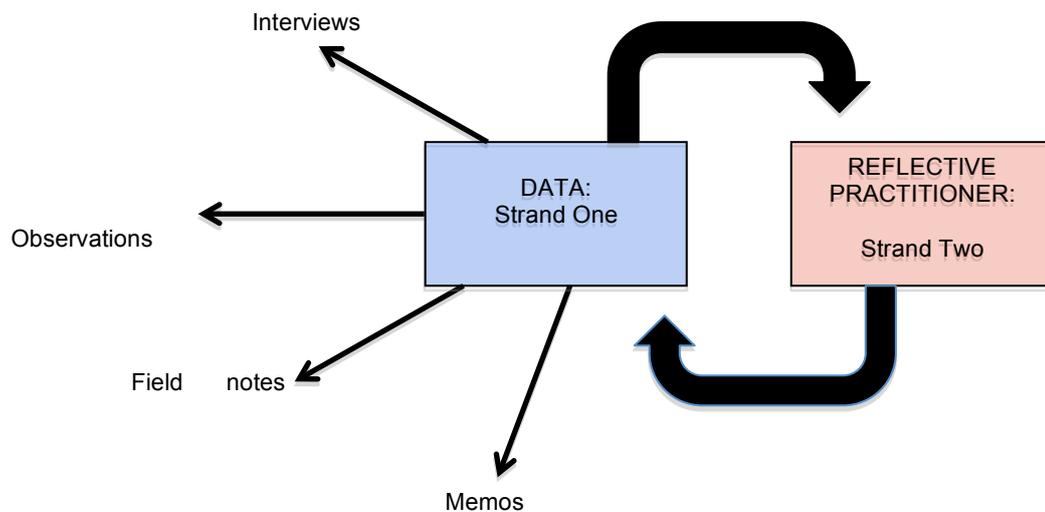


Figure 4.1: The two strands of analyses

Strand One: This strand focuses on the analysis of the data generated from the investigation of the influences on the English theatre artists' teaching practices. The participants' narratives collated from the interviews were reduced through content analysis, and the cycles of In Vivo Coding as well as the subsequent cycles of Pattern Coding. Subsequently, they were cross-analysed with the observations of the participants teaching practices (which included video recordings of the observations). Cross-analyses were used not as a means to validate their accounts, but to explicate motivations, intentions and offer possible interpretations for the choices made in the teaching practices.

Through the coding cycles, two themes, demonstrating the heterogeneity of the theatre artists' identities and practices, were identified:

- a) Conceptions of teaching practices;
- b) Theatre artists' teaching practices: negotiations between the artistic and the education fields.

Nested within this second theme, are two sub-themes:

- Negotiating structures of control and discipline within the school

- environments: position-taking and transformation of space as strategies
- Diversity in teaching approaches adopted by the theatre artists: body-centred–talk-centred continuum

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Bourdieu's (1977, 1991, 1993) concepts of *habitus* and *field* are key theoretical tools in unpacking much of the data in this section. Supplementary to Bourdieu, other theories are variously invoked to bolster or offer different perspectives to the analysis.

Strand Two: A parallel focus in this first phase of the research is to unpack my reflective practitioner lens. The aim is to challenge and make uncertain my assumptions and knowledge structures layered by my personal, artistic and educational experiences as a Singaporean theatre artist, educator and researcher. Framing my analytical process are these guiding questions:

- a) Why and how are the collation and subsequent interpretations of the data made and this question's corollary, what are my social and ethical blind spots experienced or reflected in this first phase and how do I negotiate them? The questions raised relate to what I see, feel, think and do while in the English sites.
- b) Consequently, what are the learning points in the English sites affecting the strategies to be employed in the second phase, that is, Singapore?

I attempt to dialogically swing between these two strands and end this chapter with a reflection on the implications of the English research on my overall inquiry. Grounding my analysis in this chapter, I invoke Patti Lather's (2008) 'critiquing across difference' as detailed in the preceding chapter on methodology (pp. 87–88). The 'difference' inferred here relates to cultural, social and historical differences in trajectories, practices as well as values inflected in the artistic and teaching practices. Additionally, both Bourdieu's (1996b) and Gallagher's (2007, 2008) emphases on reflexivity in research will guide my analytical practice.

There is one final note before I move forward in this chapter. The layout and the text types alternate between two presentational styles. The first style presents the field notes accounting the experiences of the site, setting and locale; quotations from the

interviews and extracts of observations; and my analytical memos reflecting my preliminary analysis of the data. These texts are italicised and framed by text boxes. The second style refers to my analysis of the data, un-italicised.

Ethnographic case study research generates copious research data, which has to be sieved, categorised and subsequently reduced in response to the research questions. It is a hermeneutically interpretive process of which losses and gains (Luttrell 2010) are inherent. Highlighting the two different stylistic choices would hopefully offer the reader an understanding of what are different/same, excluded/included and multiple/hybridised through the researching lens of a Singaporean theatre artist and educator. I attempt to connect with the present reduced data, and make transparent additional layers of selection, both the known and yet to know. In doing so, I aim to open up opportunities for further critique and dialogue with the readers.

2. The Four Research Participants: Conceptions Of Teaching Practices

At first glance, anchoring the first phase of this research are the ‘similarities’ between the four research participants. Rita and Reese are graduates of the same M.A. in Drama and Theatre Education programme, though each graduated from a different cohort and year. Meanwhile Rona, at the time of my research, was a finishing doctoral student in the same department. They also collaborated on previous theatre education projects prior to this research endeavour. For example, Rita, Rona, as well as Viola, were leaders of one of the beginning drama teachers’ training programmes. Subsequently, Rita co-created a collaborative project with Viola in April–June 2010, which I observed and assisted as a video archivist. Later in August of that same year, Reese took on a supporting facilitator role in a project that Rita was involved in. Thirdly, all four participants teach, variously, either as a part-time or full-time staff in the same institute of education. A memo written on 5 August 2011 raised concerns over my choices.

Memo, 5 August 2011

I am uncertain if the four participants were appropriate seeing how each are connected to the same institution of higher education. Perhaps, the similarities raise questions on whether the same experiences would lead to similar teaching practices. Were their intellectual and philosophical foundations shaped by the academic and performance institutions they were trained in? What of the personal as well as other professional influences, such

as past and present artistic practices? Do these affect their ways of thinking, acting and seeing the world (in this respect the world of theatre education with young people)? Perhaps their similarities may be good to think through the presence of agency as well as reflexivity that Phillip Taylor and Jonothan Neelands wrote about as one of the key elements of drama teaching practices. In sociology, Margaret Archer's proposition of human agency as central to humanity could also be interrogated here. To what extent does agency and reflexivity affect how they perceive themselves, their work and their influences against that of other theatre artists working in the field of drama and theatre education? Or in other words, how differently do they 'see' the world of the classroom and the young people they work with from each other? What do they 'see'? And how would observing them help me understand of a) my own work and the way I perceive it as well as b) the three Singaporean theatre artists later?

My earlier concern in the lack of research sample variety, which I felt was necessary in achieving theoretical contrast (Yin 2003; Miles & Huberman 1994) for this ethnographic case study research, was unfounded. Their responses to the unstructured interviews of two themes—a) past artistic and teaching histories and b) discussion on the observed teaching practices—as well as subsequent observations (in-situ and videos) made of their teaching practices revealed differences. They substantiated Taylor (2000), Neelands (2006) and Archer's (2007, 2000) proposition on reflexivity and agency.

As the interviews were unstructured, much of the 'talk' and the narratives generated were participant-led. Each successive question was in response to the content and topic introduced by the participants' retrospective accounting of the events and experiences in their lives. In that manner, the narratives often took on detours. In the process of reconstruction, I relied on the codes and themes to recompose their narratives to form a composite profile. An exemplar of the coding process was offered in Chapter 3, sections 11.3.1–11.3.2, pp. 104–107. Table 4.1 presents my reconstructions of the theatre artists' profiles as a negotiation of both their responses (italicised) and my translation of them (un-italicised).

There may be arguments against their selection as appropriate cases. As argued in the introductory chapter, the politics of determining who is an artist and whose work is artistic, and consequently their suitability for this research, will almost always raise questions. For the selection of the English research participants, I leaned on the operational constructs outlined in Chapter 3. As indicated in Table 4.1, Rona and Viola had past artistic training and previous professional work as theatre actresses. Meanwhile Reese and Rita were involved in community- and youth-theatre projects. Additionally, the sum of their artistic and educational endeavours (both formal and informal artistic training and professional experiences) offer a good match to the

theatre artists identified in Singapore. Like their counterparts in England, the Singapore theatre artists too have different artistic experiences, both formal and informal training histories and diverse professional and community-related theatre experiences. I will discuss the Singapore theatre artists in greater detail when we engage with their teaching practices in Chapter 5.

Table 4.1: Expanded profiles of the English theatre educators/artists

RITA	Age	40-49
	Formal Theatre Training	No. Her journey began <i>“as a performer within youth theatre”</i> , but subsequently taking on <i>“increased responsibility in youth leadership”</i> . Two mentors have an impact on her teaching practice. She credited her approach to working with young people from her <i>“transformational . . . awakening . . . privileged”</i> experience with her first mentor in the youth theatre organisation. The 10 years she spent with the youth theatre under his leadership saw her develop her performance skills alongside an <i>“educational mind set”</i> . His approach, she explained, was more process-based allied to Dorothy Heathcote, rather than the <i>“skills-based”</i> approaches she later experienced in her teacher training. To her, skills-based meant <i>“theatre craft”</i> , where roles are more clearly spelt out and assigned, rather than the ensemble-led process work she experienced with the youth theatre organisation. While she enjoyed performing, it was perhaps her response to her family’s desire for a <i>“safe route”</i> that she chose to abandon performance training and pursued other degree choices (DC400050).
	Formal Teacher Training	Yes She trained to be a drama specialist in London. The teacher training experience <i>“was actually the first time in my educational life where it made sense what I was doing”</i> . It was a year where she <i>“understood teaching and learning”</i> and became the <i>“catalyst to want to study more”</i> . She later did her Masters in Drama and Theatre Education where she encountered her second mentor, who by accident she later discovered to have also been influenced by the same mentor referred to earlier. Both the teacher training in London as well as her Masters education were <i>“definitive”</i> in that they made her feel she found something she was <i>“actually very good at”</i> . She taught full-time for 5 years in a secondary level as a drama specialist before moving on as a peripatetic drama specialist and then later working in her present position as a university lecturer in education, specialising in Drama and English. <i>“[My] expertise in being able to work effectively within a group of young people and actually understanding . . . first of all kind of, the importance of that social dynamic and how we are going to work with one another and with-ness being quite central in that . . . a pedagogue first [and then] think about the way in which my . . . my commitment and knowledge of drama, you know the power and potential of drama in young people’s lives”</i> (DC400050).
RONA	Age	40-49
	Formal Theatre Training	Yes (at higher education (H.E.) level). Rona’s journey with theatre <i>“began by accident”</i> , whose main motivation at the time, encouraged by her English teacher, was to include drama as an area of interest <i>“purely to impress Cambridge”</i> application. She had some experience with amateur community theatre then, more as a <i>“hobby”</i> . Apart from that had very little <i>“context for theatre”</i> . Drama and English became her combined degree application to most of the universities she applied and in which she ended up graduating with. While at university, she realised her ability and received a first in Drama. The university experience in particular the work she did with one lecturer from the department became the focal point of her initial influence in theatre making. Her lecturer had an interest in <i>“Artaud, total theatre, and also had a particular interest in Shakespeare”</i> . She performed in an annual Shakespeare Festival, which he organised with an Italian university that included workshops and dialogue between the participants. She highlighted his multi-disciplinary approach to staging Shakespeare, with the use of choral and <i>“a collaboration with the music department”</i> . When the lecturer left the university in England and moved to Italy, he <i>“fostered”</i> a few of the students, including Rona and invited them to continue doing the work with him in Italy. Upon graduation she worked in Italy but at the same, along with some friends, set-up a theatre

		<p>company in Birmingham. Their theatre company specialised in “<i>doing small-scale productions of Shakespeare . . . collaborating with other art forms so we . . . would work with a visual artist who would do a big installation</i>”. Apart from acting, her portfolio also included managing and creating school-based workshops and performances to supplement their income. Rona has performed in physical theatre, devised theatre as well as text-based theatre. She has a special interest in Shakespeare. At the time of the research, Rona still performs and is involved with a women’s theatre organisation in Birmingham.</p> <p>She considers herself having “<i>started as an artist</i>” but feels she is more than that. Being an artist is increasingly becoming a small strand of her other work which engages “<i>deeply into more thinking about teaching, learning, the purpose of theatre</i>”. She is an “<i>all rounder</i>”, one of the few with an arts management, teaching and performance experience. She considers herself a “<i>connector</i>” for artists and generating possibilities for theatre beyond arts for arts sake. Her interests lies,</p> <p>“<i>in the kind of inclusion projects</i>” as well as “<i>making new theatre, making dynamic theatre, making theatre that was inspiring that was messing with the form</i>” (DS400045).</p> <p>To Rona, “<i>the things that excited me then (meaning her artistic projects) were still the things that drive me as a teacher</i>”. As such, Rona does not see a dichotomy between the artist and the teacher in her. They are “<i>all on the same agenda</i>”.</p>
	Formal Teacher Training	<p>Yes</p> <p>“<i>I was aware I could be teaching erm in those off, in those fallow periods. And was also aware that if I did a teaching course that I would be able to bring something back to the company really confidently. So I was very lucky I got an Arts Council grant to go off and do a PGCE . . . I did a full-time PGCE in my mid-twenties and not really with the intention of being a teacher. But got, really, really enjoyed it</i>” (DS400045).</p>
REESE	Age	20 – 29
	Formal Theatre Training	<p>No.</p> <p>When doing her undergraduate degree in English, she was actively involved with the university’s drama society. Just before graduation, together with her friends, Reese created a theatre company and produced a performance, which toured Edinburgh, London and York. Its success generated an excitement in the theatre company they had established.</p> <p>“<i>That was a really big . . . moment in my life because erm it was obviously our second tour, we’d taken it back to Edinburgh, building on our reputation from previously. And we’d got funding to learn Butoh with Gabrielle Marie Rotie who is an expert in it. So we, we’d had weeks, I mean we dipped our toes into Butoh we didn’t really, you know, know it fully. But it was part of our desire to learn new skills and to maybe find a way to incorporate that into our piece. We erm had got really into storytelling because it was all about Welsh folklore. So whilst that life was going on in Liverpool and the education stuff, I was also developing as a performer. And those things were sitting really nicely against each other and again part of the (theatre company) thing was I did workshops, you know education workshops. So they kind of sat together really nicely</i>”</p> <p>While she was attracted to performance, she felt “<i>something else that was not being satisfied by just being an actor</i>”. She recalled one of the early encounters with an all girls’ school working on <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> that made her want to pursue the educational aspect of theatre.</p> <p>“<i>I say that this sort of buzz you get from performing is . . . one that you experience maybe for yourself and maybe for your fellow actors . . . That that’s nice to know that all that hard work because I would work hard (laughs) at those things so it’s nice to know that it has come of. . . in an education context I think it’s about seeing the progress . . . you know seeing that development . . . And even if it’s ever so slight it carries with it so much value if they find it’s been an exciting thing, if they feel like they’ve learnt. . . it’s not necessarily about you. Although it is cause it would be, it would be maybe disingenuous to say that I don’t get a sort of selfish kick out of seeing the kids developing and stuff cause of course you do. But its different, it is just different</i>” (DC400104).</p>
	Formal Teacher Training	<p>No</p> <p>While she and her friends created the theatre company, Reese also did creative work with other arts organisations. In Liverpool she was an actor with a theatre education company that created touring performances for schools. But she felt “<i>frustrated</i>” at the inertia of the company not wanting to “<i>rethink</i>” how they perceived theatre and education. That got her more interested to</p>

		explore better ways in which theatre making could consider the educational aspects. She researched for a suitable course and graduated with an MA in Drama and Theatre Education. At the time of the research she is completing her doctoral thesis on a performance-based research with young people from a secondary school and an 'Arts Centre' (DC400104 and VN860010).
VIOLA	Age	40 – 49
	Formal Theatre Training	<p>Yes.</p> <p>She trained in a theatre conservatory (HE level) specialising in acting. Subsequently, she gained professional acting experiences with an arts organisation. First hired as an actor in the company ensemble and subsequently she moved on to assume a position in its education department, a position she has held for the last 10 years.</p> <p>There is <i>“something very defined about being an artist because you have purpose prescribed. You know, it might be as an actor your job is to play a character, so you got the ‘who’ on a stage, you got the ‘where’ in an imagined you know environment of when and the world and all that kind of thing and all those things are very very clearly defined”</i>.</p> <p>Viola defined good drama teaching as something which, <i>“works both from the script and from the students . . . has a kind strong plan to it but it departs from that plan. So it would be like an actor working with an audience and working on a script and then suddenly deciding to leave the script completely because the audience has given him something interesting and it is much more interesting to pursue that”</i> (DC400053).</p>
	Formal Teacher Training	<p>Yes</p> <p>Prior to her actor training, she was a teacher for 8 years (DC400053).</p>

Through content analysis, the data generated several themes of which three are highlighted for their relevance to this research:

- a) The importance of significant ‘others’: mentors, colleagues and peers and moments as catalyst or turning points.
- b) Negotiations of both personal and professional *habitus* and their self-perception.
- c) Patterns of language used and the power struggle in legitimation and authority.

2.1. Significant ‘others’: mentors, colleagues and peers and moments as catalyst or turning points

The narratives of the participating theatre artists suggest that it is difficult to determine or predict how specific professional development would affect their teaching practices. Other factors such as development as artists, educators, persons as well as past professional encounters affect how each develop their idiosyncratic stamp on their teaching practices. However, a pattern emerges from the data to indicate that ‘turning points and key personalities’ such as ‘mentors’, ‘colleagues’ and ‘peers’ figure prominently in their narratives. Particularly in Rita, Rona and Reese, they offer ‘retrospective’ contexts, or as Jerome Bruner puts it ‘cultural tool kits’ (1991, p. 3–4), which the participants return to when making sense and meaning of their selves (self/professional identities) and their actions.

The data also suggest that in the process of ‘talking’ about their experiences, the theatre artists display reflexivity (Gullestad 1996, cited in Eakin 1999) in unpacking their alliances with the different influences contributive to their teaching practices. This supports Archer’s (2000) proposition of the presence of ‘agency’ affecting everyday action and identity formation. However the sense making agency of each individual is negotiatory. This means that participants encountering dissimilar values and experiences would evaluate new experiences in relation to the past, thereby (re)examining and consequently challenging or affirming their present dispositions. As demonstrated in Rita’s narration,

A man called RS, who died . . . this year and I think because of that has actually also made me really think about what he brought into my life and what he offered me and the doors that were opened by having that done you know the privilege of working with him. He was a . . . he . . . not only in terms of theatre but also that emphasis on on, on the process . . . and process drama he worked very closely with Dorothy (Researcher notes: meaning Dorothy Heathcote) and I didn't know that obviously at the time erm but as I looked back and as I grow and continue to, to make sense of my journey I am fascinated by that very early introduction which now becomes increasingly clear as to the kind of path that I took erm and it wasn't until I was doing teacher training which was at (named a London-based institute) which was very er. . . very skills-based which was suddenly a time for me kind of going . . . hang on that's not, that is not part of my background (Researcher notes: She paused and changed her tone to emphasise this phrase). (DC400050).

However, while the negotiations exits, it does not mean that values and perceptions change automatically or immediately. Here in Rita's account, the underlined phrase suggests her engagement with dissimilar experiences, or 'shocks' as Maxine Greene describes them (1977, p. 287). Her negotiation implies an evaluation of the new experiences against the previous influences that had shaped her teaching practice. In her explanation, we observe a cognitive as well as an embodied appraisal of the 'shocks'. There was a sense of discomfort as she evaluated the meeting of these new and old influences. Rita's eventual articulation of her alliances affirms her position and strengthens her perception of the 'type' of teaching theatre artist she is, one which becomes "increasingly clear" as her "journey" continues. Accordingly, it is this self-constituted position that impacts the shape and direction of her teaching practice. I propose that Rita's affirmation is an act of position-taking, resulting in observable distinctions between what she does from that of another theatre artist allied to a different structure of influences. This is observable in Rita's collaborative projects, which I will discuss in detail at a later point in this chapter.

2.2. Negotiations of both personal and professional *habitus* (values and dispositions) and their self-perception

A second example is found in Reese's narrative. It provides evidence of agentic selection and negotiation between personal or familial inculcated *habitus*, or what Bourdieu refers to as 'durable' dispositions, and the newly acquired (1991, p. 72). Here in this research, the 'newly acquired' refers to the *habitus* negotiated beyond the boundaries of familial socialization, ranging from the 'educational', 'social' and 'occupational'/'professional' *habitus* (Britzman 2003; Shevtsova 2002, 2003).

When probed to reflect on where the interest for education might come from, Reese referred to her parents as perhaps the starting point. While her parents were both

teachers at different points of time, none of them had any association with drama. But her memory of her parents' profession as teachers, particularly her father and his interest in voluntary work with the community struck a chord.

One could suggest that Reese's melding of theatre and education is sieved and perceived through the lens of her familial habitus/dispositions. A negotiation takes place between the dispositions 'socialised during childhood' as well as those 'acquired through new experiences' to produce what Geertz terms as "constellation of enshrined ideas" (1980, p. 135). In Reese's situation, this constellation affects her interest in theatre. She inhabits a nexus of performance and education where "loving performance" is insufficiently satisfied without "the work with young people" to generate the right balance of "buzz" in her artistic and educational practices. Yet at the same time, she admits a certain desire to return to the stage, and perhaps pursue what she has set aside in order to complete this educational trajectory. She plans to return to performance once her doctoral research is completed.

2.3. Patterns of language used and the power struggle in legitimisation and authority

A comparative analysis was conducted across their different narratives. The analysis revealed how each repetition of words used, or emphasis made with respect to certain chosen vocabulary, were emblematic of their position-taking in the field of theatre education. As mentioned earlier, the unstructured interview process was chosen to enable the participants to narrate their personal stories. With this process, the participants offered a spectrum of articulations relating to the different ways in which they constructed their relationships to theatre and how the experience of theatre shaped and influenced their way of working with others, including their teaching approaches with young people.

For example with Viola, her narratives reflected theatre-related references when explicating her teaching act. She used the phrase the "actor and his audience" and "script" or text, to decode the relationship between a drama teacher and their students, signifying her position as the 'theatre artist' in the two-person collaboration between herself and Rita.

There is something very defined about being an artist because you have purpose prescribed. You know, it might be as an actor your job is to play a character, so you got the 'who' on a stage, you got the 'where' in an imagined, you know, environment of when and the world and all that kind of thing and all those things are very very clearly defined it happens in a scene at a time of day . . . erm you have a certain period to enter that world and you use every skill that you've got in order to do that performance and people are going to pay to come and see you do it. And erm teaching doesn't feel, good teaching doesn't feel as defined as that because teaching, well, I'm thinking about those who work on a script and if you are an improvisational artist that's different. Erm . . . but good teaching works both from the script and from the students. So it really would be like the best kind of drama teaching I think has a kind strong plan to it but it departs from that plan. So it would be like an actor working with an audience and working on a script and then suddenly deciding to leave the script completely because the audience has given him something interesting and it is much more interesting to pursue that. What I find, what I struggle with all the time is the relationship between the script or the lesson, you know, or the kind of prescribed and how that meets the needs of the person I am working with, will be the individual, the child. (DC400053).

Viola's reliance on text/scripts surfaced in the later half of the interview. She reflexively interrogated her struggles working without a scripted lesson plan during her collaboration with Rita.

[W]hen you are working with somebody who doesn't work with that script as Rita and I are doing then you suddenly realise that, then you have got to make room inside that a) for the other person you are working with and b) and for the kids who might not respond to the script in quite the way that you think they should. So I find that really interesting and challenging and I mean its interesting for me because I have to work with a script and Rita who is so reflective you know and loves to be very in the moment and that clash between those two approaches is was very erm obvious on the first, no, actually on the first day we were working together, it was the second day that we weren't working together. (DC400053).

With Rita however, her experience with the "ensemble theatre" as well as making theatre with an "educational content" generated a distinctive preference in valuing the collective and an emphasis on process in her theatre education approach with young people.

We had exposure to all aspects and I think maybe my first exposure and not fully recognizing that in terms of the true sense of ensemble where we were all equipped all those of us that saw that, needed that, wanted to fully understand and to be able to . . . erm you know work within that rather than just these isolated roles and we were encouraged to do that we were encouraged to take the responsibility to have ownership over . . . crafting the work so we felt absolutely you know proud every time we went out. We understood it but we were never . . . we were never . . . complacent we were never comfortable cause we were always encouraged to seek you know erm . . . to develop the work really er . . . And I think because of that . . . that which felt like an occupation in a sense beyond school. Erm you know we went to Edinburgh every year I started at 16 and I went for probably for, for 10 years in a youth capacity from being a teenager and all of, all of the delights that it brought by going away and having those first experiences with people from a wide variety of background and ages and then you know becoming . . . erm . . . older, running the venue erm . . . driving the lorries you know rigging the place up converting . . . you know . . . erm . . . places that were not normally theatre spaces in the year . . . erm . . . And then TIE. We had a school-based theatre company and we toured locally within Leicestershire, erm Leicestershire schools. But then we would take our work up to the festival. Erm so I could, you know, in my own, it was progression for me in those ways . . . I think also for the fact to being involved within the TIE productions that were also built out of the Leicestershire youth theatre and the organization within that I was given additional responsibility of understanding . . . erm the educational content and value of the work that we did er and what we were presenting for young audiences erm you know the true sense of participation erm . . . and engaging young minds and opening young minds. We were involved in new writing and . . . erm yeah it was just layers upon layers very carefully revealed by this amazing man that allowed us step by step to erm . . . to grow and take as much as we need and to be . . . challenged if we felt that was appropriate where if you were a hungry child you know there was, there was plenty you know so that I think for me that's absolutely kind of you know my, where my core values come from and I owe that to him directly. (DC400050).

Her preference for an ‘unscripted’ lesson plan was a commitment to the idea of the ensemble as a process of “crafting”, “developing”, taking on the “responsibility” of a “true sense of participation” through working collectively. A scripted text would negate her experience of “engaging” with the young people and privileging their voice.

2.4. Data discovery: complex syncretism of values

What these three themes tell us is that embedded within the narratives are codes or signs that reveal each participant’s dispositions and the positions they assume within theatre education. There are several points to highlight in this discussion.

Firstly, such dispositions and positions are variously inflected by the different social, political, economic as well as personal histories and circumstances. Regardless of how similar their professional developments may be, artistic training as forwarded by Trowsdale in her earlier research (1997, 2002), or prior pedagogic training, these influences though present are not necessarily singular in shaping their teaching practices. A complex syncretism of learnt ‘values’ experienced through practices, artistic and/or relating to teaching, with significant ‘others’ such as mentors, peers and colleagues and other turning points or events are necessary considerations (Bruner 1991). The ‘differences’ challenge any definitive or singular influence affecting their teaching practices.

Secondly, the three themes also suggest that the constitutive structure of “self” is complicatedly braided with their seemingly reflexive and conscious embeddedness of institutional practices. This also includes professionally acquired systems of knowledge to impact the way of seeing, thinking and acting upon the world. A further assumption forwarded here is that their subsequent actions and articulations may (re)establish the authority of such practices and knowledge.

I return to Rita’s interview in which she reflects on an “increasingly clear” theatre education practice (see section 2.1). Here, the clarity she alludes to, is part of an on-going process in establishing her identity, simultaneously constituted and constitutive of her perceived position, unconscious and conscious dispositions (*habitus*) and

position-taking in relation to other practitioners and practices within the field of drama and theatre education (Bourdieu 1996a). In doing so, she constructs a boundary that defines her practice. She establishes a claim of resonance and membership with some, but not every genre of artistic and teaching practices within the field (ibid., p. 225).

Also significant from the narratives is that the theatre artists, particularly Reese, Rona and Viola to a greater degree than Rita, express a position of being in-between two 'worlds' (Goodman 1978). One world is theatre/artistic and the other, education. While each 'world(s)' informs the other, it does not necessarily inform in the same and equal proportion. The balance of which is subjective and it varies between theatre artists and how they perceive their identities as well as positions within the respective 'worlds'. For instance Rona seems comfortable to ply between the artistic and education fields. Meanwhile, Viola questions the tensions she embodies with her artistic concerns within her teaching practice. This standing 'in-between and betwixt' the nested borders of artistic and education is a recurrent theme which surfaces not only in their perceptions of selves but also in their reflections of their approaches to teaching. Subsequent discussions on their teaching practices in section 5 of this chapter will develop this theme further.

Finally, Bourdieu's perspective on cultural production as a site of "struggle about boundaries of the group and conditions of membership" is applicable here (1996a, p. 224). It reflects the larger issue of how education, and in this case, artistic and teaching approaches may perpetuate and affirm specific orthodoxies and ideologies (Bourdieu 1974). Or as Foucault (1984) would have it, knowledge as a technology of control and discipline which shapes the 'thinking, seeing and acting' of the subjects with them running the risk of perpetuating the very technologies that inscribe them. The question asked then is to what extent are they firmly connected to, as Bourdieu maintains, an embodiment of dispositions based on "the premises established in the previous state" (2000, p. 161), meaning their existing institutional *habitus*, and hence limits any radical revisions of it? Following Greene (1977), is there a means to 'shock' the discursive practices and awaken the consciousness of the possible alternative?

I suggest that engaging in collaborations as well as dialogue with theatre artists with different teaching approaches may offer the opportunity for a reflexive examination of the respective ideologies within each teaching practice. It follows that collaborative arts practices as unpacked here highlight “the complex entanglement and struggle of theatre processes and of learning through theatre” (Hladki 2003, p. 145). As it is observed and discussed in greater detail in a later section of this chapter, Rita’s “increasingly clear” *habitus* becomes destabilised when faced with the practices of a theatre artist with a different *habitus*, consequently turning the process of collaboration into a challenging experience of (re)evaluation and (re)learning. Collaborative projects involving practitioners with ‘different’ practices offer the possibilities to exercise reflexive critique, not only of the partner’s work, but also of one’s own. Implicated within such collaborations is Lather’s (2008) ‘critiquing across difference’. The opportunity of working with an approach deemed ‘other’ challenges and offers the ‘shock’ that is needed to question existing assumptions. I submit further that collaboration is a site of complex social relations of ‘interacting differences’. It should be viewed as a positive, one that could offer seeds of possible re-learning, re-invention and re-creation.

3. Impact Of Critiquing Across Difference On The Reflective Practitioner

As a reflective practitioner engaged in a critique across a landscape of ‘difference’, the questions raised in the data collated in the English sites do not limit themselves at source. They are also valuable as reflexive interrogation of my own embedded knowledge and experience, which has hitherto affected the way I interacted with the theatre artists in both the English and Singapore sites. This reflexive interrogation is demonstrated in the memo of 20 January 2012. In it, I documented my reflections on the *resonances* felt in the narratives of the four participants.

Gunther Kress (1994) suggests, unlike the written text, the flow and direction of speech, and in this case conversations within the process of unstructured interviews, rely on implicit knowledge shared between speakers. The implicit acknowledgement of ‘knowing what the other means by’ saying what is said, generates moments of ‘complicité’ and ‘empathy’ whose alternatives are ‘surprises’ and ‘puzzlement’. In

the in-between moments of pauses, raised and falling tones of each theatre artists as well as the expressions on their faces and hands, I found myself experiencing moments of *empathetic* understanding. This happens despite my presence of ‘otherness’ as a theatre practitioner from a geographically and culturally (political, social, economic and history) different landscape. But what are the conditions that influenced these moments?

Memo, 20 January 2011

The empathetic resonance I felt towards aspects of their journeys was also met with moments of distance, when practices appear ‘different’. Several moments in the interviews were illustrative of the distance mentioned. For example, when Rona mentioned “inclusive projects”; or her accounts of drama as a point of interest in a university application; and the presence of choosing appropriate programmes to be trained as a drama specialist. These pieces of information revealed the development, establishment as well as opportunities available for professional development and training in drama and theatre education in England as opposed to Singapore.

But more often than not, there were more instances of resonance rather than alienation, particularly the ‘text-book’ vocabulary of terms in drama education such as “process drama” (Rona, Rita and Reese); “ensemble” (Rona, Rita); or iconic names of drama practitioners such as “Dorothy Heathcote”, etc. These resonances suggest a connection to and awareness of drama and theatre education canon. But does knowing such canon determine and frame the way Singapore theatre artists practise theatre education? Or do Singapore theatre artists utilise practices and discourses outside of these ‘canon’? How about my own practice? Am I now, with my increasing work with drama ‘in’ education, more influenced by drama education theories rather than my own theatrical rehearsal room practices? What was it like when I first began teaching in schools?

As a theatre artist, my sudden realisation of my ‘schooling’ and perhaps embodiment of a largely English drama in education canon surprised me. These reflections highlight the evolution of my practice. But a greater concern is the supposition of such a ‘drama in education lens’ would have on my research participants in Singapore. How would this knowing affect the way I view the work of the Singapore theatre artists who may not have had the same drama in education exposure as I have?

Additionally, Rona’s provocative response to my research raises questions on the “blind spots” of assumptions framing the vocabulary used during the interviews.

I am wondering where your question about the dichotomy between teacher and artist is coming from in a way. Because my experience as a teacher came after my experience as an artist, I think I’ve always done that. And I think the lecturer at Manchester whom I learnt about drama in education from I suppose. And the books like Jonathan’s books like Structuring Drama Work or you know or the books that I read at that time . . . all of these were very much you know they were all on the same agenda. I’ve never really myself have any kind of division . . . between the two. It’s like common sense. (DC400046).

Returning to her profile, Rona had pedagogic training with a specialisation in drama teaching. As such, Rona’s understanding of the term “teacher” refers to her training and position as a drama teacher, which conflates the idea of ‘general’ and ‘drama’

education as one. While in my line of questioning, I perceived teaching as ‘general’ teaching, something separate from drama teaching. This reflects our different systems of reference (Goodman 1978) as well as experiences.

Additionally, this incident of misinterpretation of terminology is a lesson in reflexive listening (Bourdieu 1996b). When working with interviews, sensitivity to misinterpretation of what seemingly appears to be common terminology is needed. In this instance, understanding what Rona meant by artistic–education symbiosis as “common sense” requires an unpacking of what is said in relation to her embodied system(s) of knowledge and practices (Archer 2000). In other words, a thorough listening to the audio recording and a conscientious reading of the interview transcripts are necessary in picking up the nuances embedded in her narratives.

Rona’s comments may be interpreted as a revelation of her successful embodiment of two worlds and roles, meaning, drama teacher and theatre artist. She also inhabits two different organisational structures: her full-time positions in various arts organisation and the occasional teaching projects with different educational institutions. Both occurred, at times, simultaneously over the span of her adult working life. As such she embodies a nested relationship of theatre/artist and education/teacher training and practices within a nexus of arts and educational institutions. All of which may contribute to her successful position-taking and consequently identity as a teaching artist. In that respect, her understanding of the term ‘teaching’ may be understood as a reflection of her seemingly successful theatre-artistic-education-teaching symbiosis.

However Rona’s experience may not be a logical outcome for all theatre artists who navigate between these two worlds. The discussions in the later sections indicate that Rona’s seemingly successful nexus of theatre and education may be an ‘ideal’ position, one which is not necessarily experienced by all theatre artists who teach. This evidence concurs with Britzman’s (2003) conclusion that teaching practices are not only about the strategies. It is a social relational process whose success is contingent upon various factors. These include perceived status and expertise and contextual circumstances, including school support, available facilities and student

dynamics. In the next section, I explore the theatre artists' negotiations between 'worlds' and by extension, the systems of knowledge they embody.

4. Negotiations Between Worlds And Systems Of Knowledge

The discussion in this section focuses on two collaborative projects. The first project was led by Reese, which I partook as a co-facilitator with two Masters students from the Theatre Studies and Theatre and Drama Education departments. Her project is referred here as the 'Creative Arts' project. The second collaborative project, referred as the 'King Lear' project, involved Rita and Viola as co-leaders. The two collaborative projects contain similar relational conditions and contexts. Firstly they share similar delivery structures: both workshops/lessons were situated in a school environment with some lessons conducted in purpose built arts spaces. Secondly, the theatre artists implicated in the projects had almost similar developmental trajectories. Rita and Reese both graduated, albeit at different points in time, from the same Masters programme in drama and theatre education. Meanwhile, Rita and Viola were both trained as teachers. Thirdly, both collaborative projects brought different teaching and creative expertise together.

I begin the discussion by presenting the field notes made of the external or architectural surround, or locale, before narrowing the lens to the setting and subsequently the sites of the classroom engagement (Carspecken 1996). The process of analysing the data from these two projects also involves reflections on my own practice evoked during observations. The discussion in this section will focus on the practical negotiations between the nested nexus worlds of theatre/artistic and education/teaching practices.

4.1. Negotiating structures of control and discipline within the school environment: position-taking and transformation of space as strategies

<p>Engagement 1/School A Research participant: Reese Period: October – December 2009</p>
<p>Field notes: 26th November 2009</p> <p>Student participants: Varied (on paper 15) attendance, mixed gender, age between 14 – 17 years old</p> <p>School A is surrounded by a metal fence and once through the gate, there is a small car park space, perhaps no more than 10 cars. Nothing immediately different from the Singapore schools that I have visited except that School A is flatter or less structurally imposing. It has no distinct colour, beige with red bricks, and it seems almost tucked away among the two-storey houses surrounding it. Not far from the gate is the foyer, where I am greeted by Reese, my first English research participant. She seems nervous and is trying to finish a cigarette.</p> <p>Three co-artists facilitators assist Reese in devising a performance with students from School A. Today, only two of us, myself and another facilitator are present. Reese decides not to wait for the second facilitator who is late. She wants us to start on time.</p> <p>The foyer is a fairly large space, with a one-way entrance. The tiles are discoloured, and the windows slightly stained. There is a solitary wooden bench in one corner and in another corner what looks like a security booth. Two staff members—a man and a woman—are manning the booth. They ask for our “any photo-ID?” and the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) papers—a document I had obtained through the university. It involves a check on criminal background, past records and approval of conduct for work with young children and those with disabilities. I paid £36 for this document. There is another gate within this foyer, an electronic gate that separates the visitors from the students and teachers inside the school. It is this gate that we need to cross to access the students. Behind the gate two teachers are shouting at the students, early teens, as they convene after their break. The noise level is high, but expected, nothing different from the usual processes of being in a school. The teachers shout again to get them to be quiet, to sit in their respective rows. There is no microphone.</p> <p>We proceed to the ‘security booth’. Reese speaks to the people behind the booth and we show our documents. But we cannot go through the gates, yet. We need to wait for our ‘missing’ facilitator before entry is permitted. When the second facilitator arrives, we sign our names on the logbook and receive tags with four-digit non-sequential numbers on them. The electronic gate is ‘buzzed’ open and we enter.</p>

The description of the school repeated again in the second field notes of my first visit to School B, with the second research participant, Rita.

<p>Engagement 1/School B (plus School C: this project involves two schools) Research participant: Rita (with Viola) Period: April 2010</p>
<p>Field notes: 27 April 2010</p> <p>Student participants: 10 students from School B and another 10 from School C; mixed gender, age between 12 – 16 years.</p> <p>Architecturally, it is a red-bricked, three-storey high building, with a huge car park. The school looks quite huge. It has a sizeable green field in front of it, and an open-air basketball court. The foyer, or waiting area, though small, is bright and fitted with sofas. In a corner there is a glass cabinet featuring some trophies. Instead of a metal gate separating the ‘visitors’, it is an electronic door. Again the CRB is asked. I sign my name on the logbook and a numbered tag is offered.</p> <p>Additional note: the school shares the grounds with a different school.</p>

The third field notes, however, described a different space. It was the Arts Centre in which Reese’s project finally situated. The theatre artists were not required to wear numbered tags nor have CRB documents. However, there were security officers patrolling the arts space. The arts space manager had to be informed of the students’ arrival and prior arrangements had to be made to obtain the key to the space.

<p>Engagement 2/ Arts Centre Research participant: Reese Period: October - December 2009</p>
<p>Field notes: 15th October 2009</p> <p>Student participants: Aged 13–17 years old, mix gender.</p> <p>The building is situated in the university grounds, within a theatrical complex known here as the Arts Centre. The creative arts space is on the ground level of this complex. Getting into the space, however, requires some navigation and familiarity. It is tucked deep in the complex, and the entrance is away from public view. Once in the creative arts space, the room is spacious, and has floor-to-ceiling glass panels as walls on one-side of the space. This makes the work visible to passers-by.</p> <p>The students arrive by school bus and Reese greets them outside, does a tour of the space with the students before bringing them into the space. Some students begin to run to the glass panels, others walk in slowly and another stands in a corner of the space. Each, in their own way, takes in their first encounter with the empty space.</p>

Henri Lefebvre posits that “[t]he space of a (social) order is hidden in the order of space (1991, p. 289. Italics in original). These three field notes reflect my theatre artists’ concern with the mood and atmosphere of the ‘drama’ of human interaction, the architecture, the landscape and the mechanics of security and student management. I concur that statistical data and factual account of school population, neighbouring demographics and pupil attainment standards are useful. However in this instance, Lefebvre’s understanding of the politics of spatial production and operations suggest that much can be gained and understood from an attentive focus on the surroundings.

Informative of the observation made is the recurring motif of ‘control’ throughout the field notes between the three sites. The ‘world’ of the English school environment is familiar yet different from the environment I am accustomed to in Singapore. While the notion of security as a form of control is similar, the mechanisms and architectures of such control are different. In Singapore, security checks are situated in purpose-built security booths by the school gates usually several metres away from the school foyer. The security is managed by security officers hired through external companies. There are no CRB checks, but wearing visitor tags is a norm.

The encounter with technologies of security in the English context alerted me to the presence of that control, an experience I had taken for granted. Indeed, the gate, the security checks with the required CRB and the waiting for permission to engage the students are expressive of the technologies of control, reminiscent of Foucault's (1991) notion of institutional 'mechanics of power'. Humans and their relations are "subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (p. 138). In the school context, discipline is "without weapons, without instruments of constraints" (Foucault 2005, p 239). These traditional signifiers of exerting overt repressive control are missing. Instead, control and discipline are exerted through a paradox of 'softer' agendas of child protection and care, where entrusted with the responsibility and duty to protect, the school takes security and control as a high priority. Through these mechanisms, the theatre artists'/educators' 'difference' is highlighted.

The theatre artists' 'difference' relates not only to the ideological and cultural differences in teaching practices but also the 'otherness' of identity and membership within the institutional and teaching community. I wanted to understand how the English theatre artists negotiate these mechanisms of control. What support is available to help them do so? My strategy was to note their responses as well as my interaction within the school environment. How is migrating between artistic and teaching cultures, practices and environments expressed in the way they teach and relate to the teachers and students? In the final analysis, their negotiation of the presence of control and discipline within the structures of the school system is linked to the perceived positions of the theatre artists' 'difference/otherness'. This perception is informed by factors such as perceived symbolic, cultural and social capital and how they impact on the professional, personal and institutional relationships towards the arts, or in this case, theatre education. Two examples highlight the theatre artists' negotiations of the school environment: a) positioning expertise b) appropriating space.

4.1.1: Positioning expertise

In the two schools observed, the English theatre artists'

- experience with school-based work;
- professional history as drama specialist;

- association with the teaching fraternity;
- the school's ethos towards drama within the curriculum; and
- the perceived status of the project

affect the position and consequently the relationships the schools have with each of the theatre artists and their respective projects. These factors affect how both the schools as well as the theatre artists are able to negotiate their respective positions of 'difference' and consequently the elements of control and discipline built within the structures of the school system.

Two contrasting relations were observed in the two projects relating to the extent of support each school offered to the respective projects. Below is an example extracted from the observation records taken in Schools A and B. The contrasting experience is reflected in the analyses.

<p>Engagement 1/School B (plus School C: this project involves two schools) Research participant: Rita with Viola Period: April 2010</p>
<p>Observation record: 27 April 2010</p> <p>Student participants: Mixed 12 – 16 years with 10 students from School B and another 10 from School C.</p> <p>Rita and Viola were given two different rooms.</p> <p><u>First Room (Note: The field notes of the second room is offered on page 138.)</u> A classroom space. It had a light wall-to-wall blue carpet, huge windows on one side of the classroom wall. On the walls were coloured posters, assignments of students pasted on boards and a clean white board. The room had been prepared prior to our arrival with all the tables and chairs pushed to one side. Viola and Rita took some chairs and placed them in a circle. 10 students (mixed gender; aged 12 – 16) from School B arrived. While they waited for another 10 students (also mixed gender; aged 13 – 16) from school C to arrive, Viola and Rona introduced themselves. Students from School C arrived 6 minutes later. Viola welcomed them and Rita and Viola reintroduced themselves. All the students were seated on chairs. Then Viola got them to push the chairs back and they stood in a circle. Rita stood in the circle with them and she began the morning with games.</p> <p>Viola: <i>So what we'll begin with, who remembers my name?</i> (Several students replied and called out her name).</p> <p>Viola: <i>I don't have a name tag but I'll get one later on, so its 'X' [mentions her name] ok. Alright? What we are going to do is we are going to start by just saying hello to each other and this is really easy and I'm going to show how, I am going show how we are going to do it and then you are going to do it, alright? So . . .</i></p> <p>And she began by walking across the circle and introduced herself to a male student from School C. She demonstrated the activity and before long, Rita, Viola and the students were greeting and introducing themselves. The room was filled with murmurs of names and laughter. 10 minutes later, Rita stepped out of the game and took her camera and began taking some photographs. Then about 10 minutes later, she signaled to me that we should go to the second space to set up. She and Viola chatted a little bit on what Rita was going to do in the second space. During that time, the students were busy constructing a still image.</p>

In Reese's project, she was offered a school hall.

Engagement 1/School A Research participant: Reese Period: November – December 2009
Observation records: 26th November 2009
<p>A teacher greeted us saying that the teacher in charge was busy. He told Reese that we would be working in the school hall. We walked into the school hall. It was dark and cold. The floor was brown parquet and it was slightly dirty. Reese's reaction to the space was "oh no, it's so big and cold". She was concerned that the space was unmanageable for the work we had planned. She made a decision to work in a small section of the hall and contemplated using the available chairs to 'demarcate' a, 'creative space'. There was also an issue with dirt and a quick discussion ensued on the possibility of avoiding floor work. She also felt the hall was 'unwelcoming' and decided to change the plan slightly to make the students feel welcomed in the school hall.⁵</p> <p>Reese: <i>What if we begin by performing a scene, like they were visitors and we are welcoming them into this space.</i></p> <p>Noorlinah: <i>With words?</i></p> <p>Reese: <i>No maybe just our bodies. You know get them to feel the different ways of making someone feel welcome or not welcome. Or no. What if we get them to create different scenes of welcoming us, the visitors into this space? Get them to generate the feeling of hosting us guests, especially you two since you have never been in the school before.</i></p> <p>So when the students arrived (10 of them) Reese stayed on to discuss their work while the two of us prepared ourselves as guests, outside. We waited. When they were ready, we returned and the students presented their different versions of 'welcome'.</p>

The recognition of both the symbolic and cultural capital surrounding each school project and theatre artists impacted how support was offered within the respective schools. The different school support the theatre artists received affected them in two ways. Firstly, it affected the construction of the teaching tasks, which involved amendments to the lessons planned. Secondly, it impacted their well being in the school environment; from one of excitement, creative liberation and strength to one of stress, fear and challenge.

For instance, both Rita and Viola had been trained as teachers and also involved in the training of both non-drama and drama specialists. Furthermore their associations with two highly regarded organisations in both the artistic and teaching fields presented them in a better position to obtain greater support. The support of teachers from both Schools B and C for Rita and Viola's project greatly eased administrative and logistical issues. A discussion with the two teachers involved in the project, from

⁵ When this chapter was returned to the research participants for feedback, Reese made a clarification of the reaction she had to the space. She said, "Just to be clear here, I had worked in this school hall before for two weeks at the very beginning of the project and it was fine. I think my negative reaction on this occasion was because we had grown used to the open and light space of the 'Arts Centre' (name changed) and in comparison, this hall felt decidedly unwelcoming". This further supports the argument of space and the bodily response to space as a consideration in the theatre artists teaching practices.

Schools B and C, revealed the perceived cultural capital accrued to Rita and Viola. These teachers highlighted the constraints of their teacher position and in the process, alluded to the theatre artists' privileged positions.

Teacher School B:

What Viola and Rita have got in this scenario, this workshop scenario which is you know perhaps something that the teacher hasn't got, the classroom teacher, is that they got people to kind of doing to a certain extent quite a lot of the boring, logistical stuff, booking the rooms, dealing with having to find new rooms for the teachers, organising lunches, breaks, the stuff that can within you know the teacher in the classroom can get in the way, you know, that has been removed. Erm, although I am sure there is a whole heap of, I mean, this has taken hours and hours of planning. But the kind of, the rhythms and the routines, and the sort of issues that happen in an average teacher's day to a certain extent there not been a big issue in this particular scenario.

Teacher School C:

In terms of constraints, biggest one for me as a classroom teacher is definitely the room itself. While you are able to clear tables and chairs to the side, it's a really big issue to kind of create a really free space. It would be impossible for me in my classroom to dramatise a space with Goneril and Cordelia and Regan as mannequin dolls position in the costumes and things like that (she refers to the theatrical transformation of the space which Rita created using three mannequins, each in costume and head gear, to signify the three female characters in Shakespeare's King Lear). But it would be possible maybe to bring in some more costumes and to bring in some more props and make those part of our practice as everyday English teachers.

Additionally, School B is highly supportive of drama within the school curriculum. It has, in the past, supported teacher development in this area. This is demonstrated in the presence of a drama teacher acting as liaison personnel for the project. Previously, she had attended a professional development programme led by both Rita and Viola. In that respect, both the positions of the theatre artists as well as the ethos of School B vis-à-vis drama and theatre education eased the theatre artists' migration from an artistic space into an educational space. School B offered a technician and technical support. It ensured the attendance and punctuality of the students in the sessions, as well as made available appropriate space as requested by the theatre artists.

Meanwhile in School A, Reese's doctoral research was undertaken as a voluntary-participation and extra-curricular activity. Teacher support, time, space as well as student attendance were inconsistent and challenging to manage. As a result, Reese, as compared to Rita and Viola, had a more difficult task in achieving her desired goals and at times were affected by the challenges she faced with the school. Throughout her project, Reese discussed how she had difficulties in securing the appropriate space for the sessions with the students as well as negotiating full attendance. These difficulties affected the construction of her lessons. The only time

full attendance was achieved was three days prior to the performance of her project at the Arts Centre.

What was obvious, as demonstrated in the field notes was how Reese, using Schön's (1983) terminology, reflects-in-action. She transformed the moments of challenge to moments of possibility through her ability to adapt. An example is offered in the field notes of 26th November 2009. In it, Reese's initial reaction to the hall's inhospitably "big and cold" condition became the inspiration for a change in the lesson's activities. She constructed an exercise where students needed to use their bodies to 'welcome' visitors. This 'reflection-in-action' as an adaptive mechanism is not limited to Reese but also a recurrent practice exhibited by all the theatre artists participating in this research. This theme will be revisited and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. It will focus on how reflection-in-action, that is, the tacit and implicit knowing while in the process of doing and experiencing the action, or what the Singapore theatre artists refer to as their 'intuitive' sense and feel of their teaching strategies, affects their teaching acts.

4.1.2: Transforming and appropriating the school space

Indeed, the theatre artists' sense of privilege as the 'outside expert' is also enacted in the way in which the school space is appropriated and transformed into what Augusto Boal defines as "aesthetic space" (Boal 1995, p. 20). According to Boal, space for creativity is marked by its plasticity (transformable), dichotomic (divisible into sections) as well as telemicroscopic (open and visible) qualities. Additionally, aesthetic space possesses "properties which stimulate knowledge and discovery, cognition and recognition: properties which stimulate the process of learning by experience" (ibid.). Boal's definition of aesthetic space suggests the learning that takes place in it affects both the affective domain (feeling and memory) and also the imaginative domain, what some consider as thinking and imaging with the mind's eye (Collins 1991).

The transformation of the classroom, studio or hall space into an aesthetic space for play, creating, reflecting, rehearsing and performing was observed in the fieldwork. Features of 'control and discipline' of a classroom environment such as rows of chairs and tables that reflect the 'conventional' and institutionalised structures of

learning were removed or placed to one side. Beyond the literal transformation of physical space, there was also the transformation of the imaginary space. This was achieved through the manipulation of theatrical space and time through various drama strategies. Some of the strategies employed were still images, enactments of dreamscapes, the use of recall and flashbacks, the projection of future happenings and the embodiment of the ‘what if’ situations. These strategies offered the students the opportunity to further reconfigure and transform the physical creative space with their active engagement of the ‘drama worlds’ (O’Neill 1995).

However, while both the ‘Creative Arts’ and the ‘King Lear’ projects demonstrated a commonality of space as a key consideration, each experienced different conditions. The different conditions impacted the theatre artists’ successful negotiations of the school environment.

The ‘King Lear’ project consisted of a three-part process in which the school workshop was its first. The second process involved a visit to Stratford-upon-Avon to watch the Royal Shakespeare Company’s staging of *King Lear*. The third part of the project was a 2-day workshop in a purpose-built theatre space in Coventry. The workshops ended with the students creating their own interpretations of *King Lear*. The aim of this three-part process was to offer the students an authentic learning experience through the theatre-making processes. As such, spatial transformation was a necessary element not only as a concrete physical entity in which the learning took place, but also as the resource in which the learning was constituted. Below are field notes taken from the video recordings of Rita’s process of transforming the school hall.

<p>Engagement 1/School B (plus School C: this project involves two schools) Research participant: Rita (with Viola) Period: April 2010</p>
<p>Observation record: 27 April 2010</p> <p><u>Second Room a.k.a the school hall (in School B)</u> The second room was the school hall. But we could not enter the hall, there was an assessment going on. Tables and chairs were lined in rows with students’ heads bent in concentration. We waited for the students to finish their assessments before we entered the hall. The school hall was a large space and on one end were some platforms, some piled onto another creating a make-shift low elevation stage, with curtains drawn to each side. Rita whispered, “we need to move fast” referring to transforming the school hall before the students arrived. To create the atmosphere of the King Lear ‘drama world’, both Viola and Rita brought boxes of props, three roll-on suitcases of costumes, including several crowns, three different coloured capes, some coloured cloth, swords and laminated A4 pieces of texts extracted from the play. They also had three mannequins. Rita drew the curtains to close off the stage. She then pulled the sliding doors partitioning the ‘aesthetic space’ away from the rest of the</p>

hall. She took out a large and long roll of paper and pasted that on the sliding door. It worked as a 'reflection' wall for the students to record their impressions and reflections of the drama activities (VID00013.AVI).

The teacher in charge of the project arrived shortly after. She apologised for the inconvenience (referring to the assessment earlier) and offered help. She got a technician to provide technical assistance. Rita could then work with lights and sound. She added some lights as "*a point of focus*" on the area where a hand-drawn map was placed on the floor. The map was depicted King Lear's kingdom. Music was then chosen to create a sense of time and space that was not of the present. It sounded 'old world', I remembered saying. Each element, objects, lights and sound, added up to create the fictional drama world for the students to enter. Just as the transformation was complete, Viola entered the space.

Viola: *They're great. It looks fantastic. It looks really really good. Oh come on how many people have to put a set together in half an hour, you know.*

Viola was responding to Rita's concern that the latter was not able to transform the space given the time she had. Rita explained herself, "*we couldn't get in because . . .*" and she stopped, raising her hands as if to indicate this was the best she could do given the circumstances (VID00016.AVI: 0016 - 0038).

In the second extract below, Viola was observed preparing the students to encounter a "very, very different kind of space". Rita added to this anticipated difference by suggesting that the 'creative space' gave the students "permission" to do something, which they "normally" would not be allowed to do. She was referring to writing on the wall.

Indeed, writing on the wall is suggestive of a deviant act, perhaps vandalism. Here, it is suggested that such a deviant act is acceptable, though within limits of the 'permitted' area demarcated by the pasted sheets of paper. As a corollary, the aesthetic space signifies the 'out-of-the-normal', the 'not routine'. Hence, it is separate and distinct. Yet, in spite of its distinctiveness, it exists within the normal educational structures, albeit like the scrawls on a paper-lined wall, is bordered within limits and boundaries.

Engagement 1/School B (plus School C: this project involves two schools)

Research participant: Rita (with Viola)

Period: April 2010

Observation record: 27 April 2010

Outside the second Room (in School B) (VID00019.AVI and VID00020.AVI)

The students arrived after their morning break. Both Rita and Viola greeted them outside the second room/school hall.

Viola: *In a minute or two, we are going into the drama studio and we have changed it into a very, very different kind of space. One of the things we are going to ask you to do is to have a think about what the scene is, to start to build some theories, some ideas about what might be going on in that space, what's happening, what has happened, what might be about to happen. You are going to see a lot of stuff. Really your job is to explore and to also to start to form theories about what's going on. Ok, Rita do you want to say anything else.*

Rita: *In the space there are marker pens, have I got everybody, yup, yup, yup. There are some marker pens out there, there are sheets of paper. All the time what we are going to be doing is, we put some paper there, we want your thoughts, reflections, we are going to be hearing your voice, but we also want to capture what you think on paper. And so we start to collect all this material. So*

as you start to go in, as you start to explore (then she drew her attention to a group of boys who were talking and she brought their attention back) we are going to ask you, after a few minutes to start writing. Scrawling on the walls, normally you don't have permission to do that. But try to keep it on the paper erm that would be your main focus.

After the introduction, the students entered the space. As they walked in, that 'old world' music greeted them.

Rita: (side coaching) *Move into the space, start having a look around, explore, listening, just go in and have a look.*

Meanwhile for Reese's 'Creative Arts' project, space was an equally important element in her work. Her project involved students creating in a school environment and thereafter migrating to a creative arts space at the Arts Centre. However, unlike Rita and Viola, Reese had limited access to the school space, which deepened her sense of impermanence and dislocated her teaching practice from the school environment. Her point of comfort and confidence came when the students moved to the creative arts space.

The creative arts space in the Arts Centre is a large clean space. It has limited furnishing and with floor-to-ceiling glass panels on one side. The sense of 'openness' of the arts space is symbolic as a site of possibilities on several levels. In *Open-space learning: A study in transdisciplinary pedagogy*, a team of researchers and educators suggests learning that takes place in sites that break away from the conventional classroom or lecture-style teaching environment offers what they connote as a 'third space' of possibilities (Monk, *et al.* 2011). In this third space, barriers to connective mind-body learning, interacting, creating and responding to multi-disciplinary stimuli, and by extension resistances to multiple and diverse perspectives, are deconstructed and challenged (*ibid.*, pp. 128–129). But more than just a space of possibilities, Reese and the students appropriated the 'open space' and reproduced it as a 'home' for their creative work, housing both the imaginary and concrete processes and objects of creation, that made working in it more 'hospitable'. In transforming the creative arts space, they too transformed themselves. The space is 'representational' and therefore affirmative of their identities as 'creators' (Lefebvre 1991).

The discussion thus far focused on how space is conceptually appropriated in the theatre artists' teaching practices. The transformation of space articulates the bodily and spatial recuperation of theatre artists' identity and practices. They do so through

the symbolic appropriation of an institutional space of control and discipline into an aesthetic space of creativity, imagination and possibility. In creating a distinct and separate space within the larger educational institutional space, the theatre artists were also simultaneously marking themselves out as being separate and different from the remaining structures of the school and its system of knowledge generation.

However, while spatial transformation is desired, it is not a given product of the teaching act. It is a negotiated process mediated not only by the symbolic capital affecting their identities (status and recognition), but also their teaching practices and consequently the relationships they have with the schools, teachers and students. The challenge for theatre artists is their 'outsider' identity. Being an 'outsider' may hinder their access to space and its eventual transformation. There is a need to immerse themselves quickly within the available structural, logistical and financial resources of the school. In other words, they need to acquaint themselves with 'organisational literacy' (Blasé 1984) to accommodate the needs of a 'different' discipline such as theatre education. Rita and Viola, with their past experiences as teachers and subsequently drama educators, and their present experiences in teacher training, have greater competency and understanding of the school's organisational structure. Therefore, they were better able to manage their migration from their positions of 'artistic and outside' into the domain of 'education and inside' school environment.

At the end of this first phase of research, my analytical memo signposts 'space' as an area of focus for the Singapore research.

Memo, 20 August 2010

The contrasting response and reactions to the situation reveal the importance of school support and relationship to the presence of the theatre artists/other/outside/visitor and the smooth transition between the artistic environment that theatre education has a relationship with and the educational space in which theatre education resides. This point is reflected in the contrasting field notes observed between Schools A and B and the different reactions expressed by the theatre artists. But it is not just a matter of school support. The data analysis reflects facilities as currency and capital when it comes to arts education. Some schools may have the financial and therefore logistical capacity to accommodate. With the theatre artists, indeed within the theatre education 'world', the notion of knowledge that is made through an experiential process necessitates a larger and open space, with ample room for the body to be engaged together with the mind. But when schools are not privileged with such resources, negotiations with the needs of theatre education and the existing structure of schooling can result in tensions.

Action needed: To highlight space as a key area to survey and how that relates to theatre artists' teaching approach in the Singapore context. How do theatre artists in Singapore and the Singapore schools negotiate space? Considering that theatre education has not got the same long-standing tradition as experienced in England, what are the constraints and how do Singapore theatre artists deal with these constraints?

5. Different Emphasis In Theatre Education: Talk-Centred–Body-Centred Continuum

The transformation of space is a key distinction between theatre education and other disciplines in schools. It breaks away from the routine desk-and-chair-bound educational process of conventional teaching and learning. But more than just a means to transform a physical space, it is about a transformation of both the bodily, mental as well as the emotional space necessary in experiential learning (Kolb 1984). However, the term ‘experiential’ as it relates to ‘embodiment’ and ‘bodily-learning’ in theatre education requires further unpacking. I argue that the change in configuration of the space for learning signals a deeper epistemological shift from the conventional rational structures of learning to one which privileges a more experiential learning process where ‘bodymind’ connections are emphasised (Boyette & Zarrilli 2007).

The first suggestion of difference in the conception and approach to ‘experiential’ learning was made during the discussions between the theatre artists who collaborated in similar projects as well as during the interviews. For instance, in the interview, Viola revealed the tensions experienced in her body during the longer reflective discussions led by Rita in the ‘King Lear’ project.

It was a brilliant reflective session, the questioning and everything is, but all my body was going get up, get up, do something, get up and do something. But then sometimes I'll get up and do something but I wouldn't know why I have done it. So I know I have done something but it's like I'll do it and make sense of it afterwards or maybe not. (DC400053).

Elsewhere, a separate interview with Reese, who too shared a collaborative workshop with Rita in a later project, also raised a similar theme of body/talk centred approaches to theatre education. In her narrative, she furthered the discussion as different emphases. In the following extract from her interview, she attempted to make sense of her contribution in the collaborative project by tracing the different approaches that were employed in the workshop space.

I can't remember thinking well I am going to intervene here. But possibly because Facilitator X doesn't do the performance thing and Rita is somewhere in between the two I would say. I would say she is in between the theatre and the drama education, I don't know. So maybe I kind of intuitively felt that we needed to fill in a gap there and bring out that side of things because . . . I think the natural . . . space for Rita and X to occupy, in different ways, definitely in different ways however what they share is, erm, an interest in 'talk'. There is strong interest in, in debate, discussion erm making sense of and using the drama as a way of generating discussion. . .

. And I like that as well, you know, definitely. But maybe as a counter to that, intuitively, I was challenging that maybe a little bit and I would say in small ways it was not (laughs), it was not the dominant voice at all in the process (34:02). . . Erm but it, but it, it was just little things everyday that would be, be part of that challenge to the, to the talk talk talk talk. It was more a . . . doing, feeling through the body . . . (DC400104).

My initial interest is in the ‘seen and felt experience’ of ‘difference’ of the respective theatre artists. A secondary but related focus was how these differences were perceived through my reflective practitioner lens. For instance, I juxtaposed Viola and Reese’s accounts with my own memo generated at the end of one of the school visits in the ‘King Lear’ project.

Memo, 30 April 2010

There is a difference in approaches between Rita and Viola. Rita leads the reflections, and in these sessions, students are generally seated on the ground, discussing the text and mind-mapping ideas. Her key focus is on ‘meaning’, with questions like “what do you think you understand by this?” Meanwhile, Viola leans towards inhabiting the “character” and the “the text” by imagining what “would you do if you were” line of enquiry. I was behind the camera most times listening to them and watching them lead the project. There were moments when I felt like jumping in with a physical activity that I think could help drive the reflections more actively.

At the time of researching the process, the idea of a body/talk-centred approach was not immediately obvious to me. It was only through dissecting and analysing the data that I was drawn to the possibility that Viola, Reese and I share a ‘body-centred approach’ to our teaching practices. As such, what ‘body-centred’ meant to each one of us was not clarified. This emergent finding led me to work more closely with the available data in an attempt to perhaps concretise how the ‘difference’ might best be articulated.

I focused on the spatial and bodily architectures, as well as the frequency and range of body-related activities. Patterns of commonalities in spatial and physical management were observed in their practices.

- a) The bodies engaged in theatre education transformed and morphed the space into different permutations. The circle was formed not only at the start of the class but also at different times within one workshop period/day. The circle formalised the group as a whole and was formed at the request of the workshop leader(s). The circle was often interrupted by a dispersal or scattering of students engaged in play. Other times the space was divided into smaller aesthetic spaces, either decided by the workshop leader(s) or initiated by the students. Concentrated group work often took place in these divided aesthetic spaces.

- b) Their practices also privileged turn taking and articulating opinions publicly. This was observed through two forms: discussions and enactment of theatrical activities such as still image, scene building, or gesture work. Again this was formalised, facilitated and moderated by the theatre artists leading the sessions. During discussions, often a show of hands was the strategy used to identify speakers. As the students gained more confidence in adopting turn taking and speaking, names were called to identify speakers. Numbers were used in all four projects to indicate turn taking. There was a higher frequency of small group collaboration and discussion over whole class discussion.
- c) Students were encouraged to present their work to others to view and comment. There were varied configurations of performance space: performance presentations in a round; in a proscenium; or the promenade style viewing where the audience was made to move to where the groups were presenting.
- d) There were excursions out of classrooms or school contexts to purpose-built arts spaces. Students travelled from schools to external sites in buses. Walking tours were organised to spatially orientate the students to the new sites. Time was allocated for the students to experiment with configuring space for their theatre work.

Two variations were observed and examples of these from the four theatre artists' teaching approaches are appended in Appendix 2 as extracts A to G.

- a) The physical or 'in-the-body' responses were more dominant as observed in Reese, Rona and Viola's teaching practices.
- b) 'Reflective talk' or 'discussions' were more dominant in Rita's teaching practice.

I highlight 'more dominant' which suggests not an absence of, but the degree to which the body or talk is harnessed for learning and teaching as indicated by:

- repeated referencing of the body, or talk, in their instructions and demonstrations of the drama tasks;
- facilitation of students' participation involving movement and mobility as compared to seated discussions;

- greater concentration of the body a) as an expression of the text or ideas germinating from the text through gestures, movement, action and physical characteristics of characters; and b) the body as a central visual and physical score of the theatrical work (Murray & Keefe 2007).

The exercise in locating precisely how Rita's teaching practice is different from Viola and Reese in relation to the role of the body in learning is challenging. The challenge disavows any simplistic and reductive dualism. Instead, from the available data, I offer an interpretation. Their 'difference' points to a *continuum* between body-centred and talk-centred emphasis. In other words, Rita may be seen to privilege discussion and the exploration of sense-making through talk over the physical virtuosity of the body in inhabiting, exploring, thinking and expressing the meaning. However it does not mean her approach is absent of any physical engagement. Rather, the degree to which the body is engaged as the main channel for processing the learnt experience is less emphasised.

Significantly my interest in highlighting this difference raises further questions on my own teaching practices. By singling the difference, I am at once revealing my own partiality to body-centred work. Below I offer Viola's reflections as an echo of my immediate response to Rita's approach, in particular, her spotlighting on the possible lack of 'enquiry' questions in the theatre artists' teaching approaches (see underlined).

[T]his is something very important I think for me its very important and enquiry question erm which is really, really, you know is what gives the arc to the learning. The fact that you are engaging, it's very similar to having an intention or a motivation when you are performing, you know. There are parallels but they are just in a different situation but absolutely parallel. Because it's the thing that gives meaning to your pursuit. Either to your acting or performing or the activities you are doing, you are trying to solve something. [. . .] So I think that's the bit that is missing in a lot of artists' work is that they don't know how to frame an enquiry question and pursue a process that is going to take them there. . . . It becomes an activity with no meaning. . . . And on a couple of occasions I felt I was in that artist camp not really following the enquiry question but then sometimes you have got to kinda do something to see if something emerges you know just . . . it's kind of a bit random but I don't know. (DC400053).

What is revealing in Viola's account, and I suggest the more important issue here, is the need for balance between talk-centred and body-centred learning. That is, to find a balance between the moments to reflect and make sense of the action, and allowing the action to be the exploratory bed for meaning making. That balance, however, is not an easy one to achieve. In the collaborative 'King Lear' project, Rita and Viola

struggled to find the balance between ‘reflective talk’ and ‘action’ in their teaching moments. Unfortunately the ‘King Lear’ project ended with no decision on future projects. It would have been a worthwhile endeavour for Rita and Viola to conduct another collaborative exercise to ascertain what is gained and made different in their teaching practices once the dust of experiments and reflections have settled.

6. Summary And Implications Of The Research On Phase II

I thank these four theatre artists and educators for their generosity of time and openness in letting me into their teaching moments. Either through observing and archiving their teaching practices or co-facilitating with them, they openly shared their successes as well as the tensions and complications in their teaching practices. Through them, the research surfaced the complicated mapping and layering of influences and negotiations embedded in teaching. At times, these were contradictory and often not neutral.

Correspondingly, the research in England reflected the influences, development and evolution of my own teaching practice. Using the English sites as reflective research sites, I was made aware of my exposure and empathy with the larger English drama in education canon. Thereafter, I attempted to be vigilant and mindful of the possible ‘differences’ that might be present in the Singapore cases.

In summary the research in the English sites highlighted the following:

1. As explained in Chapter 2, agents or subjects position-take within and between fields, and the perception they have of themselves in the field in relation to others along the various positions available within the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 101). Navigating positions within and between fields is a complicated endeavour. The success varies according to the recognition and legitimisation of the positions vis-à-vis the appropriate possession of symbolic, cultural and social capital. As the English research indicated, some artists, like Rona, traversed between their artistic and education fields with greater ease as compared to others. The data also

suggested the English theatre artists were embroiled in position-taking vis-à-vis their perception of what constituted theatre education and the differences they perceived between them as ‘experts’ of the subject. The discussions alluded to possible tensions that existed not only between practitioners of different fields, but also within the same field, as depicted by Rita and Viola.

2. Also pertinent in the discussion was how *contexts* mattered when discussing their negotiations of their positions, identities and teaching practices. This expanded Trowsdale’s earlier research on teaching theatre artists (Chapter 2, p. 27) which focused only on their artistic training histories. In other words, when examining theatre artists’ teaching practices, considerations must be given to contextual specificities. In this chapter, *contexts* referred to the theatre artists’ histories and layered *habitus* (artistic training and experience in the education system); influences from peers and mentors; the varying systems of knowledge; the complex matrix of socio-political-economic-cultural environment; and the educational structure and systemic conditions. Pluralising the contexts underscored that an understanding of ‘how’ and ‘what’ of theatre artists’ teaching practices cannot be examined through a singular lens.
3. Additionally, the data revealed a complex syncretic structure of self-constituted influences (section 2.4, pp. 124–127). These referred to the reflexivity and agency in negotiating between the nested nexus of personal and professional habitus encountered throughout each theatre artists’ artistic and teaching development (Britzman 2003; Archer 2007). I interpreted this to be an indication that the practice of teaching (and perhaps affecting other forms of practices), is not only social, but evolves over time.
4. The data requested for a sensitive reading of their narratives to uncover patterns that may reveal an understanding of their ‘worlds’, and perhaps ‘world views’. This was demonstrated when comparing Viola’s narrative structure with Rita’s. Accessing the patterns of vocabulary they used during the interview helped generate an understanding of what they deemed as important in their theatre education practices.

5. There was a focus on spatial production as symbolic of bodily and spatial recuperation of theatre artists' identity and practices within an education setting. The discussion noted how space was symbolically appropriated and transformed from an institutional space of control and discipline into an aesthetic space for creativity, imagination and possibility. Through the transformation, the English theatre artists were also simultaneously marking themselves out as being separate and different from the remaining structures of the school and its system of knowledge generation.
6. There was also a suggestion of 'difference' in the conception of experiential learning as observed in their teaching practices. In the final analysis, I proposed a body-centred–talk-centred continuum as a means to frame the investigation further. Proposing the continuum disavowed any simplistic and reductive dualism. Instead, it positioned the extent to which the body or talk recurred as the 'dominant' nexus in sense-making.
7. Collaboration was suggested as a possible strategy for confronting different systems of knowledge and institutionalised *habitus* embedded within the theatre artists' teaching practices. As observed in the 'King Lear' project, collaboration offered the possibility of diverse teaching practices confronting, disturbing and informing one another. In the process, it could increase the reflexive opportunities toward re-evaluation and re-negotiation of existing *habitus*.

The findings from the English sites impacted the Singapore research. When in Singapore, I made a concerted effort to record and document the observations in greater detail. I focused on transcribing the instructions and the changes that took place between activities. Also, I increased the frequency of the interviews as well as added post-observation interviews after each classroom observation. An added element made available to me when in Singapore was the presence of varying teaching projects in which the Singapore theatre artists were involved. These amendments were made to heighten the replication logic by increasing the number of cases to identify and isolate recurrences or variations.

It is with these elements and possibilities in mind that I proceed to Chapters 5 and 6. These chapters present, analyse and discuss the data collated from the main focus of this study, that is, the examination of the Singapore theatre artists' teaching practices.

CHAPTER 5: DECONSTRUCTING THE SINGAPORE THEATRE ARTISTS’ TEACHING APPROACHES

1. Introduction

The discussions on the findings in Phase I concluded with ‘critiquing across difference’ as informative for this research. It not only offers an opportunity to understand patterns of similarities and dissimilarities in practices within the same field, but also a reflexive critique of one’s own teaching and artistic influences and practices. Indeed, there were two major outcomes from the research in the English sites.

The first was the impact the English inquiry had on research methodology (Chapter 3, section 9, p. 87–96). Reflecting from the experience in the English sites, further modifications were made to the Phase II inquiry in Singapore. These included employing a different approach to the interview process; introducing video assisted situational recall to obtain the theatre artists’ account of their teaching activities; firming up the observation framework; and identifying diverse and multiple teaching projects as research sites.

Secondly, giving form to Phase II meant translating and embodying the gains and losses experienced in Phase I. That meant having a sense of the baseline issues and contradictions, which I needed to be mindful of in the Singapore context. These are reflected in the following questions:

- Are there distinctive differences in the Singapore theatre artists’ teaching approaches when seemingly less informed by various traditional and contemporary English practices of Drama-in-education and Theatre-in-education? What then are their self-constituted structures of influences?

- Do the Singaporean theatre artists reveal heterogeneous practices? What shapes their perception of engaging with young people in schools?
- Are contexts (personal and professional, artistic and pedagogic experiences, as well as the structural and systemic conditions) important considerations affecting their teaching practices?
- How do they negotiate the artistic and pedagogic needs embedded in their teaching approaches?

Underlying these questions are issues of negotiation, adaptation, (re)generation, and (re)invention of identities and practices when theatre artists are placed in the nested nexus of two fields: theatre/artistic and education/teaching.

1.1. Postscript to the introduction

Memo, 20 December 2010

Back in Singapore, I sensed the urgency of the theatre artists' passionate telling of their stories as an expression of their emotional connection they have with teaching, and the lack of research and documentation of such work in Singapore. They recognised my position as one of the theatre artists who, like them, are involved in the work, experiencing similar challenges of artist-school-student relationships, and felt 'trusted' to allow me in to their teaching space and agree to be part of this research. As Joan once commented in a personal conversation, "Of course, this needs to be done, especially so little of it is being researched. Yes, I will help." Her 'it' refers to the theatre artists' teaching practices both in the larger global theatre education discourse and Singapore. Her willingness to 'help' epitomises her sense of duty and obligation to the theatre education community. I felt the pressure to do it right, whatever the 'right' meant within the limits of the data, my comprehension and interpretation of them as well as the time offered to complete the work.

The memo above revealed that despite my attempts at sharpening my reflexive reflective practitioner lens through the English sites, I still held concerns about my researcher role when returning to a site of 'insider' significance (Hockey 1993; Newkirk 1996). The strategy, following Wendy Lutrell (2010), was to pay close attention to variations for the possibilities of "a more nuanced argument" that they might offer between different contexts, socialisation, practices and identities (p. 267).

1.2. Structure of the chapter

I reiterate here my adoption of Richardson's (1997, cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2008) prismatic, or crystalline, approach (Figure 5.1) crossing between different observations of the same theatre artist's teaching practice to different observations of different theatre artists' teaching practices. I set these up against my reflective

memos; theatre artists' interviews; videos; conversations; teacher interviews; and field notes of the school environment.

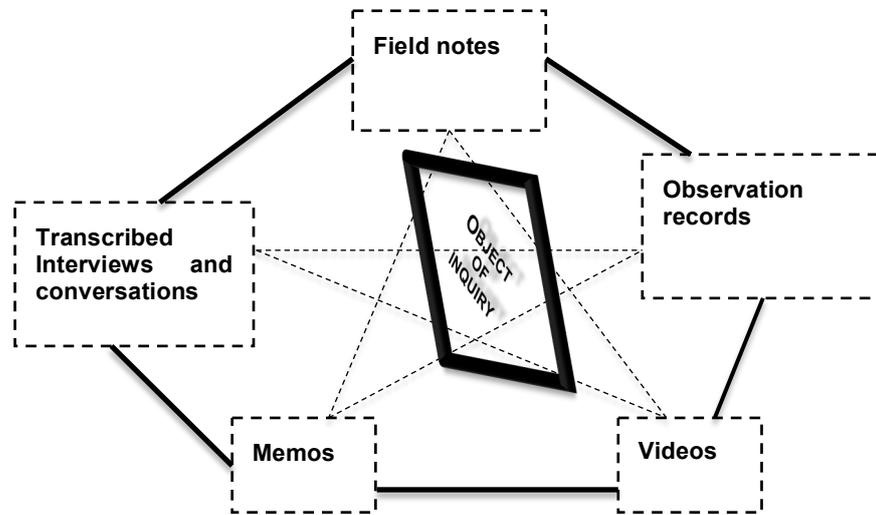


Figure 5.1: Crystallisation of the data source

As with the English theatre artists, I begin this chapter by introducing the three Singapore theatre artists through their reconstructed composite profiles. The profiles present key themes explicated from the first and second cycles of coding their various interviews surrounding artistic and teaching histories and practical experiences. Various influences that shape, what has hitherto been framed as, their *professional artistic habitus* are also highlighted.

Beyond that, I explore what Singapore theatre artists bring when they migrate from the artistic space into an educational environment. This means unpacking their pedagogic practices. According to Richard Pring, a pedagogic practice is “a set of *activities* united in a shared set of *purposes and values*” (2004, p. 16. Italics my own). Pring’s definition suggests three aspects to pedagogic practices: **activities** or the strategies they employ to engage learning; the **approach and emphasis** that affect how the activities are employed; and the **principles** that guide all of them. I will begin by unpacking their in-classroom **activities** and the **approaches and emphases**. Through the examination of the in-classroom teaching moments, I propose that their heterogeneous teaching practices are an actualisation of doing the same, differently. In other words, the approaches and emphases to the activities may vary but the principles underpinning the activities remain the same. Also the

heterogeneity hinges upon an experienced interplay of a) their peripatetic / freelance structure of their work as theatre artists as well as b) their negotiations of the specificities of each pedagogic context. Thereafter, I attempt to articulate the **principles** that guide these activities in the subsequent and penultimate chapter of this thesis.

2. Highlighting Contextual Specificities In Phase II

Reflecting on the importance of context(s) as previously forwarded in the closing summary of Chapter 4, I begin by contextualising the Singapore research.

2.1. Theatre artist identity, professional practice and teacher training

I revisit Bourdieu's argument on identity and practices as discussed in the introductory chapter. Bourdieu argues that identities and practices are social constructions. They are symbolic of position taking, capital acquisition and struggles for legitimisation and recognition within a field of cultural production (1996a). To identify oneself as a 'theatre artist' is to locate one's position within a field. To stake that claim, one needs to amass the possible social, cultural, symbolic, and economic capital (or the lack of it) associated with the identity. In doing so, the identity demarcates boundaries of one's difference set against others within and beyond the field.

Olivia, Joan and Sandra are theatre artists whose legitimisation to that identity is supported by the recognition accorded to them by the theatre community, the Singapore media and the arts funding body, that is, the National Arts Council (NAC). Two of the three theatre artists enjoy prolific professional artistic practices alongside their teaching engagements. Olivia, for instance, is a director and playwright of her own theatre organisation. Joan is a stage actress. All three are recognised as theatre educators in both the school and community settings. Olivia, Joan and Sandra are members of the Singapore Drama Educators Association (SDEA), with Joan and Sandra engaged in different committees within the organisation. Only Sandra has limited professional theatre-making involvement in Singapore. This is due to her

recent return from a 12-year absence from the Singapore theatre community and her full-time employment in Europe as a teacher. All three have not had extensive nor formal education in drama pedagogy. Unlike Olivia and Joan, only Sandra has a general teaching certificate. She was trained in Singapore as a teacher in the mid 1980s and practised in Singapore as well as Europe.

2.2. Structures for artist-led arts education in Singapore

Drawing from the earlier exposition on the arts education landscape in the Singapore context in Chapter 2 (pp. 54–61), I highlight the role theatre artists play as arts educators in the Singapore education settings. Prior to the 1993 establishment of the NAC Arts Education Programme (NAC-AEP) as well as the degree-level drama and theatre education offered in teacher training at the National Institute of Education (NIE), theatre artists have been the main provider of theatre education in schools (Stinson 2010; Dramatise 2011). Thereafter, the development of the NAC-AEP further fuelled artists' presence within schools (Tan 2003).

The NAC-AEP (http://aep.nac.gov.sg/about_aep.aspx) is a database of endorsed arts education programmes to schools through three categories. They are “Arts Experience” (workshops conducted in schools), “Arts Exposure” (assembly performances) and “Arts Excursion” (arts engagement at a purpose-built arts space). The programmes are diverse and spans across Dance, Music, Theatre, Film and Multimedia, Visual Arts and Literary Arts. As discussed in Chapter 2, to encourage school engagement with arts education, funding is provided by the NAC. With funding, schools enjoy subsidies to the arts programmes endorsed by the NAC-AEP.

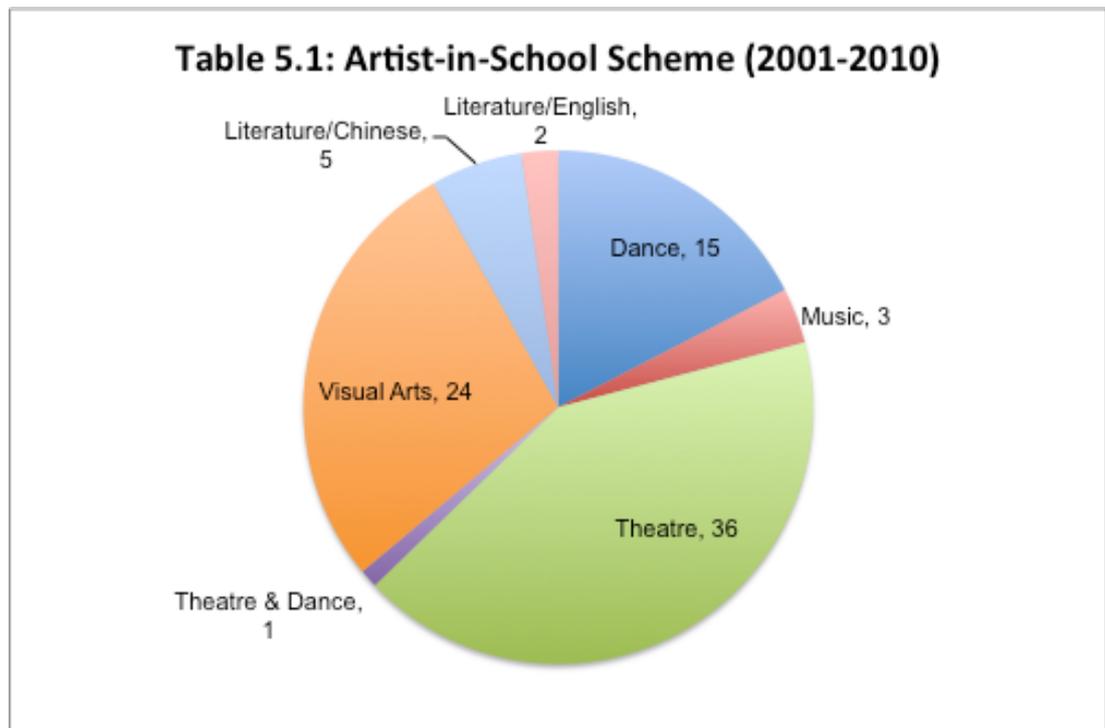
In 2004–2008, I sat on the advisory panel for NAC-AEP theatre education programmes. As an advisory panel member (members consist of teachers, principals, artists and theatre educators), I evaluate the programmes' suitability as theatre education in schools and suggest improvements to the proposed programmes. The theatre education programmes marketed under the NAC-AEP cater to broad-based exposure to theatre and are often short-term workshops (6–15 sessions) of between 1–4 hours in duration per session. They range from introductory skill-based workshops such as introduction to acting, voice projection or Forum Theatre, to the

use of drama or theatre skills as tools to develop confidence and appreciation of an academic subject such as *Drama for Literature Appreciation* (<https://aep.nac.gov.sg/aeplistsings.aspx?artform=T>).

In 2001, the NAC initiated the Artist-in-School Scheme (NAC-AISS). One of the first theatre education AISS project was the Development-Thru-Drama programme at the Mayflower Primary School in 1999 (Wong & Hunter 1999). The AISS is different from the NAC-AEP in that the former attends to sustained integration of artists-led arts education in the curricula. The AISS programmes span across two or more terms and engage with in-curriculum teaching across a particular academic level or standard. Teacher involvement is also a requisite of the AISS. This demands a selection of artists with both artistic and pedagogic understanding. Though statistical evidence is absent at this juncture, ground-level precedence indicates that the AISS projects are often established through personalised or networking encounters and connections. Artists and schools may approach each other to negotiate possible collaborations and thereafter jointly propose a plan for the NAC funding consideration. In that respect, the NAC-AISS has no specific programming or content model; they are bespoke arts education projects. To make artists' presence economically viable for schools interested in the AISS, the NAC funds S\$10,000 or up to 30% of the total programming cost (http://aep.nac.gov.sg/artist_in_schools.aspx). Additionally artists and schools can also access the Totalisator Board Arts Grant.

Table 5.1 offers the number of AISS projects implemented from 2001 to 2010. It indicates theatre enjoying the largest presence in the Singapore schools. Note that these do not include the already established presence of visual arts and music within the school curricula. This suggests a number of things. Firstly, the arts education landscape into the new millennium showed signs of gradual expansion. It resulted in greater awareness of the possibilities of theatre education within the curricula. By then, the NAC-AEP had a decade long presence. The NIE was offering drama and theatre modules to trainee teachers. The SDEA, a professional body for applied drama and education practitioners, was also established. Secondly, at the school level, the devolution of the education system, which began in the mid 1990s, meant schools now have greater autonomy to create bespoke programmes for their students.

Some schools identified performing arts as a ‘niche’ identity for themselves. There was also the introduction of drama as an elective Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) subject in 2006–2007 (Stinson 2010). All these generated larger pockets of drama activities within the school environment.



The funding for both the NAC-AEP and AISS excludes work done in the co-curricular activities (CCAs), affecting the various arts activities organised beyond the school curriculum. This includes all drama club activities. A theatre artist’s work with the drama club consists of directing the annual school productions as well as preparing students for the bi-annual Singapore Youth Festival (SYF) Drama Competition (Tan 2003). Among the many different types of teaching projects included in the research, I observed Olivia, Sandra and Joan work with their respective drama club students. Olivia had three SYF projects, while Joan had one. Restricted by the time frame of the fieldwork, I was only able to observe Joan conduct lessons with her drama club students. This limited opportunities to observe her in a different type of theatre education project and in a different school setting. Meanwhile, Olivia and Sandra’s teaching projects were more varied. They include both drama club as well as in-curriculum theatre education projects.

The SYF is a controversial phenomenon. When I was the President of the Singapore Drama Educators Association, I facilitated several focus group discussions with teachers and arts educators on arts education in schools and its challenges. These discussions almost always raised on-the-ground sentiments against the SYF, citing anxiety as well as stress for students, teachers as well as the directors engaged to mount the SYF productions. In 2012, Nominated Member of Parliament, Janice Koh, raised these stress points in parliament and urged the Minister for Education to consider ways to “moderate any competitive pressure on students to perform for awards” (Singapore Parliamentary Reports, 10th September 2012). Stress notwithstanding, the SYF is an important aspect of the Singapore school culture which sets benchmark for excellence and value-add on the back of the prestige such competitions bring to the school. Perhaps such prestige is the reason for the increased school participation. In 2009, there were slightly over 100 secondary schools in the event. In 2011, the number increased to 125 out of 154 secondary schools (<http://www.singaporeyouthfestival.sg>).

2.3. Consequences of arts education funding

There is no statistical data to indicate the number of theatre artists involved in the SYF. Seeing the number of schools involved as well as the number of schools a theatre artist is able to commit for the year, I suggest that there are other ‘players’ in the SYF enterprise. I am tempted to think that the NAC’s resistance to fund co-curricular activities signals a decision to distant itself from the competitive aspect of the SYF. I further suggest that the NAC funding structure is also a means with which it defines and frames arts education. Additionally, it marks and frames the identities of ‘artists’.

As previously proposed (see point 2.1, p. 153), identities are socially constructed; recognition as ‘artists’ are both self-created as well as conferred. With its arts education funding schemes, the NAC defines not only the identities of the ‘artists’ recognised as such within the arts community, but also their ability to function as one within the education setting. The NAC identifies artists through their professional practice, though there have been situations when practitioners are considered artists despite years of absence from professional artistic practice. Nonetheless, the funding

access symbolically establishes the recipient as a bona fide ‘expert’ in the art form.

Furthermore the funding structure has consequences on the relationships and practices constructed between artists and schools thereafter. For example, to access the AISS funding, artists are required to manipulate their arts practices within in-curricular settings. For theatre artists, this meant transforming the experience of ‘doing’ theatre as a pedagogy to serve academic subjects such as English Literature, Languages (English and Mother Tongue, meaning Mandarin, Malay and Tamil), Social Studies, History, and later Drama as an ‘O’ level elective (Stinson 2010). As this chapter unfolds, discussions with the three theatre artists involved in the research reveal the negotiations necessary to accommodate these demands. With this research, Sandra’s collaborative project with Mr T melding drama and visual arts as well as the teaching of drama as a subject with Ms S, were projects funded by the NAC-AISS. Olivia and Joan too have had experiences with the AISS in previous years. However, they had no AISS project when the fieldwork was conducted.

In summary, theatre artists may be involved in one or more of the following types of theatre education projects in schools:

- In drama clubs, either as independent drama trainers or representatives of arts organisations, they develop the students in theatre-making processes. They create performances with the students for various events in and outside school. They are also involved in preparing the students for the bi-annual SYF Drama Competition.
- In AISS projects within the school curriculum. Often this is a sustained semester or year-long engagement. The projects run for a minimum of 2 and maximum of 3 years.
- The in-curricular projects vary from a) theatre as pedagogy to enhance the learning of selected academic subjects; b) teaching drama as a subject; and c) theatre pedagogy for socio-emotional and life-skill development. The latter is largely tailored for academic underachievers to develop their confidence and identify personal strengths.
- For the in-curricular programmes, schools generate the curricular framework and theatre artists are subsequently invited to submit proposals to meet the

schools’ needs. Once a theatre artist has been identified, discussions with the cooperating teachers on lesson objectives and evaluation outcomes follow. Prior to the start of the project, the theatre artists are required to offer either a scheme of work or structured lesson plans to the teachers.

Reflecting on the theatre education topography laid out above as well as the research experience in the English sites, I considered ways to increase the opportunities of obtaining varied data sets for cross analyses. Not only in terms of the diversity in artistic training histories and professional practices but also the availability of varied teaching projects as varied sites. Accordingly, the three theatre artists were ‘shadowed’ in as many teaching projects they were engaged in and as time and resources of this research endeavour permitted (Table 5.2). The varied projects offered opportunities to interrogate the notion of ‘dominant’ or ‘signature’ pedagogy in theatre artists’ teaching practices (Trowsdale 1997, 2002; Dobson, 2005, Donelan 2005; Galton 2008; Thomson, *et al.* 2010)

Table 5.2: Overview of teaching projects observed

Olivia	Joan	Sandra
<p>Olivia’s projects were not funded by the AISS 1. Drama Club projects. Conducted in two schools School A, a high ability mixed-gender secondary school. Situated in a residential area of largely middle to high-income population. The school is described as one of the few remaining schools offering Chinese and English Languages as first languages to high-ability and fast-tracked students. This was Olivia’s first year engaged to direct the students for the SYF drama competition in April of the following year (2011). At the time of the research (August 2010) she had completed one month out of a 9-month workshop process with the students.</p> <p>School B, is a mixed-ability all-girls school. It is also a faith-affiliated school, though it accepts students of diverse religious practices. It is situated in a predominantly middle-class to working-class residential area. Olivia had prior experience of working with the school’s drama club. At the time of this research, she was creating a devised performance with the students for</p>	<p>Two drama club projects were observed in School D. Joan’s projects were not funded by the AISS. School D is a mixed-ability and mixed-gender secondary school. It is a ‘faith-affiliated’ school, though it accepts students of diverse religious practices. It is situated in a predominantly middle-class to working-class residential area.</p> <p>Joan has worked in School D’s drama club for 5 years. In the first project, Joan worked with 30 students in preparation for the SYF drama competition. In the second project, Joan worked with a group of 22 junior members of the drama club.</p> <p>At the time of the research, the drama club had 60-strong members. There were three teachers assigned to manage the club with whom Joan liaised with regularly. At the time of the observation, only one of the teachers worked closely with Joan. I observed two occasions where the teacher, Ms W, engaged in discussions with Joan and the students about the play. In another situation, she was observed discussing student disciplinary</p>	<p>Three projects in one mixed-ability, all-girl school, School E.</p> <p>1. Drama Club. Sandra taught a group of 13 year-olds in the drama club. These students were new to both the school as well as the drama club. There was a teacher in charge but she was not present. Sandra’s drama club engagement is not funded by the NAC-AISS.</p> <p>2. Theatre education as a pedagogical tool in collaboration with visual arts teacher Mr T. With this project, Sandra collaborated with Mr T. Together they designed and taught a special curriculum, melding drama and visual arts as pedagogy for learning and personal growth development with students identified as academic underachievers.</p> <p>3. Theatre as a subject Sandra, working in collaboration with the drama teacher Ms S, taught 15–16 year-olds. In this instance, Sandra was co-teaching drama as an IGCSE ‘O’ level elective.</p> <p>The last two projects were funded by the NAC-AISS. At the time of working with Sandra for this</p>

<p>the SYF competition. School B has performing arts as its niche area, and offers visual arts and drama as electives in its list of examinable IGCSE ‘O’ level subjects.</p> <p>In both projects, the teachers in School A and B offer administrative support to Olivia, ensure attendance as well as communicate schools’ and students’ expectations and feedback.</p> <p>2. Theatre as a subject In this specialised arts school, School C, Olivia was engaged as a theatre director and consultant to teach the process of theatre-making and performance creation. Admission to the specialised arts school is based on high aggregate academic score as well as an audition process. As such, the students are described as mid to high ability students with a special interest in the arts. At the time of this research, Olivia was teaching a group of 15–16 year-old theatre students.</p>	<p>issues and ways of managing the situation with Joan.</p> <p>Joan also offered lesson plans, which she wrote for an in-curriculum project in a separate school. In this project, Joan was the curriculum planner but not involved in the teaching of the programme.</p>	<p>research, she was in her second year of the AISS in School E.</p>
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I foreground these elements as pertinent contextual specificities affecting the ensuing analysis and discussion of the Singapore data sets.

3. Introducing The Three Singapore Theatre Artists: Olivia, Joan and Sandra

3.1. Composite profiles

In these composite profiles, the same treatment of employing two text styles as per the profiles of the English theatre artists is offered. The theatre artists’ verbatim narratives are in italics and my reflections of them, unitalicised. The codes ‘artistic’ and ‘teaching’ histories guide the identification and extraction of narratives verbatim from the raw data to form the composite profiles (Table 5.3). As with the English research, the Singapore theatre artists’ narratives offer the ‘retrospective’ contexts, that is, their self-constituted *perceptions* on the influences in their artistic and teaching development.

Table 5.3: History of artistic and teaching experience

Olivia (playwright, theatre director and educator, age range 30-39)	Joan (theatre actress and educator, age range 40-49)	Sandra (theatre director and educator, age range 40-49)
Theatre/Artistic experience		
<p>Her theatre journey began with “<i>an encounter by chance</i>” with “<i>theatre studies in junior college</i>”. Her ‘A’ level drama teacher left a “<i>big impression</i>” on her. He was credited as having “<i>opened this world to theatre</i>”.</p> <p>Thereafter, Olivia pursued a degree in theatre in a university in the US. But shortly after, she returned to Singapore and enrolled in a local college of performing arts. In the performing arts college, she met another pivotal mentor who was described as a teacher “<i>great at her craft and deeply committed to her students</i>”.</p> <p>Upon graduating from the arts college, she worked as an actor as well as a workshop facilitator with different theatre organisations. Her next two mentors came from one of the theatre organisations she obtained a full-time residency with. “<i>I learnt devising by practising it with them. So I learnt their way, how they made theatre. [. . .] I still think of them as my most influential ‘early’ teachers</i>” (DS131010).</p> <p>Since 2005, Olivia helms her own award-winning theatre company. As the company’s artistic director, Olivia conceptualises, writes and directs its theatre productions and educational and outreach programmes to schools and the community. She develops “<i>varied works, ranging from intimate experimental theatre pieces to multidisciplinary art experiences and theatrical spectacles in outdoor public spaces</i>” (Hennedige 2012, p. 4).</p>	<p>“<i>I started out more as a performer [. . .] and my professional training [. . .] for the 2 full years was at Lecoq in Paris, France. . . . When I came back to Singapore [. . .] I started to go into . . . er . . . I still continued to perform but I started to do directing as well because I was an associate with [a theatre company], they got me to direct</i>” (DS050122).</p> <p>She directed youth theatre projects performed in schools, otherwise known as ‘assembly programmes’. She also directed several main season professional theatre productions. In the last 10 years, she limits her directing commitment to youth as well as community development projects such as theatre with the down syndrome community and theatre for seniors.</p> <p>“<i>I used to direct professionally and I don’t do that anymore so I, I know also my own choices why I didn’t want to continue directing and I am more comfortable erm . . . serving somebody else’s vision as a performer. Erm . . . I am happier, I am better at it</i>” (DS050111).</p> <p>Joan continues to perform professionally and has established her own arts education company developing and collaborating with other theatre artists as educators in schools.</p>	<p>Sandra has a less formal artistic development. “<i>I don’t have training in theatre, . . . I have done lots of courses.</i>” (DS200810). Her experience with professional theatre in the 80s and 90s was “<i>on the job</i>”. She was one of the core members who founded what is now an established English-language theatre company.</p> <p>“<i>We set up from nothing really, we did not have a space, no office [. . .] We wanted to get work out, I fell into it [directing] by default and learnt on the job. [. . .] I suppose a lot of it influenced my teaching.</i>” Her directorial preference is devised performance. “<i>It’s the pain and the joy The uncertainty is double-edged. . . . it keeps me challenged</i>” (DS200810).</p> <p>Her engagement with the arts started early. “<i>I clearly went into the arts because, to be honest, I was acting since I was a child. My mother was doing all these operettas in a [local school]. I inevitably ended up in these performances. [. . .] And then when I went to [name of school] that completely changed my life. Secondary 1, Merchant of Venice . . . I have to say that even at 12, I fell in love with Shakespeare</i>” (DS29120).</p> <p>Her “<i>vivid</i>” recollection of the exposure she had to theatre and other art forms while at school, influenced much of her interest in the arts and education.</p>
Teaching experience		
<p>“<i>The first class I taught, I didn’t have any proper training. I basically used exercises that I had experienced [. . .] So I learnt how to get a classroom going on the job</i>” (DS131010).</p> <p>With no formal teacher training, working with young people became a “<i>testing ground [. . .] unlocking . . . finding ways of building a relationship with, every individual</i>”</p>	<p>Her engagement with teaching came in 1999 with the establishment of a new theatre training institution.</p> <p>At the institute, Joan did “<i>professional actor training ya. [. . .] for 5 years. [. . .] And then I was starting to do er more freelancing er teaching in er youth, more youths, schools. So when I left, left [the theatre training institute] that</i>”</p>	<p>Sandra was trained as a teacher in 1988. She began her teaching career in an all-girls secondary school, teaching literature and was in charge of the drama club. Drama “<i>was not a curriculum thing</i>” at the time, “<i>it was more a manner of teaching</i>”. In her teacher training (in Singapore) “<i>the focus was the teacher as a facilitator. . . . you are not giving them the information, you are not the authority but you</i>”</p>

<p><i>in the space</i>"; identify as much as possible what is <i>"under the surface of each individual</i>; and articulating clearly the intent of the work. <i>"I feel it's a responsible thing to do, they have a right to understand what's happening to them, around them, as it happens"</i> (DS160111).</p> <p>To Olivia, the term 'teaching' is occasionally replaced with verbs such as <i>"contact"</i>, <i>"navigate"</i> (DS131010) or <i>"impact"</i> and <i>"share"</i> (DS160111).</p>	<p><i>was when I went full-fledge into schools"</i> (DS050122).</p> <p><i>"[T]he first 3 years where we had really masters, good teachers of their genres of their particular methodologies"</i> (DS050122). Learning from the "best" offered a sense of what it meant to be a good teacher. To Joan, a good teacher is one with <i>"that experience [with] a very deep understanding of human nature [. . .] and how that affects the way in which learning issues and student relations are resolved.</i></p> <p>She acknowledged needing to alter or "switch" the teaching experience gained from the performance institute to young people in schools. <i>"In terms of the lesson plans, . . . learning new tools and . . . and how to make a switch from . . . a professional actor who is much older to somebody who is Sec 1, 13 years old in school, compulsory drama"</i> (ibid.).</p>	<p><i>are facilitating learning"</i>. This teacher training resonated with her theatre work, <i>"we were devising a lot of work, so you know I devised instead and you go with what the kids offer you and you go from there"</i> (DS291209).</p> <p>Her pivotal encounter with the "power" of theatre education came when two of the directors of the theatre company she co-founded attended a Theatre-in-Education (TIE) workshop conducted by Alan Lyddiard and Tony Graham of T.A.G. Theatre supported by the British Council. When they returned, they conducted a workshop to share their experiences with the members of the theatre company especially those keen on education.</p>
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The themes embedded in their narratives reveal the impact of mentors, colleagues and peers and significant moments as catalyst or turning points that imprint their artistic and teaching development. There are repetitive references to embodied learning with 'on-the-job', or learning through 'practising with' others or 'by doing'. These recurrences suggest a pattern of similarity regardless of artistic training background. There is also a predilection for 'uncertainty'; openness to 'chance'; and 'different' experiences. These include the revelations of becoming a director by default or taking up the opportunity to direct a production despite not having directed previously. They suggest that the three theatre artists are open to varied opportunities, demonstrating their ability to remain flexible. Whether this is a disposition acquired in their theatre training or an adaptive attitude learnt later as a response to the structure of their job as 'freelance' or 'peripatetic' theatre makers is unclear. What is important is that their adaptive and flexible disposition connects with their earlier reference to the theme of 'learning by doing': the "everything is on the feet" (Olivia, DS400088); "see where it takes you" (Olivia, Observation records: 15 September 2010); "on the floor" (Joan, DS400098); "let's try" (Joan, Observation record: 24 November 2010); and "the making of" (DS291209). This motif of embodied learning recurs and emerges as a significant structure in their teaching practices.

There are also points of departures between the three Singapore theatre artists. Where ‘mentoring’ has a significant imprint in Olivia and Joan’s structure of learning, Sandra articulated a reliance on peers as well as the community of theatre practitioners (Table 5.3). A possible explanation for the difference is the varied entry points to theatre making: Olivia and Joan having formal artistic training while Sandra’s development is periodic, workshop-based and less formal.

Additionally, each theatre artist has varying professional artistic trajectories. Olivia and Sandra lean towards directing, while Joan, acting. There are also artistic differences in theatre making genres and interests. Olivia is noted for her wide-ranging multidisciplinary experimental theatre work and large outdoor spectacles. Meanwhile, Sandra who’s last theatrical production was 20 years ago, seemed less certain what her next directorial work may be, but professed an inclination towards devising as well as interests in personal stories (DS400069). It is difficult, however, at this juncture to ascertain how the varying artistic styles impact their teaching practices. It may be worthwhile to return to these differences when cross-analysing the interview data with the observation records and their discussions in the video assisted situational recall. The process of cross-referencing the data may illuminate the extent to which heterogeneity in artistic experiences impact teaching practices.

3.2. Recursive utterance and significance of ‘worlds’

Again informed by the research conducted in England, a separate coding on ‘worlds’ was generated. The coding identified that the notion of ‘worlds’ bears a strong presence in the Singapore theatre artists’ ontology. In total, references to ‘worlds’ reverberate fifteen times across their interviews. Deconstructing their narratives, I identified two broad categories of ‘worlds’. The first reference is the ‘lived real’ world and within which there are references to varied cultures and practices as different ‘worlds’. Secondly, they refer to the temporally and spatially layered, diverse and multiple ‘theatrical worlds’.

For instance, Olivia’s reflection of the multiplicity of theatre worlds is informative. She states,

There are different worlds, theatre, and even if they (referring to the students) don't get it now, they'll get it the next time they work with a different director (DS270810).

Embedded within this statement, Olivia structures the 'theatre world' as an 'alternative' to the 'real'. She alludes to the possibility of theatre as a means to interrogate and consequently make sense of the 'real world'. Significantly, Olivia's statement hints at diversity in approaches to theatre making and by extension plurality in visions, ideologies, genres and aesthetic sensibilities. While their endeavours of theatre making may be the same, the lens on how the theatre is made may be different and hence offer multiple and divergent perspectives to the 'real'.

As detailed in Chapter 2, Goodman's (1978) writing on worldmaking is a valuable resource. While Bourdieu develops *habitus* and *fields* within the lens of relational social theory, Goodman formulates world(s) out of a linguistic and symbolic system of describing, deciphering and organising points of view within a philosophical construct. Where Bourdieu constructs his theory from an observation of the real, Goodman employs abstraction to the real. As such positioning Bourdieu in dialogue with Goodman aids my reading of the Singapore theatre artists' teaching practices. It allows me to juxtapose nested nexus of the social structures of education on one hand, with a philosophical approach to teaching. Such a philosophical approach is informed by an esoteric but nonetheless real, potent and visceral embodiment, and accordingly, implicit understanding of the concept of 'worlds'. I am suggesting here that the concept of 'worlds' is embedded in the larger domain of 'fields'. Accordingly, there may be multiple conceptions of different 'worlds' (of theatre making aesthetic impacting different theatre making approaches) within the theatre field.

Within this nested nexus, the theatre artists' referencing of worlds is significant in that it implies a connection with specific epistemic influence on the construction of knowledge. It is expressed in a pedagogy favouring plurality and difference. This would suggest that the Singapore theatre artists' artistic *habitus* seem to be ideologically at odds with the educational doxa (Bourdieu 1977). The latter is characterised as recognising attainment standards, conformity, uniformity and authority of one 'right' answer as its default or dominant teaching practice (Tan,

Sharan & Lee 2006). The nested nexus, therefore, pose a discomfort for the artists as well as the educators and the students, one which constantly demands attitudinal as well as cognitive ‘shifts’ to navigate what would otherwise appear as two politically separate, distinctive and resistant practices.

Extending this line of thought further, a question to ask then is would this ideological difference continue to make theatre education by theatre artists a marginalised endeavour? Or over time, and with greater expectations of theatre artists to fill in pedagogical duties within schools, would theatre artists’ teaching practices become more aligned with school goals and structures? Would they be co-opted by the educational institutions in which they practice? I will attempt to response to these questions in a later chapter, but first I shall return to present more codes from the raw data.

3.3. Coding patterns of language structure

The juxtapositions of their narratives in the composite profiles indicate that their involvement with theatre making as central to the construction of their teaching acts. Evidence surfaced when analysed against the second code identified as ‘theatrical vocabulary’. Informed by the research conducted in the English site, particularly the experience with Viola’s narratives (Chapter 4, section 2.3, pp. 123–125), I concentrated on patterns in the language structure of the Singapore narratives. Table 5.4 reflects the frequency with which the three theatre artists rely on ‘theatrical vocabulary’ to make sense of their lives, their engagement with the teaching act and the environment. After two cycles of coding, 5 more codes as indicated in the far left column under ‘themes’ emerged from the larger umbrella code of ‘theatrical vocabulary’. The five themes are interconnected. But for clarity of coding purposes and analysis, I extracted them into five different themes.

Table 5.4: Narrative isolation: artistic habitus impacting teaching practices

Theatre Artists / Themes	Olivia	Joan	Sandra
Connection between artistic identity and practices	1. <i>“You can’t separate yourself from your sensibilities [. . .] I always come into the space [refers to the teaching space]</i>	1. Joan highlighted her experience at a performing arts academy and working with different ‘masters’ as pivotal in honing her pedagogic attitude.	1. <i>“I think the artist also from the start creates a different atmosphere [in the classroom]. [. . .] Erm, so I think the sensibility is different”</i>

with educational practices	<i>bringing with me whatever phase I'm in artistically and I am always evolving</i> " (DS270810).	She acknowledged the need to <i>"mediate and find for ourselves what works and what doesn't work. Because they all are, they come with one methodology they are one of the best in this methodology in the world they are very good at it but they may not be the most open to others. [. . .] I tell you I don't think I could have gone into teaching at all without that experience. First of all it taught me so much about patience about humility [. . .] understanding and compassion and yet it doesn't mean you don't care about quality"</i> (DS050111).	(DS400082).
Connection between artistic development and life	1. <i>"It follows through from what I've discovered about working within group dynamic, whether it's a group of actors or a class. Every group is a different animal. Every group has a different vibe, they affect each other, . . . so its about spending some time with the different personalities (pause) I mean its like getting a sense of where people are at (pause) it's a combination of a general group vibe and the individual vibe"</i> (DS270810).	1. <i>"Life is . . . not a one-way street. Sometime there is growth sometimes you 'gostand' [reverse]. Sometimes it's up and down. Sometimes you do question ah yah what is this all about? . . . But that in itself is growth. [. . .] I am just trying to see when the breakthrough will be artistically la. I think artistically there is still a long journey"</i> (DS400098). 2. <i>"I think anything that works on the self as a human being will always go back to the arts somehow. [. . .] for me to say "You don't need me already". [. . .] Because then you see that , , , there is this growth"</i> (DS400098).	<i>"I also feel that the . . . that the process of making art where that is the drama or visual or whatever it be, is in itself transformational"</i> (DS400069).
The learning that theatre affords	1. <i>"There is a responsibility and natural desire [. . .] that the artist has to communicate something vital. Even with students it's got to be something, it can't just be them making a play. And it can never just be about technique, in the bigger picture, I mean"</i> (DS160111). 2. Theatre space is <i>"an upside down world"</i> (DS131010 & 160111) and <i>"it has everything to do with the ordinary world and nothing to do with it"</i> . (DS160111). <i>"[T]heatre has this way of enabling people to, encounter with, work through, deal with, look into [. . .] life's mysteries and complexities"</i> (DS131010).	1. There is also a concern with nurturing a <i>"questioning mind"</i> and a strong belief that artists <i>"have so much to share, I mean, especially in the Singapore education system. [. . .] [Theatre has a] certain kind of responsibility and discipline . . . respect for others is very important . . . I think we inject a sense of creativity and fun and free space for the individual to express himself herself in different ways"</i> (DS050111). 2. She works through the theatre methodology to get the students <i>"connected with their bodies, their emotions, their thoughts, their impulses.... Hope to get them sensitised, more sensitive, more open, more aware, more</i>	1. <i>I am more patient in the teaching environment, [. . .] to create a piece that is theirs [. . .] I mean you must affirm "oh wow I did this".</i> (DS 400084). <i>"It is about learning what this means and where did this come from"</i> (DS200810). 2. <i>"I mean, I suppose, having been brought up so much with drama being a performance base, you know this was completely new. I mean the power to change lives was immense. [. . .] You know because it brings them to an area of reflection, which is arguably dangerous. You know. But incredibly important. That they are to think critically"</i> (DS291209).

	<p>3. “[S]tart to think of things that are out of the ordinary in order to reflect what’s very real and very, very er human and at the core of each of us. So those are the rules, imagination [. . .] to exercise your imagination, to understand that you are, I think we are fundamentally creative, we were made to be creative you see” (DS160111).</p>	<p>connected to themselves, to others and to the environment . . .” (DS210811).</p>	
Teaching environment as a theatrical / rehearsal space	<p>1. The classroom is viewed as a “heightened, highly imaginative creative space, which reflects the kind of human complexity you get anywhere you find a group of people in a room” (DS160111).</p> <p>2. She engages with the teaching act “from a directorial position” which is “this very impulsive, free, unpredictable space” (DS160111).</p>	<p>1. I need my space to be clean and uncluttered . . . if you want me to analyse there are influences in my life . . . I have worked with people like Mnouchkine and even with Robert Draffin . . . we all need that kind of space. My life is not like that you know, like my room is a mess. My working desk is a mess (emphasis on mess). But when I go into a rehearsal room I need it to be clean. If there is furniture and all that it is all right but it needs to be stacked nicely. I mean nicely at the side (laugh). So wherever I go I . . . I do that” (DS050111).</p>	<p>1. “I think it is important to be involved in the making of” (DS291209).</p> <p>2. “I kind of work directorially. I see what happens. [. . .] and to work with what happens” (DS400069).</p>
Lessons are planned but fluid and flexible: traces of devising and improvising	<p>1. “I definitely enjoy being prepared and yet not having a set plan so you’re really on your feet” (DS160111).</p>	<p>1. “Most of it was planned. I didn’t finish all I planned, I made an on-the-spot decision to drop the last big exercise” (DS210811).</p>	<p>1. “I’m quite willing to just trust the process. [. . .] “you embrace to quite a degree some uncertainty [. . .] a lot of my theatre making has been that. . .” (DS200810).</p> <p>2. “Because I know I can’t do the same thing with this class that I did with the last class or with another class” (ibid.).</p>

There are several points, which I wish to highlight.

1. In their own way, each theatre artist articulates an interdependent relation between their artistic and teaching identities and practices. Each informs the other within ‘evolving’, ‘growing’ and ‘transforming’ dispositions. Joan’s metaphor of artistic development as a life’s journey encapsulates their tacit acceptance of a continual process of tension between their existing *habitus* and the challenges of new *habitus*. This is further exemplified in Olivia’s assertions that “you can’t separate yourself from your sensibilities”. Through it, she reflects an awareness of how her artistic background as a director (which in

itself is evolving and developing) may affect the way she negotiates her teaching encounters. This is echoed by Sandra who admits that her directorial lens may at times challenge her encounter with young people.

I want to direct. OK. I mean it is very hard for me. This is something I constantly find. Whatever the group is I want to direct it. But it is something I have fought a lot because they need to learn and sometimes you need to allow them to make these mistakes and sometimes, I mean even in that group, if I have more time to evaluate I would have wanted to go down the path of 'did the planning help you, do you feel?' I mean and if they said yes then I would have had to accept that. (DS400085).

2. There is also recognition that being the 'other' is a valuable position to be in. This is indicated in Joan's claim of the theatre artist's presence as 'injecting' the possibility for students to experience 'difference' in education.
3. Their articulations of 'sensibilities' also reflect a sense of plurality and diversity within the field. For example, Joan relates to the "different methodologies" she experienced in the performing arts school and the need to mediate between what is appropriate according to the different needs and contexts. Olivia reflects on her own evolution as generating difference within herself. What this may suggest is their openness to a coexistence of 'difference' and 'choice' within their practices.
4. The theatre artists see their role as important: Olivia with the interrogation of the complexities of life through theatre; Joan with the development of a questioning mind and a sensitivity to self and environment; and Sandra with empowering students to believe in the agentive capacity of selves through creation.
5. Also of significance is their projection of the classroom as a rehearsal space. This perhaps explains the three theatre artists' recurring emphasis on a 'suitable' space for their theatre education projects. In a separate transcript, Joan remarked that the absence of a designated space for theatre education in most schools continue to marginalise theatre education. It forces theatre as a subject and methodology, theatre artists and the students engaged with it to exist nomadically. Consequently, Joan argues that the nomadic existence disrupts the students' ability to develop a relationship with theatre within the school environment with constancy, comfort and depth (DS050111).
6. Finally there is a tacit reference to devising and improvising as a strategy invoked in lesson planning. When engaged by the school for the in-curriculum

projects, each theatre artist is requested to submit lesson plans as evidence of their curriculum intentions. To engage in teaching, the theatre artists are made to learn, as Joan states, these “new tools” from teachers, fellow theatre artists or templates offered by the schools. As new tools, the ‘lesson plan’ may appear ‘alien’ to these theatre artists and one, which has yet to find a resonating fit within their repertoire of teaching practices. However crystallising this act with the different observed teaching moments reveals other considerations. Specifically, the fluidity in lesson planning is not a preference for less structure, but a negotiation with the theatre making process as a disciplined practice. As Olivia and Joan offer, theatre has its own rules. They believe that the “responsibility and discipline” (Joan, DS050111) needed to conduct themselves in a theatre class is equally, if not more, demanding physically, mentally and spiritually. Structure is not absent from theatre making nor theatre learning processes. But a reliance on structure alone limits the opportunity of being “alive and alert, [where] you are open to possibilities” (Olivia, DS270810).

Sandra echoes this sentiment,

[My] plan would have changed probably hugely [. . .] I'm quite willing to just trust the process [. . .] I mean you can't say its going to be exactly like this, it is not like I am going to paint this and this is going to be what it will look like and that's what it is going to be, full stop. (DS200810)

What the fluidity attests to is their sensitivity and awareness of teaching as *a dialogical interaction*. It is dependent upon what and how students respond to the lessons. The students’ responses are subject to their own resources and prior knowledge in the arts, the objectives of the theatre artists’ presence in the school and the time with which they have to work with the students. All of which are contingent upon the constant, and at times spontaneous, negotiations of subtle ‘differences’ that exist relationally between space/time/practice. As such, a rigid adherence to a planned lesson may not be appropriate.

This comfort with fluidity offers a sense of what Kempe (2009) suggests as confidence in their ‘subject knowledge’. These are variously translated in their narratives as the ‘instinctive’ ability to see and understand what needs to be

done, or ‘sensing the vibes of’; ‘feeling your way’; achieving ‘complicité’; and ‘open’ relationships. These characteristics are aligned with Schön’s (1983) study on studio related processes of reflect-on-action, indicating an implicit understanding of their expertise. Throughout the observations, their plans changed upon contact with young people. Some activities were accomplished but often, as Olivia recounts, “you sense their energy. Sometimes you feel they are tired of a particular way of exploring the work and you had planned something more vigorous, then you change it slightly” (personal conversation post observation dated 27 August 2010).

4. Observing The Three Singapore Theatre Artists At Work

What is needed to make more sense of the Singapore theatre artists’ teaching practices is to offer a picture of what goes on within the classroom walls. For that I turn to the observational framework as detailed in the methodology section, which includes classroom talk; the teaching body; spatial transformation; artefacts and theatre strategies (Chapter 3, 10.1.3(b), pp. 94–95). The discussion, while focused on Singapore, will also reflect on the findings from the English sites. These include the importance of ‘spatial transformation’; the presence of a ‘continuum between talk-centred and body-centred approaches’; as well as the extent to which ‘contextual specificities’ affect the choice and approach to the activities implemented in the classrooms.

4.1. Classroom talk

I draw upon Robin Alexander’s (2005) observation of dialogic teaching across the UK. I organised the data on classroom talk in two categories: repertoire of teaching talk (instructions, discussion, dialogue) and repertoire of learning talk (discussions, dialogue, explain, narrate, ask questions, evaluate, explore, imagine, reason, justify, critique, negotiate). As my focus is on the theatre artists’ teaching practices, I limited my analysis to the data that indicate how they harnessed talk to engage the students, “stimulate and extend their thinking and advance their learning and understanding” (ibid., p. 37).

a) Repertoire of teaching talk: sidecoaching

The theatre artists variously employ a repertoire of teaching talk. These include lecture-style instructions or one-way communication led by the theatre artists as well as dialogue between students and theatre artists to further explain the instructions. However it is the third pattern of instructional talk, sidecoaching, which I wish to elaborate. According to Spolin (1999), sidecoaching consists of instructions or ‘assists’ given *over on-going* activities (p. 28). They are used to:

- offer additional guidance or instructions to clarify observed doubts or to deepen the exploration;
- offer comments on the progress or development of the group or individuals working on the task. This took the form of encouragement; suggestions on how to work through the task; highlighting changes that were seen; inviting new players into the scene or activity; highlighting unexpected or new developments emerging from the activities;
- offer attention to a specific group or individual while the task is on-going;
- avoid interrupting the ‘flow’ in the exploratory process, a concept explicated later (Csikszentmihalyi 1990);
- also, as Spolin suggests, allow the theatre artists to “step into excitement” of the activities that the students were engaged in (op. cit.).

Sidecoaching engages with audio/verbal probes and stimuli to provoke a response from the subject (in this case, students). The students receiving the sidecoached instructions react by reflecting on their in-the-moment actions and adjust them accordingly without breaking away from or stopping the activity. They are required to multi-task by maintaining their focus on the task, displaying a heightened awareness of their environment and attending to the sidecoached instructions over a sustained period of time.

In the Singapore research, sidecoaching accompanied sustained on-the-floor explorations present in Olivia’s projects with Schools A, B and C, Joan’s work with the junior drama club students in School D and Sandra’s teaching of drama as a subject in School E. The possible reason for this occurrence may relate to the pace and choice of activities. For example, in Joan’s 2-hour workshop with the junior members of the drama club, she structured an exploratory movement-related activity

in which students created movement in response to music and texts. Prior to the activity, she offered the opening instruction. It consisted of a dialogue between her and the students (lines 1–11). Thereafter, sidecoaching was introduced once the activity began.

School E	
Research participant: Joan	
Period: November–December 2010 & July–August 2011	
Observation record: 20 August 2011	
1] Joan:	<i>I am going to play a piece of music and you all take your time to respond to it. You</i>
2]	<i>move around the space. I have placed chairs and some paper on the floor.</i>
3]	<i>You respond to the music and in your own time, pick up the paper and read the text. You</i>
4]	<i>can read everything, some of it, up to you. Just move, stop, read. Any questions?</i>
5] Student:	<i>Is there a space limit?</i>
6] Joan:	<i>Ah good question, don't hide behind the piano la. And stay within the room.</i>
7]	<i>(laughter)</i>
8] Student:	<i>Do we have to move with the chairs?</i>
9] Joan:	<i>Yes, when you are ready. Ok. For now just sit on it, or move around it. Let's see how</i>
10]	<i>it goes. Ready? Go into the space and find your own space. You can start standing,</i>
11]	<i>seated, lying down, whatever you feel comfortable.</i>
<p>The pieces of music she selected were all instrumental pieces. She played the first piece. No one moved. 15 seconds later, a girl began to move her arms to the rhythm. Soon, others bobbed their heads. A few minutes later, one student got up and ran around the space. A boy walked slowly to one of the pieces of paper and read the text out loud.</p> <p>Over the on-going activity, Joan sidecoached, <i>“When you are ready, just feel the music and listen to the reading. Do what you feel comes from you. In your own time.”</i></p> <p>The music rolls on to the next instrumental piece.</p> <p>Joan sidecoached again as she observed more students moving, <i>“Good, some of you are using the space. How does the music affect you? Is it light and cheerful? Do you feel its rhythm? Start small and then explore what else you can do.”</i></p> <p>A few minutes later when more students were on the floor, she added, <i>“Have I used every part of my body? How is this piece of music different from the previous one?”</i></p> <p>The last sidecoaching offered questions to provoke the students to think about their actions and bodies in space. There were a few who remained seated throughout. She did not comment on them. This went on for 42 minutes. At the end of the activity they had a discussion. The first response from one of the students: <i>“It was difficult”</i>.</p>	

Viola Spolin’s various writings on sidecoaching (1985, 1999) referenced rehearsal-based exploration and the directorial lens as its foundation. Inferring from Spolin’s reference point, it is possible that Olivia, Joan and Sandra would have experienced sidecoaching as students of theatre as well as with performers and directors in their own theatre practice. Accordingly, they are familiar with this structure of instruction giving and are comfortable working with it to communicate with the students.

As mentioned earlier, sidecoaching works best in teaching contexts with sufficient time for sustained on-the-floor exploration. I observed in Sandra's situation, she employed sidecoaching in the teaching of drama as a subject. But a different teacher talk was used in a separate in-curriculum project with Mr. T, the visual arts teacher (see Table 5.2, Sandra's school projects).

<p>School E Research participant: Sandra Period: August 2010–March 2011</p>	
<p>Observation record: 10 January 2011</p>	
<p>Sandra:</p>	<p><i>All right. So we imagined. We thought about something we did before. In fact what we did was, we closed our eyes. Remember that? (responses from some students: Yes). And each of you was asked to remember, well you were asked to remember about something you always wanted to remember, a day in your life, that you always wanted to remember. Something. Remember that? (students nodded their heads) And then you wrote this down. Do you remember what that was you wrote down? Who doesn't remember (Sandra raised her hand as a signal to invite those who do not remember to do the same. No one did.) Ok. Excellent. Now we are going to work with that further today. First you went back, you remembered, you imagined, you wrote it down. And today we are going to continue. You are going to tell that story. And you are going to do it in a special and different way, all right. We are going to show you how it is done. You are not going to stand up and tell it to the whole group. Ok you need to listen otherwise you wouldn't know what is going on. All right. You are going to tell it to one other person first, that is the first thing you do. All right. I am not going to explain it yet, I will show you what happens.</i></p>
<p>(Demonstration)</p>	
<p>Sandra:</p>	<p><i>So you will tell a story, give someone a story, the one you wrote about, yes all right. Story that you already wrote about, that memory, now you will tell it to someone. All right. And that person will then take it as their own. And you will theirs. Ok. And when you get this new story, you will then tell it to someone else and then you pass on again and tell it to one other person. So you will tell it twice over. Ok. All right. So let me arrange you now. This is how we are going to do it. You just move down a little here (indicated where the girl should sit). And the girl next to you will face you (and pointed to the next girl to her new position). So you come and sit here, so that we make two circles (Sandra gestured to show how the circles meet). All right, girls do you see that? Can we all move and do this?</i></p>
<p>Students then formed two circles and began exchanging stories.</p>	

In this extract, Sandra was observed spelling out what was needed, how the activity was linked to the previous week's work and where it would lead to next. As Sandra later explained, these students have been identified as academic underachievers. She was mindful of ensuring full comprehension to help them achieve the task. From the data, it appears that the lesson objectives and outcomes as well as student capabilities affect the employment of appropriate classroom talk to engender engagement with the activities.

b) Discussions and dialogue: large group, smaller groups and one-on-one

Discussions and reflections while present, vary in frequency and duration across the different Singapore sites contingent upon the different project needs. I revisit the findings from the research in Phase I/England discussed in Chapter 4. I discussed how talk-centred dominated the structure of learning in Rita's approach. This observation was made when comparing Rita's teaching approach to Viola, Reese and Rona in the English sites. The comparison suggested a continuum between talk-centred and body-centred approach as an explanation. It was suggested that Rita's approach leaned towards a talk-centred approach of teaching, where group discussion, oral reflection and brain-storming of ideas were privileged (Chapter 4, section 5, pp. 142–146).

Meanwhile in the Singapore sites, Olivia, Joan and Sandra appeared to lean towards a more body-centred approach where discussions occur less frequently and are often initiated at the start or the end of their sessions with the students. In separate interviews, I asked them to comment on the place reflections and discussions have in their teaching practices. While all three admitted that the presence of 'talk' and its corollary adjustment of tone and vocabulary vary according to context and project needs, nonetheless there was a greater investment in the actual doing and that discussions were often generated from the experience of doing. Olivia and Sandra offered an explanation for this occurrence. Olivia explained,

I don't have the skills to sit down and solve deep-seated problems with the students. But through theatre and the language of theatre, we can offer some perspective about life that helps us feel, not so different in our situation or not so alone, or that its ok, even if its super hard and complex. (DS160111).

Sandra highlighted the importance of feeling it in the body to prevent the students from,

just being cerebral about what they were saying (200810). She adds when working with the body, something else that has been sourced that is in my body and I feel it and part of me is thinking I know where this is coming from . . . because the body doesn't lie. (DS200810).

The sense offered through their narratives is that criticality and reflexivity is engaged in the doing and that it is in the 'doing' that ideas are concretised, deconstructed, questioned and probed.

There is also a recognition that not all students are “*able to verbalise so much but they are doing things*” (Joan, DS400098). Implicit in Joan’s statement is the acceptance of the complexities of working with the English language in theatre education. As depicted in the exposition on Singapore (Chapter 2, section 5.1, pp. 55–56), while the English language is the lingua franca, it is seldom the mother tongue (Rae & Tan 2012), which suggests a psychological and emotional distance with the language. It is a complex relationship resulting in a varied and hybridised proficiency of the English language in Singapore’s multi-cultural and multi-lingual classrooms, which may privilege ‘doing’ over ‘talk’. There is yet another factor worth considering. The theatre education classroom, for many of these students, offers a ‘different’ and ‘new’ educational experience. Dialogue and discussions are uncommon practice within an educational environment that is dominated by teacher authority (Alexander 2005; Tan, Sharan & Lee 2006). Accordingly, the skill to engage in reflective talk for both the theatre artists as well as the students may require more time and exposure to develop. The issue of language and culture of discourse within the Singapore classroom are two ideas, which I am presently unable to expand given the limits of the current research. However, they are worth investigating in the future on effectiveness of body-centred approaches to circumvent language inhibitions in the Singapore classroom.

4.2. The teaching body

My focus on the teaching body invokes Parker-Starbuck & Mock’s (2011) and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s (2005) observation of the body as materially, culturally and historically specific and iconographic of their identities. It also incorporates the body as actively sensing, knowing and doing as discussed in Chapter 2 (Archer 2000; Shevtsova 2003; Blumenthal 1984; Boyette and Zarrilli 2007; Liberman 2011). In other words, I examined how theatre artists embody their identities as artists and educators, and express them as separate from other teachers within the school context. Accordingly, in the observation, I noted features of dressing, footwear as well as the presentation of both body and gestures as iconic of their hyphenated artist-educator selves.

Beyond the assertion of their ‘otherness’, as discussed in Chapter 4, their attire symbolised an association with the ‘workshop’ condition inherent in the rehearsal-room culture of theatre making (Monk, *et al.* 2011). Along with such an association, it further signaled a disposition of ease and adherence to a different propriety and rule of engagement. These include their freedom to be mobile in open spaces, comfortable with their presence in and around the students, breaking with the codes

of conduct involving touch and proximity, and an establishment of a ‘friend’ relationship rather than the teacher-student hierarchy typically experienced in school (Galton 2008). All of which invoked a different practice of the body. Their bodily performance suggests receptivity to a *multi-sensorial* form of learning.

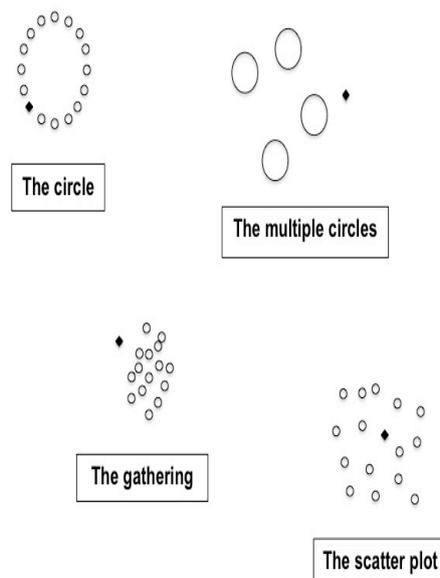


Figure 5.2: Four spatial formations

conventional space as a disruption, appropriation and as a consequent, a representation of their creative identities. Beyond that, I suggest that the spatial transformation enacts a formulation of a distinctive system of knowledge, one which highlights the disciplined and heightened awareness of ‘self’+‘space/environment’+artefacts/objects as foundational in the theatre making discipline. This idea is consonant with theatre practices in both studio-based training and rehearsal-based explorations as explicated in Chapter 2, section 3.5.1, page 51 (Blumenthal 1984; Shevtsova 2003; Boyette & Zarrilli 2007).

In the observations, the theatre artists and students work with a tacit understanding of the permeability and malleability of space. Within the teaching process, four recursive patterns of spatial formations emerged. Each theatre artist used the four formations differently.

4.3. Spatial transformation

In chapter 4, I discussed the theatre artists’ transformation of the

It is difficult to pin point with exactitude the different moments these formations occur. I propose instead to understand the spatial formations as a system of (re)structuring movement symbolic of balancing cohesion/all/being together with dispersion/each/a-part, or what Olivia describes as the ‘individual’ and the ‘unit’ (DS160111) in ensemble-building. The balancing of the individual and the unit is reflective of my discussion of Bogart’s (1995) notion of the ensemble as ‘snowflakes’. It connotes the presence of difference within the collective (Chapter 2, section 3.4.1, p. 49–50). Viewing the spatial formation as such may offer a different perspective to consider space as a necessary element in the construction of the ensemble.

Inferring from my proposal, the **circle** engenders cohesion, and the coming together as an ‘all’. In that respect, the appearance of **the circle** at the start and end of the class suggests a bringing together of the disparate energies. But the circle is not binding; the space opens up depending on the tasks and the activities offered. This is played out in the appearance of the **multiple circles** and **scatter plot**. Here the togetherness is intercepted by the possibilities of ‘each’ and ‘being a-part’ as necessary for the exploration of varied perspectives and ideas. Swinging between these formations the students as well as the theatre artists are offered opportunities to interact with different people and in different group sizes. In so doing, they experience different working styles and approaches.

However it is worth noting that while the scatter plot and multiple circles appear in all the projects, **the circle** is used more frequently in the in-curriculum projects. Perhaps, the circle is employed to structure and formalise a ritual of starting the engagement on an equal footing. This is observed in Sandra’s work where she begins either standing apart from or seated as part of the circle, discussing the successes and challenges of the previous week before highlighting the goals of the day. The circle is then re-organised at the end of the session to recapitulate the lessons learnt. For the drama club, Sandra once again employed the circle to get the students organised before they break up to work on individual or group tasks.

Throughout Olivia and Joan’s observations, the circle was used sparingly. In Olivia’s case, it was employed at the beginning phase of her work with School A and

subsequently the circle is not returned to. Joan employed the circle as a structure for a game with the junior members of the drama club in School D. Both Olivia and Joan employed **the gathering** as a more predominant formalised structure for reflections, discussions as well as instruction. Symbolic that these formations are to the discussion of the ensemble, there is also the consideration of practicality. The research data suggests that as the rehearsals intensified and the production dates drew nearer, the students and the theatre artists were more concerned with meeting the production needs. **The circle** as a formation, in spite of being at the heart of a theatre education ethos, gave way to **the gathering** in the face of constraints of time and fit for purpose practicalities.

4.4. Employment of artefacts

Artefacts here are defined as resources and materials used in class. The artefacts employed are not limited to texts (printed scripts) either published or devised. They include visual images, music, lights, costumes, hand props and large sets. Objects and costumes are less frequently employed and least of all lights. They were introduced to the class according to the needs of the project. For example, with projects that led to full-scale theatrical productions, such as those observed in Olivia and Joan's drama competition productions, props, sets and costumes were brought in for the students to work with.

Specifically with Olivia and Joan, apart from texts both published and devised, a wide range of music, with and without lyrics, is used. An example of music as an artefact can be found in the earlier discussion of sidecoaching in Joan's teaching moment (section 4.1, observation record: 20 August 2011). We will see another example later when discussing Olivia's work involving games and exercises.

4.5. Employment of theatre-based strategies

To ground the discussion on strategies, I offer extracts from Olivia, Joan and Sandra's teaching encounters. The extracts depict how games, stories, devising and improvisations, tableaux making, ensemble and scene building are employed. However, these strategies are not the limits of the theatre artists' repertoire. I am well

aware that the fieldwork granted a limited window to the possibilities that may surface. Additionally, my further abridged interpretations as well as my singular researcher lens could only offer slices of the density of the theatre artist–student relationships. They are nonetheless valuable not only as data, but critical as evidence of the losses and gains of the reflective practitioner within the construct of an ethnographic case study.

4.5.1: Games and exercises

The commitment to play in theatre education is well-theorised and documented (Courtney 1989; Neelands 1984; Winston 2012). My focus is not to further explicate the importance of play in theatre education but to examine the use of games and exercises as part of the repertoire of play in theatre education. Specifically I wish to focus on the connection of games and exercises to a) ‘flow’ and b) as a diagnostic tool to understand the dynamics of the students in class.

a) Games and exercises as a repertoire of play and connection with flow

The first idea is drawn specifically from Hans-Georg Gadamer’s (2004) chapter on “Play as the clue to ontological explanation” in *Truth and Method*. Gadamer’s ideas on play and art are too complex to offer in brief. However the main crux, which I attend to, is the connection he makes between the process of art and play through his explication of ‘aesthetic differentiation’. Art (and play) are differentiated because they have their own sense of logical outcomes and rules. Gadamer describes play as,

[a] closed world, one without transition and mediation to the world of aims . . . He cannot enjoy the freedom of playing himself out without transforming the aims of his purposive behavior into mere tasks of the game” (2004, p. 107).

This idea resonates with the bracketing of play from the real world as espoused by Johan Huizinga (1970) and Roger Caillois (1961). Another point of connection between play and art in Gadamer’s formulation that relates to my investigation is the aspect of losing oneself in play (p. 103). This notion connects with the concept of ‘flow’, defined by Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (1990) as “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter”. The pleasure is in the doing (p. 4).

What distinguished play and art process from ‘normalcy’, if a distinction is a possibility at all, is the idea that both art and play absorb the doer into the task/activity and ‘self’. In doing so, it temporarily disconnects the ‘self’ from the ‘real’ world. As a consequence, the players find themselves in a state of ‘flow’. In this state, the subject experiences:

- an intense and focused concentration;
- where the action and awareness of the environment merge together;
- loses self-consciousness;
- yet alert and responsive and a sense that one can control one’s action;
- senses a distortion of time;
- and the activity is intrinsically rewarding
- able to operate at full capacity (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi 2002, p. 90).

But a point I would like to make in response to Gadamer is the type of play in question. Not all play engenders flow. A play experience, which offers just enough challenge to tip the scale beyond our usual limits, creates flow. This is when the body is pushed to the edge between ‘self-consciousness’ and ‘losing self’. It is from these well-spring of ideas on play, flow and extreme concentration that I attempt to make sense of how games and exercises are used in some of the classes I observed. First let me explicate the concept of games and exercises.

Augusto Boal (2002) prefaced his use of ‘exercises’ as that which,

designate all physical, muscular movement (respiratory, motor, vocal) which helps the doer to a better knowledge or recognition of his or her body” and its relation to other bodies and objects in the work space or environment (p. 48).

Each exercise is a physical reflection on the self (the ‘I’) and at times in connection with an idea, image, a text, character or scene. Meanwhile, for Boal, games are “extroversion”, meaning an outward “expressivity of the body as emitter and receiver of messages” (ibid.). In his sense, games are means with which the ensemble dialogues with its members, where each member introduces the ‘self’ and displays tacit and innate capacities, non-verbally. Examples of games as “extroversions” are *ice-breakers, warm-ups and warm-downs* games, or those played as interjections and

disruptions to moments of high concentration. Game playing is also a device to establish normatives of social interaction in a classroom.

Notably in some of Olivia, Joan and Sandra's sessions for instance, reference to games and playing connect with a degree of 'fun' followed by laughter, temporary chaos, screams and at times utter confusion. Meanwhile, exercises dictate a significant mood change physically, vocally as well as in the energy and concentration invested in them. An observable marker is the absence of laughter. This marked change makes for a slightly different engagement and employment of the two terms.

However it is important to caution against a didactic binary between the two. In actualisation, the game and exercise division is less clear. Arguably, the enjoyment sensed in the playing/doing of both intensifies despite the absence of laughter. I submit that it is in the longer sustained 'play' state that the possibility of 'flow' may occur, especially those requiring greater concentration due in part to the challenge they offer in doing them.

Below I offer two extracts highlighting the adaptive construction of games and their mutability into exercises. These were taken from Olivia's teaching moments in two different sites.

School C: a performing arts school Research participant: Olivia Period: August 2010
Observation record: 27 August 2010.
Context: This was session 4 of a 4-session programme, 3–4 hours/per session, and is my first and only observation of Olivia's work in School C.
<u>Time: 2.10pm</u> <i>Olivia: Up on your feet and listen to my instructions. (Scatter plot configuration)</i>
They began walking around the space and she sidecoached, " <i>Be sensitive to each other. Either walking or running or pausing. But you need to do this collectively, ultra sensitive to each other. I suggest you do this very slowly first. At the right time people can take risk. Be aware of each other. Let's start neutral, please, cleaner.</i> "
Gradually and from within the group, the pace increased. She sidecoached saying, " <i>Someone has changed a bit</i> ". The students alerted by her voice, began to sense a change in their environment and adjusted their pace. A student initiated a run. The pace quickened. The students responded to maintain the pace.
Olivia, walking around the room, occasionally stopping and with her gaze fixed on the students, she sidecoached, " <i>Be more sensitive ya. Try not to lead the process. You have got to decide when you are going to speed the process but you also have got to feel it.</i> "

As the students moved, she sidecoached with, *“That’s good. Getting better.”*
This went on for 3 minutes, with the pace constantly changing, alternating between running and walking initiated by those within the group.

Olivia: *Fix the gaze of your eyes. Ok, when I say walk you run and run you walk. Pause, everyone stops.”*
As she sidecoached, the students would continue working on the activity, without stopping or turning their gaze to look at her. They appeared concentrated on the task of either walking, running or stopping.

Olivia: *When I say hop you fly and when I say fly you hop.*

Some students collided with another in the beginning, but after 13 minutes into the process, the students seemed more adjusted in the space, and managed their various actions with limited contact.

Olivia: *When I say forwards you go backwards when I say backwards you go forwards. Be careful.”* She noticed some kids bumping into another as they attempted to walk backwards.
She stopped them. Breathless the students gathered to listen to Olivia.

Olivia: *I am going to call out a number, 5, and you are going to form a group of 5 people in it. Whoever fails to be in a group, dies dramatically (everyone laughs).*

She called a number and chaos ensued. Students grabbed other friends to be in their group. Two students were left out and they ‘died’. She teased them, *“Surely you can die more dramatically. You’ve got the ceiling, the walls. Do die more dramatically.”* She laughed. She called out another number and the game continued. It went on for 5 minutes and each time, the ‘death’ got more dramatic. Olivia continued to encourage them, teasing them to be even more flamboyant, *“stage it bigger. It’s your death and no one else’s”*. [I identified this activity as a game employed by Olivia to interject or break the moment of intense concentration. The students released much laughter, and the atmosphere felt lighter.]

Time: 2.28pm

Teacher talk: Instructional dialogue

Olivia: *I am going to play a selection of different sounds. What you are going to do is very simple. Put the music in your body, allow the music to inspire you and allow you to move.*

Student: *Are there instructions?*

Olivia: *Yes, the music will instruct you. The music will speak to you. It will dictate or inspire you. The music will inspire you to move. It need not be literal. For example like Lady Gaga. I don’t know, someone might be inspired to do Tai Chi. But it’s got to feel right and its got to be a truthful impulse. Don’t be afraid. Work with your impulse, and it might evolve.*

There was a momentary silent. Olivia sensed the students were still lost.

Olivia: *You can draw inspiration from someone else. If you are lost, maybe you can see someone. You may copy, you can make it your own. You can start anywhere in this room. You can be sitting, lying, just find a starting point.*

Students got up, found different spots in the room, faced different directions, focused and waited for the music to begin.

Time: 2.34pm

When the music played, the students moved. At first, some of the students flapped their arms, with little awareness of other parts of their bodies. But by the second piece of music, more students began to experiment with their bodies. By the end of the second piece of music, Olivia sidecoached,

Olivia: *I want you now to embody one person’s movement. So you are all moving in the same way but in your own way. Be sensitive to each other.*

She observed and sidecoached, her tone of voice calm and more measured, *“Very good. As you are exploring, you are all moving the same way in your own way. Try to find it. Try to make it more your own. Moving the same way, but in your own way. Yes, good. Play a bit with the levels.”*

This went on for 10 minutes. Then Olivia added “character traits” to the movement. So the exercise began with free form and then slowly, Olivia added more layers to the work.

3.07pm: A 2-minute break was given to end this section. The students returned and together with Olivia, reflected on the process. One hour had passed.

In the above extract, the possible ‘flow’ state kicked in only with the last exercise with music, where the students were most concentrated. But not every student achieved this state of flow. There were those whose concentration lapsed. Later in a conversation with Olivia, she identified some students who achieved “the heightened state”, to which I interpreted as ‘flow’. But I was not able to identify if they were the same students, who I had observed and noted. But what is instructive here is that Olivia almost always deployed games at the start of the lesson. When necessary, she would scaffold layers of difficulties to the games. The games would either transform into a series of movement related exercises. At other times, instead of a smooth transition between games into exercises, Olivia may introduce a sudden switch between game playing and exercises as depicted above. The exercises, unlike the games, require greater concentration. There is also sustained duration in exercises, which is not always present in games. All of these elements in exercises offer space for the students to achieve a ‘heightened’ sense of awareness and sensitivity. But the final equation of achieving flow rests in the students’ commitment, and a willingness to engage deeply in the activity. The students in School C are theatre students and this may be one of the reasons why they seemed more receptive to doing sustained physical exploration.

Meanwhile in School A, recognising that the students have limited experience doing theatre, her approach with the same ‘running’ activity took on a more playful quality. Here, the students displayed a greater degree of self-consciousness.

<p>School A Research participant: Olivia Period: September 2010–January 2011</p>
<p>Observation record: 15 September 2010 Context: This was my first observation of Olivia’s work in School A. Duration of session: 2 hours.</p> <p>After 15-minutes of playing an active game of “Fire”, she gathered the students to discuss. (<i>The gathering formation</i>) Olivia: <i>So how was it? How did you feel about playing the game?</i></p> <p>A few students responded with “<i>at first it was confusing</i>”, “<i>fun</i>”, “<i>tiring</i>”, and <i>laughter</i>.</p> <p>Olivia: <i>The game made you move faster. It got you more excited, right? The task is very simple, right, run. So we focus on what we have to do. Know what we have to do, focus with your heart. The game can be the funnest game. Building a play is like building a game, it has room to play and whether it works, it needs to have committed players.</i></p> <p>Then she moved on to the second game: chase, walk, run, pause, touch, sing. In this game, she called out either one of the actions listed and the students would immediately act on it. The game felt very much like the spatial exercise experienced in School C offered above (observation record: 27 August 2010).</p> <p>The game went on for about 3 minutes. At one time she interrupted the game playing with a question.</p>

Olivia: *Can anyone offer a simple children's song?*
Boy 1: *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Stars.*
Olivia asked if there was a Mandarin version and a few nodded. A girl sang the Mandarin version. She requested that those who knew the song would teach it to those who did not.
Olivia: *Consciously learn it so that everybody can sing the song.*

Then she resumed the 'chase, walk, pause, touch and sing and run' game. She spotted some students in red T-shirts. She called out, "*All those in red sing it together.*" Then she singled one of the students, K, and requested he sang the Mandarin version. Encouraged by the students cheering him on, he stood up to sing. Students were then asked to walk around the space again. Olivia walked around the room with them too, but her eyes focused on them. She scanned the room and at a particular moment she called out, 'pause'. Again she reiterated the task, "*When I call out 'Catch or Chase', the catcher tries to catch someone in the room. The task is to focus on what you need to do*". She called out 'pause' again and everyone stayed still and held their position. She walked over to one student and touched his shoulder and requested that he catches. Everyone runs. Then she called out a name and requested the song. Some students began to giggle. With a firm tone, she cautioned the students, "*Avoid laughter, don't break the concentration.*" He sang and the playing continued. She never got them to a point of great concentration as the giggling persisted.

b) Games and exercises as diagnostic tools

Discussing Olivia's modus operandi with games and exercises reflects a counterpoint to Linda Griffith's (Griffith & Gallagher 2003) thinking on 'doing the same',

The problem is that these tricks have become the substance, so everyone does the same exercises, we all arrive at the same conclusions and can all demonstrate the same skills at the end of it. No uncharted territory (p. 123).

Unlike Griffith, these games, according to Olivia, are 'entry points'. They are used as a means to gauge not only the students' capabilities. They also offer her space and time to evaluate the effectiveness of her lesson. Embedded within the game playing is a dialogic and reflexive process. The games or exercises offer a two-way simultaneous communication between planned structure and spontaneous response to what the students bring to the activity. In that dialogic moment, both Olivia and the students are "alive and alert", or as she claims, "sensitive" to each other. This is witnessed in the extract of School A (observation record: 15 September 2010). In that extract, she tweaked the 'running' activity to respond to the students' energies, abilities and responses to the activity. When compared with School C, the differences in her approach at School A were:

- she included 'Chase' to "*energise the students (referring to School A). I felt they needed some energy in their bodies*", said Olivia in a post workshop discussion. This was something she had not planned but introduced after witnessing them in the first game (Fire).

- she was more involved in the activity, walking around and tapping on the shoulders of individuals to activate them as ‘catcher’.
- she offered more encouraging sidecoaching
- she included singing to listen to their voice, *“I needed to get to know them better. And the idea of a song came up because I wanted to know their level of comfort, you know, how they felt about each other.”* This was done through playing the game, to distract them from the consciousness of performing to a crowd. The choice of song too was important. It was a common childhood song (*Twinkle, Twinkle Little Stars*), offered by someone from within the group. She also encouraged them to use their mother-tongue (Mandarin), which she felt the students in School A would be comfortable with.

Both game playing and exercises require that the subjects (both theatre artist and students) to be conscious of their surroundings and the happenings in between. As such “doing the same” is never the same. Each enactment of the game or exercise offers a minutiae of unique encounters. If attended to, these encounters enable the transformation of the objectives of the teaching moment, and in the process, the games themselves are transformed.

4.5.2: Improvisation as a process and product

In the following extract, Olivia was working on an improvisation with a group of teenage girls, aged 14–16 years old, from School B. Together they were devising a piece of theatre for the SYF drama competition.

<p>School B Research participant: Olivia Period: November 2010–January 2011 Observation record: 16 November 2010</p>
<p>Olivia said, <i>“Let’s play dog and bone. Do you girls know how to play this game?”</i> Some girls had not experienced it, while those who had, offered to explain the game. Olivia would intermittently interrupt the explanation by highlighting the salient points, repeating and clarifying the rules some had offered. With the rules understood, the game began. Five minutes into the game, and familiarity with the rules, the game got more exciting. Shouts and screams intensified within this competitive game. Several wins were enjoyed on both sides. The score was even: three all.</p> <p>So when one of the students, Camilla, expressed her first burst of disappointment when her team lost, nothing felt out of place. In the first outburst, Camilla shouted out, <i>“Unfair! We did so well.”</i> She then turned to her group members and firmly said, <i>“Come on, we can do better”</i>. Another round of dog and bone and again Camilla’s team lost. This time she turned her attention to another student, <i>“Janice, come one, how could you touch the bone? Told you, take your time.”</i> Another loss and Camilla was exasperated. She demanded her team to be more vigilant. She glared at the opposing team, obviously upset at their success. The last outburst caught me off-guard. In a loud accusatory tone, she confronted another girl, Joanne calling her names and blaming her for the poor play. <i>“You are so stupid! Told you so many times! You are so lousy. Why do we have you in our team?”</i> Joanne</p>

was silent at first and then as if found her voice, replied haltingly that she was sorry. The moment was tense. All the girls looked on, no one spoke up for Joanne. Some girls seemed stunned, except for one or two who began smiling. I looked around, hoping that someone would intervene. I looked at Olivia, wondering what she would do. She stood nearby watching, not speaking. I felt like jumping in, but felt the reins of the researcher stopping me. Again I looked around. Then Joanne began to tear. Olivia finally took a step in and said, “*Good. Thank you.*” Joanne laughed and Camilla hugged her. The girls broke the tension with laughter and excited chatter. It was then that I realised, I was witnessing an improvisation.

In theatre, improvisations refer to the spontaneous engagement and exploration of a problem or issue as in the Boalian ‘Forum Theatre’ (1995); as well as improvising with theatre games as a tool for problem-solving for actors and directors (Barker 2010). Elsewhere in drama education, observations of the use of improvisations indicate scaffolding of the engagement with a clear framework of marking the learning outcome to be explored within it (Wagner 2002). However, in the extract above, the improvisation is the state in which both the participants and the workshop leader dispense with certainty and enter into a zone of the unexpected. Analogous to riffing in music, the improvisation, which Olivia set up for the students, had an almost random beginning. It engaged with free-form exploration to conjure an inspiration, or a moment where possibilities emerge (Sawyer 2000).

Ted Gioia (1988), cited in Lee Brown (2000) theorised in jazz music, that improvisation in this manner is a ‘retrospective’ model as opposed to ‘prospective’ model (p. 114). In other words, decisions are made while in the process, spontaneously responding to what happens as it is happening. Indeed, in the ‘dog and bone’ scene, it began with a whisper in the ear of one student to suggest anger. Thereafter, a tap on another student’s shoulder to request a response to the anger exhibited. A few more taps in between and some element of chance mixed in, the improvisation was underway.

However, several conditions are necessary to set-up improvisations in this manner. Firstly, there is an element of risk and the participants are vulnerable to situations that are unprescribed. There is thus a greater obligation to an ethics of care, trust, commitment and responsibility that underpins the ensemble spirit in the improvisatory work. Indeed, in a post-observation discussion, Olivia highlighted the required level of comfort (which I interpret as trust and respect) needed for such work. She explained, that she would not be able to devise in this manner in School A. She cited the margin of uncertainty in the students’ abilities and her capacity to

create the necessary conditions for devising and consequently improvising with them. She was cognizant that the students were the final arbiter of the creative learning process. The level of trust and respect she had in School B, reflected Olivia's recognition of the students as 'artists'. She recognised the students' commitment to the artistic process as well as to each other. As such it enabled her, and them, to engage with a high level of improvisational uncertainties. Together, they welcomed the "pliability and porousness" of the creative process. As 'theatre makers', they were receptive to work with and against orthodoxies and test the limits and potentialities of personal and group contributions to the creative process (Govan, Nicholson & Normington 2007, p. 3).

Finally, the 'dog and bone' improvisation reveals an acceptance of possibilities, imperfections and failures. Each is a learning opportunity to be built upon and developed further. In other words, "improvisational creativity as a process *is* the product" (Sawyer 2000, p. 150. Italics in original). As a process, improvisations of this form come close to the improvisations that artists display in their own studio/rehearsal processes. As Sawyer indicates, this is an improvisational style of *problem-finding* rather than *problem-solving* (ibid., p. 154). In the 'dog and bone' improvisation, Olivia and the students were identifying and searching for the form and content of their devised production. Through improvisations, they physicalised mind-mapping of the possible scenes for the final product, and subsequently worked towards refining them.

In a different extract, Sandra was observed leading an improvisation with eight students of the drama as an elective programme in School E.

<p>School E Research participant: Sandra Period: August 2010–March 2011</p>
<p>Observation record: 20 August 2010</p> <p>Sandra began with a warm-up exercise: walk, stop and drop (note: similar to Olivia's spatial running activity), with the aim of developing the students' ensemble sensitivity to space, others in the space and the development of the peripheral vision (DS200810). The exercise was conducted for 10 minutes, followed by a discussion on areas of improvement, which indicated that the exercise had been done before. In the discussion, Sandra cited 'levels' of difficulties, suggesting that each repetition is enhanced by "<i>a different instruction</i>" which developed the exercise further (ibid.).</p> <p>The students went back into the space, once again beginning with a walk around the room (scatter plot formation). Sandra sidecoached the students by offering several narratives. In each, they found themselves trapped in different situations, which they needed to escape from. A box was first described and the students</p>

depicted their struggles with its walls gradually caving in. Several other scenarios were offered culminating in one of the longer explorations of a space filled with slime. The students by then found themselves lying on the floor from the previous scenario. Sandra sidecoached their means of escape and the students enacted them.

During the exercise, Sandra offered the following sidecoaching guides:

- How far are you in this space?
- Is it difficult to get out of the slimey space?
- Are you covered in slime?
- Is it slippery? What colour is it?
- Is there tension in your arm as you pull yourself out?

In the discussions, the students told her they felt it was creepy and disgusting. Indeed, while they were in the moment, some of them generated sounds reflecting what they felt. Post-observation discussion with Sandra revealed her intention of wanting the students to “*experience the emotion*” and “*create the experience as it were*”(DS200810) sans telling or demonstrating, but feeling the way and showing it. “*The body doesn’t lie*” (ibid.), she explained.

Improvisations in Sandra’s example is offered here as a counterpoint to Olivia’s approach. In Sandra’s practice, improvisation was employed as a tool, where the process served a learning outcome. It was aimed at sensitising the students to their bodies for the later work to come. I end the discussion with Sandra’s extract, to indicate that improvisation is a complex endeavour. While there is not the space to unpack the possible gamut that improvisation as a strategy offers, suffice for the discussion to indicate that there are varying levels of engagement and challenge. Each time improvisation is employed, there are subtle differences and varying spectrum of engagement, that of ‘process as a tool’ and ‘process as a product’.

4.5.3: Building the ensemble through complicité

I felt actually quite nice about the relationship I built with this group of students in this school. [. . .] whether Sec 1 or 4, there is still a general kind of already er . . . complicité in a way. . . . I, there were few moments I raised my voice somewhat but . . . it didn’t cause any erm . . . sss . . . I feel maybe in some other schools or . . . settings it might cause the kids to be unhappy. Or not able to continue working, but . . . you know. And then, and then there were moments when I’m, I’m like a bit lost and I could just ask a question and there will be like 10 voices replying. Oh this is the line, this is what we did, this is the prop, this is whatever. So it was, I felt good about that. (Joan, DS 400098)

The quotation above is taken from an interview during the *video situational recall*. In it, Joan expressed her appreciation of her tripartite “three pillars” relationship between “the school, the students and then me, the instructor” (DS050111), and the building of the ensemble through *complicité*. Perhaps, her use of the term signposted her earlier artistic training with Jacques Lecoq in France. One of Lecoq’s pedagogical framework is achieving *complicité*, in French, suggesting “an alive, vibrant and engaged rapport between performers, and performers and audience” (Mason 2002, p. 33). Implied within this definition, is a ‘shared experience’ and an

understanding of the dynamics between individuals within and apart from the collective.

My time with Joan was spent observing the rehearsals of *The Wolf Boy*, a script by Peter Charlton (1985). I observed her induct new students to the drama club and manage the drama club schedule, production matters and student discipline with the teachers. Joan managed her school-based drama club much like a youth theatre company. She had a student-led production team, from sound and lighting operators and designers, to costume and props managers and stage managers. She openly expressed her desire to see different students leading the various teams in the drama club. Student leaders were appointed and there were various tiers of leadership roles made available so that everyone could develop “responsibility and initiative” (personal conversation dated 2 August 2011). I remembered her pride after attending a rehearsal of the student-led⁶ Teachers’ Day performance. She was impressed by their “strong desire to perform” (DS400098). She highlighted how they had worked well on their own. She explained they had a “great sense of space, great sense of ensemble, everybody was working very well when I was in the room. Independently you know. Ahh they don’t need me any more” (ibid.).

I turn to the observational records generated between November–December 2010 and July–August 2011 to extract the different moments in which *complicité* is enacted in her relationship with the students in the drama club.

<p>School D Research participant: Joan Period: November–December 2010 & July–August 2011</p> <p>Key: ‘S’ followed by numbers indicate the different students involved</p>
<p>Observation record: 24 November 2010</p> <p>Earlier, I observed students in their groups presenting what they did for a section of the play. As the groups presented, Joan invited students to offer comments or ask questions on the choices made. Following that, Joan proceeded to direct the prologue of the play.</p> <p><u>2.10pm</u> Joan: <i>From memory which group has the best gestures for the “once upon a time” sequence, which we did earlier. Do you remember one or few gestures you found interesting, or you like?</i></p> <p>A few students chorused different gestures. The group discussed with Joan for a few minutes. Then she called out</p>

⁶ The seniors of the drama club on their own accord, conceptualised and subsequently proposed a performance for Teachers’ Day. They then invited Joan to offer her input.

a student to demonstrate the chosen gesture. She (S1) performed it twice and then taught selected students involved in the prologue. As the students co-taught and learned, Joan offered support, suggesting the students observe the detail and sharpen their movements

Joan: *Let's say for example you are seated, how would you adapt this gesture?*

S1: *Maybe we could do something like this (she demonstrated).*

Joan: *Ok good. Let's try.*

Joan invited two more students to join, making it 14 students. S1 repeatedly taught the sequence to all of them: a choreography of gestures with different levels, which began without chairs and now with chairs incorporated. They presented.

Joan: *What do you all think?*

S2 (a senior member of the drama club): *It is not working. I don't know. It does not feel right. Maybe [the movement] not synchronised.*

S3 offered a suggestion to get students to point at different directions. The students tried a pointing sequence randomly aimed at different directions. This went on for 20 minutes. With each suggestion, they would practice and present to the rest of the group. Comments were drawn from the floor and Joan offering her thoughts. Two students asked if they could join the line. Joan let them do so. The 2 girls grabbed their chairs and joined in. Again the students repeated the sequence, incorporating the two new girls.

29 November 2010, a pivotal scene, involving safety issues, was the focus. Here, she worked with the students to manipulate a rope and table as key props in the scene.

Joan: *The next time, I want to try with the rope. So you need to set up the rope properly first. I need the rope to be meticulously arranged. I don't know who is in charge of the rope. You guys go and sort it out . . . What do I mean meticulously? It looks like it is hanging there but it is not just hanging there, how every rope is twisted, tied around him properly, without strangling him. So everything must be designed. Can we spend some time to arrange the rope meticulously?*

Working independently, the students attempted different configurations to interpret 'meticulously' and yet caring for their friend, the 'wolf boy', whose body was wrapped in rope. With each presentation, Joan offered a suggestion.

Suggestion 1: Can I advise that you don't carry him on the table?

Suggestion 2: Can I suggest something that perhaps when he comes in you can have two people around him to hold the ropes?

The rehearsal room was filled with pockets of different activities (multiple circle formation) where she 'butterflied' from group to group to supervise the various tasks she had assigned. Ten-minutes later, she regrouped and the students put the disparate parts that they had been working on together. Each rehearsed moment was a repetition to be edited and each repetition raised possible questions. Joan ended with, "*Ya, ya, I don't know yet. I don't know what the next step is, we will see whether it works*".

Field note: 26 August 2011

Session #1 of a series of workshops Joan led for the new members of the drama club. There were 17 students, 13 and 14 year olds. There were two games introduced. The first was a game done in a large circle with the 'caller' in the centre. Everyone was seated on a chair. Each student picked a piece of paper from a hat with a number on it. The number was not revealed, not to anyone in the circle and the caller in the centre. The object of the game was to exchange seats between persons whose numbers have been called. No signaling was aloud. The caller would attempt to get back in the game by obtaining a seat. Joan started the game with a pair of numbers called. Then she challenged them further by calling out more 3 or more numbers at the same time.

This game started slow as students were cautious in vacating their seats. Joan persisted, and constantly side-coached them as the game was played. "*You have to look ah, ok. Some people are trying to get your attention but you are not looking. I can see*".

Later, Joan added, "*We are starting to work as a group. Great. Getting better*".

The game lasted twenty-four minutes.

Joan: *So how was it?*
Student: *Tough*
Joan: *Tough, Yah tough ah. But it got better, slowly, slowly. Now let's try another game.*

The objective of the second game was to throw a ball in sequence. The first round set a pattern and then the pattern was repeated at increasing speed. The challenge increased a notch when Joan introduced a second and then a third ball into the mix, layering two different sequential patterns onto the first. The group needed to work together: observing the rhythm, sustaining the pace, and keeping the ball afloat. The game was played for 18 minutes. Joan played with them as she continued to side-coach.

Joan: *Keep a look out for the ball. Try throwing it to the person. You can't just anyhow throw it. Be clear who are you giving it to. The catcher must try to get the ball, do whatever it takes to catch it.*

Joan: *Ok now got more balls right? Oh, oh! So how? Confusing right? Ok we try ah.*

When the game first began, students stood relaxed, with their weight on one side of the body. The ball was thrown haphazardly, sluggishly. But with two and three balls added, more mistakes happened. The tempo was more varied. Gradually, the students' bodies became less slouchy. Their weight shifted on both feet, some bodies bent forward, their hands discernibly outstretched, waiting for the ball. Almost everyone had this physical stance. I noticed how their hands were in preparation mode. When Joan stopped the game, the students had by then achieved a 'togetherness'.

In the observation record dated 24 November 2010, Joan was observed inviting the students to share their ideas to help her shape the prologue of the play *The Wolf Boy*. In opening up the space for the sharing of ideas, she revealed the workings of multiplicity and diversity inherent in developing work as an ensemble. I observed how the senior members of the drama club were the first to respond to Joan's call for ideas on the gestures needed for the prologue. There were several offers and she turned to the remaining students for their opinion.

Sharing ideas requires taking some risks. For young people in Singapore unaccustomed to discussions in class, it takes courage and commitment to initiate an idea or offer a response to a given idea. In research on student learning in Singapore (Tan, Sharan & Lee 2006), it is noted that the dominant teaching structure is the whole-class method. It is largely teacher-centred with close connection to learning from textbooks (ibid., p. 3). There has been a policy change towards facilitation of discussion and independent learning. However, a nation-wide practice of student-centred learning and in particular active participation in large-group discussion has not taken effect (op. cit.). As I sat there watching Joan's exchange with her students, I imagined how frightening it was for a junior member of the drama club to watch how some ideas were openly rejected, while others were accepted.

During the post-observation discussion, I asked how she developed the relationship she had with the students. She shared some of the key values she would go on to reiterate throughout the observation phase. They are ‘respect’, ‘responsibility’, ‘initiative’, ‘a questioning mind’ and ‘care’. She acknowledged that one of the ways of achieving these core values is through ‘training’. But training is not limited to specific skills such as voice, physicality and acting genres and traditions. Instead her emphasis on training focuses on developing an embodied and reflexive development of these values through games, exercises to develop performance skills as well as the creative process of theatre making.

I was able to observe two sessions in which she worked with the new members of the drama club. The observation record dated 26 August 2011 documented the first of the two sessions I witnessed. The seat exchanging game the group played at the start of the session was a challenging one. In the first two minutes, no seats were exchanged. The students’ fear blocked them from initiating, giving and responding. Apart from the fear, the students had yet to develop trust among themselves and Joan. But Joan stayed on with the game. She offered them clues to help them think of strategies to move the game forward. The game finally picked up twenty minutes later. The students lamented the game was tough. To that, she responded, “Slowly, slowly”.

From the observation, the sense offered was that the theatre making experience was also an educational process to develop *complicité*. In the observation record dated 29 November 2010, the students had to develop their own strategies of working with a piece of rope tied around one of the boys. As she explained,

[T]he kids will come up with some idea and then it will inspire me and I will think of something and it might look totally different from what they have come up with but it was something they did which inspired me. So that was nice. (DS050111)

In that extract Joan offered some ideas and left much of the design to the students. The process did not generate any confirmed structures for the play. By the time they ended the rehearsal, it was unclear if the choices made were suitable. But that was not an issue. The work for Joan had progressed. As a director, she now had the materials to add her creative input.

With much emphasis on developing relationships and privileging the students as fellow collaborators, I decided to turn to the students to understand their perspectives in the equation. The focus group consisted of 5 students. They included a member of the production crew, two lead actors and two chorus members. The discussion explored their interest in the drama club; the process of developing *The Wolf Boy*; and their relationship with Joan as their director and drama trainer.

Several recurring themes emerged from the focus group interview (DS400093):

1. Their understanding of team building (ensemble)

S1: [In] some play, even the chorus play an important part, they too tell a story. Definitely in drama you will get a lot of experience with team building, people build each other up with healthy criticisms, building each other up encouraging one another and also being a team player and also definitely when the time is right for you, you will step out and . . . a leader is a leader but he is also a team player.

S4: Ms Joan doesn't emphasise team building a lot, I think she is more subtle. She would like tell us to get in to a group, or like work with people we normally won't work with. She doesn't like tell you like straightaway be friends with this person, its like slowly build the relationship ya. I think it is more effective than forcing you . . .

2. The idea of ownership, and respecting the students' creativity

S2: [S]he doesn't force her methods on us, she believes in our creativity . . . our ideas. She works on students' creativity and she gets us to be independent so we use our initiatives to act out in a way that we feel is suitable.

N: So you said when you first read the script you didn't understand the play. So do you understand it now? How did you manage to do that?

S3: It was definitely the process. I think when we first read the play I don't think we all understood the heart of the play. And Ms. Joan kept emphasising the heart of the play and asking us to find the heart of the play because –

N: Did Ms. Joan tell you what the heart of the play is?

S3: No definitely not. Because she wants us to feel it. I think that she believes that if we feel it, we can express ourselves through it and by telling us it just wouldn't work.

3. Expressing individuality

S1: Drama is like a big happy family . . . we can be ourselves and just let loose.

S2: In classroom environment you have to control yourself more if not you will be in trouble

N: What do you mean by controlling yourself more.

S2: Don't be so out-going, don't stand-out

The focus group discussion revealed an implicit understanding of the tensions inherent in the ensemble, between the assertion of the individual and the unity of the group. They also expressed an appreciation for the space she offered them to discover and learn independently. Finally, embedded within their statements, was a

tacit understanding that much of what Joan wished to impart was structured through a bodily understanding of initiating, giving and responding. The later three elements, I suggest, is at the heart of a complicitous ensemble-building process.

4.5.4: Stories, questions and comprehension

*I asked them what questions do you have? Which I didn't want to be answered. Which I realise I do . . . fairly often. Cause I think when you ask them what do you think about something they don't know what to think. The question doesn't mean anything to them. So you show a piece [referring to the presentations], or a monologue or whatever, and then you say if you had a question for this person, you know, what would it be? Because then you force them to engage with what they are watching. You structure . . . the engagement a bit more and hence they get more engaged and then they say well I, I think, and **then** [emphasis] I ask the questions. Sometimes they don't know how to ask the questions because they are like what do you mean I can ask a question because they are not used to this here [Singapore schools]. (DS400092)*

In unpacking her strategy of questioning, Sandra demonstrated her teacher training and experience in resolving learning issues. In the above, Sandra highlighted a three-fold strategy:

- a) offering a stimulus to initiate discussion (“show a piece, or a monologue”)
- b) framing of the engagement (asking a question in reference to a learning point e.g. “person” in the performance, or the “person” who created the performance)
- c) then probe further with more questions

Sandra’s interviews also indicated a greater reflection and critique on teacher development and practice and the connection with student learning.

[With reference to reading a book for leisure.] Because you [as a teacher] are always thinking about it in terms of I need to teach them plot, character, dadadadadada. [. . .] so you are always reading it in that structure you don't think well what does this really mean to me? If you cannot do that with yourself then how are you going to that with, you know, the kids? (Ibid.)

The two examples above suggested that Sandra’s pedagogical experience offered a tighter connection with curriculum standards, appreciation of learning behaviours, learning outputs and input considerations as well as learning needs that are less observed and considered in Olivia and Joan. Parallel to her pedagogic habitus was a ‘devising’ feature, characteristic of her artistic predilection. This was applied to her lesson planning, pace and flow of her classroom engagements as well as her preference for on-the-floor explorations.

I take what I see and I try to make that grow . . . and I shape it. [. . .] I'm doing it as I am on the floor. And, I, I can see how it throws people especially, erm, how it can sound very, you know, I am not always very articulate, and I, and I see it in my mind's eye and I have several shapes of where this will go. But I will never say this is how I want it to be. Because it is really about what I have . . . and that's my strength, that I can. (DS400082)

Indeed, in School E, I observed three projects, of which two projects involved co-teaching between Sandra and another teacher. One is offered here as an example. In it, Sandra collaborated with a visual arts teacher, Mr. T, in tailoring a curriculum for students identified as academic underachievers. The curriculum melded visual arts and drama for personal development with the aim of exploring cross-over identities between child/primary education (12 years old) into teenager/secondary education (13 years old). The stimulus for this 90-minute lesson was 'story building' using personal and shared stories.

School E	
Research participant: Sandra	
Period: August 2010–March 2011	
Field notes: 10 January 2011	
Note: This extract was recorded and offered to Sandra for the video situational recall.	
Forty 12–13 year olds were seated in a circle. Sandra asked questions to recapitulate what they have learnt the previous week. This review took four minutes and thirty seconds.	
Once the recapitulation was completed, she invited Mr T. and I to demonstrate the telling of a story from our childhood. Thereafter Sandra paired them in a formation of a circle within another circle, with one telling the story to another and the second girl moving to the left and retelling it to the third student. From pair work, the students were grouped into fours. The retelling continued with more stories exchanged. Thereafter, the students were asked to pick out parts of the story they found 'striking', where images could be identified. Working with these 'striking' images, they created what Mr T. identified as "tableau or freeze frame". The groups presented. They ended by recapitulating the activities completed and looked ahead to the following week.	
Field notes: 17 January 2011	
Key: 'G' followed by numbers indicate the different students involved	
The following week, they worked on enacting the stories. Students, in groups of four or five, rehearsed their stories and subsequently performed them.	
Sandra:	<i>Ok I am not going to make so much of a comment, but they (the audience) are going to ask (turning to the performers) you a couple of questions. But you don't have to answer this. When you watched this moment, what are some questions you have?</i>
G1:	<i>What is the story about? The story-line?</i>
Sandra:	<i>What is the story about?</i>
Then silence. Sandra intercepted the silence with a question.	
Sandra:	<i>What happens before and after? Anything else?</i>
G2:	<i>I think that they became friends.</i>
Sandra probed for elaboration and G2 offered a more detailed description of what she thought she understood from the tableau. In another group's presentation, she got them to turn towards a different direction.	
Sandra:	<i>Why am I asking them to do that?</i>
Girls:	<i>Because we are facing their buttocks</i>
Sandra:	<i>You can only see their backs. Remember when you go into the tableau, when I took you through it, when I took 1,2,3,4 girls out to look, you began to sharpen certain things. Remember that (raising her hand to her head) and make it clear (creating a gesture). The things you said, be clear, be confident, be expressive. (Turning to the performing group). And freeze. Interesting. Look at the faces what are the different</i>

*expressions? Are they all the same? What's the difference? What could be going on here?
Who are they? (She claps and the scene begins).*

With each tableau, Sandra layered additional information to sharpen their compositions and performance.

According to Sandra, 'craft' is the attention to detail. It is the artistry in both the 'teaching' and the 'making of' theatre (DS200810). Sandra attempted to negotiate working on 'craft' while observing the curricula objectives outlined by Mr. T. Teacher talk dominated the process. But she attempted, where possible, to include performance elements such as creating scenes, generating dialogue and embodying characters. In all these attempts she would scaffold 'questions' to lead the students to firstly understand and then execute the drama. This was observed when the students worked on their personal stories. Though the process was painstakingly slow, by the following week, the students were able to create one-minute scenes from the stories they created a week ago.

Sandra revisited the use of personal stories in her work with 13 new drama club members. The extract here demonstrates the adaptations she made, reflecting the different classroom condition, objectives and student abilities in the drama club. The drama club was conducted in a classroom with desks and chairs moved to the sides

School E

Research participant: Sandra

Period: August 2010 – March 2011

Field notes: 9th March 2011

15 girls, seated in a circle, each recounting the story that Sandra had told them. Sandra told them a personal story of her broken friendship with her best friend when she was 13. In their recounting, Sandra encouraged them, *"Feel free to embellish what I have told you. It is ok. Can you add? (Yes, chorused the girls). Yes. And is it wrong? (They shock their heads). So yes, you can add stuff to it, change the names but try to retain a sense of the story I told you"*.

After the retelling, Sandra reviewed the story again and then divided the girls into three groups of 5 (multiple circles). In each group, she encouraged them to retell the story from the perspective of one other person involved in the story.

Sandra: *Earlier I told the story from my perspective, the "I". Now try figure out how, you know, the best friend would have told the story. Do you have a name for this 'best friend' character? (A few girls suggested different names). Ok, you can name her whatever you wish. Angel was mine. You can keep that or change it, it's ok, it's now your story.*

Sandra 'butterflied' from one group to another to observe and assist. The process lasted for 30 minutes, with Sandra layering the storytelling with more instructions. By the end of the 30th minute, the girls progressed from telling to creating three tableaux for their stories.

During the presentations, Sandra invited one student at a time from each group to step out and *"look and change whatever she wants. If she thinks any expression needs to be sharpened, change a position, when she is ready, she steps back in"*. This went on till every girl had a chance to change the tableaux. When the girls were making the changes to each tableau, she side-coached with questions.

*"Figure out where the audience is";
"Focus your attention on where you wish to move them and why";
"Some of you are moving your eyes across the room";
"Where is your energy going, where are you directing it to, be clear";*

She also commented on the students' use of space, their bodies, facial expressions, gestures as well as movement to communicate their scenes.

Stories played a significant role in Sandra's work during this observational phase. It reflected not only her interest in the personal, a parallel exploration in her own artistic work (DS400082), but also her ideals of theatre education as enabling and transforming. Her choice of working with personal stories also highlighted her concern for student agency in the creative process.

I would like to be able to create a piece that is theirs . . . even if it was a script but it would become theirs. [. . .] Because I want them to acknowledge it. I mean you must affirm, oh wow I did this, oh look no hands, Ma. [. . .] I would like to work towards, towards that [. . .] I don't know because the school has its own expectations . . . but I would like for them to come up with a piece at the end of the year that is an ensemble piece possibly, we'll see what the form is, but that is theirs, that they have created it that they can perform, that they can tell this is my story. (DS 400084)

Beyond that, her structuring of learning through personal stories offered possibilities for, what Kathleen Gallagher terms as, 'what happens when' moment (2001, p. 45). In other words, privileging the contexts in which the varied and layered subjectivities, issues and problems may exist within these moments. This was demonstrated in the extract dated 9th March 2011. In the drama club project, students began by retelling the story from the monocular 'I' and subsequently progressed to a multiperspectival 'She/You/We'. As the session progressed, the tableaux concretised the story further by considering spatial and temporal contingencies affecting the stories. Also, starting with a story claimed as her own, Sandra created a 'safe' zone for exploring personal stories. The 'safe' zone was a diagnostic and distancing tool, where she guided and buffered her students' engagement with the stories by modeling sensitive treatment of personal stories.

[Y]ou can't just let kids go and expect them to come up with something, like you can use as a director. They are not trained actors, . . . The way you deal with things, the way you handle things, how far you tap into things. And you know sometimes you get an artist come in who doesn't understand that. (DS291209)

Beyond the stories, what struck me as pertinent in the light of exploring 'difference' is the structure of instructions articulated by Olivia, Joan and Sandra. Embedded within theatre education is a constructivist mode of learning (Vygotsky 1978). This

meant learning is socially mediated and the teacher plays a guiding role in developing the learning. However, the space between learning which is made overtly explicit and that which is tacit vary in relation to the space offered for the learner's own introspective discovery. Sandra's greater emphasis on comprehension in the in-curriculum project engenders articulating the learning process more explicitly. Meanwhile, in my observations of Olivia and Joan, both leave more room for tacit negotiation.

I offer two reasons for this difference. Firstly, Sandra's teaching habitus endured despite having left the profession. Her straddling of this duality reflected Rona, Viola and Rita's experiences as theatre educators discussed in the preceding chapter. Secondly, the conditions of the engagements vary. Sandra's collaboration and the in-curriculum focused projects engendered a more explicit connection to pre-determined outcomes as defined in the curriculum. Meanwhile, drama club engagements are stand alones with little connections with the larger curricula framework. Hence there is greater room for the theatre artists to employ their own direction for learning.

5. Summary

I end this chapter by summarising the salient points.

Firstly, the Singapore theatre artists construct their teaching practices relying on a melding of artistic training (studio-based structures) and rehearsal experiences. They acknowledge that their artistic development and evolution affect their classroom practices. They also note that transferring those artistic experiences into a school setting, and working with youths with little or no theatre background, demands 'switching' and 'shifting' of mindsets and attitudes. This meant learning 'new tools' to respond to the requirements and needs of the schools. The acquired tools include lesson planning and adapting instructions and activities sensitive to the students' capabilities and needs. Such tools are acquired through learning from peers as well as 'on-the-job' experiences using their early encounters in the classroom as 'testing grounds'. In working with the practice of 'testing' the plans, Olivia, Joan and Sandra

are receptive to spontaneity, responding to the immediate demands on-the-floor and the students, and offer space for and working with ‘unpredictability’ as part of the equation of teaching. As suggested, their artistic history with devising approaches to theatre making are probable factors influencing their teaching practices. Together with the peripatetic structure of their professional artistic enterprise, Olivia, Joan and Sandra are comfortable working with improvisations as an adaptive strategy.

Also a key point to emphasise is the recurring phenomenon of the body-centred approach in their teaching practices. The data indicate their investment in the ‘doing’ positions the body as a channel for sense-making. Cross-referencing the observations with their narratives suggests that learning by doing is a *habitus* generated from their artistic practice. I attempted to infer socio-cultural influences such as the constraints within English language use and impact on discourse in Singapore. However, limited by the framework of this research as well as the collated data, an extensive discussion on the latter is not possible. However this suggests possible areas for future interrogation to understand how a body-centred learning may be privileged in overcoming language constraints in teaching and learning.

Finally as discussed in the preceding chapter, the politics of practice similarly presents itself in the Singapore data. The findings are indicative of relational negotiation and the struggle between different *habitus* melding or interfacing when the theatre artists migrate to an educational institution.

Drawing from my earlier discussion in Chapter 4, I sharpen my articulation of the Singapore theatre artists’ teaching practices as embodying a complex web of negotiations. They negotiate between the hermeneutically porous and intra-layered artistic ‘worlds’ (Goodman 1978), meaning different artistic practices and influences to find an appropriate approach to work with the students of varying capabilities and exposure to theatre. In addition, the theatre artists also negotiate between different pedagogic knowledges and approaches between the artistic and education fields (Bourdieu 1993).

The findings further highlight that the act of learning how to teach is inherently social, contextually reflexive, mediated and constructed (Kuzmic 1994; Lave and

Wenger 1991; Britzman 2003). The contexts and conditions of teaching (school culture; objectives, outcomes and expectations; student abilities) affect the selection of and approaches to the activities. As demonstrated in the extended discussions of the observation framework early in this chapter (sections 4.1–4.5.4), the varying conditions necessitate doing the same, differently. If doing the same *differently* prevailed in their teaching practices, can we, as Calder (2006) suggests, identify the “total world view” that shape and guide their heterogeneous pedagogy (p. 1361)? That, however, is the focus of the penultimate chapter.

CHAPTER 6: THEORISING THE SINGAPORE THEATRE ARTISTS’ PEDAGOGIC PHILOSOPHY

1. A Bridging Discussion

Let’s recapitulate what has been discussed up till this point. Chapters 4 and 5 propose that a study of theatre artists’ teaching practices requires a closer examination of the contexts influencing the act of teaching. In examining the contexts, the data suggest that each field—theatre and education—has its own heterogeneous influences, practices and demands and they impact the way theatre artists’ construct their teaching practices. Accordingly, I submit that the theatre artists’ teaching practices is a complex nesting of the heterogeneous influences from these two fields. This is submitted in the light of emerging findings within the nested nexus worlds of both theatre/artistic and education/teaching. The nexus makes uneasy bedfellows of theatre and education. As such, the agents are bound up in struggles and negotiations of authority and legitimisation between the varied systems of knowledge and practices within drama and theatre education, as well as between the fields of theatre and mainstream education.

Reflecting on that knowledge, Chapter 5 narrowed the lens specifically to the Singapore theatre artists’ teaching practices. There, the discussions attempted to unpack ‘how’ Singapore theatre artists, with their limited exposure to prevailing international knowledge of theatre education pedagogies, conduct theatre education. The discussion reflects my negotiation of Bourdieu’s *habitus* in the light of Shevtsova and Archer’s proposition of reflexivity and agency detailed in Chapter 2, sections 3.2.1–3.2.2 (p. 40–43). Reflexivity dishevels and destabilises existing *habitus* and offers room for development, learning, construction and a generation of new *habitus*. For instance, in the Singapore research, Olivia, Joan and Sandra exhibited varying degrees of struggles in maintaining the balance between the artistic

concerns in their teaching practices as well as the need to achieve educational aims. When seen in the light of the discussion of the English theatre artists' varying responses to their artistic-teaching identities and practices, the findings point to an interplay of reflexivity and dialogic negotiation of *habitus*. They vary according to how each theatre artist reflexively negotiates and decides how best to position and invoke the appropriate reservoir of dispositions to serve their needs and situations.

Finally, as suggested in Chapter 2 (section 3.1.3, p. 36) both the theatre artists' theatre education classrooms as well as their teaching practices can be conceived as a nexused 'third space' (Bhabha 1994). This third space is a hybridised rehearsal/studio/performing arts training informed pedagogy. This 'hybridised third space' pedagogy constitutes what Sandra refers to as their 'different sensibility'. I propose that the sensibility alluded to by Sandra relates to a set of principles, which inform the structure, choice and emphasis of their teaching activities and purposes (Pring 2004). I further submit that to understand the principles undergirding the hybridised third space pedagogy, we need to return to what Calder (2006) terms as the "total world view" (p. 1361). In this chapter, I frame the constituent of the Singapore theatre artists' world view as a **theatre-life optic**, an overarching philosophical framework grounding the way they structure and construct their teaching practices.

2. Explicating The Theatre-Life World View And Ethos

I propose the **theatre-life optic** is a theatre-within-life and life-within-theatre praxis (Carreri 1991; Dennis 1994; Nemiro 1997; Taylor 2000), Clifford Geertz (1973) defines 'world view' and its corollary concept 'ethos' as such:

A people's ethos is the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood; it is the underlying attitude towards themselves and their world that life reflects. Their world view is their picture of the way things in sheer actuality are, their concept of nature, of self, of society. It contains their more comprehensive ideas of order (p. 127).

In his formulation ethos manifests behaviourally what world view informed cognitively and are both mutually dependent. The world view offers the ideal state

in which ethos attempts and may not necessarily succeeds in achieving. In that respect while both are mutually dependent, they exist in a dialectical tension between ideals and limitations.

The theatre artists’ reflexive world view, a complex syncretisation of values extracted from different *habitus* within different sites and times, forms the basis of their intuitive axiology. It is reflexive in the way it is adaptable, enacted within a process of inquiry, or as Archer suggests, a feedback loop of internal conversations (2007, p. 63) that enables the subject to question its effect and appropriateness within each environment.

Let me explicate the theatre-life optic further with this illustration (Figure 6.1.).

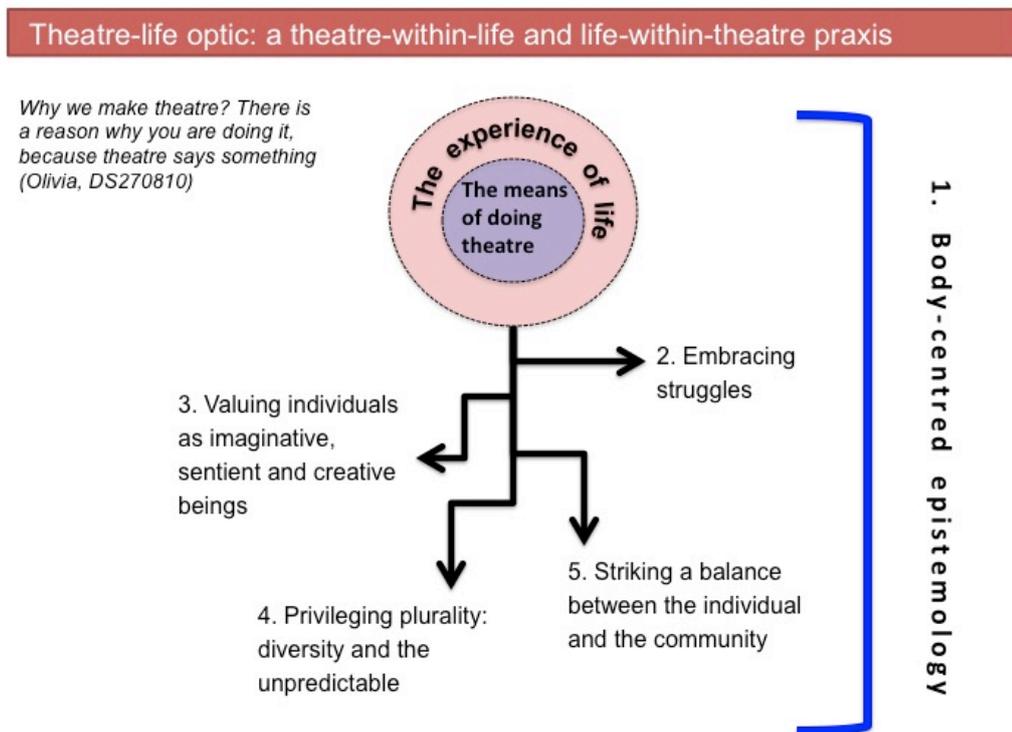


Figure 6.1: Theatre-life optic

Olivia’s question on ‘why’ (Figure 6.1) expands Kempe’s proposition of “*knowing about and knowing how to [. . . and] knowing through*” theatre (Kempe 2009, pp: 411–412) necessary in theatre education to include knowing the self and the motivations in doing theatre. In other words, her emphasis on ‘why’ reflects the connection and dependencies of both theatre and life. The dependency offers the possibilities of “recreation of one through the other” (Read 1993, p. vi) as

represented by the two overlapping circles. The recreation is an outcome of a dialectical relation between the theatre artists' engagement with doing theatre and their lived social experiences as their fodder for theatre⁷. There is a strong regard to what theatre is as goal and tool; product and process; rooted in life and distanced from it; part of society and critical of it.

To explicate the theatre-life optic further, I turn to the themes as generated from the findings in Chapter 5.

2.1. Body-centred epistemology: knowledge in theatre-life optic

As earlier posited, the body and embodiment is one of the core concepts in this research. Tables 5.3 and 5.4 in Chapter 5 indicate their visceral and body-centred engagement with what it means to *make* theatre, *think and live* with its means and ends. Appealing to how they were trained, the three Singapore theatre artists referenced their studio-space training as well as rehearsal-based experiences, privileging body-centred learning in teaching approaches.

Evidence of such experiences was observable in the strategies they employed in the classroom engagements as well as in the way they constructed their instructions. These include but not limited to body-centred devising and improvisational processes; focused physical and mental vigilance; repetitions; rehearsals; games and exercises; and sustained physical responses to stimuli (artefacts). Joan's enactment of *complicité* as a strategy is also an added dimension to this discussion.

I also refer to their different articulations such as “the making of” (Sandra, DS291209) as well as “[e]verything is on the feet” (Olivia, DS400088), with

⁷ Alan Read's 1993 book on *Theatre and Everyday Life* suggests a connection between everyday life as the 'given' and theatre as the 'created'. In his attempt to make this connection, he acknowledges that the 'given' he attributes to everyday life is a contrast to the extent of construction and created in theatre. Everyday life is a social phenomenon, subject to the “political urgency” of everyday interactions (p. 151). Yet despite the acknowledge, Read points out that there is a degree of “inevitable biological specificities” given in the everyday life which is beyond construction and negotiation and to which human passivity necessarily relents to (ibid.). He cites gravity and light as examples. As such while theatre feeds off everyday life, it has also the ability to turn over everyday life. It has room to reconstruct, redefine, and reformulate the instances of everyday life, and with technology, even gravity and light. And education as theatre offers that same room to reformulate the structure of education, and in doing so, challenges it. The question raised then is to what extent is theatre within education able to transgress with a resultant transformation. The response is perhaps the need to unpack what it means by transgression and transformation, areas with which is beyond the scope of this research.

activities focused on connections “with their bodies” (Joan, DS210811) and the reiterations on ‘feel’. In their reflective discussions conducted with the students I observed the theatre artists enquiring with: “So how do you feel?” or “How does that feel for you?” or “Tell me how you feel doing it” or “What does it tell you?”. Following the questions, the students share how ‘it feels being in the moment’ and the theatre artists respond with ‘how it feels watching them’.

What is unarticulated here is the complicit sharing of the ‘transpired feeling’ between those doing and those watching. The division between performers and audience is suspended. At this complicit moment, all the bodies and minds are assumed to occupy the same spatial and temporal plane within the same theatrical ‘world’. But to enable this ‘shared’ experience there is an assumption that the body made ‘docile’ (Foucault 1991) requires theatre and its processes to free it. In other words, learning through/with/in/as theatre is a means to (re)educate and (re)connect the body with its ‘authentic’ ability to learn and make meaning of its experiences (Greene 1978; Todres 2007; Liberman 2011). Hence the focus on physical games and exercises as witnessed in their work examined in Chapter 5.

But what is this shared ‘experience’ or how is the experience ‘shared’? There are suggestions that the arts offer a window to the possibilities of achieving a “complete experience” (Dewey 1950, p. 57). Dewey terms it ‘aesthetic experience’, cultivated through the senses of experiencing and enjoying pleasure and beauty (not separated from, nor singularly focused on, the cognitive). He finds no disconnection between the aesthetic experience from pleasure and beauty with the “natural and spontaneous in primary experience”, and possibly in all other forms of practices (ibid.). But only art qualifies the ‘aesthetic experience’ as useful and makes its development fundamental as (artistic) *knowledge*. Embedded in Dewey’s explication is the centrality of the body and the senses.

But to explicate the location of aesthetic experience as knowledge and its relation to theatre specifically, I turn to the Sanskrit manual of theatricality, the Bharata-muni’s *Natyasastra*, and in particular the term *rasa*, denoting ‘flavour’ and ‘taste’ (Schechner 2001). Saha (2012) offers a summary of *rasa*,

At the time of eating a person relish the flavor of his food to a great extent. Similarly, a perceiver whose mind is engrossed enjoys the presentation of various emotions and derives immense pleasure out of his experience. It can be explained as aesthetic delight (p. 38).

There is a lot to deconstruct in there, which will not serve the current purpose of this thesis. However, what I do want to highlight is that an aesthetic experience governed by *rasa* is sensorial, experiential and immediate. Like the enjoyment of food (preparation and consumption), aesthetic experience goes beyond the ocular. It is embodied experience that connects what is seen, heard, touched, smelled and tasted with the heart, mind and soul of the person experiencing it (Dace 1963; Schechner 2001; Saha 2012). What is experienced on the outside is internalised on the inside, and consequently expressed as a response. *Rasa* is cyclical, sustained through shared and social communion by the committed acts of the agents/actors whose focus is to affectively transmit/present (communicate), so that those who watch may receive/taste and correspondingly offer in return/response. As such *rasa*, in the first instance, values the lived and subjective experiences of those within the moment but also the intersubjectivity of those sharing the moment.

I suggest that the concept of *rasa* and Dewey's 'aesthetic experience', illuminate the centrality of the body as a vessel for 'feeling' as 'knowing' in the theatre artists' teaching practices. It is tacit made explicit through its actions. It is potent in its instability, existing within spatial and temporal contingencies and therefore "incomplete" and open to "possibilities" (Greene 1993). Knowledge, through the body as a technology for learning and meaning making, is reclaimed as a social endeavour. It is perceived not as a reproduction but as a possible regeneration where the past learnt experiences and the present, the subject and the collective, meet, collide and destabilise each other. I submit that this perspective on knowledge is a crucial deviation from the standardised and structured form of knowledge regarded in much of mainstream education.

Implicated within the theatre-life optic and its body-centred knowing are the following values:

- Pushing boundaries as a rule
- Recognising individuals as imaginative, sentient and creative beings

- Living with plurality and diversity and the tensions within it
- Humanistic core in its endeavours

2.2. Pushing the boundaries as a rule

Olivia firmly believes that theatre offers the possibility of creating an “upside down world”, within which “it is our absolute business [to] continually pushing the imagination” and that is its rule (DS160111). Within this ‘upside down’ world, reality is unpacked, bent, made to be re-ordered. Its inhabitants are the burlesque, laughter, tears, the absurd, grotesque and dreams. They may take place separately and simultaneously. The ‘upside down’ world is like a carnival in the Bakhtinian sense. It exists in the “borderline between art and life . . . does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators” (Bakhtin 1984, p. 7). It is a world not to be seen but to be lived, where “everyone participates . . . and subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom” (ibid.).

Citing Georg Lukács, Carol Becker (1994) suggests that the arts, in their multifarious representations, desire for multiplicity implicate a revolt against stasis and status quo. As such while the arts represent life, they are not rooted in life’s seemingly structured simplicity.

The more that is hidden and suppressed, the more simplistic the representation of daily life, the more one-dimensional and caught in the dominant ideology the society is, the more art must reveal (p. xiii)

I suggest that a theatre-life optic subjects learning in theatre education not only learning *through*, *with*, and *in*, but also *as* theatre. With the latter, learning and teaching take on ‘aesthetic dimensions’ (Dobson 2005). If learning were to be *as theatre*, it follows and accepts the given conditions and boundaries within theatre. Consequently, when bringing the theatre-life optic to bear on education, theatre artists subject the dominant and prevailing ideology of education and knowledge to task. They question curricular and lesson objectives; disciplinary functions and teaching approaches; and student agency and participation in education. In that respect, a theatre-life optic informed pedagogy, while acknowledges the prevailing

“*audit culture*” educational system (Gidley 2009, p. 534), pits its own standards *against* the system. As Joan claims, “we inject a sense of creativity and fun and free space” and develop a questioning mind, (DS050111) suggesting that theatre artists and their means as potentially subversive within the established structures. Also illustrative is Sandra’s reference of theatre artists’ presence as creating and bringing a *different* atmosphere and sensibility (Chapter 5, Table 5.4).

But this does not mean learning as theatre is without discipline. The etymology of ‘discipline’ rooted in French *descepline*, denotes physical punishment, enduring suffering in order to achieve accuracy or a sense of order. Embedded within this etymological frame is the expectation of ‘struggle’ as eventually rewarding and hence positive. The theatre work of Antonin Artaud (1965), Jerzy Grotowski (Grotowski & Barba 2012) and Tadashi Suzuki (1986) are those that immediately come to mind, with its emphasis on conditioning the body to be free and responsive to both internal (within self) and external (environment) stimuli.

However in theatre education, the conditions of working with young people and in recognising the difference between them and actors, the idea of discipline in theatre requires adaptation (referencing the ‘switch’ and ‘shift’ in mind set explored in Chapter 5, Table 5.3, p. 161–162). Accordingly, pushing boundaries and consequently ‘struggles’ are embedded within activities necessitating taking risks (e.g. games); experiencing discomforts with attempting the new (e.g. physical exercises, improvisations); committing to activities while suspending disbelief (e.g. ‘dog and bone’ improvisation and scene building); developing instincts and impulse and negotiating working and living together as a collective/ensemble. No matter how well scaffolded and how ‘safely’ prepared the activities are, there will always be a presence of ‘danger’ and the ‘unexpected’. As Joan states,

<i>I observe the struggles and try to create an environment, stimuli and conditions that will help them (Joan, DS210811).</i>

Participants are set-up to push personal boundaries and as a consequent to experience and overcome the struggles in the process.

2.3. Valuing individuals as imaginative, sentient and creative beings

Theatre education if left as a pedagogic structure closely aligned with theatre making principles, is concerned with the qualitative development of persons, their bodies, their minds as well as the metaphysical aspects of their inner wellbeing, both their spirits and emotions (Greene 2001; Shevtsova 2003; Boyette and Zarrilli 2007; Soto-Morettini 2010) and the connections with the community at large. It respects subjects' agency as imaginative, sentient and creative beings with resources as well as capacity to construct, make sense of and interpret meanings. Yet in the course of working socially, inherent in the process of theatre making, these subject-centred and interpretive aspects of knowing are further challenged in relation to other subject-centred and interpretive perspectives, leading to intersubjective negotiations of the knowledge between individuals. As the theatre artists working with the ensemble as an approach demonstrate, there is thus a need to achieve balance between the units of individuals and the collective enterprise.

In one of the interviews, Olivia describes the doing of theatre with young people metaphorically as “trying to fit something odd shaped or carrying something that is way too heavy up very narrow staircase” (Olivia, DS160311). Manoeuvring the box requires an orchestration of every individual in the team, working and balancing off the energies and strengths of the respective members carrying the odd-shaped box up the stairs.

Indeed, in Chapter 2 (section 3.4.1, p. 49), I had offered a suggestion on the decoupling of the individual and the community in the interpretation of the ensemble. Here once again, through the data, the importance of locating the ‘*I*’ in the collective asserts itself. Adding on to the earlier discussion, I submit that one of the ways to situate the discussion of the ‘*I*’ in rehearsal as well as studio-based activities is through the development of *presence*, a vital concept in theatre training and performance.

Presence relates to being present, both physically and mentally, or what Zarrilli refers as ‘bodymind’. In theatre training, the development of *presence* translates in practical terms to the triple focus of developing a) the actor/participant’s acute

awareness of self; b) a heightened sensitivity of other actor/participants, borrowing Chaikin's, 'inner rhythm'; and c) an awareness of the environment, both within and beyond the rehearsal room (Chaikin 1972, pp. 59–60). As such, 'presence', is a quality of "being right here, right now, with an awareness of the actual space and the actual moment and of the vital meeting of lives in that space and moment" (Blumenthal 1976, p. 113). The emphasis on *presence* places the responsibility squarely on each individual to be an active participant within the collective. In so doing frames the notion of 'team' as the sum of committed individuals (Blumenthal 1984; Herrington 2000). Learning how to be present, I propose, is an experiment on a parallel commitment to the larger society. It develops, as Greene suggests, a heightened concentration of the reflexive, agentive and actualising self within the prospective praxis of societal transformation (Greene 2011).

2.4. Privileging plurality: openness, fluidity and the unpredictable

Olivia's persistent refrain to her students to 'find their own way' (observation 27 August 2010) in their own explorations with theatre is an indication of a practice informed by the value of plurality in the theatre-life optic.

Because each of them are so like, they are so, some of them are idiosyncratic, are weird and strange and therefore you move this way and therefore its quite interesting and its totally acceptable. And this girl who is beautiful and graceful should not try to do that, she should do it her own way. (Olivia, DS270810).

What does plurality refer to? According to Patrick Riordan (2003), there are three possible applications of the term. Firstly as observable fact, meaning, there are obvious multiplicity and diversity in lifestyles, worlds and value systems and cultures. Secondly, plurality is also used to reflect the value of pluralism relating to "approval of diversity and an attitude of tolerance of the other" (p. 42). The third usage is the thesis of value pluralism, which hinges upon an ideology of incommensurable intellectual and metaphysical scheme, which suggests relativism (ibid.). In this research, the findings seem to suggest the first two: both as observable fact and an attitude towards diversity.

Discussing plurality connects us back to the notion of 'openness', which has currency in the theatre artists' artistic and teaching practices. As previously discussed

openness, bound up with the conceptual and spatial framework of open-space, is a metaphor for their attitude towards multiplicity and diversity. Instances from the observations reflective of this metaphor are the constant engagement with ‘let’s see’, offering ‘I don’t know’ as an answer and considering multiple perspectives.

In privileging plurality, the theatre-life optic promotes inclusivity, an oft-cited feature in arts integrated education (Bryce, *et al.* 2004; Hall and Thomson 2007; Galton 2008; Siedel, *et al.* 2009; Ewing 2010). What is essential to highlight here is that inclusivity, attempted within the concept of plurality and diversity respects living with and negotiation of difference and struggles against fitting into a prefixed, measurable and determined standard (Greene 1993; Pring 2004). It is not only about including the ‘other’ as a means of forming a community, but attending to the divergent perspectives concomitant with the presence of ‘the other’. In so doing, it comes close to “defamiliaris[ing] what has become so familiar” (Greene 1993, p. 214). The interaction of diverse perspectives exposes the ‘self’ to the tensions between the subjective and the intersubjective, to make sense through deliberation, reflection and negotiating of conflicting views.

While it privileges plurality, the theatre-life world view exists within a space of tension and struggle between consensus and dissensus (Mouffe 2004; Rancière 2010). Consequently, it opens up opportunities for exercising the persuasive power of negotiation and arbitration. Indeed within the teaching practices of the three Singapore theatre artists, we witness accounts of conflicting agendas and perspectives and their negotiations of them in the schools. For instance, Joan recounts how she stood steadfast in not adapting a play text, which the school felt was counter to its religious foundations. Her refusal to change the context of the play to suit the school’s beliefs signalled her agency and disagreement. The final outcome was to identify a different text in keeping with both religious values as well as artistic integrity. In that respect, living with diversity and plurality is dialogical in its respecting of choice and agency and does not shy away from conflict and tension (Joan, DS400098).

Accordingly, I suggest, valuing plurality appropriates the learning space as a ‘creative and generative’ space, through which the learning becomes inclusive. It is

inclusive not only in accepting the different student abilities and identities but also the varied ways in which theatre education is made present in the school. Such exercise of inclusivity may not critically transgress the overall curriculum and affect a systemic educational change (Hall and Thomson 2007). Nonetheless, theatre education's different pedagogy injects an alternative 'vista' of thinking and experiencing learning. It may still be affective and transformational for the individual students and teachers within the system (Greene 2011).

2.5. Humanistic informed interrogation of life and theatre

The theatre-life optic develops a critical and humanistic nexus within education, reflecting Greene's observation of artistic-aesthetic imbued education that was discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 3.3.1, p. 46). It does this by teaching "beyond the narrowing limits of subject boundaries" (Neelands 2009). When applied to theatre education, the theatre-life optic extends the act of teaching beyond form and content to include "social visions" (Simon 1992, p. 56). As Olivia adds,

So then you come in from that entry point. But teach . . . but teach Maths in a way . . . that transcends Maths. So teach theatre, go in there and do theatre in a way that is beyond just the craft because at the end of the day we are not . . . human beings first and then we artists second, you know. And, erm, life happens outside of the rehearsal room So yah. (DS131010).

Joan echoes Olivia's articulation of theatre education as transcending the teaching of form and content with a "very deep understanding of human nature" (Chapter 5, Table 5.3). Joan's emphasis on the connection between good teaching and an understanding of human nature and the impact it has on her own perception of teaching is further reiterated in the following extract taken from a different interview:

I tell you I don't think I could have gone into teaching at all without that experience. First of all it taught me so much about patience about humility. The humility of course in front of all these people you are student again and I truly respect them. So the patience thing is also from [the head of the institute] and all that. I think [the head of the institute] is known for yah lah he only sees the good and the strength in everybody, most of the time. . . . How to teach. Yah, That kind of also that one mainly from [him] la because it permeates throughout everything . . . so you really have to learn a lot about those understanding and compassion and yet it doesn't mean you don't care about quality (Joan, DS050122).

Meanwhile Sandra approaches the idea of theatre and life through the construction of *agency* (Archer 2000). Prominently, the emphasis is on the transformational power of the arts (DS291209 and DS400069) as enabling the students to reflect and relate

theatre experiences with real life experiences. Accordingly, we hear a constellation of values reiterated throughout their different interviews such as “humility”; “patience”; “compassion”, “transformation”, “power”, “imagination”, “reflection”, “questioning mind”, “responsibility and discipline”, “initiative” and “embracing uncertainty and unpredictability” as emblematic of this ‘theatre-life’ ethos. While not a perfect fit, these values resonate with the findings of research offered in Chapter 2 conducted by Dobson’s (2005) with his notion of ‘aesthetic dimensions of education’; Donelan (2005) in Australia; Trowsdale (1997, 2002) and the LPN study (Thomson, *et al.* 2010).

As such, drawing from the discussions thus far, I conclude by suggesting that at the heart of a ‘theatre-life’ optic in teaching is not only the criticality and awareness of social inequalities but also a self-consciously humanistic orientation towards life. Such a vantage point has resemblances to the critical progressive education as advanced by Greene (1978; 1988; 1995 & 2001); Freire (1996) and Giroux (1983).

3. ‘Enabled’ Educator As Agent Provocateur In The Theatre-Life Ethos

The theatre-life optic requires an ‘enabled’ educator, or in Archer’s terminology an ‘active agent’ (2007). A central feature of this enabled or active agent is reflexivity, critically aware of their considerations in teaching content, sensitive to pupils’ capabilities and interests and “are able to creatively use materials, personal talents, and innovative resources in planning and implementing learning activities” (Goodman 1986, cited in Kuzmic 1994, p. 16), To that I add, cognizant of their own potentials in developing individuals for collective change (Greene 1988). Such an ‘enabled’ educator is also reflexively cognizant of positionalities within the structure of the establishment. They are acutely aware of their struggles between achieving the ideals governed by their world views and what life ‘is’, and ‘can’ be within the limits of the present educational framework (Archer 2007).

Aware of the politics of their position and the negotiations and struggles they encounter while in education, the Singapore theatre artists in this research see their roles in schools as valuable. For instance, they cite, each in different ways, the

limiting conditions of the educational system they were educated in. The memories of those experiences are reflected in their current thinking of what education is and the potential of theatre as a means to:

- a) recoup the “imagination which is lost” (Olivia: DS160111); “inject a sense of creativity and fun” into education (Joan: DS050111); “a sense of questioning” (ibid.);
- b) develop a sense of humanity and community: “a lot more compassion, a lot more patience” against “too narrow-minded [. . .] old school conservatism” (Joan: DS400098);
- c) break society’s “strident need to define who and what I am” (Sandra: DS400082), and encouraging the need to “empathise with difference” (Sandra: DS400070/71);
- d) contribute positively to society: “I want to know what I am good at so that I can pass that on.” (Sandra: DS400082); “I think, . . . if we are able to look at things beyond what is right and what is wrong and we look at things in the grey areas, that is quite incredible for a teenager” (Olivia: DS160111).

While they acknowledge these possibilities, they are mindful of their limited abilities to overhaul a system. As Joan reflects,

I cannot just rock the boat to the extent that I just let the kid do anything and everything they want. Because there is also a certain reality. Living in the, this school or this country. (DS050111).

Their awareness of the limitations is vital to what Greene (1978) suggests as an ‘awakening’ and that “to function as a free agent” requires making “choices appropriate to the often unpredictable situations that arise” (p. 248).

4. Revisiting Questions Raised And Probable Answers

In many of Greene's writings on educational philosophy, she invoked the artists' way of creating artistic work as inspiration for her advocacy on literature and arts integration in education. Drawing from Greene's philosophical postulation, as well as the findings from the Singapore sites, I offer my proposition of the theatre-life world view to deepen an understanding of the theatre artists' reflexive teaching practices. With the explication of the theatre-life optic, I submit that to understand the theatre artists' pedagogy is to trace and identify the world view guiding their work (Calder 2006). In this study, the analyses of the data suggest that the theatre-life world view is a melding of life's lessons and artistic habitus. Consequently, it guides and informs their ethos in interrogating the educational as well as the larger social worlds. Theorising an embodied theatre-life optic in this manner suggests theatre artists' approach as an epistemic shift and when employed in the present educational structure ruptures and destabilises the existing high stakes competencies paradigm of education and the educator's role in it.

Navigating Chapters 4, 5 and 6 brings us back to the key question that began this inquiry:

What do theatre artists bring to their teaching practices when they migrate into an education setting? How does such an understanding contribute to the larger conversations on theatre education?

In offering the theatre-life world view, we engage with the artists' teaching 'worlds' and perceive education through their lens. To see through their lens is to accept that what they bring to theatre education makes for a different engagement in the classroom. While different, it does not negate or suggest a deficit of the teacher's or drama teacher's 'worlds'. Instead the inquiry focused on how each theatre artist offers multifarious strategies of achieving learning through/with/in/as theatre, which reveal the individual theatre artists' heterogeneous influences, none of which devalue the approaches of the other. Additionally, the explication of the theatre-life world view aims at offering an understanding of the complexities that govern, direct and inform not only their construction of their teaching practices but also their relations to the school culture, the teachers within it as well as the concept of education and knowledge writ large. These findings suggest that the transgression, disruption,

disjunction and appropriation are necessary outcomes when incomparable ideologies meet.

Before concluding this chapter, I would like to return to the questions that emerged from the process of analyses, which I offered in Chapter 5. I asked would this ideological difference continue to make theatre education by theatre artists a marginalised endeavour? Or over time, and with greater expectations of theatre artists to fill in pedagogical duties within schools, would theatre artists' teaching practices become more aligned with school goals and structures? Would they be co-opted by the educational institutions in which they practice? There are no easy and neat answers. I offer a response, by reflecting on the theatre artists' experiences in an education setting as a continuum between the periphery and centre. The centre reflects a position closer to the demands of curricula, while the periphery reflects distance from curricular expectations.

Olivia, Joan and Sandra noted that the in-curriculum work has different needs and thereby pose different demands on them as artists, with the exception of the teaching of theatre as a subject. As Olivia explains, the in-curriculum lesson plans are constructed to serve the learning outcomes of academic subjects to which theatre as a pedagogy serves (DS160111). Despite possibilities of finding space within the plan to exercise an "impulsive, free, unpredictable" mode of engagement, she intimated there are limits to which a theatre-life optic informed teaching practice may comfortably locate itself. This suggests the underlying tension inherent in further hybridising as well as transforming the artistic practices to integrate the arts as well as the artists' presence to serve curricular needs.

With respect to the practices of a theatre-life optic, the data from the Singapore sites suggest that it is more prominently applied within projects involving their expertise in drama clubs and teaching theatre as a subject. These projects, I suggest, lie in the margins of the school curricula. It is within these 'marginal spaces', that the Singapore theatre artists transgress and construct their 'third space' of possible and alternative structures of learning. And it is from these 'marginal spaces', that I collate, analyse, interpret and consequently construct the theatre-life optic, its affordances and its possibilities, in educating young people *through, with, in and as*

theatre. These marginal spaces are less policed, and have less impact on curricula outcomes and consequently on student achievement and attainment standards. As such the artists are left to their own devices to structure their interaction with the students as they deem fit. Does this mean that theatre artists' presence and work will continually remain in the margins of the school culture? Or perhaps there is power in locating oneself in the margins, being within and yet being apart. As the late Singapore playwright and director observed,

moving between the margins of different periods . . . that kind of marginality, a fringe kind of existence, allows one to compare and reflect. (Kuo, Krishnan & Tan. p. 126)

In his observation, Kuo suggests that the 'marginals' cross, interact and engage with diverse perspectives. They transgress and transcend boundaries, and in doing so live with the struggles and tensions of being between borders.

Yet, I hesitate to offer these responses as definite. I forward a consideration reflecting what Charles Taylor maintains as the complex layering of human experiences. If we were to understand social practices through the science of interpretation, we cannot arrive at a conclusion "with fine exactitude" (1971 p. 49). As earlier argued, the prevailing ambiguity towards artists as educators, stems from the lack of understanding, specifically on the part of educational institutions and educators on *how* theatre artists construct their teaching engagements. As such, the space for integrating an alternative artistically informed teaching practice has possibilities, which have yet to be realised.

Further, the theatre artists in England and Singapore, all show varying degrees and means of exploiting and appropriating their theatre expertise to serve educational ends. The data seem to suggest that the English practitioners, engaged with a longer history of theatre within education settings, as well as steeped in specific traditions of drama and theatre education, traverse with relative ease across artistic and educational platforms. Their Singapore counterparts display greater resistance but this has to be contextualised within the histories and practices of, which the school practice is a microcosm of, the larger contested presence of the arts in the Singapore society. There are then doubts on whether the findings in this research may

sufficiently respond to the two questions. However, suffice to propose that these questions offer possibilities in the direction of future research on theatre artists in schools. What next? What are the implications of the research to the larger discourse on theatre education? The final and concluding chapter offers some considerations and reflections on the journey beyond the present study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

1. Research Findings and Key Issues

Through the ethnographic case study research in England and Singapore, this study offers the possibility of making explicit the tacit and implicit understanding of how theatre artists construct their teaching practices. It does this by conceptualising theatre artists' teaching practices as a nested nexus of artistic and pedagogic structures. While drawing upon Bourdieu's relational social theory and in particular *habitus* and *field* as an overarching theoretical framework, this inquiry also invokes multiple theories to deepen the interrogation of the lived experiences of the theatre artists in education settings.

Briefly, the findings of the study suggest that an understanding of 'how' theatre artists' teach must consider the layered histories; multiple contexts; philosophical framework; and the politics of practices betwixt and between the artistic and education fields.

1. The interrogation includes tracing a confluence of influences such as artistic training and practices; past pedagogic experiences both formal and informal; influences of mentors, peers and key moments; as well as personal choices and decisions. In other words, an understanding of their complex syncretism of self-constituted structure of perceived influences.
2. There is also the consideration of contextual dependencies. Contexts—the immediate classroom and pupil engagement as well as the school culture, commitment to theatre education, expectations of the theatre artists' role— affect how the theatre artists shape and construct their teaching practices. Contextual understanding would also require sensitivity to the political exigencies affecting arts education within the country and as a consequent

in the school (Chapter 4, pp. 125–126; Chapter 5, pp. 156–158; 165–170). This will impact how each theatre artist negotiate their identity and the complex circuits of mobility enmeshed in the politics of capital acquisition, cultural production and jostling positions (Bourdieu 1993, 1996).

3. The study also reveals reflexivity and its twinned concept of agency as vital to theatre artists' acts of teaching. Here we witness how each theatre artist negotiates the presence of old and new *habitus* differently, generating heterogeneous approaches within their teaching practices.
4. It is also suggested that to know *how* theatre artists teach requires an understanding of the deployment of a repertoire of **activities**, the varying **emphases** as well as the **philosophical framework or principles** guiding their choices and decisions. To that end, the findings suggest the theatre artists as embodying an intuitive and instinctive understanding of their hybridised pedagogy of rehearsal/studio-based/performance experiences. It relies on strategies from theatre-making process, adapted to suit engagements with young people within different teaching contexts.
5. Over this hybridised pedagogical structure, I extracted from the Singapore findings suggestions of a distinctive world view identified as the **theatre-life optic**. Considering Geertz's formulation of world view, it is suggested that the principles constituting the theatre-life optic frames the teaching practices. Embedded within the principles are elements that privilege openness for multiplicity and diversity.
6. The final analysis indicates that the theatre artists' understanding and enactment of pedagogy do not fit perfectly with the prevailing educational culture of pedagogy. As such a spectrum of negotiations occurs, ranging from transgression, disruption, disjunction and appropriation as outcomes of theatre artists' presence in schools.

My concluding reflections offered here is that the nested nexus hybridisation of artistic and pedagogic structures are potent framework for affecting multiplicity and diversity in education. Theatre artists offer a different learning and teaching environment. Evidence of this difference is not only offered in the way they conduct

their teaching practices (as detailed in Chapter 5) but also as expressed by the students who experienced the different teaching and learning environment the artists create (pp. 193–194).

As such, this thesis argues that there is space for theatre artists' involvement in education. While their approaches are different, their expressed goals of education are similar, that is, to benefit the students. As proposed in Chapter 6, the theatre artists' notion of education is an embodied humanistic teaching and learning approach focused on nurturing the individual within the community, with an emphasis on multiplicity and diversity. I suggest that such teaching practices may cushion the present stress on standardised testing. However, to achieve a better integration of theatre artists' different lens on pedagogy requires sustained and impactful dialogue between artists and educators. To facilitate dialogue, more research in this direction is needed. This proposition becomes even more urgent in the face of increasing theatre artists' presence as educators in schools, globally. This study is therefore one such endeavour: to deepen understanding and offer the theatre artists' voice in the discourse of theatre education teaching practices.

2. Implications And Suggestions For Future Research

Beyond forwarding the voice of the 'marginal', the implications of this research and the suggestions for further investigation are manifold. I return to the introductory chapter, which outlined my motivational directions for this research.

2.1. Implication on professional development for artists who teach

Indeed the consideration for professional development is one of them. It is an urgent off-shoot of global readings on artists' presence in schools. In Singapore for instance, the development of the Singapore Drama Educators Association was to serve this ostensible area of need in response to an increasing participation of theatre artists in education settings. Drawing from the findings thus far, I propose a model of professional development as illustrated below.

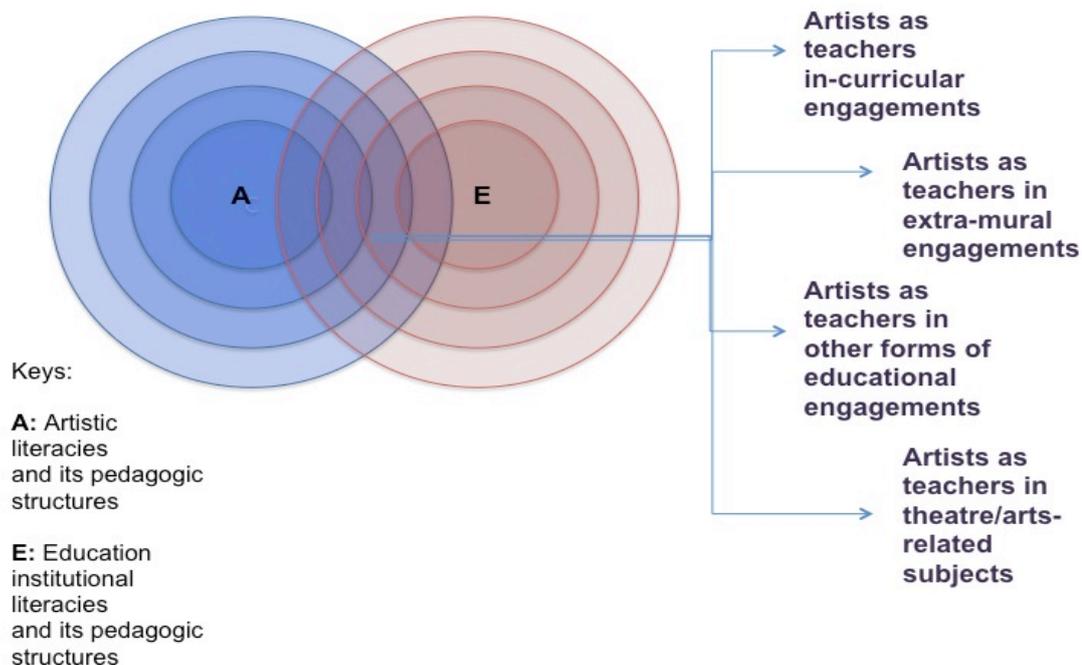


Figure 7.1: Proposed model of theatre artists as educators professional development

The model accounts for the professional development of theatre artists as a nested nexus of artistic literacies and education institutional literacies. In figure 7.1, the juxtaposition of the ‘artistic’ (A) and ‘education’ (E) literacies for professional development signals not an absence of pedagogical structures in theatre artists’ teaching practices but one that requires articulating, refining and defining. In that respect, the model suggests that the professional development of theatre artists in education settings must consider their artistic influences as valuable, if not vital, in structuring their teaching experiences. Adding value to their existing dispositions is ‘education institutional literacies’, which pertains to praxis involving contemporary pedagogical philosophies, organisational literacies, classroom management as well as curriculum and evaluative principles that affect arts education. Additionally, varying projects and varied teaching expectations are also important considerations for their professional development. Conceiving theatre artists’ professional development as a meeting of artistic influences and educational needs may offer them better support in pursuing educational endeavours.

2.2. Impact of local research on global discourse: leaving the door open for dialogue

The research was conducted with the aim of understanding the Singapore practice. However in formulating the design, the strategy undertaken to include Phase I in England highlighted the impossibility of studying the local without identifying the resonances and consonances with the global. Indeed, as intimated in the introductory chapter, the concept of education is knotted in discourses of power within knowledge construction and dissemination as constitutive of the modern world. Yet it is erroneous to consider the binary dominant-weak/developed-developing worlds argument as the only explanation that sticks. So while Errazuriz (1998, in Bamford, 2008, p. 30) laments on the proliferation of model-type copies within educational systems often at the expense of social and cultural specificities, an investigation of on-the-ground practices may offer evidence of adaptations, reformulation and regeneration, through innovative and alternative practices that are responsive to local needs.

Theatre education practices are no different. While there are prevailing practices, largely the United States, England and Australia, that have erstwhile dominated theatre education discourses in Singapore, there are also pockets of practices, which have yet to be researched and made prominent. This brings me to the notion of glocalisation, referred as the “tempering of effects of local conditions” on the possible “homogenising ideas imposed by globalization” (Codrington 2005, p. 716). However, I suggest that glocalisation in the 21st Century highlights a complex ‘multi-logue’ “interrelationship between the global, regional and the local” (Edwards & Usher 2000, p. 53). It suggests the exercise of agency and reflexivity in choices, decisions and strategies. This is nowhere further from the truth for a small city-state like Singapore. Its development rests as much on what it can do to retain its Asian identity but also what it must do to brand itself as an open market, cosmopolitan and globally connected country.

This leads me to the writings of the late Kuo Pao Kun. One of his plays, “Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral” (2003) immediately comes to mind. The play tells the story of a castrated Chinese-Muslim Eunuch, Admiral Zheng He, and the

voyages he made across the Indian Ocean with his armada. Kuo draws parallels between Zheng He's life with that of contemporary Singapore; the metaphor of castration depicts Singaporeans as culturally deracinated. But recognising that such is the condition, Zheng He and by association Singapore, are "cut loose and therefore set free" and "have thus become natural heirs to all the cultures of the world." (1998, p. 61). Deracination *can* serve as an emancipatory tool to "stitch our cultural memories together with other cultures to arrive at that which can transcend the sum total of Singapore's cultural fragments" (Wee 2007, p. 127).

To do what Kuo suggests requires that we acknowledge absences while embracing hybridised becomings. I suggest, such is the task ahead for theatre artists and educators impacted by globalisation: to locate local accents within the tenor of theatre education practices and contribute diversity, the cornerstone of plurality, into the larger theatre education discourse. This, in my view, is a positive and healthy development. Studies on localised adaptations, which in themselves are inhomogenous, may generate discussions on how prevailing or dominant practices are further inflected and refracted with local sensitivities. In Singapore for instance, there is a need to interrogate and understand how language, and in particular, the mother-tongues (Malay, Mandarin and Tamil) may challenge and adapt English-centred theatre education practices. Or to study theatre artists trained in 'traditional' Asian or folk arts. How then would they integrate what they do artistically in education? Are there differences? These are areas, which the present research is not able to accommodate.

3. Reflecting On The Challenges And The Impact Of Ethnographic Case Study On Reflective Practitioner

Finally, I end with my own reflections on the process of doing research "in a familiar setting" (Hockey 1993, p. 200). At the start of this research I was faced with many different research design permutations, which included working on the inquiry as practice as research. Adopting the latter meant interrogating my own practice, unpacking my work with the students as the object of inquiry. The final arbiter on the

chosen research design was the value learning collaborative and dialogically would offer me as a beginning researcher.

As I have discovered, learning to observe, account for and code the work of other theatre artists provided me an understanding of the rigours of research, an undertaking new to my immediate experience. Within it, I experienced the challenge of maintaining respect for the observational process as well as the subjects' participation as objects of inquiry. At the same time, I was made aware of the complications of the lived, fluid and dynamic construct of doing research with lived experiences. Additionally, it also offered me an opportunity to do a parallel interrogation of both the work of others as well as my own. I saw my own practice at times mirrored through the practices of others, and at other times, refracted differently.

Accordingly, there were questions on how best to negotiate my subjectivity; reflexivity was offered. Reflexivity, from my struggles with it, is an embodied experience. It requires experimentations, encounters with failures and guidance to epidermalise and make it part of my everyday practice. One of my biggest challenges was how the reflective practitioner's experience of observing rather than doing impacted my way of seeing, perceiving and understanding what I saw. Take for example my observation of the theatre artists in England, when in my archivist role, it was difficult for me to maintain distance. The sense of my body's ache and itch to enter their discussions, jump in or play along was palpable. These bodily responses were pregnant with memories of having done what was currently made to witness. As Susan Kozel explains, "[a]ll those who experience a piece—performers, audience members, stage managers, journalists—do so from their own culturally situated positions, their own preferences, histories, bodies, and connections with the art world" (2008, p. 134). However the act of perceiving does not stop, it continues to be engaged in a communicative two-way processing and sense-making between what is already known and what is now made known, differently. Indeed, the research process brought to light my assumptions and in turn forced me to critique my own teaching practices. Echoing what Lather opines as "being wounded by thought", doing this research proved empowering as well as destabilising (2007, p. 8).

Such confessions highlight that research is a subjective act and that strategies must be in place to delimit the subjective and intuitive sense. One of the ways I tried to negotiate my subjectivities was to reflect on the Singapore experience using the English experience as a counterpoint. There were challenges to that strategy. Spatial and temporal conditions vary and affected the selection of the theatre artists. The lack of knowledge of the workings of the English culture affected the research method as well. Also the limits of time and space in completing a doctoral research within a three-year span meant limiting the scope of analyses and room to allow the thought process to mature. An experienced lens returning to the data may read them differently. Further, the study focused only on theatre artists with extensive experience in school. Researching those who embarked on educational work fresh from performing arts training may offer a different perspective. What of gender and its impact on teaching practices? There are more questions yet to be answered. Nonetheless, these limitations suggest that doing research is an art and that the endeavour once begun will open doors for more interrogation.

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Appendix 1

In the pre-observation interview, John singles out his working relationship with the drama teacher and identifies her as ‘a terrific teacher’. Yet he also describes the tension he experienced in his dealings with her.

. . . I was obliged to ask Karen what are the bits that I am not ticking out that the examiner is looking for, you know, still frame, different modes of speaking, different characterizations, (tone changes) she’s got a list all over her drama studio. And I am going this isn’t drama, this has nothing to do with drama. When I went into rehearsals, nobody said “oh we’ve got to use still frame in this show, you know.” They would say what is the truth of this show, what are we trying to say in this show, you know. There was a bit, kind of tension between me and the drama teacher working with her kids. Now this is a different, I don’t have this tension in my research. This was extra-curricular work that I voluntary did cause I owe the school a lot and I need to pay back. And that was how I felt. So you know out of my respect for Karen and my love for her, she is a terrific teacher, I thought I’d give her a hand. What it brought up for me was how facile the teaching is. It’s box ticking. Nothing to do with . . . when I said to the kids, what’s the point of telling this story? Urgh, or yeah, to get a good grade. You know, there is nothing to do with grades, but it is of course, that’s what the kids are doing it for.

(Transcription: pre-observation interview with John dated: 31 March 2010)

Appendix 2

Sample of an interview transcript (extract).

Research participant: Rita (DC40050.WMA)

Keys: R= Rita N = Researcher

R: I think very . . . very clear and very strong roots which over the years I will keep returning to is erm Youth Theatre erm and for me and perhaps the most transformational time you know in my in my life and you know . . . you know a 16 year old . . . entering into youth theatre you know in er a social experience beyond the parameters of school and suddenly a . . . erm . . . an awakening really, don't know how to describe it in any other way, to see a world beyond the confines of curriculum and the limitations of that for me I think where I felt was actually very narrow, so youth theatre most definitely because I was very privileged to work with . . . erm . . . a team of people but . . . one man in particular who was exceptional in so many ways and I think exceptional because I was introduced to a very high quality theatre practice.

N: And who is that?

R: (1:25) A man called RS, who died . . . this year and I think because of that has actually also made me rally think about what he brought into my life and what he offered me and the doors that were opened by having that done you know the privilege of working with him. He was a . . . he . . . not only in terms of theatre but also that emphasis on on on the process . . . and process drama he worked very closely with Dorothy and I didn't know that obviously at the time erm but as I looked back and as I grow and continue to to make sense of my journey I am fascinated by that very early introduction which now becomes increasingly clear as to the kind of path that I took erm and it wasn't until I was doing teacher training which was at [name of school] which was very er. . . very skills-based which was suddenly a time for me kind of going *hang on* that's not that is part of my background.

N: When you say skills-based do you mean acting skills based?

R: (2:44) Well very skills-based in terms of you know theatre craft so I said you know not purely acting but in you know within the theatre there is roles thinking about rather than process which was very much marginalised . . . but it was then as I was being introduced to leading names in drama and theatre education that I then could look back at Youth Theatre and the experiences that I had which was going Ah Oh OK . . . so that's the work that informs him or her I could see who shaped who influenced and how that has influenced me. So my journey was a performer within youth theatre but also taking on you know . . . increased responsibility in erm erm youth leadership . . . er . . . I took on erm venue management and we were all about you know right from the start there was a very professional feel to it so I understood clearly about the roles of of of people who were involved in that ensemble theatre you know whether we were doing the lighting whether we were doing the sound whether we were doing the rigging whether we were doing the design of the set whether it was about directing small elements of it whether we were performing whether we were a lead in that you know it was sort of . . . we had exposure to all aspects and I think maybe my first exposure and not fully recognizing that in terms of the true sense of ensemble where we were all equipped all those of us that saw that

needed that wanted to fully understand and to be able to . . . erm you know work within that rather than just these isolated roles and we were encouraged to do that we were encouraged to take the responsibility to have ownership over . . . crafting the work so we felt absolutely you know proud every time we went out we understood it but we were never . . . we were never . . . complacent we were never comfortable cause we were always encouraged to seek you know erm . . . to develop the work really er . . . and I think because of that . . . that which felt like an occupation in a sense beyond school erm you know we went to Edinburgh every year I started at 16 and I went for probably for for 10 years in a youth capacity from being a teenager and all of all of the delights that it brought by going away and having those first experiences with people from a wide variety of background and ages and then you know becoming . . . erm . . . older running the venue erm . . . driving the lorries you know rigging the place up converting . . . you know . . . erm . . . places that were not normally theatre spaces in the year . . . erm . . . and then TIE we had a school-based theatre company and we toured locally within Leicestershire erm Leicestershire schools but then we would take our work up to the festival erm so I could you know in my own it was progression for me in those ways . . . (6:00) I think also for the fact to being involve within the TIE productions that were also built out of the Leicestershire youth theatre and the organization within that I was given additional responsibility of understanding . . . erm the educational content and value of the work that we did er and what we were presenting for young audiences erm you know the true sense of participation erm . . . and engaging young minds and opening young minds we were involved in new writing and . . . erm yeah it was just layers upon layers very carefully revealed by this amazing man that allowed us step by step to erm . . . to grow and take as much as we need and to be . . . challenged if we felt that was appropriate where if you were a hungry child you know there was there was plenty you know so that I think for me that's absolutely kind of you know my where my core values come from and I owe that to him directly.

- N: (7:11) I have a question about this PGCE at the [name of school]. I don't quite understand . . . is PGCE is a teacher's training course and it's a one-year course and you did it in [X] at the education department?
- R: Yea . . . yeah they don't suppose they wouldn't call themselves an education department but it is a, it was a strand of it so you know you can do actor training there and [name of school] is a synonymous with very superior.
- N: Conservatory training.
- R: Yeah. There are also kind of now increased Masters programmes in a sense the education was a smaller branch.

Appendix 3

Extract A: VID00020.AVI

Rita is sidecoaching as students pick up marker pens to begin ‘scrawling’ their thoughts on the wall lined with paper. Music is playing in the background, lights are rather dim, students milling around the mannequins, touching the objects and reading the printed cards, and going to the wall to ‘scrawl’ what they think they know about the play from what they see. Rita gets them to read the texts extracted from King Lear and positions themselves around a piece of text that “*really caught your eye*” (3:03-3:04). Students begin to select their text and she gets them to start “*talking*” with others who have chosen the same text, on “*where you are there*” (03:45 – 04:20). The students then are encouraged to jot their discussions down around the text. Rita and Viola assist students when they seem stuck.

*Rita: Ok two questions. You don't need to answer this but just thinking cause we are going to come together. Question 1. What do we think we know? What do we **think** (emphasised) we know . . . about this play? And second question: What do we want to find out? What do we want to find out from what we've seen, what we've written, what we held, touched, what do we want to know. (08:37 – 09:09)*

Extract B: VID00021.AVI

Viola, in costume with cape, crown and carrying a wooden stick as sceptre, performs Lear. “*Give me the map*” as she utters King Lear’s text. “*Know that we have divided into three, our kingdom. Into three our kingdom, and tis our fast intent to shake, tis our fast intent, tis our fast intent, tis our fast intent. Yes, Yes. With the map there, know that we have divided into three our kingdom and tis our fast intent to shake all cares and business from our age, hmm, conferring them on younger strengths. Whilst we unburden, crawl towards death.*” (00:37 – 02:40)

Viola, as Lear, repeats the lines in different permutations while she demarcates the territories on the cloth map using masking tape. Once the demarcation seems to her/his satisfaction, Viola/Lear continues with the remaining text signaling his daughters to speak their love for him. The students sit silently watching the performance. Viola/Lear beckons the students to speak. Not receiving any response, Viola removes her costume and leaves the map and throne (04:19). An 11 second pause follows and then Rita enters the space as asks the students, “what do we know now?” Students begin discussing the scene with Rita.

Extract C: MOVOC9.mp4.

In this video, we see Rita leading a 14-min discussion and brainstorming activity with the students. Dividing the 20 students into three groups, she tasks each group to take on a collective voice (or she calls it “*role or identity*”) of either one of the three daughters – Goneril, Regan and Cordelia. In this 14-min session, Rita offers her instruction: “*think about how you are going to persuade the King of your love. So this is about persuasive talk.*” The focus is on the words that they will use to convince the King. The groups begin to discuss the various possibilities.

“There are all words aren’t they, how about action?” Rita asks mid-way through the discussion but is not picked up by the students. One of the students mention “act sincere”.

She picks on the word “act” and draws in performance as a way to develop on her notion of “action”. It is here that Rita connects “action” with “performance” but does not go further to explain nor develop the “action”. Her next instruction: “Just a couple of minutes now, just talking, you’ve got to draw on everything that you have begun to question, write about, feel, think, since we come in to this space. . . . just ideas. I’m kind of thinking as you have got ideas, can we write those down, any ideas, as you get your thoughts. Bits of paper. One person in the group may be scribe, note-taker. Get yourself a pen, agree who that person is. Just 2 minutes, writing down as many ideas as you can.”

Extract D: VID00026.AVI

Rita: It’s everything we talked about in our practice the importance and value of names. If we can’t name you we can’t include you.

Viola: Ya we can’t name you we can’t include you. Although maybe to go actually, we might, might go a bit easy on ourselves. So we may not be able to include you but we are (extend her hand out to an imaginary person in front of her) going over to say would you tell us, (extend her hand to another imaginary person) tell me what, you know what. If we get the names we get the names, we (using the same hand gestures again), we include. We do it physically, or we do it gently in a way that is going to help us solve that problem. (01:25 – 01:56)

Extract E: Observation field notes of Reese class with School A in the creative arts space at Warwick Arts Centre

Reese does a ‘name game’ as a ritual for the students to ‘tune in’ to one another and to focus everyone’s energy to the collective work. In this name game, the idea of travelling, which was the theme of the project, was also weaved in. Students prepare by standing in a circle. A student says her name and moves across the circle to another person and that chosen person says his/her name and moves across the space to another person, and so on. But each time this game is played, Reese encourages the students to use their bodies more. “Try make your gestures bigger”, she would say. Reese later adds on the game by suggesting that the student who moves across, greets and calls out the name of the person she/he travels to. Most of the students are shy. Knowing that the workshop builds up to a performance, Reese intention is to get the voice and the body to be more connected and build the vocal and physical confidence of these students. In one of the sessions, three assistant facilitators work with Reese and the students on the name game ritual. We begin gently by greeting and calling out the name of the person we are walking across to. As the ritual progresses, one of the assistant facilitators makes her gesture slightly bigger. Reese takes that moment to suggest that students could include different feelings and attitude as they walk across to greet the person. “How would you say it if you are happy to see her? How would you body show that you are happy?” When my turn comes, I exaggerate my joy of seeing a student and walk across with great energy, physically and vocally across the room. My hands are stretched out as if to hug the person, and my legs take on impatiently large strides. Reese again picks up on that moment and uses it to encourage others to take the chance at exaggerating the walk, voice and gesture. The ritual goes on for another 10 minutes. This time, students engage their bodies and voices a lot more. Not only in terms of size but the form changes as well. Some choose to walk side-ways to a person. Some run across. This greeting ritual becomes part of

the performance, where the students use luggage and haul them in different ways across the circle, greeting and calling out names.

Extract F: DIPART1B.mv4

Reese initiates a walk across the room. Her instructions:

“You are at an energy level, if you have got a scale of 1 to 5. 1 being catatonic and 5 being fiery like you are being lit on fire, then I want you to, like you are walking on coals, on hot coals or, you have an image what you think 5 might be. I want you to just now be walking at a 3.”

As she sidecoaches, the students are walking around the room, in different directions, walking and listening to Reese at the same time. *“What message do you send to you body to walk to level 3. You think about yourself for now and you take it down to a level 2.”* The students visibly slow down their pace.

“What might that be like? And level 1. It’s really hard. Imagine your body is filled full of treacle, syrup something really sludgy. You’ve got to walk your body right through all that. Sludgy, mud, swampy kind of goo. How do you push your way through? And think about how you body has changed in that way. Have a little look around and see how other people’s body has changed how did we move differently, in different state” The students offer different ways of walking through the description which Reese provides. She then changes the scale to a 4 and she asks them to feel what that burst of energy might be like. She invites them to be creative and offer different ways and directions of walking around the room. She reminds them of bringing their sensation and focus on the body as well as the space around them. As she explains, “drama and performance, they do three things. They work on your body, work with your body. And your mind, you do a lot of thinking, chatting, thinking. They also work on your soul”. Her intention, it seems, is to connect the body with the thinking and feeling as well as the awareness of the space they are working with.

Extract G: Observation field notes of Rona with students in a studio space

Rona’s session began with an introduction to the Ensemble as the method in which *“the actors here learn to ‘know’ each other and develop ‘trust’ over time so that they can ‘create’ a better production together”*. She emphasised how the work is a team creation rather than an individual creation, to create, what she termed as, “Magic”. She also highlighted that she was going to work with them “as a professional group”, using some of the techniques the actors worked with to understand Shakespeare’s text. In the 2-hour session, the students were mostly on their feet. There were three moments of “discussions” when students were seated on the floor discussing the activity that had engaged in. These moments totaled to 27 – 30 minutes with the fourth moment, which is a demonstration of costumes and props of about 15 minutes. For the most part the students were physically working with the script enacting the texts and experiencing what it would be like to perform the text.

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