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Fool’s Play:
The Performance of Leadership Development

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ABSTRACT

Recent scholarship in leadership development has focused on the limitations of the functionalist discourse. With increasing fervour, critical scholars claim that efforts to develop leadership and understand its development must move beyond entitative, individualist and outcome-oriented assumptions. Amidst the growing diversity and complexity of the leadership development field, the figure of the developer is still largely invisible. To address this lacuna, this research investigates the tensions encountered by developers, and their respective interactions in the development context. Such interactions are interpreted through an ontological perspective of organisational life as a series of dialogic, socially constructed performances.

The findings of the research are based on data generated through a 12 month ethnographic research partnership. The researcher facilitated an emergent, collaboratively designed leadership development programme within the New Zealand branch of a global supplier to the construction industry. The approach to data generation and analysis combined traditional qualitative and participatory arts-based methods. These were informed by practices originating in the fields of applied theatre and organisational aesthetics, including performance ethnography and organisational theatre.

There are two principle contributions of the research. First, a theatre-based metaphor and associated framework of ‘aesthetic pedagogies’ that enable scholars and practitioners to better understand the developer’s role in the social construction of leadership development. Second, a radical, theatre-based technique for undertaking leadership development, known as ‘organisational playmaking’. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the research, these contributions hold the potential to ‘travel’ into the related fields of organisational development, organisational aesthetics and applied theatre. A range of theoretical and practical implications may also help strengthen dialogue between these disciplines.
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INTRODUCTION

“Tis the times’ plague when madmen lead the blind.” IV.1:47

I perch on the edge of my seat, shaking. The house lights go down. Titters from the audience fade away. The music starts and the cast enter the stage in semi-darkness. I am very, very nervous. The people around me have trusted me with their stories and feelings. I want so much to honour them but the play must show a balanced reality. And I want it to be good. Les has put his neck on the line. He has invited international guests and top clients to what he is hoping will be a quality production. He has placed a huge amount of trust in me. But even this morning we were changing things. The dress rehearsal just one hour ago was a disaster. I was watching it, saying to myself “Oh my goodness, what is going to happen? This could be awful, or it could be ok”. There is nothing I can do now...... Lights up.

This thesis concerns an increasingly pressing issue affecting contemporary organisations: the performance of leadership development (LD). In the “turbulent world that characterizes our organizations today” (Raelin, 2003, p.xi), there is a critical imperative for every community to develop forms of leadership that “bring out the best of the human condition” (p.xii). Considerable scholarly attention in leadership studies and beyond has been devoted to the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of this development. There is, however, a lack of empirical research into the detailed processes taking place in the negotiation and performance, or the ‘how’, of development (Sutherland, 2012). In particular, much extant
research is written from the perspective of an objective, neutral observer (Graham-Hill & Grimes, 2001). It has ignored the complexities and tensions constructed in the relationships between organisations and those practising development. As Cunliffe points out, management education “fails to consider that practitioners deal with ill-defined, unique, emotive and complex issues” (2002a, p.35), which may explain why functionalist, normative and decontextualised approaches to LD still dominate this contentious terrain (Mabey, 2013).

The ethnodramatic (Saldaña, 2011) monologue opening this chapter is adapted from a recorded phone conversation I had with a close contact in the immediate aftermath of a theatre performance. The performance featured a play entitled At What Cost written with, for and about Toolzone (New Zealand) Ltd as part of this doctoral study. It represented the climax of a 12-month ethnographic, arts-based research project that investigated how the tensions of development are performed in the encounters between developers and participants. I had originally become interested in such tensions while designing and facilitating LD programmes for one of New Zealand’s largest construction companies. I was struck by the focus on economically-driven ‘performance outcomes’, instead of the hope, possibility and aspiration I felt should be at the heart of leadership (Adler, 2006). The development I encountered seemed to be “homogenising corporate behaviour and perpetuating cultural conformity” (Mabey, 2013, p.375). As a former actor and theatre-maker, I knew there was an alternative kind of pedagogy. I had experienced first-hand theatre’s “role to play in giving a voice to the excluded; in giving a voice to the minority; in demanding the right to speak publicly; in criticising without fear; and in questioning the borders of freedom” (Neelands, 2009, p.180). There seemed an opportunity to explore the connections between performances of development and the theatre tradition.
Early forays into literature confirmed dramaturgical concepts and theatre-based practices had been applied in organisations, both in pursuit of instrumental objectives (Clark & Mangham, 2004a, 2004b) and for more liberationist ends (Badham, Carter, Matula, Parker, & Nesbit, 2015; Nissley, Taylor, & Houden, 2004). My research began as an investigation into how theatre might be used in the latter way in organisational and leadership development. I was particularly interested in how dynamics of power and control might play out in the theatre-making process. While my methodological focus has remained fixed on crafting theatre within an organisation, the aim, objectives and scope of the research have evolved over the course of the project. The research has become less about ‘organisational theatre’ (OT) (Schreyogg, 2001) and more about the dynamic relationships, motivations and performances that constitute the social construction of development.

**Research Questions: Tensions in Development**

Prentki sees tension, or contradiction, as essential to a development process and claims “the facilitator's function is to take participants into areas usually hidden by the masks of hegemony, convention and common sense”(2015b, p.345). As I became immersed in my research site, my scholarly attention was increasingly caught by the startling frequency and regularity with which tension and ambiguity crept into my fieldwork encounters. Some of the tension expressed in the opening monologue, for example, relates to different conceptions of what development is trying to achieve. Ambiguity around the intentionality of an activity emerged as a central tension in this research. It links to debates within LD literature as to whether development should be oriented towards outcome or process (see chapter one) and how such decisions are controlled. Another source of tension in the monologue connects to the different
expressions of identity in performance. I was in the unusual position of acting as both researcher and development facilitator. As researcher, I was torn between loyalty to the participants with whom I had collaborated and a critical curiosity as to whether the theatre intervention would go ‘far enough’ in challenging the potentially oppressive norms surfaced in the research. As developer, I hoped the intervention would meet organisational objectives and be part of the ongoing construction of lasting, impactful change at Toolzone. Due to my chosen methodology, I took on a third persona. As artist, I knew the potential for theatre to touch the aesthetic sensibilities of those witnessing a performance. I felt the urgency to help generate such an ‘affect’ (Thompson, 2009) in this unconventional, demanding context. Forms of tension infused almost every interaction between myself, as the embodiment of these personas, and organisational stakeholders. These ranged from confusion as to upon what or whose behalf I was acting, to different understandings of what would constitute a ‘quality production’.

The dearth of empirical research into the developer figure was one motivation for the research. The second was the creeping realisation that this research and development activity was becoming a collectively-owned and socially constructed performance rife with competing agendas and tension. Fuelled by these recognitions, I was compelled to pursue an inquiry into the performance of tensions in development. The research is based on the following questions:

1. What tensions does a developer encounter in the performance of leadership development?

2. How might a developer interact with these tensions in their performances?

3. What implications might such performances have for leadership development?
The decision to assign tension a central position in this inquiry is informed by a critical, postmodern and social constructionist world view that conceives a developer as actively implicated in the processes of development. Tension is highlighted as potentially constructive in practices that unsettle established interpretation modes and challenge the status quo (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006). In critical or dialogic LD, for example, ‘unresolved tension’ around the interactions of developers and participants has been expressed as “walking a boundary between intervention and the participant’s agency” (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013, p.1241).

As I began working with the research questions, I discovered the tensions and ambiguities within the opening vignette were only some of those experienced daily by scholars, organisational actors, developers and artists in development situations. There are almost as many potential points of tension as there are moments of interaction. Some, such as the tension between aesthetic and instrumental intentions and the political complexities of donor relationships, have received attention in the field of ‘applied theatre’ (AT) (Balfour, 2009; Mullen, 2015; Prentki, 2015a). Balfour, for example, argues for holding “in tension the quality of the process that participants go through in making theatre and the quality of the work that is created” (2009, p.357). Other tensions, such as the degree to which participants should be involved in the construction of a theatre intervention, are investigated by critical scholars within ‘organisational aesthetics’ (OA). Nissley, Taylor and Houden (2004), for example, theorise a typology of theatre-based interventions in organisations according to tensions arising from ‘control of role’ and ‘control of script’. Still other tensions, such as the extent to which tangible outcomes can be articulated, measured and/or recreated, are subjected to scrutiny by those examining the dynamics of LD (Bolden & Gosling, 2006; Carroll, Levy, & Richmond, 2008; Mabey, 2013). Notably, while different terminology is often applied, many of the tensions
debated in these separate discourses are strikingly similar. To date, however, no research has brought these disciplines together to explore productive synergies. Nor has there been much dialogue between the respective scholarly communities. By researching the processes involved in crafting theatre for change, in an organisational context, I hope to strengthen connections and offer meaningful contributions betwixt and between all these fields and, possibly, beyond.

**Theatre as Method**

Commissioners of development programmes are faced with a “bewildering and contradictory array of expectations” (Carroll et al., 2008, p.364), corresponding to the myriad and increasingly complex interpretations of leadership and its development (Grint, 2005a). To meet such expectations, a vast array of practices has manifested, including a profusion of arts-based methods. Arts-based methods of development enable participants to ‘see more and see differently’ (Barry & Meisiek, 2010). They can generate collective mindfulness by “defamiliarizing organizational members’ habitual conceptualizations” (p.1505). As chapter three explains, theatre is but one of the many forms available. In order to address the research questions, I carried out an ethnographic study of a theatre-based leadership development programme (LDP) that took place inside a business I refer to as Toolzone NZ. The LDP was structured around the construction of an organisational theatre (OT) intervention (Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyogg, 2001; S. S. Taylor, 2008). OT differs from other theatre-based techniques such as role-play and is distinct from Radical, Corporate or Situational Theatre (Clark & Mangham, 2004b). It includes four elements: theatrical presentation (encompassing stage, actors, audience); organisational specificity; a defined audience; and a commissioning party (usually a paying client) (Schreyogg, 2001). The intention was to isolate intervention activities and use traditional
qualitative methods such as interviews and observation to investigate the tensions within them. Because I myself was responsible for both the research and arts-based development, the associated processes became blended. It became impossible to separate out the research from the development and theatre-making practices. As has been strongly argued in applied theatre (O'Connor & Anderson, 2015), in this inquiry, theatre-making was research in itself.

Although my research context is leadership in organisations, applied theatre (AT) has a strong presence in this study. In particular, the OT process became influenced by principles of performance ethnography. Whether arts-based or not, critical and dialogic development practices in organisations, and the research inquiries that document them, often rest on a dialogic, discursive or narrative aesthetic in their methods. This alone grants them parallels with AT pedagogies. AT is part of a long tradition of theatre with foundations of pro-social justice, education and change (Ackroyd, 2007). Development in the applied theatre context usually refers to work carried out by NGOs to address poverty, rural development, gender equality, human rights, disaster management and other social issues in what were previously known as ‘third world’ countries (Ahmed, 2002). Developers, usually termed facilitators or educators, are those carrying out the interventions, aiming to work ‘with’ rather than ‘for’ or ‘to’ participants (O'Connor & Anderson, 2015). Unlike organisation studies, there is an active critical debate in AT around the assumptions of ‘benefit’ attached to ‘transformation’ (Neelands, 2004; O'Connor, 2015; Prentki, 2012). There are calls for vigilance around promises of change, especially where funding relationships may muddy the waters of intentionality (Balfour, 2009). Despite the apparent differences in contexts, this thesis concurs with scholars who note the synergies between AT and theatre-based methods used in organisations for a different form of development (Ackroyd, 2007; Neelands, 2007).
Thesis Style and Structure

Brecht notes, “the smallest social unit is not one but two; in theatre, as in life, we develop one another” (1948, p.12). Like Brecht, it is my conviction that we all bring our beliefs, values and attitudes to every performance we engage in. Likewise, "in any meaningful exchange of experience and understanding conducted as a dialogue both parties are engaged in a process of changing and being changed by that encounter" (Prentki, 2015a, p.74). As a researcher this requires entering the ‘space of indeterminacy’ (Deetz, 2009) where one can only begin to understand relationships and processes from within. As a developer, such a stance corresponds to a relational pedagogy where methods “designed to encourage interactivity and collaboration have been seen to be in direct opposition to authoritarian and didactic approaches to learning" (Nicholson, 2005, p.43). As researcher, developer and artist I was required to place myself centrally in, not just the research, but the development and the theatre-making work that took place.

I conceive this as a performance and dialogic encounter, unique according to the context of its apprehension (Schechner, 2013). The aforementioned three personas, thus, weave their voices through this performance, speaking sometimes in unison as a chorus, sometimes separately, occasionally oppositionally. They collectively tell an ‘impressionist tale’ (Van Maanen, 1988), which carries elements of realist and confessional writing including detailed personal moments within fieldwork. Such an approach allows researchers to bring aesthetic elements to their story and describe significant snapshots in the research journey from their own perspective, "cracking open the culture and the fieldworker’s way of knowing it" (p.102). Inherently unfinished, an impressionist tale 'brings to light' the messiness, complexity and uncertainty of life. It is one partial, contestable and alternative subjectivity, resting on a raft of relational and
subjective assumptions, based on a singular researcher experience. Nevertheless, the rich insights afforded can present significant value to theory and practice.

My impressionist tale can be likened to a ‘play within a play’, a device famously portrayed in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and other plays. The setting for the ‘meta-play’ is Toolzone. The action follows the commissioning and implementation of a theatre-based research and development project. The ‘play within’ is the performance described in the opening vignette towards the end of the fieldwork. Like characters from another famous tragedy, *King Lear*, players within the two realities (Toolzone and the fictional organisation portrayed on stage) express discomfort as their identities, intentionalities and loyalties are stretched between multiple, conflicting agendas. Resonant lines of dialogue from *King Lear*\(^1\) are, thus, peppered through the thesis and become increasingly integrated into later chapters to illustrate specific findings. The line quoted at the beginning of this chapter, for example, uttered by Gloucester after he has been blinded, is intended to suggest our approach to LD may have gone awry. Within the narrative of the thesis there are other deliberate suggestions of playfulness, for example, where theatrical motifs are used in data chapters. There are also sections, such as literature review chapters, that express a more formal documentary style.

The thesis is structured as follows. I begin with a chapter about LD. Adapting Mabey’s (2013) comprehensive summary, I first map the territory. I synthesise current debates into four ‘tussles’ dividing the field. I state my position relative to each and pose a number of questions that have yet to be satisfactorily addressed. In the second half of the chapter I look outside the immediate LD field to form an impression of how developers stage their performances. In particular, I look at how the relationships of developers to

\(^1\) Lines from *King Lear* are cited according to the act (I-V), scene (1-7) and line(s) (000) as published in the Tudor Edition of Complete Works, (1951).
authority, ideology and pedagogy have been treated in OD and AT. The chapter concludes with some questions that remain unanswered in the literature. These connect to how a developer could or should position themselves relative to the political complexities of organisational life.

In chapter two I narrate the emergence of performance studies and the dramaturgical perspective of organisations as scholarly domains, plotting their connections. Goffman (1959, 1961, 1986), Turner (1979, 1982, 1986; 1982) and Schechner (1988, 2013) have a strong presence in the early part of this chapter. I then look at how an ontology of performance has been applied in the methodological processes of framing, distancing, play and the construction of liminality, all of which are core concepts relating to the findings of this research. The final part of the chapter raises questions about the dichotomy of ‘aesthetics’ and ‘instrumentality’, ending with some critical concerns around the politics of performance that link to those raised in chapter one.

Chapter three opens with a summary of the methodological foundations to this study. I then describe how certain arts-based methods influence the research design before presenting a detailed description of the methods used. Unlike more conventional qualitative research, there is a blurring of lines between methods of inquiry and methods of development, and I invite my reader to enter the narrative in a holistic way. I describe the unfolding of the theatre-making process using Schreyogg’s (2001) six-step process of OT as a guide. Owing to the influence of AT, and the integration of research and development, the resultant set of methods became a hybrid of OT and ethnodrama that I call ‘organisational playmaking’. In the description of the methods used, brief snapshots of data are spliced into a detailed commentary to illustrate aesthetic and pedagogic
processes in action. The last part of the chapter touches on ethical considerations of the research.

The next two chapters, four and five, present the data findings of the research. They both begin with an ethnodramatic vignette that is then unpacked in order to generate preliminary assertions. Chapter four, *The Negotiation of Ambiguity*, looks at the political processes surrounding the construction of identity, intentionality and control in development. It exposes tensions encountered in relationships with the organisation. Most of the data are drawn from one particular critical interaction when the future of the research endeavour was in jeopardy. I connect moments within the data to some of the tussles and developer castings noted in chapter one. Chapter five, *Playing with Distance*, investigates the processes and inherent tensions of crafting the principle development activity; the theatre performance. Referring to theory from chapter two, I pay particular attention to the way distance is perceived and played with in the interactions between participants and myself, as developer-artist.

Chapter six pulls together and builds from the interpretations of data in the previous two. It offers a framework of ‘aesthetic pedagogies’ built from a theatrical metaphor to make a number of contributions to theory and practice. In my discussion, I make note of where insights gleaned through a specific theatre-based process may be extrapolated into a more general development practice.

In the final chapter I summarise these insights and contributions in terms of the implications they may have for theory and practice. I also highlight some limitations of the research and directions for future scholarship. While this chapter aims to bring together all the various strands and stories running through the research, there is no trite happy ending. In accordance with my theoretical and practical assumptions, my
concluding remarks herald a conscious disappearance from the narrative amidst some lingering ambiguity. This intentionally open ending to the performance of this thesis is informed by a belief running through the research; that it is in a space and state of 'un-knowing' that truly exciting new trajectories and futures may be imagined.
CHAPTER ONE:

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

“Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;” II.1:115

The development of leadership is a “politically contentious activity” (Mabey, 2013, p.359), primarily because there are so many, often incommensurable, understandings of what is being developed (B. Jackson & Parry, 2011). We all have our own view of leadership, which cannot be disassociated from historical and socio-cultural transmission mechanisms found in the richness of our own experience (Ford & Harding, 2007). Alvesson and Spicer (2012) refer to the ‘endemic vagueness’ of leadership, a term they claim is now applied to explain almost every organisational situation, blunting the concept. As Grint (2005a) points out, the word leadership itself has as many definitions as people interested in it. And yet, organisations appear to reify this elusive, ambiguous concept spending millions each year in the pursuit of its development.

While glimpses of my own perspective appear in parts of this thesis I do not seek to engage with the debate around what leadership is. There is already extensive scholarship serving that purpose (e.g. Collinson, 2014; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Grint, 2005a; B. Jackson & Parry, 2011). Rather, drawing on Mabey’s (2013) comprehensive review of LD, this chapter teases out the contested claims, questions and tensions that continue to challenge researchers and practitioners in the field. At risk of adding yet another set of binary dichotomies (Collinson, 2005) to an

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2 Grint (2007) provides estimates of the total LD industry value from US$15b to US$50b worldwide. Other estimates put the figure around US$100b within the USA alone.
already confused area, in the first half of the chapter I condense the main areas of debate into four ‘tussles’ that seem to divide the field around a particular practice or focus. I call these; the ‘outcome vs. process’ tussle, the ‘individual vs. collective’ tussle, the ‘separated vs. situated’ tussle, and the ‘control vs. liberation/emancipation’ tussle. In recognition that many in the LD community are both practitioners and scholars, and in a bid to strengthen dialogue between theory and practice, I refer to a range of empirical and theoretical work, highlighting ‘unanswered questions’ as opportunities for further empirical inquiry. Notwithstanding the permeability and overlap between them, but in the hope that a simple classification may bring needed ‘theoretical clarity’ (Mabey, 2013) to my argument, I explore the tussles sequentially. I use my analysis to claim that many of the suggested shortcomings of LD may be explained by insufficient attention having been paid to the role of the developer.

In light of this lacuna, the second half of the chapter is devoted to what takes place inside the development space. I look at a range of approaches taken by developers, how they present and position themselves, and the assumptions informing their practice. The chapter concludes with some comments around the limitations in our current understanding of leadership development and suggestions for new trajectories.

Mapping the LD Landscape

Applying a modified version of Alvesson and Deetz’ (2000) discourse framework to the LD terrain, Mabey (2013) finds the overwhelming majority of leadership development programmes (LDPs) ascribe to a functionalist discourse. This is defined by

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3 I originally planned to use the label ‘dialogues’ due to the alignment with a dramaturgical perspective. As I became more familiar with the debates, however, they felt more like cries across a battlefield or between wrestlers locked in stranglehold, and less like the open, transparent discourse that dialogue suggests, hence the term tussle.
Kamoche as “the purposive use of policies / practices to achieve managerially sanctioned objectives aimed at enhancing organisational performance and effectiveness, and the quest for practically useful outcomes” (2000, p.756). A functionalist approach views leadership as “broadly self-evident and essentialist” (Mabey, 2013) and development activities are structured with an emphasis on instrumentality. Non-functionalist discourses, on the other hand, guided by a constructionist epistemology, are generally “not concerned with the transfer of knowledge about leadership, but rather with the generation of new knowledge that enables people to more effectively shape and take up their roles as leaders” (Bolden & Kirk, 2009, p.82). Mabey claims “authors tend to remain committed to their favoured ontological approaches”, and, accordingly, one of the aims of his paper is to promote dialogue within the discipline:

….we are all embedded within and subject to competing sets of discursive assumptions; however by becoming more critically reflexive and attuned to the constraints associated with these discourses, the possibility arises of being able to study, critique and draw conclusions about leadership development in a fuller, richer manner (2013, p.362).

Much of the contention in LD seems to originate with scholars from the non-functionalist discourses - interpretive, dialogic and critical. Keen to drive the generation of knowledge forward, they challenge the assumptions underlying the dominant, functionalist approaches. Although this contention does not necessarily constitute the kind of constructive dialogue Mabey (2013) asks for, these are the voices “clamouring to know how leadership distributes itself across time and task, site and situation, and people” (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014, p.7). These scholars try to shift attention towards examining how leadership is continuously constructed in interactions and discourse rife with subjective meaning-making processes. It is the diversity of opinion within the relatively small field of LD that makes the scholarly conversation so rich, and yet, the fiercely held positions also make the landscape rugged for a junior scholar, perhaps even perilous. Finding my way across this terrain I have stumbled upon four
tussles that might never be won or lost, but that I believe warrant further dialogue. Before summarising each I should declare that I locate my own ontological and epistemological position within the interpretive discourse, with a natural tendency towards critical and dialogic practice. I should also note that the lines between formalised LD and the organic developing of leadership practice in situ are somewhat blurred. As far as possible I will use examples of theory and practice that address intentional LD events or interventions. I recognise, however, that LD happens in an ad hoc, social and emergent fashion within the workplace. Where necessary, therefore, I refer to such informal processes to explicate my arguments.

**Outcome vs. Process**

The first tussle I wish to address – that between outcome and process in development - stems from the core question of whether reality exists externally as an objective entity or is constructed between actors. If our reality is bounded and unchangeable, all we can do is influence the outcome of our behaviours. If it is dynamic and subjective, efforts may be better spent exploring how we construct leadership together. To illustrate the contention I will use the example of ‘competency models’ and a ‘logic of practice’ (Bourdieu, 1990), two approaches to LD which could be considered directly in opposition to one another (Carroll et al., 2008).

For many organisations, and scholars that study them, LD outcomes equate to changes in individual behaviour or skill, often referred to as ‘competencies’. Competencies are defined as "an acceptable standard of practice and/or a behavioural predictor of improved performance" (Bolden & Gosling, 2006, p.150). One of the earliest critics of competency models stated:
This approach has been developed without any corresponding effort to question and transform the relationship between employers and employees or to change an ingrained, competitive emphasis upon individual careers and advancement. It is unconcerned to incorporate an appreciation of the actual or potential social roles of management. It excludes consideration of the personal meaning of managerial work, let alone an understanding of how managers’ contradictory positioning within social and organisational structures affects their capacity as managers to reflect and act. (Wilmott, 1994, p.109)

Although another early commentator called them ‘obsolete inventories’ (Rost, 1993), competencies still appeal to organisations struggling with the ‘vagueness’ of leadership as they represent "an attempt to usefully describe and thus operationalise what can appear a bewildering and contradictory array of expectations" (Carroll et al., 2008, p.364). The 'ubiquity' of competency approaches may, however, also neglect, and possibly invalidate, important dimensions of leadership understanding and practice (Carroll et al., 2008). Bolden and Gosling (2006) list three of the functionalist assumptions that inform a competency approach: that those performing will display the same behaviours; that these behaviours may be learned; and that success follows when weaknesses are improved (all of which are negated by research from non-functionalist discourses). They launch a polemic on the growing use of what they consider a ‘reductionist refrain’, arguing that competency models "emphasise measurable behaviours and outcomes to the exclusion of more subtle qualities, interactions and situational factors" (p. 150).

Functionalist LD approaches do not question the assumptions upon which programmes are designed. They "offer a managerialist perspective that focuses only upon what goes in (the contents of the programme) and what comes out (whether participants become better skilled in their work)" (Ford & Harding, 2007, p.478). In pursuit of enhancing 'measurable behaviours', considerable energy is spent by organisations on the evaluation of LDPs, through techniques such as 360’ feedback or employee surveys. Even with the focus firmly set on impact, outcome and efficacy, however, there seems to be a
high degree of uncertainty about what LDPs are trying to achieve. Mabey (2013) claims the overarching goal of functionalist LD is the enhancement of organisational performance, often with an economic imperative. This has spawned increasingly sophisticated measurement techniques, yet one functionalist case study of an ‘exemplary’ LDP reports the overall evaluation as follows:

The findings from the independent evaluation reveal a programme that is overwhelmingly successful in that it achieved its organisational objectives of increasing individual levels of confidence, providing networking opportunities, enhancing decision-making skills and strategies, and developing a “big picture” perspective. Over 80 per cent of respondents report being more effective in working in a dramatically changing environment, having broadened their perspectives beyond their departmental silos, and having enhanced their team and communication skills. At a time of very low morale among employees, two-thirds of the LR participants report increased enthusiasm for the job (Foster, Bell Angus, & Rahinel, 2008, p.505).

Economic performance features only subliminally here: success indicators derive from participant self-reporting of changes to their behaviours and skills, or competencies. Elsewhere in the same article, Foster et al (2008) identify the original goal of LD as isolating common attributes of successful leaders and diffusing them to individuals through training. This would explain why behaviours emerge strongly in their list of outcomes proclaimed as having met organisational determinants of ‘success’. Quite how ‘developing a big picture perspective’ can be measured or claimed as having been achieved remains unclear. Also unsatisfied by similar such claims, Jones (2006) responds to the clash of the ‘hard and soft stuff’ of management. He asks “exactly how does an organisation measure the net present value of improved leadership capability” and “is it possible to make a direct correlation between an LDP intervention and that team’s improved performance” (p.482)?

Like Bolden and Gosling (2006), Carroll, Levy and Richmond (2008) see the application of competencies to leadership development as problematic and inappropriate. They argue that "a focus on praxis, practitioner and practice offers both challenge and transformation to the ways that leadership is bounded and constrained by current
organisational and managerial conventions” (p. 363). Supported by others in the ‘leadership-as-practice’ movement (Cunliffe & Hibbert, 2016; Denis, Langley, & Rouleau, 2010; Raelin, 2016; Raelin, Kempster, Youngs, Carroll, & Jackson, 2018), they claim that a practice orientation can help prevent leadership becoming a ‘mechanistic imperative’ (Carroll et al., 2008, p.364). Where competency is rooted in objectivism, practice is explicitly constructionist and assumes relationality where bundles of practices (Schatzki, 2005) are the source of meaning and identity construction. A practice perspective argues that the majority of action takes place ‘on the hoof’ (Chia & Holt, 2006) and involves situational, improvised response. Action is ‘immanent’ (Chia & Holt, 2006) and “unfolds along with identity through feeling, responding, coping and negotiating with the day-to-day” (Carroll et al., 2008, p.367).

A practice view can “reorient us to think about and explore the vast bulk of leadership action or coping that is as non-reflective and non-conscious as the simple opening of doors” (Carroll et al., 2008, p.374). It offers a complete contrast to outcome-driven approaches which assume that intentional, pre-determined and bounded outcomes may be pursued and achieved in a development context. Evoking the popular metaphor (Inkson, 2004), a practice approach is about the journey, not the destination; the ‘how’ rather than the ‘who’ or ‘what’ of leadership development (Carroll et al., 2008). Practice and process-oriented approaches are, thus, comfortable dealing in emergent and unpredictable outcomes. But, with a small number of notable exceptions from the related domains of leadership (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003) and strategy (Samra-Fredericks, 2003), Carroll et al (2008) find little empirical material that looks at the everyday processes within development. Looking outside to the field of strategy-as-practice, they refer to Chia and Holt’s (2006) challenge to explore “non-deliberate practical coping, as opposed to planned, intentional action”, adding that this may feel unsettling to many
leadership scholars. Mabey reinforces their concern, stating “this emergent, distributed view of leadership development is difficult for functionalists to contemplate, as it defies the planning-for-performance assumptions of corporate learning strategies” (2013, p.375).

Perhaps in part to assuage these fears, but also to raise the profile of process and practice approaches, further attempts must be made to “seek ‘richer versions’ of leadership coming from more intimate and sustained interactions with actors” (Carroll et al., 2008, p.373).

More nuanced and richer versions of leadership and LD may come from sustained interaction between researchers and organisations but they may also be revealed by applying new techniques to a process view of development. If we can encourage those within organisations to see leadership as a relational process (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003), the ‘best’ approaches may be those that use stories, metaphors and myths to recognise mutual benefits and appeal to emotion. Organisations may even develop a culture of fun, trust and honesty along the way (Rost, 1993). Adhering to this view, Bolden and Gosling (2006) argue that the limitations of competency frameworks strengthen the call for symbolic and narrative processes to uncover and better understand collective sense-making in organisations.

For those in the interpretive, dialogic and critical discourses of LD, it is the process, rather than outcome, of development that takes centre stage (Mabey, 2013), but that does not mean outcomes are necessarily absent. Unlike functionalist studies that report ‘success’ based on the subjective claims of an individual that a programme enhanced their decision-making skills, (see, for example Foster et al, 2008), social constructionists:

....are more likely to problematize the variability and inconsistency in actors’ accounts and analyst findings, address the conditions of their production, and try to understand how conflicting truth
claims about leadership come into being and may actually coexist. Analysts often choose a constructionist path over essentializing theory because it supplies the necessary tools to grapple with communication’s unending variety and detail (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, p.175).

Within a non-functionalist discourse of LD the range of acceptable ‘outcomes’ of development is broad. Anything from a discursive indication that a ‘space for freedom’ (Spicer, Alvesson, & Karreman, 2009) or ‘space of action’ (Carroll & Levy, 2010) has emerged, or the generation of plurivocal debate within a participant group may indicate ‘success’. Even within the functionalist discourse authors have recognised the flaws in focusing primarily on evaluation and outcome. They particularly bemoan the fact that most programmes do not have the necessary time or resources to measure and demonstrate long-term impact so are forced to evaluate short-term outputs (Russon & Reinelt, 2004).

Perhaps the most interesting point arising within this first tussle concerns intentionality. It is suggested that when an organisation undertakes any kind of LD (whether outcome- or process-oriented) they need to consider what they are trying to achieve, and any underlying assumptions. Stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of development must critically examine their own conceptions of leadership and the narratives they are trying to create (Cunliffe, 2002a). Are they reaching for a fixed, defined and measurable outcome (such as trying to shape a group of people into an ideal leader mould), as appears to be the case in most functionalist examples? Or are they attempting to harness something more complex and shifting, a form of collective sense-making perhaps, as many constructionist and critical scholars argue is important in LD? Unfortunately, there is a notable lack of evidence in the literature that such issues of intentionality are even raised in the majority of development. This seems an omission and leads me to the following questions: who guides discussions around intentionality in development and what conditions must be created in order to facilitate the process? As
with all summary questions in this section of the chapter, these queries will be revisited later in the thesis alongside other relevant parts of the research narrative.

**Individual vs. Collective**

My next tussle features tension between individualistic and collective approaches to LD. It is not difficult to see why individual leadership, and the development of it, has historically attracted attention. We live in a society that is increasingly centred around aspects of self (e.g. 'self-development', 'self-awareness', and 'self-improvement'). We romanticise leaders (B. Jackson & Parry, 2011) and worship ‘heroes’, such as charismatic celebrity CEOs (Guthey, Clark, & Jackson, 2009), who are seen to be autonomously capable of transforming organisations. We have become more individualistic in how we perceive consequences. For example, there is now a widespread assumption that career situation and financial standing are a direct result of our own actions; we are individually responsible for what happens to us and our own learning (Contu, Grey, & Ortenblad, 2003). Early LD reflected the ‘cult of the individual’ and aimed to try and isolate the characteristics of ‘good’ leaders in order for people to emulate them. What early, individualistic conceptions of LD failed to appreciate, however, is that leadership cannot exist in isolation. Leaders cannot lead without followers. There must be an interdependent, shifting relationship between them (Mabey, 2013). Rejecting the common assumption that one is either a leader or a follower, Jackson and Parry (2011) remind us we are all both (and many more things besides). Holding a focus on whether we are acting as leaders or not distracts from the real question of ‘what is going on here?’ (Goffman, 1986). As noted previously, it is the ‘how’, not the ‘who’ of leadership that matters (Carroll et al., 2008).
Even the mainstream, predominantly functionalist, academic leadership community seems to recognise the need for a fresh approach. Indeed, there has been a ‘paradigm shift’ (Cullen & Yammarino, 2014) towards a relational view of LD that privileges connections among entities:

Collective engagement in leadership by multiple individuals and larger entities sharing multiple leadership roles through both formal and informal relationships is a required capability for facing increasingly complex workplaces and non-work situations (p.180).

Whilst this encouraging rhetoric appears in (arguably) the foremost leadership publication in the academy, suggesting the tussle has already been won, the battleground may simply have shifted. Approaches that favoured the development of the individual leader may once have squared up against those that were concerned with developing collective leadership. Now, the skirmish is between individualistic versus collective development practice. In other words, the argument has become methodological. I will use two papers to illustrate the point.

Day (2001) recognises the distinction between leader and leadership development and states that leader development builds intrapersonal competence while leadership development builds interpersonal competence. His definition of LD as “expanding the collective capacity of organisational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes” (2001, p.582) initially appears collectively focused. Upon closer inspection, he refers to the same individual capacity building approach as most mainstream LDPs in the functionalist discourse. Even where LD follows his suggested ‘integration’ strategy, it still focuses on helping people understand the methods they use in relating to and influencing others; an individual pursuit. To be fair to Day, he was writing at a time when collective appreciations of leadership were in their infancy and much has taken place since to promote and unpack the ideas of plural (Denis, Langley, & Sergi, 2012), collective (Raelin, 2003), shared (Hooker & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003;
Houghton, Neck, & Manz, 2003; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce & Sims, 2000), relational (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003) and distributed (Grint, 2005b; Gronn, 2000, 2002) leadership. There is no need to catalogue the emergence or nature of those concepts here. I do, however, note calls for research that examines the processes of sharing or distributed leadership and, more importantly, the construction of leadership at a collective level, either in teams or as an entire organisation undergoing development (B. Jackson & Parry, 2011). In the conclusion to his paper, Day suggests participants in development ask "how can I participate productively in the leadership process" instead of "how can I be an effective leader". While his suggestion presents a refreshing shift towards a process and collective / relational understanding, this study reaches towards a third option that goes further. I would argue that the questions now required should begin "how can we.....".

In the second example paper, McCallum and O’Connell (2009) also claim to move away from individual indicators. They state, “the underlying issue is that developing individual leader competencies focused on traits and situational attributes does not equate to better leadership” (p.153). Yet their paper focuses almost entirely on cultivating the ‘relational skills’ of leaders (even including that goal in the title), thus reinforcing rather than challenging the functionalist and individualistic competency or behavioural approach. Relational skill is another individual capability. Their definition of leadership, like many others, reflects how an individual uses influence to encourage participation from others. If this is how leadership is understood in most organisations, as Jackson and Parry (2011) claim, little wonder so much emphasis is placed on developing the abilities of individual leaders in LDPs. Despite widespread critique levelled at the individualistic leader-centric view of leadership, the examples presented here suggest development work continues to develop individual leaders, even while it claims to be pursuing values of collective leadership.
Taking a different approach, a new wave of critical research in LD has emerged within non-functionalist discourses. It places collective leadership right in the middle of development, rather than as an aspirational end. It takes the view that “leadership actors co-create their subjectivities – personal and professional identities, relationships, communities, and cultures – in communication through linguistic and embodied performances” (Barge & Fairhurst, 2007, p.228). Collaboration, communication and discourse have thus become increasingly central to those in the domain wishing to reverse the prioritisation of cognitive over social aspects of interpretation (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). Carroll and Simpson (2012), for example, see their work as part of a nascent movement that seeks to better understand leadership development as discursive and relational. They argue that collaborative sense- and meaning-making occur through sociality and dialogue. Everyone participates in leadership and “when members of such a community lead together in this fashion, that is, when they collectively reflect on their problems and possibilities and collectively choose and implement effective solutions and initiatives, they have the makings of a democracy in action – the essence of leaderful practice” (Raelin, 2012, p.12). Importantly for this research, and unlike most empirical work on leadership or development, Carroll and Simpson (2012) recognise that “there is no stable, external ‘spectator’ viewpoint; rather, all actors, including researchers, are co-evolving participants in the construction of relationships, structures, realities and meanings” (p.1287).

My interpretation of this second tussle is that many LDPs masquerade as a version of ‘collective leadership development’, but develop individuals in much the same way as traditional ‘hero-centric’ interventions, using different variants of method and language. While the literature on collective leadership is well covered, and practitioners appear to know how to develop individual leaders to co-construct it in their organisations, the
methodological processes around the collective development of leadership are under-explored. The main unanswered question emerging from my second tussle is, therefore; how can leadership be collectively developed?

**Separation vs. Situatedness**

The third tussle I have identified is between separation and situatedness in LD. This tussle explores physical or metaphorical distance. Programmes tend to occupy a position on a spectrum of ‘embeddedness’. At one extreme there are standalone programmes, where development is separated completely from organisational context. An example would be ‘open’ academic programmes within universities. At the other, there are situated programmes, where development is fully integrated into the daily lives of participants. These might include tightly focused ‘in-house’ programmes looking at the micro-processes of leadership. And there is everything between. In order to explore the possibilities and limitations of the various approaches I will consider different readings of distance. First, in spatial separation, distance can be experienced as the physical removal of participants from the workplace into another setting, usually the classroom. Second, distance can involve the metaphysical or pedagogical separation of learning from context. In this section, I unpack these expressions of distance in LD and argue that scholars interested in the ‘inside-out’ question may actually be looking in the wrong place for answers.

Until fairly recently, much leadership development has taken place in a classroom setting where participants are separated from their everyday working lives (Bolden, 2010). This is unsurprising given the majority, functionalist view has always been of leadership as a set of fixed processes or skills that, if learned and applied by everyone, will transform organisations (Mabey, 2013). Participants are seen as a homogenous group
who can soak up abstract knowledge, transport it and disseminate it back into their workplaces. Justification for the separation practice seems to be the assumption that cognitive, cerebral and episodic learning will translate into enhanced performance when participants return to the workplace. Also, if ‘learning’ takes place elsewhere there is little risk of distraction away from the ‘day-to-day’ role while present at work. Participants are identified by others as ‘leaders’ or ‘future leaders’. They are enrolled on a course (often ‘residential’) where information, transmitted didactically by ‘experts’ and absorbed into the heads of participants, will inform the roll-out of ‘best practice’ back in the business environment.

Interpretive and dialogic LD discourses place “an emphasis upon systemic context and inter-subjective appreciation” (Mabey, 2013, p.365). Associated programmes tend to be less physically separated, more situated. As LD scholars and practitioners increasingly recognise the value of such contextual and embodied learning, completely separated programmes are gradually being replaced by those that have at least a component physically situated in the workplace (Day, 2001). For example, there are now many LDPs in which the ‘teaching’ takes place in the classroom but participants are then expected to apply their learning to coursework specific to their role(s) in their own time at work.

There also appears to be a growing recognition that what goes on inside the development space is much more than the academic learning. Kamoche (2000) quotes a participant: “It’s not what’s on the course that really matters. It’s the other things you do while you’re there, the people you meet, networking, learning from each other” (p.759). Whilst a clash in ontological perspective means I wouldn’t prescribe Day’s (2001) methods, I agree with him when he states “Leadership development in practice today means helping people learn from their work rather than taking them away from their work to learn”. I also

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Day (2001) recommends more evaluation of LD and lists a number of methods including 360 feedback.
believe Day, and others who argue against the physical separation of employees from their workplace in development, may have missed a trick. Learning from work does not necessarily mean at work. Paradoxically, and in support of the distancing process recognised in the theatre (see chapter two), separation may be just what is required for deep, situated learning to take place.

Taking the idea of spatial distance and drawing from van Gennep (1960) and Turner’s (1969) analysis of ritual (see chapter two), Ford and Harding (2007) argue that the venue for LD should become a liminal space. Participants, they argue, depart for a programme as one thing, and return something else. During development, participants are undoubtedly undergoing some form of transformation, although as Kamoche (2000) notes, the notion of ‘returning’ in an altered state following ‘enlightenment’ can generate unforeseen expectations and consequences. Jones (2006) extends the liminality idea. He argues that one way to create an adaptive learning environment and correct the deficiencies of the dominant, diagnostic development approach is to ‘make the familiar strange’. Only by uncovering what has previously gone unnoticed may we see a new way of doing things. Exactly how ‘strange’ to make the familiar seems a source of uncertainty and potential tension. Jones believes LDPs can be conceptualised as “sites of ritual process wherein the larger cultural, historical and national conflicts that confront human societies are confronted and redressed as they manifest themselves in the particular organisations and individual lives of programme participants” (p.483). This seems a grandiose claim, and I find it unlikely that many organisations view their development programmes as having such a wide impact. I am aware, however, of LDPs that incorporate some kind of community project within them\textsuperscript{5}. There are also many examples

\textsuperscript{5} A 2014 programme delivered by the researcher on behalf of the University of Auckland Business School included an aspect of CSR that eventuated in the rebuilding of a local school.
of development interventions that involve activities outside normal routines and ‘comfort zones’, such as jazz workshops, yoga or meditation (Jones, 2006).

What is unclear from Jones’ analysis is whether he insists on the physical removal of participants from their everyday setting. In this research I concur with the popular view that it may sometimes be profitable to step outside a situation in order to better understand it. I am drawn to the notion of development in a liminal space, but I would argue that understanding development may be less about whether it happens in or out of the workplace, and more about the nature of the interactions in the learning space, wherever that is located. Rather than focusing on the geographical location of learning, therefore, we may more productively explore what is happening in any physical space. I now look at contextual situatedness and the idea of metaphysical distance, instead of spatial separation, to expand on this idea.

The notion of a development ‘context’ is ambiguous. Many studies treat context as the arena in which the development is taking place, primarily associated with the industry, business model and geographical distribution of the organisation. Under this view, a contextually situated programme in the charitable sector, for example, might draw from ideas of ‘spiritual leadership’ or ethical practice (B. Jackson & Parry, 2011). For Gagnon and Collinson (2014), context is always about power and politics. I will look further at their work when discussing my final tussle concerning control and liberation. One point they make in particular, however, reflects the way insufficient attention has been granted to the conditions of the learning space in LD:

Much extant research on LDPs is prescriptive in tone, focusing on competency creation and tending to be context-free, disregarding the social, organisational and political settings in which LDPs are embedded (2014, p.649).
Contextual situatedness, taken to the extreme, could mean a programme that was built entirely around the specific everyday practices of participants. Kempster and Stewart (2010) define situated learning as “an order or pattern of activities that enable a ‘novice’ to become a fully participating member practising a particular role” (p.205). In such a case, a development activity may be so tightly linked to the context of the individual participant that it becomes a form of coaching or counselling that has little benefit to the organisation beyond incremental improvements in motivation or efficiency. Conversely, if contextual separation is viewed as entering a space devoid of localised meaning, it may manifest in the loss of relevance or significance as participants ask, 'what does all this mean for me?' The familiar may now be too strange and participants may be "touched little, if at all, by the experiences and languages to which they have been introduced" (Ford & Harding, 2007, p.487). It is not difficult to imagine how entering a world of theoretical leadership abstractions or fantasies could alienate participants, rendering them impotent. Yet, even if designed around the needs of a group, too much contextual relevance may have its drawbacks. Programmes that construct learning around a strategic business imperative may be seen by participants as another coercive way to eke out even greater performance from an already stretched workforce. Also, “by privileging a multiplicity of local meanings, [the interpretive LD discourse] has the potential to unravel into endless relativism” (Mabey, 2013, p.370) and may result in the agency of local actors in their context being over-emphasised (Gronn, 2000).

Taking a more holistic view of context that appreciates subjective social, cultural and historical factors, situated (or embedded) approaches have synergies with action research (Shotter, 2010), where development and research take place concurrently. They may work best by “drawing participants’ attention to aspects of their own activity and the

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6 An example of this would be a LDP for a NZ construction company in 2013-2014 (managed by the researcher)
language they use that they would otherwise not notice, taking account of their embodied readiness to respond to events in their own unique and particular surroundings and giving credence to the precise, bodily feelings aroused by such encounters” (Mabey, 2013, p.373). Such practices generate aesthetic and kinaesthetic ways of knowing in a certain kind of learning space, inside or outside the organisation. Some context-rich approaches claim to explore the ‘lived experiences’ (Sutherland & Ladkin, 2013) of participants within their everyday environments (Mabey, 2013).

Although their work is individualistic and somewhat formulaic, James and Arroba (2005) offer a highly situated model that works with the ‘hidden beneath the surface’ lives of individuals. Their approach involves helping LD participants become aware of parts of their organisation that are not usually attended to, or that are actively avoided because of their perceived negative affect. They call this ‘reading the context’ – focusing the gaze outwards whilst paying attention to fears and anxieties inherent in leadership. Their argument is that situated learning must have an emotional component accompanied by critical self-reflexivity (James & Arroba, 2005). The ultimate in self-reflexivity may be autoethnography, as carried out by Kempster and Stewart (2010), who justify their choice of methodology by the “dearth of in-depth research on the development of leadership practice from a relational, social and situated perspective” (p.205). Whilst it does not look at an intentional LD intervention, their study is at the extreme of situatedness, in telling a highly contextualised story of only one individual’s leadership learning journey. Indeed, the authors suggest that experiential or naturalistic LD (on-the-job learning) may be the primary influence of development, even if it is ephemeral and unaccountable, like 'dark-matter' (Kempster & Stewart, 2010).
Two hypothetical programmes might appear to take oppositional approaches, one being classroom based and theoretical, the other ‘hands-on’ and situated inside the workplace. There is, however, potentially little distinction between them if they are both functionalist and individualistic. There is also no guarantee that a localised, contextually situated, programme will be any more generative. Rather, what appears to be significant is the process by which decisions around distance (physical or metaphorical) are made, and the fluidity with which context is handled inside the learning space. There may even be a kind of ‘sweet spot’ that emerges organically inside the LD environment where participants collectively establish the ‘right’ level of contextualisation for their own collective leadership learning. The question this tussle presents is: what degree of spatial and contextual proximity might enable the collective development of leadership to take place, and how is this negotiated?

Control vs. Liberation

The final tussle I wish to examine concerns the tension between perspectives of control and liberation/emancipation in LD. This is the shadowy domain of critical leadership studies (CLS) and commentators from all sides may, in fact, be involved in more than a tussle. Arguments around consensus, identity, oppression and domination occasionally feel like full frontal attacks. In an attempt to provide a path across this dense, political landscape, I begin by highlighting two papers that, while not strictly from within the development discourse, offer different ideas for how emancipation might be possible in LD. In doing so, I note that while some LD may appear emancipatory on the surface, it may at best stifle plural processes, and, at worst reinforce the hegemonic control it claims to challenge. I then highlight how power, control and resistance are interpreted in LD by
focusing on some of the most critical work to date. The section concludes with some observations around where this research may lead next.

Re-asserting the assumptions of the functionalist discourse, Mabey states “the bias towards consensus arises from the fact that such aspirations and definitions of knowledge-gain, skills-acquisition and attitude-shift are deemed to be mutually beneficial for leaders and followers alike” (2013, p.363). Challenging this bias, he believes development can provide the space for counter-cultural 'individual utterances' and expressions of 'otherness'. This is particularly true of programmes within the critical discourse where "leadership development prompts the organisation as a collective to open itself up to learning from the diversity of its members and then facilitate systemic change as a result of the learning" (p.374). As noted in the introduction, however, certain approaches "have the opposite effect of reinforcing social boundaries, homogenising corporate behaviour and perpetuating cultural conformity" (p.375). Opinion is divided, then, between optimistic scholars who see LD as a way to celebrate difference and unleash diverse, marginalised voices, and those who see only the 'dark side' of LD as a way to engineer compliance and conformity.

Among those that see LD as potentially emancipatory, including Mabey (2013), there is dissensus around the scale and scope of the prospective emancipation, what is being emancipated, and the way consensus and dissensus are treated in development. As a first example, Clarke (2006) sees potential for the development of 'representative' leadership to stimulate democracy in organisations. He refers to the 'rational myth' of centralised unitary working and challenges the inherent top-down hierarchical model that dominates many corporations. So far, Clarke argues, pluralistic attempts to distribute leadership have been undermined by "leadership legitimised through the application of
technical and economic values, power focused at the corporate centre, and organisational structures and systems that encouraged unitary working” (p.428). Management are, he claims, frightened by feelings of vulnerability because their traditional lines of authority are threatened. Although he refers only to ‘micro-emancipation’ (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002), Clarke seems to be playing with ideas of emancipation with a ‘big E’, particularly in “representing the interests of constituencies not immediately connected with a leader’s own formal responsibilities” (p.433). These sentiments sound remarkably like the liberation of the marginalised that is so central to progressive theatre (see chapter two). His arguments, however, invariably point to resolution, cohesion and ‘organisational congruence’, which suggest his ideals are more normative than critical. Clarke's somewhat idealistic vision is to establish processes that allow individuals to be "self-reflective – to deliberate, judge, choose and act upon courses of action – as free as possible from unequal power relationships" (p.429). His emancipation is, thus, about individual freedom to exercise judgement. He imagines an ‘arena’ in which “differences meet, are fought over and reconciled and reconfigured into new groupings, factions and alliances” (p.433). Although it might aspire to ‘liberate’ or ‘emancipate’ multiple voices, Clarke’s process contains the 'productive exploitation of differences', the wording of which suggests dissensus is something to be controlled and/or profited from by organisations.

In the second example paper, Raelin (2008) critically examines "whether emancipation in its dialogic form can expose and alter unjust power relations or whether it may just as readily be guilty of reproducing them, albeit unwittingly" (p.520). In his view, the enactment of praxis through dialogue might help disenfranchised workers find their voice. It is discourse that carries the emancipatory intent of "freeing people in a work environment from unnecessarily restrictive traditions and power relations that
inhibit opportunity for fulfilment of their needs and wants" (p.520). Aligning with the Marxist tradition, Raelin takes a post-modern view of dialogue as a ‘creative interaction of contradictory and different voices’.

He draws from Derrida (1992) and Rorty (1996) to claim that dialogue may work as a kind of deconstruction to open up the space for new perceptions of truth. Public reflection and the intersubjective recognition of both internal and external dialogue allow people to distinguish themselves within a social context. The group can then surface the ways in which power, privilege and voice are used to influence and suppress dissent (Freire & Ramos, 1972). Learning through collective consciousness is, thus, a product of emancipatory discourse. The enabler is dialogic praxis, but, given that our educational systems are built on answers, not questions (Raelin, 2008), it is difficult to see how this might eventuate in practice.

Emancipation, for Raelin (2008), means more than liberating individual voices in order to achieve collective consciousness. It also means creating the conditions where it is permissible to challenge "not only others’ theories-in-use, but those of oneself, the group, the text and even the entire system’s frame of reference" (p.524). It is hard to imagine such conditions occurring spontaneously in a corporate environment. Echoing Mabey’s (2013) support of embedded, situated practice in the previous section, Raelin calls for ‘critical action learning’ where skilled, reflective facilitation generates 'data'. Such data can be grassroots knowledge stemming from lived experience, accessed through non-traditional modalities such as storytelling, arts, dance, and drama. When handled critically, these methods answer the need for "problem-posing education that affirms each of us as being in the process of becoming" (p.529). Raelin's vision is compelling, and yet, he makes it seem near impossible to achieve the perfect conditions for this kind of work. He notes "presumed egalitarian methods, such as worker empowerment, employee

7 Praxis involves reflection on what the self and others are doing in practice (Raelin, 2008)
participation or self-managed workgroups, will be viewed along with dialogue as no more than sophisticated methods to engage the complicity of the workforce in the capitalist project" (p. 527). Although collective critical consciousness can be achieved, the criteria he sets are stringent and even he admits there is little hope for emancipatory change in corporate learning environments:

Students who have achieved this level of critical awareness have at the same time reported both discomfort and dissonance when their newfound social awareness and political activity were contraposed against the utter reality of their powerlessness to effect consistent and substantive change in their work environment (p.531).

A question emerges in this discussion; is it even possible to achieve emancipation with a ‘small e’ within the constraints of the organisation? Gagnon and Collinson (2014, 2017) would probably answer ‘no’, given their scepticism of LD in general and their antipathy towards ‘identity regulation’ (2014, p.646). This ethically questionable practice was initially observed by Alvesson and Wilmott who state:

We regard identity regulation as a pervasive and increasingly intentional modality of organisational control, but we do not suggest that this is unprecedented or that it is necessarily effective in increasing employee commitment, involvements or loyalty. Indeed, its effect may be to amplify cynicism, sparked dissent or catalyse resistance (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002, p.622).

Gagnon and Collinson are part of a group of CLS scholars that focus on constructions of power and ‘identity work’ (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). These include the "active processes (such as forming, strengthening and revising) which serve to construct a sense of identity" (Beech, 2008, p.51). Collinson (2014) believes that power and influence have been unhelpfully ‘dichotomized’ along with resistance and control in leadership studies. This claim fits with his earlier view that dialectical, discursive views of power and politics as both positive and negative, shifting and contextual, are more fitting to poststructuralist approaches (Collinson, 2005). Power relations in leadership development, Collinson argues, are always localised and interdependent, and usually asymmetric, ambiguous, and contested. Gagnon and Collinson note that the majority of
LDPs are embedded with hierarchy and disciplinary practices (2017). They draw attention to the way traditional programmes try to align the identities and behaviours of participants with a prescribed 'ideal' leader (2014). Individuals are "encouraged to develop self-images and work orientations that are deemed congruent with managerially defined objectives" (Gagnon & Collinson, 2014, p.34) in order to bolster commitment or loyalty. This process of normalisation, or identity tampering (Gagnon, 2008), whereby human behaviours and attributes are measured and corrected, is viewed as a form of power that constructs identity by comparing, homogenising, excluding, disciplining, hierarchising and differentiating (Gagnon & Collinson, 2014). In their analysis of two multinational LDPs, Gagnon and Collinson (2014) found that leader identity was discursively constructed, in part through the design of the LDPs themselves. Only employees who displayed the desired attributes were accepted to enter and permitted to complete the programme. One programme took an ‘investiture’ strategy in which multiple existing identities were supported. The other took a ‘divestiture’ strategy in which higher stakes of non-compliance acted to narrow the depiction of the leader-self. Both, however, used similar control mechanisms in the regulation of identity.

Offering a more optimistic view of LD, Carroll and Nicholson (2014) highlight the potential of "power interdependencies to be a development resource and site of learning in their own right" (p.1414). They tease out the binary thinking that pervades organisational studies, for example the notion that power can only exist in the presence of the opposing force, resistance. They aim to redefine relationships within leadership development in the consideration of power, resistance and struggle. Drawing on Collinson (2005), Carroll and Nicholson understand power and resistance as "mutually implicated, co-constructed and interdependent, but also multiple, ambiguous and contradictory" (2014, p.1416). They note that resistance can be visible or invisible. An
example of the former would be the overt questioning of relevance, or problem-posing (Freire & Ramos, 1972), by participants. Invisible resistance could include forms of escape, refusal and creation. Carroll and Nicholson (2014) observe that, where management attempt to legitimise a programme and suppress or even eliminate such resistance, as is often the case in hierarchical organisations, tension in the form of conflict ensues.

One of Mabey’s (2013) final assertions is that the critical discourse in LD offers few alternatives to the issues critiqued. Carroll and Nicholson (2014) counter this and provide one possible way forward when they ‘re-theorize’ resistance and struggle as generative processes, perhaps even forms of leadership (Deetz, 2008). Such leadership might be productively co-constructed between participants and facilitators in the steps proposed by Courpasson et al (2012): enclave insurgency, or the build-up of a resistance alliance; a realignment of power and; the accommodation of change. Even Gagnon and Collinson concede that resistance in LD is potentially constructive. Although they find the ‘assertion of alternate selves’ and ‘exit’ the predominant form of resistance, they identify other forms including output restriction, overt dissent (Collinson, 2003) and, importantly, the expression of employee “agency, creativity and knowledgeability” (Gagnon & Collinson, 2017, p.1255). The latter may yield positive consequences for both the individual and the organisation, particularly where autonomy and independence emerge as outcomes. Referencing the two types of workplace opposition, ‘resistance as distance’ and ‘resistance as persistence’ identified by Collinson (1994), Gagnon and Collinson (2017) find ‘collective resistance’ appears through valuing difference, rejecting team process tools, and using humour to parody and juxtapose culture and control processes.
Raelin (2008) concludes that the best we can hope for is a liberationist politics which explores the struggles of everyday lives, rather than major social problems of the world. His emancipatory dreams, thus, appear deflated. But hope is not lost altogether. He urges more scholarship into the deconstruction of emancipation, such as exploration of ‘recognition and realization rules’. This aligns with more general calls within CLS for investigation into tensions and contradictions within leadership development, including studies that name homogenisation and normalising practices (Gagnon & Collinson, 2014). Ironically, given his aspirational perspective, Raelin (2008) does just that by examining the adoption of ‘scripted selves’ designed to comply with organisational culture. It seems more attention might also be paid to the dialectical relationship between difference or diversity and resistance in the design of future leadership development programmes (Gagnon & Collinson, 2017).

It remains to be seen whether, "despite commitment to critical leadership theory in the way leadership development is conceived and undertaken, the pressure of commercial interests, on the one hand, and micro-political dynamics, on the other, may overwhelm the intent of non-elitist leadership development" (Mabey, 2013, p.376). Or perhaps, more hopefully, there might a real opportunity to design development in a way that liberates multiple voices. Relevant to this research, the unresolved issue emerging from this tussle centred on control and emancipation is around finding methodologies that flush out - rather than suppress or ignore - power dynamics in organisations. The suggestion running through the literature is that narrative and arts-based methods might help understand control and resistance in LD. This research seeks to find out how that may be possible.
Tussles and Trajectories

In the first part of this chapter I mapped the LD terrain by focusing on four areas of contention, or tussles. Rather than being constituted of two distinct and conflicting positions, each tussle is actually a spectrum with multiple possible viewpoints, although much writing veers towards and fiercely defends one extremity or the other. It is, therefore, the interplay and dynamic tension within each tussle that affords dialectic possibility (Fairhurst, 2001). Within each tussle, there are a number of possible trajectories along which the field might progress. I have drawn out those I find most pertinent to this research, and have highlighted some unanswered questions that connect to my three main research questions from the introduction. These are: how, and under what conditions, is intentionality in development constructed; what might the collective development of leadership (as opposed to the individual development of collective leadership) look like; in what space and with what degree of contextual distance could such an approach take place, and; what methods might best enable us to explore the tensions and struggles, including the embedded power relations, of LD?

Despite the majority of development remaining rooted in the functionalist tradition, my map shows encouraging signs that critical, constructionist and collective approaches to LD research are no longer banished to the margins. Yet, even in these domains there is little research that truly adopts a view of development as a co-created, participatory interaction between developer and developed. Within organisation studies in general, there seems little interest in intermediary figures. The overwhelming majority of research focuses on what is happening to rather than with participants and is written from the perspective of a solitary ‘knowing voice’ - that of the researcher or researcher-developer. A mission statement from empirical research serves as an example; “we seek
to develop [participants’] own leadership practice using a learning approach that incorporates the creative process stages of clarification, transformation and implementation” (Hall & Grant, 2014a, p.246). This is clearly development being ‘done to’ participants.

There are many studies that explore the intricacies of development processes - arts-based or otherwise – or essentially the what of development. Very few look at who implements them and how. Those that do are often written by academics working within business schools with the associated open-enrolment MBA programmes as research sites, a further constraint on the scope of knowledge generation. As Sutherland and Ladkin point out, “we lack a focus on how educators work with participants to co-create an enlivened, empowered learning space that becomes a nexus of lived experiences, stories, theories, concepts and ultimately deep learning” (2013, p.106). Often the developer figure is absent altogether as if the facilitation occurred by magic. The most presence they are usually afforded in a paper is a few paragraphs describing their role in association with the study and their design of the intervention. Mabey’s (2013) comprehensive review of LD includes only a few lines mentioning facilitation of development. Interestingly, he suggests one core reason little critical attention is devoted to LD may be that it would require “those who are conducting leadership development to consider how their own leader identities are being constituted and maintained, and to apply this criticism to themselves as facilitators, recognizing the power imbalance inherent in trainer–participant relationships” (p.372). Perhaps LD scholars are reluctant to hold the mirror up to their own practice.

From the analysis in the first part of this chapter, it appears there is a need for LD that is more process-oriented, collective, consciously situated, encouraging of dissensus
and attentive to power dynamics. If this is so, there is also a need for developers willing to practise it. Noting the limitations and lacunae within their field, Carroll and Simpson (2012) are among the first to suggest more empirical work might examine the role of developer inside LDPs and it is along this trajectory I wish to pursue my inquiry. I contend that the tussles arising in the first half of this chapter cannot be fully explored without consideration of the role the developer plays in the co-construction and negotiation of development conditions, including intentionality, situatedness and collectivity. For this, close attention must be paid to the dynamics of the learning environment. There are no easy answers as to what development is, where it happens, who or what it is for and who owns / drives it. New insights into who the developer is and how they act may help deepen our understanding of these ambiguities within leadership development.

Casting the Developer

“I do profess to be no less than I seem, to serve him truly that will put me in trust” I.3:11-12

I begin this section with a few comments on terminology and scope. I use the label ‘developer’ to denote any person facilitating a development intervention within a group or organisation, whether or not it is described as LD. They may be internal (employed by the organisation) or external (contracted for service). Critics of a participatory or constructionist approach might argue that, under the logic that we all contribute to each other’s learning experience, all participants within a learning space could be conceived as developers. While I concur with such a perspective, for clarity I will focus on individuals who have been tasked with or who have taken responsibility for the delivery of a
development activity. Also, to prevent further scope confusion, in this study I do not include personal career or development coaches who work one-on-one with participants, although there may be some value in exploring similar dynamics within those processes. For example, an article by Kempster and Iszatt-White on co-constructed coaching raises some interesting points that will be briefly surmised in a later section. Where other terms are encountered – such as ‘facilitator’, ‘practitioner’, ‘interventionist’, ‘teacher’ and ‘educator’ - unless there is a specific reason to separate them out, I will treat all of these using the term ‘developer’.

In the next sections I provide an overview of how the developer role has been conceived in extant literature. Owing to the paucity of theory in my area of prime concern (LD), I draw connections between the related disciplines of organisation development (OD), organisational aesthetics (OA) and applied theatre (AT). As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, the practice of ‘development’ is understood differently according to theatre, organisational or economic conventions. There are, however, overlapping areas of relevance. Tensions within a branch of AT known as Theatre for Development (TfD), for example, are remarkably similar to those experienced in more localised development within organisations:

The political reality of the world [developers] inhabit means that their operations are judged according to perceived notions of value for money, growth and economic benefit while the rights framework underpinning these activities measures their worth according to wholly different, people-centred criteria. (Prentki, 2015a, p.12)

In my review, I cast the developer into a number of different personas, according to the manner with which the work is approached, or pedagogy, including the degree to which the developer becomes integrated in the work. First, there is the ‘developer-as-sage’, or expert persona. Developers performing as a ‘sage’ impose a form of learning onto the setting according to a specific set of pre-determined parameters and from an
elevated, separated position. In the ‘developer-as-therapist’ approach, developers respond in an embedded, but unobtrusive and incremental way to the perceived needs of the group or individuals. Finally those operating in the guise of ‘developer-as-missionary/mercenary/prostitute’, either work with an ideological zeal to ‘convert’ a group of participants to a new way of being, or sell their services potentially at the expense of integrity and/or ideology. In each case I include the underlying philosophical assumptions and a number of theoretical or empirical studies to illustrate my points.

**Developer as Sage**

The first set of pedagogies would include the approach taken in many MBA programmes. A leadership ‘expert’ performs his piece to a classroom of students, much as a King might instruct his assembled court of nobles. It is a familiar image: the didactic, heroic presenter transmitting information, often literally from ‘on high’ - raised on a platform in front of a captive audience. Assumptions underpinning such techniques fit with the functionalist approaches described earlier in this chapter. They might include the view that knowledge exists ‘out there’ to be found and learners are passive recipients. Indeed, it may be precisely the pervasive view of learning as a passive, inevitable, ‘good’ (Contu et al., 2003) activity and the “authority of the expert” (Gabriel, 2004, p.12) that has precluded extensive empirical work into the developer figure to date. These approaches seem to rest on the belief that “in order to lead, a man must first learn to obey” and have strong undertones of the kind of disciplinary control found in ‘scientific management’ (Gabriel, 2005, p.150).

In an earlier part of this chapter, a study by Foster et al (2008) was used as a representation of functionalist LD and I took issue with some of their assumptions around impact and assessment. Here, however, I borrow from a series of readily graspable
concepts they use to describe teaching and learning approaches. These are: ‘sage on the stage’, or behaviourist, techniques for uni-directional information transmission from all-knowing expert to recipient; ‘guide on the side’ methods - essentially the same but accomplished through less directive facilitation and (often ineffective) cherry picking of key components, and; ‘all in the hall’ - what the authors consider a social constructivist approach that involves active participation in knowledge construction. In the latter, participants “interpret current information in light of prior knowledge through interactions with others” (p.509). Foster et al (2008) found the 'all in the hall' pedagogy allowed a higher level of conceptual thinking. This included grappling with abstract expressions, metaphors and analogies, and the space for ‘scaffolding’ from both peers and facilitator that included hints, questions and encouragement. ‘Sage on the stage’ learning, on the other hand, was limited to general skills and competencies, with little linking to prior knowledge. The findings support the (now relatively widespread) view that the kind of ‘hero-led’ teaching found in MBA programmes and similar development environments is inadequate (Gabriel, 2005; Sutherland & Ladkin, 2013). Notably, Foster et al (2008) encountered discomfort in participants from both methods. Discomfort in the more didactic teaching methods came from ‘cognitive conflict’ with new concepts or processes. ‘All in the hall' techniques, however, evidenced 'comfort with discomfort' in which recognising and accepting discomfort or conflict motivated the construction of new knowledge.

Delivered with “a kind of orthodoxy or received wisdom, a credo of shared assumptions, opinions and beliefs” (Gabriel, 2005, p.148), the developer-as-sage approach privileges content over process (Foster et al., 2008). It has been described as an intensely masculine pedagogy whereby an audience is seduced towards a view of

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8 Sometimes referred to as 'peer-to-peer’ learning
leadership as heroism (Sinclair, 2009). Indeed, many developers working in this way seem to adopt a ‘guru status’ to embody a ‘heroic leadership’ message, whereby:

leadership development often works, or does not, to the extent that it satisfies audience desires: desires to be entertained, transported and transformed, to feel greater mastery and glimpse the lusted-after power to be in control, but also to flirt with vulnerability, sometimes pain and loss, before being brought to consummation (Sinclair, 2009, pp. 270-271).

At first glance a highly dramatic nature of delivery sits well with my paradigmatic view of development as performance (see chapter two). Such an approach, however, generates superiority and power imbalances, clearly at odds with more recent trajectories of leadership development focused around collaboration and egalitarianism. Nevertheless, as Sinclair notes, we are all, even those of us committed to critical and constructionist approaches, sometimes "tantalised by the infusion of heroic masterful leadership, the idea that someone powerful will take charge and to know what to do and that we can surrender to their guidance" (2009, p.277). A pertinent question is raised in her discussion: if it is accepted that self-reflexivity is important for developers, how can they embody this and balance it with the need to maintain authority in the learning environment? This question connects to later discussions around how control is constructed in the performance of development.

The question of authority in development and the assumption that it is necessary is intriguing. As Sinclair (2009) and colleagues in LD (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013) suggest, the power and authority of developers is actively negotiated and reproduced in the learning space. Research also suggests, however, there are options available to developers beyond the obvious ‘clinging’ to power seen in the (still common) ‘sage on the stage’ approach. Notwithstanding the fact that identities are co-constructed in the moment of interaction with participants, developers, like ethnographic researchers, must by necessity present themselves in their first encounter with an organisation or group. Part of this
presentation, or performance, is a reflexive consideration of power, including the potential for complicity. They should note the narratives privileged by those in positions of power. In so doing, they should acknowledge that every conversation or interaction is an opportunity to maintain or change "which narratives predominate, what is seen as good, right, and worthy of collective action – in other words, the basic premises guiding how people organise themselves and work together" (Bushe & Marshak, 2015, p.39).

Mainly due to the potential for oppressive tendencies, this thesis argues that the ‘sage on the stage’ approach is outdated and, for the main part, obsolete, if not destructive. Acting as a counterpoint, reflexivity is one of the hallmarks of the next set of pedagogies that include dialogic methods.

**Developer as Therapist**

Developers who perform as 'sage on the stage' experts are clearly conscious of power dynamics. They may choose to emphasise and exaggerate the inevitable imbalance in order to retain as much status and authority as possible. Dialogic developers bring a different consciousness of power asymmetries to their work, paying attention to and working with “the part [they] play in constructing the 'realities', 'systems', 'structures' and practices [they] critique” (Cunliffe, 2002a, p.47). The approaches I have assigned to the ‘therapist’ category are those in which a developer enters a learning context with little expectation of what they might find and the nature of the required response. They invite participants to share the learning space (the physicality of which they consider to be important in the learning experience). They then encourage them metaphorically ‘onto the couch’, ask them questions to explore emergent issues and construct with them an open-ended dialogue, tightly focused around the process and present moment of interaction. Their philosophical underpinning is likely constructionist or phenomenological (Gherardi,
2000). It manifests in a relational pedagogy and a practice-based view of learning which assumes that, “in everyday practices, learning takes place in the flow of experience, with or without our awareness of it” (p.214). In contrast to ‘sage’ approaches, these developers are often skilled in unconventional (or non-normative) techniques, including arts-based methods. Indeed, theatre-based pedagogies “designed to encourage interactivity and collaboration have been seen to be in direct opposition to authoritarian and didactic approaches to learning” (Nicholson, 2005, p.43).

From the LD literature, the closest example of this kind of practice seems to be in Kempster and Iszatt-White’s (2012) exploration of coaching and co-constructed auto ethnography (CCAE). Unlike the better-known transactional form of executive coaching, the developer in CCAE is a "highly informed active partner" (p.320) who enables the other to know their own experience through a process of critical reflexivity. The fundamental assumption behind such an approach is to enable knowledge construction rather than to retrieve what is already known. The authors draw a connection with experiential or action learning where a three-way contract between learner, facilitator and employer is built on "an epistemological and pedagogical approach which recognises and attends to relational knowing and praxis" (p.324). They note the problem of asymmetric power relations between researchers (or developers) and the researched (the developed), or 'the knower and the known', and offer Cunliffe’s dialogic reflexivity as a way to create a learning process of "discursive, contextualised and ongoing practice constructed in the moment" (2002a, p.45). Importantly for this research, Kempster and Iszatt-White highlight the tension between being non-directive, yet needing to meet organisational imperatives. They argue that co-constructed learning may help provide a resolution.
Although it primarily concerns one-on-one activities, co-constructed coaching as a development pedagogy has parallels with Cunliffe’s (2002a) ideas around 'co-authorship', a central theme of ‘dialogic OD’. Under this view, the identity or role of the developer is conceived as guiding a creative process co-owned with organisational participants, their voices integrated. Developers are embedded within the process - "part of the discursive narrative that influences the meaning making taking place" (Bushe & Marshak, 2015, p.18). As with process-oriented LD, “one does not plan for a specific change, but instead helps to foster the conditions that lead to new ways of thinking and new possibilities” (Bushe & Marshak, 2015, p.197). Dialogic forums allow participants and developers to collectively develop repertoires to decipher, normalise and navigate tensions (Grant & Wolfram Cox, 2017).

While it seems to offer huge potential in participatory methodologies, co-authorship may be a risky endeavour. Gabriel and Connell (2010) see the potential of co-creating stories as a critical pedagogy and draw from the Japanese art of ‘renga’ to construct their research method. As both participant and ‘coordinator’ of the exercise, Gabriel finds himself in hot water when his "own sense of responsibility for and ownership of the renga had led [him] to overstep the mark into another participant’s sense of ownership" (p.517). Barry (1996), too, reflects on how, in supposedly collaborative, arts-based inquiry, he had imposed his fascinations, hunches and schemas onto a participant in a vicarious manner, whilst remaining ‘safely out of the picture’. These examples raise the question, similar to that asked by Sinclair (2009) previously: if developers are embedded in a dialogic and participatory process how do they shift between being part of the ensemble and acting as the conductor or director in the construction of the development performance? In a novel approach, Gabriel and Connell (2010) invited participants to vote on whether or not the development activity should
continue. They conclude that the reflexivity of this pedagogy offers more opportunities to influence the thinking of one's peers in an interactive way than traditional safe and pedestrian methods. Hansen et al (2007) also support a low-profile facilitation method. They argue that anonymous authorship in collective storytelling as a method helps surface hegemony in organisational narratives by allowing everyone to participate in the storytelling, rather than certain groups being ‘storied’.

Writing in a separate domain (AT) but with striking commonality, Aitken, Fraser and Price (2009) argue for dialogic engagement and the embeddedness of the facilitator or researcher within the participants’ reality. They refer to one of the most actively pursued pedagogies within AT - ‘teaching in role’ - developed in the ‘process drama’ of Dorothy Heathcote (see chapter two). In this technique the developer performs within a fictional drama alongside participants and is ”the person in the equation who creates the space of possibility, who does not find solutions but nurtures the questions” (Gallagher, 2000, p.114). Allowing an agency usually denied, the fiction provides assurance that actions within it will have no consequence in the 'real world'. A ‘safe container’ is created, that suspends the usual cultural rules about what is acceptable to say and what is not (Schein, 2015). The emphasis shifts away from hunting down solutions towards opening up contested territory to generate learning opportunities. It is in such a trusting environment that 'undiscussables' may be surfaced (Badham & Matula, 2013; Nissley et al., 2004). The idea of imagining new realities is not new to LD. Extending an analogy into a fully dramatised fiction, including a dramatic performance by the developer, however, is a radical proposition for the field. Aitken et al believe it can disrupt the status quo and open spaces for participants to "determine some of their own direction and the learning journey" (2007, p.6), thus presenting a different form of relational pedagogy.
This section has highlighted a number of related practices that, within a discourse that includes 'mutual', 'relational', 'dialogic', 'experiential', 'co-constructed' and 'co-authorship', seem to represent nuanced forms of a participatory approach to development. The developer is embedded within the activity, both leading and following, passive and active in the learning process. He or she coaches (Kempster & Iszatt-White, 2012), guides, listens to confessions and monitors enactment (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013). But, as Nicholson and Carroll point out, even this form of co-constructed development presents a “disciplinary regime” (2013, p.1230) with rules, logics and surveillance to which participants submit themselves. They argue that both the presence and absence of developers can be critical in the sense-making processes of LD and suggest developers may not be sufficiently aware of their ‘entanglement’ within power and identity dynamics of the learning space. To be conscious of one’s own power in a learning space is only one part of the self-reflexivity developers may need. Arguably just as important is an awareness of ideology, or a shared system of values or beliefs (Kershaw, 1992). This is a subject well covered in the AT literature, particularly in the scholarship around TfD. It is, therefore, to a group of powerfully evocative images of developers from within AT and OA that I turn next.

**Developer as Missionary, Mercenary and Prostitute**

In the proceedings of the 2006 Organisational Theatre Summit hosted by Learning Lab Denmark, one title stands out: "Tis Pity She’s a Manager: Is Organisational Theatre Prostitution?". Writing about their own experiences as artists carrying out development in organisations, but referring specifically to theatre-based interventions, the authors make the following observation:

> When you do theatre within a corporation you are offering up your powerful tools in the service – in the service of what? So perhaps the question is not whether one is a prostitute, but whether one
is a mercenary. Although within the framework of our duality there may not be much difference – both sell themselves, the purity of the soldier being bound up in duty and service while the purity of the woman is bound up in love and virtue. Either way, the question remains, in the service of what? (S. S. Taylor & Thellesen, 2006, p.29)

Regardless of method, it is a provocative question, and one rarely addressed in the LD literature, other than recommendations to state the purpose of the development activity upfront. Taylor and Thellesen (2006), together with scholars from AT, bring the question of how power intersects with purpose directly into the realm of the developer. Balfour (2009) suggests using theatre in development involves "practitioners immersing themselves in the related culture and discourse, absorbing relevant theoretical perspectives and translating aesthetic objectives to service what is often a 'donor agenda' (p.351). Whilst strong partnerships may result, developers may "come under pressure to comply with organisational priorities of targets and outcomes" (p.352) which threatens their integrity. Developers risk becoming mercenaries or missionaries, promoting messages that may not be relevant to the needs of participants. Balfour (2009) believes the 'central commonality of social intentionality' within AT must be more critically examined in light of funding relationships and the commissioning of development work by donors. There is, he argues, even in the critical and socially aware practices of AT, a need to more closely examine ideological ambiguity. There is also a need to recalibrate the balance of aesthetics and social instrumentality in practice, an issue that will be addressed more fully in the next chapter.

Neelands (2004) uses other religious imagery to convey stories of profound change in classrooms that use drama as pedagogy. 'Miracles', such as a particular student's discovery of voice, may inspire hope or faith in others, but are also manipulated by researchers or developers whose "hero narratives include evangelised reports of personal victories in making miracles happen against all odds" (p.47). Neelands contends
that it is reasonable for a developer to expect changes, even miraculous transformations, as a result of drama-based development (given participants are invited to imagine themselves and behave differently). He adds, however, that we are hard pressed to determine if and how the aesthetic ‘effects’ may be incorporated into the socio-cultural domain. Different drama pedagogies will vary significantly in their function, intention, discourse and aesthetic. According to Neelands (2004), it is those that set out to produce change that are the most likely to trigger transformation. He suggests two conditions for transformational learning: a commitment to an artistic/pedagogic position that insists on the de-stabilisation of normative knowledge/power structures, and; a refusal of certainty and completion – an understanding of human actors in a perpetual state of becoming, rather than being.

Development within organisations is rarely founded on political or social agendas with the same weight as those in AT. There are, however, parallels with "a colonial model where the centre prescribes what is good for the periphery" (Prentki, 2012, p.202) that often predicates work in the applied arts. The assumption is one of deficit, where participants, like patients needing treatment, are somehow lacking. A good dose of theatre, or some other method, will sort them out. The developer thus becomes an ‘evangelist’ with links to the esoteric arrogance of the ‘sage on the stage’. In righteousness, a developer-as-missionary may trump the ‘sage’ by failing to consider whether the recipient even wishes or needs to hear the message. In cautioning against such practices, O’Connor (2015) asks, as outsiders, what ‘right’ do developers have to intervene? Others, cited by O’Connor, go further, claiming development is simply imperialism in disguise. McDonnell conjures a provocative image by asking, “how did we get here, then - to this point where we have become secular missionaries, with ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’ in one hand, and an air ticket in the other, acting as global saviours?”
(2005, p.72). With similarities to arguments in the situated-separated tussle of this chapter, Balfour (2009) argues that the 'insider-outsider paradigm' is no longer adequate to describe the messiness of practice. Citing McDonnell, he claims that the validity of the developer’s presence itself should be questioned and cultural missionaries should be made redundant:

> It is this belief that we are necessary, that we can offer something which is, by definition, irreplacable, that creates the crisis of engagement… If we could see that we are not necessary, then we might be able to form more useful human and political relations based on genuine dialogue. (McDonnell, 2005, p.70)

Such dialogic relations are the reason Prentki (2015a) believes a developer should not be described as a catalyst as, like some evangelists, catalysts interact without undergoing a change. He notes "in any meaningful exchange of experience and understanding conducted as a dialogue both parties are engaged in a process of changing and being changed by that encounter" (p.74). Supporting this point, the philosophical underpinning of TfD is the Marxist view that "change itself arises from a dialectical encounter between the understanding developed through lived experience and the capacity to construct alternatives" (Prentki, 2015a, p.16). Under such a view, the developer brings a strong ideology to her work, often based on the writings of Brecht or Freire. Prentki argues that the training of any TfD developer is incomplete without studying the fundamentals of Brecht’s performance aesthetics. Having a socio-political consciousness and possessing a strong ideology does not necessarily mean acting as an evangelical missionary. Nor does acting as a prostitute or mercenary indicate an absence of ideology. Whomever, or whatever, the developer is in the service of, critical consciousness is enabled not by controlling the operation of a workshop, but by establishing a dialogue with participants. Through it, the developer may instigate the co-construction of a critical commentary that frames the action of an organisation and
preserves the integrity of the developer. The developer is then the critic and conscience of an organisation, the "embodiment of counter-hegemony" (Prentki, 2015a, p.70).

Like Cunliffe (2002a) and others in organisational studies (Barry, 1996; Carroll & Simpson, 2012), those writing in the critical AT space argue that developers cannot be objectively neutral. They must untangle the "hidden, assumed premises on which the work is based and the unstated purposes that may drive it" (Anthony Jackson, 2007, p.2) and, importantly, reveal allegiances (Neelands, 2007). This goes beyond the advice offered to developers from within CLS which suggests developers should simply be reflexive about the power asymmetries within development (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013). If Neelands (2007) and others are right, and developers should critically examine and proclaim their place amidst shifting power dynamics and their own ideology, how should such complexities be addressed? Even if a developer is able to answer Taylor and Thellesen’s (2006) question and establish what they are in the service of, how and to whom should that answer be articulated? All participants and stakeholders involved in development within organisations understand that developers are contracted by sponsor organisations and have obligations they must meet. But these can vary widely. There is an opportunity, therefore, to state the intention (and possibly even the political position) of the development work clearly upfront to alleviate any suspicion or distrust of developers. Perhaps one option is to follow the dialogic approach and appreciate a more nuanced, decentralised view of power. Such a view would note “the importance of challenging dominant discourses, of recognizing the centrality of tension, paradox, and conflict in organisational change and of harnessing these to deliver opportunities for generative change” (Grant & Wolfram Cox, 2017, p.199).
An example of exactly this arises in Nicholson and Carroll’s (2013) study of a New Zealand LDP. In profiling facilitators they encountered a feeling of “walking a boundary between intervention and the participant’s agency” (p.1241). One described the ‘unresolved tension’ of wanting participants to feel in charge of their own destiny, yet being aware that, as a developer, she was perceived as the all-knowing ‘sage’. Participants seemed to want assurance or affirmation. Developers, however, were reluctant to solve participants' problems for them. They held back from intervening in the hope that more choices would become available for participants. Nicholson and Carroll (2013) argue that the developers in this programme underwent a co-constructed learning experience with participants. They came to see power and expertise as contextual and relational, but a truly co-constructed space was difficult to establish due to the ‘hard-to-shift’ power dynamics of development.

**The Performance of Development**

Accepting that developers are steeped in the ‘hard-to-shift’ tensions around power and ideology, it may be that the most we can hope for is ‘a theatre of little changes’ (Balfour, 2009, p.356; McDonnell, 2005, p.73). Such an approach “moves away from the need for change rhetoric, impact assessments and the strain for verifiable measurements” (Balfour, 2009, p.356). It may also create a space for more playfulness between practitioners and participants and a greater emphasis on aesthetics (Anthony Jackson, 2007). Betraying his own witty playfulness, and linking back to ideology, Balfour closes his arguments with the comments:

The practitioner often has to be half car salesman, half ideologue. Gaining access/permission into a context is where the ideology of the practitioner is paramount, in discharging and advocating for aesthetics as central, and of establishing open-ended relationships that hold in tension the quality of the process that participants go through in making theatre and the quality of the work that is created. (2009, p.357)
Balfour’s aesthetic of playfulness through artistic methods is just one of the possibilities highlighted in the second part of this chapter for those wishing to find a path across the politically contentious terrain of LD. Having now navigated the many guises of the developer figure, the questions asked at the midpoint can be reconfigured to align more closely with the overall research questions presented in the introduction. The unanswered questions arising at the conclusion of this chapter are, therefore:

1. How is the role of the developer constructed in a collective learning space and how can it be ‘played with’?

2. What kind of space and contextual positioning might a developer construct with participants?

3. What is the relationship between the intentionality and ideology of the developer and the processes of collective LD?

The tensions of development featured in my first research question (see introduction) have begun to crystallise in this chapter. They appear to include alternative perceptions of developer role and ambiguous positionings along the spectrum of each LD tussle. The way these tensions are performed, however, and the implications that may have remain unclear. There are hints in the literature, and my summary questions above, that aesthetic and pedagogic considerations may be important. The next chapter, therefore, zooms in on the dynamics of performances and what an understanding of performance aesthetics may bring to this trajectory of inquiry.
CHAPTER TWO:

PERFORMANCE

“If for I want that glib and oily art to speak and purpose not, since what I
well intend I’ll do’t before I speak” I.1.223-224

Performance features centrally in this research. I use the term in three ways in this
thesis. First, as part of an ontological framing through which all interaction in social life
may be understood as performance. This usage assumes a socially constructed, dialogic,
subjective and spatio-temporal nature of performances. It is this lens on how reality is
constructed that underpins an understanding of development as performance. The second
way performance is used in this research is as the conventional term applied to a staged
event. Parts of the empirical material in later chapters are delineated by the term ‘post-
performance’ meaning they were generated after the staging of a live theatre intervention.
A third, less frequent usage comes from the perspective found within the research site for
this study: in Toolzone, performance generally referred to a marker for productivity and
profitability, as in ‘high performing teams’.

Because performances are subjective, liminal, dangerous, duplicitous and hedged
in convention (Schechner, 1988), like development, performance is a politically
contentious activity. The main source of tension between those who study performance
and its effect(s) or ‘affect’ (Thompson, 2009), is around different interpretations of the
'aesthetic' and 'instrumental' properties of applied art forms. It is this tension I wish to
explore in this chapter. I begin by exploring different understandings of performance
within academic literature, noting how each informs this study. I then focus on four specific dimensions of performance-in-action that appear to resonate with some of the development perspectives and processes of the previous chapter. These are; framing, distance, play and liminality. Finally, I propose that a more nuanced understanding of the tension between instrumentality and aesthetics within theatre and performance may advance theory and practice in LD.

What is Performance?

From a clown in Covent Garden to a CEO declaring results in national media, performances are all around us. A performance is any action “framed, enacted, presented, highlighted, or displayed” (Schechner, 2013, p.2) in at least one of eight contexts, sometimes separate, sometimes overlapping. These are; everyday life, the arts, sports and popular entertainment, business, technology, sex, ritual and, play (Schechner, 2013). Within these categories, performance takes on different meanings. For example, performing in business may mean attaining collectively understood and pre-determined descriptors of ‘success’ (such as profits). Performing in everyday life can entail simply highlighting an action for those who might be watching.

The ‘performative turn’ (Haseman, 2006) in social science was ushered in by Erving Goffman with the 1959 publication of his seminal The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Drawing on the ideas of Mead (1934) and Burke (1962), yet refuting the literal view of the latter that reality is drama, this text suggested that all of life could be analysed using a dramaturgical perspective. Every interaction or encounter constitutes a performance involving transmission of an intentional or unintentional expression by an individual and the formation of an impression by the other. Performances are thus socially constructed in the everyday interactions of social life and are the genesis and fabric of
human relationships. Schechner also appreciates this dialogic aspect of performance, noting “performances exist only as actions, interactions and relationships” (2013, p.30). He refers to performance as a dynamic ‘system’ with intersecting nodes that encompasses deep structures such as preparations for and aftermaths of performances. Schechner notes; “any semiotics of performance must start from, and always stand unsteadily on, these unstable slippery bases, made even more uncertain by the continually shifting receptions of various audiences” (1988, p.xix). Noting the difficulties of definition, he adopts a narrow perspective of performance as activity “done by an individual or group in the presence of and for another individual or group” (Schechner, 1988, p.22).

A performance does not necessarily take place at the moment of creation. For example, the painting of the Mona Lisa was a solo pursuit undertaken centuries ago, but a performance of the Mona Lisa takes place whenever and wherever a new viewer apprehends it, an experience that will be unique every time. This is the subjective and spatio-temporal nature of performance (Schechner, 2013). We all see, hear, and feel, something different according to our own life stories, experiences, and biases in the context of the given moment. The utterance of a character on stage may generate a powerful, embodied, emotional response in one audience member and complete apathy in another – indeed there were indications of this happening in this research. Those who study performance are, therefore, less interested in artefacts of performance as themselves, preferring instead to examine them as “players in ongoing relationships” (Schechner, 2013, p.2). Performances do not exist in anything. They can be found between actors, co-performers or witnesses; all those we can collectively refer to as ‘players’. Performances are the being, doing, showing doing and explaining ‘showing doing’ within all human interaction (Schechner, 2013).
Schechner (2013) finds the field of performance studies to be ‘wide open’, starting where most ‘limited-domain’ disciplines end. There are concerns it is now a ‘field without limits’ and more consensus is necessary to bind the scholarly community together. Cited in Schechner (2013), McAuley (2010) argues that distinctions between performance and other action must be made, and that in order to do so, we should look closely at the nature of the relationship between actor and audience. He notes:

for an activity to be regarded as performance, it must involve the live presence of the performers and those witnessing it, that there must be some intentionality on the part of the performer or witness or both, and that these conditions in turn necessitate analysis of the place and temporality which enables both parties to be present to each other, as well as what can be described as the performance contract between them, whether explicit or implicit. (p.45)

McAuley seems to suggest that the most notable aspect of performance in all its versions is intentionality. In other words, why we act may be as important as the act itself. As noted above by Schechner, a performance may be ‘for’ another individual or group. Goffman’s definition of performance is “the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by its continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on its observers” (1959, p.22). For Goffman, then, intentionality relates to the impression and influence each social actor wishes to convey. But there is a distinction to be made between the intentionality of performance and the intentionality in performance. Addressing intentionality of performance, but using a different term, Schechner (2013) describes seven interpretive and overlapping ‘functions’ of performance; to entertain, to create beauty, to mark or change identity, to make or foster community, to heal, to teach or persuade, and to deal with the sacred and the demonic. As noted in chapter one, function and outcome are troubling concepts. As I intend to examine the subjective and shifting nature of intentionality elsewhere, I will not dwell on what Schechner calls function here, other than to observe his view of its import and to concur with him that some performances will attend to more than one item in the list. Brechtian
epic theatre, for example, follows the principle that theatre should both entertain and educate. Aligning with Schechner’s function of fostering community, Turner’s (1986) anthropological understanding of performance sees it as a means of bridging cultures, declaring ‘shared humanity’ and coming to know one another better by entering our respective performances. Performance is both an activity and a way of knowing.

McAuley (2010) and Goffman (1959) are more concerned with intentionality in performance - the sense of purpose each actor brings to or generates dialogically within the interaction. Whether acting as enthusiastic employee, long-suffering manager or office clown, we play our part. When doing so we all, according to Goffman (1959), invite observers to believe the character they see possesses what he or she appears to – or that things are the way they appear to be. Yet, even this apparently simple invitation masks complexity. Goffman (1959) argues for at least two radically different types of ‘sign activity’. The first is the expression given (traditional communication through verbal symbols or substitutes) used to convey the desired message. The second covers a wide range of action, often more theatrical or contextual, performed around this communication for other reasons, known as the expression given off. The individual who presents herself always has an objective. Perhaps she wishes others to think highly of her, or perhaps she wishes to provoke her audience. She attempts to control and manage the impression others have of her through different expressions of self, selectively dramatising certain elements. The observer, in turn, may assign parts of the behaviour of the performer as either easy to manipulate, or as parts over which she seems to have little or no control. They would then use those signs in the latter category to try and validate the message communicated. They may ask, “do the gestures and body language I am seeing reinforce or clash with the statements I am hearing?” The self-aware performer could exploit this natural decoding response and further try to manipulate those signs
taken by the observer to be less controllable in order to strengthen the case of the
message. So the game continues, or as Goffman calls it, “a potentially infinite cycle of
concealment, discovery, false revelation and rediscovery” (1959, p.20). He adds a caveat
however, that

... the arts of piercing an individual’s effort at calculated unintentionality seem better developed
that our own capacity to manipulate our own behaviour, so that regardless of how many steps have
occurred in the information game, the witness is likely to have the advantage over the actor, and
the initial asymmetry of the communication process is likely to be retained. (Goffman, 1959, p.20)

To complicate matters further, Goffman reminds us we are constantly switching
between the roles of performer and observer and, in fact, act as both simultaneously.
Performance, therefore, is a socially constructed, reciprocal and relational activity
containing multiple and shifting presentations of identity and intentionality. It is this
understanding of performance as a construct, or quality of action (Goffman, 1959), as
opposed to a ‘fenced-off’ genre (Schechner, 1988), that informs my study. With this in
mind, I now move to look at applications of this perspective and what is currently known
about how such performances are constructed.

Performance in Action

In my review of the performance studies and dramaturgy literature, four aspects of
performance-in-action emerged as relevant to this study. These are; framing, distancing,
play and liminality. In presenting them here, I will reach out to a variety of sources and
disciplines, beyond the boundaries of organisational studies. Given the methods used in
this research (see chapter three), theatre will feature heavily. In preparation, I begin by
looking at the theoretical connection between theatre and organisations.

In addition to Goffman, a number of scholars, such as Kenneth Burke, Ernest
Bormann, Iain Mangham and Michael Overington, have explored what is variously
known as the dramaturgical perspective, the theatrical analogy or the 'organisation-as-theatre' metaphor (Mangham & Overington, 1982). Like performance studies, dramaturgy concerns itself with both artistic practice, and the everyday actions that make up our behaviour. One of the goals is to enrich our understanding of social interactions by “bringing characters and their motives to life” (Prasad, 2005, p.48). The metaphor attracted support partly due to a dearth of conceptual mechanisms to describe the ritual and drama of organisational life, but there have been questions of heuristic value. I tend to concur with the view that while the metaphor does not necessarily offer fresh insight in itself - its main contribution being semantic (Cornelissen, 2004) - it can help us draw parallels between theatrical and organisational performances (Schreyogg & Hopfl, 2004).

It enables us to interpret organisational behaviour (e.g. control of physical space, relationships, texts, action) through a theatrical frame. As the organisation-as-theatre metaphor does not feature as a central principle in this research, I will leave further debates regarding its relevance to other scholars. The idea of framing as a process, however, does feature prominently and is the first performance-in-action element I wish to explore.

**Framing**

As his approaches to interactions demonstrate, Goffman (1959, 1961, 1967, 1969) is the master of minutiae, but he also offers a helpful way to step back from the close-up and consider more widely what is being created. In everyday performances, Goffman identifies a socially constructed form of what he refers to as ‘working consensus’; the “single over-all definition of the situation which involves not so much a real agreement as to what exists but rather a real agreement as to whose claims concerning what issues will be temporarily honoured” (1959, p.4). Working consensus will vary according to the
convention of each context. For example, in a management meeting one might expect to observe signs of deference towards those in superior ranks, whereas in a conversation around the photocopier, an observer may note displays of affection or camaraderie between colleagues. In these examples there is no obvious conflict in the reading of the situation. All parties appear to have accepted the definitional claims made by others present, and there is a resultant implication of shared intentionality. In short, the players purport to know why they are there. Their acceptance is, in part, informed by their prior knowledge of the dramaturgical elements – the setting, the characters and plot – that constitute the performance. It is also an expressive act in itself, one that signals the social discipline we are all subject to. As Goffman states, “A certain bureaucratization of the spirit is expected so that we can be relied upon to give a perfectly homogeneous performance at every appointed time” (1959, p.64).

In routine daily life, therefore, it seems we adopt aspects of identity according to the conventions of the situation we find ourselves in, what Goffman (1986) calls the ‘frame’ of an event. Within a frame, or the presentation of a situation, we play the part expected of us, following a script. Notwithstanding the myriad, nuanced and sometimes contested views held by different participants in a situation there will be always be a common perspective that interactants would recognise as valid, to be found at the ‘rim’ of the interaction. A primary framework, or frame, represents this rim and is a schema of interpretation that renders an otherwise meaningless aspect of an event into something with meaning. Although Goffman (1959) uses the word ‘consensus’ in his original reference to them, frames are almost paradoxical as they are anything but fixed. They are socially constructed and may even be fluid within a single interaction. Goffman explains that “while one thing may momentarily appear to be what is really going on, in fact what is actually happening is plainly a joke, or a dream, or an accident, or a mistake, or a
misunderstanding, or a deception, or a theatrical performance, and so forth” (1986, p.10). These re-readings are the alternative frames we can apply to a situation, which vary in their degree of organisation. Despite sometimes being impossible to describe with any completeness, frames allow a user to “locate, perceive, identify, and label” (p.21) occurrences in social life. They are a way to transport our consciousness, if only temporarily. We may rest on them briefly but they should not be clung to. By passing through a frame we “are for a short time ready to accept the fictitious world of the jest as a reality in relation to which the world of our daily life takes on the characters of foolishness; the child’s turning towards his toy as the transition into the play-world; and so on” (Schutz, 1971, p.231).

Goffman (1986) goes on to add layers of interpretation. While primary frameworks are the establishing concept, he notes the ‘embarrassing fact’ that we are likely to apply several at once in any given moment and that we may be ‘wrong’ in our application, although we rarely are. Also, frames are subject to transposition or ‘keying’, one example of which is the treating of activity as make-believe, through playfulness – such as a mock-fight. Goffman states “brief switchings into playfulness are everywhere found in society” (1986, p.49). There are contexts, however, in which making light of a situation by applying a ‘play key’ to a primary frame is not deemed appropriate, such as with a friend going through a bereavement. Fooling around has its limits.

Theatre is one specific keying of a primary frame with very clear rules that impose limits on what activities and materials are acceptable. But even if conventions are followed, tension can be found where a keying of the primary frame is in dispute through differing perspectives. For example, in a dramatic staging, the degree of faithfulness to the original in transformation may be in question: one audience member might perceive
the story presented to be closer or further from the truth than another. As will be revealed in chapter five, exactly this tension around distance was both anticipated and felt during the dramatisation and performance phases of the fieldwork. Keying can provide boundaries, for example where out-of-frame activity such as the prompting of an actor during a dramatic staging draws attention to the limits of the frame. Often great efforts are made to conceal the frame limit and heighten the illusion within the performance, as when puppeteers try to hide the wires. The ‘temporal brackets’ of a frame can be important cues, for example the dimming of house lights and the lifting of a curtain in a formal stage performance. Schechner (2013) argues that both make-belief and make-believe frames, engineered in this way, are a useful tool for analysing the interactions of our social world, but it is the potential to open up new imagined realities that presents the most radical application of frames, as AT scholars have recognised.

The opportunity to arouse ‘critical epistemological curiosity’ (Freire, 1998) within learners through fictional frames was revealed to drama educators by Goffman’s insights into everyday life. Boland (2013) argues that an understanding of framing generates a new pedagogical space in which participants may enhance their “capacity for learning, not only in order to adapt to the world but especially to intervene, to re-create, and to transform it” (Freire, 1998, p.66). Perhaps due to the many configurations offered by framing and its related ideas of keying and fabricating, the concepts have been widely used in what is now termed ‘process drama’. For pioneer Dorothy Heathcote, framing is around selecting signs that can be codified in language or objects, or by persons behaving significantly. A frame is:

marked by conscious signing of intent… indeed anything which at the moment assisted in the total picture becoming available to be ‘read’ by the class… You signal across space meaningfully, to get a response which will have been born from your own signal, as the person/s alongside you read the sign (Heathcote, 1984, p.160).
Heathcote’s comment about a ‘total picture’ echoes Goffman’s (1959) insistence on frames as devices of shared perspective. It is the intersection of framing with the related notion of distance, as ‘a space across which signals are made’, I move to in the next section.

**Distance**

Using some of Goffman’s and Schechner’s principles, Heathcote and others in AT have focused their work on how drama, and particularly fictional frames and keyings, can create a ‘distancing’ or ‘estrangement’ effect. This was most famously applied in the theatre by Brecht (1964), using the term *verfremdungseffekt*. Goffman himself describes Brecht’s “pattern of drawing attention to the fictive character of the whole, so that the audience isn’t allowed too long a period for holding one set of laminations” (1986, p.403). He notes how the playwright “periodically reminds his viewers that what they are involved in is but dramatistic make-believe”(p.419). Jackson (2007) feels that ‘aesthetic distance’, or the maintenance of a clear distinction between stage and audience, is an essential ingredient for a theatre event. Creating distance has a strong connection to the tussle around separation and situatedness in LD. Eriksson believes such a defamiliarisation through distance raises consciousness, stating:

> The effect and function of making strange is inherent in creating a sense of wonder. I would suggest that the modes of thought used in daily life have an automating and dulling effect on the awareness; the practical events of daily life weaken people’s perception with the result that we are no longer being able to see, but rather merely to recognise. Through estrangement, the familiar can be made strange, so that things are seen in a new light, with a new awareness. (2011, p.103)

Heathcote saw potential to use role positions to generate distance, ‘key’ the primary frame and construct a “shared perspective with the learner-participants on how to resolve issues embedded within the underlying dramatic tension” (Boland, 2013, p.60). The drama frame can, through distance, ‘protect’ and bring clarity to future action.
Fiction reduces the risk of exposure and "allows participants to explore and push boundaries in the imagined world" (Aitken et al., 2007, p.9). An example is where youth participants were invited to apply a ‘gaming’ frame to a domestic violence story in order to explore alternative action without risk of privacy violation. This was the case in a New Zealand study in which the facilitators “needed the students to engage with the characters’ class and culture perspective, but not get locked in to them, nor to make them defining factors” (O'Toole, 2009, p.487).

Such work raises the question of how closely art should imitate life. Shakespeare understood theatre as a mirror in which we can see our vices and our virtues. His famous ‘play within a play’ from Hamlet, acts as an illustration. Following the Aristotelian idea of mimesis, his hero stated “the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as ‘t were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure” (III. 2:21-25). Philosopher and psychoanalyst Lacan also used the mirror metaphor, and viewed the ‘mirror stage’ as a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation – and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of fantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic – and, lastly, to the assumption of the armor of an alienating identity, which will make with its rigid structure the subject’s entire mental development (1977, p.42).

But rather than a direct reflection, theatre can also work as a metaphorical magic mirror, or looking glass through which we can, like Alice, travel (Meisiek & Barry, 2007; O'Toole, 2006). In the Theatre of the Oppressed, the action is a mirror we can enter if we do not like the image it shows us. We can play with perspective by penetrating it, rehearse modifications of this image, rendering it more to our liking. In this mirror we see the present, but can invent the future of our dreams: the act of transforming is itself transformatory. In the act of changing our image, we are changing ourselves, and by changing ourselves in turn we change the world (Boal, 2006, p.62).
Even if we are changing ourselves only temporarily within the drama frame, there appears still to be value in a certain kind of distancing regarding identity. Following Goffman’s (1961) terminology, Carroll refers to ‘role-distance’ that “provides a measure of ‘protection’ which enables the participants to assume an attitudinal stance that reflects a worldview which is different from points of view that the participants might normally evince as utterances in their day-to-day life” (Boland, 2013, p.62). So, rather than naturalistic drama which, through ‘mimesis’, acts only as a mirror to reflect reality directly, applying distance in a portrayal of either the situation or the actors involved allows ‘metaxis’ to occur, described as:

The state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different, autonomous worlds: the image of reality and the reality of the image. The participant shares and belongs to these two autonomous worlds; their reality and the image of their reality, which she herself has created (Boal, 1995, p.43).

Metaxis induces a kind of dual reality that includes 'what is' and 'what if'. Our ability to sustain both is at the heart of the distancing offered through framing. We are able to 'suspend our disbelief' and accept the fictional world presented to us, while at the same time being conscious of its fictionality. Through a kind of refraction, instead of reflection, participants can see themselves from the outside as an ‘other’ - opening up possibilities for multiple possible future selves (Sparrowe, 2005).

In Brechtian ‘epic’ theatre, devices are used to jolt spectators into "a heightened awareness of the theatre in which he or she sat, and of the theatrical devices being employed to represent the world on stage" (Anthony Jackson, 2007, p.141). These might include placards or projections of the scene name, and moments where actors step out of character to address the audience directly or break into song. The distancing of the epic theatre appeals to reason, rather than feelings, and, like metaxis, arouses the capacity for action by placing the observer outside, looking in. In this 'new' genre, there would be "no
chance of the actors having the effrontery to offer such people those few miserable scraps of imitation which they at present cook up in a few rehearsals any old how and without the least thought!” (Brecht, 1964, p.44). Even in song, Brecht felt it “important that he who is showing should himself be shown” (p.45). Interviewed about acting, Brecht argued that "spectator and actor ought not to approach one another but to move apart. Each ought to move away from himself” (p.26). Asking whether we should, in fact, abolish aesthetics, Brecht, and many after him, felt that the meaning of plays presented in the conventional dramatic form is often blurred by playing to the audience's hearts and, rather, matters in the theatre ought to be presented "coldly, classically and objectively” (1964, p.15). That way, the dangers of catharsis might be avoided.

While catharsis is not a central motif in this research, it deserves a brief mention as it relates to performance effects / affects noted in the data findings. There is some contention around whether performance in general, and theatre specifically, should generate catharsis. Turner describes how rituals of rebellion can be cathartic, “discharging tensions and allowing the system to function without serious contestation” (1986, p.145). Yet, for Stanislavsky (2003 [c.1936]), catharsis involves the reliving of past emotional experiences to modify them and shake off their negative power (Meisiek, 2004). Aristotle’s catharsis combines the emotions of pity and fear and releases audience members from the associated negative effects. Certain authors, including Brecht and Boal, are wary of such a process as it may suffocate, rather than stimulate the urgency for change. Citing Scheff (1979), Meisiek summarises different perspectives: “Moreno viewed catharsis as a way to foster creativity while Boal sees it as the unleashing the motivation for action” (2004, p.803). Recent attention has shifted to emotional ‘affect’ where audience members are able to make sense of their responses rather than allowing them to dissipate (Thompson, 2009). Whether or not the emotional experience of
catharsis should be avoided or embraced, there are connections to the idea of distancing as a process in performance. Along with framing, the idea of distance links to the third dimension of ‘performance-in-action’ addressed in the next section.

**Play**

Play can be a frame, a keying or transformation of a primary frame and, as one of Schechner’s (2013) seven categories, a performance. The very fact that we refer to dramatic action as ‘playing a part’ demonstrates the interdependence between play and theatre. Play is an intrinsic aspect of performing representing the ‘what if’ Boal identifies as so important in drama for change (Schechner, 2013). Following Bateson’s seminal work on playfulness, Goffman (1986) identifies play as “an activity through which people frame and adapt the social relationships involved in organisational life” (cited in Statler, Heracleous, & Jacobs, 2011, p.238). He believes “the central kind of make-believe is playfulness” (1986, p.48) and proposes certain 'rules' when transforming serious action into play. These include the repetition of patterns that may not be followed faithfully, the power of any participant to refuse an invitation to play or terminate play once begun, the mixing up of dominance order found in literal activity, an independence from external needs, frequent role switchings and clear signs for the beginning and termination of playfulness (Goffman, 1986). Within this list there are many parallels with the theatre - particularly the expansive yet delimited, non-linear space of the rehearsal room.

As recognised in the section on framing, playfulness has limits. Goffman (1986) deems these to be cultural and contextual, subject to change over time. Play can be dangerous, and much of the fun of playing stems from juggling the risks of consequence. Deep play denotes a real-life activity (such as mountaineering) in which the stakes are so high that it seems irrational to engage in it (Geertz, 1973). The related concept of dark
play involves deception, fantasy and subversion, hidden agendas and the possibility that
even a play frame itself might be disrupted (Schechner, 2013). The instigator of play
must, therefore, pay attention to the framing of the activity: "how do players, spectators,
and so on know when play begins, is taking place, and is over?" (Schechner, 2013, p.93).
What are the rules and how are they to be enforced? Bateson’s (1972) notion of ’meta
communication’ as a kind of signal, or framing of intent, may be useful here. A meta
communication constitutes an act (similar to Goffman’s expression of sign vehicles) that
influences how what follows should be received. Strong cultural conventions, such as
those found in the theatre, can play this part in performance so that, for example, even the
darkest aspects of the human condition can be playfully represented as positive and good.
As such, the play frame potentially contains two ‘peculiarities’: "a) that the messages or
signals exchanged in play are in a certain sense untrue or not meant; b) that that which is
denoted by the signals is non-existent". (Bateson, 1972, pp. 182-183). It is this inherent
capacity for contradiction within play that links to pedagogical processes discussed in the
data findings of this thesis.

With parallels to Goffman’s (1986) list, Schechner argues that the activities of
play, theatre and ritual have several common qualities: a special ordering of time; a
special value attached to objects; non-productivity in terms of goods; rules (1988, p.8).
He also notes special places are often set aside or constructed in which to perform these
activities. It is the ‘site’ of performance, including the processes of framing, distancing
and play, I wish to consider in the final ‘performance-in-action’ section.

**Liminality**

A limen is a threshold, a strip between the outside and inside of a structure,
usually with a lintel above, a “passageway between places, rather than a place in itself”
Victor Turner, in his many writings, uses this imagery in anthropology to analyse the transitions within the rituals of life. He argues that we all pass through a ‘liminal’ space or state when we transform into new identities or social realities. The liminal is the second in a three-phase model of human ‘rites of passage’ - borrowed from the Belgian folklorist, van Gennep – preceded by ‘separation’ from normal social life and followed by ‘re-aggregation’ into the new reality (Turner, 1979). In this research the term liminal will be used with regard to performance activities that take place "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner, 1969, p.95). LD can be conceived as one example of such a liminal performance activity in the sense that it transforms leadership cultures and practices by constructing new realities. The development space exists between the present and imagined future(s).

All performances require a physical space, which can be public and liminal, for example the area between the front of stage and just behind the curtain in a traditional proscenium arch theatre. This ‘empty space’ (Brook, 1990) is a limen connecting imaginary worlds with the daily lives of spectators (Schechner, 2013). It is also possible to designate a space as temporarily liminal for the duration of the performance, such as a village square for a tribal ceremony, or a yurt in the woods for a development intervention. For Turner, what makes a space liminal is the potential to experience ‘communitas’. He describes this as ‘spontaneous camaraderie’ or “total, unmediated relationship between person and person, a relationship which nevertheless does not submerge one in the other but safeguards their uniqueness in the very act of realizing their commonness” (1974, p.274). As Turner points out, “Any society which hopes to be imperishable must whittle out for itself a piece of space and a while of time, in which it
can look honestly at itself” (Turner, 1986, p.122). This honesty may include a radical scepticism, even resistance, as Turner describes:

(Liminality) can be the venue and occasion for the most radical scepticism – always relative, of course, to the given culture’s repertoire of sceptical concepts and images – about cherished values and rules. Ambiguity reigns; people and public policies may be judged sceptically in relation to deep values; the vices, follies, stupidities, and abuses of contemporary holders of high political, economic, or religious status may be satirized, ridiculed, or contemned in terms of axiomatic values, or these personages may be rebuked for gross failures in commonsense (p.102).

Alongside the widely appreciated betwixt and between state of liminality, Turner describes a simultaneous state of 'outsiderhood'. He defines this as "being either permanently and by description set outside the structural arrangements of the given social system, or being situationally or temporarily set apart, or voluntarily setting oneself apart from the behaviour of status-occupying, role-playing members of that system" (Turner, 1974, p.233). Liminal outsiders are not the same as 'marginals' - who typically occupy two or more groups simultaneously - and may include roles such as priests, gypsies, shamans. Turner (1974) argues that liminality involves the physical removal of the participant from their everyday reality, and the subsequent return in a altered state. Liminal processes are thus “transformations, permanently changing who people are” (Schechner, 2013, p.72).

One might conceive theatre as the ultimate liminal zone. For centuries it has represented a location and segment of time in which people from all walks of life may lose themselves, to emerge collectively changed in some way. Revealing the ‘metapatterns’ (Turner’s pseudonym for frames) of our realities, theatre can satirise and reveal in exactly the way Turner imagines. It can highlight the attention of the observer on what might be otherwise concealed within the institutions of everyday life, thereby encouraging plural reflexivity (Turner, 1986). But there are some (mainly the same people who argue that catharsis suppresses action) who argue that traditional, or ‘pure’,
theatre does not transform and any change it evokes is fleeting. Brecht, for example, felt that some ‘Aristotelian’ theatre was in effect “propaganda for the status quo” (Prentki, 2015a, p.19). Even contemporary forms of ‘aesthetic theatre’ might “advocate reform of existing social institutions without a fundamental or revolutionary questioning of the institutions themselves” (p.19). Change is central in the work of Augusto Boal, who based much of his pedagogy on the theories of Paolo Freire. Boal notes “Transformation of the world implies a dialectic between the two actions: denouncing the process of dehumanisation and announcing the dream of a new society” (1998, p.74).

The presence or absence of lasting transformation is a slippery issue, particularly given the premise of this research that nothing in reality is fixed or stable. If permanence is negated, it would seem impossible (and futile to attempt) to assess whether participants return from the liminal space of the theatre, or a development intervention, permanently changed. This research does not provide an answer to such a quandary but it does adhere to the notion of liminality as a space of transformation and possibility. With, ideally, an absence of power (Gabriel, 1995), it is a space in which, through performance, “a group or community seeks to portray, understand and then act on itself” (Turner, 1979, p.466).

Over the course of these four ‘performance-in-action’ sections I have moved from performance as a theoretical construct towards the use of performance and theatre as a development activity. Questions that arose regarding ‘if’ and ‘how’ theatre might transform the world open up debates as to whether arts-based interventions are simply another way of objectifying ‘the other’. Such debates tie in to the discussions around ideology in development raised in chapter one. It is a brief return into this murky territory of ideology and intentionality I will make in the last part of this chapter.
Aesthetic or Instrumental Performance?

“This Nature’s above art in that respect.” IV.6:86

This section looks at the tension around conceptions of performance as art and/or instrument. Should art be useful? Should theatre be, as Brecht wished it, “at the service of an informed, reflective consciousness that will transfer directly into the ‘real world’ beyond the theatre walls” (Anthony Jackson, 2007, p.142)? Or should it remain purely ‘entertainment’ - focusing on fun, the present moment and individual virtuosity (Schechner, 1988)? Should it display ‘that glib and oily art to speak and purpose not’, as the performances of Cordelia’s sisters in King Lear seem to? Perhaps there is a ‘sweet spot’: an audience could be sufficiently emotionally engaged to empathise with the struggle depicted on stage, but distanced enough to arouse a collective, critical curiosity and action towards social change. This may be similar to the possible ‘sweet spot’ of contextualisation raised in the separated-situated tussle of chapter one. While Brecht (1948, 1964, 1965) was openly against gratuitously emotive theatre, most commentators in performance studies and applied theatre would argue that instrumentality and aesthetic experience can and should not be forcibly separated. Both have value and both may be felt in the course of a performance – indeed no performance can be purely one or the other (Schechner, 1988). It is exactly this human capacity to hold this tension, to experience multiple ways of knowing simultaneously and to appreciate the plurality of what is and what could be that gives drama its power. So what is ‘aesthetic experience’, what is ‘instrumentality’ and why, as noted below, is there still tension between ‘higher forms’ of art and those that claim to use art for instrumental purposes?

Like play, aesthetics is a complex, ambiguous, subtle and pervasive construct. There is a ‘constant shifting’ between conceptions of aesthetics as a way of knowing, and
as a dimension, aspect, or object (Strati, 1992). The dominant paradigm still appears to be Aristotelian aesthetics, which amounts to a conception of life as ‘raw’, art as ‘cooked’ (Neelands, 2010b). Owing to its relationship with artistic practice, aesthetic considerations feature strongly in debates around the purpose, or intentionality, of performance. The theoretical foundation of aesthetics and ‘the aesthetic’ deserves a brief exploration then, before addressing tensions around art and instrumentality.

The word ‘aesthetic’ is used to denote a broad category of practices or artefacts of artistic or art-like nature (White, 2015). It ‘conjures up’ often abstract notions of beauty, taste, and the sublime (Haseman & Winston, 2010). Categories include the sacred, the comic, the ugly and the picturesque (Strati, 1992). In verb form the word is often used as a synonym for ‘artistic’ and as a noun it may refer to a particular form or style of work, particularly work concerning sensory perception. Geertz, cited in Jackson (2007), notes that aesthetic activity is designed “to demonstrate that ideas are visible, audible and…tactible [sic], that they can be cast in forms with the senses” (1997, p.118). This sensory appreciation of ideas may be "the most resonant and productive concept for educational theatre practice" (Anthony Jackson, 2007).

An aesthetic has been referred to as “the resonant interplay between expressive forms of all cultures and those who witness and/or participate in them" (Cohen, Varea, & Walker, 2011, p.6). Under this ‘process’ definition, aesthetic experiences are bounded in space and time and engage people on multiple levels simultaneously - sensory, cognitive, emotional and often spiritual - all of which contribute to meaning-making processes and action (White, 2015). The idea that aesthetic experience is bounded fits well with the notion of a liminal zone as, paradoxically, the spatio-temporal constraints allow an expansive freedom of expression to flourish. Temporal boundaries in particular can
render an aesthetic experience and the recollection of it more potent than a purely intellectual abstraction. Potency does not, however, necessarily equate to durability. Practitioners working with aesthetics should recognise that, contrary to an assumption that “meaning is carried (unchanged) through time” (Cunliffe, Luhman, & Boje, 2004, p.261), meaning derived from the ‘aesthetic moment’ (Linstead, 2000) will find new forms and may even evaporate altogether as time progresses.

If it is possible to sustain an intrinsic aesthetic across any significant duration (an assumption I challenge in chapter seven), it will inevitably be subjective and collectively constructed in a certain context. I concur with White who, citing Shaughnessy (2012), states:

the aesthetic of a single work, a set of related practices or a recognisable tradition draws on shared understandings between all of those taking part – as audience members, or artists of whatever kind – about how the elements of a performance to be attended to and how they relate to each other and to the things they refer to, represent or re-shape in performance (2015, p.11).

Given my methodological stance, I do not think it necessary to firmly establish a single defining aesthetic within an activity. Rather, as Neelands (2010b) suggests, we should ask ‘whose aesthetic’ is under examination. We might then concentrate on how different aesthetic processes are experienced by different players within a performance. In other words, "to seek the art within interventionist theatre practice is not necessarily about changing the work done; rather it is about the need constantly to test, question and develop practice, and where necessary to re-conceptualise it" (Anthony Jackson, 2007, p.29).

Instrumentality refers to the degree with which an activity is designed to intervene, or effect “specific, measurable goals” (Neelands, 2000, p.32). Like the literature around development, there is little clarity as to what these goals might be. If art is used in a performance ‘as instrument’ to pursue certain ends, what might the artists or
performers using it be in the service of? The debate between the value of aesthetic and instrumental processes resembles the tussle in LD between process and outcome (see chapter one). Suggestions are that most scholars and practitioners assume and privilege pedagogic outcomes as part of theatre’s instrumentality. Authors variously refer to impact, effect or transformation. Kershaw believes the fundamental purpose of performance is ‘efficacy’, which he defines as the “potential that theatre may have to make the immediate effects of performance influence, however minutely, the general historical evolution of wider social and political realities” (1992, p.1). Such an effect, even a ‘minute’ one, Kershaw admits is almost impossible to ascertain. The historical suspicion of the subversive power of the theatre suggests it is widely appreciated to wield significant transformative potential. People seem to innately understand the power of theatre without being able to capture it.

A performance must, according to Kershaw, "play' with the audience’s fundamental beliefs, and... provoke a potential crisis in those beliefs, without producing immediate rejection" (1992, p.28). It should therefore employ authenticating conventions that disturb ideology without causing a riot. Such an ‘effect’ is clearly contextual – as noted previously and supported by Kershaw - because what may be challenging to one audience community may be innocuous to another. Further, Kershaw (1992) maintains that audiences always have a choice as to whether and how efficacious the performance is, made available to them through the understanding that it is ‘only a fiction’, with no bearing on the real world.

If something is ‘only a fiction’, we can detach ourselves from its potential significance and ‘enjoy’ the spectacle. Thus, ‘entertainment’ is placed at the opposite end of a dyad with efficacy. While efficacy rose to dominance from the 1960s onwards
(Schechner, 1988), it is accepted that no performance will be entirely one or the other. Every performance will effect some kind of change, although Thompson (2006, 2009) calls for a focus on ‘affect’ instead of ‘effect’. He argues, extreme emotion such as joy can be a fundamental part of activism and, far from having a dulling effect that might stifle opposition (as Brecht, Boal and others have feared), aesthetic qualities can enable people to tolerate suffering and find the continued energy to resist. This may be what Boal (1993) was referring to when he cautioned against the numbing catharsis found in Aristotle’s ‘coercive system’ of tragedy, preferring instead “catharsis of the revolutionary impetus” (p.155).

Tension between aesthetic and instrumental drivers of performance connects to a dichotomy of ‘pure’ and ‘applied’ art forms. Neelands notes:

Cultural conservationists also argue that there is a clear line dividing the 'high art' of classical theatre from the 'low art' practices of educational drama; the theatre is a 'natural' hierarchy of the aesthetic experience in which the institutions, practices, genres and terms of 'high art' have an undisputed prominence (2010b, p.81).

It seems the privileging of function over experience encountered in LD is reversed when it comes to the theatre tradition. ‘High art’ is that which has no obvious instrumental purpose and corresponds to the ‘restrictive art of the theatre’ as a ‘literary and private aesthetic’ (Neelands, 1998, p.31). Nicholson (2005) refers to Bourdieu’s (1993[1971]) ‘politics of purity’ as an explanation for why what is perceived as ‘pure’ theatre has become the preserve of the middle class. Ackroyd (2007) problematises the binary terminology ‘pure’ and ‘applied’, noting that in most other contexts, the former is prized where the latter insinuates presence of toxic impurities or imperfections. White (2015) refers to a further assumption that 'pure' theatre takes place in 'proper' places and is focused around its quality as a work of art rather than provision of a benefit.
White (2015) concurs with Cohen-Cruz (2012) who suggests applied forms have become 'too operational'. Balfour seems to agree when he states aesthetic engagement is “eroded in the service of pragmatism” (2009, p.350). Similarly, Thompson (2000) argues that focusing solely on a social agenda ‘dries out’ artistic content. Jackson observes "considering the pivotal place of the word 'theatre' in our terminologies, it does seem strange, if not wholly surprising, that the artistic dimension of this theatre is so rarely addressed head-on" (2007, p.28). White (2015) urges scholars and practitioners alike to beware of 'over-instrumentalising' and to think of all forms of theatre as art. Artistry and creative ambition should, he advises, be placed at the centre of the work, alongside, rather than subordinate to, critical thinking and political awareness. Similar sentiments appear elsewhere:

....there is a danger of applied theatre being seen as a technique and to forget not only that theatre is an art-form, but also whose needs are being met. We forget at our peril the question of what applied theatre is for. We need to ensure that our practice comprises more than simulation exercises and role play, that it is truly reflective, and that we debate the purposes of what we are doing (Ackroyd, 2000, p.6).

And:

Applied theatre is first and foremost a form of theatre. It is therefore, in its own right, an artform, with distinct features and characteristics. Regardless of its progressive radical heritage, it must always possess aesthetic qualities that move and inspire to emotionally engage the audience and performer (O'Connor & Anderson, 2015, p.33).

AT scholars seem united in the view that theatre, whether ‘applied’ or not, contains both aesthetic and instrumental elements, and there should be no privileging of either. Thompson (2000) calls the distinction between them a ‘false dichotomy’. Neither should there be a hierarchy between the alternative forms of knowing each set of processes generates. It is assumed that aesthetic processes yield emotional and embodied responses, also known as ‘knowing in your gut’ (S. S. Taylor, 2003). Instrumental performances evoke rationality or cognitive responses, labelled ‘knowing in your head’, or intellectual knowledge (S. S. Taylor, 2003). Each of these, and possibly also a further
two categories of learning process (Neelands, 2000) - expressive and personal/social – has a place in the performance of development. Whilst distinctions between them may be helpful in isolating specific participant experiences, I argue that it is an impossibility to separate them out. They are, as O’Connor and Anderson recognise, “completely entwined” (p.34). To participate in pure or applied theatre is to be submerged in an experience that combines gut and head knowing, or embodied and cognitive responses.

It is not always possible to avoid the privileging of instrumentality, particularly where the theatre event is heavily influenced by the ‘donor agenda’ (Balfour, 2009). Ackroyd critically asks “is it legitimate for drama to be used to any ends which our sponsors support?” (2000, p.5). A clash between ‘commercial interests’ (Mabey, 2013) and the openly pro-social aims of progressive theatre-makers may partly explain why there has yet been little uptake of theatre-based methods in the organisational sphere.

There are also the ‘micro-political dynamics’ (Mabey, 2013) and emphasis on functional efficacy within organisations identified in chapter one. In chapter three I will introduce some of the practices used in arts-based development. Much previous work of this kind has been subject to critique around the lack of empirical evidence of ‘impact’. Ironically, many commissioners or funders of theatre-based development programmes claim to want long-term change, yet have no way of measuring such ‘effects’. They may, in fact, wish to sustain some aspects of the status quo (Etherton & Prentki, 2006). Scholars recognise the need for a robust and critical evaluation that takes account of the complexity of understanding change, and incorporates intangibles such as ethical effectiveness, a lack of which may risk damaging the credibility of the field and future funding of projects (O’Connor & Anderson, 2015). So far such a ‘need’ has not been met. What attempts there are at evaluation are often purely ‘technical’, rooted in the false separation of the art object from everyday reality – an ‘insidious’ relic of Kant’s hierarchy of taste (Haseman
& Winston, 2010). They support the dominant functionalist paradigm of western research and practice and, as such, insufficiently attend to aesthetics.

This research does not enter into the ‘imprecise science’ of evaluation (O'Connor & Anderson, 2015) – a subject covered comprehensively elsewhere (see Etherton and Prentki, 2006). It does, however, recognise the desire for certainty of instrumental ‘success’ that hounds many programme commissioners, and consequently, development practitioners. Regardless of the intended or unintended impacts of an activity – which are socially constructed, shifting and subjective in any case - performances in organisations are, by necessity, a blend of instrumentality and aesthetics. This argument is summarised in the following statement:

Theatre that aims to educate or influence can truly do so only if it values entertainment, the artistry and craftsmanship that are associated with resonant, powerful theatre, and the aesthetic quality that – by definition – will appeal to our senses…. Even in the most proactive interventionist theatre, the aesthetic dimension of the work is pivotal. Lose sight of the aesthetic and the capacity of such theatre to intervene is seriously diminished (Anthony Jackson, 2007, pp. 27-28).

The Performance of Tension

In this chapter I have leant heavily on the theories of Schechner, Goffman and Turner to highlight certain elements of performance and theatre theory that inform my study. I have claimed all of the interactions in life, including the processes of LD, can be conceived as socially constructed, dynamic, subjective, relational and intentional performances. Framing, distancing, play and liminality were presented as key, interconnected theoretical principles I will later use to guide the interpretation of my empirical material. In particular, distance emerged as a dynamic of performance that could be applied through the process of framing, in association with liminality and playfulness. The four ‘performance-in-action’ principles and the connections between them may offer partial answers to my second research question around how developers
interact with tension. In response to my first research question, the last section of this chapter examined the predominant tension affecting the pedagogic application of art and arts-based methods in development. This was found in the debate around the separation and privileging of aesthetic and instrumental factors of performance.

Having spent the past two chapters working through a variety of tensions encountered by developers, and presenting some possible options for the performance actions they may take in response, the next part of the thesis moves into the data generation and analysis phase. In chapter three I document the performances and challenges encountered as researcher, developer and artist in my own theatre-making process. As noted in the vignette opening this thesis, one of these challenges was around how to make the ‘play within a play’ aesthetically ‘good enough’, whilst provoking change. It is, thus, with a powerful statement around the motivations of theatre-makers that I close this chapter:

The theatre must provoke, if the target is truly to move people beyond the normative conventions which keep the spectator passive, the citizen obedient. Of course if you simply provoke, you run the risk of meaningless outrage – the question is what you do with that provocation and the resulting release of energy. You also have to seduce, by the power of the narrative and the quality of the theatrical experience.....And to make the experience truly seductive, the art must be good enough. (Adrian Jackson, 2009, p.44).
CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

“I will do such things – what they are yet I know not” II.4:278-279

Methodological Foundations

The ontological position of this research understands reality as socially constructed performance. Assuming truth to be partial and contestable (S. S. Taylor, 2015), it seeks to gain understanding by interpreting subjective perceptions, and is concerned with local and emergent insight rather than large-scale generalisability. By denying the existence of an objective externality, I understand reality to be co-constructed in the moment of interaction (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011), conceived as a performance. Knowledge is generated through expressive dialogue (Calas & Smircich, 1999; Gabriel, 1991) and meaning-making is a social process located in the spaces between people (Kennedy, Carroll, Francoeur, & Jackson, 2012). This study attends to “feelings, intuitions and multiple forms of rationality of both the researched and the researcher, rather than a single logic of objectification or purified rationality” (Deetz, 2009, p.27).

The first section of this chapter explains the foundational principles guiding the research; social construction, critical postmodernism and aesthetics. The next section introduces arts-based research (ABR) and performance ethnography as two related methodologies connecting these foundations. The remainder of the chapter is focused on research design and explicates the many concurrent and complementary processes of data generation and analysis that were used in the fieldwork. Although they were carried out in
an iterative, cyclical and often overlapping fashion, for ease of consumption they will be presented together in a chronological, holistic narrative modelled on the six-step process of OT (Schreyogg, 2001). A brief section on the ethical considerations of the research closes the chapter.

**Social Construction**

The social constructionist perspective was popularised by Berger and Luckman (1967) and is built on the tenet that “people make their social and cultural worlds at the same time these worlds make them” (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, p.173). Realities are multiple and subjective, created through interactions between and among social agents. A constructionist world-view recognises the importance of language and discourse as the relational medium by which meaning is constructed. Research carried out in this paradigm, like this study, is often participatory and locally situated.

In leadership studies, including some within LD, there has been a shift towards research that assumes leadership to be a co-constructed reality, a process and product of a socially negotiated order (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Grint, 2005a; Grint & Jackson, 2010; B. Jackson & Parry, 2011). Grint and Jackson, for example, argue that a social conscience should be central to leadership research and ask, “How can social constructionist perspectives on leadership help to make the world a better place?” (2010, p.3). There are, however, pragmatic and interventionist orientations within social constructionism suggesting a constructionist ontology does not equate to a critical one (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). This research favours a more critical understanding of constructionism with links to postmodernism.
Critical Postmodernism

Postmodern approaches to qualitative research eschew metanarrative (or ‘grand theory’) (Lyotard, 1984), problematising both subject and author. While the “postmodern turn” has been instrumental in shaping the recent trend in organisation studies towards more reflective knowledge-making (Calas & Smircich, 1999), it has also been scrutinised for its seeming inability to go beyond deconstruction in providing alternatives to conventional theory development. Rather than a standalone approach in itself, Calas and Smircich (1999) see postmodernism as the gateway to a new form of criticism that asks “for whom” and “for what” are we representing. Alvesson and Deetz (2006) struggle to provide a concise framing of postmodernism beyond acknowledging the centrality of discourse and fragmented identities. They note the diversity of opinion within organisation studies surrounding whether critical theory and postmodernism can be combined as a perspective. Both grew out of a disillusion with the modernist view of organisations based on control and bureaucracy. Each provides “enriched conceptions of power” and “bring to the surface suppressed conflict for the sake of reconsideration” showing how “managerial values embedded in language systems, social practices and decision routines have lessened the quality of organisational decisions and reduced the capacity to meet important human needs” (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006, p.2).

Critical approaches can be grouped into those focused around an ideology critique and those that propose communicative action, the latter being most relevant to this study through its commitment to an affirmative agenda (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006). By making the familiar seem strange, some interventionist theatre methods follow critical and postmodern principles of turning the “self-evident and familiar social world into something less obvious, natural, rational and well-ordered” (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006,
They may attempt to unmask power and domination (Gabriel, 2001) and unsettle established modes of interpretation, challenging the status quo and raising the voices of those who have been silenced (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006). Theatre, critical theory and postmodernism can be connected through aesthetics (Lyotard, 1984), another key influence in this research.

**Aesthetics**

An aesthetic perspective appreciates the world through 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973), engaging with felt and embodied meaning derived from subjective experience (S. S. Taylor, 2015). Aesthetics was born out of symbolism and the dramatistic genre described in chapter two, and assumes the contemporary organisation is in flux, constantly negotiated and reinvented by accessing sensory experience. It does not, however, claim to provide a complete or authentic interpretation; rather, the knowledge generated through abductive reasoning in an aesthetic approach can only be fragmented, partial and transient (Strati, 2000).

Organisational scholars have turned to aesthetics as a means of examining individuals' emotional and symbolic responses in organisational life (Bathurst, Jackson, & Statler, 2010). An aesthetic perspective challenges the positivist world-view, centred around logic and rationality, that still dominates management research and business education (S. S. Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). It argues that emotions, aesthetic appreciation and the body are essential parts of organisational dynamics. In opposition to a positivist paradigm, constructionists within aesthetic domains argue to replace the criteria of validity, reliability, and objectivity with credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity, (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) notions that seek to build trustworthiness in research (Barry, 1996). Weick (2007) advises scholars to "drop the
tools of rationality" in order to "gain access to lightness in the forms of intuitions, feelings, stories, improvisation, experience, imagination, active listening, awareness in the moment, novel words, and empathy" (p. 15). This study is directly concerned with how these aesthetic experiences are brought to life.

**Arts-based Research**

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that ABR forms a sub-genre of qualitative research that includes a wide range of interpretive practices and empirical materials such as artefacts, visual texts and productions. Some arts-based researchers see themselves as *bricoleurs*, meaning they are able to navigate and switch between a range of perspectives and paradigms, “assembling and combining resources of variable origin that are invested ex ante to engage in an endeavor with uncertain outcomes” (Perkmann & Spicer, 2014, p.1786). Findings are often presented in the symbolic form of knowing that relates to the art form; for the poet, the sonnet (for example); for the composer, a melody. Eisner (2008) suggests the benefits of ABR include: the ability to address nuances of situations; access to empathic feeling; fresh perspectives; enhanced self-awareness and emotional capacity. Leavy (2009) extends this list, adding that an arts-based researcher may: contribute to the enlargement of human understanding; become part of a holistic approach to research; be especially evocative and provocative; raise awareness and critical consciousness; and promote dialogue through participation. ABR allows a researcher to 'bring themselves' to the study, although responsiveness to the unexpected is essential and "the most meaningful insights often come by surprise and maybe even against the will of the creator" (McNiff, 2007, p.40).

Despite challenges such as a perceived absence of artistic skill, Barry (1996) asserts that organisational researchers should not retreat from ABR. Paradoxically, the
opportunities that arise from such a methodological approach can only be exploited by full immersion into it. ABR requires embracing uncertainty and complements a non-linear research approach where meaning may emerge sporadically and iteratively. Leavy believes the 'incubation' phase of qualitative research is often "glossed over and tidied up later" (2009, p.18), a view supported by Hunter et al (2002) who argue that arts-based approaches should expose the 'messy interface' between interpretation and analysis. Responsiveness is essential, as is a personal criticality centred around problematisation, where even our own assumptions - such as whether or not theatre itself can lead to any kind of change (Balfour, 2009) – are under scrutiny.

Immersion, uncertainty and responsiveness are hallmarks of ABR. They are what give it ‘swing’ – the corporal, affective and cognitive ‘movement’ of an activity (Thompson, 2000). Supporting Lyotard’s (1984) view of the dynamic between researcher and researched as an ever-evolving, aesthetic relationship, ABR is often participatory. Lines between researcher and participants may blur, whereby ‘subjects’ are repositioned as decision-making actors (O’Connor & Anderson, 2015). Generally this requires long-term, co-learning partnerships and a commitment to the generation of findings that will benefit all partners, as was the expectation in this research. Participatory methods are often driven by the desire to create more democratic processes and opportunities to challenge hegemonic knowledge. Roles are reframed so that "both researcher and participants are actively engaged in the designing, interpreting, analysing and representing of data" (O’Connor & Anderson, 2015, p.22).

There are almost limitless possibilities for data generation in ABR. There are also alternative forms of presentation and representation, the power of which lies in the way they show, where intellectual forms tell (S. S. Taylor, 2008). An intellectual form, such as
the text from a conventional research report, names an experience. An artistic form takes an experience and represents it as an object in the world that we and others apprehend. This allows us to name it through an abduction process that bypasses logical, rational filters - a "holistic intuitive leap" (p.399). Through emotional connection, and enigmatic, fragmentary, aleatory and atopic understanding (Linstead, 2000), we find ways in which the artistic form resonates with our own lived experiences.

**Why Theatre?**

Whether it be poetry, narrative prose, drama or other forms, arts-based researchers transform data into art, both to analyse it and present it. Drama is just one possible form in the artist’s repertoire, one suited to my prior experience and research objectives. As a theatre practitioner I already possessed an ability to analyse characters and texts. I had been trained in emotional sensibility and empathic understanding, scenographic literacy and storytelling; the necessary ingredients for what Saldaña (1999) calls ethnodrama (see next section). The inherent uncertainty of drama beckoned. In showing organisational members possibility (rather than telling them) researchers and developers using drama cede control of interpretation to the participant. As Taylor puts it, "artistic forms are for opening up many possibilities rather than forcing a specific outcome. Theatrical performance offers us a key for opening a door to organisational change, but we don't know where that door leads us" (2008, p.405). I was already familiar with the literature around OT, and it seemed to offer a promising approach to this study. While most studies focused on the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of OT (Clark & Mangham, 2004a, 2004b; Darso, Meisiek, & Boje, 2006; Meisiek, 2002; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyogg, 2001; Schreyogg & Hopfl, 2004; S. S. Taylor, 2003, 2008; S. S. Taylor & Thellesen, 2006), little attention had been given to ‘how’ the practice was carried out. Set on using theatre,
but seeking alignment between methodological foundation and research design, it was to
the field of performance ethnography and ethnodrama I turned.

*Performance Ethnography and Ethnodrama*

Denzin asserts that "the performance text is the single, most powerful way for
ethnography to recover yet interrogate the meanings of lived experience" (1997, p.94-95).
Like classical ethnography, performance ethnography is concerned with the 'when, where
and how' of the field site but it "exposes the dynamic interactions between "power,
politics and poetics" (Madison, 2008, p.392). The technique challenges researchers to
represent these interactions to make meaningful interventions" (Hamera, 2013, p.207).
Inherently critical, performance ethnography is more interactive than the 'participant
observation' of classical ethnography: "the author is the active part of the story, a person
so enthralled by hearing his own voice and listening to others telling the tale that he
cannot remove himself from the narrative" (Tedlock, 2013, p.236). The research
technique reflects the way performance artists integrate knowledge from multiple
domains: specialised knowledge of craft, embodied knowledge of the senses, politically
engaged conceptual knowledge (criticality) and pragmatic knowledge, or know-how
(Hamera, 2013). The term covers numerous approaches, ranging from performative
writing techniques that act methodologically to transform a research study into a dramatic
narrative, hereafter known as *ethnodrama*, to elaborate stagings of data - a form of
pedagogical interpretation and/or publication. What links them all is a performance text
based on nonfictional, researched reality.

In performance ethnography, the dramatisation of data can be both an analytic
process and a mode of representation. A researcher selects, analyses, intertwines and
dramatises sections of data to produce 'evocative texts' (Barone, 1990). If the text, or
script, is then used to mount a live performance event, the process and product become known as *ethnotheatre* (Saldaña, 2003). Hamera (2013) proposes a set of questions that may ground the ethnographer, refining her understanding, and reminding her of her responsibilities to research communities (see p.211). Connecting to the LD and performance theory introduced in chapters one and two, Hamera closes her list with the question: who does it serve? Saldaña (2003) suggests only one question need be asked when considering the dramatic representation of ethnographic work: in what way will the participants’ story most credibly, vividly and persuasively be told? He notes:

If the art form has this ability, this power, to heighten representation and presentation of social life, and if our research goal with a particular fieldwork project is to capture and document the stark realities of the people we talked to and observed, then the medium of theatre seems the most compatible choice for sharing our findings and insights (Saldaña, 2011, p.15).

While honouring the story must be a key consideration, I would argue that the capability of the researcher should feature in the decision. The story may suit a painted representation, but if the researcher has little or no experience in painting and is a gifted narrative writer, it is more likely to resonate in written form. Additionally, ethnodrama demands that the budding ethnodramatist exhibit reflexivity, asking repeatedly whose story is it and what is it about (Saldaña, 2003). Saldaña (2011) argues that the overarching purpose of ethnodrama is to "progressively advance its source participants, creators, body of dramatic literature, readers, audiences, and the broader communities they involve, to new and richer domains of social and artistic meaning" (p.32). As he notes elsewhere, the synergy of theatre and qualitative inquiry is strong: "both disciplines, after all, share a common goal: to create a unique, insightful, and engaging text about the human condition" (Saldaña, 2005, p.29). Echoing the scholars featured towards the end of chapter two, Saldaña respectfully urges ethnodramatists to balance the goal of social change with the artistic imperatives of an effective production - an "intellectually and emotionally satisfying aesthetic experience" (p.31). For Saldaña, art comes first, the
message, second, recycling the phrase, "a play is life with all the boring parts taken out" (2003, p.221).

Although the quotidian is often researched in other contexts, in performance, it is an aesthetic experience that engages an audience. Stories may “capture organisational life in a way that no compilation of facts ever can” (Czarniawska, 1997, p.21) but the performance is where the magic happens:

It is through the performance of stories, within a privileged space, that we find a safe forum in which to play with ideas of organisational change, as well as practice reflexivity, accessing how we think and feel about organisational lives (Hansen, 2002a, p.9)

Where audiences are diverse, as they are in organisations, it is vital a performance holds attention. As argued in chapter two, theatre should always entertain, no matter how committed practitioners may be to addressing and affecting serious issues. Ackroyd and O’Toole bemoan the many ethnodramas that have conscientiously preserved original material to such an extent that the performances are "dull and pedestrian" (2010, p.67). There is a balance, therefore, to be struck between remaining faithful to reality, something Saldaña calls ‘ethnodramatic validity’ (2005) yet creating an inspiring aesthetic, achieved by trusting artistic impulses. As Saldaña states, "ethnotheatrical artists don't necessarily heighten or skew reality through their imaginative writing and staging, but they seem to endow their productions with aesthetic forms that create hybrids of performative ontologies" (Saldaña, 2011, p.206). The genre and aesthetics of a piece, in this context, are the elements of 'conceptual infrastructure' that shape how a performance is received and interpreted by an audience (Hamera, 2013). They are therefore, potentially, a significant source of tension, and ripe for exploration.

The preceding sections have outlined an ontological and methodological position that draws from a number of perspectives but that converges towards a set of methods.
based around theatre-making as research. In the next section I discuss how these were enacted in multiple performances within the research design.

**Research Design**

“Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.” I.1:35

The theatre performance and immediate aftermath (including post-performance interviews) in January 2017 were the culmination of a 12-month fieldwork phase that began when I entered the research site in January 2016. The methods used fall broadly into two categories; conventional qualitative methods such as interviews and observation, and a series of theatre-based techniques employed with the objective of crafting theatre in collaboration with research participants. Some methods in the latter category, for example the playbuilding workshop, were designed as leadership development activities and, therefore, had both a research and development agenda. All methods were infused with principles of aesthetics or ABR, for example the dramatisation component in semi-structured interviews (see description below). The combination of these methods makes up an overall research design I will christen ‘organisational playmaking’, not to be confused with the specific activities of playbuilding and playback that took place half way through fieldwork. Organisational playmaking can be considered a hybrid of performance ethnography and OT. It is more collaborative, critical and research-led than OT, yet, due to a specific development focus on organisational change, it sits removed from what is typically considered performance ethnography or ethnodrama.

The various methods were woven together in an immersive, ethnographic research partnership with the NZ subsidiary of Toolzone, a global supplier to the construction industry. Every interaction and decision leading to the live staging of the theatre event
and workshop was treated as either an aspect of method or a data point. In the following sections I will document key methods, particularly the two most interactive components of Organisational playmaking, both of which became key development activities pertinent to later findings: the playbuilding workshop and the live performance. For clarity, I will structure my presentation of design processes according to Schreyogg’s six-step model for producing OT, shown below in figure one. An approximate timeline across which these methods were employed can be found in appendix five.

![Organisational Theatre Process](image_url)

**Figure One: Organisational Theatre Process (Schreyogg, 2001, p.6)**

*Commission*

In December 2015 a research partnership began between myself and Toolzone (New Zealand) Ltd. Toolzone met my criteria for a suitable research site in three ways. First, the organisation was ideal for longitudinal study in terms of size, location and access (Bryman, 2011) with almost three quarters of the approximately 80-strong workforce based in Auckland. Second, organisations in which other creative learning and development programmes have already been carried out seem to experience the greatest development impact (Badham et al., 2015; Barry & Meisiek, 2010; Boyle & Ottensmeyer, 2005; Carter, 2010) so openness to contemporary or radical development was deemed preferable. Toolzone had experience with collective painting and other arts-based techniques in orientation programmes, although never theatre. Finally, owing to the
unconventional methods I proposed to use, independence from any corporate management structure seemed important. I was confident from descriptions of other innovations that the NZ leadership team had the necessary subsidiary mandate to exercise decision-making autonomy concerning the project.

I met Les McNeill\(^9\), the General Manager (GM)\(^{10}\) of Toolzone when he enrolled on the MBA programme at the University of Auckland Business School. I approached him with the idea that Toolzone might become my research partner. As soon as I described my intentions, he simply said, "I love it". I emphasised the project would be research, not consulting, and that outcomes could not be guaranteed, but I also suggested that, due to my background in LD and the participatory nature of inquiry, there was likely to be a development component. I talked about the level of trust required, the 'leap of faith' that I needed my partner organisation to make with me, none which dampened Les’ enthusiasm. At the request of Toolzone, a contract for a fixed term of two years covered the research partnership. Following advice from a legal expert in the University Ethics Department the agreement was ratified on 22nd March, 2016.

**Entering Toolzone**

Evered and Louis (1981) claim that a researcher can come to understand the reality of an organisation through being fully "immersed in the stream of events and activities...becoming part of the phenomena of study" (p.389), what they call 'inquiry from the inside'. Such embeddedness helps to alleviate potential power asymmetries (Aitken, 2009) and is appropriate where the researcher needs to build trusting relationships and seeks to draw inferences from participants-contributed data (Butler-Kisber, 2010) . My entry into Toolzone took place on 3 February 2016 when, dressed in

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\(^{9}\) All Toolzone employees are referred to using pseudonyms in this thesis

\(^{10}\) Near the end of the fieldwork phase he became Managing Director (MD)
the same bright red shirt as others present, I attended the annual sales and marketing
conference. An extract from my research journal describes how I was introduced to the
group:

**Figure Two: Excerpts from research journal, 3 February, 2016, Kick-off
Conference**

The general manager opens proceedings. I have met him on a number of occasions. He is a slim,
wiry Scotsman with a small amount of short grey hair and sloping shoulders. His face is very
animated and he exudes energy. He talks about the new people who have joined the team.

He dwells on two people in particular: the first is the newly appointed head of logistics, an Indian
lady who was recruited from a position with Toolzone in India. He outlines the challenge that
faces her, and says she will be responsible for “3PL fixing”. Secondly, surprisingly, he focuses on
me, the last name on the list. He expresses his excitement about my project that uses theatre and
tells people that in a year’s time we will be watching a play about Toolzone. As he speaks, I stand
glancing around the room, trying to gauge reactions. Most faces are blank.

[He] continues by outlining the plan for the two-day conference, using the metaphor of a recipe.
He refers to a “transformation” the company needs to go through. “Cogs must turn to take
Toolzone from being a $20 million company to a $30 million and $50 million company”. He talks
about “pain”, “implosions” and announces “that’s why Leny is here - to look at the stupid stuff
we’re doing”.

Unlike some ethnographic studies, my research and I were made highly visible
within the organisation from the outset. This was no ‘fly on the wall’ investigation. Far
from being treated as a visiting observer, I was immediately woven in to the fabric and
future of Toolzone. I was ‘claimed’ as part of the ongoing work of the company, part of a
tightly knit team. The following week, I spent my first full day at Toolzone and, having
completed training modules, sent my own ’announcement' to all Toolzone NZ staff,
signing off with "I am very much looking forward to getting to know you all over the
coming months and becoming part of the Toolzone family". I signed off with the email
signature 'Independent Researcher – University of Auckland'. As we will see in a later
chapter, the tension between being ‘one of the family’ and being ‘independent’, inside
and outside, was a recurring motif within the research, one that warrants further empirical examination in terms of advancing both research and development practice.

Between February and May 2016 I attended other company events, including an induction for approximately 15 new staff entitled Our Culture Journey. The resounding metaphor I encountered was "am I on the bus?", a question designed to ensure personal values were aligned with those of the company - integrity, commitment, courage and teamwork. In the first six months, I spent approximately three full days a week at Toolzone, attending meetings, taking ‘field rides’ with sales staff, reading company documentation and communications, and interacting with members of the team.

**Exploration: Crafting Stories**

Interviews commenced in May 2016, three months after entry. Between 16 May and 14 June I carried out 38 face-to-face interviews in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington at a mutually convenient time during the working day. Each interview was audio recorded and later transcribed. Alvesson (2003a) highlights three major positions relating to interviewing: neopositivism, romanticism, and localism, the latter of which is best suited to a constructionist, co-operative inquiry. People produce situated accounts, rather than objective reports, and draw upon local, cultural resources, including the immediate social environment (Alvesson, 2003a). As rich insight was sought, and because I wanted to eliminate any information asymmetries or power imbalances as far as possible (Cassell, 2009), I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions in a conversational style (Kvale, 2015). Such an approach recognises the respondent’s active role in steering the interview. The purpose was to surface themes and subjective perceptions of everyday reality in order to begin generating material for the theatre production.
Barry observes “high levels of organized yet respectful questioning can help create a sense of safety during the beginning of an interview” (1996, p.420). I suspected the interview would be outside the ‘comfort zone’ for some, so I began with benign, straightforward questions such as "can you think of three words that describe Toolzone and then tell me about your choices". Mid-way through the interview, I asked participants to think of a time they had experienced a strong emotion concerned with work, and tell me about it. Many stunning stories emerged. But it was the final part of the interview that yielded the most compelling material. Participants were invited to offer responses in a dramatised or narrative form (Chase, 2011). I asked about their experience of theatre and then, explaining that I needed material for my play, I asked them to tell me a story using miniature blocks and figures from my daughter’s toy-box. I suggested they choose from two themes: something that made them proud to work for the organisation or; something that they wanted to change. A small number did both.

Styles of storytelling performance varied. Some participants, similar to those recognised by Boje (2006), told their story directly to me, succinctly, almost confrontationally, without embellishment, plot or linear coherence, expecting me to 'fill in the blanks'. Those who adopted this style occasionally ignored the toys altogether. Some created epic drama - long-winded and elaborate chronological journeys - personifying multiple characters with descriptive detail and moments of emotional intensity, imagining themselves on the miniature stage they created in the moment. Some were reticent, pausing frequently, struggling to find the right words, and some gazed wistfully into the mid-distance as they recalled details of the scenario they described. Those that wanted to tell two stories clearly enjoyed the imaginative experience. Figure three below shows the way two participants used the toys to tell their stories.
Figure Three: Two photographs taken at the end of the storytelling interviews with participants
Looking back at the transcripts, I note the 'instructions' given during early interviews were more repetitive than those in later sessions, suggesting I gained confidence as I progressed with the interviews. Later interviews are more conversational in general. The most striking element is that every person who agreed to be interviewed committed to the story-telling exercise, regardless of whether discomfort was expressed in their performance.

Dramatisation: Constructing the Play

There is a line of critique within OT that claims theatre-based interventions in organisations may support, rather than challenge, power imbalances and top-down leadership paradigms (Clark & Mangham, 2004a, 2004b; Meisiek, 2002). Wary of such comments, my hope was that the play would be co-created and owned by people across the organisation. It seemed desirable to create a space for ‘individual utterances’ and ‘expressions of otherness’ (Mabey, 2013) and avoid the bias towards consensus in development (see chapter one). I knew such a process would require in-depth, group sessions which I also suspected would have a learning and development outcome in themselves. Keen to understand the tensions around the performance of development and the role of the developer specifically, I sensed the collaborative construction of the play in the development space would be a central activity in data generation. The design of this component was, therefore, crucial. At first I imagined a series of six to eight 'rehearsals' at the UABS during weekday evenings, each with two or more different groups of approximately 10 people. For practical reasons, this was revised to an intensive two-day workshop in a dedicated off-site location. My best case scenario was that a group of 15 employees, demographically, geographically and functionally diverse, would volunteer for what I refer to as the ‘playbuilding workshop’. In reality, I had to find ways to attract
people, such as the promise of social time and a ‘day in lieu’ for hours worked during the weekend. The final delegation of 13 was almost a direct representation of the company, with a proportional mix of gender, ethnicity, seniority and functional department.

Having secured commitment from participants, I used my experience as a developer and theatre-maker to craft a flexible and deliberately open-ended programme. I used techniques developed by Augusto Boal (1989), Joe Norris (2009), Clive Barker (2010) and Keith Johnstone (1999) for the ‘creative’ component. The resultant devising process referred to as the ‘playbuilding workshop’ was rooted in principles of TfD and other forms of AT where the activity is framed as research with, as opposed to for or to participants (Denzin, 2009). The role of participant was added to my already hybrid persona of researcher-developer-artist. In what became our own ‘dialogic forum’ (Grant & Wolfram Cox, 2017), my fellow participants were invited to collectively interpret existing data from the project, generating further themes, ideas and dialogue that would shape the theatrical performance at the culmination of the fieldwork phase. The main data generated in the workshop were, thus, the lived experiences (Richardson, 1997) and stories contributed by participants. In a ‘critical action learning’ process seen by Raelin (2008) as central to emancipatory development (see chapter one), this ‘grassroots knowledge’ was accessed, reflected upon, and translated into dramatised vignettes that would ultimately become scenes in the production.

The workshop took place at an eco-lodge in a forest in West Auckland on a cold weekend in July. Full-group sessions were conducted in a canvas yurt. There were 15 chairs, one whiteboard, an electric heater and a pile of yoga mats. Games were played throughout the two days, not only to energise and focus, but to build connection and collective ownership of the development space and process. Activities on day one were
designed to generate themes, characters and scenarios that would address the current challenges of leadership and culture at Toolzone and the first session was structured around collective storytelling. Gabriel and Connell (2010) explain the disappointment of co-authors in a collective story-telling exercise. Participants in their study felt others spoiled a good storyline when all sense drained from it. The authors observed that insufficient ‘active listening’ was taking place. Some contributors reintroduced themes that had democratically been discarded by the group, suggesting a kind of disobedient arrogance. I spotted the same tendency from certain group members who attempted to sabotage exercises with overly complicated or entertaining ideas. One participant admitted to trying to control proceedings:

Margaret: I found myself thinking ahead, and it wouldn't go where I was thinking it was going (laughs)

The whole group laughs

Leny: So what happened?

Margaret: Well somebody changed it. Like I would be thinking one thing, that the story was leading this way (she is using her whole body and arms to show the flow of the story and looking at the whole group as she does it) and somebody else would lead it that way.

Leny: And how did that make you feel?

Margaret: Frustrated! (laughs and the whole group laughs. She sits back in her chair and folds her arms smiling) like, "no no no, that's not the story!"

The next section was devoted to generating themes for the play, some of which led into vibrant discussions about leadership and culture at Toolzone. There were moments of tension and defensiveness, particularly around the area of integration. I asked for a label that could describe the issues raised - the group came up with ‘on-boarding’ which was written up on a large sheet of paper entitled ‘themes’, and attached to the wall. The group produced many such ‘graffiti sheets’ listing themes, characters, lines of dialogue and story summaries. Periodically, we paused for a few minutes of individual reflection, in which participants would jot down thoughts on post-it notes and attach them
to appropriate sheets around the room. At the end of each session, we spent a few minutes silently perusing these, allocating gold stars to points each of us most wanted to retain for the production. I called these reflection activities ‘golden nuggets’.

Towards the end of the first morning, 34 anonymised statements taken from interview data were used as the starting point for an exercise that used embodiment and vocalisation to generate first individual, then group Image Theatre (Boal, 1989). Two of the static images created by the group, and the phrases they were based upon, are shown below in figure four.

Figure Four: Image Theatre exercise based on interview statements conducted during playbuilding workshop, July 2016

“A wall of frustration”
“You have got the support and the team behind you”

Next, these ‘freeze frames’ were developed into vignettes, or short scenes that could be linked together into a story line. In a group discussion after these were performed, four characters were created to represent the fictional organisation for the play. They were: a newly recruited customer service representative named Bruno; the top salesman, Beau Williams; a customer, Rob Anton and; a long-standing member of the finance team, Wendy. Working in different groups this time, the participants spent most of the afternoon fleshing out the details of these representative people. Each character was then presented back, with surprisingly rich description, and the group discussed whether any attributes needed amending. An example of a character summary sheet is shown below in figure five.
The first day ended with the final ‘golden nugget’ exercise and a spontaneous discussion that precipitated some reflections around the process:

Michael: I think it has been really good in regards to dragging out from us the things that we think fundamentally need to change. Or could be improved. And those things need to be transcended in the acting....So people are going away thinking “how do I play a part in that?”, “how can I do something personally differently that could affect change?” Because it’s up to us as individuals to change, if there’s something that needs to change within the organisation. It’s not just about the upper.

Stefan: I think it’s been a good, constructive day, and there’s been some real life examples of what we deal with on a day to day basis portrayed, not only in this environment but even just talking about it – the accounts that have been put on the walls. And the bi-product is going to be a raw account of Toolzone’s state of play, here and now. People might go “wow, is that how it really is – shit I’ve been in a real bubble” but that’s what drama is, I suppose. It sort of hits you right in the face.


**Playback in Playbuilding**

On the second day of the playbuilding workshop, members of Auckland Playback Theatre came to work with the characters and stories created by the group. Playback theatre provides a space for "affirmation and collective remembrance" (Rowe, 2007, p.15) and has links to psychodrama (Moreno, 1972). It developed in the 1970s amidst three social and cultural trends characteristic of the post-modern condition (Lyotard, 1997). These were; a distrust of grand narratives and increasing preference for localised accounts, the blurring of the lines between fiction and truth and, an increasing fascination with ordinary people and their lives (Rowe, 2007). The purpose of playback is to promote a “radical social encounter” (Fox, 2009). A group of actors improvise a ‘teller’s’ personal narrated account, opening up a story to “multiple levels of reflexivity so that performers, spectators and teller can see its ‘workings’ – that they can view how it is represented and so how it might be represented differently” (Rowe, 2007).

Playback can focus the aesthetic sensibility of a story. It allows an audience to appreciate both the way actors embody different perspectives and capture ‘moments’ dramatically, but also the way the telling of the story can impact deeply on its interpretation. Playback exposes the deep listening, improvisation and ensemble capabilities essential in the creative process and I felt it offered potential for a powerful learning experience. I had concerns that the improvisational form might be alienating for some Toolzone participants, although I noted in my research journal that it may have been ‘good for them’ to feel outside their comfort zone. On reflection, this has obvious connotations of the deficit model mentioned in chapter one and the question of whether developers can or should determine what is ‘good for’ participants. The playback actors seemed to sense the discomfort and chose to begin their performance with simple
reflection exercises to represent real moments from participants’ lives, a practice that helped bridge the space between actor and spectator. Each of the four Toolzone participant groups working on a character-led story then presented their narrative to the actors. They included character details and moments of tension. The actors played the stories back sequentially. After each performance, as a crucial part of playback, there was an opportunity for the tellers to comment on how things should have been done differently. As a ‘radical encounter’, the playback session (photographed below in figure six) appeared to help participants appreciate the different levels of framing required in participatory drama, and resulted in nearly two hours of riotous laughter and introspective engagement.

Figure Six: Playback actors performing one of the Toolzone stories during the playbuilding workshop
At the end of the second day of playbuilding, I asked for quick-fire feedback around the circle, which revealed some stirring comments, some of which link to the tensions around control and distance encountered in chapters one and two:

Kyle: I think the main thing for me was understanding that everyone has their own frustrations. And... understanding to a higher extent what each department goes through. You know, you have got both sides of the coin and we might not have the answer now. We might not even have the answer until after the play, but it helps you empathise.

Bea: I think this is a good chance for us to gather together and look at ourselves as a team. Because each of us plays a part in the big picture. It is good to understand the picture, and to understand each other more. Also, how we can move forward from this.

Tim: There have been some really open and frank discussions and hopefully we can all take something away from it and actually start to grow and move forward. Take the blinkers off.

Joss: No matter what role you have in the company, everyone has their own battles to fight, every single day. Everyone’s got their frustrations, everyone’s got their battles. It’s not just one person in the company it’s everyone.

Kyle: You wouldn’t get answers like this, you wouldn’t find out things like this if you sat all of us around a boardroom table and someone goes, “hey can you tell me about the company and your frustrations”.

These comments suggest that while generating data for this research project, participants were also experiencing insight and value deriving from a collective and process-based approach to LD, as discussed in chapter one. They were beginning to ask the ‘how can we...’ questions suggested towards the end of the tussle around individual vs. collective development in chapter one. The collective processes that emerged in the playbuilding workshop are themselves variations on a theme of arts-based inquiry that include the making, illustration of essence and projective techniques highlighted by Taylor and Ladkin (2009). They are directly connected to tensions experienced in a management meeting shortly afterward that is depicted and discussed in chapter four, hence their coverage in such detail.
From Story to Plot - Writing Drama as Analysis

Gooch (1988) believes everything in a play must be built around what he calls the 'idea' which may be a phrase, a feeling, an object, a story or even an image. The plot will then follow a course that reflects the idea and would usually include a protagonist, an inciting incident, a climax, a major turning point and an open or closed ending (Gooch, 1988). Key moments or events in the plot can then be identified by working backwards from the climax, repeatedly asking 'what happens immediately before that', so that the action proceeds with a kind of inevitability, like a chain of dominoes.

To establish some initial possibilities that might inform the ‘idea’ behind this play, I had already carried out a first coding cycle with interview data prior to playbuilding, using both content analysis and dramaturgical techniques (Saldaña, 2013). In a second cycle after the workshop, I experimented with different coding approaches (‘in vivo’, process, emotion, dramaturgical and narrative) (Saldaña, 1999) with which to analyse the whole data corpus, which now included interview, observation and playbuilding data of various kinds. I opted for holistic and descriptive coding, a kind of thematic analysis, in which I identified the high-level subject of each ‘chunk’, and then the attitude each participant took towards it. I used ‘pattern coding’ to form the ‘meta-code’ and link similarly coded data into categories, providing structure to the data corpus (Saldaña, 2013). With the ‘meta-code’ created, sections of interview transcript were then re-contextualised against my own categories (Tesch, 1990) in order to converge upon the singular dramatic ‘idea’ that would act as the foundation for the play (Gooch, 1988). I
gave this the deliberately paradoxical title, ‘Collaborative Autonomy’, to reflect the leadership tensions and stories that had emerged\textsuperscript{11}.

When faced with how to craft a sequence of action, or plot, around this idea, I was in the unusual, sometimes constraining, position of having had characters, themes, context and fragments of dialogue already created during playbuilding. My challenge was to bring these together dramaturgically and assemble a script that would connect the different narrative elements. I had to decide what ‘treatment’ to give the massive amount of text generated through the fieldwork. Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1995) faced a similar conundrum: they knew the text needed refinement, yet they wanted to preserve the true voices of the participants rather than subject the material to over-interpretation. They landed upon the solution ‘scripting as coding’, in which a coding process is used to construct a theatre script. As a non-linear method, analysis often takes place at the same time as data generation, for example, identifying possible lines of dialogue while transcribing video recordings and writing analytic memos. I blended a third coding cycle within a scripting as coding process with ‘writing as inquiry’ (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005) to craft an initial script. The production of copious analytic memos was valuable in this process.

I assigned each of the pre-determined characters a stance on the idea of collaborative autonomy that would guide the moments of conflict in the story arc. They also had a personal struggle related to one of the sub-themes from within the data corpus. For example: Bruno’s story was about the challenges of on-boarding new team members – he supported the concept of ‘collaborative autonomy’ introduced by the new GM; Sales manager Paul wanted to help his team achieve their best performance but was trapped

\textsuperscript{11} While not central to the findings of this research, further information regarding the ‘idea’, characters and stories in the play may be found in appendix seven.
against the ‘wall of frustration’ created by process compliance (see figure four above) – he was openly sceptical but ultimately begrudgingly supportive of ‘collaborative autonomy’. I added three further characters to flesh out the fictional company I called ‘Drillset’. The result was a group of composite characters (Saldaña, 2011) that had recognisable features. Although none was a direct imitation of an actual participant, chapter five discusses how certain characters were more familiar than others and the responses to such aesthetic choices.

The playbuilding workshop had already generated sections of dialogue with sufficient escalating tension or conflict to drive action (Saldaña, 2011). At the end of it, my PhD supervisor and co-facilitator for the second day, Peter, led an exercise of ‘silent negotiation’ to create a negotiated narrative (Gabriel & Connell, 2010). Once they have their research material, ethnodramatists blend fact and fiction in order to craft plausible dialogue. My approach was to begin with these negotiated narratives and flesh them out into scenes involving two or more of the characters the group had created. Some ethnodramatists use participants’ own words in the dramatic script, a form known as verbatim (Anderson, 2015). Indeed, whole plays have been constructed this way, prompting the well-known theatre director Max Stafford Clark to comment "What a verbatim play does is flash your research nakedly. It's like cooking a meal but the meat is left raw" (Saldaña, 2011, p.11)\textsuperscript{12}. Verbatim practice bestows a particular ethical responsibility upon the researcher-dramatist. They must select what to include and what to omit, stripping away 'verbal debris' in order to give a transcript aesthetic shape (Saldaña, 2011), whilst retaining respect and integrity for the voices of participants (Anderson, 2015). In this research, I used both dialogue generated in playbuilding and comments made during interviews and informal conversations within Toolzone. This

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{12} More than one audience member later used the word ‘raw’ to describe the final production in this research}
tension around ensuring a faithful representation of the voices of the project (Oswick, Anthony, Keenoy, Mangham, & Grant, 2000) is picked up again in chapter four. As Saldaña notes:

I have yet to read any backstage, behind-the-scenes account by any ethnodramatic playwright that did not make some mention of struggling about what to leave in, what to leave out, tweaking the verbatim text, creating composite characters, fictionalising to some degree, and so on. Such tensions are not anomalies but givens of the ethnotheatrical enterprise. The resolution is not to shy away from these matters but how you deal with them (Saldaña, 2011, p.40).

Ethnodramatists must also pay special consideration to the risk of participants being identified through their use of language (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010). To avoid this risk, one option is to blend the depiction of real participants into hybrid, or composite, characters. I did this by amalgamating transcripts and paraphrasing to protect individual identities. Narratives risk being diluted, but messages potentially become clearer. To bring additional humour and parody to the skeleton script, I found dialogic ways to emphasise similarities, for example ‘DING DONG’ was used to lampoon an actual term used at Toolzone – ‘HONKS’ – which celebrated exceptional performance. Toolzone had its own vernacular which I mimicked with my own terminology, sometimes in order to elicit cheap laughs. ‘FFS training and WTF reports’ were used, for example, to illustrate the addiction to acronyms within the real organisation. ‘Excel 2020’ was the Drillset version of ‘Champion 2020’ – a recently launched strategy for Toolzone global. The annual ‘kick-off’ conference became ‘lift-off’. A full synopsis of the play may be found in appendix six.

_Mise en Scene: Bringing Grillset to Life_

In the previous section I looked at the construction of the play _At What Cost_ as a set of data generation and analysis methods. ‘Mise en Scene’ follows this construction, or dramatisation, and involves the staging of the production. In a staged presentation, non-
verbal elements of action and scenography - the setting, costumes, props and the use of multimedia - can be as important as words in the audience experience. While many of the decisions and processes for these aspects of staging took place externally to Toolzone, most were influenced in some way by participants. They may, thus, be considered important aspects of ‘method’ in terms of the tensions that informed and resulted from them, discussed further in chapters four, five and six. Each staging decision was taken from a perspective that combined the interests of my hybrid persona (researcher-developer-artist). It is not necessary to document every production value. In the next sections, however, I will document some of those that carry through into later data analysis.

**Production Values and Choices**

**Space**

The choice to stage *At What Cost* in a 1929 'atmospheric theatre' of international significance in the centre of Auckland, was made, with the MD’s endorsement, by the Marketing and HR managers of Toolzone. They wanted the audience to dress up for a ‘Night at the Theatre’, arriving to red carpets, ushers in traditional waistcoats, champagne, and popcorn. Theatre buildings convey a sense of occasion to a performance, but they also provoke certain aesthetic expectations. I had a simpler ‘black box’ theatre space in mind, with options for adventurous staging choices. I wanted the audience to be intrigued, not dazzled. Whilst I bowed to Toolzone’s venue selection, I argued against the distractions of alcohol and snacks, making the point that this was theatre for change, not just entertainment. At the performance, banners appeared with the words 'Theatre of Learning' suggesting my intent had been registered. This title has since been used for
materials designed in-house by Toolzone that describe the project to internal and external stakeholders.

**Media technology**

Media can establish mood and messages in theatre. Images projected onto a screen can easily shift the location of the action, without the need for complicated scene changes. Words can be projected to help link the action, for example in covering lapses of time. They can also, as Brecht observed, provide distance through framing. In the performance of *At What Cost* projection was used to display header images for e-mail messages distributed to the whole company that were voiced during scene changes. It was both a technique to break the action, as ‘periodic reminders’ of the ‘make-believe’ (Goffman, 1986), and an attempt to parody the overwhelming amount of email traffic I observed in Toolzone. In boardroom scenes, the screen doubled as the display of PowerPoint images the group discussed within the action.

**Lighting**

The primary function of lighting in the theatre is to ensure that the audience can see what is happening, but it can also be an important design element drawing attention to aspects of the action. I was limited by the facilities, but wanted to use lighting to enhance the theatrical aesthetic. I worked with a professional lighting designer who applied different lighting states so that more intimate sections of dialogue were tightly focused, whereas action involving the whole cast was brightly lit. There were additional, distinct lighting states for scene changes and musical numbers, both of which reflected the colour of the costumes and set. During the performance, the auditorium was in darkness, but people could see one another as their faces reflected the lights from the stage. This
became an important feature of the audience experience as, like Hamlet in his famous ‘play within a play’, they were able to watch the watcher.

**Sound and music**

Sounds, like smells and tastes, have the power to transport, to stimulate strong, physical, sometimes unconscious reactions. Wanting to immerse participants within the action, I had intentions of using ambient noise to reflect an office environment. In the event, the practicalities became insurmountable. To add a small detail of authenticity, I did insist on a phone ring and a single 'ping' sound effect to signify the arrival of an e-mail.

Conscious of my audience’s lack of theatregoing experience, I chose to play upbeat, recognisable pop music as they entered the auditorium and to reflect the mood during scene changes. The only use of recorded music within a scene was for the first entry of the villain character, the egocentric salesman, in scene three. I wanted his entry to be extremely dramatic so he entered through the audience, interacting with them in a jovial way as the opening bars of *Working Class Man* by Jimmy Barnes played loudly. The music to accompany the songs was performed live by a pianist, using an electronic keyboard with its own amplification.

**Costumes**

Until the recent move to the corporate headquarters, every employee at Toolzone wore the same red shirt with logo embroidered over the breast pocket, except on Fridays. Since the move to corporate HQ the dress code for support staff was relaxed, but there was still a strong red motif throughout the building which I wanted to parallel in my production. Tempted for a while to use surplus red Toolzone shirts with a replaced logo, I
later became concerned about direct associations and made the decision to use a different colour running through the production. Blue shirts in a similar style as those used by Toolzone were made and actors supplied the standard accompaniments befitting their character.

**Cast**

Actors, above all, can make or break a performance, not only on the day, but in their attitude and preparation throughout the rehearsal period. Although some ethnodrama projects are performed by the participants themselves, most ethnodramatists agree that it is perhaps even more important than with fictional theatre to employ experienced professionals. In depicting actual people, or characters blended from actual people, there is a necessary ethic of responsibility to the authentic portrayal of participants’ perspectives and emotions (Saldaña, 2011). I chose to hold public auditions and, after several ‘recalls’ cast six actors with a mixed level of experience but all with some degree of training and previous professional experience. They were contracted for one full-day rehearsal each week for six weeks and four consecutive evenings during production week, including the performance.

**Direction**

Even with non-fiction theatre, with the emphasis on personal story, rather than spectacle, the director needs a strong vision and the capacity to explore all the creative possibilities to engage with the audience in performance (Saldaña, 2011). Ideally, playwright and director should be separate, and work collaboratively together during the rehearsal process to hone the script, without ego. Practically, in ethnodrama, playwright and director are often one and the same, and it can be difficult to step back and assess where the script might be improved. This was certainly the case with my project as I was
playwright, director, producer and composer/lyricist during the production phase. In the final week before the performance, my supervisor, Peter, and a renowned musical theatre expert, Craig Christie, attended rehearsals and offered suggestions that would make the performance more powerful. Whilst it was uncomfortable to make changes at the time, I knew that their outside consideration was a gift and I am certain their comments enhanced the aesthetic of the performance.

**Performance: Staging Dramatised Data**

A performance of ethnotheatre acts not only as the dissemination of findings, but as a data generation and analysis method itself. Many performances are interactive, encouraging audience participation or interruption and almost all involve some degree of discussion immediately afterwards. The performance itself is "temporal and ephemeral" (Saldaña, 1999, p.68) and yet the after-effects can be profound and long-lasting (Schreyogg & Hopfl, 2004). During the performance, processes identified by OT scholars come into effect: second-order observation (Schreyogg, 2001), ‘unfreezing’ (S. S. Taylor, 2008), psychological safety through the social sharing of emotion (Meisiek, 2003) and, possibly, catharsis (Meisiek, 2004). The performance is a consciousness-raising device, a starting point to galvanise collective sense-making, which can be channelled into a wider change process through follow up activities.

The performance of *At What Cost* began at 3:30 PM on Saturday, 21 January 2017. It was a 45-minute musical theatre production staged before a live audience of approximately 80 Toolzone employees plus invited guests. Depicting a parallel reality centred on a fictional organisation (Drillset), the play both mirrored and inverted aspects of the audience’s world. It evoked the attitude of carnival (Prentki, 2012), in which the

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13 Les invited approximately 20 business leaders and media to attend the performance and there were around 10 audience members from the University of Auckland invited by myself.
world is turned upside-down, and the bureaucratic monologue is drowned out by a polyphony of voices in dialogue with each other (Bakhtin, 1984a). The multiple voices I had heard in the course of my data generation were woven into the intertwining stories of the play. Music and comedy helped provide the light and shade within the story and each character experienced their own emotional journey that reflected one of the core themes raised during the research. As a piece of ethnotheatre (Saldaña, 2011), much of the dialogue was lifted from individual interviews or skits created during playbuilding. The songs were written around statements made either by participants as themselves, or in role during the workshop. Finance Manager Wendy’s solo, for example, entitled Them and Us, was based on a comment made during the first round of interviews. The audience laughed in most of the places I expected them to, and some I did not, and there were moments of complete stillness during intimate and emotional scenes. I sat on the edge of my seat the entire time and breathed a huge sigh of relief when the closing music began and the stage lights went down.

**Follow Up: Reviewing and Writing**

**Post-performance workshop**

When the performance was over, my supervisor, Peter, and I co-facilitated a learning and development workshop based on the instant reactions of the audience to the play. This was a deliberate attempt to meet Brecht’s requirement that “he who is showing should himself be shown” (1964, p.45). It also allowed the spectators to take a more active role in what happened next. First, they were invited to participate in an initial quick-fire reflection exercise in pairs. The next request was to write responses to questions on four flip charts positioned around the room. The questions, designed to stimulate collective critical consciousness (Raelin, 2008), were: "How did the
performance make you feel?”, "What did the performance make you think?”, "What questions about Toolzone, work or yourself did it make you ask?” and, "What would you change about what you saw to make it more like Toolzone?". In the next part of the post-performance workshop, the six actors were asked to remain ‘in role’ so that audience members had a chance to quiz them on the action of the play. The largest number of people gathered with the actor who played the character Beau, the aggressive salesman. Amanda and Bruno attracted sizeable groups but only a few clustered around Paul, Jason and Wendy. Each actor was accompanied by a facilitator from the University, and in a report from them afterwards, they noted many people "holding back", choosing their words carefully in discussion with the actors. At one point, the conversation around Beau became quite heated, and some of the facilitators later commented how upset people had been after the performance.

Peter called the whole group back to the main rows of seats for a final debrief that began with each facilitator reporting on the conversations with actors. Most observed a range of views among the group where people had identified with characters, but also noticed the differences between characters and the real people within Toolzone. Participants then had an opportunity to ask myself and the actors any questions about the production. Peter wrapped up the workshop component by observing a 'generosity of spirit' demonstrated by everyone at Toolzone "taking Leny in". MD Les closed proceedings and my supervisors and I joined the Toolzone team for a drink before their dinner event commenced.

**Questionnaire, post-performance interviews and report**

In an effort to ‘corroborate’ interpretations (Dey, 1993), and to give people a chance to reflect, I sent an online questionnaire to all employees two weeks after the
performance. As response rates were low at only 17 of a possible 80+ audience members, within the next fortnight I conducted another 18 interviews. This time there was no structure: I simply asked people to tell me what they thought, and followed their improvised responses with further prompts and questions. There were strong reactions, such as Margaret who felt "you could have had people lose their jobs over that" and Ozzie who, when asked what could be changed said, "no, I actually think everything was perfect".

Part of the agreement between Toolzone and myself was that I would prepare a report of ‘interim findings’ following the intervention part of the research. I had promised this in the knowledge that my full thesis would take many more months to construct and publish. I wanted Toolzone to have something they could reflect on in the meantime. The report took the form of a PowerPoint presentation delivered at a management meeting in March 2017. It included my own reflections on the process along with comments I had received through the survey and interviews conducted since the performance.

**Exit - preparing to write**

The phased transition from ‘the field’ back into my personal zone of reflection and analysis began after the main theatrical performance. Many scholars write as though a researcher simply ‘returns’ to their previous life unchanged. For me, this was not possible as my immersion was both deep and prolonged. Between September 2016 and January 2017 the research had focused on producing the theatre event. The frequency of my visits to Toolzone had reduced, although it temporarily increased immediately after the performance to allow me to gauge responses. After delivering my interim report to the EMT in March 2017 I withdrew further and did not enter the Toolzone premises again until September 2017, although I had regular contact with Les and the HR Manager over
email. In this post-field-work phase, documentation processes such as visualisation using spatial diagrams allowed me to gain cognitive ownership over the data, precipitating intuitive synthesis. Following Dey’s (1993) advice to read and re-read the entire data corpus before committing the metaphorical pen to paper, I developed a process of reflective reading that involved integration, assimilation, retention and recall, and extensive annotation. I wrote analytic memos and practiced 'shoptalk' with my husband, helping me to articulate what I was noticing about the data (Saldaña, 2013), including patterns and interrelationships (Saldaña, Leavy, & Beretvas, 2011). Though numerous data points enabled a form of triangulation, I was cautious to look for interactions and affect as “reverberative connections” (Saldaña, 2013, p.92) rather than imposing positivist relationships such as cause and effect.

This kind of interaction analysis is geared towards assertion development, a process of seeking plausibility around observations made regarding the “local and particular social world under investigation” (Saldaña et al., 2011, p. 120). As I mined the data for key moments of action, I leaned heavily on Goffman’s dramaturgical and performance analysis (1959, 1961, 1967, 1969, 1986). I made 'observer comments', some dramatised, to organise my interpretations. After many months of teasing out local meaning, I felt ready to translate some of these insights into the ‘impressionist tale’ (Van Maanen, 1988) that would eventually become my thesis.

**Ethical Dilemmas**

Having reviewed the guiding methodology and the detailed processes of data generation and analysis, in the last section of this chapter I touch on the ethical challenges faced in the many performances constructed during fieldwork. In emergent arts-based research it is almost impossible to anticipate the variety of ethical issues that may be
confronted. Nevertheless, in the case of procedural ethics, I followed the guidelines of the University of Auckland, and when ethically important moments (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004) were encountered and the appropriate judgment was unclear, I sought the advice of my supervisors.

Impact on participants was the most crucial ethical consideration. The obvious way to reduce risk to participants is to operate with informed consent and protect identities. Where interview and observation data were concerned this was relatively straightforward. All statements included in the interim report and thesis were either left anonymous or assigned to a pseudonym. All participants were given an information sheet that explained how their contributions would be treated confidentially and were asked to sign a consent form before commencing any interaction. These measures were sufficient to disguise the identity of participants to external readers and observers. There were, however, two cases where the preservation of anonymity was more challenging.

First, in the playbuilding workshop, all participants agreed to uphold confidentiality within the group. One of the characters collaboratively developed for the fictional play, Wendy, bore a striking resemblance to a real person in Toolzone, in appearance, job title and behavioural attributes. Because the real employee, Margaret, was present in playbuilding and actively involved in the construction of the character, I made the difficult decision to retain Wendy for the performance. As discussed more fully in chapter five, the tensions around this choice yield some important considerations for developers. In this case, however, despite my initial uncertainty, no negative impact on participants appears to have been caused.

The second case in which identity was difficult to protect was when including Les in my thesis. As my key contact in Toolzone, he features in the entire narrative of this
project, and his position, behaviour and comments are important in my analysis. Anyone who was part of the research process would recognise the real person from my descriptions, despite names being changed. As it happened, the ‘real Les’ was keen to promote the ongoing association between the ‘real Toolzone’ and the University of Auckland.

Identity protection is one way to ‘do right’ by participants and minimise the power of the singular ‘knowing mind’ over participant. There are, however, other forms of individual power held and utilised by the ethnodramatist embedded in the work. The presence of an author's active voice in an ‘impressionist tale’ is one potential manifestation of such power. The subjective nature of ABR means that absolute truth or authenticity in representation is a fallacy and being faithful to stories is made more difficult with diversity of participation, so, as described earlier in this chapter, an ethnodramatist must make choices, and in doing so, exercise power. My decision to include myself as narrator, and active participant in the research story, was guided by a critical reflexivity (Cunliffe, 2002a; Richardson, 1990; Van Maanen, 1988). Like any scholar, I was subject to personal bias, whether conscious or unconscious (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010), but I made efforts to critically question each decision or assumption as it unfolded, with the help of a reflective journal.

It is the goal of the ethnographic researcher to ask unsettling questions in dialogue with subjects (Van Maanen, 1988). It is only through a commitment to critical theory, self reflexivity and a disciplined grasp of the aesthetics within each situation, though, that ethical errors may be avoided. Alvesson and Spicer (2012) urge researchers to use circumspect care - understanding that all interview material can and should be reflexively challenged especially that of managers who may have a poor understanding of the
situation. Conquergood (1982) describes four specific ethical errors within ethnography specifically according to their performative stance towards ‘the other’. They include the ethical sins of selfish plunder, over-emphasis on ‘wow factor’ or sensationalism and a detached nihilism. His proposed solution, dialogical performance, acts as a moral centre and pulls together “mutually opposed energies that become destructive only when they are vented without the counterbalancing pull of their opposite” (p.9). In short, performance ethnographers should play with the opposite forces around identity and commitment within an intimate conversation that respects other people and cultures (Conquergood, 1982). Even though some might argue that my work did not constitute traditional performance ethnography, these principles became important during my research.

Part of reaching a moral centre is taking time to fully appreciate the ethnographic site, in my case becoming deeply immersed and undergoing prolonged observation in Toolzone NZ. Only by spending sufficient time inside the company, both during important occasions and day-to-day interactions, could I recognise that which would faithfully and respectfully portray the company and participants on stage. It also helped avoid weighting the content of the play towards material that would be provocative or newsworthy. I felt a strong responsibility to honour my participants in the dramatisation of their world. Clearly in the moment of performance, power is shared with the audience (participants) as they engage in their own discretionary interpretation. Additionally, in my case, the playbuilding group created the characters, themes and parts of dialogue that would appear in the story. This amounted to a different ethical responsibility: that of ensuring the playbuilding participants were not blamed by their colleagues for what occurred during the performance. Hamera discusses the importance of an aesthetic appreciation in performance ethnography, emphasising that the researcher must "know
the unique conventions, standards of taste, genres, and techniques circulating, however implicitly, within her site" (2013, p.212). My own aesthetic awareness helped me to exercise judgement about what would be acceptable to the Toolzone audience and how best I could mitigate against individual participants’ culpability. I discuss in depth the ways ‘distance’ was created, partly to protect participants, in chapter five.

Also of concern in the consideration of impact on participants was the amount of time required of them to participate. Involvement seemed far more onerous to some employees than others, particularly the customer services team. I was careful to undertake interviews and observation as efficiently as possible out of respect for their time, always checking comfort levels with participants if it looked like the session may take longer than originally planned. Although I had wished it to be, attendance at the performance was not entirely voluntary as it was scheduled as one of the activities of the annual conference. As Neelands (2000) notes, compulsory attendance can make the theatre convention harder to secure. In live media, however, audience members are never passive recipients; they can vote with their feet\textsuperscript{14}. I did not want anyone to walk out although, due to the norms of Toolzone, it would have been unlikely. It was important, therefore, to prepare the audience for what they would see, so they could take responsibility for their reactions and responses (Saldaña, 2011). I address the nature of such framing in more detail in chapters five and six.

\textsuperscript{14} Or make a formal complaint – which did not happen in this case
CHAPTER FOUR:

THE NEGOTIATION OF AMBIGUITY

“Idle old man, that still would manage those authorities that he hath given away!” I.3:17-18

In chapter one I argued that the tensions of development cannot be fully explored without due consideration of the role the developer plays in co-constructing and negotiating development conditions. In chapter two I proposed that development itself is a collective performance. Chapter three described how the specific performance of a ‘play within a play’ at the heart of this research was enacted. This is the first of two chapters that examine empirical material. Each is designed to progress the two claims made in chapters one and two and unpack the tensions encountered in the performance of development. This chapter focuses on the performances of negotiation that take place between developers and organisational stakeholders, particularly commissioners. In it, I identify two key tensions in the performances of organisational influencers; ambiguity of control, and ambiguity of intentionality. I then look at the performances of the developer in relation to these expressions of tension in negotiation. The subsequent chapter highlights tensions arising in the co-constructed performance of the development intervention itself. In both chapters, I use elements of dramaturgical analysis to isolate and analyse tensions encountered during critical points in the research, drawing parallels with the tussles of LD and the tensions around aesthetics and instrumentality identified in chapters one and two respectively.
Both data chapters open with a vignette that forms the basis for the ensuing analysis. Other fragments of empirical material are then spliced in to support or extend emerging assertions. Each vignette is an ethnodrama (Saldaña, 2003). Vignette 1 is dramatised using my personal field notes taken following a meeting inside Toolzone. That meeting discussed the progress of the project and, specifically, the July playbuilding workshop retreat, given the colloquial name ‘Kum Ba Yah’ by Toolzone employees. Vignette 2 is verbatim (Saldaña, 2003), meaning the verbalised text is a direct reproduction of the actual performance transcript, with only character names altered. Both have stage directions inserted as applicable to create a more holistic experience for the reader, and both include sections of ‘inner monologue’ (reflections registered during the interaction and recorded shortly after) shown in a different font. Following playwrighting convention, when presenting and deconstructing the dramatised data, which I conceive as performance texts, I write in the present tense and use the third person (referring to the artist-developer character Leny). When stepping back to draw inferences or analytic reflections, I mainly transition to the past tense, using my own ‘researcher’ voice.

Vignette 1: “KUM BA YAH CRISIS”

Early August 2016. The boardroom in a corporate office. A light wood table is surrounded by contemporary chairs with bright red cushions, occupied by the seven members of the Toolzone NZ executive management team (EMT), and Leny, a Ph.D. student at the University of Auckland commissioned to carry out an experimental development programme. Phones, laptops and coffee cups litter the table and there is a sense that this group has been in discussion for some time. As the discussion around the previous agenda item draws to a close, Les nods towards Leny and, with an open-hand gesture, ‘gives her the floor’.
LENY  
(to Les) Thank you. (to everyone) Les thought I should speak to you all today because we are at the stage where we need commitment. Basically, I need you guys to give me the green light so I can work towards a performance at kick-off in February. (She glances around at everybody, checking they are all with her, and proceeds)

I am anointed, granted an audience to beg support. I muster authority and clutch at my unique position as trusted adviser to Les. Using his name, I pull rank and make a thinly veiled threat, indicating that, though they have the power to curtail my research, should they do so, they will be going against his wishes.

The idea of the play is accountability, taking self-responsibility within a culture of high-performance. When I carried out the interviews several participants talked of frustration where people complained about others not doing their job properly, and it struck me this was at odds with the direction the company is going - this supposed shift from efficiency to autonomy. The story takes place in a company called Drillset (there are giggles from the group) and follows a new female GM who comes in and finds a culture of blame and resistance (raised eyebrows and furtive glances around the table). It's about her challenges trying to steer the culture towards collaborative leadership. Other themes from my research such as work-life balance come into it, as well as diversity and on-boarding. It's a fictional company, but there'll be lots of parallels with Toolzone. I haven't decided yet whether to use actual red shirts or a different colour like blue. I want people to recognise aspects of themselves, but I want it to be funny and I want to celebrate some of the great things about Toolzone so it doesn't end up being a downer.
I legitimise my work. I demonstrate my familiarity with the company. I appeal to their appetite for a good story, enticing them with tasters, without spoiling the main course.

DECLAN That's important. It's the main launch event of the year, and we wouldn't want people feeling negative. I'm not sure that kick-off conference is the right time, to be honest. What about pushing it back to later in the year?

LENY The problem is, the longer we leave it, the less relevant it becomes. People have been so generous with their contributions, I really want them to see what's coming out of all this research.

LES It's got to be at kick-off. There isn’t another time to get everyone together. But it's got to be a celebration. I don't want any of this negative bitchiness that came out at ‘Kum Ba Yah’.

OWEN If that's what people are feeling, we need to hear it. You can't change unless you know what's really going on.

DECLAN But is it actually a problem? Do we even need to raise it as an issue?

OWEN Definitely. If there's a problem with blame and lack of accountability, that is counter to our culture and it needs to be resolved. (He stands as if the conversation is over and starts checking his phone)

DECLAN But is a play about it going to help?
LES       We've already committed, so we are doing it. As long as it’s not another bitch-fest.

Different motivations appear. Declan is first respondent, smooth and diplomatic, yet keen to assert himself and demonstrate his loyalty, first and foremost. Without directly challenging Les, he doubts, apparently with the morale of others top of mind. I suddenly wonder if Declan is afraid of what the performance might reveal, or precipitate. Perhaps he is more risk-averse than other members of the leadership team.

Les immediately buries the idea of alternative scheduling. He shuns diplomacy and, speaking from an individual perspective - “I don’t want any of this negative bitchiness” - he dictates that the performance must contain a celebratory message. This is a solo performance of bravado, presumably directed at the team rather than me, as he and I had already discussed his preferences one-on-one (privately, I had explained to Les that the play would be a reflection of my findings, and I could make no promises to meet his demands. I did not feel it prudent or necessary to remind him of this in the group setting).

Owen’s reaction is surprising and refreshing. During previous interactions, he has appeared disinterested, almost resistant, to the whole project, claiming not to have time
for the ‘touchy-feely’ aspects of the workplace, and yet, here he welcomes feedback of all kinds. Bolstered by relief and admiration when he reveals his position, I feel confident enough to continue:

LENY (leaning in) You see, I didn't feel the ‘Kum Ba Yah’ session was negative at all. We spent a couple of hours venting frustrations on the morning of the first day, which was actually a necessary part of the process. It was based on established techniques. Getting those feelings out helps people move past negativity and start thinking about ways to change.

This is a repeat of the arguments I provided for Les the previous week. Without resorting to academic jargon, I am becoming more adept at defending the process now, although I still feel it necessary to validate the technique.

VICKI I didn't think it was helpful. (Irritably) If people want to talk about that stuff there are proper channels. The whole thing seemed very negative to me.

Vicki digs and I startle as I register that she is the ‘spy’ who sent a secret report to Les on the first evening of the playbuilding workshop. The piqued way she mentions ‘proper channels’ makes me realise she feels usurped, as if my project undermines her employee-facing role. For some time before this I had felt a disconnect with Vicki, as if she was playing some kind of game, and this comment cements
it for me. I feel a surge of annoyance and snipe to take the wind from her sails.

LENY Perhaps if you had stayed till the end, Vicki, you would have seen how we used those emotions to come up with some constructive ideas and stories for the play.

STEFAN Yes, I don't think you would have got so much buy-in if you'd held a normal training session here at the office. There was something about being away altogether, doing stupid things, that helped people open up. I thought it was really positive.

SHARON I've heard people say they found it cathartic. Although they're not talking about what actually happened. They have been quite secretive about it.

OWEN The fact is, we are not perfect and that's the reality we have to face. Just do it. Have a great big piss up afterwards and everyone will be happy.

Contrary to my expectation and the generic stereotype, the sales managers rally in support. Whether it is their inherent ‘devil-may-care’ attitude, or whether they genuinely see OT as a prospect for long-lasting change, all three favour the project in general, and scheduling the performance at the kick-off conference. This is the tipping point. After these consecutive approvals, there is no going back.

JULIA I’m fine with that.
DECLAN  Just as long as the messages align with the rest of the conference.

LENY  Yes, I’ll work with Les to make sure we have continuity.

LES  And you are going to make it very clear that the new GM character is not replacing me, aren’t you?

The hitherto silent finance manager, Julia signals her acquiescence. Having revealed tensions between herself and Les in a confidential interview only a few days prior, I have a sense she is quietly optimistic, whilst appearing indifferent. Declan feels the pressure and rolls over, not without clarifying his stipulations. Les, too, re-emphasises his grounds for endorsement. Relieved to be given the green light, I reassure the team I will not violate their trust, being careful, however, not to make promises I can’t keep.

LENY  Absolutely. I’ll do an introduction before the play that covers off those points.

LES  And how we handle goods is a problem - that needs to be in there. And the pain points around process and rapid growth.

LENY  Definitely.

JULIA  And losses. $300,000 this year, so far.

SHARON  People are excited about it. (to Leny) They see you as a kind of change management expert who is going to solve all our problems.
I reel at this comment and wonder how many others have ignored my repeated communications regarding the nature of my work, as research, not consulting. I realise that, although I have developed strong relationships with many team members, there is still a large group who have little understanding of what is happening and why I am here.

LENY Really? That's not quite how it works. This is your play, created by your people. It's up to you, and them, to make change, not me. So between now and then, maybe we could try to shift that perception?

I have no expectation of that happening as there is no mechanism in place to enable the shift to take place. So far, all communication about the project, apart from a cursory introduction from Les, has come from me and it has been evidenced that people don’t read it fully. I make a mental note to address this in the introductory speech before the performance.

DECLAN I just wonder if anyone is actually going to get it. I think it's going to go over most people's heads. They don't have the maturity to grasp something like this.

LENY I think you would be surprised, Declan.

LES Right, that's it, then. Let's move on.

LENY Thank you for your support, everyone.
**Tension, Conflict and the Domino Effect**

In the theatre, tension is often located in dramatic conflict, the height of which usually comes at the climax of the play and hinges around a choice for the protagonist(s) that drives action. Although the nature of this scene is not highly dramatic in a conventional theatre sense, I believe *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* is the climax of the narrative representing this research project. It is a moment where all the conflicting forces of development that surfaced in this research come together in one place and time. The essential choice is whether or not to allow a performance of the ‘play within a play’ at the heart of the development process to go ahead. There are, however, a number of other points of tension and conflict within the action, particularly concerning control and intentionality. So, to mimic Goffman (1959), I begin by asking ‘what is going on’?

The action of the scene follows a straightforward organisational ritual. A meeting is called in order to negotiate a decision. Key characters present their position and consensus is sought. In this case, after the various depositions there is a majority ruling that the performance will go ahead at the conference launching the next calendar year. There are, however, two ways in which this meeting is uncharacteristic of many negotiation rituals that proceed with little ‘drama’. First, the EMT had never before convened to discuss the progress or potential future of this particular project. Leny had presented reports at previous meetings, but these had sparked little obvious interest and, while there had been informal one-to-one interactions, there had been no previous open dialogue in the EMT group context. Second, there is a notable ‘tipping point’ within the scene when the outcome could have been quite different, marked by the lines beginning “we’ve already committed so we’re doing it”. If *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* is the climax of the ‘meta-play’, this decision is the ‘critical moment’ from which the rest of the drama
proceeds. As noted in chapter three, (methodology) events in a well-made-play are like dominoes, each leading to the next, although it may be only in the final denouement that such a path of inevitability is visible to an audience. In analyzing scripts, therefore, theatre makers often work backwards from the climax, asking ‘what has just happened’, ‘where have the interactants come from?’ or ‘what does that character want and how does he/she try to get it’?

There is a theoretical basis for such analysis, found in Goffman’s (1959) assertion that performances influence observers and McAuley’s claims that performances must contain “some intentionality on the part of the performer, or witness or both” (2010, p.45). Following the above line of questioning, therefore, beginning with Les as convenor of the meeting, in the following two sections I investigate the actions within the performances of key organisational influencers to uncover their motivations and strategies for getting what they want, including how their individual interests intersect with the relationships between them. To aid this process, I have applied a common dramaturgical technique to the non-verbalised text within the vignette. Action words have been underlined in order to appreciate some of the intentions behind each interaction in the scene.

**The Anointing of Authority**

“I do invest you jointly with my power;” I.1:129-131

The first action Les takes is to give Leny the floor. The fact she requires no introduction beyond a nod and hand gesture reveals the level of familiarity Les assumes to exist between her and the entire EMT. She is already present in the room as he has invited her to attend the whole EMT meeting, not just the part relating to the project. Les
seems to want her and her project to be fully integrated into the fabric of Toolzone’s strategic direction, a point of alignment with the way Leny was introduced to the organisation at the annual conference six months prior to this meeting (see figure two, chapter three). In the opening ‘inner monologue’ immediately following Leny’s first speech, the word ‘anointed’ is used. This suggests Les is giving away, or at least lending, his mantle of authority to Leny for this particular performance, like the King in the quote at the start of this chapter.

There are a number of potential reasons for him to do so. On the one hand, Les might be so trusting of Leny that he believes she understands and will represent his interests unequivocally. Such a possibility has echoes of the developer-as-mercenary or -prostitute positioning outlined in chapter one, where a developer is essentially a puppet controlled by the commissioner(s) of development. In this case the commissioner is like a King trying to ‘manage the authorities’ he has supposedly given away. A leader performing such an act might possess absolute belief in their own omnipotence – granting them the assurance that developers will do whatever possible to satisfy their desires. But the anointing could indicate a different kind of trust. The ‘leap of faith’ that he himself acknowledged could be so complete that, in this moment, he trusts Leny to deliver exactly what Toolzone needs, even if he himself doesn’t yet feel clear as to what that is. This more humble attitude in which a leader and commissioner of development recognises and accepts the limitations to their own powers of perception, and defers (even temporarily) to another, is tightly linked to the ‘faith’ that Goffman describes:

When the individual is in the immediate presence of others, his activity will have a promissory character. The others are likely to find that they must accept the individual on faith, offering him a just return while he is present before them in exchange for something whose true value will not be established until after he has left their presence. (1956, p.2)
The faith he is offering in his performance becomes a commodity to exchange. Such a transactional view has an association with the developer-as-sage positioning in chapter one where those facilitating development are seen as unchallengeable, all-seeing experts able to deliver ‘silver bullet’ solutions, for compensation. They are hired to fix the organisation and the contractual obligation of the commissioner is that the methods of the sage are accepted as doctrine.

These two potential explanations for the apparent ‘anointing’ of the developer by the commissioner occupy oppositional positions in relation to control. On the one hand, where the developer acts as a ‘puppet’, the commissioner retains tight control over her and her methods. On the other, where the developer is genuinely lauded as a ‘fixer’ of problems, control is handed over almost completely. There are hints within the data that Les attempted to perform both of these expressions of ‘trust’ at times. For example, interview and email data reveal Les veered towards hubris on occasion, possibly when under stress and, using the words of the inter-text commentary ‘dictated’ the way forward, trusting others would follow. A section from an email sent to Leny in advance of the EMT meeting indicates the manner with which Les assumed totality of power and exerted dominance in written form:

I really want the funnel scope drilled down before progressing to next stage. This is both new ground for you and the company, and it needs to serve a purpose. – Les, email to Leny 25.7.16

In contrast, there were signs that Les genuinely tried to yield to the development process, putting his needs secondary to those surfaced in the research. For example, his striking display of authenticity when he ‘opened his heart’ (S. S. Taylor, 2014) in the immediate aftermath of the theatre event (see vignette two, chapter five). A few weeks after the performance Les described to Leny how he believed the theatre event had been
the ‘best 360 feedback ever’ that helped Toolzone achieve a previously lacking ‘sightfulness’.

It is not clear to what extent the management of impressions in these oppositional performances was contrived to influence the expression ‘given off’ (Goffman, 1959). While they may contribute to Les’ overall performance, his other actions and comments in *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* suggest neither of the two offered interpretations of reasons to ‘anoint’ Leny are complete. His next action in the vignette is to sit back silently and wait for other EMT members to respond to Leny’s opening statement. This is a departure from a performance style that favours high-energy, speed and autonomy in response. It appears to be a way to gauge the collective reactions of those closest to him, yet after only one such reaction, he immediately jumps in stating “It’s got to be at kick-off”. If he believed either that Leny would cede to his agenda or that her process was certain to deliver what Toolzone needed, such interjections, and perhaps even the meeting itself, would be unnecessary.

Instead, Les seemed to oscillate between these two performance modes, perhaps due to a perceived lack of control over the unfolding theatre intervention process. Lines such as “it’s got to be a celebration” and “I don’t want any of this negative bitchiness” appear to reveal a need for Les to stand firm on ‘cherished rules and axiomatic values’ (Turner, 1986) and exert as much control as possible over what remains in the planning of the intervention. As chapter one explains, this is a common feature in development. Nissley et al (2010) found exactly this tendency where commissioners of theatre-based development tend to cling to ‘control of script’ wherever possible. Gagnon and Collinson (2014) note similar patterns in LD where, in efforts to ensure development reinforces existing hegemonic control structures, organisations reserve the right to narrow the scope
of ‘ideal’ leadership identities permitted within programmes. Not only do commissioners articulate the ‘needs’ or desired outcomes of development up front; they continue to retain some oversight of the ongoing design and construction of a programme.

Goffman notes that “regardless of the particular objective which the individual has in mind and of his motive for having this objective, it will be in his interests to control the conduct of the others” (1956, p.2). This appears to be what Les is attempting, but there is a tension that infuses his apparent need to control both the meeting and the intervention. This tension comes to light when Les’ ‘front-stage’ performance in the vignette is juxtaposed against a ‘back-stage’ interaction that took place only a few days earlier, an interaction that can retrospectively be conceived as the ‘domino’ tipping over, prompting Les to convene his senior team in the ‘crisis’ meeting. Les met with Leny to debrief the playbuilding workshop, known as Kum Ba Yah. The excerpt below contains sections of verbatim text from a voice memo made immediately after the one-on-one debrief.

**Figure Seven: Transcription from recorded voice memo made by Leny, Friday 29 July 2016**

So we sat down and he said, "Right let's talk. What's been going on?" And I said, well from my perspective I was very surprised to hear that you had heard negative comments, because from my perspective the two days went really well. It generated some fantastic research outcomes for my project and I felt there was a wonderful constructive and collaborative energy in the group. So, I'm really surprised that anybody had negative things to say....

So Les is obviously feeling very nervous about what happened at the workshop. And I tried to explain to him that the outcomes of the workshop were not about exposing how people thought or what they felt about things, they were actually to generate stories and characters for my play.

I don't know how much he really believed me. I kept trying to press the point that I'm not here to encourage negativity - I'm not here to glorify it. I am here to help people see things in a different way and, the workshop was only ever designed to be constructive.

Les would like the opportunity to kill the whole thing if he feels it's going to be deflating rather than elevating. And I think I'm okay with that.

He is also very preoccupied with this notion that he needs a statement of purpose that he can clearly articulate. He still feels quite a long way from actually being at that point.

I get the sense that he feels almost ambushed, like he wasn't really sure what he was letting himself in for, and I expressed to him again how this is experimental research. We don't really know what
the outcomes will be. That didn't seem to help. And I think I also mentioned the point that we mentioned earlier on which is that Toolzone is going through this very change focused time and there will be a lot of discomfort and uncertainty about what's happening and everybody is nervous. And he said he is quite unnerved by the whole thing. So I'm feeling a bit uneasy.

Reading this reported encounter as a straightforward trigger event to the crisis meeting, it seems fear tipped the domino over. Words such as ‘unnerved’, ‘uneasy’, ‘nervous’ and ‘jumpy’ cut through Leny’s lengthy, emotionally charged download where the words ‘sense’ and ‘feel’, or derivatives, appear multiple times. There appears to be fear of the unknown, of being unable to control future consequences. If this encounter is placed in a wider context, however, and considered as one of the back-stage preparations for the later front-stage performance of *Kum Ba Yah Crisis*, a more nuanced, internal tension between control and devolution is revealed. Les appears to cling to power over the intervention, while simultaneously trying to relinquish it. It is as if he realises he is holding the strings to a potentially productive and powerful puppet that might rebel or break free. He seems torn between hanging on more tightly or passing the strings to someone else. His insistence that the EMT come together to debate the future of the development activity indicates he felt a need to share, or potentially rescind, the absolute authority he had so far assumed over the project and his apparent ‘anointing’ of Leny further supports that interpretation.

Rather than ‘anointing’ Leny in the sense of gifting her the authority to proceed, then, Les appears to be elevating her to a position of visibility, possibly even visible culpability so that, should a crisis befall the project, and Toolzone, his individual responsibility will be diminished. Grint (2005a) observes a similar phenomenon when he describes the potential of collective practices to distribute not only leadership capability but culpability. Les does this publicly in performance and, as the inter-text commentary reveals, Leny seems to understand why this is happening. She reflects; “this is a solo performance of bravado, presumably directed at the team rather than me, as I had already
discussed his preferences one-on-one”. She consciously repeats, for the wider group, arguments she has already made in her private ‘back-stage’ performances to Les. Her speculation that Les feels ‘ambushed’ in the voice memo also suggests the possibility that Les may feel resentful towards her, having been exposed, and might seek to shift some of his own vulnerability onto other shoulders. There is a sense that Les may feel a retrospective regret that he has ‘given away’ the authority to autonomously establish scope, purpose, control and intentionality in the project. He seems to realize these potential sources of tension are only now being seriously addressed mid-way through the programme; culpability for the lack of prior attention would be difficult to assign.

Having no prior experience of a particular process may exacerbate a frightening sense of ‘unknowing’ which would explain Les’ need for the ‘funnel scope’ to be ‘drilled down’ before moving on to the next stage, as requested in his email above. As chapter one discusses, traditional functionalist LD reaches for practices that are ‘evidence-based’, such as competency, rather than experimental approaches. The quest is to access and operationalise reliable “behavioural predictor(s) of improved performance” (Bolden & Gosling, 2006, p.150). Despite his apparent unease with unknown outcomes, one gets the sense that Les genuinely wanted to be able to enter a process that was less prescribed. Indeed, earlier data points depict an excitement to try something novel, radical even, a development practice untested in New Zealand. An excerpt from Les’ reply to my email follow-up shortly after Kum Ba Yah Crisis supports this:

This is certainly what I reflect on within this leap of faith. I have no need at this stage to meet Peter or to have an update interim in three to four week’s time. This is your PhD and we are the vessel, I am pleased to hear that the outcomes and the transparency is aligned. – Les, email to Leny 8.8.16

Summarising the dynamics of Les’ performance in Kum Ba Yah Crisis, it appears the main source of tension encountered in his particular set of actions sits between a need to control the intervention and a need to ‘let go’. This tension can be located at the nexus
of two previously identified LD tussles; outcome vs. process and control vs. liberation. Even though there is widespread doubt around the possibility of determining improved ‘performance’ as an outcome of LD (Jones, 2006), most organisational leaders, like Les, have an idea at the outset of the changes they desire from a development programme. Many also retain close control over a programme as it proceeds, requesting a high level of planning and content detail from development facilitators and holding the prerogative to alter or cancel a programme should it deviate too far from their objectives – exactly as Les did in the voice memo above. As chapter one argues, focusing so heavily on outcome risks the development of leadership becoming a ‘mechanistic imperative’ (Raelin et al., 2018), yet the ‘leap of faith’ required to move away from such ‘knowing’ remains daunting for all but the most courageous leader. A practice or process perspective may contain the ‘space for freedom’ (Spicer et al., 2009) and ‘space of action’ (Carroll & Levy, 2010) that delivers emergent and unexpected outcomes, but such unplanned action is deeply unsettling as it “defies (the) planning-for-performance” (Mabey, 2013, p.375).

Although most LD theory recognises Les’ first motivation (the need to control outcome), no studies have yet considered it in relation to the second, conflicting motivation – to let go and ‘give away authority’ to a developer. This may be because it simply does not happen. Under a view of control as a constructed process, it cannot be intentionally and single-handedly passed from one player to another. Even if it could, there appear to be no examples in the literature of development in which it is permissible to challenge theories-in-use and/or an entire system’s frame of reference (Raelin, 2008). It seems ambiguity around control in development presents too great a threat to organisational stakeholders. Current theory and empirical studies suggest that, to assuage the unease of ambiguous outcomes, there are really only two possibilities. In the first, the process must be externally validated or sufficiently ‘known’ by the commissioner in
advance, in which case the decision to take a ‘leap of faith’ would revert to a straightforward commitment to a tried and trusted process. Under these circumstances there is no need to ‘let go’. In the second, the relationship between the commissioner and the developer (including her methods) would need to acquire absolute trust whereby the developer is assumed to act solely on behalf of the commissioning agent. In this case, under agreement that the appointed developer will do their bidding, a commissioner ‘gives away authority’ at the outset and there is no ongoing tension regarding control. Both options potentially deliver the kind of safe and benign development that chapter one argued against. In the second, the developer becomes nothing more than a complicit puppet. Little wonder then that, because management feels vulnerable when traditional lines of authority are threatened (Clarke, 2006), programmes presenting genuine potential to emancipate or surface dissensus are rare (Raelin, 2008).

*Kum Ba Yah Crisis* suggests another possibility. The reason no studies have yet addressed the ways in which organisational commissioners give away control to developers may not be because it doesn’t happen, but rather because the moments in which it is attempted have, as yet, gone unnoticed. By seeing them as precarious, performed dialogic constructions, this research brings them to light, albeit in a fleeting, tentative way. While it has been observed that the conflict between wanting to control a development intervention and wanting to yield to a less-controlled, more open-ended process is the primary tension in the performance of Les, it is a tension that comes and goes. In one moment he wrestles with how to ‘invest his power’ under the entitative assumption it can be harnessed to invest. In the next he seems to recognize the slippery nature of authority as a co-construction beyond his reach. The data of this study, therefore, show that control, or authority, and the ‘anointing’ of it, are temporary, partial, conditional and subjective. As an aspect of co-constructed power in development, control
is inevitably localised, ambiguous and contested (Collinson, 2005). It is also interdependent (Carroll & Nicholson, 2014), and the way control is ‘anointed’ relies on the collective performances of all players, including the developer. Complexities within performances surrounding control thus present a partial answer to the first research question. The performances of the developer in relation to tensions of control will be examined in further detail towards the end of this chapter, but first, I will examine another key form of tension as it appears in the vignette, focusing first on the character of Declan.

**Expressions of Intentionality**

“How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell.” 1.4:346

Like Les, Declan exhibits a discomfort around ambiguity of outcome in his performance, but there is less visible conflict for Declan as, unlike Les, he does not seem drawn to the kind of development that favours process and unplanned consequences. He operates from a singular perspective, based on his own belief around the purpose of development, which, if aligned to the Toolzone rhetoric is simply the pursuit of ‘high performance’. The main tension of Declan’s performance, therefore, is more external than it appeared to be for Les, and concerns striking an acceptable balance between the level of control the EMT and the developer respectively exert over the intervention.

Declan seems motivated by gaining as much control as possible over the future of the project. In his first action, he jumps to endorse Leny’s suggestion to celebrate Toolzone. With an almost regal use of the collective pronoun, he states “we wouldn’t want people feeling negative”. assumption that negativity is something to be regulated, minimised or ‘actively avoided’ (James & Arroba, 2005) is pervasive in organisations. Dissensus, too, is generally suppressed in favour of homogeneity and “identity regulation
is an increasingly intentional modality of organizational control” (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002, p.622). Despite his apparent opposition to negativity it is ironically Declan who is most negative in his performance, expressing doubt with statements such as “I’m not sure that kick-off is the right time” and “I just wonder if anyone is actually going to get it”. Also ironically, Declan’s performance acts paradoxically to simultaneously question the integrity of the process (“is a play about it going to help?”) and support a pedagogy of dissensus (“do we even need to raise it as an issue”). This last question is the enactment of exactly the kind of critical and productive challenge this thesis argues is essential in LD. Although he is less open than Les to ambiguities around control, Declan is the only person (other than Les) who maintains a strong position towards the project. He exudes skepticism, but he seems to struggle with how to articulate his challenges. Initially vocal, he tries to elevate discussions towards settling on a high-level collective intentionality of performance (see chapter two), but comes up against centralist assumptions that the development intervention will be going ahead regardless and will inevitably deliver some form of ‘beneficial’ outcome. Les directly opposes him on two occasions, (“It’s got to be at kick-off” and “We’ve already committed”). In response, he stands back, and indeed ‘rolls over’ when it is obvious the remainder of the group will ratify Les’ decision to proceed. An informal conversation with a long-standing employee after Kum Ba Yah Crisis revealed ongoing tensions between Les and Declan. Accordingly, it seems possible that Declan’s ‘dissent’ in this vignette is one of the main drivers behind the construction of the supposedly ‘collective’, but in actuality strongly individually-influenced, decision to go ahead with the theatre performance.

Such a possibility relates to the spatio-temporal, relational and subjective quality of performance (Schechner, 2013). Kum Ba Yah Crisis was one ‘critical incident’ in a much larger meta-play with a complex cast of characters, each with their own set of
relationships. As chapter two argues, each micro-performance within any interaction is but one contextual presentation of self that can never be replicated. The outcome of such a performance, in this case the ‘green-lighting’ of the theatre performance, is contextually dependent on the relationships between the players at that time and their respective expressions of intentionality in performance. No matter how close a relationship, the other actors in any performance will never fully know the motivations behind each utterance, or, as Goffman puts it, “no amount of (such) past evidence can entirely obviate the necessity of acting on the basis of inferences” (1956, p.2). Being forced to make such inferences about the underlying motivations of the other actors in a performance is another form of ‘not knowing’ that many may find uncomfortable. Declan does not know what has been said in private between Les and Leny. He does not know what really took place at the playbuilding workshop or what information Les has received about that event in the time since. Working with partial information, therefore, he can only guess at what embodied, emotional responses his utterances might generate in the ‘ongoing relationship’ that makes up the performance of *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* (Schechner, 2013). He can, through inference, try to convey in his sign activity an impression that secures his desired outcome (Goffman, 1959). In the event, Declan’s desired outcome – a postponement – does not eventuate. Despite his smooth diplomacy, his influence cedes to that of Les and other actors in performance.

We are all playing at this guessing game to a greater or larger extent in each of our daily interactions. Goffman suggests it is a game in which we maintain surface agreement - a ‘veneer of consensus’ where each actor conceals “his own wants behind statements which assert values to which everyone present is likely to give lip service” (1956, p.4). In the specific context of development such an observation becomes particularly important where inference intersects with intentionality. As the tussle around control and
emancipation in chapter one describes, we are hard-wired to seek out consensus in the performances around us. The ambiguity expressed in Declan’s doubtful comments (“I’m not sure-” and “I just don’t know-”) exhibits his uncertainty around what might happen if the performance goes ahead (outcome). It also points to the lack of perceived consensus in the related motivations, or intentions, of other characters. *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* thus reveals a relationship between outcome and intentionality in development that warrants further examination.

Chapter one argues that what sets process-based development apart from functionalist, outcome-driven LD is not an absence of outcome, but ambiguity. The outcome derives from, rather than shapes, a continuously evolving process. Such a process-based approach does not ignore outcome altogether. There may be a relatively clear articulation of what an organisation hopes to achieve, but it is not the central focus of process-based development work. Instead, a critical process-driven approach would pay close attention to the intentionality and ideology underlying any stated outcome and it is suggested that programme design must take account of the associated power asymmetries and coercive narratives that may influence the work (Cunliffe, 2002a). Nearly everyone in *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* seems comfortable in the assumption that the development is happening and that it will have some beneficial outcome for the collective organisation. Declan is the only member of Toolzone who raises questions of ‘why’ (“do we even need to raise it as an issue?”), supporting the observation in chapter one that intentionality is rarely addressed in LD. The intentionality of development is, like performances of leadership and development themselves, socially constructed. It represents the ‘why’ behind the work. As chapter two outlines, intentionality is at the heart of the debates around the primacy of aesthetic or instrumental drivers in applied theatre and other arts-based development. As chapter one shows, aesthetic considerations
are usually absent in LD, meaning instrumental intentions resting on functionalist assumptions are the norm. Like some cases of TfD, LD may be carried out in pursuit of some kind of ‘benefit’ (such as ‘high performance’) without stopping to consider whether participants either want or need to ‘hear the message’ (O’Connor, 2015).

Declan’s performance parallels precisely this ‘crisis of engagement’ (McDonnell, 2005) that stems from an assumption that development is necessary and ‘right’ or where the “centre prescribes what is good for the periphery” (Prentki, 2012, p.202). Declan assumes the responsibility to deliver what people need, as noted in “we wouldn’t want people feeling negative” and the arrogance to predict that “they don’t have the maturity to grasp something like this”. His critical questioning, however, reveals a tension associated with an ambiguity of intentionality.

In chapter one I asked: who guides intentionality in development and what conditions must be established to facilitate the process? Two potential answers to the first question immediately present. One might expect that intentionality of a programme is defined either by the commissioning party (the organisation) or the appointed developer. One might also assume (as some theorists do – see Etherton and Prentki, 2006) that every development activity ought to have a clear intent behind it. The most striking aspect of Kum Ba Yah Crisis is that questions around the fundamental purpose of the development activity are barely raised by either the organisation or the developer. Where intentionality does feature, it is expressed as partial, individual stipulations, rather than any cohesive or strategic organisational purpose. This oversight suggests another tussle from chapter one - whether programmes are designed for individual or collective development – has been neglected. For example, the only references Les makes to holding an intentionality are his statement focused on ensuring employees do not think he is retiring (“you are going to
make it clear that the new GM character is not replacing me”) and his demand for the performance to be “a celebration”. There are only vague hints at collective purposes revealed through Sharon’s comment that the project will “solve all our problems” and Owen’s impression of the project as a way to face up to uncomfortable ‘truths’(“we are not perfect and that’s the reality we have to face”). Although some have specific ideas around what needs to be in the performance, not one member of Toolzone’s senior team, apart from Declan, stops to ask, ‘why are we doing this development work in the first place’?

There are a number of reasons intentionality may not be clearly defined either at the outset or part-way through a development programme. I have already touched on one of these; where emergent techniques are used and the range of possible outcomes is still empirically undocumented there is no ‘model’ to follow. Under a process-driven view, the perceived obstacle of having no precedent could be easily overcome by the acceptance that outcomes can only ever be transient, partial future visions. Such a situation may even present an opportunity to contribute to new empirical knowledge, an opportunity requiring the ‘leap of faith’ Les agreed to take during initial negotiations with Leny. In the far more common practices of functionalist LD, however, the achievement of tangible, well-defined outcomes is considered more important and difficulty articulating these may mean it is simply avoided. Such difficulty may stem from the fact that the development activity is highly contextually situated or centred on the individual, as discussed in chapter one. If a programme is designed to be tailored to specific, individual needs it may be almost impossible to express these holistically, particularly where a programme covers a long period of time. Trying to craft a unified intentionality that considers “(participants’) embodied readiness to respond to events in their own unique and particular surroundings” (Mabey, 2013, p.373) would be a tall order for any
management team. As the discussion around competencies in chapter one explains, commissioners may prefer to rest on a set of flawed, functionalist assumptions such as the belief that if a previously hidden ‘weakness’ is identified and stamped out, a team’s collective performance will automatically improve.

Also, like any performance, and in parallel with the control discussed in a previous section, the negotiation of a unified intentionality is a co-construction between whichever players happen to be present at the current time. Often, for example, the decision to commission development is made by one party, a senior leader or executive committee responsible for strategic direction of the business. The responsibility for a detailed design, including articulation of intent, is then handed over to administrators in HR or OD functions, who may be ill-equipped to set objectives for a programme. Certainly this was the case in Toolzone. Once Les had committed, coordination was delegated to HR administrator Vicki. Employees responsible for functional delivery may, therefore, skip over the more strategic step of determining an over-arching intentionality and move straight to implementation. Certain leaders, such as Les, may also make the assumption that intentionality has been established where in fact it hasn’t, through their tendency to overstate the degree to which leadership capability is distributed in their immediate vicinity.

So far in this chapter I have highlighted two key tensions that feature in the negotiation of development from the organisational perspective: the tension around striking an acceptable balance of control over the design and ongoing construction of development, which I will call ‘ambiguity of control’; and the tension that comes from a discomfort with ‘ambiguity of intentionality’. *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* can be conceived as a direct consequence of the combination of these tensions. Had there been a clear collective
understanding of who was in control of which elements of the project and why, and had the overarching intentionality been more fully appreciated, I suspect the meeting would not have been convened. Returning to the assertion made at the beginning of this chapter, that the role of the developer is key to understanding how these tensions play out, I will now look at how the developer in this research interacted with these tensions as part of the negotiation dialogue.

**The Developer and ‘Ambiguity of Control’**

In *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* Leny initially appears to accept the mantle of authority with which Les anoints her. Taking care to perform her role of appointed expert with ‘legitimacy’ (see inter-text commentary), her first action is to present an overview of the planned theatre production. She knows she already has Les’ approval, and consciously impresses that point in her performance. Since encountering the fears and uncertainties Les revealed in the ‘back-stage’ interaction of the voice memo, however, she is aware of the need to placate and reassure Les and potentially others in the EMT. In a sense she partners with Les in her ready and loyal acceptance of his conditions around approval for the theatre performance (“Yes, I’ll work with Les to make sure we have continuity”; “Absolutely. I’ll do an introduction before the play that covers off those points”). This acceptance is different from accepting the gift of authority. In those moments, she consciously performs the ‘puppet’ role she knows is necessary to complete Les’ performance of holding control over the intervention. Before the assembled audience (the rest of the EMT) she willingly takes on the enhanced ‘visible culpability’ that Les wants her to have.

Where Leny finds the space and opportunity to challenge, however, she readily takes it. As Kershaw (1992) argues, her performance provokes crisis in her audience’s
beliefs, but (perhaps narrowly) avoids generating immediate rejection. This is most obvious in the discussion around the playbuilding workshop. She deliberately contradicts Les’ suggestion that playbuilding was nothing more than a ‘bitchfest’ with a considered reflection on why that particular part of the development process was necessary and constructive (“(it) was actually a necessary part of the process. It was based on established techniques”). As the inter-text commentary explains she ‘defends’ and ‘validates’ her methods in the face of doubt. She also delivers an intentional, playful, but possibly incendiary snipe at Vicki when the latter’s comment threatens to upend her claims. When Sharon then surprises her with the revelation that Toolzone members see her as the agent of change, Leny again contradicts and presents a challenge to the assembled EMT: “This is your play, created by your people. It’s up to you and them to make change, not me”.

It seems that parts of Leny’s performance as developer mirror those of Les as commissioner. In the fleeting moments where Les ‘gives away authority’, she accepts it wholeheartedly. In moments where Les reclams control, she willingly yields to support him. In concert with Les, she performs a repeating inversion of give and take, acting both ‘for’ and ‘against’ the norms and assumptions of the organisation. Nowhere present is the ‘clinging’ to power seen in the developer-as-sage approach. Rather, as Nicholson and Carroll (2014) observe, the power of the developer is continuously negotiated and reproduced. There is synergy and reciprocity in the co-performance of Les and Leny, perhaps even in the moments of contradiction, which, as the inter-text commentary reveals, have already been played out as a kind of ‘back-stage’ private rehearsal prior to the public performance in front of the EMT. The vignette suggests, then, that a developer may serve dual functions in the performance of negotiation with commissioners - to support and to challenge. How one balances these potentially conflicting responsibilities
becomes a source of tension a developer must somehow perform to the satisfaction of all parties. Developers can walk a fine line between antagonizing and accommodating the powers that sustain them. Those adopting a dialogic approach may even see contradiction and deconstruction as a principle function of their work (Raelin, 2008). When crafting their performances amidst the complex web of power dynamics, therefore, a developer must enact critical reflexivity. She must consider how closely she wishes to align to the various claimants of control, asking ‘who or what am I acting for?’ She should also choose where, when and how, to claim different constructions of control herself, noting that enacting control over a process, even temporarily, may mean taking on two different kinds of responsibility, authority and culpability.

As Sinclair notes, developers may be required to satisfy “desires to be entertained, transported and transformed, to feel greater mastery and glimpse the lusted-after power to be in control, but also to flirt with vulnerability” (2009, pp. 270-271). If developers expend all their energies satisfying such desires, even emergent, participatory development such as that pursued in this research risks becoming yet another ‘disciplinary regime’ (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013) with the same rules, logic and surveillance common in functionalist discourses. One of the strategies Leny appears to employ in *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* to avoid such consequences is a playful positioning of herself in relation to the business. This could be viewed as another form of ambiguity – this time of identity. Her oscillations between positions of control could even be interpreted as deliberate moves or shifts in metaphorical proximity to the business. For example, as Balfour (2009) suggests, throughout the research Leny is immersed in the culture and discourse of Toolzone and, in the vignette, consciously highlights her familiarity and allegiance with the organisation (“there’ll be lots of parallels with Toolzone” and “I want to celebrate some of the great things about Toolzone”). She
exhibits a fondness for participants (“people have been so generous with their contributions. I really want them to see what’s coming out of all this research”), yet actively distances herself towards the end of the vignette (“It’s up to you and them to make change, not me”). One can imagine how these various presentations of self could create a level of confusion around whether Leny is really ‘inside’ or ‘outside’, acting ‘for’ or ‘against’ the interests of Toolzone.

**The Developer and ‘Ambiguity of Intentionality’**

In the previous section, I suggested one way developers might perform when encountering the tension surrounding ambiguities of control is to play with presentations of their own control, identity, and/or proximity to the organisation. As all of the factors under scrutiny in this chapter are understood to be fluid subjectivities, some overlap between these sources of ambiguity is inevitable. The ambiguities are themselves ambiguous and open to interpretation. Nevertheless, in this section I isolate some of the strategies a developer might use when encountering the second major form of tension in *Kum Ba Yah Crisis*, ambiguity of intentionality.

As noted, in *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* members of the Toolzone EMT express a distinct lack of engagement with the idea of a unified intentionality. I have speculated that the reason for this may have been because the decision to undertake the work was made autonomously by Les. It could also have been because there is a general assumption within Toolzone that all development pursues the same vague aspiration – ‘high performance’ – or because intentionality was simply too difficult to articulate. Performing in the role of developer and artist, Leny’s initial articulations of intent in the vignette, like others’, are expressions of personal needs and wants related to the theatrical performance in question (“I need you guys to give me the green light”; “I want people to recognise...
aspects of themselves”; “I want it to be funny”; “I want to celebrate”). She betrays no obvious high-level purpose. Neither is there any clear ideology present in her performance, as Prentki (2015a) and those using TfD in a Marxist tradition might claim there ought to be (see chapter one). She does, however, perform a ‘nod’ to the social and ethical commitments of her researcher persona (“I really want (the participants) to see what’s coming out of all this research”). The only other reference she makes to intentionality is in assuming some kind of change will be possible for the organisation as a result of the performance (“it’s up to you, and them, to make change, not me”). Whether through a consciousness of the tensions and competing forces at play, or a simple error of omission, Leny makes no attempt to articulate a singular intentionality for the project, maintaining instead that it is the organisation’s issue to resolve.

Analysing the vignette as a whole, therefore, it seems the answer to the question ‘who guides intentionality’ asked in chapter one is ‘no-one’. Such a conclusion, however, may be judged as hasty when the vignette and the question are more closely scrutinised. The guiding of intentionality is actually, in this case, shared amongst the ensemble. There are also different forms of intentionality in circulation. Following the lead of both Leny and Declan, most of the EMT are quick to express some attitude towards what they hope or expect the performance to deliver. In this sense, intentionality is highly personal and wrapped up in identity. There is not, however, a convergent process of achieving unanimity around a high-level purpose for the activity, a different form of intentionality. Such a process would be better reflected in a question that asked ‘who guides the process of reaching consensus in intentionality’. If this question were asked, the answer in this case may still be ‘no-one’, but this thesis would argue that it is the wrong question. As chapter one explains, consensus in development is not necessarily a good thing.
Right through this research there has been ambiguity around what the development is ‘for’. The project was referred to repeatedly as a ‘leap of faith’ verifying the uncertainty that was accepted by all parties as a necessary component of the commitment. Six months into proceedings (by the time of *Kum Ba Yah Crisis*), however, there are incongruities that suggest this acceptance shifted as the intervention moved into the implementation phase. First, there are Les’ attempts to control outcome highlighted above. Second, there are the statements from figure seven; “(Les) is also very preoccupied with this notion that he needs a statement of purpose that he can clearly articulate. He still feels quite a long way from actually being at that point” and, “he wasn’t really sure what he was letting himself in for”. For a developer committed to a process approach, such inconsistencies are expected and support the idea that intentionality is itself a fluid and subjective construction. Even if consensus of intentionality could be achieved it would be short-lived. Even if there had been a ‘mission statement’ of the kind noted by Hall and Grant stating “we seek to develop participants’ own leadership practice using a learning approach that incorporates the creative process stages of clarification, transformation and implementation” (2014b, p.246), such promises would have meant different things to different people and been devoid of relevance. As chapter one notes, it is a fool’s errand to try and ascertain whether such intangible objectives have been achieved. Specific outcomes, and a singular articulation of intentionality representing the pursuit of such outcomes, are accordingly not central to a developer adopting a process- or arts-based practice. *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* suggests, though, that developers should remain mindful that dominant paradigms of LD still privilege unanimity above uncertainty. If not fully culpable for setting an overarching intentionality, the developer might at least bear co-responsibility for its consideration. She might flag the ambiguities associated with intentionality, flush out plural, possibly

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conflicting perspectives of purpose and weave these into a multi-faceted, evolving intentionality to be revisited and reframed across the course of a project.

Performance 'Review': The Tensions of Negotiation

This chapter has responded to the principle questions in this research by presenting two key tensions encountered in the negotiation of development, and some interpretations of the way developers interact with them. The first tension emerging in the data was between controlling and ‘giving away authority’ and relates to the tussles of outcome vs. process and control vs. liberation identified in chapter one. This tension, which I have called ‘ambiguity of control’, exists primarily in the relationship between a commissioning party and a developer. Whilst ambiguity of control can be uncomfortable in the co-constructed performances between players, this research shows that the negotiation of development holds potential for developers to acknowledge and perhaps play with this discomfort. They might do so by critically and consciously attending to representations of control in their performance. The second tension was related to ambiguities and expressions of intentionality, which, it appears, is interwoven with identity. Organisations like Toolzone may crave the certainty of a singular narrative. The performances in Kum Ba Yah Crisis suggest, though, that in the context of negotiation with organisations, developer identity, or expressions of self in role including personal manifestations of intentionality, is far from fixed. Such a claim aligns with arguments that selves are continuously re-interrogated and re-translated (Neelands, 2004) and that reality and human actors are in a perpetual state of becoming (Freire, 1998; Prentki, 2012; Raelin, 2008). An impression of identity, including multiple expressions of intentionality, is thus, a performed co-construction subject to all the complexities Goffman notes in his many dramaturgical concepts (1959, 1961, 1967, 1986). These insights begin to answer
two further questions raised at the end of chapter one; how and under what conditions is
intentionality in development established and, what methods might best enable us to
explore the tensions, including the embedded power relations of LD?

Stepping back from the vignette and associated analysis, it is now possible to see
that the actual events documented in this chapter may not have eventuated had my
identity and intentionality as a developer been more clearly presented from the outset.
The fact that they did happen is an indication that these particular tensions around
ambiguity, and their associated assumptions, needed to be engaged with and elevated as
central to this particular development activity at this particular time. It seems possible that
similar tensions are encountered in all development, to a greater or lesser extent. Perhaps
all programmes need to go through a kind of ‘crisis of confidence’ as the various
ambiguities and conflicts come together in negotiation. Commissioners and participants
alike may need to develop a 'comfort with discomfort' that accompanies the construction
of new knowledge (Foster et al., 2008). The opportunity for it to happen may come early
in a design process, in a ‘back-stage’ private performance between commissioner and
developer, or in a more public way, part-way through, as was the case in this research. It
seems authority, responsibility and culpability are all different, shifting and subjective
aspects of control bound together in various presentations of identity. This research
suggests a developer in any context must be part of, complicit in, and possibly a guide to,
ongoing negotiations that address the balance of such presentations and their intersection
with questions of intentionality.

This chapter concludes with the assertion that an understanding of the
complexities of negotiation in development may have much to gain from appreciating
ambiguity. There are productive possibilities for ambiguous presentations of identity,
control and intentionality in performance. What is yet unclear is how these ambiguities and tensions are communicated and carried through into the performances within the learning space and how they relate to the proximity of a developer and development to an organisational context. It is the notion of proximity, or distance, in performance, as it relates to the second research question, that I address in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE:

PLAYING WITH DISTANCE

“I am ashamed that thou hast power to shake my manhood thus; that these hot tears, which break forth from me perforce, should make thee worth them.” I.4:296-297

Distance as a concept has multiple applications and interpretations. It emerged in my review of the literature as one of the principle tensions in performance and it plays a central role in the research endeavour. In chapter two I discussed how distance in performance may be conceived literally as the physical space across which signals are transmitted (Heathcote, 1984) but also metaphysically as the proximity of different ‘laminations’ applied over a primary frame of interpretation (Goffman, 1986). In the latter perspective, the degree of abstraction represents ‘aesthetic distance’ (Anthony Jackson, 2007). The greater the distance, the greater the abstraction from the original framework, and the less recognisable the performance. In the theatre, realistic genres appear to stay ‘close’ to the ‘truth’, while productions adopting aspects of surrealism or abstraction appear to create distance between the action of the play and the realities of the audience. As this chapter explores, however, the assumption that realism equates to ‘truth’ is a ‘naturalistic fallacy’ (Neelands, 2010a) and notions of distance, including perceptions of it in the performance of development, require closer examination.

In development, aspects of metaphorical distance are sometimes loosely referred to in evaluative enquiries such as, ‘did it go far enough?’ A number of participants in my
fieldwork encounters seemed to ask exactly that, and there were diverse impressions of whether the ‘play within a play’ went too far or not far enough. When asked colloquially, the question tries to scrutinise the extent to which the activity challenged or extended people (individually or collectively) beyond their normal cognition or behaviour. Did an activity, for example, sufficiently jolt participants out of fixed patterns towards something different or ‘better’? Such a question assumes there is a normal, stable origin from which participants may be extended, or removed, and that if the development ‘fails’ that is the place to which they will return, essentially unchanged. Those of us working in the theatre tradition know this to be inaccurate. As Prentki observes:

In the teeth of all environmental and psychological evidence, the power-brokers would have us believe that we are stable, fixed entities; that there are unchanging places to which we can return and rediscover who we really are. The experience of drama, of life made conscious, teaches us that there is no going back. (2018, p.9)

My starting point in the previous chapter was to claim that the tensions of development cannot be fully explored without due consideration of the role a developer plays in the co-construction of development conditions. The focus of that chapter was how such conditions are negotiated in performances with organisations and I wrote mainly from the perspective of a developer contracted to an organisation. Given the way aspects of proximity have woven themselves through the entire research project, in this chapter I analyse data in relation to expressions of distance. In the first half I turn my attention to the tensions encountered within the ‘space of action’ (Carroll & Levy, 2010), thereby responding to the observation in chapter one that the ‘how’ of LD has been under-examined in the extant literature (Sutherland & Ladkin, 2013). Working with the previously noted assumption that all development is performance, in the second half of the chapter I retain the vantage point of a developer, but add the lens of an artist when examining the data. I thus pay particular attention to what has been called ‘aesthetic distance’ (Anthony Jackson, 2007) and how the developer might interact with tensions.
around distancing as a process. Once again the chapter begins with an ethnodramatic vignette, after which supplementary empirical material is used to support and develop findings emerging from the data. As many of the assertions stem from decisions related to crafting the intervention, there are strong links between the data presented here and the processes described in chapter three (methodology and research design).

**Vignette 2: "GOOSEBUMPS"**

A Saturday afternoon in January. In a large events space of the Civic Theatre, Auckland, a temporary stage and plain black backdrop has been erected between two sweeping staircases. A simple set resembling an office is on the stage, in front of which six actors, wearing identical blue shirts, sit with the writer and director, Leny. Five facilitators from the University of Auckland sit off-stage at one side, facing the audience. The theatre performance has finished and a post-performance workshop has been conducted. A block of theatre seating faces the stage and is occupied by the approximately 80 employees of Toolzone NZ. Their managing director, Les, steps up onto the stage to address the assembly. Throughout his speech he paces back and forth across the stage using sweeping arm gestures.

LES Okay, so first of all, thank you to the actors, you are amazing. I sat in the back and I didn't know whether to laugh... At one time, I was crying. *(Turning to the actress playing Amanda and putting his hand over his heart)* Amanda, you took me to an area..... 'At What Cost'..... I was self reflecting on me, my personal journey of 27 years with the company. And I have paid some price in my personal life, so thank you for that experience.
I breathe a sigh of relief. This is the watershed moment I had hoped for, but could not bring myself to expect. I sensed the play would need to affect Les at a deep level for him to appreciate its power so, knowing something of his personal journey, I wrote one line in the title number, At What Cost, specifically to trigger his individual emotional response, although the whole song was designed to resonate with anyone who has had to make difficult choices in their career. I had been petrified of his reaction to this decision so I ride a wave of gratitude as I realise he doesn’t hate it – or me!

(With over-the-top sentiment, to the actor playing Bruno) Thank you Bruno, I want to hire you (laughter and light applause from the audience). I loved you! (Bending over and clasping his hands together as if worshipping) I loved you! (Applause and laughter increasing) You were just… I see you every day in my life, I admire you and I admire every single person.

He revels in the glory of his audience. He deliberately over-indulges the actor playing Bruno, with great dramatic effect. But does he mean he admires the actors and their authentic portrayal or does he admire every person who exhibits dogged loyalty in Toolzone?

Now, (looking over at the actor playing Beau) the evil villain at the end, Leny took extreme licence as we've already heard (ironic low laughter as Les opens his arms
wide to indicate scale), but I also self reflected. We do see that at times. It was over exaggerated but it hit the mark.

I delight in hearing this. It would be so easy to dismiss the Beau character as an exaggeration, irrelevant to this company, but Les does not allow that to happen. He steps up and validates my choice by admitting there are similarities with real people, demonstrating to his team that it is okay to identify with less desirable behaviours.

And I reflect now on why did I want to do this, in the first place. Why did we as a company embark on this journey, and this story? Last year, there was quite a lot of change for our company. We were jam-packed into a very small building. We were going through five years of immense growth both with our business results and with our people. We were changing to a new corporate head office. We were going to build this dynamic new tools service centre. People were leaving the company and new people were coming into the company. This strategic direction we had set and the path for the next five, 10 years would be challenging. And when I sat down with Leny and she said "Les, you have to have a leap of faith" I was nervous. I was certainly nervous. Would we be able to do something here with a group of professional actors that would change our mindset? That would change the mindset so that we can reflect and move forward to the next journey, the next phase of this great company?

This man has a gift. He draws people in to his story, sharing his feelings and asking questions to create a sense of drama around the context of his own decision-making.
Over the last two days we have celebrated. We have celebrated our own achievements. We have celebrated teamwork. We have celebrated our courage, our commitment and our integrity. This morning we shared business results and we showed the strategic direction that will take our company further than we could even believe. When I reflected on pictures and photos of 17 years of building this company in New Zealand it was quite amazing. And then to open up our heart this afternoon and see this wonderful play. Whether we like it or not, whether we love it, whether we are happy or sad, or whether it has injected an emotional connection, I think we achieved our goal. That was what I was trying to achieve.

Was it really? This is the first time I have heard Les claim a specific organisational outcome as his intention. This statement jars with me while seeming to indicate he has experienced his own personal denouement: does he realise the essence of the project at last?

Because we are such an emotional company. We have so much passion. We believe in everything we do, we believe in everything that Toolzone as a group has to offer. And why do we do this? We do this for our customers. Because we passionately create enthusiastic customers and we will build a better future. Together we cannot do that singly, we need a great team. And you are that great team. I will play a very small role in orchestrating that path. So on behalf of Toolzone New Zealand, on behalf of myself, my heart, everything I am trying to achieve with you as the people of the company, thank you for having the courage to sit and see this self reflection of us, whether it was great, bad or indifferent. Today we will celebrate with one hell of a party.
Pinot Noir will be in flow. Heineken beer will be in flow and (to actor playing Wendy) Wendy, we do have a drink for you. (To the audience) So thank you, thank you again.

(Les applauds and leads a standing ovation. He then walks across the stage, shaking hands with the actors, before giving the cue to the assembly that it is time to exit)

**Tensions of Distance in Performance**

If, as argued in the previous chapter, *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* was the dramatic climax or moment of conflict in the meta-play representing this research project, the performance of *At What Cost* and the immediate aftermath, dramatised in *Goosebumps*, is the denouement or ‘big reveal’. Like the final scene in a well-made play, the vignette appears to tie loose ends together into a neat resolution, yet the methodological assumptions of this research argue that there is no such thing (see Neelands, 2004). Rather, as one performance in the unfinalisable history of Toolzone, *Goosebumps* is a snapshot that captures some complexities and tensions of the development construction process. Following a similar format to the previous chapter, I begin by using dramaturgical principles to analyse the performance, starting with Goffman’s question ‘what is going on’?

*Goosebumps* takes its name from a comment made by an audience member:

There was so much in the final play from what we worked on in the workshop, it was really cool, it gave me goosebumps a couple of times when you heard little lines come out. – Henry, interview 6.3.17

*Goosebumps* (tiny lumps on skin) can appear unexpectedly in the ‘oddest moments’ (Booth, D. quoted in P. Taylor, 2000, pp. 55-56). For Booth, describing his experiences of teaching, they might be felt when a brief utterance stops the action for a millisecond or a group coalesces as an ensemble, as if directed. The research participant
who christened the vignette seems to be describing similar ‘tiny moments of recognition’
between the fictional reality on stage and his own memory of an experience.

The action, or domino, that preceded Goosebumps was the performance of the
‘play within a play’. As explained in the ‘Performance’ section of chapter three, the one-
off live staging of At What Cost took place at the end of a two-day annual conference. It
was immediately followed by a post-performance workshop, for much of which Les was
absent. Having hosted his invited guests in a separate room, he re-entered the
performance/workshop space during questions from the audience approximately 10
minutes before making his speech. Peter, my fellow workshop facilitator, then
acknowledged the “extraordinary generosity and bravery” Les exhibited in
commissioning this project, before inviting him on-stage to close the event. Goosebumps
thus parallels a moment found in many finite development interventions where, having
been absent for much of the activity, a commissioner or internal sponsor re-appears at the
completion of a final module to summarise proceedings. This appears to afford
participants a kind of ‘closure’ from the active part of a programme. Where they have
been conscripted to participate, they are released from duty.

Goosebumps consists mainly of a polished presentation by a leader skilled in the
arts of communication and influence. Whereas his first action in Kum Ba Yah Crisis was
to ‘give the floor’, here he takes it and occupies it until the end of the event, closing with
the triumphant ‘last word’. His use of language, vocal variety and embodiment leave little
chance that his sign activity will be discredited by his audience (Goffman, 1959), as noted
by one participant during an interview a few days later:

What Les said was so damn good. It resonated. It was almost like he had rehearsed what he was
going to say - Michael, interview 6.3.17
Given the timing of proceedings, Les’ speech could not have been rehearsed for more than a few minutes, if at all, and, yet, it has a ‘scripted’ quality. It is a retrospective summation of a process filled with trepidation, struggle and doubt but, unlike *Kum Ba Yah Crisis*, the performance flows as if there is no tension. References to tension in Les’ speech are subtle, suggested and euphemistic, rather than overtly integrated into the performance, and they can be grouped around two motifs associated with distance.

**Distance as Reflection**

The first motif performed by Les concerns reflection. Les uses the word ‘reflect’, or a derivate, five times in his performance. In the first two cases, he suggests the play has encouraged a process of ‘self-reflection’ in his own personal and professional life. He states “I was self-reflecting on me, my personal journey of 27 years with the company” and, in a striking display of emotion in which he admits to having cried during the performance, he thanks one of the actors for triggering reflection on the ‘personal price’ he has paid in his work. Like the King quoted at the start of this chapter, he has been ‘shaken’ and brought to tears by the power of another - in this case the theatre production and all those involved in its creation. Then, he admits to having “self-reflected” around the presence of toxic personalities in the workplace, accepting they do occur, albeit in a less dramatic way than was portrayed on stage. This indicates he may have been ‘reading the context’ in the way that James and Arroba (2005) suggest is necessary to situated learning - focusing the gaze outwards whilst listening to internal fears and anxieties (see chapter one). As a performance, it is a way of openly legitimising a programme without suppressing potential resistance to it, thereby avoiding the conflict that may otherwise have ensued (Carroll & Nicholson, 2014).
In the latter two cases Les uses the term ‘reflect’ in a collective way to first ask “could we change the mindset so that we could reflect” and then to thank his team for “having the courage to sit and see this self reflection”. The assumption Les seems to make in all cases is that reflection is a beneficial, but challenging, act that must involve emotion. Leny, too, seems beguiled by the promise of reflection. As the inter text commentary shows, she is thrilled by Les’ admissions, and sees them as an act of granting permission for the audience to engage with the reflective process. He seems to be inviting his team to transcend denial and deeply consider the identity, attitudes and behaviours of all in Toolzone, in order to open a learning conversation that might influence future collective mindsets. In this performance, Les and Leny thus seem to align with LD practitioners who place the stimulation of reflection through feedback-generating activities (B. Jackson & Parry, 2011) at the centre of development. A statement made by one participant afterwards shows how reflection was felt as the most impactful part of the process:

You held the mirror up. “Look into the mirror”. And that was one of [Toolzone’s] cultural things, where you have to look into the mirror and ask what is the truth, what is the bloody truth? - Todd, interview 6.3.17

A reflection is usually taken to mean the display of an exact mirror image. A mirror image can expose flaws in ‘close-up’ and compositional aspects of movement or form in longer range (for example a mirror wall in a dance studio). As chapter two explains, the metaphor of theatre as a mirror has been famously recognised by Shakespeare, Lacan, Boal and others. The argument made in chapter two, however, was that holding up any kind of mirror to reality, or generating ‘mimesis’ in Aristotelian terminology, may not be enough to enable transformational change. Instead, what may be necessary is a process of ‘metaxis’ (Boal, 1995) or ‘making the familiar strange’ (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006) where more space, or distance, is created between the original
and the ‘copy’. Such framing de-familiarises so that “things are seen in a new light, with a new awareness” (Eriksson, 2011, p.103). Similarly, Brecht (1965) argues that for something familiar to be clearly perceived, it must be made ‘incomprehensible’.

Development might need to aim for more than mere reflection in order to bring clarity to future action and “push boundaries in the imagined world” (Aitken et al., 2007, p.9). It does not seem to matter whether the ‘imagined world’ is located in the future or fiction, provided the imagery and recognition of it generates emotional connection. Whether conscious of it or not, the emotion Les experienced seemed to help him transcend a state of reflection into something akin to what Sutherland calls ‘aesthetic reflexivity’ which “mobilises the aesthetics of experience to develop self-knowledge” (2012, p.33). Les personally resonated with Amanda’s story but also stated in an interview a few days after the performance, “we are all Amanda”, and used such insight as ‘momentum’ to implement change, embodying what Boal (1995) might refer to as ‘catharsis into action’.

The data suggest there is a need to frame reflection and associated processes in development. Minutes before Les’ speech documented in Goosebumps, workshop facilitator Peter ‘wrapped up’ proceedings with some comments registering tension around recognition and reflection. First, as the audience regrouped from a quick recap in pairs, he observed:

You get a real sense that people were looking and going "yes, that's us, there", you know some of that real teamwork.... And "that's not us, thank God we have things in place so that doesn't happen". And that questioning is what the theatre does. If you start here and got angry and said "that's not us!", Exactly. And actually this kind of conversation around the room, talking about your company, talking about your work, but through the lens of the theatre, is what we hoped for.  
– Peter, workshop facilitation 21.1.17
Shortly afterwards, when one of the co-facilitators reported back on discussions with the actor playing Beau, Peter interjected again regarding the fictionalisation of the story, stating:

It is never the intention with theatre to make an exact mirror. It is actually because it is not a mirror, if you are looking at it going “thank God that’s not us”, that's important for the discussions around the room. I just thought it was really important to say that because I could see people getting really upset at the Beau table..... If you got angry watching the play, it's a pretty good thing. Because when you go to work you'll be looking to see if there are any elements of Beau around, which will be really useful. How do you deal with them? – Peter, workshop facilitation 21.1.17

Finally, when someone in the audience asked the actor playing Beau whether, having been through this experience, he would work for Toolzone, the actress playing Amanda interrupted with a comment that "Toolzone isn't Drillset", to which Peter responded "That's a really important distinction". Both Peter’s explanations during the workshop and Les’ summation speech suggest each performer individually felt it necessary to guide an audience that was struggling to make sense of the process they had experienced. Collectively both performances were an act of retrospective framing to a process of reflection and, potentially, aesthetic reflexivity, which, for some, may have felt confusing and confronting. As one audience member explained:

I think the biggest thing you did, the biggest thing that worked really, really well, was your Professor thing (meaning Peter’s comments afterwards), kind of, giving our inside or outside view of the whole thing. And then, I think, then for a lot of people it clicks in their heads as to why it was done in the way it was done.... it clicked in a lot of people's heads that, it can't be exactly the same as what you found. There's got to be some theatre in behind it, otherwise it just doesn't resonate and connect with people, right? - Michael, interview 6.3.17

References to reflection in Goosebumps and the surrounding interactions suggest development should go beyond a focus on the challenges of current reality. Activities should show both what is and what could be. The space between is the expression of distance. One of the issues with such a presentation is that the nature of ‘what is’, ‘what could be’ and the distance between is experienced differently by different people, and is continually shifting. There is also a timing issue. Any depiction of researched reality, theatrical or otherwise, can only ever be a snapshot, subject to perpetual change. Meaning
is not carried, unchanged, into the future (Cunliffe et al., 2004). As one participant remarked in a post-performance interview “it made me think back to the time that we were there and where we are now”. As chapter one argues, most development is concerned with a fixed impression of where or who people are at the outset and where they are going. The data in this study suggest a more pressing issue may be what distance between a current perception of reality and the ‘somewhere else’ represents to those enacting, ‘in the moment’, the performance of development. It is, thus, more important to frame and appreciate the process of interacting with distance than try to articulate a singular impression of current or potential realities.

As Meisiek and Barry (2007) observe, theatre can overcome issues of time and space, acting both mimaetically as a mirror to multiple realities and metaxically as a window to multiple future possibilities. Yet, whether fictional or not, a developer trying to portray a ‘second world’ (Eriksson, 2011) will inevitably encounter sources of tension. In order to answer the second research question around how developers interact with tension, the tensions must first be understood. This section has made some suggestions for how tensions associated with distance can be interpreted in one way – as reflection. There is tension around the level of distance-as-reflection to bring to the central performance of development so that the experience is both familiar and strange enough to engage critical consciousness (Raelin, 2008). Another source of tension concerns the assumption that development must involve movement, the second motif around distance identified from Les’ performance.

**Distance as Movement**

Questions of movement across space have been present in this research from the beginning. As a developer I have asked ‘how far could or should I go’ and, in the
immediate aftermath of each decision, ‘did I go far enough, or too far’. Participants asked in various ways, ‘how far will we have to go’, or ‘how much further could we have gone’. As indicated in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, such questions seem to suggest assumptions that development takes people from one place to somewhere else, moving across the distance between. Use of the word ‘far’ reflects that way in which we subject ourselves, through entering a development activity, to movement away from the ‘safety’ of a pre-existing place or state. For developers and participants alike such an acceptance may be accompanied by a fear of what will happen as they make the journey together. Ambiguity around what the crossing of distance means thus manifests as a source of tension.

Les uses ideas of movement in a number of ways in his performance. First, he tells the actress playing Amanda ‘you took me to an area......’ where he was able to reflect. Appearing grateful for having been taken there, he plays the role of passive recipient; he has ‘been moved’ by the intervention. Later, referring once again to the ‘leap of faith’ taken, it is clear he himself has precipitated the action, or movement, necessary to experience the development process. This time, he has moved himself. He claims the responsibility for having initiated the development (“why did I want to do this in the first place”). In each case, there is a distance that is independently traversed with the result that an individual, and his personal reality, is changed forever. There is also, however, a suggested ambiguity around whether participants in development are active or passive in their movement across distance. This connects to the tussle of control vs. liberation raised in chapter one. It also links with the observation made in the same chapter that much development work, inside and outside organisations, works on a ‘deficit’ model where the centre assumes to know what is best for the periphery. In most organisations the responsibility for the design of development is located with managers in a HR or OD
function. Employees are expected to attend programmes that have been designed for them, purportedly in their interests. Even with many theatre-based programmes, participants have almost no control over the distance they are expected to traverse in the process (Clark & Mangham, 2004a). The company controls both the ‘role’ they are expected to play and the ‘script’ they are expected to follow (Nissley et al., 2004).

Such a view of employees as passive subjects in a development process over which they have little control aligns with another depiction of movement in Goosebumps. Les uses imagery of movement to construct a narrative of a company pioneering into the future (“why did we as a company embark on this journey”; “I will play a very small role in orchestrating that path”; “we were going through five years of immense growth”; “could we... move forward to the next journey, the next phase of this great company”). This is movement across distance on a grand scale with the momentum to carry even the most change-resistant employee. There are, however, two journeys interwoven together in this rhetoric: the high-level journey towards the ‘next phase of this great company’ with an articulated destination and strategic direction and; the specific development journey documented in this research, culminating with the theatre performance. As noted in chapter four, the destination (outcome) and direction (intentionality) of the latter were filled with ambiguity, and Les previously experienced deep discomfort concerning unknown outcomes. In his performance in Goosebumps, however, he states, “Whether we like it or not, whether we are happy or sad, or whether it has injected an emotional connection, I think we achieved our goal. That is what I was trying to achieve.” This statement contains nothing about a tangible outcome and suggests Les has now reached a place, or entered a space, where unpredictable outcomes are not only accepted, but revered. In the inter-text commentary Leny calls this a ‘personal denouement’, but it could also be likened to a movement across metaphorical space from a position where
knowing dominates to a place where ‘unknowing’ is valued. As Leny acknowledges, though, his statement also retrospectively validates his leap of faith, thus dissolving any pre-experienced tension around the uncertainty of entering uncharted waters. Developers ought, therefore, to be conscious of the tendency commissioners may exhibit to exonerate themselves in closing performances.

In the previous section, distance as reflection was examined as a source of tension. In this section, I looked at a second interpretation of distance as movement. The expressions of each motif in the performance of Goosebumps suggest the process of moving into the space between current realities and potentialities contains tension. Such a claim offers another component in answering the first research question. In terms of Les’ performance there is evidence to suggest that the movement into a place where ambiguity is acceptable may be an act of development itself. If development is understood as movement into a space between ‘what is’ and ‘what could be’, therefore, a better appreciation of what such distance represents to participants might advance understanding of the different responses to development. Questions of ‘how far to go’ may be misguided. Instead, it might be asked; how do development participants perceive and then enter the space of aesthetic reflexivity lying between current and future realities? If an answer can be found to this question, it would make a significant step towards answering the second research question. Paying heed to the dialogic nature of performance, I will now look for such an answer in the interactions of the developer and participants that concern distance in development.

**Distancing in Performance**

Boal (1995) and Brecht (1964) argued that an aesthetic of distance is what arouses the capacity for action. Brecht, particularly, urged that distance, also conceived as
estrangement, should be incorporated into every theatre performance regardless of the intentionality or context. The expressions of distance encountered so far in this chapter appear to have instrumental, rather than aesthetic, qualities. They are related to the tasks behind development; the motivation to reflect and move into a space for action. In chapter two, however, I argued that it is impossible to separate aesthetic and instrumental aspects of performance and, by extension, the same applies to development and distance. Artistry and creative ambition deserve a central positioning alongside the focus on cognition and critical thinking in development as a whole and the tensions of distance within it. Rather than using the term ‘aesthetic distance’ as was offered in chapter two, then, a more useful distinction between types of distance encountered in this research is offered. In this chapter I conceptualise the types of distance described in the previous section as constructs, whereas tensions of distance encountered in the active performance of development may be better described as distance-as-process, or ‘distancing’. In this section, I look at how 'distancing' may paradoxically alleviate some tensions, while yielding some of its own. 

**Distance of Form**

The processes of applying distance in development can be broadly split into two categories which relate to what I will call distance of form and distance of content. Distance of form concerns the level of ‘theatricalisation’ (Anderson, 2015) or spectacle in the ‘conceptual infrastructure’ (Hamera, 2013) of a performance. It relates to the artistic abstraction described at the opening of this chapter and the aesthetic style and genre of performance, for example the use of humour and music. Decisions relating to applying distance of form can be summarised in the question: “How removed, or abstract, should the overall style and genre of the performance be in relation to the context of the
activity?” Within such a question there are, however, a number of more narrowly defined choices which are revealed in the data, each of which contains tension. In Goosebumps, the first reference to distance of form is in comments relating to the authenticity of the actors’ performance. As chapter three explains, unlike some interventions that use theatre in development, this production used professional actors on a raised stage in a formal theatre in order to enhance the credibility and persuasiveness of the story (Saldaña, 2003). Presentation of a ‘polished’, rehearsed performance was a deliberate act to create distance between the everyday realities of Toolzone and the fictional world of Drillset. It was rooted in the assumptions of chapter two that aesthetic experience enables a ‘resonant interplay’ (Cohen et al., 2011) between different ways of knowing accessed through multiple senses. Such a choice to distance the realities of participants and theatrical presentation, however, may come at a cost. Boal (1985) and others believe it is the experience of being actively involved in the performance that leads to ‘liberation of the spectator’, or participant. Only a small number of participants had been actively involved in the crafting of the theatre event during playbuilding. Although members of the audience were active in the sense-making workshop immediately afterwards, they remained relatively passive during the theatre performance in exactly the way that Jackson (2009) claims normative theatre conventions dictate.

In the event, Les tells the actors collectively “you are amazing” and goes on to 'worship' the actor playing the character Bruno, although there is some confusion as to whether he is addressing the actor or the character at that point. After the performance event, Les and others continued to express difficulty separating the actor from the character. For example, during a dinner to celebrate the project, Les insisted on calling each actor by their character name throughout the evening. Although they came from the fictional reality of Drillset, the characters took on a life of their own within Toolzone,
beyond the play. In the weeks and months following the performance, their names became synonymous with traits and behaviours so that team members would say to one another, for example "don't be such a Wendy" or "maybe you had better start thinking like Amanda". As Les later stated:

Bruno wasn't just the customer service. Bruno was every new person in the company. Doesn't matter about your role. And Beau was every ego-minded self-centred person - Les, interview, 31.1.17

Organisations and developers alike appear to concur that the translation of learning from a defined development context into everyday reality is a mark of ‘success’. As chapter one explains, however, it can be challenging to determine if, where and how this is happening. The ‘legacy’ of the characters in this research appears to be an indication. It suggests that the authenticity of the actors’ portrayal stimulated a reflective, collective consciousness that did transfer directly back into the real world beyond the walls of the theatre, as Brecht wished it to (Anthony Jackson, 2007). Such consciousness appears to have been generated through a combination of the distance created in the aesthetic experience of performance and the instrumental, cognitive, rationalisation of the process in the workshop event afterwards. The performance was artistically ‘seductive’15 (Adrian Jackson, 2009) enough and distanced from reality so as to emotionally engage with a range of subjectivities. Combined with the post-performance workshop, it also contained sufficiently strong messaging that was ‘close’ enough to galvanise lasting change in the business.

Parallels may be drawn here with other forms of development. Many programmes draft in experts to deliver specialist techniques or modules. The expectation is for them to perform their ‘art’ in a ‘polished’ manner, thereby emphasising the distance between

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15 In an ‘attractiveness’ sense rather than the sinister form of seduction as corruption observed by Sinclair in chapter one
themselves and participants. As the tussle around situatedness in chapter one describes, such approaches are often delivered in a physical location removed from the business environment, such as a business school. While there is a potential aesthetic pay-off, as there appears to have been in this research, as chapter one outlined there is also a risk that such specialists, like the ‘sage-on-the-stage’, may alienate participants with esoteric arrogance. To resolve such a tension, those involved in the design of development should pay attention to when, where, how and why they are bringing in the experts and the potential distancing effect it may have.

The second reference to distance of form in Goosebumps is noted in the comment “Leny took extreme licence”. This was not realism or ‘kitchen-sink drama’. As chapter three details, the genre of the play was deliberately heightened musical theatre, with elements of comedy. One audience member seemed to appreciate the resultant light and shade:

I think people realised that it was an artistic representation of what we are, or need. As I think you said... someone said, from the start, the play would be f***ing dead set boring if it was just what we are. It's got to have excitement, it's got to have, you know, dark times, it's got to have sarcasm, it's got to have, you know humour or enjoyment. So, had it just been one-dimensional, half the crowd would have probably fallen asleep. - Stefan, interview 6.3.17

In this heightened aesthetic, there were deliberate moments where actors ‘broke the fourth wall’ without losing composure; they physically moved through the audience and/or interacted with them, engaging eye contact and responding to laughter with improvised gestures and ‘off the cuff’ comments. The double intention behind such moments was to emphasise the theatricality of the performance, whilst simultaneously bringing the audience ‘closer’ to the action – helping them feel part of the unfolding drama. Another audience member recognised the indulgence of the adopted style, commenting “You got to take the creative licence and heighten the drama, which was quite entertaining” (Henry, interview 6.3.17). Saldaña (2011) urges aesthetic
consideration in ethnodrama and instructs practitioners to place ‘art first, message second’. In this research, audience members particularly appeared to appreciate the ‘art’, including the music, as noted in comments below:

The musical was witty and it made the performance fun to watch. – anonymous participant (questionnaire results) 3.3.17

Musical element made it more theatrical and over exaggerated characters made it amusing. - anonymous participant (questionnaire results) 3.3.17

I liked the musical part, it was really, really good. – Bea, interview 21.2.17

I really liked the scene layout, how it was like conversation, then conversation, then someone gets an expositionary song. – Henry, interview 6.3.17

Yet, if a performance becomes too theatrical (or “over-exaggerated” as Les claimed certain elements were), it may edge close to the ‘entertainment’ end of the performance dyad (Schechner, 1988) and ‘messages’ may be at risk of getting lost. Discussion of the LD tussle around situatedness argued that entering a space ‘devoid of localised meaning’ can result in participants being ‘touched little’ by an experience (Ford & Harding, 2007). One participant in this intervention, for example, found the aesthetic of comedy overwhelmed the ‘localised meaning’, stating: “perhaps too comical and some people could’ve missed the point”. As suspected in chapter two, therefore, when applying distance of form in development activities it seems there is a balance to be found between engaging with the senses through spectacle to avoid ‘dull and pedestrian’ didactic performances (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010), and stimulating cognitive, critical consciousness. Again, such interpretations would seem to extend to the traditional development sphere, particularly the observation that development should contain elements of ‘light and shade’, as would a ‘well-made play’. Developers using any approach might seek to generate moments in which participants are ‘struck’ or “moved to change our ways of being, talking and acting” (Cunliffe, 2002a, p.36). They can do so by paying attention to the overall ‘aesthetic’ of the work. With what Les called ‘injections’
of emotional connection, development could even be conceived as a way to immerse participants completely in a state of 'communitas': the "direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities" (Turner, 1982, p.47).

**Distance of Content**

*Goosebumps* contains a number of examples of the way distance of form may be applied in development and some of the tensions experienced in the process. The second type of distancing is to find an appropriate amount of distance between an original context and the ‘copy’ in the detailed content of the performance. Using a selection of micro-performances, this section will examine two approaches to characterisation that reveal how different applications of distance of content are experienced in the performance of development.

As chapter three explained, four of the characters for *At What Cost* were co-created during playbuilding and three were added later during final scripting stages. Of the original four, two became controversial figures. The first was the character of Wendy. The playbuilding group had created her to have a striking resemblance to a real Toolzone employee, Margaret, who was present during playbuilding. She seemed to revel in the parallels between herself and the fiction - as shown by her comment below, made shortly after the playback session with invited actors and taken from a video transcript – with my annotations:

*(to playback actor)*“Can I compliment you on being Wendy. That is exactly how I feel!” *(as she says the word exactly, she holds her hands in open fists around the side of her head and I can hear from her voice that she is smiling)*

The characteristics given to Wendy by the playbuilding group included perpetual frustration, a short temper and tendency towards confrontation. As an artist-developer, I chose to retain the character in the play without any further ‘treatment’ and in the final
performance she was depicted as a negative, resistant employee of Drillset. In our post-performance discussions Les had mentioned how the real employee, Margaret, had been “not disturbed, but emotional” as a result. Curious to see how the performance had affected her, therefore, I interviewed Margaret shortly afterwards. She stated:

It was enjoyable. I did enjoy it. And it did make me think about my role within the company and whether or not I am like that. I don't think I am. – Margaret, interview 20.2.17

Les informed me that she had shared her reflections with him:

...certain people came in to me on Monday morning and apologised. They saw themselves inside the characters. I can remember one person who related herself to Wendy.... She said to me ‘if I ever display those sorts of behaviours, can you remind me who I am’? She’s been with me for over 10 years in the company. She’s never asked for that kind of feedback before. – Les, interview 13.3.17

Margaret claimed not to think she was ‘like that’, yet she felt an urge to discuss the possible parallels with the MD of the company. I also spoke to Margaret’s line manager, the Toolzone financial controller who reflected:

...people could quite easily tell who, who it could, she could be. I was trying to watch Margaret when I watched the show and see how she responded to that. Right after the show, I talked to her to seek her feedback. She was handling it better than I thought she would. I was quite worried about how she could take it personally. It was the image at the beginning, when she was trying to tell people off and tell them they were not following the rules and stuff like that. But she (Margaret) told me it actually was happening every day. – Julia, interview 6.3.17

Another interview participant revealed that she perceived the character of Wendy and her attitudes to be a close reflection of Toolzone. She stated:

When we have issues come up, we've got that Wendy character - which you portrayed exactly right - which was like "you haven't done my process, why do you not listen to me, you haven't done it", rah rah rah, and that is her reasoning for our mistakes.

She then went on to say:

That Wendy character is still not a teamwork character. It's still there as functionally a roadblock to getting things done. My team actually complain about her all the time, the way that she speaks. So when they are trying to solve an issue, she talks to them like they are about three years old and they are the dumbest person in the world. And they don’t like that, and then they keep that Wendy stereotype about her, like she doesn't give a shit about what they think, what they do. So those under currents are still there. – Sharon, interview 12.3.17
In both of these last comments, it seems the participant is using the term “that Wendy character” as a pseudonym for the real person. In a similar way to the confusion between actor and character displayed by Les in *Goosebumps*, there is a blurring between the two realities of Drillset and Toolzone.

These observations around the characterisation of Wendy from four vantage points suggest these participants perceived a close positioning between the reality of Toolzone and the ‘second world’ on stage. Relating this back to the tussle from chapter one, although the aesthetic form of the intervention in this case was highly ‘theatrical’, and hence separate from the Toolzone context, the content was situated tightly within the Toolzone environment. This is hardly surprising given the active part Toolzone employees played in constructing characters, stories and dialogue in playbuilding. The development activity can thus be classified as close but distant, positioned inside and outside the organisation simultaneously. The interview responses indicate processes of metaxis (Boal, 1995), second-order observation (Schreyogg, 2001) and/or aesthetic reflexivity had taken place under these conditions. Participants seemed to be asking “which parts of the characters that I am seeing on stage are similar to me (or my colleagues)” or, “why did that character (and by extension, me) choose to make that point in that particular way, using those particular words, gestures and non-verbal cues?” These examples use my own interpretive phrasing, but they are the kind of questions Goffman (1959) envisages in his performance analysis.

A contrast can be made with the processes of distancing relating to the second controversial character, Beau the salesman. In *Goosebumps*, Les refers to him as “the evil villain” and, indeed, his function in the drama was that of antagonist. I had tried to make
him relatable but as one comment from an audience member reveals, this was not fully successful:

I think Beau was probably my least favourite character but that is because he was a little bit two-dimensional, I think. There wasn't a lot behind him except for angry and villain. – Henry, interview 6.3.17

In Goosebumps, Les claims the characterisation of Beau was “over-exaggerated but it hit the mark”. Beau was certainly less of a direct parallel to a real person than Wendy and more of a hybrid character, but there were physical, behavioural and vocal similarities between the character and a number of salesmen I had interviewed, particularly Scott. In an interview, a senior manager revealed Scott’s reaction during the performance:

I looked over and there was Nathan, Warren and Scott. Nathan said to Scott, "hey, this Beau character is you", and Scott said "what are you talking about, it's you!" And they were both laughing and joking. I spoke to Scott. Scott took it in good humour. – Tom, interview 1.3.17

Wendy was a close, believable depiction of an individual who could be (and in fact was to some) found within the real organisation. Beau was more of an abstract caricature and responses to his presentation were more polarised, no doubt partly because his role as a salesman represented nearly half of the actual employees in Toolzone, whereas Wendy operated within a small department. While both seemed to resonate, the performance of Beau was more divisive, perhaps because it could be considered more extreme and less situated in the local context (see chapter one). From the various interview and conversational responses it appears that choices around distance of content in the performance precipitated two kinds of emotional connection to the characters and their related stories, both of which were felt as unsettling. The first, as seen in Goosebumps, is present in Les’ response to Amanda’s storyline and can be linked to what Boal would call ‘catharsis into action’. It stems from the process of metaxis whereby a participant can belong to both their own reality and the fictional image of their reality at
the same time. They can see themselves as ‘an other’ and connect to possibilities for multiple potential futures and selves (Sparrowe, 2005). A summation of this response could be “I am seeing parallels with my own situation and I can use that to change for the better”. Margaret’s reaction, as documented by Les would be another example of this kind response to distancing. There were further examples of what could be termed reflexive action in response to Amanda’s story as described below:

I think the work life balance came through a lot, for a lot of people, not just me. It was funny, I was like (laughing), "do I stay till the end of the whole dancing and everything or should I just go home?" Because I had to fly out the next day. I was like, "no I'm going home". – Michael, interview 6.3.17

The second kind of emotional connection to the play appeared as a kind of direct affront that seemed not to translate into action. It can be summed up in the statement “that’s not Toolzone and I’m angry about it”. Returning to the quote at the start of the chapter, it manifests metaphorically as the ‘hot tears’ emanating from a ‘shaken manhood’ but it does not follow through to personal, reflexive change. As some participants observed:

Some of the characters people were getting pretty upset about. Saying "that's not me". Actually "that's not us". – Bea, interview 21.2.17

[He] was quite angry. He took it very literally. He thought the sales manager was him. That Beau was an attack on the sales guys. – Tom, interview 1.3.17

People made a direct association. "Leny’s made a play about us, therefore that is me". I’m not sure that people were able to make that relation, so that was kind of missed on some people, hence why they were sort of "this isn't us! How dare you?". – Tom, interview 1.3.17

Peter, in his workshop facilitation, had stated “if you got angry that’s a good thing” intimating that such anger would necessarily lead participants to question how things could be done differently. Evidence from the data, though, suggests some may have felt the anger but failed to act upon it. It appears those who saw the play as a literal
presentation, and thus experienced only a mimetic, not metaxic, process, were unable to move past the confrontation of the performance, even when prompted by skilled facilitation. Rather than being offended because of too much distance, or a lack of association, however, one questionnaire respondent theorised another reason for the strong emotional response that inhibited action:

The dramatic aspect of the characters offended some people but only because they saw themselves in the characters. - anonymous participant (questionnaire results) 3.3.17

Unlike mainstream functionalist LDPs that project ideal-leader characters, this development activity portrayed human error in everyone through composite and flawed characters who each had to make compromises. In so doing, it followed the critical performativity of Alvesson and Spicer (2012) by focusing on ambiguities and breakdowns in leadership, rather than lauded examples of where things have been done ‘right’. So, rather than asking “how close am I to this engineered ideal leader character, and how can I become even more similar” as people may be expected to do in other LDPs, participants in this process asked “do I do anything that these characters do and, if so, what action could I take instead?” In the excerpts above, those who were most offended seemed to have been publicly stating “that’s not us/me and I’m angry about it”. What some may actually have been feeling, however, could be interpreted as something akin to “I am a bit like that sometimes, but I’m angry that I had to see it and, therefore, I’m not going to do anything about it”.

Whether or not their outward appearance aligned with, or masked, inner sense-making processes, many of the people who exhibited apparent difficulty moving beyond the literal interpretation of the play were from the sales department of Toolzone. This suggests that proximity to the centre of the action features alongside proximity to
character in participant experiences of distancing around content. Whether or not they identified with Beau as a character, the fact that he was both the antagonist of the drama and a salesman was a strong enough link for them to be offended. In terms of distance of content in a theatre context, then, it is not only resonance (or lack of it) with character, but also situation that determines the degree or reflection or reflexivity.

The interpretations of data in this section suggest there are more and less productive versions of an emotional connection accessed through distancing. Like the control and intentionality discussed in the previous chapter, distance in development is ambiguous, fluid and subjective. As one participant pointed out, he himself was struggling to articulate his own impression of distance:

I'm sort of torn between whether it was a beat up, or it was a pure realisation, or a glamorised realisation of our existence. – Stefan, interview 6.3.17

Nor is a perception of distance stable over time. In a surprising twist, one participant made a complete u-turn in his interpretation of the action in At What Cost as shown below:

At the point of the play, I'm thinking, hmmm, that's a bit shocking, because it shocks everyone. I'm thinking it's a good move from Les that we can (have this performance and) let people know how each other are feeling about this. But at the same time, after two weeks, I went no! They (sales guys) should be more aggressive, there should be more of those people. You guys (sales) shouldn't feel anything! You should laugh at everybody else. “Who cares? I'm doing my job”. That's it! – John, interview 20.2.17

Another participant displayed the ability to hold different responses to the distance encountered in performance simultaneously:

Even though my personal opinion was the content was a beat up on some of our employees and the sales team the show itself was fantastic. Top job. - anonymous participant (questionnaire results) 3.3.17

This supports the assertion made in chapter two that it is precisely the human capacity to experience multiple ways of knowing and appreciate the plurality of what is and what could be that gives drama its power. He was able to be both inside the drama,
affected by its emotion, but also to stand back and appreciate the wider aesthetic of the performance.

Performance ‘Review’: The Paradox of Distance

In chapter two I argued that development, like theatre, is a performance. I went on to claim that aesthetic and instrumental qualities must be integrated in performance. Jackson frames this by stating a performance should both ‘seduce’ and ‘provoke’ and that an audience may be “coaxed or challenged into moving beyond the role of passive spectator into active critic or subversive participant” (2009, p.41). In this chapter I have looked at how distance may be both experienced by participants and used as a process by developers in order to meet that challenge. I have identified some of the tensions and risks involved, such as the decisions around genre and characterisation in crafting a development activity, and the variety of responses to presentations of distance. While a specific theatre-based intervention was the subject of this study, some of the findings in this chapter may be relevant to development of all kinds in all contexts.

In the first half of the chapter I investigated two different ways to conceive distance as a construct in development – as reflection and as movement. It appears that in all development there is an expectation that a space exists between what is and what could be and this space must either be moved into or crossed. Traditional functionalist development is concerned with articulating what is on the other side of that space – the destination, or desired outcome of an activity. This thesis acknowledges some degree of clarity in the defining of such an interim space may be necessary in order to alleviate tensions when working with organisations. Understanding the act of entering the space between current and potential realities and what this distance represents, however, may be more important than defining what they will find when they get across. There is some
confusion around what the process of reflection involves and whether or not it is an appropriate aspiration. If reflection is only the subjective presentation of ‘what is’ at the current time, its usefulness is limited. Equally, if only one desired future is reflected as a presentation of the ‘destination’ for a development activity, the opportunity to explore the space in between, where as yet unknown potentialities are co-created, is lost. This thesis argues that reflexivity as a process that considers the distance between ‘what is’ and many ‘what ifs’ may be more valuable than reflection. It also recognises that reflection, reflexivity and associated processes must be more clearly framed when making expectations of participants, particularly where their involvement is not voluntary. Theory and practice from the theatre tradition may help advance knowledge in this area, especially the insights of Boal and Brecht around metaxis and estrangement respectively.

In the second half of the chapter I presented two different types of distancing as a process - the application of distance of form and distance of content. This responds to the assertion made in chapter two that the question of how closely art should imitate life requires more critical examination. I made the suggestion that developers and scholars of development must be highly attuned to the interactions of aesthetic and instrumental drivers and associated tensions. The degree of physical and contextual situatedness, raised as a tussle in chapter one, should feature in decisions related to applying distance in development. Distancing was shown to elicit various emotional responses, possibly even the ‘catharsis-into-action’ highlighted by Boal (1995). In relation to this, it was noted that even where participants may claim to be ‘unaffected’, there may be deeper, underlying processes at work in the aftermath of an intervention. As Goffman (1959, 1986) has recognised, conscious or unconscious fabrications around the degree of reflection or reflexivity may be performed in dialogic encounters. The data initially seemed to suggest, as Saldaña (2011) and others have (see chapter two), that there may be a ‘sweet spot’ in
applying distance, particularly distance of form to a performance of development. It also suggested, however, that participant perceptions of distance are fleeting and personal, so the idea that a developer might strike the ‘right’ balance of distance across an intervention is a fallacy. What seems more likely is that there are many moments of resonance that may occur unexpectedly when one or more individuals connects across the distance presented at that particular moment. Distance can, thus, be played with and applied as a frame to an aesthetic practice, just as the comic, ugly, sacred and sublime (Strati, 1999) may be used in development activities (see chapter two).

For Brecht, change seemed to hinge on distance:

> We need a type of theatre which not only releases the feelings, insights and impulses possible within the particular historical field of human relations in which the action takes place, but employs and encourages those thoughts and feelings which help transform the field itself. – Brecht, quoted in Kershaw (1992)

If the word ‘theatre’ and ‘development’ were interchangeable, this statement appears to be a succinct summary of the tensions inherent in the processes of distancing in this research. It seems the development of leadership must engage people’s minds but also their hearts in order to achieve any kind of change (S. S. Taylor, 2014), whether outcome or process focused. In chapter two I suggested a paradox; that separation through distance, or ‘making the familiar strange’, may be just what is required for deep, situated learning to take place. The data in this thesis endorse such a notion, but extend it with some detailed insights. These are based around what distance might represent to participants and how a developer might work with distance as both an aesthetic construct and a process.

Together, the assertions springing from the data findings in these two chapters provide some answers to the first two research questions. Distance is both a tension and a way to interact with tension. There is, however, a complex challenge laid down for
developers. They must find ways to engage with and elevate ambiguity around control and intentionality in the negotiation of development, and then play with perceptions and presentations of distance in their performances. In the next chapter I offer a framework for how, and by whom, such a challenge might be faced.
CHAPTER SIX:

THE DEVELOPER-AS-FOOL

“O Lear, Lear, Lear! Beat at this gate that let thy folly in and thy dear
judgment out!” I.4:269

Carroll and Nicholson (2014) claim the only way to enable a more nuanced
practice among all agents in the development context is to make the tensions of such
practice visible and accessible. Responding to such a provocation, several strands of
tension encountered in the social construction of development are presented in this thesis.
They are centred on the relationship of a developer to an organisation and its members, an
area generally under-explored in organisation studies. The contributions this thesis makes
to leadership development (LD) therefore all emanate from a more nuanced
understanding of the performed interactions that construct this relationship - far beyond
the traditional functionalist conceptions of client-provider transactions. Such
understanding is accessed through a metaphor that emerged in the course of my analysis,
like many meaningful insights, by surprise (McNiff, 2007). The metaphor relates to the
founding principle of this thesis that development is a performance, co-constructed by the
developer and the developed in the space of development. It traces its ancestry through
the Elizabethan theatre, the medieval courts of Europe and in the rituals of many early
global cultures. It is the metaphor of the ‘developer-as-fool’, a notion that may help
generate new knowledge in the field of LD. This could include theoretical and
methodological understanding for researchers, practical applications for development
facilitators, and productive considerations for organisations undergoing development.
The structure of this discussion is as follows. I begin with an explication of how the developer-as-fool metaphor emerged from the findings including a brief background to the concept of folly. Then, using illustrations from *King Lear*, a play steeped in tensions of control, loyalty and purpose, I will develop the assertions emerging from the findings to offer a framework that depicts three ‘aesthetic pedagogies’ of the developer-fool; ‘motley’, ‘elasticity’ and ‘play’. Finally, I will suggest implications for theory and practice including avenues for further research.

**Wherefore Folly?**

In the lead up to *Kum Ba Yah Crisis*, there were indications that the various perceptions of truth emerging in the OT process were beginning to threaten the power structures within Toolzone. As development is inherently power-laden (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013), this was always to be expected. It was not until I was immersed within the organisation, however, that agendas were revealed and I began to sense palpable anxiety from senior figures around the affect(s) of the project (Thompson, 2009). The phrase 'speaking truth to power' began to resonate - a phrase often attributed to the action traditionally carried out by the theatrical fool. Fools - both on and off the stage (in medieval courts) - are the only characters permitted to speak freely in the presence of Kings. Their unique, playful identity affords them protection against punishment doled out to others who threaten authority. The fool has to walk a tightrope between challenging and assuaging power and it was this image of balancing above all others that drew me to the metaphor. After the completion of the fieldwork, as I mined my data set, clear patterns began to form around the idea of juggling multiple agendas, whilst performing with skilled, playful artistry. I began to imagine myself as a Shakespearean fool living by his wits under the watchful eye of power.
At the time it felt serendipitous that a theatre-based metaphor should spring from a research project built around a theatre intervention, but it was the relationship between developer and organisation, rather than the theatrical processes within OT, around which the metaphor began to crystallise. This is not just a metaphor for theatre-based development: the principles are relevant regardless of the form. I will, however, tease out the insights and implications using my dramaturgical lens on the theatre processes enacted in this study. Viewing myself as the character in the meta-play who facilitated the 'speaking of truth', the natural extension was to see Les as the King to my fool. In another setting it may have been possible to position the entire senior management team as a collective king, possibly even an entire business unit, but in this project it was initially Les alone who took responsibility. Perhaps partly because of that fact, we developed an unusually intimate and respectful relationship. It is this king-fool relationship that features centrally in the forthcoming discussion. Although the historical fool was always male, and I honour this tradition when referring to the fool on the theatre stage, in the spirit of playful contradiction, I deliberately write the metaphorical developer-fool as a female in this thesis. At the risk of upsetting purists, I am confident Erasmus (1958 [1511]) would support my decision and would point any critic towards his work In Praise of Folly for an explanation of why.

Folly in Action

Armed with my metaphor, I now explore the aspects of the developer-fool that emerged from my data findings. I group these into three ‘aesthetic pedagogies’, a deliberate oxymoron that springs from consideration of the ‘poetics’ of applied art. A poetics of representation does not support the binary division between content and form that underpins the majority of development work where the instrumental is privileged
over the aesthetic (Prentki & Preston, 2009), following definitions given in chapter two.
The term is intended to provoke through playful contradiction – a hallmark of folly, as we shall see in a later section. I use it to emphasise, first, a point made in chapter two that an aesthetic can be pedagogic (O'Connor, 2013) and, second, the fool as the agent who best straddles the two domains. But who is this intriguing figure?

**The Motley Fool**

“If I gave them all of my living, I'd keep my coxcombs myself” I.4:106

In chapter four I examined how a relationship between a developer and the forces of power in an organisation is constructed and negotiated in moments of performance. Within my metaphor, the image of motley is used to represent the tensions and ambiguity around the performance of developer identity, purpose (or intentionality) and ideology, all of which emerged in the data findings as key dynamics of development processes. Motley is, then, the first of three aesthetic pedagogies that together make up the main contribution of the developer-fool, and thus, the bulk of this chapter.

Motley is a paradox, in two important ways. First, traditionally, motley was the presentation of ‘otherness’: a costume of many colours reserved for only one figure, demarking the fact that he operated outside of usual dress laws. The vividness of the garb (sometimes accompanied by pointed cap and bells) both draws attention to, but detracts from the individual wearer - appropriate where the identity of the character is nothing more than function. The fool is simply a channel through which the audience may view the action (Prentki, 2012), an imitative ‘agile parasite’ (Hyde, 1998), or shape-shifter that “presents nothing but represents everything” (Prentki, 2012, p.17). The motley garb is an unambiguous sign vehicle (Goffman, 1959) – everyone knows the wearer is a clown, a
trickster and playful soothsayer – but, like the theatrical mask of folly, it is also a device or disguise behind which the fool can hide in ambiguity and safety (Prentki, 2012).

Second, motley signifies the freedom of the outsider to flout convention but it also designates the wearer as a low status representative of authority. Those who don the garb are both anointed by and shackled in submission to the King – the ultimate symbol of dominance. On the stage, high and low statuses are juxtaposed to engineer a strong aesthetic of contrast, whereby fools possess the ability to move freely amongst, with proximity to, those in power:

“The clown is he who, although moving in high society, is not part of it, and tells unpleasant things to everybody in it; he, who disputes everything regarded as evidence. He would not be able to do all this, if he were part of that society himself; then he could at most be a drawing-room scandal-monger. The clown must stand aside and observe good society from outside, in order to discover the non-evidence of evidence, the non-finality of its finality. At the same time he must move in good society in order to get to the sacred cows, and have occasion to tell unpleasant things. The philosophy of clowns is the philosophy that in every epoch shows up as doubtful what has been regarded as most certain; it reveals contradictions inherent in what seems to have been proved by visual experience; it holds up to ridicule what seems obvious common sense, and discovers truths in the absurd. (Kott, 1967, p.131)

The fool literally wears and mocks the colours of the court. He wears his motley with pride, revelling in his otherness; yet, like the cassock of a monk or the uniform of a prisoner, it represents a constraint whereby the wearer is stripped of secular status (Turner, 1974). Motley is, therefore, a paradoxical symbol of dependence and independence, limits and license.

“Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd fool....” I.4:197

It is not the physical attire of a developer that I liken to the motley garb; rather, it is the ability to hold and shift between multiple presentations of identity, intentionality and ideology in the construction of a development relationship. It is well-known that much development involves self examination (usually that of participants, not developers). It is also generally understood that developers wear ‘many hats’ in their
work. The tendency within LD studies is still, however, to think of identity as a singular, relatively fixed entity (Mabey, 2013). Extant research "tends to maintain an oppositional relationship between the self as an agent or the self as a regulated object" (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013, p.1229). The findings of this study support other studies within dialogic and critical discourses of LD that suggest development itself is a process of constructing identity (Carroll & Levy, 2010; Gagnon, 2008). It also supports theory that identities in development are fragmented, multiple and shifting (Ford, 2006), and that the ‘repertoire’ of possible selves is limited by contextual factors (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013). Turner states:

...as Goffman and others have shown, ordinary life in the social structure is itself a performance. We play roles, occupy statuses, play games with one another, don and doff many masks, each a "typification". (1986, p.107)

In this case, it is the self-presentation of the developer, rather than participants that is under scrutiny, and only within sociality, rather than in and of itself. This is not a thesis about identity. Rather it is the construction and presentation of identity (or self) in dialogue with others that features. This represents a relationality that is rife with tensions that demand both a license to practise and a consciousness around how a performance is constructed. To construct my arguments around how this might be achieved, I will refer to both data findings from this research and sources from the closest theatrical king-fool relationship of all – Lear and his Fool.

Kings and fools co-exist in a kind of symbiotic alliance. Hegel (2002 [1807]) suggests actors in struggle are reciprocally dependent and only recognized in relation to the other: the King is not a king without the fool and the rest of his subjects; the fool is no fool without the King (Prentki, 2012). Neither possesses control: they construct it together. The fool needs the King to provide security; the King needs his fool to show
him the truth as there is no one else who will do so. As Erasmus notes, traditionally kings sit isolated at the top of a feudal regime:

....for all their good fortune princes seem to me to be particularly unfortunate in having no one to tell them the truth and being obliged to have flatterers for friends…. The fact is, kings do dislike the truth, but the outcome of this is extraordinary for my fool. They can speak truth and even open insults and be heard with positive pleasure; indeed, the words which would cost a wise man his life are surprisingly enjoyable when uttered by a clown. (1958 [1511], pp. 118-119)

Certainly this applied in Toolzone where embedded traditional hierarchies belied the superficial indications of fun and egalitarianism in the culture (Fleming, 2005) and few were willing to challenge authority. In Shakespeare’s tragedy, Lear famously gives up his position and status, descending into a kind of madness where, first, he and the Fool are represented as equals, both fools, calling one another ‘boy’ and ‘lad’, then the balance of status is upturned altogether and fool becomes master, educator:

Fool: Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter Fool and a sweet one?

Lear: No, lad; teach me.

Fool: That lord that counsell’d thee
To give away thus land,

Come place him here by me,

Do thou for him stand:

The sweet and bitter fool

Will presently appear;

The one in motley here,

The other found out there.

Lear: Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool: All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with. I.4:136-49

In the space of a few lines the Fool shifts between multiple presentations of identity according to his ‘function’ and status at any given moment. He is a boundary-crosser, defying categories and oscillating between motley positions (Hyde, 1998). The idea of fool as ‘teacher’ in this text fits the development metaphor nicely, as does the
notion of fool as trusted advisor to the King, in the absence of others willing to speak the ‘truth’. Lear’s anger, intense but usually short-lived, is directed at perceived disloyalty - witnessed in the line “Dost thou call me fool, boy?” Yet the Fool, with impunity, continues his repartee throughout the scene and is clearly listened to with ardour. His final line in this excerpt is “characteristically ambivalent” (Prentki, 2012, p.106). It seems to return dignity to the King by suggesting folly is inside all of us from birth, and thus inescapable, but it could also suggest that Lear was born mentally retarded. Later in the same scene, after the entrance of Lear’s daughter Goneril, the Fool is more direct in his challenge to the King:

Fool: Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou had'st no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now: I am a fool, thou art nothing. I.4:190-4

In the theatre, characters always take a status relative to the others on stage and in these excerpts the Fool seems on an equal footing with Lear. We know from a simple comment that he is, in fact, nothing more than a ‘whipping boy’, with no status, no worldly possessions, not even a name:

Fool: I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are. They'll have me whipp'd for speaking true: thou'lt have me whipp'd for lying; and sometimes I am whipp'd for holding my peace. I.4:180-5

And yet, there is a genuine affection towards him:

Lear: Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart that's sorry yet for thee. III.2:72-3

As a parallel to the ‘backstage’ discussion between myself and Les recorded by voice memo (see figure seven, chapter four), in private, Lear and the Fool appear more like friends. There is even a brief suggestion that the Fool takes on a parental role although it is not clear if Lear directs his final exclamation at his fool or himself:

Fool: Canst thou tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear: No.

Fool: Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.
Lear: Why?

Fool: Why, to put’s head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear: I will forget my nature. So kind a father! I.5:21-31

These, and many other sections of dialogue in the first half of the play, depict an intimate but volatile relationship between the King and the Fool that is mirrored in my own encounters inside Toolzone. Over a series of micro- and meta-performances, the motley identity, or self-presentation, of a developer-fool acting in relation to participants was constructed by Les, myself and the other members of Toolzone with whom I interacted, for example in the ‘anointing’ of authority in Kum Ba Yah Crisis. The first part of motley, then, is the aesthetic ability to shift between fluid ‘working subjectivities’ (Fairhurst, 2007) of identity, or a ‘melange’ (Beech, 2008) of different performed characters (Goffman, 1959), including depictions of status. It is to move away from assumptions of fixed identities and embrace the ‘processual nature’ (Alvesson, 2003b) of the self where, “the same person who is in favour of accountability and performance evaluations, likes autonomy and freedom from dysfunctional measurements” (p.187). Motley helps to answer Sinclair’s (2009) question from chapter one around how developers can juggle the demands of exhibiting self-reflexivity and maintaining authority. It is not, however, immediately obvious how such an action may be performed. What, then, grants the developer-fool the ability to shift between positions and adopt different perspectives?

“Marry, here’s grace and a cod-piece; that’s a wise man and a fool.” III.2:41

The findings from this research suggest it is ambiguity around the intersection of identity, ideology and intentionality that affords the developer the liberty to play with presentations of self and ‘get away with it’. Performed characters are much more than
simple roles; they are a conception of self as a “dramatic effect arising from a scene that is presented and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern is whether it will be credited or discredited” (Goffman, 1959, p.253). In the case of my research the multiple performed characters and the associated sign activity (Goffman, 1959), or intention, were generally credited by my fellow actors opening up opportunities for expression and dialogue that may otherwise not have arisen. Through selective use of framing and other modes of presentation I held and expressed a number of different narratives, an aspect of development facilitation Carroll and Levy (2010) believe to be vital. The melange of performed characters, however, was delicately attuned to the perceptions and expectations of other players in the performance. The developer-fool is thus relational in her motley presentations of self, rather than isolated. An example would be the reciprocal oscillation between challenging authority and consciously accepting it as Les’ ‘puppet’, as noted in the analysis of *Kum Ba Yah Crisis* in chapter four. The resultant motley collection of potentially conflicting perceptions (Beech, 2008) around who I was and what I was there to do contributed to the intrigue of the project. Subsequent spontaneous conversations about family, future career prospects, and relationships with other employees enriched my understanding of the tapestry of life at Toolzone. These, including the willing openness of discussions with the ‘old-timers’ who saw me as an ally, not a threat, were unlikely to have happened if I had been perceived as a conventional, transactional development practitioner.

Ambiguity of identity goes hand in hand with ambiguity of intention, or purpose, which links directly to the first tussle of LD, raised in chapter one - outcome vs. process. It also connects to the debate of whether art can be an instrument, discussed at the end of chapter two. It reignites the question; of what, or who, are developers in the service (S. S. Taylor & Thellesen, 2006)? Developers selling themselves as mercenaries or prostitutes
might align best with commissioners featuring towards the functionalist end of the outcome spectrum I pointed to in chapter one, with a firm focus on tangible and ‘positive’ outcomes. A dialogic, embedded development approach discussed in chapter one, on the other hand, fits with the open-ended, process-driven pedagogy of the developer-fool that does not guarantee outcomes. In the latter, the developer-fool is primarily in the service of ‘the process’, and would, in the spirit of transparency, necessarily have had conversations, as I did, about the ‘leap of faith’ required by the organisation. Although the conversation generally ought to take place, however, my findings suggest it may not be essential for an organisation to buy into the argument. A degree of ambiguity, discomfort and consternation regarding intentions, perhaps even a ‘crisis of confidence’, may, in fact, be productive in development.

The data findings show that the power brokers in Toolzone, like those in many organisations, were concerned with and motivated by control over outcome. As no imagined future can be identical to another - or indeed stable - each had a slightly different, and shifting, outcome in mind. At the outset, Les clearly had an idea of the intention of my project, noted in the comment during my initial introduction (see figure two, chapter three): “Leny is here to tell us all the stupid things we do” - almost a direct modern parallel to the Fool calling Lear a fool to his face. While most would agree that development is more than telling an organisation the ‘stupid things’ they do, his statement does have an allure of simplicity and, in some ways, fits with the provocative playfulness of the fool, discussed in a later section. The data show that, rather than converging through a process of collective negotiation towards a clear and instrumental articulation of purpose, a multiplicity of expected outcomes was sustained by members of the EMT. This was held right through until the climactic moment of the development activity, the performance of the play within a play. Contrary to the assertions of scholars such as
Etherton and Prentki (below), this research challenges the notion, therefore, that the negotiation of a shared intentionality is a prerequisite for success in development:

A vital element in the achievement of any impact in the project was the early agreement on co-intentionality between the funder and the agency, thereby removing one potential obstacle to transformation - mismatch of covert agendas leaving participants confused. (2006, p.153)

In fact, I would further argue that while it may have been uncomfortable, a crisis even, for the Toolzone EMT to experience the sudden realisation that they had no commonality around purpose or expected outcome(s), it may have been necessary. The absence of certainty allowed - possibly compelled - them to remain in a state of uncertainty and openness to the deep emotional reflection and/or metaxis we saw evidenced in the data. In other words, while those with skin in the development game may feel a strong desire to know the end of the story, it is sustained 'un-knowing' and the prospective of multiple alternative narratives that can enable reflective learning in a ‘space of action’ (Carroll & Levy, 2010). Supporting the idea that ‘not knowing’ can be a productive tension in learning (M.-A. Hunter, 2015), this assertion ties into the process-outcome tussle in chapter one. I will discuss in a later section how it also connects with ‘presence’ within a learning space, and the idea of staying ‘in the moment’. First, however, I should like to address the idea of ideology as the final application of motley within my metaphor.

Lear’s Fool lives in ambiguity. There are a number of points in the play where protagonists seem to ask in his presence “what is it all for?”, but they are left unsatisfied. The function of the theatrical fool is to comment on the action and cycle through contradiction, rather than provide answers. He does not present any kind of intentionality or ideology – he simply ‘is’. But the theatre itself is inherently ideological. As Neelands (2010a) observes in his citing of Edward Bond’s 1978 poem, participants should ‘leave the theatre hungry for change’. Even ‘pure’ forms are produced in the hope of somehow
changing an audience by connecting into and interacting with their ideologies. In this case, how far should the metaphor extend? Should developers bring their own inevitable judgments and political underpinnings to their work or should they act like fools and hide them behind a mask of ambiguity?

In chapter one I described a discourse of hope running through CLS that is beginning to offer alternative views of power and resistance in LD as potentially constructive (Carroll & Nicholson, 2014; Gagnon & Collinson, 2017). Even so, there is reticence to make a strong claim regarding how much of an ideology, if any, a developer should bring to practice. AT scholars are less tentative: ideology, wrapped up with intentionality, it is claimed, must be faced head-on to avoid the integrity of developers being compromised (Neelands, 2007). In this section I offer the paradox that there are ‘many shades’ of ideological transparency and that the developer-fool can once again exhibit an aesthetic pedagogy of motley in her understanding and handling of ideology in the construction of development.

Imagine for a moment a developer who enters a context declaring a strong political affiliation and personally held values / belief system. Now imagine a developer who appears ideologically ‘neutral’ in a cloak of ‘professionalism’. Is either ‘right’? The instinctive answer would probably be ‘it depends’. Ideological ambiguity may lead to concerns around what kind of change a developer envisions (Neelands, 2007), but, as the data in this project suggest, it may also generate other, unanticipated responses. As chapter one discussed, Neelands calls for applied theatre practice to be clearly oriented with either ‘the ambivalences of identity politics and philosophical communitarianism’ or ‘the politics of redistribution’ and states “we need to know why we are acting, to understand which society or section of society the author is for or against” (2007, p.305).
Neelands’s view seems to be that even the missionary or prostitute developer must give honest attention to the politics of intention, fuelled by ideology, to avoid an ideological crisis. He refers mainly to developers in a TfD context, operating in high stakes environments, but his proposition is apposite within organisations. It invites the question: is a ‘crisis’ of ideology something to be avoided at all costs?

Clearly where the situation presents a threat to human life, including that of the developer, political affiliations should be declared if doing so mitigates risk. Potential conflicts of interest - such as where funding relationships demand a certain moral position – should also be made explicit up front to avoid misleading power asymmetries. Within organisations, particularly in LD, threatening situations are rare. So, is it sufficient for an individual developer to make a judgment call as to whether a certain context requires the declaration of their own ideology? If so, how would they go about making such a call? Does the different context allow an organisational developer to ‘get away with’ not stating their beliefs and values? Or, even in ‘safety’, should they still bring their whole self, ideology and all, to their work?

Here, the fool can help us again. All other characters occupying the stage have a clear ‘motivation’ – something actors often struggle to access during rehearsal in order to suspend the disbelief of an audience – but the fool does not need a reason to act. In fact, as nothing more than critic and conscience, he has very little influence on the action. With a kind of fatalism, the fool seems to understand that he cannot fight the inevitable unfolding of events. When I began this project my motivation was to unmask organisational injustice and disrupt destructive power regimes; I wanted to find out if OT could foster democratic citizenship (O'Connor, 2010) and give voice to the marginalized, rather than be co-opted as another tool for coercive domination inside organisations.
Clark & Mangham, 2004b). My choice at the time was to keep these motivations under wraps and my repertoire of performances, including *Kum Ba Yah Crisis*, purposefully revealed little in the way of ideology. Looking back, I ask; should I instead have openly articulated my political leanings and desire to challenge traditional corporate values? What would have happened if I had? There are hints here of poststructuralist thinkers such as Derrida (1992) and Baudrillard (2001), who resist any notion of a stable system of meaning. There is possibly even a closer alignment with postmodernist views of ideology as pluralistic and de-centred (Kershaw, 1992). My journey into folly has helped me understand that bringing and holding on to fixed ideals in development is a fruitless pastime. Development in all contexts is a socially constructed performance, and therefore, even if we choose to reveal our pre-formed political affiliations or judgments, they are subjected to the perpetual state of flux in which development encounters happen and inevitably shift as part of the process. Indeed the data in this study reveal a host of collective sensemaking, possibly even democracy-in-action (Raelin, 2003), processes, with multiple ideologies, taking place in the performance of development. Had any particular ideology been declared, negotiated and agreed upon as a foundation for the project, it would have been a ‘rational myth’ (Clarke, 2006) and these dynamics would have played out in a very different way.

This brings me to the principle claim of this section; that intentionality and ideology are more of a social construction than writers in AT, CLS and dialogic OD seem currently to appreciate. As chapter one discussed, many scholars acknowledge identity and manifestations of power as relational, fluid and socially constructed. There is now widespread critical questioning of the promise of ‘social benefit’ of ‘applied theatre’ used for development purposes (Ackroyd, 2007). There is also doubt as to whether LD programmes can achieve the emancipatory effects it was once hoped they might (Raelin,
2008). Yet there appear still to be assumptions (flawed in my judgment) that our perception of what is good and right and the part developers play in that narrative is static (Bushe & Marshak, 2015). Data from this study show that, like identity, ambiguity of intention and ideology is almost limitless. Rather than driving a convergent negotiation towards a consensual intentionality, developers shift between various conceptions of instrumentality. They dance between different appreciations of almost every position on the efficacy-entertainment dyad, and they continually question whether, when, why and in what way to proceed. Indeed, almost every encounter within the data corpus contained at least one shift in a perception of purpose in either developer or participant, or both. Just as we have multiple selves, we experience and perform multiple expressions of why we are doing what we do. In a group context, the fluctuations are amplified, which can yield tension. As Ackroyd and O’Toole (2010) note, even when performance ethnographers begin a project with little ‘social responsibility’, concerns and priorities appear, disappear and reappear along the way, changing over time and between co-performers.

It would, therefore, have been an empty gesture to ascribe an overarching intention based on a fixed ideology to a process built on participatory and constructionist methodologies. That is not to say intentionality and ideology should be neglected. This study instead supports the view that ideological tensions “draw out the messiness of practice or, Turner’s ‘contamination of context’, which makes ‘flaws, hesitations, personal factors, incomplete, elliptical, context dependent situational proponents of performance’ visible” (Balfour, 2009, p.354). To avoid a ‘crisis of engagement’ (McDonnell, 2005), the exposure and raising up of such persistent tensions may aid in the establishment of a “lively non-decidableness.... which nags, plays, tickles and itches in attractive ways..... [which] foregrounds the possible, the unimaginable, and ‘ways’ rather than ‘the way’” (Barry, 2008, p.3). This thesis does not provide any recommendation
around how much of a personally-held ideology a developer should bring to her or his work, and how it might be expressed. It does, however, suggest that, in their relationships with organisational stakeholders, developers should actively promote the exploration of ideology as a motley, ambiguous and shifting construction of agendas, beliefs and values that may influence the performance of development in any given moment. It also suggests that ideology should feature as a fundamental part of ‘instrumentality’, along with intention, in a developer’s own consideration of the purpose behind the work. Such nuanced attention requires that developers look beyond the rhetoric of “art first, message second” (Saldaña, 2011) or vice versa and become reflexive, imaginative and artful in their handling of such ambiguous notions.

**Summary of Motley**

Goffman notes the multiple identities and intentionalities available to, and required of, a social actor:

...in this arena the individual constantly twists, turns, and squirms, even while allowing himself to be carried along by the controlling definition of the situation. The image that emerges of the individual is that of a juggler and synthesiser, an accommodator and appeaser, who fulfils one function while he is apparently engaged in another. (1969, p.91)

In this section I have presented the idea of motley as the first in a framework of three ‘aesthetic pedagogies’. Motley describes the way the developer-as-fool might work with ambiguity in the presentation of these multiple performed characters, or presentations of self, in order to navigate some of the tensions of development identified in chapter one. To wear the metaphorical motley garb is to embrace ambiguity and paradox and consciously bring multiple presentations of identity, ideology and intentionality to the construction of the development relationship. By modelling such a performance, the developer-fool might flush out the conflicting, ambiguous ‘concealed wants’ (Goffman, 1956), expectations and doubts held by fellow players, enabling them...
to be confronted in the negotiation and performance of development. Motley, then, presents a foil to the ‘human urge’ for certainty (M.-A. Hunter, 2015) by making the radical proposition that consensus of intentionality (including ideological foundations) is not essential to development. In fact, what is more essential, is a recognition that consensus is not essential and that dissensus may generate new and fruitful trajectories, a point further developed in a later section on contradiction. In the next section I look at the second aesthetic pedagogy that emerged from the data findings and that is enacted in the ongoing performances in development.

The Elasticity of the Fool

“Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following; but the great one that goes upward, let him draw thee after.”

II.4:72-73

The previous section of this chapter dealt with complexities in the construction of relationships between developer-fool and chief protagonist(s) in the performance of development. This section looks at how such relationships are then maintained and/or modified in the development space. I build on the idea of motley to add a second, derivative pedagogy – that of elasticity, first within and between relationships, then applied to the development space itself. To begin, how does elasticity connect to the metaphor of the fool?

While the human embodiments of reason and folly - King and Fool - may be conceptually interdependent and ultimately inseparable, the degree of connection between them fluctuates over the course of their co-performance. When the relationship works,
even in prolonged separation there is an intuitive and improvised mutuality, akin to that seen in dance or figure skating partnerships. Each actor may ‘save’ the other when mistakes are made and oscillations between leading and following are imperceptible unless you know what you are looking for (Johnstone, 1999). Another pertinent image, straight from King Lear, is that of the shadow – a two-dimensional copy of the original, but a shifting shape that can become more or less recognisable and can be absorbed or separated entirely in either direct sun or darkness. When Lear asks “who is it that can tell me who I am?” the Fool answers “Lear’s shadow” (I.4:229) but we are left uncertain as to whether he means Lear has become but a shadow of himself, or whether the Fool is himself responding as ‘Lear’s shadow’.

In the theatre, the fool appears when he is needed and fades away when his presence is no longer required (Prentki, 2012). In King Lear he first appears in act one scene four and remains active on stage until the end of the act. This is the main establishment of his character, after which he is off-stage for a long period of action and then reappears intermittently in acts two and three before disappearing altogether with the line “and I’ll go to bed at noon” towards the end of act three. At noon, shadows slip away, so beyond the riddle of going to bed in the middle of the day, this line is a clear signal from the Fool that he accepts his redundancy - the need for him to retreat from the story. As Prentki (2012) suggests, there is no longer any space for him as other characters are now teetering on the edge of madness and folly. There are then a further 11 scenes in two acts that take place without him, mostly depicting a calamity spiralling towards the tragic ending. In total, the Fool is onstage, actively contributing to the drama for only six scenes of 26 and present on stage but ‘inactive’ for durations within four of these. There are only two occasions when he is on stage in conversation with other characters without Lear, and only one incidence (act three, scene two) where he occupies the stage alone. Rarely does
a fool have a stronger presence in a play, but his time on stage is brief and concentrated. My presence at Toolzone was similar. I came and went without fanfare or flourish, sometimes disappearing for extended periods, and my time with the company was only one brief episode in what is likely to be a much longer history.

Barry claims art must be ‘unusually moving in tensional ways’ and “If the work stands too far from the familiar, we no longer register it as different; we just think it odd. If it is too similar, we dismiss it with a ‘been there, done that’” (2008, p.33). Similarly, fools must be familiar, but sufficiently distanced from the reality of both the play and the audience to fulfil their function. Were he onstage for the whole performance, like a Greek chorus, his critical commentary would become mere narration. Fools fade into the shadows and suddenly bounce back into view, jolting us into reflexive consciousness. This ability to be both present and absent gives the fool an other-worldly quality: he is amongst us, but somehow separate. He spans “the official and the popular, the scripted and the improvised, the fictional and the real, the stage and the auditorium, the spirit world and the material world” (Prentki & Preston, 2009, p.20). The fool, thus, has an elastic tendency to spring back suddenly, and also stretches the distance between himself and the realities he comments on, including the chief protagonists. It is this stretching and springing back that emerges from the data as a recurring theme initially in the way relationships played out - particularly between myself as developer-fool and Les, the King.

Chapter five shows that I instinctively (not always consciously) stretched and shrank physical and metaphorical distances through the course of the project. I began immersed inside the organisation, wearing their garb, quietly watching and listening from the corner like a new, junior employee. I later moved to deliberately acting as an ‘oddity’
and removing myself completely for almost three months (save one or two brief visits) to write, produce and direct the performance. There was a gradation of proximity, therefore, between myself as the character of developer-fool, and my ‘stage’, or forum for the work, with extremes of either positioning. Without formal ties to Toolzone or interests that might influence my status, I was “in a semi-detached relation to the society upon which folly preys” (Prentki, 2012, p.16). But it was neither a static semi-detachment, nor a steady increase in distance over time. There was an elasticity where the distance of relationship (particularly between myself and Les) would stretch during periods where one, both or all parties were moving away from others, only to recoil again at moments such as Kum Ba Yah Crisis, when a greater need for mutuality and/or trust were required. The most obvious snap or spring back occurred when Les reappeared in the meta-play of the OT project at the performance, dramatised in Goosebumps. Les made a conscious choice to align himself closely with the ‘play within a play’, although he could have generated a very different expression in his presentation of self (Goffman, 1959). To do this, he had, in a sense, to find his way back to the work, having spent a period apart from it, and me.

The fool is able to move fluidly in all factions of society with a ‘semi-detached’, elastic connection to many different co-performers at one time. The ability to walk alongside power, and yet be detached from it is a paradox that relates to the tussle raised in chapter one of how situated or separated developers and their work should be to the physical location and/or context of the organisation. It also relates to questions raised in chapter five around how a developer might accompany or guide participants on the development journey across the distance between what is and what could be. The data from this research suggest that developers should somehow adopt multiple positions inside and outside organisations in order to best understand and serve the needs of
development, yet little is currently known about what conditions might best enable the various possible positionings. Alvesson (2003b) suggests in immersive work we must get close to our subject but avoid ‘closure’. Although there are synergies with this project, his arguments are mainly centred on ‘straight’ research rather than development work. A look at the dynamics of a development space may help in this regard.

“When we are born, we cry that we are come to this great stage of fools.”

IV.6:183-4 - The Space for Folly

Beyond the motley management of expressions and impressions in relationships, the developer-fool can bring an elastic framing of time and space to their work. Specifically, this corresponds to the understanding that while we can never physically be inside and outside in the same moment, we might carve out a liminal space, ‘betwixt and between’ an organisation, sometimes stretching the boundaries within, sometimes stepping out to perform on either side. The theatre plays with space and time. There are limitless possibilities for where, when and in what sequence, action takes place. As chapter five shows, spatial and temporal decisions are key aspects of applying what has been called aesthetic distance (Anthony Jackson, 2007), but what I refer to as ‘distancing’ in terms of content or form. In the Medieval mystery plays, the stage was divided into two zones: the locus, equivalent to the pulpit, from where official discourse could be proclaimed and; the platea, later called forestage. The latter was the domain of characters that live in both worlds (such as the fool) and allowed them to "manipulate the theatrical paradox whereby drawing attention to the unreality of the fiction being staged behind them strengthens the audience's capacity to believe in what they are seeing and to connect it to their own experiences" (Prentki, 2012, p.38). Such juxtapositioning allows an audience to appreciate the ‘there and then’ and the ‘here and now’ simultaneously as
“incomplete, unbalanced transformations of time and space” (Schechner, 1988, p.xviii).
From the forestage, the audience is invited into folly to "view images of itself for delight, education, guilt, celebration or criticism" (Prentki, 2012, p.16), with the fool thus holding up a magic mirror to show us the present and invented futures (Boal, 2006). The fool moves fluidly between different zones and carries an alternative view or ironic commentary on the fiction within the play. Prentki (2012) calls this 'double distancing' whereby "the performance simultaneously confronts an audience with images of its own contradictions while enabling it to laugh at characters who are and are not representatives of itself" (p.16).

If we consider the audience, then, as the third zone, we find parallels between the forestage of the fool and Turner’s liminal space, a ‘symbolically fluid’ and ‘troublesome’ space (Barry, 1996) or ‘venue for radical scepticism’ (Turner, 1986). It is the perfect metaphor for the performance space of a developer-fool, a kind of 'second world' (Bakhtin, 1984b) with its own codes of conduct. Far from being a direct, mirror-image copy of reality, the liminal space parallels the official discourse with various degrees of distance, granting time off from reality (Prentki, 2012). As noted in chapter one LD scholars have attempted to make the connection between liminality and learning spaces in LD. Either the arguments, like so many others, are overly concerned with the result of the process, rather than what goes on within (Ford & Harding, 2007; Kamoche, 2000), or their reference to liminality feels almost an afterthought. The latter includes those with a brief note on how making the familiar strange may help create an adaptive learning space (Jones, 2006), or how a development space might be liminal in its lack of constraints (Carroll & Simpson, 2012). There is no reference to the potential for ‘communitas’ or plural reflexivity usually associated with liminality (Turner, 1974) in these studies.
Nevertheless, the findings in this thesis reveal that the processes of 'ensemble-based' learning (Neelands, 2009), including collective sense-making, did occur in both of the development events that are the most obvious candidates for liminality in the fieldwork – the playbuilding workshop and the performance event. In each, participants were invited to step out of their usual working circumstances into an unfamiliar environment devoid of status, power and judgment. People came (or at least remained in the case of the performance) of their own accord – indeed I recall feeling surprised when they began to arrive at the yurt in the woods. They voluntarily took the necessary action to begin traversing the distance between current and imagined realities. The few rules around how such a performance would unfold in the development space were negotiated together at the outset. They were both temporary and elastic, in the sense that participants tested them by stretching interpretations and re-moulding to suit the changing circumstances. Using the construct of distance as movement, as opposed to reflection, and applying an aesthetic frame of elasticity to both the spatial and temporal dynamics of the learning space, it is conceivable that developers might better understand and work with the participant experience in the performance of development.

Although I didn’t know it at the time, I followed most of Turner’s (1986) protocols of liminality by stripping status, denunciating role and attempting to demolish structure. Given the inevitability of localised and asymmetric power relations in LD (Collinson, 2005), however, it seems unlikely our liminal workshop space was completely absent of power. It is also doubtful that I fully ‘doffed the mask’ as he also suggests, due to the strong pressures I felt to perform my assumed roles as developer, writer and director. Data does indicate I brought my own vulnerability to the performances and revealed aspects of a different, more personal, self within the moments of ‘communitas’ that arose spontaneously in both events. There was undoubtedly a ‘radical scepticism’; as
chapter four shows, this was automatically perceived as ‘negativity’ to be suppressed by the EMT in *Kum Ba Yah Crisis*. Ambiguity did reign, and “vices, follies, stupidities... [were] satirized, ridiculed, or contemned in terms of axiomatic values” (Turner, 1986, p.102). So with the understanding that parts of the development space created in this project were as close to being liminal as possible, how does my proposed aesthetic pedagogy of elasticity intersect with liminality?

The most compelling aspect of liminality in this project is not the anthropological or ritual notion that those present inside a liminal zone are in the process of transforming. My methodological underpinning already assumes that we are all in a continuous process of becoming. Rather, the strongest connection between liminality, the fool and an aesthetic pedagogy of elasticity is the notion of communitas, emanating from the lifting of constraints, something only possible where an elasticity of distance, physical and/or metaphorical is created. The developer-fool can perform in a space and time which will expand to meet the needs of the participants present. Just as her relationships ebb and flow, she trusts that the boundaries of the performance zone will stretch and shrink as required to allow the full gamut of possible imagined futures the group wish to explore. But she does not demand that participants either remain ‘situated’ inside the reality of the organisation or ‘separated’ completely into a fiction. In inviting participants to enter the liminal space, the developer-fool offers a lifeline before a leap - an elastic cord that will flex - so that should tension arise related to distance, as it did with Margaret and the fictionalisation of the Wendy character, there is a dedicated space and time to make further choices about the presentation of distance so as to cushion a fall. Within the liminal space, the developer-fool can try to bring participants closer to an idea or move concepts apart, the core understanding being that nothing is fixed – everything is in motion and, like shadows, the appreciation depends entirely upon the angle of perception.
Summary of Elasticity

Chapter one presents a tussle within the LD literature as to how situated or separated development work should be in relation to the organisational context. In this section I have argued that a developer-fool may adopt an aesthetic pedagogy of elasticity in their interactions with participants inside and outside a liminal learning space in order to navigate this tension. In previous chapters I have claimed that a consciousness around aesthetic distance is important in development work that uses arts-based methods. Here, I extend the claim to argue that it is how a developer frames and plays with distance, by granting it a certain elasticity, that matters. By conceptualising both the connections between people and the spatio-temporal boundaries of the learning environment as elastic, the developer-fool metaphor brings a new perspective to our understanding around the social construction of LD.

We have seen that the fool acts as a conduit, both outside and within, these worlds or spaces, knowing them intimately, yet detached from the obligations of each. An aesthetic pedagogy of elasticity allows a developer-fool to go beyond the duality of finding a presence either inside or outside organisations. Like the theatre, folly creates space for ambiguity, paradox, creativity and flexibility where "the unspeakable may be spoken and the unacceptable enacted. It is a space of play in which the most playful are the survivors" (Prentki, 2012, p.17) and it is to a pedagogy of play that I now turn.
**Playing with Folly**

“Have more than thou showest, speak less than thou knowest” I.4:117-118

The third and final aesthetic pedagogy I have identified running through the data is play. Play has so far been almost completely ignored in LD, although it has been linked to coping with ambiguity, development of commitment and overcoming psychological defence reflexes in other organisational contexts (Statler et al., 2011). Schechner believes play is at the heart of performance and “the more 'freely' a species plays, the more likely performance, theatre, scripts, and drama are to emerge” (1988, p.99). Moreover, a 'targets and outcomes culture' is in direct opposition to a 'playful culture' and playfulness, the latter of which is an integral aspect of the aesthetic experience of drama and can impact upon audiences far more than serious, didactic messages (Anthony Jackson, 2007). We have already seen that much of LD overly ascribes to the first kind of culture and remains turgid and benign as a result. In this section I will suggest that we substitute the word development for drama in both statements above. Adding a healthy slug of playfulness into current development practice might also help redress the imbalance towards lasting and meaningful change.

Erasmus suggests “foolery is so handled that the reader that is not altogether thick-skulled may reap more benefit from it than from some men’s crabbish and specious arguments” (1958 [1511], p.2). The fool is the metaphor arising from the empirical material that helps us see the potential for bringing an aesthetic of play into the learning space, particularly as play is “conceptualised at the experiential level as involving paradox, ambiguity and uncertainty” (Statler et al., 2011, p.238). I do not intend to launch a comprehensive argument on the benefits and risks of play in the workplace (others have tackled this matter already – see Statler, 2011, Fleming, 2005 and Kupers,
2017). I will, however, use theory and data presented in this thesis to argue that there are four intrinsic aspects of play from which a developer-fool can draw in the constructed performance of development. These are; presence and open-endedness, humour and fun, inversion, and risk.

**Presence and Open-endedness in Play**

“Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.” I.5:41

In the section on motley, I talked about how developers can simply be in the service of ‘the process’, rather than any directional outcome or ideology. In chapter one I claimed that a practice view of action as primarily taking place ‘on the hoof’ (Chia & Holt, 2006) was more suited to development than an outcome-driven, competency-based approach. In chapter two I described the ‘timelessness’ and ‘expansiveness’ of play, noting the parallels with the dynamics of rehearsals for theatre performance. Whilst it may be possible to be fully absorbed in a practice or process without being engaged in play, I introduce the idea of open-ended ‘presence’ here as there are strong synergies between what is referred to as ‘flow’, play, presence and perpetual flux, elements the fool character knows well:

Where situations seem to be locked into fixed positions, the fool uses the device of play, in both senses; trying out what fiction and imagination might achieve and looking for any signs of play, that is movement in the materials presented to him. He, more than other members of his species, experiences the world as a constant process of flux, of becoming rather than of being. This is why, for the fool, certainties are always illusory and the attempts of his fellow creatures to arrive at a steady state are doomed to fail. (Prentki, 2012, p.4)

Scholars observing participants enacting make-believe - a key application of playfulness (Schechner, 1988) - have noted their sense of ‘presence’. They are completely absorbed in the activity, in a state of ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). In such a state, there is a loss of ego, attention is focused on a limited stimulus field, action and
awareness are experienced simultaneously, and no goals or rewards are sought outside the experience – it is ‘autotelic’ (Turner, 1979). This description evokes images of bliss, as does the idea of ‘fantasy’ – the second major domain of playfulness (Schechner, 1988). Gabriel believes being absorbed in fantasy "can offer a third way to the individual, which amounts to neither conformity nor rebellion, but to a symbolic refashioning of official organisational practices in the interest of pleasure, allowing a temporary supremacy of emotion over rationality and of uncontrol over control" (1991, p.479). Being present, then, is a form of heightened engagement with the current moment, including the action and emotion bound up in the performance. We instinctively feel it happening when we watch actors ‘in the moment’ on the stage, where actors in play “facilitate a productive interaction in the free, open creation of meaning” (Kupers, 2017, p.999). Even in the most polished performance, we are aware of both the control actors exert over their character in the story, and their lack of control over how the action plays out. Playful actions are open-ended processes and thus, even scripted action has an element of improvisation.

Sutherland and Ladkin (2013) argue that the “moment-to-moment configuring and reconfiguring of action strategies to manage and encourage diverse viewpoints from many participants requires an agility of action beyond predetermined pedagogical plans and predetermined learning outcomes” (Sutherland & Ladkin, 2013, p.122). Such an open-ended view aligns with the ‘therapist’ set of pedagogies discussed in chapter one and links to the tussle of outcome-process and ideas of dissensus that feature in the control-emancipation tussle of the same chapter. Additionally, it meets the second of Neelands (2004) pre-conditions for transformational learning - a refusal of certainty and completion. These scholars are, however, not advocating for throwing the plan out of the window. Rather:
In these spaces we have pre-determined plans, processes/activities and goals, but the way these are enacted, the ways we achieve desired outcomes are highly subtle, in the moment, often tacit actions responsive to an ever unfolding learning environment. To deal with this moment-to-moment unfolding we are relying upon our abilities to read, understand and act in response to aesthetic stimuli that we pick up in real time. (Sutherland & Ladkin, 2013, p.121)

Similarly in the learning space of playful presence, the developer-fool brings a host of playful activities with which to tackle the ideas constructed by the group. Importantly, as Sutherland and Ladkin appreciate, there is always a level of improvisation that occurs in this kind of workshop event – as it did in the playbuilding of this project. While art may be rooted in the ‘as if’, remaining in the present moment of play is to explore the notion of ‘what if’ – a child-like, open-ended curiosity (O'Toole, 2006). What if I do / say this right now? What if I don’t? Mabey believes it is this spontaneity, commonly found in play that is responsible for a profound learning experience: “the unanticipated... is where, after all, most learning occurs” (2013, p.373). Playful attendance to the current moment therefore supports the argument of an earlier section, that the suspension of ‘un-knowing’ generates exciting new trajectories in development.

Whether in flow, make-believe, fantasy or dramatic action, dwelling in the present moment can feel, to both participant and observer, as if time is suspended. Prentki argues “the fool experiences time as a cycle, a wheel of Fortune, rather than the linear process of the socially ambitious” and uses the following speech by Lear’s Fool as his illustration:

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;
When nobles are their tailor’s tutors;
No heretics burned, but wenches’ suitors;
When every case in law is right;
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues;
Nor cut-purses come not to throngs;
When usurers tell their gold i’ th’ field;
And bawds and whores do churches build;
Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion: III.2:81-92

While he calls it a prophecy, here the Fool is using irony to paint a picture of the future that is already present. Throughout the play he looks backwards and forwards, commenting on what has been and what may come, but, unlike rationalistic attempts to attribute cause-and-effect that are so pervasive in organisations, the fool does not attribute association between events. He dwells in the unfolding process (Carroll et al., 2008) of what is going on around him, in a state of becoming, not being (Raelin, 2008), apparently unconcerned with outcome. His “process of inquiry is cyclical and ongoing because the nature of theatre is to discover and rediscover new depths in the material in focus” (Neelands & Goode, 2000, p.105). As we have seen in chapter one, commissioners of development want to know ‘the ending’ and time is often a pressing issue, due to economic constraints. The fool reminds us that there is no end – every story is incomplete and more stories are ‘brewing and boiling’ as we make sense of the discourses we are most aware of at the current time (Hansen, 2002b). However much time we are permitted, it is our role as developers to recognise the inevitability of unfinished realities (Neelands, 2004), and notice the emerging potentialities, by remaining ‘in the moment’:

The fourth and deepest level is presencing, which involves total attention on what is emerging and what could be emerging. The real art of directing creativity, in our opinion, lies in these deeper layers of conscious presence and artful creation (Darsø 2004), coupled with the ability to select, describe and communicate effectively, what is emerging. (Ibbotson & Darso, 2008, p.558)

If, as this research assumes, it is the collective sensemaking within ongoing social interaction that constitutes reality, taking a constructionist approach to research and development demands the same process- and present-centred view of learning. By its nature constructionist development cannot guarantee outcomes and must be, to a degree,
open-ended. In the knowledge that they have only fleeting, but possibly profound opportunities to work in the moment (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013), developer-fools can and should not try to determine the outcomes of development: no matter what is done, things will not turn out as expected. Rather, they should create space to be playful and adaptive within an environment not controlled by the clock, when “anything might, even should, happen” (Turner, 1979, p.465).

**Humour and Fun**

“May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse?” I.4:223

Humour is the primary way a fool evades persecution:

The fool, using humour, can do the unthinkable, trespassing on otherwise forbidden territory and satirising leaders and followers. Through his actions, he provides the vicarious outlet for the most basic antisocial feelings. By creating absurd situations, the fool is verbalising the fears and anxieties of others. The self-deprecating quality that goes with his transgression of taboos makes it less threatening and more easily accepted. (Kets de Vries, 1990, p.760)

Even with humour to break the ice, there are limits to the amount of 'bad news' anyone can take at one time. Hence, "doses of insight must be well timed and carefully measured" (Kets de Vries, 1990, p.764), to make the pill less bitter. If humour permits a fool to ‘get away with it’, perhaps comedy or parody might be conceived as a form of playful resistance. Certainly this would support Gagnon and Collinson’s (2017) argument that using humour to juxtapose culture and control can be a way to value difference and reject regulation processes. In this way, play might be felt as subversive for those ‘driving the cart’ of positional power.

The best comedy always comes from personal experience. Schechner (1988) argues that just the ‘right’ amount of disclosure is the centre of the comic art form. So, supporting assertions of the previous section, a fool must be deeply embedded in the reality he questions, having listened, observed and reflected before commenting,
simultaneously earning permission to be disrespectful. His humorous mask is then the device that enables him to 'get away with it’ and the jester becomes a ‘living caricature’ (Kets de Vries, 1990), the "vehicle to express what under other circumstances would be considered destructive social information"(p.759). Freud considered humour to be 'rebellious' (1927), but it is also a safety valve, a socially acceptable mechanism to release anxiety or trigger catharsis. As Bakhtin has argued, with echoes of Brecht: “Laughter purifies from dogmatism, from the intolerant and the petrified; it liberates from fanaticism and pedantry, from fear and intimidation, from didacticism, naiveté and illusion, from the single meaning, the single level, from sentimentality” (1984a, p.122).

A fool walks a fine line between humour and seriousness, forcing us to question the rationale behind our decisions. It is in the capacity as mock ‘educator’ we see Lear’s Fool express both humorous cheek (Kent is in the stocks during the scene below) and steadfastness:

Fool: We’ll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there’s no labouring i’ th’ winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men; and there’s not a nose among twenty but can smell him that’s stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following; but the great one that goes upward, let him draw thee after. When a wise man give thee better counsel, give me mine again. I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm.
But I will tarry; the fool will stay
And let the wise man fly.
The knave turns fool that runs away;
The fool, no knave, perdy.
Kent: Where learn’d you this, fool?
Fool: Not i’ th’ stocks, fool. I.4:66-75
Despite the seriousness of the subject matter, there are other very funny speeches and sections of dialogue featuring the Fool in *King Lear*, and one can imagine the Elizabethan audience erupting in riotous laughter at some of the particularly mischievous and crude jibes Shakespeare weaves into the tragic drama. The fool character is used here to lift the audience from the gloom of the stage reality, to defuse tension and perhaps, as Brecht would have us do, to prevent the audience from slipping into the empathetic wallowing of Aristotelian catharsis. Brecht understood, as did Shakespeare, that no matter how heavy or political the subject matter, theatre must entertain and humour can help with the estrangement effect at the centre of epic theatre. The irony of the fool is he can play at both ends of Schechner's efficacy-entertainment dyad at the same time.

Moving to the organisational context, Taylor’s OT always uses humour and he describes his writing as 'expressionistic comedy' in which "much of the action is presented through metaphors that are made physical" (2008, p.399). Responses from his participants suggest that watching the plays gives an audience permission to 'poke fun' at themselves and "get a little distance maybe (perspective) on what we're doing and the system that we are in" (p.403). Taylor (2018) makes six recommendations to developers working with performances of OT, the last of which is to 'have fun', the rationale being "If you (the cast) don't have fun, the audience won't have fun. And if you're having fun, the audience will have fun" (p.312). In a literal sense, the data from my project support this assertion as the actors reported having had fun in the process of rehearsing and performing and there were many moments during the staging that elicited collective laughter, particularly occasions in which aspects of culture were lampooned (such as acronyms and profligate e-mail use). Most audience members consulted afterwards described having 'enjoyed' the performance, particularly musical elements, and
commented on the ‘amusement’ of the experience, suggesting the production ‘hit a nerve’ (Badham & Matula, 2013).

Can the essence of Taylor’s ‘poking fun’ be distilled into development that does not use theatre or musical comedy as a method? If we take Taylor’s idea further and apply it to the conceptualisation of development as performance, and developer and participants as ‘players’ in development, there is a strong argument for crafting an aesthetic of fun within the learning space. But this does not require all developers to be comic geniuses or that their work should elicit full belly laughter. A developer may simply give off an expression of having fun, following which the participants begin to have fun, and so on in a mutually reinforcing manner. A developer may need to instigate such a process with a signal to participants, for example inviting them to laugh at her with some kind of self-deprecating inversion of status (Goffman, 1961) and/or foolish action or comment. A collective humorous reflexivity could enable the interactive influencing of one’s peers envisaged by Gabriel and Connell (2010) In an unfamiliar context, the first laugh can generate a powerful release from anxiety – like a watershed. I clearly recall the relief I felt in moments of comic resonance (Badham & Matula, 2013) during both the play building workshop and the performance. The trick, however is for such a moment to occur spontaneously, as a form of ‘communitas’ rather than the more commonly known version of a somewhat contrived ‘ice-breaker’. Such an occurrence is more likely when the developer is both present with participants, and able to surprise them, possibly by playing with inversion - the subject of the next section.
Inversion and Contradiction

“That such a king should play bo-peep and go the fools among” I.4:174-175

As the best-known performance clown of the twentieth century, Dario Fo was the closest we have had to a real-life Shakespearean fool in recent times. Underpinned by a Marxist ideology, his unique brand of satirical and farcical humour stemmed from his ability to take every social situation and stand it on its head. The targets of his comedy were often oppressive institutions such as the Catholic Church, and, like Lear’s Fool, his strategy was to expose contradictions and then play in the gaps that were created, drawing attention to corruption, injustice and wickedness (Prentki, 2012). As Farrell (2001) notes of one of Fo’s key characters, the Madman in Accidental Death of an Anarchist:

He enjoys a fool’s licence to blurt out truths which the authorities would prefer to suppress, but in an upside-down world, where the worldly wise have made their peace with a society of unreason policed by violence, the madman is the only arbiter of decency and reason. (p.100)

Inversion can be considered a form of distancing, whereby the familiar is made strange. There are many playful opportunities to do this within each interaction of the development context. As noted in chapter two, signals given within a play frame could denote messages untrue, not meant or even non-existent (Bateson, 1972). Play itself is often considered the antithesis of work (Kupers, 2017) (including development), although there is now a ‘blurring of boundaries’ (Fleming, 2005) and a gathering movement towards ‘serious play’ which recognises the synergies between the pursuits (Kupers, 2017; Statler et al., 2011). Including simple playful activity in what is traditionally considered a ‘work’ context – development – may be enough of a contradiction to make some organisational realities feel strange. Others might require more deliberate inversions. A technical example of playful contradiction from my data would be the decision to depict the fictional organisation on stage with a strong blue colour motif, as
opposed to the red of the real-life organisation. While not a total inversion (which might have been an absence of a dominant colour altogether from the staging), the colours of red and blue are often seen in opposition to one another, for example in the brands of the major parties in bipartisan politics. The fictional reality of the ‘play within a play’ was, thus, visibly contrasted with the meta-drama of Toolzone in order to increase aesthetic distance (Anthony Jackson, 2007). A more aesthetic example of inversion would be the way in which the musical genre of At What Cost allowed the tension of a critical moment to be instantly defused by a toe-tapping ‘number’. Even within songs, there were contradictions and irony. Lyrics from Bruno’s up-beat pop number Amazing, for example, have a sense of the ‘utopian’ prophecy of Lear’s Fool:

We used to have no support, we were always getting caught short,
But now we have a training plan, we don’t have to be superman
They used to just pass the buck, and no one would give a stuff,
But now that we’re one big team, working here is a dream

We all know each other’s pain, and we all share in the gain
The culture is so fun, we all get along as one!

In any arts-based intervention analogous artefacts assist a developer in making "playful interpretative moves ... to see more, see differently, and to allow organisational members to make interpretative extensions regarding their workplace scripts, categories, and schemas” (Barry & Meisiek, 2010, p.1520). Each artistic proposition, and the collection of interactions that leads to it would qualify as such, for example the dramatic vignettes produced during playbuilding. Uncertainty and spontaneity are valued in art. ‘Seeing differently’ in sometimes surprising ways allows the construction of a meaningful dialogue, as opposed to predictable response through ‘cued elicitation’ (M.-A. Hunter,
There is value in seeing the same situation from the intense position of ‘high drama’ immediately followed by a surprising switch to a position of comic, musical irony. A developer of the relational ‘therapist’ persuasion (see chapter one) can, using inversion in a playful way both lead and follow. They can, thus, guide “organisational members to comfortably hold and behold uncertainty and ambiguity, as well as suggesting new developmental paths” (Barry & Meisiek, 2010, p.1520).

It is the power of inversion to expose opposition and contradiction that resonates most strongly with the developer-fool metaphor. Indeed, metaphor itself was defined by Aristotle as “the creation of relationships or links through the interplay of equivalence and contradiction” (Cunliffe, 2002b, p.137). As Prentki observes:

> Only by playing the fool can the facilitator open up the space of contradiction that force participants of applied theatre to confront the assumptions that operate as a barrier to individual and community self-development just as the theatre can be the place where the unmentionable is mentioned, likewise the facilitator's function is to take participants into areas usually hidden by the masks of hegemony, convention and common sense. (2015b, p.345)

A pedagogy of inversion opens up spaces for contradiction. It ties into the control-emancipation tussle from chapter one, as contradiction may feature as a form of resistance to the pressure of consensus or homogeneity, as does humour (Gagnon & Collinson, 2017). A developer-fool can thus invite participants to enter a playful space of dissonance and dissensus (Badham & Matula, 2013). The development space becomes a place where argument is not only an expected part of the social contract of play, but encouraged as necessary to the learning process (Neelands, 2016). As developer-fool I felt complicity with playbuilding participants as we collectively contradicted organisational norms in the development workshop. There was almost a sense of ‘enclave insurgency’ as we plotted to realign power and accommodate change, albeit constructively on behalf of the organisation (Courpasson, 2012). Purposefully engaging and deliberating with alternative views in this way could then answer the call in the literature for “building resistance in
the participants’ voices and behaviour” (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013, p.1243). It could generate the ‘critical collective consciousness’ Raelin (2008) proposes as a precursor to emancipation. But deliberate argument and contradiction can be extremely uncomfortable when felt by commissioners of development as a threat, as it was by the EMT in *Kum Ba Yah Crisis*. Or, indeed, when experienced by participants as the destabilising of previously held assumptions, as took place in the playbuilding workshop. This is where play comes in: if an activity is framed as ‘non-serious’, participants may be more inclined to enter into the spirit of dissensus and provocation. By combining cunning with stupidity, “being simultaneously funny and scary” (Kets de Vries, 1990, p.758), the playful developer-fool might just then ‘get away with it’ once again.

So how does an inversion or contradiction manifest in the learning space? One principle from drama that can be extrapolated to other contexts is the application of alternative frames over a situation. During a process of ‘framing’ the developer-fool first cajoles the group to

....cut out a piece of itself for inspection (and retrospection). To do this it must create – by rules of exclusion and inclusion – a bordered space and a privileged time within which images and symbols of what has been sectioned off can be “relived”, scrutinized, assessed, revalued, and, if need be, remodelled and rearranged. (Turner & Turner, 1982, p.34)

The potential for such practice has already been argued, particularly by Carroll and Simpson (2012) who claim leadership development is about building a repertoire of available frames with participants and enabling movement between them. The findings from this research develop this idea and suggest that developers, like fools, might use a pedagogy of play to apply bolder frames that invert, contradict and provoke, as opposed to the gentle repositioning of a complex issue. Carroll and Simpson acknowledge that using frames in this way might require a change in mindset and ask; what sort of development might grow and embed this kind of sociality into relational leadership
process? The answer this research offers is development carried out by a fool with a pedagogy of playful contradiction. The remaining factor of playfulness that relates to the usage of frames in inversion and contradiction is how a developer might work with signals of when and how the frame shifts – the subject of the final section.

**The Risk and Rules of Play**

“This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen” – III.2:11

Prentki (2015b) argues that facilitators should lead participants into the place of unmentionables, areas usually hidden by masks of convention, common sense and hegemony. Mabey (2013) argues that uncovering hidden prejudices is, itself, an act of play. For my final section on the aesthetic pedagogy of play I would like to enter the shadowy domain of ‘deep play’ (Geertz, 1973) and ‘dark play’ (Schechner, 2013), where rules are broken and risks are weighed up by casting light on the dangers the playfulness presents. I will argue that, far from making the development space risk-free, we have an imperative as developers to surface the undiscussables (Badham et al., 2015) wrapped in ‘codes of silence’ (Badham & Matula, 2013), and we do this by paying attention to the rules of the game we are playing. Although “playfulness may wither when the player feels unsafe” (Green, 2016, p.200), the onus falls on the developer to stretch the space within the constraints of the rules as far as possible before this withering might happen.

Playing with contradiction is a “dangerously rewarding game..... dogged by the threat of being judged and dismissed or condemned for sacrilege” (Badham & Matula, 2013, p.32). As Bateson (1972) has demonstrated, messages in play are often untrue, not meant or non-existent. The fool walks a tightrope and mostly manages to evade persecution from others, partly through the acceptance from his audience that appearances
may be deceiving and partly through his strategic use of humour. Although we do not witness it in the action, we know by suggestion, though, that Lear’s Fool is subject to corporal punishment:

Fool: If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so. I.4:163
Fool: If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time. I.5:38

In *King Lear*, others are set in the stocks for minor offences but the Fool has only Lear’s fiery temper and a stormy night to contend with and, after his disappearance, we know not what happens to him. In any case, as we have seen, he pays little regard for risk and consequence, an attitude fuelled perhaps by the knowledge that, as a dog or whipping boy, he can slip no further in status. The stakes – what a player stands to lose - are higher for most developers and participants, but perhaps we can still learn something from the fool. Perhaps the stakes are not as high as we think they are or perhaps the playfulness of the learning space might allow us to imagine, for a limited time, that they are not.

In deep play (Geertz, 1973), the stakes are so high it seems irrational to partake in the activity. The odds are stacked against the player, so there must be a fervent belief that the rewards justify the risk - the definition of a ‘leap of faith’ (Kuhn, 1970). Simply engaging in a radical arts-based development programme could be considered ‘deep play’ and, as chapter five shows, at least one participant felt the payoff did not justify the gamble. What an observer may miss, however, is the possibility of the gamble’s longer term consequentiality – the “capacity of a payoff to flow beyond the bounds of the occasion in which it is delivered and to influence objectively the later life of the bettor” (Goffman, 1967, pp. 159-160). As Goffman acknowledges, it is impossible to determine

16 Individual, non-spectator high-risk sports are an example. Examples of less risky but practical gambles taken voluntarily are: motor-racing, criminality, a military call-up and entry into political life (Goffman, 1967)
the ‘objective value’ and ‘utility’ of a human payoff but consideration of ongoing ‘benefit’ may help us understand how the risk in play can be navigated in the development space.

Dark play, may contain hidden, subversive agendas (Schechner, 2013). A player engaged in a performance of dark play can appear antisocial, particularly where the activity is undertaken in proximity to, and potentially endangering, others (M.-A. Hunter & Macdonald, 2017). Such ‘critical events’ may ‘prickle’, disrupt and disturb but they can also be creative or virtuosic (M.-A. Hunter & Macdonald, 2017). This appreciation opens up the playing space for less conventional, distasteful, ugly and perhaps threatening activities to be seen as having value. Nicholson and Carroll (2013) note that LD can spark distress, damage and disturbance, and a playful pedagogy can manipulate, but perhaps we could start to see these things as potentially productive in some way, perhaps even a necessary process that ignites change. Regardless of to what extent dark places are ventured into, there is an obvious imperative for developers using play to behave in an ethical manner, which may include acknowledging risk and being explicit around what is framed as play and what is not. As Goffman notes, “serious activity can be used as a model of putting together unserious versions of the same activity, and, on occasion we may not know whether it is play or the real thing that is occurring” (1986, p.7).

This is where rules come in as a form of metacommunication (Bateson, 1972; Dunn, 2017). Some see play as ‘unruly’ and the liminal space in which the developer-fool plays has been regarded as ‘dangerous’ by those who preside over structures of power (Turner, 1979). But, by its nature play, and the fool, must trust and succumb to rules. Rules may even be the central feature in play, as one function of play may, in fact, be to organise performance: "play is the improvisational imposition of order, a way of making
order out of disorder” (Schechner, 1988, p.104). Being engaged in play requires a constant generation of rules, without which there is no playful activity.

The first rule in the game might be, ‘do no harm’, after which a rule such as, ‘there is no failure’ could feature – a condition that could help participants fully commit to the ideas created in the learning space. Fear of judgment and failure was common in Toolzone, but in both the obvious liminal zones created within the fieldwork of this project, rules were deliberately kept to a minimum. The ones that did exist (see chapter three) were either pre-existing cultural conventions, or collectively designed to protect individuals and develop trust, even if the process itself felt ‘dangerous’. They did not, however, remove risk altogether. As Barry states, "Failure, or its equivalent, is an expected and necessary part of the play (Schrage, 2000) and certainly part of the development – if one ‘gets it right’ all the time, it is a sign that the work isn't experimental enough" (2008, pp. 9-10). Engaging with artistic methods in development requires a "very different relationship with failure and risk" (Taylor, quoted in Barry, 2008), one that involves being vulnerable and trusting in unfamiliar processes and activities (Sutherland & Jelinek, 2015). Hunter and Macdonald (2017) conceive this as ‘finding the danger’ and ‘cutting close to it’. Or, as Neelands puts it: “at the heart of theatre, whatever the context, is the desire to create a secure environment without ever being a comfort zone” (emphasis in original) (2009, p.183). As Sutherland and Jelinek argue, risk may be an under-explored area in development within organisations but it brushes up against a long-understood element of theatre: the acceptance that “When making art there are no mistakes. There are just things that don’t work” (Ibbotson & Darso, 2008, p.554).
Rules make play both pleasurable and frustrating (Neelands, 2016). Hunter and Macdonald claim that education is about learning how to play fairly in the world. In the construction of playful development, then, rules are required, but fools also stretch and break rules, disrupt, and reduce order to chaos (Willeford, 1969). So perhaps the developer-fool acts first as an agent of deconstruction – or ‘undoing’ (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013) - before construction can begin and a new order, with new rules, can be created through play. Or perhaps, more accurately, it is a continuous cycle of demolition and rebuild with no beginning or end. This extends the idea presented in chapter five – that development can look for the breakdowns (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012) or antenarratives (Boje, 2006) and use them in praxis to ask critical questions around which of the many possible imagined futures might be constructed. Here we find risk, as participants are “offered a chance to wrestle, pull, and heave alternate constructions over the liminal threshold and into everyday work life, where they begin the competition to create new realities” (Hansen, 2002b, p.13). Will they take the 'collective leap of faith' to translate the story-as-performed to the story-as-lived (Hansen, 2002b)?

In the preceding discussion I offered a metaphor whereby a developer working inside organisations may be conceived as a theatrical fool. Using the metaphor, I suggested a framework that connects three intersecting aesthetic pedagogies of motley, elasticity and play. I pointed to sections within my data findings that showed these pedagogies at work, and linked them to the relevant parts of my theoretical foundations. They were found to be connected to tensions around intentionality, instrumentality and ideology in development, and liminality and aesthetic representations of distance. It is yet unknown whether the organisational playmaking process and emergence of the developer-fool character within it will extend locally beyond the short-term into newly created realities for Toolzone. Early evidence suggests they might, but it is not
‘outcomes’ of development that justify the research. Instead, the major contributions of this study are centred on what both the methodology and the metaphor offer to the advancement of theory and practice, the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER SEVEN:

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS & CONCLUDING REMARKS

“Smile you my speeches as I were a fool? Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain, I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.” II.2:77-79

Implications of the Research

In the introduction to this thesis I set out to investigate the tensions of development as performed in the encounters between developers and participants. I posed three questions around which the research was constructed: What tensions does a developer encounter in the performance of leadership development? How might a developer interact with these in their performances? What implications might such performances have for leadership development? As detailed in earlier chapters, the main contributions of the research respond to the first two questions. First, the study yielded a series of tensions encountered by developers. These began with the tussles and possible presentations of identity discussed in chapter one. Chapter four built on these to analyse tensions associated with ambiguities of control and intentionality performed in negotiation with organisational stakeholders, particularly commissioners. Tensions experienced between a developer and participants in the performance of an intervention were then discussed in chapter five. These related mainly to the various perceptions of distance and distancing as an aesthetic process encountered in chapter two.

The second major contribution was the application of the developer-fool metaphor introduced in chapter six. It was offered as one potential answer to the second research
question. The developer-fool was shown to enact radical new ways of perceiving and interacting with tensions in the performance of development.

Perhaps because of my practical experience as actor and facilitator, I always imagined the fruits of my labours would lend themselves to hands-on application. In this chapter, as a way of ‘driving home’ the thesis, I turn to what is possibly the most important part; the implications. Rather than objective truths, I see these as ‘emerging practical theories’, exposed in “the situated nature of accounts through narrative circularity” (Cunliffe, 2003, pp. 990-991). ‘Narrative circularity’ seems an apt way to describe what follows, as the core metaphor and associated contributions come together in a web of interactions, offering multiple implications connecting to the aforementioned two main contributions. Although I treat theoretical and practical implications as separate sections for ease of digestion, there is inevitable overlap. As outlined in the introduction, there is also potential overlap between the academic audiences to which the implications are directed. Just as the theatrical fool plays in the liminal space between on- and off-stage realities, the developer-fool thus becomes an interlocutor between not only different scholarly domains, but also between theory and practice. The third major contribution is the method of organisational playmaking documented in this thesis. In the following sections I address implications to theory, implications to practice and other implications, including this methodological contribution and implications for organisations. I close this chapter, and the thesis, with some comments around limitations, suggested avenues for future research and a return to the questions outlined in the introduction.
**Implications for Theory**

Application of the developer-fool metaphor has been noted as one of three main contributions made by this research, yet the notion of folly inside organisations is not altogether new. Nearly 30 years ago Kets de Vries (1990) suggested the presence of a sage-fool may help keep businesses on track, and fight the forces of hubris. But Kets de Vries stopped at a superficial level. His organisational fool is merely a representative figure who challenges authority. His use of the metaphor does not achieve the ‘enriching’ or ‘insightful’ understanding of organisations that give metaphors heuristic value (Cornelissen, 2004). Targeting the AT context, Prentki (2015b) observes that facilitators might open a space for contradiction in their work, like a fool. The metaphor itself as a standalone construct, therefore, is not the main theoretical contribution of this thesis. Rather, like many of the phenomena studied, it is the performance of the metaphor or ‘metaphor-in-action’ that generates implications in this research. Theoretical implications of the developer-fool stem from the application of the metaphor to a specific arena – leadership development – and the connections revealed through the aesthetic pedagogies of motley, elasticity and play.

This thesis extends theory suggesting a pedagogy may be aesthetic and an aesthetic may be pedagogic. The appreciation of a performance can be simultaneously an “intellectually and emotionally satisfying experience” (Saldaña, 2005, p.31). As chapter one noted, instrumentality has traditionally dominated LD. Aesthetic dimensions may be considered “a neat and interesting ‘another way’ to look at these instrumental issues” (S. S. Taylor & Hansen, 2005, p.1221), or simply a ‘pedagogic add-on’ (Carroll & Smolovic Jones, 2018). While the shift towards a greater recognition of aesthetic dimensions in LD is encouraging, there is still a tendency to look for an ‘intrinsic’ aesthetic as a quality to
be captured, rather than as a process. Following the suggestion made in chapter six that LD may be more of a social construction than many writers appear to appreciate, this research argues that the aesthetics of development are socially constructed in performance. In much the same way as power and resistance have now been evidenced as two sides of the same coin (Collinson, 2014), distinctions between aesthetic and pedagogic processes are likely to be imperceptible. Neither can exist in isolation, particularly in performance. As Neelands notes: “the separation of the social from the artistic.....unpicks the unique weave of drama as a living practice” (2009, pp. 179-180).

Where there are aesthetic processes, there will inevitably be learning and change. Where some kind of developmental change takes place, there will be aesthetic experience, which may or may not be embodied and emotional. In the performance of development, therefore, pedagogic and aesthetic practices can be reframed as mutually constitutive and inseparable. The resultant ‘aesthetic pedagogies’ are ambiguous and constructed in a collective negotiation. Such an acceptance negates, and helps a scholarly conversation move beyond, the current binary thinking around art and instrumentality where development is seen as a mechanistic imperative. The view of aesthetic and pedagogic drivers as inextricably linked, embodied by the developer-fool, is intentionally provocative. It helps answer Neelands’ call for “pedagogic positions and desires that are intentionally located in the shifting borderlands of the social/artistic in ways that blur or confuse the comfortable and leisurely distinctions between art and work, aesthetics and politics of Western sensibilities” (2004, p.51). It also leads into the second theoretical implication.

The next theoretical implication, connecting to the motley aesthetic pedagogy, is that ideology must be treated as a core factor in the consideration of instrumentality,
along with intentionality. As Ackroyd states, “it is not enough to look at whether or not the [activity] achieves its ends. We also need to ask whether those ends should be achieved” (2000, p.6). This research suggests the relationship between ideology and intentionality is not yet sufficiently understood, although there appears to be an assumption that intentionality is fuelled by ideology. While that assumption may be true of AT, there appears to be a general lack of engagement with ideology in the performance of development in organisations. If instrumentality is pedagogic, it is also (as argued above) necessarily aesthetic. Therefore, as part of intentionality and instrumentality, ideology might also fuel, and possibly distort, the aesthetics of a learning environment. It should then feature as a central, connected part of the negotiation of development.

An associated assumption this thesis contends with is that intentionality, and underlying ideology, are relatively stable. Many in the development terrain treat discussions around purpose and expected outcomes as a necessary first step in the development process. Once they have taken place, typically there is no opportunity to revisit these questions. After the initial articulation of unified purpose, everyone involved ‘knows’ why they are doing what they are doing. Despite growing support for the ideas of multiple selves, and identity as a continuous co-construction (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013), there has been little recognition that both ideology and intentionality are also likely to shift in the social construction of development. This thesis supports theory that suggests a developer is never objectively neutral and will bring their own set of values and beliefs to their work. It also extends such theory by suggesting that developers’ own ideals will enter into the co-constructed performance of development. They will be changed by, and along with, the multiple identities, intentionalities and ideologies of all other participants. Returning to Brecht’s assertion noted in the introduction that “we develop one other”
LD can be framed as a socially constructed performance in which these constructs are continuously re-shaped and re-negotiated.

The recognition that ideology and intentionality are collectively performed social constructions may open up new trajectories for the scholarship of development. Perhaps more important however, is the associated recognition that developers are complicit in the co-construction of a collective, shifting ideology and intentionality. The suggested implication for leadership development theory is that developers can no longer be treated as neutral, objective and unchanged figures, existing externally to research. Rather, a developer is a crucial relational and contextual player in the complex performances of development and its scholarship.

Ironically, the third implication of this work is that, although they should feature as ongoing considerations in the development process, it is not essential that consensus around ideology and intentionality is reached. The research challenges the ‘deficit model’ assumption that what the centre prescribes will be ‘good for’ the periphery (Prentki, 2012). It argues against the hubris demonstrated by organisations attempting to determine what ‘good for’ even means. Dissensus, or argument, and the resultant ambiguity around who or what development is for is shown to be productive in the sense that it enables a sustained ‘un-knowing’. Such a state, similar to the suspension of disbelief within theatrical performance, can be uncomfortable, but it may also be a transitional, temporary and enlightening experience, to be entered into and returned from, altered. Liminality and communitas, thus, offer a lens through which to view not only the processes inside the development space, but also some of the relational performances surrounding development. For example, if a lens of liminality is placed over the expressed fixation on ‘outcome’ and ‘impact’, a common performance in development, it is possible to reframe
these ideals as liminal, shape-shifting constructs. In opposition to the prevalent conception of impact as a fixed, tangible, often economic output of development, impact takes on a process- or practice-oriented form, subject to ambiguity and continual refinement.

Likewise, the control over development design and outcome that many commissioners seek to grasp can be reframed as liminal. Instead of being a harness-able entity, as it is often assumed to be, control becomes another ambiguous, subjective and fluid process, co-created in the moment of performance. Rather than negating the evaluation of development altogether, then, this thesis proposes that it might be reoriented. Evaluation of development might be re-directed towards considering whether or not an activity or development context permits the questioning of “cherished values and rules” (Turner, 1986, p.102). An evaluative question might then ask: Can traditionally fixed conceptions of control and impact be reframed as processes and practices subject to ‘radical scepticism’ in which a group might “look honestly as itself” (p.122)? Such consideration would provide an alternative to more functional attempts to determine correlations between the ‘common attributes of success’ and LD (Foster et al., 2008), or ‘net present value of improved capability’ (Jones, 2006), as described in chapter one.

Whereas the aesthetic pedagogies themselves form the bulk of implications for practice, the final set of theoretical implications is centred around the critical connections (Cunliffe, 2003) between the pedagogies and associated links to tussles within LD (see chapter one). Earlier in this chapter I referred to my set of aesthetic pedagogies as a framework, and it is using theory around frames and framing that I will explain how the relationships between them have implications for theory. When introducing elasticity I called it a derivative of motley. Motley comes first, as it is more strongly rooted in the
principles of social construction. In other words, an acceptance that reality is uncertain, fluid, subjective and performed in the interactions between people, is a prerequisite for a conceptual understanding of distance, time and space as elastic. Motley and elasticity are, in a sense however, reciprocal, as an appreciation of elasticity might feed into or derive from the ambiguity that underpins a motley aesthetic pedagogy.

A visual representation of this relationship would depict elasticity as a frame nested inside the wider frame of motley. Both aesthetic pedagogies have implications for the instrumentality debate in arts-based development as they fit with the notion that performances can do and be many things at once. It is the subjective experience, or impression of participants that counts. Motley has strong connections with the outcome-process tussle of LD and also tensions around whether development controls or emancipates. Through motley we see that it does not have to be either one or the other, or any fixed position between. Development can take any and many positions on each spectrum (control-liberation and outcome-process). Elasticity also has a relationship with the outcome-process tussle whereby the suspension of 'unknowing' can be stretched as far as possible to prevent development becoming overly impact-oriented. It connects more strongly into arguments around individual or collective development and whether the work should be separated or situated with respect to the organisational context. Elasticity, in tandem with motley, allows us to understand developer-participant and participant-participant relationships, both in and around the development space, as elastic. There may be individual or collective, separated or situational processes at work, but they always occur in relationality - with a metaphorical bungee cord connecting them.

The play frame fits around both motley and elasticity. A pedagogy of playfulness, including attention to presence, humour, inversion and risk, informs all other aspects of
the developer-fool and her performance. She can be playful in her motley presentations and she should play with the elasticity of her working environment. Play has a particularly strong connection to development that uses theatre-based techniques. The idea, however, that a developer might deliberately destroy and reconstruct present and imagined realities through contradiction and playful rule-breaking offers implications to all kinds of development theory. One possible pathway might be to explore the presence of antagonism or cynicism as components of folly in development. In any event, the relationship between rules, risk and participatory forms of development begs for further exploration.

The above implications for theory offer some exciting trajectories for future research. These could be pursued through an approach that understands LD as a negotiated performance, in which the developer is integral and implicated. As Prentki states, “moment by moment throughout our lives we engage in internal and external negotiations predicated upon the shifting relations between actor, character and audience”(2018, p.1). Such a view would open up myriad opportunities to explore various dramaturgical or aesthetic elements of the performances in LD and alternative presentations of distance, or other framing devices. This thesis also suggests such new terrain may be best navigated in a collaborative approach that brings together theoretical and practical perspectives from diverse academic domains.

Implications for Practice

Implications for practice closely resemble those in the previous section. They are, however, framed differently, and accessed from a different angle. They concern the ‘how’ of development – an aspect that has received scant attention in the literature. In presenting them here I make two assumptions. First, the developer will have considered the
fundamental question regarding the ‘right’ to intervene (O’Connor, 2015) raised in chapter one. Second, an understanding of development as a socially constructed performance and an appreciation of the theoretical implications of the previous section, are at least considered as a foundation, if not accepted in entirety.

Although it is presented last in sequence, play actually weaves its way through all of the aesthetic pedagogies, much as it provides the overall framing to the previous section. Even fundamental design choices for the research, such as staging a ‘play within a play’, were playful from the outset. Practical implications are, thus, presented not as rules but as invitations or provocations to playfully engage with the previously discussed aesthetic pedagogies in performance. I make no promises around whether or not the adoption of these principles will be appropriate to the context of my audience and there is no guarantee that following them will consequentially herald the entrance of a fool. They should, however, enable a developer to confidently, proactively and purposefully take on one particular ‘in-role’ persona (Aitken et al., 2007), living by their ‘wits’ and creating the ‘space for possibility’ (Gallagher, 2000).

**Wear the Motley Garb**

Paradoxically, motley is both an 'unambiguous sign vehicle' that labels the wearer a fool, and a metaphorical representation of ambiguity. Developers wishing to bring more folly to their work should, therefore, both openly claim and perform the character of the fool whilst revelling in the ambiguity of identity and intentionality and ideology that motley demands. In practice, this means being attentive to the many performances that take place in the construction of development, including the performance of one’s own ideology. There may even be moments when a developer-fool consciously adopts characteristics of the sage or missionary developer castings in order to provoke a
particular dialogic response. It means viewing oneself as existing between the organisation and the development process – as both a co-participant and ‘critic and conscience’ (Prentki, 2012). It means accepting that every other participant may have a different perception of who you are and what you are there to achieve. It means using frames to play with these perceptions and mastering the ability to switch fluidly between expressions of performed characters. It means understanding that these perceptions, including ones’ own, are likely to shift and evolve across the course of the project, which may generate tension or discomfort. And it means becoming comfortable with the discomfort of ‘un-knowing’ and recognising it as a necessary aspect of development.

A critic may point out that ambiguity and discomfort are practically difficult conditions to establish in a world which wants answers and safe, trusting environments. I would respond to this argument with the observation that the time for benign development is over. Even in the academic literature, there is a thirst for development that goes beyond that which simply reinforces the status quo (Carroll & Nicholson, 2014; Gagnon & Collinson, 2017; Raelin, 2008). It seems developers, and the scholars that study their processes, have become increasingly frustrated by the constraints affecting development, and are seeking new approaches that offer the potential for meaningful, lasting change. This thesis does not make that promise. Instead it suggests that more empirical research might look into the relationships between developers and commissioning organisations in order to better understand where boundaries might be stretched.

Harking back to the theoretical implications, and translating them into practical action for a developer, two further implications around motley emerge. First, developers should keep their antennae raised to recognise moments in which control becomes
activated as a process. By performing something of a juggling act, allowing control over the intervention to ebb and flow between themselves and stakeholders, they should try to move their audience away from a framing of control as ‘harness-able’. As observed in Toolzone, control of development, and its travelling partners responsibility and culpability, are enacted as a performance. The uncomfortable experiences of ‘letting go’ and ‘anointing’ others are a critical part of such a performance and can open up the space of indeterminacy or ‘unknowing’ that drives creative action. The oscillation of control as a process, and the relationship between control and culpability, seem to present particularly ripe areas for further empirical investigation.

Second, a developer should accept that the intentionality of development is rarely considered thoroughly enough by organisations. Rather than settling for a vague one-off articulation of purpose, ideology and intentionality should, in fact, be consciously, critically and cyclically revisited in order to ‘check in’ with the shifting direction of a project. In response to the question raised in the outcome-process tussle of chapter one, it is the developer who may need to take on the responsibility for guiding these discussions. A developer attempting to orchestrate such dialogue should be aware the associated uncertainty may be felt as a ‘crisis’ by organisational stakeholders. While I would not suggest how, when and to whom a developer’s own intentionality and ideology should be communicated within this performance, this research does argue that a high degree of critical consciousness be brought to consideration, especially when conducting negotiations with commissioners. Under those conditions, there is an opportunity to playfully test how ‘far’ an organisation is willing to venture into the discomfort of uncertainty.
**Embrace Elasticity and Liminality**

As Schechner (1988) points out, seeing can only take place at a distance from what is being seen. Perceiving space and time as elastic constructs opens up ways to play with physical and metaphorical distance in development. A developer might, for example, pay special consideration to the frequency and duration of her appearances within the organisational context, in the lead up to, during, and after an intervention. She should keep in mind not only the proximity between herself and participants, including those exercising decision-making authority, but also how the various positions are moved between, and how the space is traversed. Does she creep back into view from the shadows, or does she spring back like an elastic recoil? A developer should ask how movement between her various positionings might be perceived and responded to by her fellow participants in development.

Following Taylor’s (2018) suggestion that when a performer has fun, so too does the audience, one possible extension of this implication concerning elasticity is the demonstration of distancing. A developer might playfully encourage participants to mirror her. She might stretch her own boundaries of possible imagined futures. She might use her own experience to demonstrate consciously stepping out of a situation in order to take a new perspective, safe in the knowledge that, however far one ventures, one can always bounce back. The use of playback in development (see chapter three) may be a relevant innovation in this regard. The technique of playback allows a performer to conduct a process of metaxis around a situation perceived as meaningful to an audience. As noted in chapter three it can be a ‘radical social encounter’ (Fox, 2009), but it can also be handled playfully by applying a fictional, play frame. If participants respond to such a reflection (or refraction), it could result in a process of relational ‘self-distancing’ in
which they ‘move themselves’ into the space between what is and what could be.

Participants might then put their own interests to one side in the interest of the collective:

...decisions and rule making are based in deliberative arguments about what is fair for the collective interests of players. In play, we learn how to live with others without the need to control them or pursue our individual interests (Neelands, 2016, p. 35).

Similar considerations may be brought to distance between people (including the developer) and context - or content - of development. Seeing herself as a performer, a developer could reframe distance as a process and bring an aesthetic sensibility to her appreciation and handling of distance. In so doing, she might recognise the moments within development in which she needs to be closer, or further away, from either people or situations. She should trust her artistic instincts and the validity of her pedagogy (Saldaña, 2005).

Time is a major constraint on development, but this thesis argues that an elasticity of time, borrowed from the theatre, might be a useful notion in practice. I do not go so far as to suggest we can stop, or rewind, the clock. In this research, however, it seems careful attention to the activities used in the development space might enable the playful compression or relaxation of usual time constraints. For example, some theatre-based exercises seem to stretch time, providing almost limitless opportunity for reflection, where others condense time with an almost frenetic energy that can yield fast, pressurised responses. Applying a performance-based, dramaturgical frame over development encounters can help isolate the moments where action might be sped up or slowed down according to what is taking place.

The concept of elasticity can be brought to the spatial dimensions of the development environment, notably when connected to the ideas of liminality. The usual boundary of an organisation may be stretched to create a new zone. The physical location
of this is not necessarily significant, although in this research both of the major interventions were carried out in spaces physically removed from and aesthetically different from the organisational premises. For a temporary period, the boundary of Toolzone became extended to surround first a yurt in the woods, then an iconic theatre building. A liminal zone may even be created by shrinking the boundaries tightly around a space within an organisation. If, however, that is the case, careful consideration should be paid to aesthetic aspects of the environment. More important than physical location are the conditions of liminality. A developer-fool should try to make the familiar strange, in an environment without status, power, or judgement, in order to stimulate communitas. They should try to create a space in which distance can be playfully explored, including its relationship with temporality (See Cunliffe et al., 2004). The various playful pedagogies discussed in the next section may help them perform such acts.

**Be Playful**

The aesthetic pedagogy of play acts as an umbrella for all the activities of a developer-fool. Indeed, an entire development activity can be framed as play. This can be a helpful ‘metacommunication’ (Bateson, 1972) or setting of the stage, so that if tension arises through provocation or dissensus, the developer-fool can remind participants that they are engaged in ‘non-serious’ activity. In each performed interaction the developer-fool should attend to the four key components of play identified in chapter six – recognition of presence, humour, inversion and risk. What follows is a guide as to how such considerations might be practically applied.

Carroll and Smolovic Jones find that “a key element of facilitating leadership development is that of being present, in the located experiences of participants” (2018, p.200). This thesis argues that one way to do so is through play. Rather than physical
presence, the ‘presence’ in play refers to a quality of attentiveness. It means being responsive to what is taking place in the current moment, as opposed to looking ahead and planning the next step in a process. Being present is to embrace what is unfolding spontaneously, and to improvise accordingly. It requires an acceptance that we are in a perpetual state of becoming and that a development process is always incomplete (Nicholson, 2005). Developers ‘acting in the moment’ may best describe themselves as sensing, meaning-making and acting agents using Heidegger’s (1971) perspective of dwelling (Sutherland & Ladkin, 2013). Their voice is but one of many, and the “moment-to-moment configuring and reconfiguring of action strategies to manage and encourage diverse viewpoints from many participants requires an agility of action beyond predetermined pedagogical plans and predetermined learning outcomes” (p.108). This open-ended view aligns with the ‘therapist’ set of pedagogies discussed in chapter one but additionally links to ideas of dissensus that feature in the control-emancipation tussle of the same chapter. Given the foundational understanding of life as performance, and the assumption that our performances are reciprocal and mutual, it follows that when a developer is present, her co-participants might also be. Spontaneous moments of collective lucidity, camaraderie and energy – also known as communitas – are more likely to occur if participants are in such a state. Above all, being present enables a developer to notice and act on potentialities.

Being present also enables a developer-fool to spot opportunities to use the next two pedagogical tricks – humour and inversion. These may be combined or introduced separately, and may even have overtones of danger or risk, the last of the playful components. Using humour can invert a situation; deliberately contradicting can, in return, be very funny. In some organisations, humour itself might be unfamiliar, even threatening. What might be a casual leg-pull in one setting could be perceived as a
deliberate deceit in another (Goffman, 1986). As Gagnon and Collinson (2017) find, using humour to parody and juxtapose culture and control processes may even be a kind of ‘collective resistance’. In certain cases, all it might take is for a developer, like a clown, to draw attention to an unusual aspect of themselves to generate amusement\(^ {17} \). In all cases, an aspiring developer-fool should carefully consider bringing humour and contradiction into the negotiation, design and implementation of development processes. They should pay attention to context in determining the right moment and the right ‘dose’ (Kets de Vries, 1990). In exercising discretion, they should not shy away from confrontation (Anthony Jackson, 2007). As a form of deep play, the mask of folly may be used to push further than perhaps conventional development dares in order to access the undiscussables beneath the surface (Badham & Matula, 2013). Leading on from this implication, empirical research into the idea of developer as antagonist, and the perils of antagonism, could provide an interesting new trajectory in the field.

Engaging in play, like arts-based methods, requires that participants understand the rules and appreciate the risks. The developer should ensure that rules or cues regarding the entering and breaking of frame are abundantly clear, whether pre-determined or co-created by the group. Using theatre this can be relatively straightforward as conventions such as applause create clear signals that the ‘make-believe’ is ‘wiped away’ (Goffman, 1986). In other contexts, such markers may need to be flagged by developers, and agreed upon as a group, in the learning environment. Developers should also pay close attention to the willingness with which the players have entered the playing space. Do they want to enter the ‘deception’ of the game or do they imagine themselves to be a passive audience? Additionally, in staging the development performance, there should be recognition that failure is both likely and potentially

\(^{17}\) Emphasising unusual traits is one form of ‘clowning’ I encountered during acting training – believed to have its origins in the Le Coq school in Paris
constructive. Once again, the developer will need to be intimately familiar with an organisational context in order to assess the appropriate emphasis (and possible re-framing) failure and risk deserve in the learning space.

The last implication for practice is this recognition of the value of familiarity. Only by understanding the daily realities of participants can a developer-fool play with irony, humour and contradiction in their critical commentary of proceedings. Where possible, therefore, developers should find ways to become intimate with the organisation and participants with whom they will interact. As Goffman states, it is in a “personal capacity, that an individual can be warm, spontaneous, and touched by humour” (Goffman, 1961, p.152). But they should also see themselves as strangers – artists – who bring something to the work that the participants do not (Anthony Jackson, 2007). This brings me back full circle to the notion of motley, as the ability to see oneself, and perform, as multiple characters enables developers to embed themselves within the complex web of development relationships. Embeddedness, or ‘infiltration’ as Goffman (1986) playfully puts it, thus features in the methodological implications that make up the final part of this chapter.

Other Implications

The remaining implications fall into two categories; those relevant to organisations and, those associated with methods employed in this research. Beginning with the first category, this thesis has the potential to radically alter how organisations engage with LD. Where organisations have ‘gone to sleep’ or become stiff or ossified, they may need a radical inversion or the equivalent of a ‘cardiac shock’ (Barry, 2008). This could entail the reframing of dominant perspectives of control, risk and failure as ‘enactments’ not entities. It could also help to carry an emerging scholarly view of
organisations as being in a perpetual state of becoming (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) into the organisational sphere. Along with businesses that have ‘stagnated’, such a shift might suit organisations that are ‘in flux’ as identity anchors are put under pressure (Barry, 2008). This was the case with Toolzone as they struggled with unprecedented and rapid growth. Developer-fools (or as Barry (2008) prefers, ‘organisational artists’) might deliver this shock by introducing a new framing of LD as an ongoing, collaboratively constructed process involving partnership and ambiguity. There is a certain humility required for such a course of action. Organisations would need to recognise a place for folly, either of their own accord or in dialogue with an external actor. Even with such recognition, a special kind of leader, such as Les, may be necessary to instigate the conditions Fletcher and Kaufer (2003) identify for relational processes to flourish. Commissioners of development, therefore, may need to form an intimate relationship with a researcher or developer (or both) committed to a playful, provocative pedagogy using non-traditional methods. If such a shift away from functionalist, outcome-driven assumptions could be achieved, an organisation may benefit from a host of alternative ways to envisage, procure, transact and assess their development practices.

Non-traditional methods are central to the remaining implications of this research. Chapter three argued that arts-based methods of research can raise critical consciousness and promote dialogue through participation (Leavy, 2009). While this research began as an investigation into the specific arts-based method of OT my focus shifted over time towards what we might learn about the relationships and tensions of development through carrying out a theatre-making process. Nevertheless, there is one key contribution to research methodology that derives from this shift and that deserves recognition. Chapter one highlighted a “growing realisation of the experiential, situated and contextually sensitive nature of leadership development” (Carroll & Smolovic Jones, 2018, p.188) and
the associated need for new approaches to LD. These might include methods that allow “participants to access intuitions, feelings, stories, improvisation, experience, imagination, active listening, awareness in the moment, novel words and empathy” (Edwards, Elliott, & Iszatt-White, 2013). Or, as Carroll et al suggest, scholars and practitioners might “seek ‘richer versions’ of leadership coming from more intimate and sustained interactions with actors” (2008, p.373). The unresolved issue from the tussle around control and emancipation was in finding or creating methodologies that flush out - rather than suppress or ignore - power dynamics in organisations. Citing Mabey (2013), I asked whether, in the face of pressure from commercial interests and micro-political dynamics, it would be possible to design critical approaches to development that might liberate multiple voices. Mabey (2013) suggests an emergent, distributed view of LD might help, but noted that functionalists may find such conceptions hard to swallow. This thesis responds to these calls by noting the under-explored opportunity to combine research and development in organisational studies using an immersive, participatory and critically reflexive research design.

Arts-based researchers do not discover research tools, they ‘carve’ them (Leavy, 2009). I did not set out to offer a new method as a contribution of this research. A set of integrated practices emerged, however, as a significant innovation providing potential value to the field of LD, and possibly beyond. ‘Organisational playmaking’ is the name I give to the overall process that became a hybrid of performance ethnography and OT. Some of the applied methods within it were explicitly arts-based, such as the playbuilding workshop and theatre performance. In these, emotional connection enabled participants to find ways in which the artistic form resonated with their own lived experiences. The ‘messy texts’ that were generated (such as static images or improvised dialogue) were
multivoiced not in the sense that they encompass many speakers using their own words (a common and literal narrowing of the interpretation of plurivocity) but because they shift perspective quickly and easily, which is what poetry allows them to do, seeing a situation simultaneously from different angles. (Linstead, 2000, p.84).

These methods ‘showed’ rather than ‘told’ (S. S. Taylor, 2008). Other methods, such as the story-telling interviews were traditional research practices with a creative ‘twist’. All were entered into from a participatory perspective and all involved elements of both development and research.

The field of AT has recognised the opportunity to combine research and practice for some time. There is now a whole arm of literature devoted to what is known as ‘applied theatre as research’ (ATAR). I wish to suggest that the principle may be adapted with regard to development techniques used in organisations. Rather than treating them merely as change technologies, development activities might be viewed as embedded, participatory research methods. Organisational studies appears to be ready for methodologies or practices that “dislodge fixed and uneven boundaries between ‘self’ and ‘other’” (Nicholson, 2005, p.29). Nicholson claims we should not be surprised if radical, arts-based, participatory methods, like other practices once situated at the margins, quickly ‘slip into the mainstream’. Combining development and research in a method such as organisational playmaking seems to present two opportunities. First, as more businesses become aware of the pressing need for information, the prospect of obtaining research and knowledge about an organisation from a development process that involves them may be appealing. Certainly in this study the potential for a research ‘outcome’ helped seal the deal with Toolzone. Second, organisational playmaking responds to Carroll and Smolovic’s observation that “ethnographic methodologies that engage with intersubjective ways of knowing might enhance understanding of what it means to be there as participants experience leadership development in terms of their own aesthetic experiences” (2018, p.200). It also goes some way to answering questions raised in the
individual-collective and separated-situated tussles of chapter one: what might the collective development of leadership look like?’ and; ‘under what conditions might such an approach take place? A participatory research methodology with a hybrid researcher-developer at the centre may, thus, help intellectual practice progress beyond the primacy and limitations of a single knowing voice.

Organisational playmaking is only one way to integrate research and development in organisations. As a participatory methodology it necessarily involved significant contributions from my co-participants. It is, therefore impossible to replicate in its entirety. The original version will enter the ‘archive’ (Hamera, 2013). The tools and techniques, however, may enter the ‘repertoire’ of the researcher-artist (Hamera, 2013). As such, I hope other scholars will play with, critique and modify these practices in the pursuit of new innovations to drive knowledge generation. It would, for example, be interesting to know whether a similar process that used another art form, or perhaps a more mainstream development method, would generate similar experiences. Working with something akin to the process as documented here, I hope I will have opportunities to explore possible adjustments and/or enhancements within the performance of development in other contexts. In particular, I am drawn to the concept of ‘communitas’ (Turner, 1974) and how it might intersect with a variety of methods in the development space.

There is one final contribution I should note before moving to the concluding sections of this thesis. The notion of shadows emerged in the course of unpacking the developer-fool metaphor. Although it appears in this thesis only as a device through which we can interpret the performance of a fool, the idea of a shadow as a metaphor for a core development relationship may provide fertile ground for further theory.
development. It is fitting that, at the end of a thesis so heavily influenced by theatre and performance theory, a Shakespearean image, filled with rich imaginings of light, shade, darkness and disappearances, should act as a pathway to the possibility of new knowledge.

**Limitations of the Research**

“All friends shall taste the wages of their virtue, and all foes the cup of their deservings.” V.3:301-303

Limitations to the study fall into two categories; those anticipated in the research design and, those that emerged in the unfolding of the fieldwork. I will briefly touch on each type with suggestions for how these influenced the research and whether they might productively be mitigated in future studies.

This research is ‘limited’ in the sense that it considers only one organisation and one highly situational, immersive research–development process. It looks at localised dynamics and is not directly replicable. This conscious choice to focus on a single site and story reflects the aesthetics and arts-based research paradigms that favour credibility over validity and authenticity over reliability (see chapter three). I believe my adherence to established qualitative and arts-based methods allowed me ‘drop the tools of rationality’ (Weick, 2007) and build ‘trustworthiness’ (Barry, 1996) in the pursuit of knowledge advancement.

Placing the researcher at the centre of a participatory methodology has limitations and would be subject to critique from rationalist scholars who claim ‘bias’ is something to be avoided. In this study, I hope I have demonstrated sufficient critical and dialogic reflexivity (Cunliffe, 2002a) to earn credibility for my claims. While dual responsibilities
of research and development were anticipated in the design, I acknowledge that the developer ‘role’ became more involved than originally expected. At the outset I was unsure as to how much of the facilitation and theatre-making I would take on. I imagined that certain activities might require the involvement of a specialised LD facilitator or theatre director. As the research unfolded, however, it became clear that the most appropriate and comprehensive way for me to tell the narrative was as an ‘insider-artist’ (Guillet De Monthoux, 2013). Due to the emergent and shifting nature of this research I ‘brought myself’ (McNiff, 2007) to the study even more than originally anticipated.

A second consciously accepted limitation was around scope. There were a number of different directions in which this research could have progressed, but there was a necessity to narrow the focus sufficiently to allow in depth analysis. Whilst impact features as a central dilemma in arts-based research, I, therefore, made the conscious choice not to investigate evaluation of outcome in any detail. Other directions were considered but consciously diverted away from. These included: a more nuanced exploration of the nature of the leadership that might be developed using these methods, and; a more thorough consideration of the role of the ‘audience’ in the performance of development.

One final anticipated and unavoidable limitation was the temporality of the research. There were suggestions that the theatre performance captured only a snapshot in time and, consequently, relevance was limited. As one participant stated “we were there, but we’re over here now”. Such comments raise an issue pertinent to any organisational research or development activity: the findings may only reflect the localised context, including time, in which they were generated. Ironically, my choice of method alleviated somewhat the risks associated with this limitation. The application of distance through the
presentation of fictional realities enabled transcendence away from the localised situation towards more generalisable principles. As one participant commented “there is a Beau in every organisation”. Likewise, as previously noted, Les later stated, “we are all Amanda”. The fiction enabled these transitions to happen.

Unexpected limitations were few in this research, due to a guiding constructionist paradigm where it is accepted that almost any eventuality might come to pass. Indeed, I believe it is the uncertainty and ‘in the moment’ responsiveness that give this research its ‘swing’ (Thompson, 2000). On reflection, one possible limitation was that time and resources did not permit me to become even more deeply embedded within the organisation. One of the many questions I reflect upon in the aftermath is what might have been possible if I had ‘gone native’ (Van Maanen, 1988) and become fully integrated into the Toolzone family. Certainly I did not anticipate the depth of the emotional connections I would build with participants and the difficulty of ‘extraction’ at the end of the fieldwork. Whether that is a limitation or an opportunity remains to be seen: that story has not yet reached a conclusion.

**Concluding Remarks**

“*Jesters do oft prove prophets.*” V.3:72

This research set out to investigate the tensions encountered by developers in LD. It is informed by the understanding that all of life is a performance (Schechner, 1988) and that all performances are essentially incomplete (Hansen, 2002a). I have conceived this thesis as an inherently partial, subjective and unfinished performance, a ‘meta-play’ documenting the processes of constructing the ‘play within’. It is an ‘impressionist tale’, written from three perspectives (researcher, developer, artist), that shows, rather than
tells, the messiness and uncertainty of life (Van Maanen, 1988). My concluding remarks, thus, ‘open up’, rather than ‘wrap up’, elements in a continuing story (Lovitts, 2007). Nevertheless, this thesis has provided answers to the questions outlined in the introduction. These answers contribute to a series of implications for theory and practice, across organisational and theatrical domains. In these final paragraphs I will summarise the key points of the research and close with a kind of ‘fool’s prophecy’ regarding the future.

In my introduction, I claimed LD is a vitally important practice in a ‘turbulent world’. It is steeped in ‘hard-to-shift’ power dynamics (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013), and associated tensions. Some of these originate in the functionalist paradigm that still dominates organisational practice (Mabey, 2013), and most are informed by the assumption that consensus is necessary to achieve desired outcomes. This thesis argues against such an assumption. It also suggests every interaction within development may be conceived as a subjective, dialogic performance. To my knowledge, no prior empirical research has positioned LD in such a way. Nor have there been any investigations into the ways in which developers interact with tensions in LD. This is, therefore, a significant piece of work with a number of original contributions.

The research documents, responds to, and extends a forming assertion that LD is more socially constructed than current theory seems to recognise. Literature has already demonstrated that identity in LD is a shifting, ambiguous construction (Carroll & Levy, 2010). This thesis claims other constructs must be similarly considered, particularly in relation to one another. My first question was, ‘what tensions does a developer encounter in the performance of development?’ Intentionality, ideology, control, aesthetics, pedagogy and distance all featured as sources of ambiguity and tension in the research.
The developer has been shown to interact with each, sometimes in the negotiation of development, sometimes within the performances of the development space. The way, or ways, in which she does so help to answer the second question.

I asked, ‘how might a developer interact with these tensions?’ The answer this thesis offers is ‘as a fool’, using playfulness, motley and an elastic appreciation of distance. The emergence of the developer-fool metaphor provided a central motif that would bind together my interpretations of data. With playful provocation, the developer-fool offers a lifeline to practitioners wishing to challenge homogenising and normalising practices in development (Gagnon & Collinson, 2014). She and her suite of aesthetic pedagogies are rooted in the theatre, but they may travel into other domains, such as AT, OD and OA. The connections presented by the developer-fool, thus, offer an opportunity to orchestrate dialogue between previously separate, but perhaps symbiotic, academic disciplines.

The developer-fool metaphor was brought into existence through the performance ontology and participatory methodology at the heart of what I have referred to as ‘organisational playmaking’. I did not set out to craft a new methodology. I had, however, already noted that OT is affected by a ‘crisis of engagement’ (McDonnell, 2005), possibly due to the hegemonic way in which ‘problem situations’ (Schreyogg, 2001) are articulated by senior management. In recognition that transformational learning rests on the de-stabilisation of normative knowledge/power structures, and a refusal of certainty and completion (Neelands, 2004), I set out to do things differently. Organisational playmaking emerged as a hybrid of OT and performance ethnography in which research and development are concurrent and participatory. As far as I am aware it is the first method to construct and then critically examine a conceptual ‘play within a play’. Neither
has any research yet used ‘playback’ as a form of framing device in development. These innovations may be some of many possible “postmodern approaches to social investigation” that are “reflexive about their own subjectivity and its complicity in the texts” (Linstead, 2000, p.84). Through ‘dialogic praxis’, they may enable ‘collective critical consciousness’ in organisations (Raelin, 2008), although whether there is true ‘emancipatory potential’, as Raelin may wish there to be, remains to be seen.

My third research question asked about implications. I hope these have now been made clear, but I also hope my call earlier in this chapter for others to challenge, stretch and play with my methods will be taken up. Conquergood (2002) claims performance-based methods can stir up a powerful concoction of practical knowledge, propositional knowledge and political savvy for those wishing to understand organisations. He also states, “Particularly at the PhD level, original scholarship in culture and the arts is enhanced, complemented, and complicated in deeply meaningful ways by the participatory understanding and community involvement of the researcher” (p.153). I hope my work has expressed glimpses of this potential in action. Certainly (and perhaps unlike the traditional fool of the theatre) I have been profoundly affected by this experience, supporting McDonnell’s observation that “in any meaningful exchange of experience and understanding conducted as a dialogue both parties are engaged in a process of changing and being changed by that encounter” (p.74). It has been at times daunting, thrilling, moving and humbling, and I am itching to get back into the field.

Like Lear’s fool, I will close by looking both backwards and forwards. Looking back, I am encouraged by the confidence of Erasmus who stated: “folly is that that laid the foundation of cities; and by it, empire, authority, religion, policy, and public actions are preserved; neither is there anything in human life that is not a kind of pastime of
I feel immensely privileged for having experienced and been changed by the encounters narrated in this thesis. Looking forward, I can see the potentialities of the developer-fool and her methods. I feel an urge to unravel her performances in other relational, uncertain and socially constructed contexts. Bringing change to a turbulent world presents a challenge. Hamera states, “We take up the challenge because the power of performance, as paradigm and shared corporeality gives us the radical hope that acts of poiesis will productively intervene in our understanding of the world, and in the world itself” (2013, p.226). The developer-fool may embody this ‘radical hope’. She and the power of her performances may cast a strong shadow over future LD scholarship and practice. Or they may ‘go to bed at noon’. Ultimately, their fate is left to fortune.

“I am even the natural fool of fortune.” IV.6:191-192
APPENDICES

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Appendix 2  Participant Information Sheet – Employee
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Appendix 5  Timeline of research design
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Appendix 7  Characters and Relationships – At What Cost
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Appendix 1:

Participant Information Sheet – General Manager

**PROJECT TITLE: “A PLAY ON WORK”**

Name of Researcher: Leny Woolsey

Name of Supervisor: A/Prof. Brigid Carroll

**Introduction**

I am Leny Woolsey, a Ph.D. student at the University of Auckland Business School interested in Organisational Development and Arts-based Learning. Prior to embarking on this journey, I completed my Executive MBA at the University of Auckland whilst working in Business Development, Marketing and Event Management. My early career was as a theatre practitioner in the UK and Europe.

My primary supervisor for this research is Dr Brigid Carroll, Associate Professor of Management and International Business, and Director of Research at the New Zealand Leadership Institute. My second supervisor is Dr Peter O’Connor, Professor of Education and Director of the Critical Research Unit in Applied Theatre at the University of Auckland.

**What is the topic and purpose of the research?**

Existing studies suggest that using arts-based methods in organisational development can help individuals and organisations become more purposeful, creative and collaborative. Engaging in creative practice in the workplace allows new approaches and solutions to emerge. “A Play on Work” is a research project designed to explore the use of a theatre-based intervention in a New Zealand business. I will be working with members of the Xxxxx team to devise and script a theatrical production that reflects current realities and possible futures for the company. Alongside the theatre production, I will be researching aspects of organisational culture, including learning and development, and the effects of using arts-based techniques.

The project will consist of three phases: pre-intervention; intervention and; post-intervention, and is expected to last approximately 18 months. In the pre-intervention phase, information will be gathered that will influence the design of the theatre-based intervention. This will be done through observation, interviews and group discussions. Research in the intervention phase will take place at a performance of the theatre production. The post-intervention phase will collect information relating to the outcomes and impressions of the intervention.

**What is involved in participating in this research?**

As the General Manager (GM) of xxxx (NZ) Ltd, with a stakeholder interest in this research, I would like to invite you to participate in the research project. For the purposes of the research, I request permission to access the Xxxxx’s premises and employees during working hours. I will also seek the assistance of your designated administrator in contacting all other employees of Xxxxx NZ to ask them to participate.

If you agree to become involved in any of the following ways, I will ask you to complete a consent form which will be kept on file for the duration of the project. If you agree to grant access to your employees, please note their participation is also voluntary and they will be advised that their decision to take part will not affect any
existing relationships they have with their employer or colleagues. I will seek your assurance that this will be the case and will ask you to confirm this in your consent form. I will ask you to provide assurance that the significant time employees invest in the project will not create additional workload and the scheduling of activities will be coordinated around their existing work commitments.

**Interviews**

If you decide to participate, the first way you may be asked to take part is through one or possibly two, interviews across the duration of the project. Interviews will take place in your workplace within working hours, at a time that suits you, and will last approximately one hour. The information you provide will only be viewed by myself, my supervisors, and, if necessary, a third party transcription provider who will have signed a confidentiality agreement.

At the time of the interview, I will ask your permission to audio-record the session(s) and you will be requested to complete a consent form. During interviews, recording equipment can be switched off at any time, upon your request and without your giving a reason. If you decline to be recorded I may offer to produce a written summary of the discussion so that you are still able to participate in the process. Transcriptions of recordings will not be made available to any participants.

**Theatre-based workshops**

Based on the interviews and focus group discussions, a small group of Xxxxx employees will be invited to form a special ‘Project Development Group’ that will take part in a series of workshops between May – September 2016. These workshops will use theatre-based techniques to explore themes and stories that emerge in the earlier phase of research and will ultimately determine the design of the theatre production. It will be necessary to photograph and video-record these sessions so informed consent will be required from those who choose to take part in this activity.

**Observations and informal conversations**

During the course of the project, I may open an informal conversation with you or ask to attend and observe one or more meeting(s) (maximum five across the duration of the project) that you are part of so I may learn more about Xxxxx NZ. The meetings are likely to be pre-arranged by you or your team and may be internal or external (with suppliers or customers). I will take field notes rather than record any aspect of these conversations or meetings. Data submitted during one-on-one conversations may be withdrawn until the date given at the end of this form. Data submitted in meetings may not later be withdrawn or edited due to the conversational and contextual nature of the discussion.

**Performance and discussion**

If you agree to take part in the research, you will be invited to attend an Organisational Theatre intervention, to be held at a Xxxxx company event, likely to be early in 2017. This performance and discussion will be the culmination of the earlier phases of research and it will be an important opportunity to participate. The event will be photographed and video-recorded so consent will be required from all attendees. Following the performance, a questionnaire will be circulated, allowing you to offer your feedback on the project.

**What will the data be used for?**

Data from interviews, observed meetings, informal conversations and focus groups undertaken in the pre-intervention phase of the project will be used to inform the design of the intervention and development of the theatre production. The small group workshops using theatre-based techniques will then develop these ideas further to generate the content of the theatre production. Data created through the rehearsals, performance, post-
performance discussion and follow-up questionnaire will then be used to draw conclusions as to the processes and outcomes involved in an Organisational Theatre intervention.

No written report of the specific information provided by participants during this project will be given to Xxxxx personnel, however a summary of interim findings and main themes may be presented to you and your management team by myself, the researcher at various points across the project. I anticipate that the findings from this research will provide valuable insight in the field of arts-based learning and development and, for this reason, I would like to use the data to produce academic publications such as journal articles. If any of the information you provide is reported or published, this will be done in a way that does not identify you as its source, unless you indicate that you are willing to be identified and/or quoted. Names and genders will be disguised in all publications. A copy of the final research report (thesis) will be held formally by the University of Auckland library.

How will data be stored and confidentiality protected?

All electronic data, including recordings, will be stored on my own private computer, in a confidential manner, during the timeframe of this project, then destroyed once it is completed. The data may also be stored on a secure server held by the University of Auckland for a period of six years, after which it will be securely destroyed. Only myself and my supervisory team will have access to the data. Every step possible will be taken to minimise the potential risk of any participant being identified. Findings will be presented in a form that respects confidentiality. Please note I cannot guarantee confidentiality for comments made during a group session, such as a focus group, because the identity and contribution will be known to other participants.

Withdrawal

Should you agree to take part, you are free to withdraw your participation from the project at any time without giving reasons. Data previously submitted may also be withdrawn without your giving a reason within three months of the date of your consent form, or before 1 April 2017, whichever is first.

I would greatly appreciate your assistance in this research as, the more participants willing to take part, the more valuable the research will be to all stakeholders. If you are happy to take part, please complete the consent form and either give it to me in person or via email. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly using the contact information below.

Thank you for helping to make this research possible.

Leny Woolsey
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<th>Supervisor name and contacts</th>
<th>Head of Department name and contacts</th>
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For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, the University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 07 MARCH 2016 FOR THREE (3) YEARS. REFERENCE NUMBER 016786.
Appendix 2:

Participant Information Sheet – Employee

PROJECT TITLE: “A PLAY ON WORK”

Name of Researcher: Leny Woolsey

Name of Supervisor: A/Prof. Brigid Carroll

Introduction

I am Leny Woolsey, a Ph.D. student at the University of Auckland Business School interested in Organisational Development and Arts-based Learning. Prior to embarking on this journey, I completed my Executive MBA at the University of Auckland whilst working in Business Development, Marketing and Event Management. My early career was as a theatre practitioner in the UK and Europe.

My primary supervisor for this research is Dr Brigid Carroll, Associate Professor of Management and International Business, and Director of Research at the New Zealand Leadership Institute. My second supervisor is Dr Peter O’Connor, Professor of Education and Director of the Critical Research Unit in Applied Theatre at the University of Auckland.

Xxxxx (NZ) Ltd has agreed to partner with me in my Ph.D. research project and I am excited to be spending the next 18-24 months working with Xxxxx team members to explore new ways of working and building for the future.

What is the topic and purpose of the research?

Existing studies suggest that using arts-based methods in organisational development can help individuals and organisations become more purposeful, creative and collaborative. Engaging in creative practice in the workplace allows new approaches and solutions to emerge. “A Play on Work” is a research project designed to explore the use of a theatre-based intervention in a New Zealand business. I will be working with members of the Xxxxx team to devise and script a theatrical production that reflects current realities and possible futures for the company. Alongside the theatre production, I will be researching aspects of organisational culture, including learning and development, and the effects of using arts-based techniques.

The project will consist of three phases: pre-intervention; intervention and; post-intervention. In the pre-intervention phase, information will be gathered that will influence the design of the theatre-based intervention. This will be done through observation, interviews and group discussions. Research in the intervention phase will take place at a performance of the theatre production. The post-intervention phase will collect information relating to the outcomes and impressions of the intervention.

What is involved in participating in this research?

As a stakeholder or employee of Xxxxx (NZ) Ltd, I would like to invite you to participate in the research project. Participation is voluntary. Your General Manager has given assurance that your participation or nonparticipation will not affect your relationship with your employer or your standing in the company. For those who participate fully, there is a considerable time commitment, as detailed in the sections below. Any time you spend participating in the project will be during normal working hours and will be accommodated by Xxxxx, who will make every possible effort to ensure this does not add to your existing workload. If you agree to become involved
in any, or all, of the following ways, I will ask you to complete a consent form which will be kept on file for the
duration of the project.

**Interviews**

If you decide to participate, the first way you may be asked to take part is through one or possibly two, interviews
across the duration of the project. Interviews will take place in your workplace within working hours, at a time
that suits you, and will last approximately one hour. The information you provide will only be viewed by myself,
my supervisors, and, if necessary, a third party transcription provider who will have signed a confidentiality
agreement.

At the time of the interview, I will ask your permission to audio-record the session(s) and you will be requested
to complete a consent form. During interviews, recording equipment can be switched off at any time, upon your
request and without your giving a reason. If you decline to be recorded I may offer to produce a written summary
of the discussion so that you are still able to participate in the process. Transcriptions of recordings will not be
made available to any participants.

**Focus groups**

Alternatively, I may ask you to be part of one or more focus group(s) (maximum two across the duration of the
project) which is a conversation facilitated by myself, the researcher, focused around a few specific topics. Focus
groups will also last approximately one hour and will be scheduled at mutual convenience for all participants
within working hours.

Focus groups will be video-recorded so only those that give permission to be recorded by way of a consent form
will be able to take part. During a group session it will not be possible to stop the recording equipment upon the
request of a single participant, however you may decline to comment without giving a reason and will be free to
leave the session at any time. Data submitted may not later be withdrawn or edited due to the conversational and
contextual nature of the discussion. The information you provide will only be viewed by myself, my supervisors,
and, if necessary, a third party transcription provider who will have signed a confidentiality agreement.
Transcriptions of recordings will not be made available to any participants.

**Theatre-based workshops**

Based on the interviews and focus group discussions, a small group of Xxxxx employees will be invited to form a
special ‘Project Development Group’ that will take part in a series of three workshops between May – September
2016. These workshops will last for a whole day and will be scheduled around the work commitments of those
taking part. Travel for participants from outside Auckland will be provided by Xxxx. The workshops will use
theatre-based techniques to explore themes and stories that emerge in the earlier phase of research and will
ultimately determine the design of the theatre production. It will be necessary to photograph and video-record
these sessions so informed consent will be required from those who choose to take part in this activity.

**Observations and informal conversations**

During the course of the project, I may open an informal conversation with you or ask to attend and observe one
or more meeting(s) (maximum five across the duration of the project) that you are part of so I may learn more
about Xxxxx NZ. The meetings are likely to be pre-arranged by you or your team and may be internal or external
(with suppliers or customers). I will take field notes rather than record any aspect of these conversations or
meetings. Data submitted during one-on-one conversations may be withdrawn until the date given at the end of
this form. Data submitted in meetings may not later be withdrawn or edited due to the conversational and
contextual nature of the discussion.
Performance and discussion

If you agree to take part in the research, you will be invited to attend an Organisational Theatre intervention, to be held at a XXXX company event, likely to be early in 2017. This performance and discussion will be the culmination of the earlier phases of research and it will be an important opportunity to participate. The event will be photographed and video-recorded so consent will be required from all attendees. Following the performance, a questionnaire will be circulated, allowing you to offer your feedback on the project.

What will the data be used for?

Data from interviews, observed meetings, informal conversations and focus groups undertaken in the pre-intervention phase of the project will be used to inform the design of the intervention and development of the theatre production. The small group workshops using theatre-based techniques will then develop these ideas further to generate the content of the theatre production. Data created through the rehearsals, performance, post-performance discussion and follow-up questionnaire will then be used to draw conclusions as to the processes and outcomes involved in an Organisational Theatre intervention.

No written report of the specific information you provide during this project will be given to XXXX personnel, however a summary of interim findings and main themes may be presented by myself, the researcher at various points across the project. I anticipate that the findings from this research will provide valuable insight in the field of arts-based learning and development and, for this reason, I would like to use the data to produce academic publications such as journal articles. If any of the information you provide is reported or published, this will be done in a way that does not identify you as its source, unless you indicate that you are willing to be identified and/or quoted. Names and genders will be disguised in all publications. A copy of the final research report (thesis) will be held formally by the University of Auckland library.

How will data be stored and confidentiality protected?

All electronic data, including recordings, will be stored on my own private computer, in a confidential manner, during the timeframe of this project, then destroyed once it is completed. The data may also be stored on a secure server held by the University of Auckland for a period of six years, after which it will be securely destroyed. Only myself and my supervisory team will have access to the data. Every step possible will be taken to minimise the potential risk of any participant being identified. Findings will be presented in a form that respects confidentiality. Please note I cannot guarantee confidentiality for comments made during a group session, such as a focus group, because the identity and contribution will be known to other participants.

Withdrawal

Should you agree to take part, you are free to withdraw your participation from the project at any time without giving reasons. Data previously submitted may also be withdrawn without your giving a reason within three months of the date of your consent form, or before 1 April 2017, whichever is first.

I would greatly appreciate your assistance in this research as, the more participants willing to take part, the more valuable the research will be to all stakeholders. If you are happy to take part, please complete the consent form and either give it to me in person or via email. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly using the contact information below.

Thank you for helping to make this research possible.

Leny Woolsey
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Email: re-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 07 MARCH 2016 FOR THREE (3) YEARS. REFERENCE NUMBER 016786.
Appendix 3:

Consent Form – General Manager

PROJECT TITLE: “A PLAY ON WORK”

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Name of Researcher: Leny Woolsey

Name of Supervisor: A/Prof. Brigid Carroll

By signing this form you confirm your agreement to the following:

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet. I understand the nature of the research and what it involves. I have received the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.
- I agree to allow the researcher access to the Xxxxx site and employees during working hours.
- I undertake to ensure that participation in the project will not add to the existing workload of any employee and that participation will be scheduled around existing work commitments.
- I agree to take part in any or all of the following as required for the research (delete as applicable):
• up to two interviews (1hr each)
• one or more informal conversations
• up to five observed meetings (1-2hrs each)
• a performance and discussion (2hrs)
• an online questionnaire (1hr)

- I understand that I may be asked to be audio-recorded in an interview setting but that I have an option to decline.
- I understand that, if I agree to be recorded in an interview, I may ask for the recording to be turned off at any time without giving a reason, however in a group situation this will not be possible. I understand that I am able to ‘pass’ (declining to comment on any question) without giving a reason. I understand that I am able to leave a recorded session at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that photographs taken during rehearsals and performances may be used in the final published thesis.
- I understand that, although I am unable to amend transcripts and withdraw contributions made during group discussions, I am able to withdraw my participation from the research at any time without giving a reason. I understand that I am able to withdraw contributed data from interviews and/or one-on-one conversations within three months of the date of this consent form, or 1 April 2017 whichever comes first.
- I understand that the data from the study will be kept for six years on a secure server, after which it will be destroyed.
- I understand that the researcher will take every measure to mitigate the possible risk of participants being identified in publications that arise from the research. I also understand that the researcher cannot provide an absolute guarantee of confidentiality for comments made during group discussions.
- I agree to maintain the confidentiality of other participants.
- I give assurance that employees’ participation or nonparticipation will not affect their employment or their relationship with the company.
- I understand that this consent form will be kept securely by the researcher until the completion of the project, after which it will be destroyed.

Signed: ____________________________

Name: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

ON 07 MARCH 2016 FOR THREE (3) YEARS. REFERENCE NUMBER 016786.
Appendix 4:

Consent Form – Employee

PROJECT TITLE: “A PLAY ON WORK”

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Name of Researcher: Leny Woolsey

Name of Supervisor: A/Prof. Brigid Carroll

By signing this form you confirm your agreement to the following:

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet. I understand the nature of the research and what it involves. I have received the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that Xxxxx (NZ) endorses my involvement in this research project and that Xxxxx will accommodate my participation during working hours, to be scheduled around my existing work commitments.
- I agree to take part in any or all of the following as required for the research (delete as applicable):
  - up to two interviews (1hr each)
  - up to two focus groups (1hr each)
  - one or more informal conversations
  - up to five observed meetings (1-2hrs each)
  - up to four theatre-based workshops (3hrs each)
  - a performance and discussion (2hrs)
  - an online questionnaire (1hr)
• I understand that I may be asked to be audio-recorded in an interview setting but that I have an option to decline.
• I agree to be audio- or video-recorded and photographed in focus group discussions and workshops.
• I understand that, if I agree to be recorded in an interview, I may ask for the recording to be turned off at any time without giving a reason, however in a group situation this will not be possible. I understand that I am able to ‘pass’ (declining to comment on any question) without giving a reason. I understand that I am able to leave a recorded session at any time without giving a reason.
• I understand that photographs taken during rehearsals and performances may be used in the final published thesis.
• I understand that, although I am unable to amend transcripts and withdraw contributions made during group discussions, I am able to withdraw my participation from the research at any time without giving a reason. I understand that I am able to withdraw contributed data from interviews and/or one-on-one conversations within three months of the date of this consent form, or 1 April 2017 whichever comes first.
• I understand that information collected in the course of this project will not be shared with Xxxx (NZ) but that interim findings may be presented in a manner that does not identify any individual participant or contribution.
• I understand that the data from the study will be kept for six years on a secure server, after which it will be destroyed.
• I understand that the researcher will take every measure to mitigate the possible risk of participants being identified in publications that arise from the research. I also understand that the researcher cannot provide an absolute guarantee of confidentiality for comments made during group discussions.
• I understand that the researcher will take every measure to ensure that participants and contributions made during the project will not be identified to Xxxx (NZ).
• I agree to maintain the confidentiality of other participants and guarantee that the involvement of other participants will not affect their relationship with me on an ongoing basis.
• I understand that this consent form will be kept securely by the researcher until the completion of the project, after which it will be destroyed.

Signed: ________________________________

Name: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE
ON 07 MARCH 2016 FOR THREE (3) YEARS. REFERENCE NUMBER 016786.
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Timeline of Research Design
Appendix 6:

Synopsis – *At What Cost*

*At What Cost* tells the story of *Drillset*, an iconic NZ construction company poised at the brink of a transformation that will either be a triumph or that threatens its existence. It addresses themes of work-life balance, abusive behaviours, compliance and control, gender dynamics in the workplace and leadership.

After long-time country manager, Graham Tibbett, is forced to resign suddenly for health reasons amidst a period of record growth, Amanda Banks steps into the breach. Appointed by global management to see the company through an uncertain transition and achieve the ‘Excel 2020’ strategic growth objectives, Amanda is a brilliant but conflicted leader. When launching her new vision for the business, she is surprised to meet resistance from almost all sides and struggles to maintain an even keel.

Beginning at the annual ‘Lift-Off’ conference, Amanda tries to instil a new corporate culture of collaboration that will help to stabilise a company over-stretched in recent years. She is immediately faced with challenges, both operational and political, embodied powerfully by two members of her senior leadership team, financial controller Wendy and national sales director Paul. In the opening scene, they grumble together about her presentation at the conference and arrange a wager for how long she will last at *Drillset*. They share the number *Just Another Cock Up*, a ‘jazz-hands’, ironic, vaudeville song about the pressures of complying with systems and processes.

The trouble doesn’t end there. After some inter-action email updates displayed over the big screen in the scene change, we meet Paul again, this time with self-centred top salesman Beau Williams in the aftermath of a big win. Beau struts around showing off to the
whole open plan office before taking a call from one of his best customers, Rob Anton of Anton Holdings. Ringing off, he realises he hasn’t followed up on the deal and he is late for an appointment. As he tries to leave the office, Amanda stops him to both congratulate him and remind him that he still needs to adopt the new online CRM system. They are interrupted by a phone call from Amanda's husband in which she apologises for not being able to meet a personal commitment. At the completion of the call, Beau rudely dismisses Amanda and heads towards the exit. The action pauses while Beau delivers his sexy blues-style solo number, *Ding Bloody Dong*.

At the end of the song, Beau seems to remember he still needs to log the order, and hurriedly approaches the perpetually understaffed customer services department. The only person he finds is Bruno, an enthusiastic new recruit who is star-struck meeting the company's top salesman. Beau interrupts Bruno’s gushes mid-flow and asks him to load the recent order into the system, taking a number of short cuts to save time. Bruno is only too happy to help.

Scene change e-mails once again illustrate the office culture and move the action forward to a week later. The scene opens with a senior management meeting in which finance controller Wendy and Paul come to blows around the big sale Beau has made. While Wendy was away on holiday the previous week, it appears Paul authorised the sale to Anton Holdings, over-riding a 'block' on the account for late payments. In the meantime, Beau enters the stage and takes a call from Rob Anton which suggests there is a problem with the urgent delivery of the product he has ordered. Beau interrupts the management meeting and calls on Paul to try and sort it out. There is an altercation which involves Bruno, operations manager Jason on the phone to the courier, Wendy, and Beau. Obscenities fly as fingers are pointed but ultimately the information entered on the system was wrong. Beau vilifies Bruno who rushes out in tears. Amanda steps in instructing Beau to go and sort out the problem with the
customer, hoping to salvage a major deal. The action pauses while Wendy delivers a sultry, angry, sung tirade about the battles between sales representatives and support workers entitled *Them and Us*.

In the aftermath, Jason consoles Amanda, commenting that “it takes a lot to change perspectives”. Amanda is left working late again. She calls her husband and apologises for missing yet another family dinner, after which she reveals her full conflicted and emotional vulnerabilities in the heart-wrenching ballad, *At What Cost*.

The next scene opens 10 days later with Amanda and Jason offering Bruno a new opportunity to be involved in a major new strategic project known as ‘BD Connect’. Bruno would be required to update some of the ordering processes to create a more seamless, transparent interface with the customer. It is clear they value Bruno for his enthusiastic support and potential. At the end of the meeting, Amanda receives a call in which her husband asks her to collect a sick child. She explains that she can’t and he hangs up. As she goes to get a coffee, a young salesman, Stephen, congratulates her on the new mentoring program she has implemented, letting slip that his allocated mentor, Beau, has reneged on the commitment. He describes the way Beau is trying to sabotage the message of collaboration, with comments such as "the only person you can trust is yourself" when referring to the mistakes made by the customer services team.

In a deliberate attempt to show different perspectives on this position, the action is interrupted once again with the upbeat pop number *Amazing* in which Bruno satirises the realities of working in customer service, by singing about the flawless culture, systems and processes.
A few weeks pass before the next scene, which opens with Bruno confidently checking in on the project with Jason, and then Beau entering on the phone. Jason returns to his desk and Beau spots an opportunity to get some information about ‘BD Connect’. Bruno is wary but we see him reveal some details of the secret high-tech product that is being launched in an alliance with a major customer. It is unclear whether Bruno is simply naive, or playing a dangerous game. In confidence, Bruno invites Beau to test the new ordering system for him.

Another e-mail break prefaces the launch of the ‘BD Connect’ project, to which the whole company is invited. The scene opens with the senior management clustered around a big screen, preparing to open bottles of champagne for the whole assembled staff. Beau enters and makes snarky comments about the effort that has been made. He proceeds to light-heartedly abuse members of the audience as if they are colleagues while the other members of the team make the final preparations. Jason steps up to make the announcement. After a long build-up, he proudly advises the assembly that Drillset New Zealand has been asked to launch a global rollout of the new ‘chemical anchor’ HY500 (glue used for construction). Testing has been completed and the new worldwide ordering system is about to go live. Before pressing the button, he notes a special design feature suggested by Bruno, that orders are time stamped, with a location and user ID, to avoid future errors and inconsistencies. With excited anticipation, Jason leads a count-down and presses the button which should launch the new system. To everyone's amazement, an error message states "insufficient stock to complete transaction". Embarrassed, Jason asks everyone to enjoy the morning tea and get back to work, while he investigates. He takes the senior team to one side, and asks Beau to join them. The new design feature has revealed that Beau pre-ordered the entire stock and dispatched it to a new entity which turns out to be his own private enterprise. He has attempted to sabotage Drillset's biggest strategic venture. Smugly, he explains that Bruno enabled him to do it and the product has all been transferred into his possession, Drillset is powerless to stop him. He
swaggers out, leaving the team in chaos. The ensemble number *The Glue That Holds Us Together* begins with the lead characters talking/singing over one another with mixed priorities. Gradually the music coalesces and Amanda leads into a group chorus, reminding them that they are a great team that can perform better together. After the triumphant close to the song, Bruno makes a shocking announcement that “Beau didn't know about the complete system - he's only got one part of it!”

The final scene takes place three months later and is prefaced by an on-screen e-mail stating *Drillset* has won a national award for culture innovation. The senior management are congratulating one another, particularly Amanda for her steadfast leadership. We learn that Beau was unable to use the product, as he only had one part, not the full set of components. *Drillset* were able to buy it back half price. A full year has passed since Amanda arrived, and, as she heads into the next Lift-Off conference, there is a feeling of stability and trust amongst the key players. All her sacrifices appear to have paid off. In the final moments, Amanda makes the decision to go home to be with her family, rather than join the rest of the team to celebrate.
## Appendix 7:

### Characters and Relationships – *At What Cost*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character name</th>
<th>Position in ‘Drillset’</th>
<th>Position relative to ‘Collaborative Autonomy’</th>
<th>Opposing force</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul Hooper</td>
<td>National Sales and Marketing Director</td>
<td>Fundamentally disagrees with it. Is resigned to the fact that, with rapid growth, there simply aren’t the required time or resources to sort the processes out once and for all. Therefore, it’s every man for himself: whatever it takes to get the job done and the sales across the line. Sales are more important than anything. If you don’t like it, you can go jump. We’re in business to make money, not friends. You just need to get the right people on board and they need to do their jobs properly.</td>
<td>Fear of losing job; pressure to pay bills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Banks</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>True high performance is far more than profits and sales. Long term performance is only sustainable with engaged and committed team members mobilised around a shared vision. Values alignment is important, as is process. There is no point in getting sales unless the systems are in place to back them up.</td>
<td>Family pressures; striving to achieve work-life balance.</td>
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<td>Beau Williams</td>
<td>Account Manager</td>
<td>Ambivalent; just wants a nice paycheck at the end of each month. Not really interested in culture or working with the team. It is all about number one. Beau puts himself first at whatever cost.</td>
<td>Status - wanting to ‘win’ and be better than everyone else; Personal greed. Laziness - doesn’t enjoy the detail and thinks he is too important for that.</td>
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<td>Jason Yang</td>
<td>Head of Operations</td>
<td>Supports the idea in theory but sceptical; he needs proof. Jason is happy to give it his best effort if he sees potential for results and his own position.</td>
<td>Career aspiration - wanting to rise to the top faster than everyone else - Jason plays a political game</td>
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<td>Wendy Simpson</td>
<td>Financial Controller</td>
<td>Is open to new ideas but pessimistic. Has ‘seen it all before’ and it never works. Doesn’t like people much so would prefer to just get on with it and do the job. Doesn’t like change.</td>
<td>Fear of losing job; (ironically) a kind of laziness - Wendy wants an easy life and to be able to go on holiday.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruno de la Tour</td>
<td>Customer Services Rep</td>
<td>Fully supports Amanda but doesn’t have much ‘voice’ to do anything about it. Will subtly try to reinforce what she says whenever he gets an opportunity. A bit of ‘hero-worship’ going on. Bruno loves his new boss and her attitude but feels isolated as no-one else seems to. He also exposes the ‘fake’ culture where everyone pretends to be social and friendly but actually they’re all out to get each other. We need to see Bruno being brave and insightful!</td>
<td>Loneliness - wanting to please everyone.</td>
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## Appendix 8:

### Glossary of Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABR</td>
<td>Arts-based research</td>
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<td>AT</td>
<td>Applied theatre</td>
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<td>CLS</td>
<td>Critical leadership studies</td>
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<td>EMT</td>
<td>Executive management team</td>
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<td>GM</td>
<td>General manager</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human resources</td>
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<td>Leadership development</td>
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<td>LDP</td>
<td>Leadership development programme</td>
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<td>MD</td>
<td>Managing director</td>
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<td>OA</td>
<td>Organisational aesthetics</td>
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<td>OT</td>
<td>Organisational theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>TfD</td>
<td>Theatre for development</td>
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Acknowledgments

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