Article 3
Devising in the Rhizome: The 'Sensational' Body in Drama Education and Research

by

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Abstract

This article investigates the possibilities of embodied inquiry and representation occurring through a theatre devising process with youth. Contemporary theatre methods, along with post-structural and performance theory, inform an alternative approach to dominant constructions of drama and theatre practices in education. The student in this project is considered a learning self in motion (Ellsworth 2005); the process and analysis taken up acknowledge the body as an emerging, phenomenological and relational corporeality. Exploring a sensational and rhizomatic approach to practice and research, this project loosens the body from the representational paradigm dominating applied theatre research, and brings it to the centre of the pedagogical and analytical endeavour.

Keywords

Author's biography

Mia Perry is an Assistant Professor of Drama, Theatre, and Education at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Working in the intersections of performance, pedagogy and philosophy, Mia has been a scholar, practitioner, and educator for over fifteen years. She has studied and practised at the Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College in Dublin; The Russian Academy of Theatre Arts in Moscow; the Central School of Speech and Drama in London; and the University of British Columbia in Canada. She has worked and taught in schools and community contexts in Canada, Ireland and Russia, and is published in a variety of academic and trade journals. Mia's current interests concern methodologies of embodiment in performance and education research, with a specific focus on contemporary cultural practices in educational contexts.

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Introduction

This article investigates the pedagogy and research of embodied, affective inquiry and representation taking place through a theatre devising process with youth. The devising process drawn upon involves a negotiation of contemporary performance creation methods with more traditional constructions of drama education. The research described involves a *sensational* approach to data analysis, taking up embodied and affective relations as the focus of the analytical endeavour. In this way, the research explores aspects of experience that often elude the semiotic and dominant representational paradigm moulding research in the humanities and social sciences. Taken from a larger study that examines the affordances and complexities of devising practices in formal educational contexts, this article explores the possibility of embodied pedagogy and research in the field of drama and education.

The construction and research of drama practices in education has been dominated by the social constructionist paradigm that has permeated the field since its establishment in the mid-twentieth century (Perry 2010). Elizabeth Grosz (1994: 17) describes a perspective on the body shared by social constructionists as one in which 'bodies provide the base, the raw materials for the inculcation of an interpellation into ideology but are merely media of communication rather than the object or focus of ideological production/reproduction'. As a result of this approach, in social constructionist drama and theatre education research and practice, the body generally is considered to be a tool for inquiry and representation only inasmuch as it is a signifying object (Franks 1996; Osmond 2007). A growing dissatisfaction with this perspective prompted my exploration of the intersections between theories of embodiment, drama education and qualitative inquiry. My preoccupation with devised theatre methods in education stems from my experiential and theoretical findings regarding the connections between these practices and post-structural notions of pedagogy (Britzman 1991; Davies 2005; Ellsworth 2005; Lather 1992). I must clarify, however, that this article is not one of advocacy or prescription – the relationship of devising methods and institutional education is as complex as that of post-structural theory and contemporary pedagogical practice. Rather, it is an attempt to describe and critically examine an embodied drama pedagogy.

In a year-long devising project, co-facilitated by myself and the drama teacher of a Grade 9 secondary school program in Western Canada, sixteen students were guided through devising methods, studies in spectatorship and performance analysis, and finally a performance-creation process culminating in a public production. The descriptions and analysis of practice included in this article are centred on one participant, April, and her engagement with one aspect of the project: character building and performance.

In order to contextualise the practices discussed in this article, and in order to avoid a potential dilution or misinterpretation of the practical and conceptual constructs that support this study, I begin with a summary of my own approach to devised theatre and my understanding of embodiment in education. These perspectives materialise in my applied practices and fieldwork with youth, as well as my analysis and theorisation of data. They serve at once as a glossary and a caveat that positions my practice and research in this field. This positioning is critical to my

scholarship when working within a field that has many avenues of engagement and varied epistemological undercurrents. In this light, I acknowledge the inevitably incomplete pictures that I paint of devising, of drama education and of embodiment, and I hope that with transparency, this study can evoke dialogue rather than didacticism. The article proceeds to outline a theoretical and methodological framework before focusing on the description and analysis of practice that constitute the remainder of the article.

Positions and Perspectives on Relevant Terminology

Devised Theatre: An Approach

Devised theatre is a sprawling category, with practices and interpretations varying from continent to continent, as well as from theatre company to theatre company. 'Post-modern' and 'post-dramatic' have both been used to describe devised theatre and its various performative relatives, and terms and definitions continue to swirl in the theory and critique of the practice as it evolves. A particularly useful way to approach a definition of devised theatre is proposed by Govan, Nicholson and Normington (2007) in their book on contemporary performance practices. They suggest that devising may be most accurately described in terms of a plurality of '*processes* of experimentation and sets of creative *strategies* – rather than a single methodology' (2007: 7). Typically, devised theatre is the creation of original work or the reimagining of traditional texts by one or more theatre artists, often in collaboration with visual art, creative technologies and other forms of performance, such as music and dance. Devised theatre is often more closely related to Live Art (Heathfield 2004) and performance art (Goldberg 1988, 2004; Wark 2006) than traditional notions of dramatic theatre, but ultimately the maze of terminology serves devised theatre better as a metaphor in itself than a descriptive tool.

The presence of professional theatre positioned as devised is strong across the theatre industries of most Western urban centres today. Influenced by my own training in devising along with my personal journey of being a spectator, a practitioner and a teacher of devised theatre, I have developed an understanding of, and an approach to, devised theatre. In relation to drama education, I postulate that there are affordances within the devising paradigm that differentiate it from other types of collective play creation models in terms of inquiry and representation. These include the commitment to multiple perspectives and subjectivities (specifically those of the creators involved), to multi-modalities (specifically lending equal weight to movement, sound and visual technologies as well as text) and by extension to performances that are not led by a 'sing[ular] vision,' or an 'authorial line' (Etchells 1999: 55). My own subjectivities (including preferences, desires and beliefs) feed directly into what essentially is my interpretation of the form. This understanding creates a lens through which I watch performance of all kind, but also a paradigm of practice from which I facilitate drama and theatre work in education. It is important to reiterate that this is a single (albeit fluid) interpretation of a form that is porous and subject to endless reconstruction. I break down a description of my 'version' of devising into the following categories: subject, aesthetic and performance dynamics.

Subject

Devised theatre occurs in an intimate relationship with the circumstances of its creation and existence. A group of artists collect in a particular time and space to create work that will be affected entirely by the circumstances of its development. The realisation of this can be as simple as a ladder that happens to be stored or left in the rehearsal room which becomes part of the final performance. Or it could be the more ephemeral influences of the current political or social

climate, or a song that is lingering in someone's head, a conversation that occurs between creators over tea, and so on. There is no end to what feeds into the creation and performance of devised theatre. It is performance created out of the banal and the profound 'stuff' of everyday life, as lived by the creators/devisers.

Aesthetic

The aesthetic of devised theatre is characterised by an interdisciplinarity that emerges when text is removed from its usual position of dominance. That is not to say that text is used less in this form – indeed many devised theatre performances are based heavily on written and verbal text. The centrality of text is not assumed, however, as it is in literary theatre forms that are based on staging dramatic texts. When written text is used in devised theatre, it is often drawn from improvisations carried out in rehearsal or found materials (such as prose, lists, lyrics, public domain documents, verbatim transcriptions). Often devised theatre has little or no verbal text, as physical bodies become the medium of expression, or sound and visual design. As circumstance weighs heavily in the creation of devised work, the form engages in technology as an important and sometimes key medium of performance (reflective of the ever-growing influence of technology on our day-to-day lives).

Intertwined with circumstance, technology and the dynamic of performance, the linear narratives of traditional theatre forms are revised in devised theatre. Narratives are often cyclical, disjointed, abstract or conflicting. In this way, a devised theatre performance is reflective of lived experience and its attendant textualities considered holistically, rather than the Aristotelian story arc (which characterises classical and traditional theatre) that portrays stories as individual 'truths' distinct from the myriad other stories inevitably starting and stopping and moving and interrupting around and within it.

Performance Dynamics

While a piece of devised theatre can be about anything, it is always also about performance. The relationship between the actor and the spectator is engaged with either explicitly or implicitly, as is the relationship between the actor and the role or function that he or she is performing. Concepts of time and space are often explored as devised theatre experiments with durational performances (lasting for hours or days) and site-specific performance. The physical space of performance often extends outside traditional theatre spaces into jails, apartments and gyms, to name but a few. Within theatre spaces, both lighting and design are used to comment on the spatial elements of the relationship between the spectator and the show – audiences may sit in full view during a performance, and actors may move and perform among spectators, or directly address spectators. In this way, devised theatre can always be considered 'site-specific'.

In summary, I take up devised theatre as an interdisciplinary, multi-vocal, non-linear form of theatre that allows for collaboration, for conflict, for consensus and for dissent. When successful, spectators will emerge from a performance provoked into thought, self-reflection and awareness of their own position of spectator and their own process of making meaning.

Embodied Pedagogy: A Working Definition

Embodiment in education is a term that can be heard with increasing frequency in contemporary research across paradigms and discipline areas. Along with a theoretical movement like this, however, a diluting of language can occur (Loutzenheiser and MacIntosh 2004). 'Embodiment' has become an accepted 'truth' in pedagogical theory, but the implications of this term, as well as

the specific meanings behind it, are less and less clear as it is taken up with increasingly diverse objectives. Due to an awareness of this, I summarise my understanding and use of the term in the following way: embodiment in education describes teaching and learning in acknowledgement of our bodies as part of whole sensate beings in motion – inscribed, living, emerging and inscribing subjectivities. That is, the body is always in a state of becoming, at once as a representation of self, a site of experience, sensation and affect, and a mode of creation in progress. In addition, embodiment is a state that is always contingent upon the environment and the context of the body: 'Continuously and radically in relation with the world, with others, and with what we make of them.' (Ellsworth 2005: 4)

Background: The Dance of Theory and Method

This study is situated within a post-structural and sensational perspective on contemporary theatre practices and embodied pedagogy. I use the term 'sensational' in reference to performance and pedagogy as lived, experienced and affected in relation to the senses, which is in contrast to the more typical perspective on these constructs: as experienced and evaluated according to representational logic, reliant on semiotic systems (word, image, design, and so on). Considering performance and pedagogy as embodied is essential to this perspective, as our minds – the subject of the majority of education research and practice – can account for only a part of the whole experience of teaching and learning. The work of Gilles Deleuze (1990, 1994) and his collaborations with Felix Guattari (1983, 1987) have provided the foundation and much of the discourse on which I draw to consider experience according to, and in relation to, forces of sensation, affect and interrelation. Also drawing on Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005), I consider the student/participant a 'body/mind/brain' and a 'learning self in motion'. In this way, I am interested in considering experience – particularly the learning experience – as a process of sensation and emergence. An attention to sensation and emergence (movement) brings to the forefront an attention to the body. Massumi states:

> When I think of my body and ask what it does to earn that name, two things stand out. It *moves*. It *feels*. In fact, it does both at the same time … an intrinsic connection between movement and sensation whereby each immediately summons the other. (2002: 1, emphasis in original)

Finally, the notion of emergence suggests the *change* inherent in embodied experience. Ellsworth calls for a pedagogy that 'address[es] a student that is not coincident with herself, but only with her change … a learning self that is in motion' (2005: 7).

The theoretical perspective introduced here can be summarised as a 'non-representational' mode of thought that offers an alternative to – though not a replacement for – the ubiquitous engagement in interpreting meaning from semiotic systems of representation. Said another way, semiotics relies on interpretations of meaning represented in 'signs' that are inherently abstract, to varying degrees, from the 'signified' (Deleuze 1994). Those signs might consist of words, images or tableaux, or might combine signifiers in presentations or productions. When we consider the relationship between one sign and another, as we do to make meaning, we find connecting lines from word A to word B to image C and so on. Eventually, this analysis of experience could resemble a grid (Massumi 2002). A non-representational paradigm, on the other hand, materialises in attention to *forces of affect* rather than semiotic signs. This concept can be understood as the change or movement that occurs as a result of something that influences, touches or connects with something else. In analysis, then, the question becomes 'What affects

are occurring in this experience?' rather than 'How can we interpret the representational signifiers of this experience?'

I use the theoretical construct of the rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 1987) to help articulate my analytical framework. To support the analysis within this article, I describe and interpret some key concepts within what is a large and complex body of thought. The rhizome can be described as a network of never-ending lines, where there are multiple entry points and places of departure, and every line can connect to any other, 'multiplying its own lines and establishing the plurality of unpredictable connections in the open-ended, what Deleuze called *smooth* space of its growth' (Semetsky 2007: 200, italics in original). Deleuze and Guattari explicate the rhizome theory in terms of six principles, the first two of which are those of connectivity and heterogeneity:

> any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything and must be … This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order … A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relevant to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 7)

Characteristic of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, the rhizome is not one side of a binary – that is, the rhizome is not the opposite of a root. By extension, I add that in this work, the body is not the opposite of the mind, and affect is not the opposite of a sign of representation. In all cases, one construct needs the other in a codependent relationship in order to function, to make change, to emerge. Considering the rhizome in relation to a series of lines provides a tangible structure through which to unpack experience through this lens. In basic terms, then, rhizomatic lines fall into two categories: those that organise, or maintain structure; and those that disrupt previously established structures. The former can be referred to as a *line of segmentarity*, describing lines or structures that form a hierarchical system of segments/orders/compartments (binaries, cycles, linearities). A line of segmentarity can be realised as a process of action, a system of behavior, an ideology and so on. This type of line exists in every rhizome as an organising component. The latter category of line can be described as a *line of flight* or a *line of deterritorialisation*. These lines disrupt and depart from either lines of segmentarity or another line of flight.

Finally, as a rhizomic lens is concerned with pathways of thought or action, space and time are integral to every concept. I draw on two particular articulations of space in this article: smooth and striated. The smooth space, as taken up by Deleuze and Guattari, implies a space that allows for difference, irregularity and change, in contrast to the striated space, which is considered a space that fixes, organises and prescribes.

Analysis: Expanding the Grounds of the Learning Self

As a facilitator of a performance-devising process, I endeavoured to find ways for the students to be on stage as themselves, or in roles that would function to expose and explore aspects of their collective identities and individual subjectivities. To this end, I 'distracted' them from their expectations of 'pretending' and 'acting' by creating performance pieces with them based on found texts, based on objects, based on subjects. They journeyed with me for a time as we built scenes based on Spiderman, on fantastical underground tunnels from Canada to China, on migrating to Australia – the list goes on. But concern mounted in the class as the end of term and end-of-term performance began to weigh on our minds, and during a group discussion some of

the more vocal students expressed their frustration with what was perhaps 'a bit too much of the abstract stuff' and a desire to get down to the real 'acting' (Geraldine, focus group, 25 February 2008).

This discussion points to a key tension between the process in which we were engaged and the systems and structures (e.g. school and culture) in which the youth functioned. The school production staged by the drama program the previous year had been Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*; the simultaneously occurring production being rehearsed by the music department at the time of this research project was *Oklahoma*. These plays were typical of productions at this secondary school. Students auditioned for parts, rehearsed and performed in character, in costume. Outside of these school productions, the youth had experienced very little theatre or staged performance. In short, the mode of performance that I was facilitating was unfamiliar territory for the students, and thus deviated from their expectations of this program.

Bringing this background to the project reveals lines of segmentation in relation to performance. The form of performance that was familiar and comfortable for this group was in specific space supported by blacks, props, sets, lights, costumes, curtains and characters. This is a space that delineates the relationships between the performer and the performed, between the performed and the spectator, between reality and the fiction portrayed. In pursuing performance creation in the absence of a significant pillar in this construction (that is, character), and asking students to look to themselves, to their own bodies/minds/selves, for performance material, I was deterritorialising a central aspect of their drama program as they understood it. Recognising and working through this space of rupture became a pedagogical issue as well as an artistic one. I was prompted to establish a process that contained enough recognisable traits in order for students to engage and invest in the work, while at the same time maintaining some integrity in my performance creation and pedagogy. The convention of character, in this context, proved to be an important stable space of inquiry for these students, and as a result the process of character development became a key component of the project.

Student and Character in Relation

The first building block of the character-development process involved a simple positioning exercise, whereby each student wrote a list of personal positions (student, daughter, son, friend and so on). From here, the students wrote and discussed narratives based on what was important to them as individuals and as a group. A series of ideas, concepts and subjects was generated from this process (for example, 'food', 'creativity', 'impulses'). I asked the students to select one idea or theme from the accumulated list and to imagine a person who might share a strong interest in this idea or theme. In this context, it was not surprising that the students began to create characters that personified aspects of themselves. In this way, they began to complicate understandings of 'performer/actor' and 'performed/fiction'. The process proceeded with character exploration through their bodies, interacting in the space in their adopted character. In addition, they worked through narrative – writing textual biographies of their characters. The students put their characters in relation to others in creation through conversation, interview and, finally, scene development.

In some cases, the characters revealed aspirations shared by the students; in others, the characters revealed circumstances that were imaginable in their own lives, but forbidden or foreboding. Some examples of this relationship between student and character came up with regard to appearance: 'She's like me, but without braces' (Lisa, classroom exercise, 26 February 2008); 'He's like me, but six foot tall' (Sam, classroom exercise, 26 February 2008). Often age

was a distinguishing factor: many of the 14- or 15-year-old students became young adults in their twenties. As the space of character opened up the parameters of possibility, realities relative to one's own were explored – at times playfully, at times with dark or satirical tones.

To undertake an analysis of these characters and pursue an inquiry into this process of creation, it is easy to lean on the recognition of signifiers. I could describe the student to the best of my knowledge, then describe the character created and suggest the correspondence between those two entities. It is provocative to consider the interplay between student and character attributes – for example, the 14-year-old student becomes a 27-year-old character, or the middle-class suburban teenager becomes a princess or a down-and-out artist. Brown hair becomes green, and a 4 foot 5 inch boy becomes a 6 foot tall man. These alternative possibilities of being, brought forth by the students themselves for the purposes of character creation, serve to further demarcate their own subjectivity – we know ourselves through knowing our difference: I am a 'student' and therefore not an 'artist'. But this analogical thought, when considered in isolation, is limited and problematic. It works towards solidifying something that is fluid, and fixing something that is always emerging – that is, our learning selves. In addition, this approach assumes a 'rounding off' and hierarchical ranking in conceptual and material structures (Massumi 2002).

If, on the other hand, we consider the process rhizomatically, a provocative and revealing analysis gathers force. Through this lens, I map the circumstances of this process, the contexts of the choices made and enacted by the students, the actions that occur, and the sensations and affects produced by the performances. Paying attention to the body in the time and space of this project can lead to an understanding of emergent learning occurring in the space of creation, and reveal pedagogical moments as active, in-motion processes rather than a series of representations of concepts, subjects and end-points.

The following analysis focuses on April, mapping a process of self-reflection (Figures 1 and 2), leading to character development (Figures 3 and 4).

- *I am:*
- *daughter*
- *sister*
- *friend*
- *adviser*
- *safe*
- student
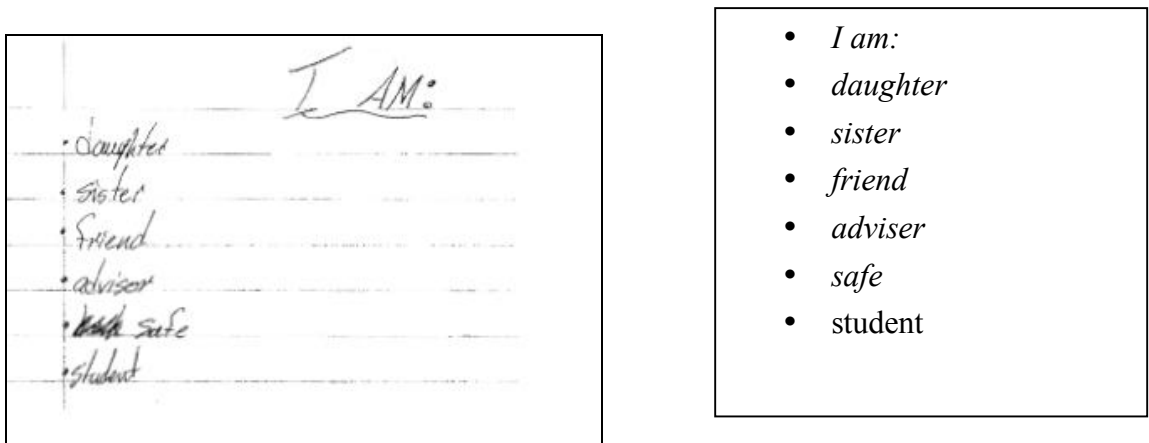
Figure 1.1: Positioning exercise

By writing a list of positions (Figure 1), April is making transparent lines of segmentarity, but also subjectivities. These positions are not detachable, however, and an exercise such as this highlights the complex and shifting positions within which the participants function. This exercise does not keep these positions fluid; rather, it freezes them in that moment of consideration. Our use and understanding of these texts resume movement, however, and so the positioning is ongoing and affected by this written artefact. These segmented positions suggest and relate directly to the body in time and space. The 'student' is embodied in the striated space and time of the school, the 'daughter' in the space and time of the relationship with her mother. 'Friend' is a position that is harder to fix with binary organisations (it sits on a continuum of potential proximities). 'Safe' suggests a different relationship with time and space, and prompts the realisation that these positions are contingent upon each other, intricately connected. The interdependency of these positions is critical to the perspective of this text as a rhizomatic map. Rather than analyse or interpret April as 'safe' and as 'friend', the rhizome reveals an understanding of a person moving through this world, where the signifier 'friend' is no more than a point of reference out of which erupt lines of flight to other positions, or away from them.

An important force of affect throughout the project discussed here was the force of consensus. The collaborative modes and group discussions revealed an inclination towards shared identities, 'team spirit' and consensus in the class. This force can be seen to contextualise the data analysed here, but more importantly, it can be seen as another line of segmentarity within which the student engagement is taking place. The second data excerpt sheds further light on this force. A task was set to write down things that were 'important to you'. Like the first exercise, this was an individual process that afforded the students an opportunity to veer away from the pull to class consensus. I was under no illusion that writing individually would entirely free the youth from the segmentary lines that exist in school and friendships/alliances, but within that space I was looking for moments of rupture (points of departure from lines of segmentarity to lines of flight). Figure 2 shows April's response to this task.

Within this example, we can see the desire to experience and exist in the intermingling of smooth and striated spaces. The territorial structures of 'family' and 'friends' is ruptured by the deterritorialisation suggested by 'individuality', 'how I feel' and 'freedom of speech'. This text serves to highlight desires and allow for the sensations of freedom (inherently smooth spaces, driven by affect and lines of flight), whilst maintaining the tethers of segmentarity for support. The process of the exercise invited April to engage with emotions, desires and concepts, and relate herself to them, be moved by them, reject some, inscribe some on paper. As the list grows, the outside forces of peers, memories and dreams, to name but a few, intermingle with the phenomenological body, and text is taken up to fix in place a fraction of what is an ever-changing aspect of April's interaction with the world. The response to the question 'What is important to me?' is written in relation to the forces of consensus in the room, to the impulses of flight, to the understandings of culture, and so on. These relations and affects play out in the proceeding process of character development.
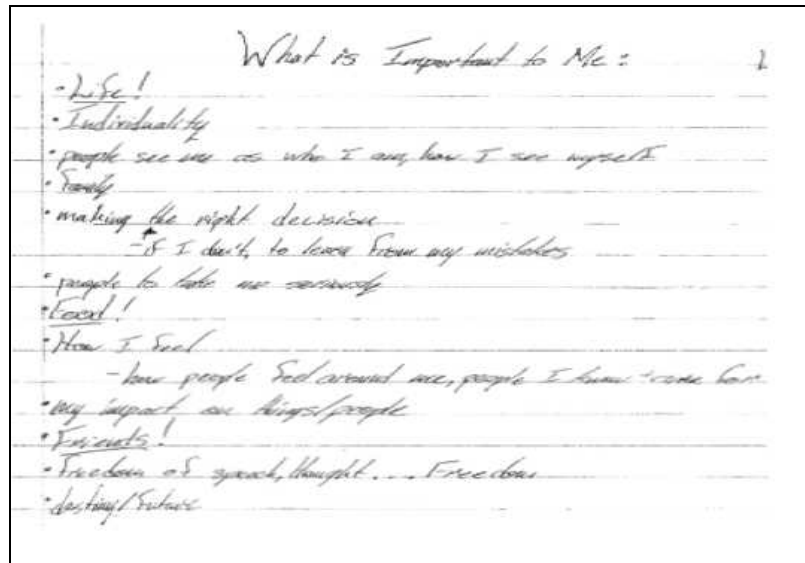
What is important to me:

- *Life!*
- *Individuality*
- *People see me as who I am, how I see myself*
- *Family*
- *Making the right decision – If I don't, to learn from my mistakes*
- *People to take me seriously*
- *Food!*
- *How I feel – How people feel around me, people I know and care for*
- *My impact of things/people*
- *Friends!*
- *Freedom of speech, thought ... free choice*
- *Destiny/future*

Figure 1.2: Subjectivity exercise

Having explored the physicality of the emerging character and a mode of interpersonal behaviour with other characters, April wrote biographical details of a character she named Lexa (Figure 3).
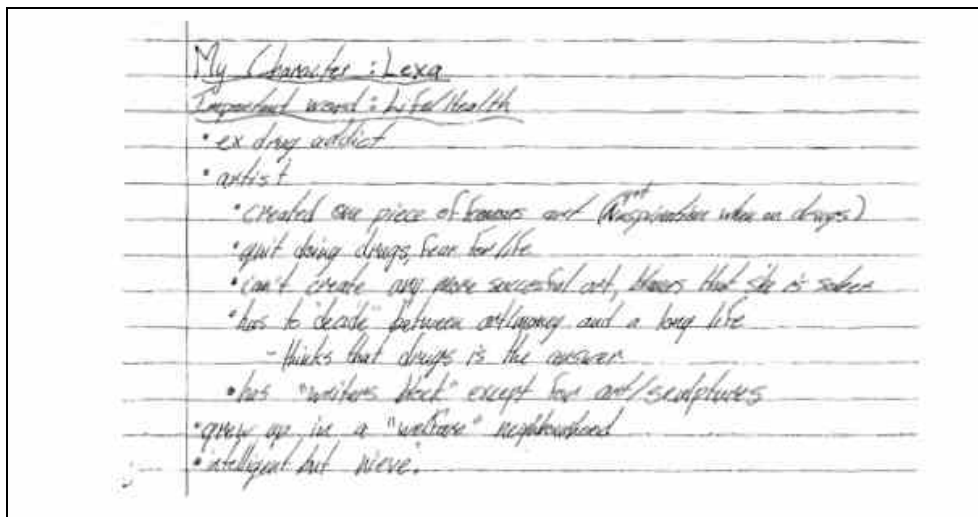
> *My character: Lexa*
> *Important word: Life/Health*
> - *Ex drug addict*
> - *Artist*
> - *Created one piece of famous art (got inspiration when on drugs)*
> - *Quit doing drugs for fear for life*
> - *Can't create any more successful art, blames that she is sober*
> - *Has 'decide' between art/money and a long life – thinks that drugs is the answer*
> - *has 'writers block' except for art/sculptures*
> - *grew up in a 'welfare' neighbourhood*
> - *intelligent but 'naïve'*

Figure 1.3: Character biography notes

This process, similar to the two described above, was another way of capturing a moment-in-time to view a snapshot of an always emerging assemblage. Considering this semiotically, as part of April's artistic output, brings forward interesting issues concerning a youth's perspective on drugs, art and notions of success, for example; however, by looking at it as part of a rhizome, that is neither begun nor ended in this artefact, we can interrogate the text as an negotiation of bodies and affects in time and place, in relation. As April, holding pen to paper, puts herself in relation to ideas of another imagined self, the affect between self and other materialises in sensation that bleeds out (as instructed) on to paper, into signifying language. That sensation, as it inspires and guides the character development, is simultaneously moving through April. As

movement suggest emergence, the student in this case can be seen as the 'self in motion' that Ellsworth (2005) proposes, 'not coincident with herself, but only with her change' (2005: 7).

Considering this third text as a process of engagement, we can see how April experiments in a corporeal world, smudging the edges of her own positions and her imagined alternative realities. Her character becomes a space within which she can explore experience that flees from the structures and circumstances of her own. The historical, emotional and material forces of 'welfare' and 'drugs' (as understood by April) can be seen as multiple forces of affect in the experience of adopting this character. These affects are put in relation to her own body, contexts and lived experiences (being an 'advisor', a 'student', part of a secondary school drama program and so on). In this way, the character becomes an invented assemblage of diverging realities. The affects and sensations of this character are coincident with those of April; they share the space, and in this way the embodied process is one of emergence for April as well as her character. April may or may not find a shift occurring in her empathy towards, and theoretical perspectives on, drug addiction, art or welfare living; she may or may not find her relationship with people like Lexa (the name of her character) altered. What is of interest here is the way in which April, the learning self, physically, emotionally and psychologically engages with, and changes in, the process of creation and representation. Due in part to the process, and in part to the particulars of participants, the characters that emerged from the process described and analysed here were rough, unstable, in-progress hybrids of the students and their chosen 'performed' person. This space allowed the opportunity for students to interact with something related to, but different from, themselves (physicality, location, age and so on).

Embodied Hybridity

Relations between self and an imagined other are tried on and explored further through monologues. The image in Figure 4 was captured from a video recorded performance of April's monologue; the transcribed text of the monologue follows.

Figure 4: April performing a monologue in the role of Lexa, her character (still image captured from video)

Transcribed text from performed monologue

Sometimes I feel like smashing this thing! I mean just looking at these numbers drives me crazy. It's like each hour takes away my life, my freedom. Now there's just so much control on my life, I mean I used to have a chaotic life, I used to do whatever, whenever, it was great. But now, now I have this stressful schedule that I have to follow. Speaking of schedules, my god, seriously, I get up in the morning, have vitamins, breakfast, prescriptions, then I have to go for a power walk; then at eight o'clock I have a dentist appointment; then at twelve, I have to go to the doctors; then at three I have to have another power walk; four o'clock I have a scan; six o'clock I have to make dinner and more prescriptions; and then ten o'clock I have to go to bed. I mean, I have no life. When does it ever stop? But that's the thing isn't it, time never does stop, it just keeps going on and on, an infinite loop. When do I fit in? I mean, what's the point? Are you just going to die? Going to keep time? Just like my heart keeping time with every weak beat. Except time goes on forever, you never know when my heart will stop. Time can only tell.

In this monologue, April plays within the context of the life of her character, Lexa, a context that draws from her own as well as an imagined world. The text works through the strict striated space of dependent, medicalised and controlled life, depicting a scenario relevant to many people in our society who exercise very little control over their own time – time that is taken up with the various responsibilities chosen or imposed: work, family, health, consumption and so on. The monologue, then, can be seen to expose relations between the known and shared context of the student, her peers, myself as the facilitator, and the unknown contexts of the imaginary other. The concepts of time, and the circumstances of addiction, recovery, dependence and control, become some of the many nodes of possible exploration and connection. It can be seen as a vehicle for investing emotion and specific material affects into an imaginary other that is always in the process of developing. The affect of anxiety, text delivery, pace and physical expression collide with the text in the performance of character. And so it leads that the monologue is an event, in time and space, constituting experience. In enacting and performing this reality, April is playing *in* this environment, in part exaggerating it for the sensation it gives her and her audience. The embodied play *in* this monologue is bringing singularities together (taken from April, taken from the imagined character, Lexa); it is breaking down assemblages (of time, of social structures); and it is becoming a new perspective, a new way of being. It is becoming a reality in itself. The performance of that reality is in turn becoming a time and place of putting self in relation to other (performed character), and of learning (through the sensory act of representing emotion and thought through performance).

As I map rhizomatic lines through and from this monologue, the motif of time becomes a point of connection. And like all points, it takes me to the performing body. An analogy can be made between the description of time in this monologue and the temporal structure of school, as the student bodies in this study are driven, with the ring of a loud bell, from one space to the next, from one subject to the next. There is very little space within that for divergence – a slip of yellow paper with a note from the previous teacher will excuse you from a tardy entrance to class. The act of creating this monologue formed connections between diverse aspects of life – aspects to which April is related through experience, through curiosity and through corporeality. Concepts reach out as analogies, and the relationship between the concept and subject in terms of

hierarchy is disrupted as April puts herself in a position of powerlessness by the concept of time. Being in time and space becomes a function of circumstance, and circumstance becomes the bricks and mortar of April's character. The character's physical body becomes the vehicle of experience, and in doing so disrupts the semiotic authority of text: 'sensuality undermines sense' (Lehmann 2006: 162). In this way, the body becomes an object of exploration. The body is a victim to drugs/society; the body becomes dependent on institutional drugs/medicalised; the body loses the freedom of independence in the plight to preserve sustainability. Simultaneously, the body/mind/self of April – able, strong, thin, white, shiny dark hair, feminine, fashionable clothes – stands, lies, shouts and struts about a school stage. This body/mind/self is the vehicle of expression. This is the body/mind/self that is sensing, is being affected and affecting, this is the body/mind/self that is changing. As this body is watched and heard, the affects and relations (the rhizome) can be seen to extend to the audience, the spectatorship of self, of peers, of witnesses.

Conclusion: Devising in Schools in Bodies

In this article, I suggest that the body is intricately related to our notions of self, other and the functions of our mind. The implications of the body in this area of research extend to the way we imagine and construct embodied pedagogies, as well as the methods we take up to research and analyse learning and creative experiences. As many scholars before me have suggested, we sense first and intellectualise second (de Bolla 2001; Ellsworth 2005; Massumi 2002). Forces of sensation are visceral and physical; therefore, a non-representational perspective on learning demands an engagement with the body in conjunction with the mind and self (subjectivities). Osmond (2007) suggests considering the body as 'knower', 'doer' and 'aesthetic medium'. In the field of drama and theatre in education, research and practice that directly explore and address the body are sparse. It is my hope that this study can open some avenues of thought or possibility in this neglected area.

The devising approach described in this article is rich with tensions that accompany many post-structural methods in education. But as a genre with no single method or form, the notion of hybridity is always implicated in the practice – and that process of hybridisation is inevitable in the classroom context. There are many aspects of devising theatre that fall into easy step with contemporary Western education and the range of demands, desires and expectations that it entails. This is particularly relevant to critical and post-critical pedagogies. The multimodality and the embodied inquiry and representation involved are two of many examples of aspects of devised theatre practices that connect with dominant theoretical and practical recommendations for education. There are perhaps as many aspects, however, that do not. The structures inherent in mainstream schooling – including timetables, assessment and spaces of practice – equate to a highly striated space. The school discourses of success and failure, of lesson plans and learning outcomes, challenge the experimental, exploratory and open-ended processes at the heart of devising. At the same time, the common base of circumstance, understanding and community present within the drama class was a rich terrain within which to devise. There is no smooth space without a striated space from which to move, and the school in this case becomes the assemblage from within which the students can challenge boundaries and rupture lines. The 'character' becomes a space in which the students can experiment and live in relation to difference. This tension between fixing and freeing, between segmentarity and flight, is indicative of the space created by the devising work in the classroom. In other words, the exercises proposed were deterritorialising processes within a space that functions to territorialise. As opposed to being an inhibiting factor, this tension is rich for devising with youth. As tension

mounts, the possibility for rupture increases; it is within these ruptures that emergence and the potential for inquiry and discovery take place.

The tension between representational and nomadic thought is as tangible in my analysis as it is in the very practice it considers. My endeavour is to avoid resting my conclusions on the meanings that I recognise, and not to lend weight to interpretations of representations that shadow the occurrences of affect, sensation, disruptions and cohesion in the processes under analysis. By considering the experience of data through notions of sensation, affect and interrelation, we bring the body back to a substantive position in the process and analysis of drama education. Learning occurs by means of the body, mind, spirit and subjectivities in the ongoing emergence of the learning self. As characters are explored through performance, the interrelation taking place takes on a further dimension when the body is implicated in the experience. The body as sensational, as well as semiotic, disrupts the signification of text, and imagined physicality (of character) is put in relation to the *actual* performing body. The experience of the mind/body/self in the process of character development and performance can be seen as one of hybridity, synchronicity and change.

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