A Selected Bibliography of Research-Informed Theatre
by
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RESEARCH-INFORMED THEATRE
My work with research-informed theatre began in the late 1990s with a set of work I called “performed ethnography”. Performed ethnography involves writing up ethnographic research data that has been collected in the form of a play script. The play scripts can be read aloud or performed, and usually readings and performances are followed up by discussion. Readers and spectators have included school administrators, teachers, and students, community educators and the general public.

After completing my MFA degree in Playwriting at Spalding University, I began to write other kinds of research-informed play scripts that worked with research data and information that was not specifically ethnographic. For example, my play Lost Daughter is based on interviews and written documentation and my play Zero Tolerance is a dramatic adaptation of an investigative report on school safety. Given this kind of broadening of my work, I now use the term “research-informed theatre” to describe my play scripts which can still be read aloud or performed, and are still usually followed up by discussion.

RESEARCH-INFORMED PLAY SCRIPTS
Goldstein, T. (2010) Speaking is a Political Act (an adaptation of an academic essay)
Goldstein, T. (2008). Lost Daughter (Canadian anti-Semitism in the 1930s)
Goldstein, T. (2003) Hong Kong, Canada (immigration, language issues at school)

DESCRIPTIONS OF RESEARCH-INFORMED SCRIPTS
Goldstein, T. (2010). Speaking is a Political Act (Currently unpublished)

An adaptation of an academic essay on the silencing of women in the academy called A Discourse Not Intended for Her. The essay was written by Professor Roger Simon and graduate student Magda Lewis in 1986 and published in the Harvard Educational Review.

A meditation on mothering and daughtering, *Harriet’s House* is a contemporary drama about how a mother and her three daughters negotiate the challenges and politics of transnational adoption in a same-sex family. The play is based on personal narratives and documentary films produced by and about transnational adoptive families as well as interviews with these families. As the play opens, Harriet reluctantly gives her 17-year old adopted daughter Luisa permission to return to the orphanage in Bogotá where she spent three years of her childhood. When Harriet falls seriously ill, however, travels to Bogotá to bring Luisa home. *Harriet’s House* was performed in July 2010 at Hart House Theatre as part of the annual Toronto Pride Festival.


*Snakes and Ladders* presents findings from an 18-month critical ethnographic research study (2001-2003) on anti-homophobia education in the Canadian city of Toronto. The play tells a story of what happens when high school teachers and students in a fictional high school attempt to put on a Pride Day at their school. Coalitions are built, homophobia is resisted and reproduced, and teachers and students learn that they can’t take their human rights for granted. Originally written in 2004, the script has been updated and edited for publication in the *International Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy* in 2010.


*Zero Tolerance* is an adaptation of an investigative report on school safety entitled *The Road to Health*, which was commissioned after the shooting of 15-year Jordan Manners in the hallway of his Toronto school in May 2007. The 30-minute adaptation was performed by OISE students, staff and faculty at the 2008 Safe Schools Conference and performed again by Equity Studies students at the University of Toronto at Hart House on February 25, 2010.


*Lost Daughter* is a historical drama inspired by William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. Based on based on interviews and written documentation undertaken by Canadian historians, the play is set in the Canadian city of Toronto in the summer of 1933, a summer of intense heat and wide spread unemployment. It is also a summer when Gentile youth wear swastika badges to keep the city’s Jews out of the public parks and beaches. Based on historical research of the era, and written as a sequel to *The Merchant of Venice*, a play that is taught in secondary schools across Toronto, *Lost Daughter* imagines what happens to Shylock’s daughter Jessica after the play has ended. Do Jessica and her husband Lorenzo live happily ever after now that Jessica has converted to Christianity? Or does the antisemism and xenophobia of their community tear their marriage apart? *Lost Daughter* won the 2005 Canadian Jewish Playwriting competition and was performed at the Toronto Fringe Festival in July 2008.

Pound Predators is based on six months of ethnographic fieldwork I undertook in a Weight Watchers program in 2006. The play takes a satirical look at the war against weight by telling the story of five women and their award-winning leader who are “fighting fat” on a program called Pound Predators. Pound Predators was performed at the Toronto Fringe Festival in July 2007.


This essay explores what it takes to work towards a future of equitable pedagogy and schooling through the presentation of my short ethnographic play entitled The Card (originally written 2004 as a 10-minute adaptation of Snakes and Ladders). The essay begins with a discussion of how critical performed ethnography works as an example of “engaged pedagogy”, and the ways in which its form and content can promote anti-oppression teacher education. This discussion is followed by the presentation of the play. The Card tells the story of Roberto Rodriguez, a high school teacher who comes out as a gay man when he tries to help a student being bullied. Embedded in the ethnographic play are the kinds of social practices and beliefs needed to achieve an educational future that recognizes social difference and strives for equity. Following the play, a short commentary discusses these practices and beliefs in a more explicit way. The essay concludes with a brief discussion of the questions and issues a recent performance of The Card raised for other teacher educators. This discussion allows me to examine the ways that the play encourages readers, performers and spectators to both recognize and respond to social difference in ways that will move schools towards a more equitable future.


A 30-minute adaptation of Snakes and Ladders.

Goldstein, T. (2003). Hong Kong, Canada (Published in my book Teaching and Learning in a Multilingual School: Choices, Risks and Dilemmas from Lawrence Erlbaum, now from Routledge).

Originally written in 2001 and published in 2003, Hong Kong, Canada is based on findings from a four-year critical ethnographic case study (1996-2000) of a Canadian high school that had recently enrolled a large number of immigrant students from Hong Kong. The play tells the story of Joshua, Wendy, and Sam, the editor, assistant editor and advertising manager of the student newspaper as they struggle with the fallout of having published a controversial issue of the school paper.


Satellite Kids is a companion piece to Hong Kong, Canada. It tells the story of Wendy Chan, Evelyn Chan and John Lee, three students living and going to high school in Toronto, while their parents live and work in Hong Kong. Rather than take their children back to Hong Kong, some parents decide to keep their adolescent children in Toronto and commute back and forth. The play focuses on the ways the guidance counselor at the school engages with the
Chan and Lee families and the ways that Wendy, Evelyn and John engage and disengage with the task of learning and speaking English.

WRITING ABOUT CREATING RESEARCH-INFORMED THEATRE AND PERFORMED ETHNOGRAPHY


Written as a personal narrative, Staging Harriet’s House tells the story of how I wrote and produced my ethnographic play Harriet’s House for the stage during the 2010 Toronto Pride Festival. In doing so, the book offers practical advice for established qualitative researchers, students of qualitative research, and theatre artists who want to produce their own ethnographic/research-based scripts on stage. Performed ethnography is one of the most pedagogically powerful genres of the alternative ethnography movement and the book provides a comprehensive guide to writing, workshopping, rehearsing, funding, marketing, publicizing and archiving an ethnographic theatre production. The book contains the script that was used to stage the 2010 production Harriet’s House as an appendix.


This paper discusses the task of adapting a very large investigative report on school safety into a performance for the stage. As such, it provides a model for how arts-based researchers can move beyond the creation of performances from their own research studies to assisting in the dissemination of other writers’ important research and investigative reports.


In this paper I argue that performed ethnography is characterized by multiple commitments which sometimes lie in competition or tension with each other and present ethical dilemmas for the researcher. Through a comparative analysis of two different ethnographic play scripts I’ve written from the same body of ethnographic data, I discuss what it means to honour multiple commitments to ethnography, drama, and critical discussion, and reflect upon what is gained and what is lost when one set of commitments is prioritized over another.


Like the Educational Insights paper annotated above, this book chapter examines the methodological tensions between the multiple commitments to ethnography, drama and critical discussion in performed ethnography. While the Educational Insights paper was for written readers interested in arts-based research and arts in education, this paper was written for a volume on innovative approaches to qualitative research. Once again, I argue that these multiple commitments sometimes lie in competition or tension with each other and present ethical dilemmas for the researcher. Once again, I also reflect upon what is gained and what is lost when one set of commitments is
prioritized over another. However, this essay ends with a discussion of the ways feminist theatre and performance work can assist researchers to address the tensions of multiple commitments in performed ethnography. The chapter is significant because it is the first time that these tensions have been discussed in the performed ethnography literature.

Writing about provoking discussion with research-informed theatre and performed ethnography


The chapter in this book on mothering begins with a synopsis and several scenes from my play Harriet’s House. The selected scenes, which focus on mothering and daughtering across cultural, linguistic, sexual borders, have something to say to teachers who are teaching and working across borders, and are discussed in a commentary that follows.


This paper responds to the question of what it might mean to educate “world teachers” for cosmopolitan classrooms and schools. I begin with the idea that teachers need to develop or build up “intercultural capital”, that is, knowledge and dispositions that will help them in intercultural exchanges of teaching and learning. I then explore what such knowledge and dispositions might entail through an analysis of my second ethnographic play Satellite Kids. They play tells the story of three high school students living and going to high school in Toronto, Canada, while their parents live and work in Hong Kong. The play’s focus on issues of power, identity, and intercultural conflict within a Canadian cosmopolitan school makes an interesting case study for exploring what intercultural knowledge and dispositions might look and sound like and how the educational project of building intercultural capital is different from the project of multicultural education that has been dominant in Western teacher education throughout the seventies, eighties, and nineties.


Through the presentation of a short ethnographic play entitled The Card (2004), this paper argues that working towards a future of equitable pedagogy and schooling must include spaces for teachers to work with students who are subject to homophobic bullying and asking questions about their sexual identities.


This paper looks at the discussions provoked by my play about homophobia and anti-homophobia education in public schools entitled Snakes and Ladders. Particular attention is paid to issues facing anti-homophobia educators who work in secular public schools located in religiously diverse communities.

This paper describes the ways my play Hong Kong, Canada has promoted discussion and dialogue around issues of linguistic difference, linguistic privilege and linguistic discrimination. After providing a brief synopsis and several excerpts from the play, I describe several of the pedagogical activities I have used with Hong Kong, Canada in my own teacher and community education work.


This paper describes an ethnographic playwriting project I facilitated, which provided fifteen high school students an opportunity to develop their English language skills by writing and performing their own ethnographies through the genre of playwriting. The paper features an ethnographic play entitled No Pain, No Gain written by student Timothy Chiu. In its examination of the issues that arise when students speak in different accents and teachers evaluate students working in a second or other language, the play provokes discussions on equitable teaching and evaluation practices for English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) students.


This paper provides a sample of the discussions my play Hong Kong, Canada provoked in a “rehearsed reading” of the play. The reading was given by a small group of pre-service teacher education students for their colleagues in my Equity in Education course at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) in December 1999. The article includes with a discussion of the pedagogical activities that could accompany future readings and performances of Hong Kong, Canada.

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