

**Signposts and Messagesticks:
An Ethnographic Study of Non-Indigenous Drama Teachers'
Engagement with an Indigenous Drama Text**

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material that has been extracted in whole or in part from a thesis that I have submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees.

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Prologue

I wish to preface this research by introducing myself and my story. This is not only because Indigenous protocols advocate this, but because without my story, it could be considered presumptuous for me to tread in this field of research. This prologue was first sent as an ‘offer’ of my story to one of my Indigenous Australian co-supervisors. It is a sketch of my journey prior to this study, a journey into an unknown landscape. Telling my story helped to open up Indigenous guidance from Indigenous knowledge holders. I do not seek to claim authority with this prologue since that would be disrespectful and reinforce white privilege. Rather, this prologue seeks to open up reconciliation and understandings by showing a personal journey of growth in understanding while attempting to balance out the injustices of the past. I hope that like the description by a Wik woman of John Danalis in the Preface to his book *Riding the Black Cockatoo* (Danalis, 2010, p. iv), that this Prologue shows a ‘whitefella who’s learned to listen’.

I wish to forewarn Indigenous Australian readers that the names of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed away may be mentioned in my story and research. In this work, I start with four questions that seem to me to underpin my engagement as a non-Indigenous Australian in a space where Indigenous Australians are the custodians of much of the landscape, its traditions and its ‘ways of Knowing’ I ask myself: ‘Where is my place? What is my landscape? What is my story? How do I tread with soft padded feet?’

These questions were posed by Indigenous Australian knowledge bearers who I was lucky enough to have contact with throughout my life. The first two questions were the first words the great Australian actor, writer, director, activist and proud Indigenous man of Murray Islander and Yidinji heritage, Bob Maza. He asked me these questions when we met in 1987. These questions were asked as part of simple introductions and inquiries at our first meeting,

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yet to me and others these were and are profound questions that require continuous self-reflection. The third question is the first that Ernie Dingo, the enigmatic and vivacious Indigenous Australian actor, comedian, personality and teacher from the Yamatji people, asked when we met in 1987. The answer to this question is always circular, changeable and developing. The last question was posed to me and others by Maureen Watson, a woman from Kungulu country who was an Indigenous Australian elder, actor, writer, singer, storyteller and activist. Her question came at the end of a story she told in 1989 when we worked on the *Mairwair Project*, a performance project involving over 80 Indigenous Australian performers and more than 1,200 differently-abled, non-Indigenous Australian performers that told the story of *Mairwair* (the Brisbane River). This is a question, a reminder and a promise intertwined, like fingers in contemplation or prayer.

In her book *Privileging Australian Indigenous Knowledge – Sweet Potatoes, Spiders, Waterlilys and Brick Walls* (2015), Nerida Blair (an Indigenous Australian academic who acted as Associate Supervisor for this research) emphasised the importance of introducing oneself, and connections to honour the lessons one has learnt (Blair 2015, p. xv). While this may seem to be a more Indigenous way of introducing one's perspective and story, since my study explores how non-Indigenous secondary drama teachers engage with Indigenous culture and knowledges (and as a non-Indigenous drama teacher who has been privileged to have had some level of contact and engagement with Indigenous peoples, communities and stories), it seems to me that I should attempt to tell the story of my own engagement with Indigenous Australian people, cultures and 'ways of Knowing'.

I lived my childhood on what I respectfully acknowledge as the homelands and nations of the Turrbal and Jagera peoples who cared for these lands passing on the stories of Country continuously until the 1820s non-Indigenous soldiers, convicts and settlers arrived, taking the land and languages and imposing names that had no connections to the places they colonised.

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I grew up in an Australia where most Australians always celebrated Australia Day and flew the Australian flag—a flag dominated by a sea of deep blue with the Commonwealth star and the stars of the Southern Cross and depicting the British Union Jack floating in the canton as if it yearned to sail back to its British home. Every morning at school we sang ‘God Save the Queen’, although I think the irony of this did not escape me even then.

In 1995, government institutions and schools began to fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in addition to the Australian flag. In 2002, warnings and protocols for public broadcasts that referenced deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were adopted. In 2008, Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols were adopted in schools and public institutions. Perhaps these are mere tokens, or perhaps they are conceivably part of a larger and slower acknowledgement by non-Indigenous Australians that Australia was never *Terra Nullius*. It is possible that non-Indigenous Australians are coming to understand that Australia always was and always will be a diverse collection of peoples and nations. Conceivably, these steps may be part of a greater acknowledgement, valuing and perhaps even privileging of Australian Indigenous peoples, who make up a rich tapestry of over 250 strong nations with more than 150 languages still surviving, and who have lived in Australia for over 50,000 years.

Sometime around 1967, my mother and I traversed King George Square in the city of Brisbane to join a rally to support the 1967 Referendum to ‘... *alter the Constitution so as to omit certain words relating to the People of the Aboriginal Race in any State and so that Aboriginals are to be counted in reckoning the Population*’. When it was explained to me what this meant, I remember asking my mother why Aboriginal people were not already counted in the population since they lived in Australia and had lived here for longer than other people.

In 1970, my mother took me to a poetry reading by Oodgeroo Noonuccal of the Noonuccal people from the island of Minjerriba (known to most people as North Stradbroke

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Island), who read from her collection *We Are Going* in a backroom of the Brisbane City Hall. I believe that this was soon after Oodgeroo Noonuccal won the Mary Gilmore Medal. On that day, the melancholic but beautiful words of Oodgeroo Noonuccal echoed in Brisbane City Hall's backroom. There was a sense of immediacy and authority in hearing and seeing an Indigenous elder speak her words with such power, but to me, her potent stories of Country and the sense of knowledges and 'ways of Knowing' were most striking.

My mother lived much of her early life in Melbourne (the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin alliance), where she worked as an usherette at many performance venues. She told me the story of the time she saw an all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stage revue show in Melbourne in 1951 called *Out of the Dark*. She remembered the performances of the great opera singer Harold Blair and the Indigenous Australian Blues singer Georgia Lee. She described how the sets for the show had been painted by the great Aboriginal painter Albert Namatjira and she showed me pictures in art books of his paintings of his Country. I remember thinking about how even when suffering from systematic injustices and oppression, Indigenous Australians could rise 'out of the dark' to such symbols of hope and celebration.

Around this time, I remember seeing the Indigenous actor Bob Maza from Palm Island (of Murray Islander and Yidinjdi heritage) in the television series *Bellbird*. I recognised his face also when he appeared at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy on ABC News. I remember discussing with my mother why Aboriginal Australians needed an embassy. She explained that even though the 1967 vote had given Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders some powers, they had set up tents because the McMahon Government had refused to discuss land rights and payment of compensation for past mistreatment with Aboriginal people. She said that this would all change if Whitlam and the Labor Party were elected. I also remember seeing the Australian Aboriginal flag for the first time during this period, with its yellow sun seen as the giver of life proudly standing in the centre with black above, representing the Aboriginal

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peoples of Australia, and the red ochre representing the land beneath, a spiritual and physical ground representing the connections to Country. It became and still remains a powerful image and symbol of the heritage and the struggles of Indigenous Australians.

The Whitlam Government was elected and they did push for more justice for Indigenous Australians. However, these actions seemed piecemeal. One image from this period that still resonates with me, however, appeared in August 1975 in newspapers and on ABC News. This is the image capturing the moment when Gough Whitlam poured a handful of Daguragu soil into the noble elder Vincent Lingiari's hands and said:

‘Vincent Lingiari, I solemnly hand to you these deeds as proof in Australian law that these lands belong to the Gurindji people, and I put into your hands part of the earth as a sign that this land will be the possession of you and your children forever’.

Years later, I saw the photograph of this transaction in an exhibition titled ‘Black on White – Aboriginal photographs of White Australians’ and I realised that this iconic image had been taken by Mervyn Bishop, the first Aboriginal photojournalist to work for a metropolitan daily newspaper.

At school in 1976 and 1977, we studied some of the poems of Oodgeroo Noonuccal (still then called Kath Walker). It was disturbing that in history classes, we learnt nothing about the long, proud Indigenous history of Australia. I had a sense of another world being described in Oodgeroo Noonuccal's poems—one that contradicted the stories I was told in history classes where books and teachers still maintained that Captain Cook had ‘discovered’ Australia.

It was not until I was a student at Griffith University in 1981 that, as part of a course called *Social Control*, I began to get a sense of the devastation that invasion, disease, wars, slaughter, genocide, enslavement, the Protectionism and Control Boards, the Assimilation policies and the Stolen Generation Period had caused Indigenous Australians. I left Griffith

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University after a year to begin an acting degree at what became Queensland University of Technology (QUT), but the articles and books I read in 1981 remained with me for years.

At QUT, I became close friends with a fellow student in my acting degree course named Ben. One day, Ben told me about his Aboriginal heritage and that he was from the Kombumerri peoples. I could tell that he was trusting me with this knowledge and I felt privileged that he was sharing this information with me. This friendship helped me understand the complex elements that make up Indigenous Australian identity, cultures and knowledges in large part because Ben conveyed how complex his relationship to Country was.

In 1982 I saw a play that changed my life. The production, Indigenous Australian playwright Robert Merritt's *The Cake Man*, was staged at the Edward Street Theatre in Brisbane and featured the amazing Brian Syron and Justine Saunders in the cast. The play portrays the lives of Wiradjuri people on a Western New South Wales (NSW) mission and explores mission life and its controls from an Indigenous Australian perspective. Initially, I had some difficulty with the natural, every day, low-key style of acting, yet I found the performance absolutely engaging. Afterwards, the cast mingled with and talked to the audience, and the sense that this was a truly different type of experience became evident. Here were real people, real stories and a real sense of Country and place. I realised from that point onwards that there is great power in Indigenous Australian theatre because it puts live Indigenous experiences, spoken and acted by living Indigenous actors (from different backgrounds), in front of an audience. I also began to realise that the 'dramaturgy' (derived as a term from *drama* and *ergos* meaning the drama work) of Indigenous Australian drama is not only the play text, but is the involvement and connection between a range of Indigenous Australian artists from different backgrounds with an audience comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, all of whom are witnessing and being taken on a journey of story and Country.

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While working at the La Boite Theatre in Brisbane in the early 1980s, I met Perth director Andrew Ross, who over many years developed a trusted relationship with Indigenous Australian playwright Jack Davis of the Noongar nation. When the production Ross had directed of Jack Davis' play *The Dreamers* came to the Twelfth Night Theatre in Bowen Hills I attended. After seeing the play, Ross and I discussed how he worked with Jack Davis and how he was lucky to work with him and such talented other Indigenous artists. These live theatre experiences, combined with seeing films like *Wrong Side of Road* led me to feel that I was more consciously engaging with modern Indigenous Australian culture during this period.

By 1985, I was touring as an actor with the Queensland Theatre Company and the Queensland Arts Council. It was during this year that I performed for a number of Indigenous Australian audiences for the first time. These performances were in rural and remote communities (some on Aboriginal reserves). These communities welcomed us, and the experience of playing for wholly Indigenous communities was very special. This experience also helped me realise that perhaps I, as a non-Indigenous Australian, was not the original or intended audience for the Indigenous Australian theatre I had seen and that the Indigenous communities I performed to, were perhaps the primary audience for many of these plays.

By 1986 I was living in Victoria and studying Theatre Directing at Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). I was lucky enough to work with Australian playwright and dramaturge John Romeril, who had a close working relationship with Indigenous Australian theatre performers such as Bob Maza and Jack Charles, as well as with the Nidethana Theatre Company (an Indigenous theatre company). While John Romeril was teaching at VCA, he was working on a musical adaptation of Manning Clarke's *History of Australia*, and he discussed including the Indigenous Australian perspectives of Australian history in a performance. He was generous as a teacher and often shared his experiences of how to engender trust in relationships with Indigenous Australian individuals and communities. Romeril encouraged

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me to see Jack Davis' *No Sugar* at the Fitzroy Town Hall. As I had seen *The Dreamers* in 1983, witnessing a play that told another chapter of the story of the Noongar people excited me. I was able to speak to Jack Davis after the performance, and he told me he was going to combine all the plays into a trilogy. The magnitude of this task struck me immediately.

Early in 1987, all of the directing and playwrighting students from VCA went to Canberra for the Australian Playwright's Conference. I decided to arrive a few days early because I saw a poster for the 1st National Black Playwright's Conference. I thought that I might be allowed to attend and see one or two workshops, but my expectations were exceeded. I saw Bob Maza in the coffee room adjacent to other larger rooms. I approached him and introduced myself as a directing student from VCA. Maza was welcoming and introduced me to Brian Syron, whom I had seen many years earlier in *The Cake Man*. They then invited me to watch a workshop performance. The play being workshopped just so happened to be *The Cherry Pickers* by Kevin Gilbert (the first Australian Indigenous playwright) and witnessing the performance was an amazing experience. When the play finished, it felt as if the applause would never stop.

The next day I began attending workshops, and Bob Maza introduced two other students and me from VCA who had decided to join the conference. We began reading and workshopping stories and scripts by Indigenous Australian artists, writers, actors and directors who were attending the conference. The group included Bob Maza, Ernie Dingo, Justine Saunders, Lydia Miller, Rhoda Roberts and Vivian Walker (son of Kath Walker, known as Oodgeroo Noonuccal by that time). Many of the younger Indigenous artists, such as Rhoda Roberts, became foundational in the blossoming of Indigenous Australian theatre of the 1990s. In January 1987 we workshopped plays and stories together and at night told the stories of where we were from. I felt so welcomed by this group of strangers. My non-Indigenous background was never an issue, but rather my openness and willingness to help was seen as a

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gift. The 1st National Black Playwright's Conference extended into the following week and I juggled my commitments to the Australian Playwright's Conference with those to the people and ideas that were thriving at the 1st National Black Playwright's Conference. Some individuals from the Australian Playwright's Conference seemed slightly exasperated when we took over a spot in one of the performance spaces to perform some of the short plays we had developed. As we gathered in a circle before one of these performances, Ernie Dingo and Justine Saunders gave the moment a sense of ceremony as they shared words of wisdom.

The next year, 1988, was the bicentenary of the arrival of the First Fleet in Sydney. Enormous Invasion Day and Aboriginal Land Rights protests were organised in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. I joined the protests in Melbourne that gathered outside the State Library and later outside parliament. In February 1988, I met with Roger Hodgman to discuss an internship I had done with the Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC). Hodgman mentioned that he had recently spoken with Andrew Ross and that he was trying to obtain funding and a space for Ross to stage Jack Davis' *First Born Trilogy* (*No Sugar, The Dreamers* and *Barungin - Smell the Wind*). In early May 1988, I was seconded over to help Davis and Ross with the production. Davis' *First Born Trilogy* was performed over two nights at the Fitzroy Town Hall. It was an amazing pair of evenings and the most memorable element was seeing almost a dozen incredible Indigenous Australian actors perform these plays.

In 1989, I returned to Brisbane to finish my Bachelor's degree in drama at QUT. I had studied at this institution when training as an actor, however, what made this year special was that I was in the same graduate class as Wesley Enoch, and we worked on plays together and were part of a *commedia dell'arte* troupe. Our discussions about what Indigenous Australian drama could do and achieve were numerous.

Later that year I did an internship at Access Arts, a Brisbane Arts organisation that works with people with different disabilities and marginalised communities. We worked on

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developing a multimedia cross-arts performance titled *Mairwair* the traditional Indigenous Australian name for the Brisbane River. I was the Assistant Director and I coordinated a number of groups and individuals. The performance involved over 200 differently abled children and adults and over 10 different Indigenous Australian communities. The performance centred on traditional stories of the river *Mairwair* as retold by the Indigenous Australian writer, poet, storyteller and actor Maureen Watson. The project was enormous and taught me a great deal about how non-Indigenous Australians can work with sensitivity with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders to bring the stories, dances, songs, lives and Knowings to life in a true spirit of mindfulness and reconciliation.

In the 1990s, I began to teach drama, English and media in Victorian Secondary schools and along with starting a family, this made for a busy life. My contact with Indigenous Australian theatre was mainly through attending Indigenous plays and studying these plays and productions with my students. The 1990s was a golden age of Indigenous Australian theatre and I saw many productions, including Jimmy Chi's *Bran Nue Dae* (a musical celebrating what it is to be an Indigenous Australian), Roger Bennett's *Up the Ladder* and *Funerals and Circuses*, Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman's *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and Richard Frankland's *Conversations with the Dead*. I began to take notes on every production and kept photographs and drawings of sets, staging aspects and other features. In 1997, Drama Victoria wanted to compile a book including both Asian and Australian Aboriginal drama. I collected some of my notes and developed a set of workshops for teachers focusing on teaching Australian Aboriginal drama. I found that I had some knowledge of the ways to approach Indigenous Australian plays, knowledges and subject matters, but I relied a great deal on my Indigenous friends in the industry. I completed a Master of Education at the University of Melbourne at this time and while I was able to incorporate some aspects of my study of

Indigenous Australian dramaturgy into my thesis, I nonetheless felt as if my understanding of this area was still in its infancy.

I went overseas with my family late 1999, but I continued to take notes on every Indigenous Australian play I saw and read each time I returned to Australia. By 2010, I had begun to compile this information into a book called *Australian Indigenous Drama*. In 2012 the book was published and I conducted a series of workshops with non-Indigenous Australian drama teachers to implement the Indigenous Australian aspects of the Australian National Curriculum in drama and theatre with the help of many of my Indigenous Australian friends in the theatre industry. I also wrote a study guide on Jack Davis' *No Sugar*.

Early in 2013, when I enrolled in my doctoral program to undertake the research explored and revealed in this document, we were asked as an exercise to do a little research and to come up with an image or diagram to sum up the research we thought we would undertake. I struggled with this simple task as I started to read more about Indigenous Australian epistemologies, ontologies and methodologies. I questioned how I could and why I would embark on this area of research and whether I had the right to venture at all into this landscape. I struggled with this simple task. When the day of the short presentation came, I decided to complete the task by thinking about where I came from and the landscape of that place. I was born on the homelands and nations of the Turrbal and Jagera peoples where the rivers meet the sea in mangroves, lagoons and ponds teeming with life. In the Yolnu philosophy of the peoples of north of Australia the name for this type of landscape is Ganma. Both Yunggirringa (2007) and Kelly (2008) describe Ganma as a place where knowledge is created and re-created. So I came to presentation with a picture and a story. The picture is shown below. And so, I offered a picture and a story, my story. I described my Ganma, the place where the rivers of the waters of Indigenous Australian Knowings meet the salty sea of Western knowledge not in a clear mouth or estuary but in a murky set of lagoons, ponds, islands and channels where the waters mutually

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engulf one another and flow and mix sustaining life. It seemed to me that at this point, I was on my way to making a journey and answering the four questions posed at the beginning of this prologue:

- ‘Where is my place?’ To navigate a small portion of the journey of reconciliation between Indigenous Australian knowledge and culture and non-Indigenous Australian teachers;
- ‘What is my landscape?’ My landscape is made up of my experiences and the Indigenous Australian dramas I have seen, read and experienced;
- ‘What is my story?’ My story is the sum of all my experiences; and,
- ‘How do I tread with soft padded feet?’

I hope I traverse this landscape with respect and mindfulness and that I try to see the ground I tread on while respecting the peoples and cultures whose knowledge, ‘ways of Knowing’ and traditions have cared for this land for over 120,000 generations. I want my passion for honouring the stories, lessons, relationships and Knowings of the First Nations peoples of Australia to help me travel through this landscape with soft padded feet and contribute to ongoing discussion, dialogue and reconciliation.

Abstract

The purpose of this ethnographic study is to investigate how non-Indigenous Australian secondary drama teachers engage with an Australian Indigenous drama text. Some studies, such as those of Moriarty (1995) and Harrison and Greenfield (2011), have focused on the implementation and teaching of ‘Aboriginal Studies’ and ‘Aboriginal Culture’. There is a gap in scholarly literature relating to the way teachers engage with Indigenous Australian perspectives and texts.

In this research, I address the following question: *‘How do non-Indigenous Victorian secondary school drama teachers (NIVSSDTs) engage with Indigenous Australian drama texts and what effects does this have on ‘ways of seeing’ that develops knowledge and understanding?’*

Ethnographic and case study research is used to examine how non-Indigenous Victorian secondary school drama teachers (NIVSSDTs) perceive and make sense of an Indigenous Australian drama text. A case study was conducted that included four NIVSSDTs in an ethnographic study of their teaching of an Indigenous drama text. Data collection was based on three data collection methods. First, semi-structured interviews with each of the four NIVSSDTs were undertaken. Second, visual journals of the NIVSSDTs were examined. Finally, discussion in forums involving the participants took place. The case design was informed by Indigenous Australian Aboriginal pedagogy of cultural interface as represented in the eight-stage model of Yunkaporta (2009) and the work on privileging Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’ by Rigney (1997), Smith (1999), Nakata (2003), Foley (2002) and Blair (2015). Important also to the data analysis were ‘theories of visibility’, especially the conceptual frameworks of reception theory (Hall 1980).

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Findings from the study were that NIVSSDTs primarily adopt hegemonic or negotiated operating positions especially when concentrating on exam criteria. Negotiated positioning is more evident when NIVSSDTs concentrate on story, themes and contexts. NIVSSDTs tended to aestheticise, objectify and engage with Indigenous Australian cultures positioning Indigenous ‘ways of Knowing’ on the periphery of Western knowledge constructs. Lack of meaningful consultation with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders is also evident.

The significance of my research lies in its contribution to knowledge about social, cultural and political issues surrounding Non-Indigenous teachers’ engagement with Indigenous cultures and ‘ways of Knowing’.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Research Problem

In this research, I address how NIVSSDTs in drama engage with an Indigenous Australian text to develop knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian culture and perspectives. In using the term Indigenous Australian, I have used guidance from documents produced within academic fields (UNSW, 2016 & Matharu, 2009), wider cultural references (AIATSSIS, 2019) and Australian drama specific documents (Drama Australia, 2012 & Casey, 2004). I am conscious of the ways that NIVSSDTs approach documents such as the ACARA Australian National Curriculum and what effects this has on the development of their knowledge and understanding about Indigenous Australian cultures, peoples and histories. I attempt to investigate some of the concerns that curriculum authorities and teachers have raised in this area about knowledge deficits, preconceptions and the possibility of tokenism. Theories of visibility are used as a ‘way of seeing’ how these problems are perceived and ‘read’ by NIVSSDTs. This visual focus is also used by me as a researcher to cross-examine ways that NIVSSDTs ‘turn’ or translate their interpretations and experiences in practical ways. In my research, I attempt to address the immediate concerns of the 2014 *Review of the Australian Curriculum* by examining how engagement with Indigenous Australian culture and perspectives occurs in one learning area. Using theories of visibility helps reveal ways that teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives could be transferable and could have a wider application across the school curriculum to multiple learning areas and even cross-curriculum applications.

1.2 Context of the Study

Van Wagenen (1991) suggested that any introduction to research should reveal and explain the different variables of the area researched, examine suppositions and contextualise the problem (1991, pp.34-35). As a performance medium, drama often achieves this by having major characters speak directly to the audience to outline the context of a scene or to present different perspectives on what will be explored dramatically. With this in mind, I begin this research with the voices of four ‘actors’ in the field of research in order to ‘set the scene’. These four players may influence and help explain the way that teachers address Australian Indigenous histories, cultures and perspectives in the classroom. The four actors are the *Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)*, the Australian Government Department of Education’s *2014 Review of the Australian Curriculum*, the *non-Indigenous Australian academics (NIAA)* working in the field of Australian Indigenous studies pedagogy and the *Indigenous Australian academics (IAA)* working in the same area.

ACARA: ‘The Australian National Curriculum mandates that Australian teachers must teach Indigenous Australian perspectives across all learning areas’ (ACARA, 2012).

Gov. Review: ‘...the emphasis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature... is criticised for undervaluing Australian literature... We are persuaded that there is a danger of... Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, culture and heritage being treated in a tokenistic and superficial manner...’ (Australian Government, 2014, p.165 & p.247).

NIAA: ‘Most Australian teachers struggle to identify and teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledges’ (Harrison, 2011, p.15).

IAA: ‘There is an injustice in this (embedding Aboriginal perspectives in the education) for non-Aboriginal teachers. They are expected to do something that

nobody has shown them how to do... There is plenty of research and training around *what* it is, and *why* it is important, but there is very little out there that deals with the *how*' (Yunkaporta 2009, p.5).

My research considers how NIVSSDTs engage with Indigenous Australian drama texts. The Australian National Curriculum requires Australian teachers to teach about Indigenous Australia as a cross-curricular priority, but non-Indigenous Australian teachers struggle to teach students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledges. Without educators teaching this material in an informed and sympathetic way, Indigenous Australian knowledge, culture and heritage may continue to be taught in "tokenistic and superficial" ways (Australian Government, 2014, p.165).

In this study, my research question was: *How do non-Indigenous Victorian secondary school drama teachers (NIVSSDTs) engage with Indigenous Australian drama texts and what effects does this have on 'ways of seeing' that develops knowledge and understanding?*

With this question in mind, I investigated how NIVSSDTs 'see' an Indigenous Australian drama text using visual methodologies and Indigenous Australian perspectives such as Yunkaporta's (2009) eight-stage model of cultural interface, specifically addressing the Story, the Map, the Silence, the Signs, the Land, the Shape, the Backtracking and the Homeworld.

It is important at this point to address what I mean by 'Indigenous' in the context of my research. There are many terms to respect the long heritage of cultures and peoples in Australia prior to invasion. Emery and Associates (1997) cite the International Labour Organisations (ILO) C169 declaration which regards 'indigenous' as a self-identification of a group of independent nations which share descent, traditions and geographic location (p.2). While some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people consider the term 'Indigenous' offensive, since it has historically been used to align Australia's First Nations people with flora and fauna, it is

also accepted that if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people consent to the term in a context where it allows contrasting reference to non-Indigenous Australian people, it is acceptable (Narragunnawali, 2018). Muir and Lawson (2018) also endorse the use of “Indigenous Australians” in recent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander phraseology publications such as *Nganga – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Words and Phrases* (p.58). Moreover, as Maori academic Stewart (2018) points out, although ‘indigenous’ is an adjective synonymous with ‘native’, which is derogatory in its associations, it also signifies conceptually the “place-based nature” of a range of human cultures (p.740). In my research, I am using ‘Indigenous’ respectfully to allow the division between ‘Indigenous Australian’ and ‘non-Indigenous Australian’ peoples and traditions. The use of the no capital letter for the prefix ‘non’ before words Indigenous Australians (except with the acronym NIVSSDTs) helps to signify the unspecific and non-place-based nature of the non-Indigenous Australians.

In the context of this study, I consider an Indigenous Australian drama to be a play written by an Indigenous Australian person, persons or group, or one where significant Indigenous Australian input is evident in process and product helping to embody Indigenous ownership. I also must acknowledge that Indigenous Australian drama often attempts to express the distinctive cultural heritages of different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, nations and cultures (Casey & Craigie, 2011, p.2). Casey (2004) also sees Indigenous Australian drama as creating different frames in its representations and its embracing of specific perspectives (p.3).

Visuality also is used to frame this research and analysis. Models of visuality are a set of concepts and theories in the fields of art, culture and sociology that consider the relationship between representation, reality and knowledge through examining the relationships between objects, images and words and their reception. While this conceptualisation builds on the work of Barthes and Foucault in the 1960-1970s and that of Wartofsky and Berger in the 1970s, it is

anchored in much earlier philosophic work, such as Descartes' theory of dioptrics. Informed by these understandings of 'visuality', in this study I use many elements of theories of visuality, especially reception theory (Hall 1980) and scopic regimes (Jay in Foster 1987). Hall's reception theory (1980) concentrates on positioning communication exchanges as determinant communicative moments (1980, p.129). This is important for this doctoral research because it provides a way of discussing and analysing how NIVSSDTs position themselves when addressing the text of an Indigenous Australian play. Scopic regimes were first articulated by Jay in the chapter 'Scopic Regimes of Modernity' in Foster's *Vision and Visuality* (1987). This chapter exposes the problems of the dominant 'Western' scopic regime of Cartesian perspectivalism and proposes other 'ways of seeing', which Jay regards as more descriptive and 'natural' than explanatory (Jay in Foster 1987: pp.12-20).

Yunkaporta's (2009) eight-stage model was used in this study to address the primary research question and provide a lens for considering the nature of data at each stage. Theories of visuality are used to underpin the three research sub-questions, which are:

1. How do NIVSSDTs 'see' an Indigenous Australian drama text as an opportunity for theatrical exploration?
2. How do NIVSSDTs visualise an Indigenous Australian drama text with a view towards greater knowledges and understandings through using the representations, symbolism and meanings embedded in that text?
3. How do NIVSSDTs 'turn' or translate their interpretation of an Indigenous Australian drama text into practical formats that address the concerns of the Australian National Curriculum?

The use of the term 'see' in sub-question 1 is intentional and refers both to the visual nature of teaching drama represented through the use of visual journals in the data collection

process of this study as well as to the concept of visuality used by me to examine the explorations of my NIVSSDT participants. While ‘knowledges’ and ‘understandings’ in sub-question 2 may seem grammatically incorrect due to the use of plurals, it should be noted that this usage is deliberate. The terms ‘knowledges’ and ‘understandings’ are referred to by Indigenous Australian academics such as Rigney (1997), Smith (2002), Foley (2003) Nakata (2003 & 2007), Yunkaporta (2009) and Blair (2015) primarily as a method of rejecting the singularity of Western pedagogy. I honour this use of plurality while also seeking to avoid the tendency of non-Indigenous perspectives to undervalue the individuality of Australian First Nations often categorising them as one homogenous group. The terms ‘turn’ or ‘translate’ are used in sub-question 3 specifically and intentionally to emphasise the movement from a positivist to an interpretivist research paradigm. The use of the word ‘turn’ is also referential to the ‘cultural turn’ movement that began in the 1970s and is centred the movement from positivist epistemology that situates knowledge and experience primarily through reason and logic to inter-subjective paradigms of interpretative approaches (Steinmetz 1999, pp.1-2).

1.3 Project Rationale

This area of study is important to me as an experienced drama educator because there is significant anecdotal evidence that Australian drama teachers find it difficult to engage with and teach curriculum content about Indigenous Australia. I realise the potential of drama teachers as educators and drama as a subject to provide a platform for cultural and valuing Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’. I am committed to developing robust research data around this focus to inform future developments in curriculum decisions. The Australian Curriculum requires educators to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and perspectives as a cross-curriculum priority. In its review of the Australian Curriculum for schools, the Australian Department of Education suggested that teachers encounter difficulties

when teaching this cross-curriculum content (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014, pp.100-101) and recommended that expertise be raised in the area of teaching Australian Indigenous knowledge, culture and heritage (p.247). In this research, I hope to identify ways of using drama to address what documents such as the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014) present as the limitations and challenges of Australian teachers engaging with and understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, culture and heritage.

At recent conferences of the Australian Drama and English Subject Association both nationally (Drama Australia ‘Continuum’ 2018 in Melbourne; Drama Australia ‘Evolve’ 2014 National Conference in Hobart; Australian Association for the Teaching of English National Conference 2014 in Darwin) and regionally (Drama Victoria State Conference 2017 ‘Under the Big Top’ and Drama Victoria State Conference 2016), I have noticed a large number of papers have centred on teaching Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives in the Australian classroom. Teachers are interested in this area but their comments in discussions at conferences seem to echo observations about their struggles with a general lack of understanding of Indigenous contexts. Since NIVSSDTs often ‘see’ Indigenous Australian plays performed by Indigenous artists and engage with these texts in performative as well as educational ways, they are often in a unique position to ‘see’ and engage with Indigenous Australian culture and perspectives in ways that potentially develop rich knowledge and understanding.

The way NIVSSDTs see, look and engage with Australian Indigenous texts is central to this study. Theories of visibility provide a lens through which to examine teacher engagement with Indigenous Australian texts and Indigenous Australian cultures more broadly. A range of theoretical models of visibility are considered in this research to illuminate teacher engagement and allow observation and theoretical positioning of the cultural knowledge examined.

I have chosen to use an ethnographic approach to examine *how* NIVSSDTs engage with and interpret an Indigenous drama text. Ethnography as a methodology uses anthropological understanding to investigate the relationship between everyday life and cultures. It is a research strategy that describes and interprets patterns in values, behaviours and beliefs (Creswell, 2013, pp.90-91). Ethnographic research is appropriate for this research because it can address the cultural, observational and interpretative aspects of NIVSSDTs' work with Indigenous Australian drama texts in order to reveal patterns in culture interpretation (Creswell, 2013, p.92). In this thesis, I attempt to uncover important aspects of the perspectives of my teacher participants (Crotty, 1998, p.7). This research is significant, as I explored NIVSSDTs' perceptions, revealing how these teachers understand and engage with knowledge of Indigenous Australian cultures through the use of an Indigenous Australian drama text. In this study, I attempt to elucidate the complex nature of how Indigenous Australian knowledges, peoples, cultures, histories, sense of identity, Country and sense of place are explored in a school educational context.

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis begins with an explanation of my interest and contact with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders and 'ways of Knowing' over almost 50 years. The introduction of the thesis outlines the context of the study in terms of the Australian National Curriculum and the struggle that Australian teachers have had with teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives and 'ways of Knowing'.

In Chapter 1, I address the primary research question concerning the manner in which NIVSSDTs engage with Indigenous Australian drama plays and what the effect that this engagement has on their 'ways of seeing', developing knowledge and understanding. Issues are raised in research sub-questions regarding how these teachers 'see' an Indigenous Australian drama text as an opportunity for theatrical exploration and how NIVSSDTs

visualise, ‘turn’ and translate their interpretation of an Indigenous Australian drama text into practical formats.

In Chapter 2, the existing literature surrounding the Australian National Curriculum and the difficulties faced in teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives is reviewed. Indigenous Australian knowledge transmission and ‘ways of Knowing’ are explored and significant findings of Indigenous Australian academics such as Yunkaporta (2009) and Blair (2015) are addressed in terms of cultural interface and privileging Indigenous Knowings. In this literature review I also consider the concept of ‘visuality’ and theories of visuality and their relationship to representation, reality and knowledge.

Chapter 3 focuses on the explanation and justification of the research design adopted for this study. The methodological orientation is explored and the use of a qualitative research approach and the research framework are outlined. The use of ethnography to contextualise the perspectives of the NIVSSDT participants is explained through the theoretical lens of visuality as is the use of the case study methodology.

The findings of the study are presented and described in Chapter 4. While the lens of theories of visuality is used in this chapter, Indigenous Australian academic Yunkaporta’s (2009) eight-stages of engagement and cultural interface are applied as the primary conceptual framework through which the data is identified and described.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the findings of the research as examined through the primary research question with some reference to the sub-questions. A kaleidoscope approach as advocated by Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg and Coleman (2000) was used to organise and analyse data in order to facilitate a constant comparison method. The two methodological lenses used to examine the data were Indigenous Australian methodologies and theories of visuality. This helped manage discussion of the data while also serving to integrate categories and their properties in the discussion.

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Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

In this literature review, I address existing empirical and theoretical literature to support the focus of this study. I explore fields of research that inform this study while attempting to address some relevant shifts in thought, theory and approaches that gives this research a novel conceptual lens. This literature review is comprised of four sections:

1. Contextualisation of the challenge of teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives;
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in educational contexts;
3. The work of Australian teachers in approaching and engaging with Indigenous Australian drama texts; and,
4. Visuality as it relates to interrogating the ways that Indigenous Australian drama texts may be ‘seen’.

I have chosen this structure and approach because it reflects the way that I seek to interrogate the research problem and the questions raised by this investigation.

2.1 Contextualising the Problem

2.1.1 The Australian national curriculum and Indigenous perspectives.

Since colonisation commenced, Australia’s education system has historically, constitutionally and traditionally been under the governance of individual colonial and state governments (Aulich, 2003, p.2). Indigenous Australian content may have been taught in some Australian schools as early as the 1930s following the publication of Indigenous Australian writer David Unaipin’s 1929 book *Native Legends* (published under the publisher William Ramsay Smith’s name with no initial acknowledgement of Unaipin). However, it is most likely

that the first widespread appearance of Australian Indigenous content in Australian schools were the poems of Indigenous poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal (known initially in literary circles as Kath Walker) from her 1964 collection *We Are Going* (Noonuccal, 1964). By the 1980s, the regular appearance of Indigenous Australian poetry texts in school curricula was complemented by the use of theatre texts such as Robert Merritt's 1978 play, *The Cake Man*, and Jack Davis', *No Sugar* (Davis, 1986). English, literature and drama matriculation text lists and exams across many Australian states since the 1980s may be alternatively perceived by non-Indigenous Australian teachers as either actively embracing Indigenous drama texts in the mainstream classroom or as furthering a new form of cultural tokenism.

During the 2007 Australian federal election, both major Australian political parties endorsed curriculum developments that led to the establishment of an Australian National Curriculum (Donnelly, 2008, p.9). The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs published a document in 2008 entitled, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, which included and mandated the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives, along with Australia's engagement with Asia and Sustainability as cross-curriculum priorities.

Soon after, ACARA was established and published *The Shape of the Australian National Curriculum* (ACARA, 2009), which outlined the purpose of the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the Australian National Curriculum. The authors of the document stated that they had seen this as a way '...that all young Australians can learn the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, of their contribution to Australia, and of the consequences of colonial settlement for Indigenous communities, past and present...' (ACARA, 2009, p.6), which framed the commitment in terms of cultural identity. The inclusion of engagement as a focus for study of Indigenous Australian cultures actively placed study of the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres

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Strait Islander peoples under the umbrella of a discourse on cultural identity. This may also be seen as constituting a barrier to genuine engagement with Indigenous Australian cultures potentially acting to challenge the constructs of knowledge and identity in the Australian educational curriculum.

The inclusion of Indigenous Australian cultures, histories and perspectives in Australian curriculums was welcomed by many. A significant number of articles and resources were written during this period, including Drama Australia (2007), Gilmore (2009) and Fitzpatrick (2009), to develop awareness and engage teachers in the area of Indigenous Australian studies. Since 2009, state educational authorities, subject associations such as Drama Australia and Indigenous Australian education associations, collectives and interest groups, such as Creative Spirits (Korff, 2018), have continued to produce documents and training in this area. Insights, strategies, protocols, considerations and approaches are offered in state government and state subject association documents such as *Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in schools* (EATSIPS) (Queensland Government, 2011) and *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guidelines for Drama/Theatre Education* (Drama Australia, 2012).

Other independent resources are beginning to be developed by Indigenous Australian educators such as Cochrane (2018), whose website TIPIAC addresses teaching Indigenous perspectives in the Australian curriculum and provides resources and lesson plans written by Indigenous Australians to help teachers teach Indigenous Australian subject matter, history and perspectives. Some articles in teacher and educator journals written predominately by non-Indigenous Australian educators suggest frameworks and strategies for teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives that advocate including Indigenous Australian history, background knowledge and cultural knowledge in practical applications. One example of such an article is

Shipp's (2013) *Bringing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the classroom: Why and how*.

However, Indigenous Australian academic writings, such as Blair's *Privileging Australian Indigenous Knowledge: Sweet Potatoes, Spiders, Waterlilies & Brick Walls* (2015), Yunkaporta's *Aboriginal pedagogies at the cultural interface* (2009) and *Co-becoming Bawaka: Towards a relational understanding of place/space* (Bawaka et al., 2016) advocate more integrated approaches. These methods are undervalued and not fully addressed in government reports and reviews such as the *Review of the Australian National Curriculum* (2014). Indigenous Australian academic explorations of Indigenous perspectives advocate more practical approaches to cultural interface while providing a sense of the ways that Indigenous Australian knowledges are embedded in a sense of Country. These approaches are reflected in Blair's (2015) use of the phrase 'ways of Knowing' rather than 'knowledge'. Blair (2015) advocated alternative ways of valuing Indigenous 'ways of Knowing', while Yunkaporta (2009) examined cultural interface in Australian education and teacher engagement with Australian Indigenous knowledges. Bawaka et al. (2016) inspected understanding of Indigenous, non-Indigenous, human and more-than-human knowledges of Country. All of these Indigenous Australian academics have the potential to influence the effectiveness of the practices of non-Indigenous Australian teachers in relation to Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing'.

2.1.2 Teacher difficulties in teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives.

This review includes literature that discusses the difficulties teachers face when engaging with Indigenous Australian perspectives as part of the Australian National Curriculum. Faccinetti (2012) found five main challenges in teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives:

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- Teachers have a lack of general knowledge about Indigenous perspectives;
- Teachers have difficulty finding reliable information;
- Teachers have preconceptions about Indigenous peoples and cultures;
- Teachers have trouble incorporating Indigenous Australian perspectives in ways that avoid tokenism; and,
- Teachers find added complexity and difficulty in the inclusion of these areas (Indigenous Australian perspectives, peoples and cultures) under the category of cross-curriculum priorities (Faccinetti, 2012).

Faccinetti (2012) notes that although most teachers take a positive approach in attempting to teach Indigenous Australian history, cultures and perspectives, ‘socio-political requirements, a lack of personal knowledge, difficulty finding reliable information and an already crowded curriculum often get in the way of confident teaching about Australia’s Indigenous people’ (p.34). Both the Australian Department of Education in its review of the Australian curriculum (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014, p.180) and Faccinetti (2012, p.34), highlighted the difficulty teachers have in avoiding tokenism when teaching Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives. This is evidenced in a 2014 study of pre-service teachers in New South Wales, which found that despite trainee teachers having some training in cultural awareness, tokenism and a lack of direct reliable knowledge were still some of the greatest problems faced by trainee teachers attempting to implement programs addressing Indigenous Australian cultures (Bickerdike, 2014). Moreton-Robinson et al. (2012) noted the great disparity between the number of pre-service teacher units in Aboriginal studies taught at universities such as Macquarie University and the Australian Catholic University (ACU) compared to those offered at other Australian institutions.

In her 2014 study titled *Teaching Aboriginal curriculum content in Australian high schools*, Booth suggests that the primary issues affecting teaching of Indigenous Australian content by non-Indigenous Secondary Australian teachers are time management, school culture, teacher interest and preconceived ideas held by both teachers and students. In her study,

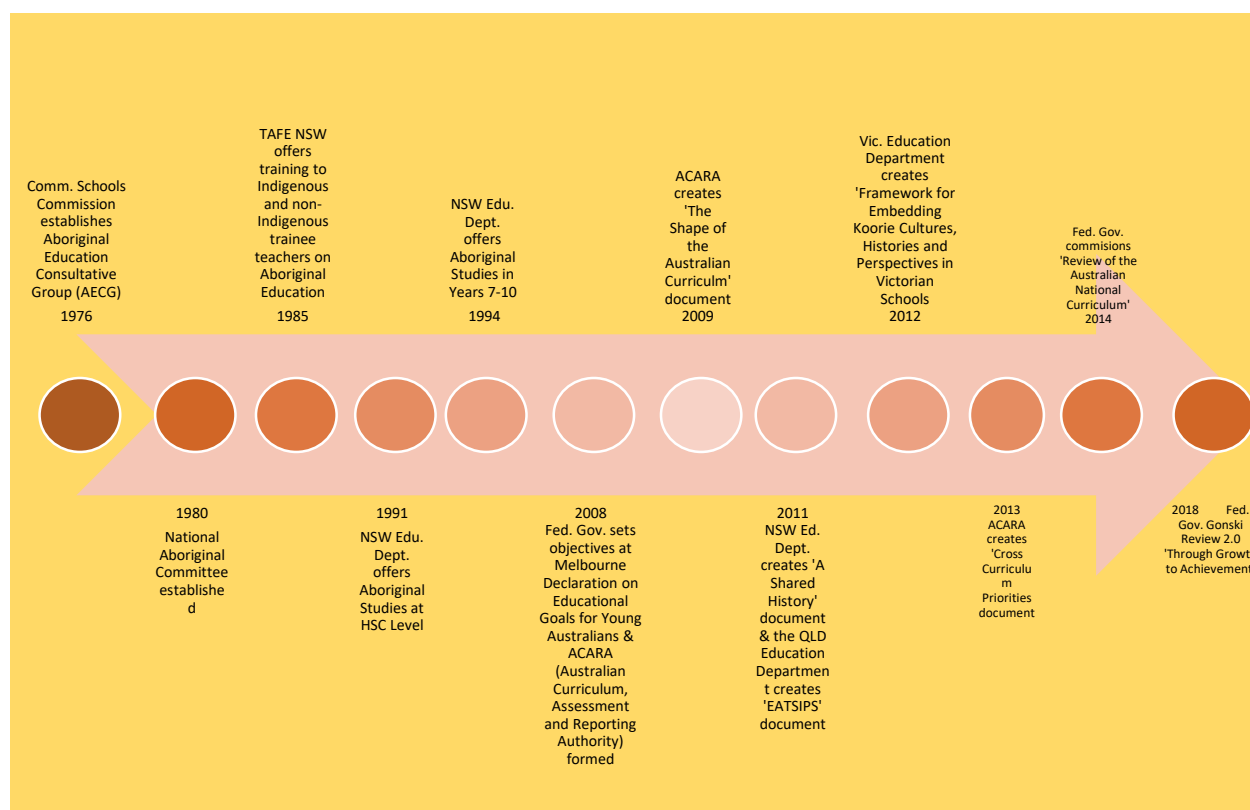
Booth analysed and mapped where, when and how Indigenous Australian content was taught in schools and tertiary education. She recommended systematising in-service learning and pre-service learning, along with providing support, information and an Indigenous Australian elder or knowledge holder in schools as potential avenues to help rectify these problems (Booth, 2014).

Further difficulties arise from the Australian Curriculum's framing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives as one of three cross-curriculum priorities. As noted by 2014 report entitled 'Review of the Australian Curriculum', teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives and 'culture' across all curriculum areas adds to the complexity of implementation, which might not have been the case if these aspects were introduced and taught through a specific learning area (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014, p.100). The placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the area of cross-curriculum priorities may be seen as unintentionally undermining the importance of Indigenous Australian perspectives, ultimately reinforcing the perceptions of some teachers and institutions that these perspectives are less important than other aspects of the 'core' curriculum.

2.1.3 Government commitment to teaching Indigenous culture.

Figure 1 provides an overview of Australian state and federal government initiatives important to the teaching of Indigenous Australian histories, cultures and perspectives starting with the Commonwealth Schools Commissions establishment of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) in 1976 and ending with the 2018 Federal Government Gonski Review 2.0 'Through Growth to Achievement'.

Figure 1: Overview of state and federal initiatives and documents important to the teaching of Indigenous Australian histories, cultures and perspectives.



While Moriarty (1995) identified the origin of official Australian federal government attention towards the teaching of Aboriginal Australian culture as beginning in 1980 with the Commonwealth Aboriginal Studies Working Group, interest probably started as early as 1976 with the Commonwealth Schools Commission's establishment of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) in 1976. Groups such as the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) also made recommendations in 1982 to state and federal education ministers regarding the integration of Aboriginal studies into mainstream Australian education (NAEC, 1982). Beresford et al. (2012) and Healy (2008) cite a number of state government curriculum changes and initiatives during the late 1980s and 1990s that attempted to teach Aboriginal Australian content and perspectives. Recent, more formal commitment by the Australian federal government to teaching Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives occurred in 2008 with the *Melbourne Declaration on the Shape of the Australian National*

Curriculum document. This commitment was further developed through programs by state governments and the production of materials, publications and websites such as the Queensland government's Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools program, known as EATSIPS (Queensland Government, 2011), and the NSW government's *A Shared History* (2011).

However, a change in the federal government of Australia in September 2013 suspended some school funding reforms and focus on the Australian National Curriculum. Ideological and pedagogical shifts led to the new Abbott Australian government establishing a review of Australian curriculum led by Professor Ken Wiltshire and Dr Kevin Donnelly. The short timeline of this review (created in January 2014 and producing a final report in October 2014), raises some concerns. Broader and more comprehensive Australian government commissioned reports took a longer time to review Australian educational matters. For example, the Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Gonski Review 1.0, *Review of Funding Schooling* (2011), took 13 months to evaluate educational outcomes, equity and funding. The short timeframe in which the review took place raises concerns about the findings and public statements made in the 2014 *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014).

In the 2014 *Review of the Australian Curriculum*, some criticism was specifically directed towards the teaching of Australian Indigenous history, perspectives and texts. The inclusion of Indigenous Australian histories and cultures was labelled 'politically determined' (2014, p.3). They also reinforced that there may be a perceived tendency for Indigenous Australian history and texts to be being taught in a 'tokenistic' way without depth, empathy or perspective (2014, p.180). While these assertions may be difficult to analyse and assess, other assertions by the authors of this document are more easily addressed.

The authors of the 2014 *Review of the Australian Curriculum* expressed the viewpoint that the curriculum was ‘ignoring the significance of Western civilisation and literature’ (2014, p.122) and undervaluing ‘Australian’ and Western literature (2014, p.165). Their findings emphasised the perception that Indigenous Australian literature has ‘had little impact on our literary culture’ (2014, p.165). This assertion is contested by the fact that Indigenous Australian drama and literary practitioners have received numerous accolades and national awards, and as such can be seen to ‘impact’ both literary and Australian culture as a whole. For example, Jack Davis received two state and five national literary awards, and Wesley Enoch has won three state and national Green Room awards for his dramas. Lionel Fogarty has won two state and four national literary awards, and Richard Frankland has won over a dozen Australian awards and two international awards for his work. Sally Morgan has won six national literary awards, Oodgeroo Noonuccal received three national and two international prizes for her poetic writings in her lifetime and Alexis Wright has received many awards including the prestigious Miles Franklin Award, considered by many Australians to be the nation’s highest literary award.

It is possible to interpret the comments of the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (2014) as a reversal in the commitment to teaching Indigenous Australian subject matter, however, it is also conceivable that the review itself was a small diversion in the evolution of the Australian National Curriculum. This viewpoint can be supported by the Australian National Curriculum’s adoption of Version 7.5 in 2015 and Version 8.3 in 2016 (Australian Curriculum 2016). Indeed, the cross-curriculum priorities and the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ histories and cultures embraced without changes in these versions can be seen as an endorsement of the importance of studying Australian Indigenous peoples, histories, cultures and knowledges in the Australian National Curriculum.

2.1.4 The context of Australian Indigenous drama history.

At this point I would like to expand the context of Indigenous drama by exploring in more detail the features of Indigenous Australian drama. I initially framed Indigenous Australian drama as being written by an Indigenous Australian person, persons and/or a group, and comprising a process that involves substantial Indigenous Australian input in process and product, which helps embody Indigenous Australian ownership. Indigenous Australian drama often also involves a process of negotiation and discussion about who has the right to tell, represent and act in Indigenous Australian stories. This process has proven confronting but productive for non-Indigenous Australian theatre-makers and filmmakers, such as filmmaker Rolf de Heer (Wright 2011) and theatre director Scott Rankin (Lehman 2017). De Heer realised that to be able to make the film *Ten Canoes* he would have to embrace Indigenous Australians working on the film as auteurs controlling the vision, casting, locations, logistics and direct negotiation with the Yolgnu community, who were caretakers of the stories being told (Wright 2011). Similarly, when working on the play *Namatjira*, Rankin recognised that he needed to make a more conscious statement of his partnership and commitment to the Namatjira family, and during performances he included descendants of the family painting the landscape of their Country live. Rankin and his company BIGhART also realised that they needed to continue their relationship and commitment to helping the family recover the rights to Namatjira's paintings long after the play had finished its run (Lehman 2017). This reinforces the notion of shared ownership in Indigenous Australian drama (Watego 1990a).

Early innovators in the field of Indigenous Australian drama included writers such as Kevin Gilbert, Robert J. Merritt, Gerry Bostock and Jack Davis. Individually and collectively they brought contemporary Indigenous Australian stories to the foreground of mainstream Australian theatre culture during the 1970s and 1980s. In doing so, they were instrumental in raising public awareness about issues affecting Indigenous Australian people in the period

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immediately after the 1967 Referendum, helping awareness and momentum surrounding these issues in the public eye. Some of the earliest plays by Indigenous Australian playwrights that were read and performed publicly were Gilbert's *The Cherry Pickers* (1968), Merritt's *The Cake Man* and Bostock's *Here Comes the Nigger* (1976). All of these plays were in some ways confrontational for the primarily 'white' middle class theatre audiences of the late 1960s and 1970s, as they revealed aspects of the daily lives of modern Indigenous Australians through strong characters while illuminating history and the present-day issues facing modern Indigenous individuals and communities (Meyrick, 2018, Feb. 29). The traditions, styles and approaches of these works were expanded upon by Jack Davis in *Steel and Stone* (1973), *The Biter Bit* (1975), *Kullark* (1979), *The Dreamers* (1982) and *No Sugar* (1986). These plays provided a greater sense of the effects of oppression resulting from the colonial and missionary periods on people from Indigenous Australian nations in Western Australia (see Appendix 11).

Non-mainstream theatre performances staged in theatre revues during this period were another important forum for Indigenous Australian drama. These performances addressed issues such as land rights, racism and police brutality. Many Indigenous Australian dramas of this era were created in collectives and ensembles, and are best represented by plays such as *Jack Charles is Up and Fighting* (1972 – Nindethana Theatre Company) and *Basically Black* (1972 - National Black Theatre). This collective ownership and approach to the creation of Indigenous Australian drama can also be seen in the work of later Indigenous theatre companies such as Ilbijerri Theatre Company, Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre, Kooemba Jdarra and the Marrugeku Company. A more autobiographical and auteur approach, in which the performer's own stories and experiences form the basis for the performance, is evident in later work created in the 1980s by performer/writers. This approach can be seen in works by Indigenous Australian Eva Johnson, such as *Tjindarella* (1984) and *Onward to Glory* (1984).

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The proliferation of Indigenous Australian dramas during the 1980s and 1990s broadened the involvement in writing, acting and theatre production by Indigenous Australian people from various nations. The expansion of the range of Indigenous Australian stories, issues and cultures is represented in dramas with a variety of different styles and approaches. Some of the plays from this period include Maza's *Mereki* (1986), Walker's *No Trouble*, Walley's *Coordah* (1987), Davis's *The First Born Trilogy* (1988), Johnson's *Murras* (1988) and *Mimini's Voices* (1989), Maza's *The Keepers* (1988), Bennett's *Up the Ladder* (1989), Harding's *Not Just Bricks and Mortar* (1989), Watson's *Mairwair* (1989), Chi and the Kuckles Band's *Bran Nue Dae* (1990) and Morgan's *Sister Girl* (1992). It was also during this time that Australian state education curriculum boards began to consistently include Indigenous Australian drama texts in their study lists. In Victoria, some of the Indigenous Australian drama texts included on these lists were: *Bran Nue Dae*, *No Sugar*, *Stolen*, *Belonging*, *The Sunshine Club*, *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, *Black Medea*, *Conversations with the Dead*, *Yanagai! Yanagai!*, *The Sapphires*, *Jandamarra*, *Walking into the Bigness*, *Namatjira*, *Black Diggers*, *Beautiful One Day* and *Coranderrk* (see Appendix 11).

In response to both the expansion of Australian performance companies commissioning, mounting and performing Indigenous Australian dramas, the Australia Council for the Arts commissioned in 2002 (and republished in 2009), *Protocols for Producing Indigenous Australian Performing Arts* (Australia Council, 2009). This document helped to set up clear protocols and guidelines for Indigenous Australian drama including process and performance guidelines and recommendations for material such as that presented in programs to students viewing the presentations.

2.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Educational Contexts

In this section of the review, I examine literature surrounding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories, cultures and perspectives. I consider both the wider educational context and how these perspectives relate to the Australian National Curriculum.

2.2.1 Non-Indigenous researchers' perspectives on indigenous knowledge systems.

In *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*, Whitt, Roberts, Norman and Grieves (2003) identified knowledge in Indigenous systems as tied to transmission linked to nature and its elements (Whitt et al., 2003, p.9). Although Indigenous groups and their 'ways of Knowing' are diverse, the holistic principles of caring for Country appear as an underlying pedagogy in more traditional Australian Indigenous education (Harris, 1980, p.380). When studying notions of interdependence between Indigenous Australian people and the land through cultural expressions, Ishtar (1994) also observed this pedagogy, echoed in his reflection that "Aboriginal people dance the corroboree ... and as they dance their powers dance up. The spirit of the land replenishes the land, all the animals ... And it comes from the land, that power ... that's why for Aboriginal people it's our obligation to protect the land, those sacred sites – it's our life. And our Law" (p. 9).

Further research has been done in this area in more recent times, including a 2014 to 2016 project by the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project. Is in this project advocate the benefits of digital storytelling and technologies as an innovative forum for young Aboriginal Victorians to engage with Indigenous Australian knowledges and cultures (de Souza, Edmonds, McQuire & Chenhall, 2016). The findings of this project were interesting since what was addressed was the relationship between the transfer of Indigenous Australian knowledges in story through online and digital environments. Projects such as this are

important because they address the concerns of transmission of Indigenous Australian cultures, stories and Knowings in digital environments.

Research into the ways that Indigenous knowledge methods can be combined with Western constructs of knowledge in school education was explored by Boisselle (2016) in her 2016 study *Blue Crab Does Run Full Moon: Using Indigenous (Aboriginal/Native) Ways of Being, Knowing, and Doing Science to Enrich School Science Curricula*. The study investigated the scientific methods of the Indigenous people of Trinidad and integrated it with Western approaches to science in school curricula. Boisselle rejected mixed or hybrid method approaches and suggested a complex adaptive theoretical system to allow interaction between the knowledges and theoretical positions of Western and indigenous science. Her study found that complex holistic adaptive systems allowed for the evolution of scientific knowledge via dialogue between Indigenous and Western ways of Knowing. Complex adaptive methods of integration through networking models are posited by Boisselle (2016) as an effective way to combine Indigenous and Western knowledge constructs on an equal footing in school education contexts (pp. 186-190). She found that a complex adaptive system is a more non-discriminatory platform on which Indigenous and non-Indigenous science knowledges can engage in dialogue, privileging Indigenous knowledges.

2.2.2 Indigenous Australian transmission and learning structures.

Traditional indigenous knowledge transmission and learning structures are acknowledged by Harris in his work *Culture and Learning: Tradition and Education in Northeast Arnhem Land* (1980). Although this study was conducted some time ago by a non-Indigenous Australian researcher in an isolated Northeast Arnhem Land community, Harris' identification of the practical, holistic, skill-based, person-orientated, place-centred and culturally derived nature of Indigenous Australian learning is still pertinent (1980, pp.39-40).

More recent studies such as those conducted by Smallacombe, Davis and Quiggin (2006) findings, corroborated the finding of Harris (1980) not just regarding the way that knowledge is transferred, but also concerning the importance of Country and relationships in Indigenous Australian communities which create a shared notion of Indigenous knowledge transmission (2006, p.53). Janke and Dawson (2012) expanded on this concept in their study where they attempted to consciously include Indigenous Australian knowledge transmission, cultural expressions, Indigenous protocols and intellectual property in their examination. All of these researchers have contributed to the understanding of Indigenous Australian knowledge transmission as complex and dependent on Indigenous learning principles, which are embedded in specific contexts, relationships, cultural expressions and protocols.

In a 2005 study, Craven and others suggested that lack of knowledge, limited resources, time constraints and limited knowledge of curriculum integration were the primary obstacles in preparing educators to teach the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum aspects of the Australian National Curriculum (Craven, Halse, Marsh, Mooney & Wilson-Miller, 2005). They also suggest that teachers who have undergone direct training in the study of Indigenous Australian cultures, peoples, languages and knowledges as part of undergraduate or post-graduate teacher preparation, felt more confident in teaching Indigenous Australian studies compared to those who had undertaken little or no instruction in this field (Craven, Halse, Marsh, Mooney & Wilson-Miller, 2005).

Indigenous Australian educators such as Yunkaporta (2009) and Blair (2015) examining this area have found that what is most problematic when approaching Indigenous Australian knowledges is not what is taught, but how it is taught and the lack of unity evident in teaching topics related to Indigenous Australian knowledges and culture. The 2009 work of the Indigenous academic Yunkaporta, *Aboriginal pedagogies at the cultural interface*, attempted to unify educational material with teaching methods, balancing social support,

language and land knowledge, connection between all things, places and knowledges. In the interface between Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures, Yunkaporta's 'Eight Ways of Learning' helps to provide greater understanding in this area. Nerida Blair's book *Privileging Australian Indigenous Knowledge* (2015) attempted to reposition Indigenous Knowings, emphasising the connection to Country, stories and voices through lived ceremony and practices (2015, xxiii). *Co-becoming Bawaka: Towards a relational understanding of place/space* (Bawaka et al., 2016) is an Australian study in which the Indigenous Australian 'Country' is one of the authors, along with Indigenous Australian and non-Indigenous Australian knowledge holders. This study emphasised the centrality of Country and space/place Indigenous knowledges in Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' (2016, p.456).

2.2.3 Existing ways of teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives.

There is a small but growing field of academic study that examines how non-Indigenous Australian educators teach Indigenous Australian perspectives. Some literature in this area, such as research by Moriarty (1995) and Harrison and Greenfield (2011), provide case studies of the implementation of Indigenous subjects and units in schools.

In his 1995 research entitled *A Study of the Processes and methods involved in the Introduction of Aboriginal Studies in the Curriculum of Three Rural Catholic Primary Schools*, Moriarty used ethnographic research to examine how an Aboriginal Studies unit was planned and implemented in three rural Victorian Catholic primary schools. He identified exploration of identity, sense of place and cultural representation as crucial elements in teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives in primary school curricula in Victoria (1995). Twenty years later, Blair (2015), an Indigenous Australian academic, also elucidated the significance of these areas as important inroads to engagement with Indigenous Australian culture (p. xxii).

Moriarty's research cites the beginnings of the Australian Federal Government's interest in teaching Indigenous Australian subject matter to non-Indigenous students as coming

from the Commonwealth Aboriginal Studies Working Group in 1980 and the reports presented to the House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education in 1985 (Moriarty, 1995, p.8). Moriarty (1995) used the objectives defined by this working group and those recommended by the 1988 Catholic Education Commission of Victoria to investigate the implementation of an 'Aboriginal "viewpoints" and "perspectives"' awareness program in three Catholic Primary schools in Gippsland in Eastern Victoria (p.9). Moriarty observed that the teaching of Aboriginal Studies to Indigenous Australian and non-Indigenous Australian students is potentially transformative. He reinforced this as important for the dismantling of 'stereotypical' depictions of Indigenous Australian culture because it placed emphasis on Indigenous Australian representations of 'Identity' and 'Sense of Place'.

Moriarty (1995) used local 'creation' and 'Dreamtime' stories and concentrated on the teaching of traditional 'place' names (pp. 27 -28, 68-69, 94-95) to address Indigenous perspectives. However, these approaches on their own may to some extent be seen as reinforcing representations of Indigenous Australian people, culture and history as existing in the past. The study also put little emphasis on local Indigenous Australian languages. The observations of Moriarty (1995) were that syllabus documents are prone to "...limited understanding or cultural bias..." (p. 12) remain applicable.

In 2011, Harrison and Greenfield presented research from a project in 12 primary schools in New South Wales. The study attempted to analyse how a group of predominantly non-Indigenous Australian primary school teachers introduced Aboriginal perspectives to their kindergarten to year 6 programs with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian students. The research was primarily based on targeted interviewing of 20 teachers in the 12 schools (eight in the urban centre of Sydney and four from more rural, central coast towns north of Sydney in NSW) and began by interviewing teachers about the methods and approaches they used '...to teach syllabus content and information *about* Aboriginal people' (Harrison & Greenfield, 2011,

p. 65). Harrison and Greenfield (2011) explored the confusion that some teachers have differentiating between Aboriginal perspectives and Aboriginal knowledge and values (p. 45). They do this by structuring these elements in their research separately, while also trying to reinforce the importance of Aboriginal perspectives in all stages of the teaching process. Their study ultimately identified three major elements or foci of Indigenous Australian perspectives that they believe have transferability to educational contexts:

1. Teaching Indigenous relationships to place;
2. Establishing a strong culture of collaboration between schools and local Indigenous communities and groups; and,
3. Examining elements and plans for transition to school programs for Australian Indigenous students. (Harrison & Greenfield, 2011, pp. 7-13)

Harrison and Greenfield's observations, along with the problems of integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as content areas, were explored in Bickerdike's (2014) study of pre-service teachers in New South Wales. This study focused on the integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as a cross-curriculum priority in the training of teachers. The research found that pre-service teachers were not proficiently educated in these areas during their training. Of note in Bickerdike's research is that the emphasis on teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives from a theoretical viewpoint in education (rather than from a perspective that utilises Indigenous Australian knowledge systems and ways of learning) led to trainee teachers ignoring and not addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspects of the Australian National Curriculum (Bickerdike, 2014).

2.2.4 Difficulties and limitations of existing approaches to teaching representation of and engagement with Indigenous Australian perspectives.

The importance of ‘Australian Indigenous perspectives’ as a cross-curriculum priority in the Australian National Curriculum reinforces these perspectives as framed within models of cultural identity and the creation and articulation of a sense of national identity (ACARA, 2012) Even though Hall’s 1992 study was conducted some 20 years before the development of the Australian National Curriculum, his observations regarding the difficulties in the framing of Indigenous Australian perspectives in terms of national cultural identity while linking these perspectives to traditions, narrative, mythology and the symbolic elements of specific cultural traditions remain insightful (Hall, 1992).

Hall asserts that when Indigenous Australian culture is contextualised within national identity it creates a discourse that has five main elements:

1. The *narrative of the nation* as formed and reformed through history, literature and popular culture;
2. The primordial narrative, which emphasises origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness;
3. The invention of a narrative of tradition;
4. The narrative of a *foundation myth*; and,
5. The narrative of symbolic purity and *original peoples*. (Hall, 1992, pp. 293-295)

Muecke (1992, pp. 19-21) expands this idea in his piece entitled ‘Available Discourses on Aborigines’, in which he calls attention to the tendency of Australian cultural studies to objectify Indigenous people and Indigenous culture. He identifies the objectification of Indigenous Australian culture within the constructs of Nussbaum’s social philosophical perspectives. Moreover, Muecke specifically saw discourse, in the Foucauldian sense, as a

useful starting point for engagement with Aboriginal Australian perspectives because it seeks ‘...to reveal, in its specificity, the level of “things said”: the condition of emergence, the forms of their accumulation and connection, the rules of their transformation, [and] the discontinuities that articulate them...’ (Foucault, 1972 in Muecke, 1992, p.22). Muecke warns against the anthropological functionalist empiricist approach to Australian Aboriginal Studies inherent in R.M and C.H. Berndt’s popular early textbook entitled *The World of the First Australians* (Berndt, 1964), which claimed objectivity while reinforcing anthropological discourse. Muecke (1992) saw this as ultimately neo-colonial despite being hidden behind a Romantic discourse (pp. 25-30).

In the context of studying the teaching of Indigenous Australian perspectives in schools, the attitudes of teachers and the paradigms within which teachers function are both problematic. Harrison’s 2011-2012 study entitled *Aborigines of the Imaginary: Applying Lacan to Aboriginal Education* applied and analysed some of the psychoanalytic domains underpinning the teaching of Australian Indigenous perspectives by some student teachers. It is interesting to note that in terms of the focus on visibility of my study, Harrison chose to use the work of Lacan as a theoretical framework for his study, since Lacan (primarily known as a psychoanalyst and psychiatrist) has had his post-structuralist ideas applied to critical theory, semiotics, film and visual analysis theory.

Harrison (2012) asserted that rather than a direct lack of knowledge, specific paradigms such as a deficit view, romantic idealism, a lack of cultural awareness training and Indigenous Australian cultural study development, were the main obstacles to teacher engagement with Indigenous perspectives (p.5). He argued that despite good intentions and some in-servicing in Indigenous Australian perspectives, teachers primarily confined their teaching of Indigenous Australian material to two polarised discourses—one of romantic idealism or one based in the suffering endured by Indigenous Australian peoples. Harrison (2012) concluded that dialogue

between Indigenous Australian people and non-Indigenous Australian communities, teachers and educational institutions is not only crucial to greater understanding and knowledge of Indigenous Australian perspectives but also key to Australian teachers becoming more conscious and critical in their teaching approaches generally.

Since my research is concerned with the engagement of NIVSSDTs with Indigenous Australian culture and perspectives, it is useful to highlight the recent work done by Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018) on engagement in educational contexts. Although their work concentrated on children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, they explore the nature of engagement and the indicators and agents for facilitation of such engagement. They defined engagement as a signifier of a commitment to learning that involved dynamic participation and co-participation concentrating on observable behavioural responses that involve decision-making, thinking, emotion, social interaction, collaboration and commitment (2018, pp.14-18). They considered the three major indicators of engagement to be behavioural engagement, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement (2018, pp. 28-32). For Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018), engagement and disengagement are not dichotomous classifications but qualitative elements that reveal different types of participation (p. 19). They identified five important functional elements of engagement—that engagement fluctuates, usually has a focal object, and is situational, malleable, purposeful and negotiable, often involving a power struggle (2018, pp. 23-24). The facets of engagement evident in Ng, Bartlett and Elliott's book, such as opportunity, access and action or participation, all appear to be observable with the participants in my study at different points in the research. In terms of the focus of my study on NISSDTs engagement when teaching an Indigenous Australian drama text, the work of Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018) is important for helping describe the dimensions and nature of engagement with the Indigenous Australian drama text itself and with Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives.

2.2.5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in educational contexts.

The identification in much of the literature of the inadequacy of teaching approaches and the deficits of a curriculum based on preconceptions of Indigenous Australian peoples, histories, cultures, knowledges and perspectives are of concern. These tendencies are referred to as ‘tokenism’ in the *Review of the National Curriculum* (2014, p.180). Much of the literature discussing this concern in education advocates the maintenance of dialogue and understanding between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australian people, communities and educators. Significant non-Indigenous Australian authored literature such as Ishtar (1994), Moriarty (1995), Harrison and Greenfield (2011) and Harrison (2012) also encourage non-Indigenous Australian educators seek to understand and value Indigenous Australian transmission of ‘knowledges’ and learning. The literature places particular specific significance on educators valuing and understanding Indigenous Australian relationships to ‘sense of place’ as indicated by Harris (1980), Moriarty (1995) and Harrison (2012). The need for more unified understanding in this area is evident in Indigenous Australian research such as that of Yuval-Davis (2006), Yunkaporta (2009), Foley (2003), Blair (2015), and Bawaka et al. (2016).

Yunkaporta’s (2009) eight stages of engagement and cultural interface which address teacher cultural engagement and pedagogy are used as the primary conceptual framework through which his data is viewed. His research proposed the application of a reconciling theory of cultural interface using an eight-stage model that included understanding engagement in terms of the Story, the Map, the Silence, the Signs, the Land, the Shape, the Backtracking and the Home-world. The research scrutinised how teachers can engage with Aboriginal knowledges and advocated the use of reconciliation through cultural interface in staff development. Central to Yunkaporta’s research is the application of Indigenous Australian processes and ‘ways of Knowing’ rather than content-driven programs. Yunkaporta specifically highlights the shortcomings of framing Aboriginal knowledges using primarily

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Western construct perspectives (pp. 162 - 164). Yunkaporta (2009) emphasised reconciling principles grounded in the theory of cultural interface as represented through the real and metaphorical framework of traditional carving processes and Aboriginal pedagogy and epistemology to promote more productive engagement with Indigenous Australian concepts and processes within the education system (pp. 164-171).

Further insight into Indigenous Australian engagement and representation is provided by the work of Yuval-Davis, who examines the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis 2006). Yuval-Davis investigated three interconnected constructs that she saw as fundamental to notions of belonging and cultural interaction. She identified the three levels of belonging as social locations, social identifications, emotional attachments, and ethical/political values. She placed specific emphasis on the points of interaction pertinent to studying how non-Indigenous Australian drama teachers interact with Indigenous Australian plays. Yuval-Davis (2006) saw social location as a fluid correspondence between the discourses of race, gender, culture and class, and she focused on belonging as an initial level for the positioning of signification and construction (pp. 199-201). On a secondary level, she saw constructions of belonging as being built by what individuals identify with and the emotional attachments they form. For Yuval-Davis (2006), duality is often reflected in the narrative of our identity (pp. 202-203). The third level of Yuval-Davis's conceptualisation of belonging involves ethical and political values. She maintained that while individual and collective identities and social locators help form a sense of belonging, change ultimately happens through challenging or contesting our sense of belonging in political and ethical spheres, which is transformational or emancipatory (Yuval-Davis 2006, pp. 204-212). Her work is crucial to understanding the relationship of engagement, identity and belonging in the Australian context where there is a need for growth towards reconciliation between Indigenous Australian and non-Indigenous Australian cultures, perspectives and peoples.

Nerida Blair's book *Privileging Australian Indigenous Knowledge* (2015) endeavoured to reposition Australian Indigenous Knowings through what Blair terms Lilyology, her metaphor for the expression of privileging and valuing Indigenous Australian Knowings. Blair (2015) purposely used the term 'Knowings' to refer to Indigenous knowledges to distinguish these from Western knowledge and its processes and constructs (p. xiv). Blair saw cultural protocols, such as acknowledgement of Country, as important acts of connection and a link between Indigenous Australians to stories, voices, practices and Country (2015, xxii). The notion of Country is central to Indigenous Australian peoples and Blair (2015) emphasised the way that Country is both personified and functions as space where Knowings are learnt, practised and lived through ceremony (p. xxiii). Decolonisation is seen as potentially being embedded in the hybridity of border thinking and constructs (2015, p. 15).

One concern Blair (2015) highlighted in her work is the potential of research as a form of colonial pillaging when applied to Indigenous cultures (pp. 19-20). Rather than seeing these border lands as merely a contested space, she perceives them as a movable landscape. She argued that these areas need to be continuously contested so as to honour Indigenous research methodologies and ways of Knowing and avoid them being simply co-opted into Western academic narratives (Blair, 2015, pp. 19-20). For Blair, Indigenous Australian Knowing is ingrained both in Country and the relationships between and within individuality, clans, nations and Country (2015, p. 130). She explains these aspects in terms of stories and through the notion of Lilyology (2015, p. 130), conceptualising alternative forms of constructs for Indigenous ways of Knowing including tapestries and songlines (2015, p. 136). Blair (2015) saw Story as crucial to the transmission of Indigenous Knowings, as Story involves structures, various voices, movements, layers of Knowing/memory and Elders central to the transmission of Indigenous Knowings (pp. 144-147). Rather than using theoretical constructs, Blair represents Indigenous Australian knowledges in living processes and patterning, and the inter-

relatedness of Indigenous Knowings as represented by herself and others through the holistic metaphor of a flower (2015, pp.159-160). Fragmentation of perspective and knowledge is seen as an attribute and a legacy of Western Eurocentric colonialist worldviews, and Blair (2015) reiterates the great costs that Indigenous peoples have borne to develop and embody their own space and their own ways of Knowing (pp. 160-161).

Blair (2015) validated the potential of theatre to elucidate Indigenous Knowings and Indigenous research methodologies through its understandings and unification of space, place, dance, use of body, community engagement, association with place and the conveyance of transformative moments, particularly those revealed through the Image Theatre techniques of Boal (pp. 209-210). Blair (2015) endeavoured to clarify relationships and webs of networks between the brick wall of Western constructs the waterlilies of Indigenous ontology, epistemology and ways of Knowing, and encouraged embedding and privileging of Indigenous Knowings and understanding of Country in a wide range of contexts (pp. 225-229).

Foley (2003) proposed the implementation of Indigenous epistemology and Indigenous standpoint theory as an approach that values and privileges Indigenous 'ways of Knowing' particularly in academic research (pp. 44-50). He maintained that Western ethnocentric research methodology and more specifically sociology and post-modernism, are, in cultural terms, inaccessible and incompatible with Indigenous epistemological ways of Knowing (2003, p.44). Indigenous standpoint theory is seen by Foley as emerging from a combination of three emancipatory theories—critical theory, feminist standpoint theory and insider-outsider theory (2003, pp.45-46). Foley (2003) advocated a more holistic approach to research that embeds in practice and theory Indigenous cultural and political integrity and where more shared understandings and reciprocal research approaches are used, involving Indigenous communities and stakeholders (p.45). In specifically addressing the contribution of theorists such as Merton, who advanced the model of insider-outsider theory (Merton 1996), Foley

contended that Western, male-dominated Anglo-European research's authoritative stance creates prejudice in its viewpoint affecting the legitimacy and impartiality of research results, ultimately making empathy and understanding of the intricacies of Indigenous Australia difficult (2003, p. 46).

Central to Foley's indigenous standpoint theory is the perception of Indigenous philosophy as being a triangulation of the physical, the human and the sacred worlds. These worlds are conceptually influenced by the Indigenous ontology of Japanangka's paradigm, Indigenist research and Indigenous Hawaiian epistemology, creating a 'space and place' where Indigenous researchers can embrace their identities with pride (2003, pp.46-50). Work has been done specifically in this area of space and place and Australian ontology by Indigenous Australian and non-Indigenous researchers working together with knowledge holders.

Co-becoming Bawaka: Towards a relational understanding of place/space (Bawaka et al., 2016) is an Australian study where the Indigenous Australian 'Country' on which the study was conducted, Bawaka, is listed as a co-author and first author of the study itself. The paper is a co-construction of Indigenous, non-Indigenous, human and more-than-human knowledges that places the 'forever knowledges' of Country, Yolnu Elders and more-than-human kin at the centre of the research (pp. 450-457). The study situates Country at the centre of space/place Indigenous knowledges using metaphor of digging for *ganguri* (local dialect for yams). The authors offer insights into relational ontology and the notion of co-becoming. Driven by an Indigenous understanding of place/space, the research explores the notion of space/place as an emergent co-becoming while demonstrating the limitations of Western ontologies when applied to Indigenous Australian ways of Knowing (2016, p.456). The study itself divides knowledge holders into two main categories, human and more-than-human, and the paper explores 'ways of Knowing' that are tangible, non-tangible, active and sentient (2016, p.456). Bawaka et al. (2016) maintained that humans and more-than-humans co-become as

space/place, and this notion of co-becoming comes from Bawaka Yolngu ontology where everything exists in a state of emergence and relationality (pp. 456-457).

The study by Bawaka et al. (2016) uses the Yolngu kinship and bond system of *gurrutu*, which underlies the principles, patterns and actions of digging *ganguri*, to illustrate Indigenous Australian ontologies and the limits of Western ontologies and epistemologies (2016, p.457). They maintained that Country shapes interactions and understandings, or co-becomings, and that this relationality fundamentally de-centres human-centric ontology as it addresses the agency of more-than-human beings and the ongoing webs of connection where space/place is constantly expanding and positioning itself (2016, pp.457-458). Central to the study is understanding Indigenous Australian ontology relationally, not through interaction but through intra-action (2016, p.459). In this sense, the study advocated the importance of co-becoming not as absorbing and dissolving different perspectives and approaches into one another, but as *gurrutu*, where space/place relationships are patterned based on a *yothu-yindi* (child & mother) styles of interdependent relationality (2016, p.460). Co-becoming is reinforced in the research as underpinning the engagement between human and more-than-human entities, and knowledges are seen to be nurtured, co-existent and enlivened by emergent natures or actions that change the space/place (2016, pp.463-464). Ultimately, *Co-becoming Bawaka: Towards a relational understanding of place/space* represents an important study where all perspectives of Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' are situated in relational, co-emergent contexts based on responsible human and more-than-human relationships emerging from the co-becoming of space/place (2016, p.468).

Another approach to transfer of Indigenous Australian ways of Knowing can be seen in more general writings such as Indigenous Australian academic Marcia Langton's curated guidebook to Indigenous Australia and the Torres Strait Islands titled *Welcome to Country* (2018). The book is essentially a guidebook to Indigenous Australian tourism experiences for

overseas tourists and for non-Indigenous Australians. It includes insights into history, engagement, languages, customs, history, native title, narrative, cultural awareness and perspectives on Country through a guidebook format addressing individual Indigenous Australian nations and present-day guides and information centres run by Indigenous Australian groups and individuals. The book is a very interesting document that encourages a two-way cultural interface as well as seeking to further Indigenous Australian enterprises, autonomy and ‘ways of Knowing’.

2.3 The Work of Teachers with Indigenous Australian Drama Texts

2.3.1 Overview of the work of teachers with Indigenous Australian drama texts.

It is difficult to identify exactly how non-Indigenous Australian teachers and specifically NIVSSDTs have engaged with and taught Indigenous Australian drama texts over the years. The dearth of research in this area does not imply a lack of evidence, but rather perhaps a lack of will to explore the perspectives of Indigenous Australian playwrights and theatre-makers to the drama and education fields. Some case study work has been done in other areas of education to attempt to conceptualise teachers’ knowledge and understanding of both their subject matter and the classroom. This includes research by academics such as Clandinin and Connelly (1988), who studied the narrative discourses of teacher knowledge transmission and negotiation. While no empirical studies have been done specifically in the area of drama, one study that does explore the teaching of an Indigenous Australian drama text in the Australian classroom is Wood’s *My Story of Sal: A Critical Self-reflective Autoethnography Revealing Whiteness in the Classroom* (2017).

Wood’s study is an auto-ethnography that tells the personal narrative of the author as a drama teacher reflecting on and attempting to improve his effectiveness in decentring ‘whiteness’ when teaching ‘Sal’, an Indigenous Australian in a class where the text studied was

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The 7 Stages of Grieving. The study was prompted by a First People's student in Wood's class, whom he names 'Sal' in his research, who refused to complete a performance task after studying an Indigenous Australian play. Wood (2017) reflects on the narrative leading up to Sal's refusal to perform and analysed his own teaching. He attempts to develop a praxis that is less racist while destabilising 'whiteness' and working towards teaching practices that are more directed towards reconciliation (p. 42). Wood sought to reflect on how Sal, as an Indigenous Australian student in his class, might access a curriculum that Wood perceived as not valuing First People's perspectives (pp. 42-43). Wood (2017) saw Sal's refusal as a peaceful act of civil disobedience and he attempts to give a sense of agency to Sal's actions and the perceptions of Indigenous Australian peoples in general (pp. 50-51). He also acknowledges that as a 'white' non-Indigenous teacher, he is colonising an Indigenous Australian text and attempting to reframe First People's experience from his position of 'white' dominance (p. 52). Ultimately, Wood suggests that the shortcomings in his teaching of an Indigenous Australian drama to an Indigenous Australian student lie not in his own 'whiteness' but in the replication of 'whiteness' in the curriculum, the pre-service training that Wood (2017) himself received and the lack of ongoing professional development in First People's education, ontology and knowledges (pp. 53-54).

Over 160 Indigenous Australian plays have been written and performed between 1969 and 2018 (see Appendix 11). One of the first articles about an Australian Indigenous drama text to appear in an academic journal was John McCallum's article on black theatre and Robert Merritt's *The Cake Man*, which appeared in *Meanjin* in 1977 (McCallum, 1977). This article and the perspectives it offered have been influential and oft-cited in textbooks and source material used by English and drama educators teaching Indigenous Australian drama texts. McCallum writes about Indigenous Australian plays in terms of their narrative elements and the hybrid stylistic elements of dramatic realism and political theatre. Three years after

McCallum's article, Merritt's *The Cake Man* was added to the New South Wales High School Certificate (HSC) Literature text list. The appearance of questions regarding this text in the 1980 HSC exam prompted students to address narrative and stylistic elements, suggesting that teachers were encouraged to take this approach to engaging with the play. This would seem to reinforce the impression that initial treatment and teaching of Indigenous Australian drama was approached within accepted models and subject-based paradigms in areas such as subjects including Literature. However, by the 1980s, a more diverse range of approaches were embraced by publications and study guides.

One example of these more diverse approaches can be observed in the 1983 republication of Robert Merritt's *The Cake Man*. With the increase in sales in the early 1980s of *The Cake Man*, former theatre critic Katherine Brisbane and her husband Dr Philip Parsons, who together had established Currency Press as a publishing house for Australian plays, started to discuss and prepare a second edition of the play. After many negotiations with the playwright, school teachers and academics, Brisbane and Parsons decided to include three prefaces in the 1983 edition. This edition (Merritt, 1983) included an 'Author's Preface', which gave a performance history of the play, a second preface that presented cultural and social background notes to the play and a third preface on the history of the Wiradjuri clans and the historical events depicted in the play. These prefaces meant that secondary teachers and students who used this edition had access to a broadened cultural, social and historical contextualisation of this Indigenous drama text. Similar authorial, cultural, social and historical notes and prefaces were continued by Currency Press for other popular Indigenous plays such as Jack Davis' *No Sugar* (1986), Jimmy Chi and the Kuckles Band's *Bran Nue Dae* (1991) and Jane Harrison's *Stolen* (1998).

In the preface to *Black Words White Page* (1989), academic Adam Shoemaker cited the difficulties that he encountered in the early 1980s with Indigenous Australian writing being

perceived as less significant and less worthy of study, even in the university academic context. His book is partly a response to the general academic non-acceptance of Indigenous Australian writing and partly an attempt to move away from literary constructs into more cultural, social and historical ones (Shoemaker, 1989). *Black Words White Page* is a work that is cited and referenced in many books on Indigenous Australian plays. Shoemaker's work at the Australian National University was influenced by the work of academic Stephen Muecke, whose writing in the early 1980s addressed the historical, cultural and ideological discourses of Aboriginal languages and cultures (Muecke, 1983a). During the mid-1980s both Muecke and Shoemaker helped design and establish courses within undergraduate programs on Aboriginal writing—Muecke at Monash University and Shoemaker at the Australian National University (ANU). Shoemaker was also instrumental in ANU hosting the First Aboriginal Playwright's Conference in 1987. The establishment of the Aboriginal Playwright's conferences led to an increase amount of writing and number of play productions created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers and theatre creators from one or two a year in the early 1980s to an average of six plays every year through most of the late 1980s and into the 1990s (see Appendix 11). Shoemaker and Muecke's initiatives also helped keep Indigenous Australian plays on text lists in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and Victoria, while also broadening the variety of approaches taken by academics and teachers to include semiotic and cultural dimensions of Indigenous Australian dramatic writing.

It is possible that the gradual increase of subjects within Australian undergraduate courses that addressed the study of Indigenous Australian drama texts in the late 1980s was one of the reasons why the 1990s witnessed an increase in the number of Indigenous Australian drama texts in school curriculum programs. The proliferation of the use of Indigenous Australian drama texts in Queensland and teaching materials related to these texts may be seen in part as a result of the work of Indigenous Australian academics like Cliff Watego. The ideas

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and structured courses developed by Indigenous Australian academic Cliff Watego from the Department of English at the University of Queensland are sometimes referred to in textbooks, study guides and the prefaces to Indigenous Australian plays themselves. Watego combined Shoemaker's and Muecke's emphasis on cultural perspectives and semiotics, and Watego's undergraduate courses in these two areas also meant that cultural perspectives and semiotic analysis often made their way into his subject readers and materials in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Watego 1990a, 1990b). Watego used and cited writings by Indigenous Australian poet and playwright Jack Davis to discuss Australian Aboriginal theatre in terms of communal, social and cultural constructs.

One important emphasis of many of the readings chosen by Watego is the resistance to allowing Indigenous Australian drama to be seen primarily within the constraints of more Western expectations of genre-specific drama, which is often bound by the limitations of theatrical conventions (Johnson in Watego, 1990a, pp.9-11). Watego also attempted to address more complex Aboriginal drama texts like those of Kevin Gilbert, who focused not only on cultural and social division between Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australian society but also the divisions and problems that exist between members of Indigenous Australian communities and within Indigenous Australian communities themselves. Later influences on teachers' work with Indigenous Australian drama texts.

In 1995, after focus group discussions at the International Drama Education Association (IDEA) conference in Brisbane, the National Association of Drama in Education (NADIE), later known as Drama Australia, commissioned a monograph containing a policy statement and guidelines for drama teachers on Aboriginal and Torres Strait education and studies in drama (NADIE, 1995). This document was also partially a response by NADIE to statements made in the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody about the need for schools to reflect Indigenous history and Indigenous viewpoints in curriculum, teaching and learning

(p.290). The NADIE document was quoted and cited in textbooks and curriculum material circulated to Australian drama teachers. It was hoped that the suggestions in the document of valuing the historical, social and cultural experiences of Indigenous Australian cultures would lead to a range of changes in the approaches teachers applied to Indigenous Australian plays and teaching Indigenous perspectives. The shifting during this period of Indigenous Australian texts from text response curriculum areas to context curriculum areas in the NSW HSC and the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) English programs can also be seen as an indication of a shift towards more contextual approaches to Indigenous Australian drama texts (VCAA, 2007).

As Australian drama teachers began to develop greater interest in developing expertise and understanding of Indigenous Australian texts, culture and perspectives, Drama Australia commissioned a new monograph in 2007. Two Indigenous Australian academics, Dr Maryrose Casey and Liza-Mare Syron were commissioned to write the Drama Australia *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guidelines for Drama/Theatre Education* (Drama Australia, 2007 & 2012). Both writers had expertise in both Indigenous Australian cultural perspectives and drama. This document is comprehensive and has been referenced, cited and quoted by most curriculum material and textbooks that address Indigenous Australian drama texts since 2008. The document was aimed at providing guidance, guidelines and approaches for teachers using Indigenous texts and source materials in drama and theatre teaching.

The comprehensive nature of this document appeared to have had a significant impact on the way Australian drama teachers approach and teach Indigenous Australian subject matter and texts. The document ranged from discussing ways of approaching Indigenous Australian texts, to contemporary Indigenous Australian performance practices, to ways of teaching contemporary Indigenous Australian theatre in terms of cultural and cross-cultural experiences. While the introduction and implementation of the Australian National Curriculum has done

much to emphasise the concerns and approaches raised by documents such as the *Drama Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guidelines for Drama/Theatre Education* (Drama Australia, 2007 & 2012), no study has attempted to directly gauge or address the ways that drama teachers engage with Indigenous Australian drama texts and whether these types of guidelines have had a significant effect on the development of knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian perspectives. This and other documents address the initial needs for guidelines for teachers to teach Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives but open up discussion about the need for a greater variety of material to be produced which is geared towards specific Indigenous Australian approaches and methods of teaching studies in these areas.

2.4 Visuality as a Conceptual Lens

2.4.1 What is ‘visuality’ and how does it relate to this study?

Since the primary phenomenon being studied in this research is the way NIVSSDTs view and develop understandings of Indigenous Australian perspectives and contexts, a theoretical lens that provides an innovative approach to examining ‘ways of seeing’ and the ‘right to look’ is addressed by this study through an investigation of visuality as a lens. Casey (2012) states that Indigenous Australian knowledge transfer and its connection to cultural production, Indigenous protocols, story ownership, sense of place, identity and spiritual beliefs (pp. 13-23) is a complex paradigm. Theories of visuality allow these concepts and contexts to be studied, researched and theorised while allowing elements of de-colonialisation and postcolonial theory to inform the theoretical focus.

The ‘eye’ has always been a dominant sense through which we experience the world (Allert, 1996, p. 1), and ‘regimes of vision’ (Foucault) and ‘scopic regimes’ (Jay) impact the way we understand and interpret the world around us (Allert, 1996, p. 1). Theories of visuality

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are a set of interdisciplinary models involving different fields of study that provide a space for a variety of semiotic and analytical discourse approaches to explain conceptual interactions between representation, reality, culture and relationships as expressed through words, images, objects and texts (Allert, 1996, pp.1-3).

Concepts of visibility are articulated in this study in the following ways. Barthes's notion of signification (Barthes, 1977, p. 34) is used to situate an approach to examine assumptions around representation and visual 'readability'. Foucault's work on heterotopias, whereby spaces or dichotomies of meaning are used to relate to or reflect a sense of individual or cultural imagery and identity (Foucault, 1986, pp.22-23), is examined to provide the articulation of power formations embedded in visibility as a tool of governance. Jay's concept of 'scopic regimes' (Jay, 1994, p.17) is used to explore the historical and discourse formations that allow the way of seeing and looking to be maximised or omitted in specific discipline formations. Mirzoeff's work around visual culture, visualisation and the visibility of hegemonic systems helps question how we legitimise, reconfigure, represent and reinterpret reality and justify it through discourses of vision (Mirzoeff, 2011, pp.22-25). Smith's explorations of the visual regimes of colonisation and how it manifests itself within perspectives of Indigenous populations assist in analysis of the visualisation of the processes of representation (Smith, 2002, pp.423-486). Visualisation as a cognate term of visibility is of particular significance in this study as it accommodates a framework from which the declaration of 'seeing' can be situated in both the concrete and imaginary world.

The 'cultural turn' that started in the 1970s provided alternative research approaches from positivist epistemology towards more meaning-based analysis emphasising the 'causal and socially constitutive role of cultural processes and systems of signification' (Steinmetz, 1999, p.2). The 'cultural turn' movement focused on meaning making as creating knowledge in itself rather than positioning knowledge within positivist epistemology, which situates and

interprets knowledge and experience primarily through reason and logic (Steinmetz 1999, pp. 1-2). Dikovitskaya (2005) describes this as a potential move away from things ‘viewed’ towards a way or process of seeing, whereby we can ‘look at and actually examine the process of visualising literary texts’ (p. 56).

My study focuses on conceptual interactions between representation, reality and culture, and these relationships as articulated in words, images and objects. Literature surrounding theories of visuality, the major theoretical framework chosen for this study, is a crucial part of the theoretical framework and analysis in this research to elucidate the exploration of approaches and strategies used by the non-Indigenous teacher participants in this study.

2.4.2 Visuality as ‘ways of seeing’.

The key dimensions of theories of visuality that are appropriate in the context of this study are:

- Visuality and signification;
- Reception theory;
- Heterotopias;
- Scopic regimes; and,
- Regimes of colonisation.

Each of these dimensions provides a different construct within engagement and ‘ways of seeing’ an Indigenous Australian drama text by NIVSSDTs.

Post-structuralism has led recent studies in the arts, cultural studies and the humanities to reconsider representation and reality (as well as the relationships of words to images and objects) as a construction to which meaning and value are ascribed. If, as Barthes (1977) maintains, visualisation and the image is an area that resists meaning, then a clearer conception of understanding cultural engagement is possible through using visuality systems such as

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Barthes's notion of signification (p. 32 -34). For Barthes (1997), visual artefacts are signifiers of reality, and in the signification process they become reality (p. 34).

Reception theory, as developed by Hall in 1980 in *Encoding/Decoding* and refined by him in his typology of encoding and decoding models, originally helped identify moments of structured relations in communication, concentrating specifically on television. The diverse and unified modelling embedded in Hall's original theories seems more applicable to this study than the further refinements he made to his model. The concentration in early reception theory modelling on positioning in communication exchanges and encoding and decoding as the determinant communicative moment (Hall 1980, p. 129) is pertinent to the systems of engagement, knowledge and understanding as communicated to and from NISSDTs about Indigenous Australian histories, cultures, peoples, perspectives and 'ways of Knowing'. In particular, Hall's identification of three decoding systems or positionings in discourse, which he named dominant-hegemonic positioning, negotiated positioning and oppositional positioning (Hall 1980, pp. 136-138), are helpful in unpacking the engagement of the teachers in this study both with the Indigenous Australian drama text and the effects of this engagement on developing knowledge and understanding.

Theories of visuality can give us further insight into the phenomena central to my study if we consider Foucault's concept of heterotopias (Foucault, 1986, pp.22-27). Heterotopia was a term in human geography re-appropriated by Foucault that attempts to describe places and spaces that function as non-hegemonic settings, or spaces of otherness. Foucault's conceptualisations may not only help elucidate conceptions of Indigenous Australian knowledges and culture but also provide an explanation for the interactions and examinations of non-Indigenous teachers in attempting to understand Indigenous Australian perspectives and knowledges. Foucault positions heterotopias as spaces with layers or dichotomies of meaning that an individual or society uses to relate to or to reflect its own image or identity (Foucault,

1986, pp. 22-23). Foucault's vision of a society of many heterotopias and a space that affirms differences (Foucault, 1986, pp. 22 & 27) can help elucidate some insights into the ways that non-Indigenous teachers examine Indigenous Australian perspectives and knowledges through an Indigenous Australian drama text.

Jay's work on visuality as specifically articulated in his *Downcast eyes: The denigration of vision in twentieth-century French thought* (Jay, 1994) scrutinises the discourses of visuality from pre-20th and 20th century thinkers who address vision in a world that has witnessed the proliferation of the spectacle and surveillance. Jay examines theories and discourse surrounding vision, including the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Emmanuel Levinas, Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, and advocates a plurality of 'scopic regimes'. In the context of this study the concept of 'scopic regimes' (Jay 1994) situates 'seeing' and 'looking' as governance structures to advocate for or omit specific discourse configurations that allow perception practices to emerge. Framing 'scopic regimes' within Indigenous drama texts provides a framework to explore the governance structure that positions visuality to function in specific ways.

In his article entitled *Visual Regimes of Colonization*, Smith (2002) proposes considering the visual regimes of colonisation as they relate to the British colonisation of Australia and its Indigenous peoples (pp. 483-493). Smith explores how visual regimes of colonisation involve the three major practices of calibration, obliteration and symbolisation, and argues that these components of the visual regimes of colonisation manifest themselves in terms of:

1. The erasure of habitus and perspectives of the Indigenous population;
2. The transformation of the world of experience through abstraction and ideology; and,
3. The subjecting of the new place to processes of representation. (Smith, 2002, pp. 483-484)

For Smith (2002), the visual regimes of colonisation involve ‘a triangulation, a simultaneous cross of the perspectives: calibration, obliteration and symbolisation’ (p. 484). He contrasts this with Australian Indigenous representations, which he sees as taking the land as a ‘field for evocation’ where bodies and spirits are imbricated and signified rather than calibrating aspects such as land in terms of geography, value and ownership (Smith, 2002, p. 492). Thus, Smith exposes representation itself as a historically context-related process intended to define and legitimise abstraction. In this way, Smith (2002) argues that representation as a discourse is in essence a colonial concept used as a way to situate discourses of sameness and ‘the civilised self’. Therefore, representation is problematised as an apparatus of exclusion rather than an inspection of diversity. Smith’s discussions and observations have particular relevance to critical examinations of the ways that non-Indigenous teachers may observe and choose to represent certain aspects of Indigenous texts. Smith’s discussions of the visual regimes of colonisation can allow critical analysis of the ways that non-Indigenous drama teachers approach and represent Indigenous perspectives.

In Chapter 3 of this thesis, I present the research design of my study. Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the study, describes how theories of visibility frame the analysis of the data, identifies the research methodologies and examines data generation and analysis strategies.

2.5 Overall Conclusion from the Literature as related to the Research Questions

Research from the literature revealed that while there has been recent government commitment to the teaching of Indigenous Australian subject matter and perspectives, non-Indigenous Australian teachers generally and NIVSSDTs specifically have trouble engaging with Indigenous Australian experiences, cultures and perspectives. The existing ways of teaching Indigenous Australian curriculum material, tends to ‘tokenism’ and stereotypes.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian educators have explored and offer insights into processes and approaches which could develop the way that NIVSSDTs ‘see’, teach and engage with Indigenous Australian perspectives. Theories of visuality theories also offer substantial insights into the way that NIVSSDTs may see, perceive, ‘turn’ or translate their interpretations and experiences in practical explorations.

This literature review helps address the gap in comprehensive research into the way that NIVSSDTs engage with Indigenous Australian subject material. This thesis uses the ground work established in this literature review to investigate my three sub-questions:

1. *How do NIVSSDTs ‘see’ an Indigenous Australian drama text as an opportunity for theatrical exploration?*
2. *How do NIVSSDTs visualise an Indigenous Australian drama text with a view towards greater knowledges and understandings through using the representations, symbolism and meanings embedded in that text?*
3. *How do NIVSSDTs ‘turn’ or translate their interpretation of an Indigenous Australian drama text into practical formats that address the concerns of the Australian National Curriculum?*

It also uses the literature and research outlined to interrogate the main research question:

How do non-Indigenous Victorian secondary school drama teachers (NIVSSDTs) engage with Indigenous Australian drama texts and what effects does this have on ‘ways of seeing’ that develops knowledge and understanding?

In Chapter 3 of this thesis, I present the research design of my study. Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the study, describes how theories of visuality frame the analysis of the data, identifies the research methodologies and examines data generation and analysis strategies.

Chapter 3: Methods Used and Design of the Study

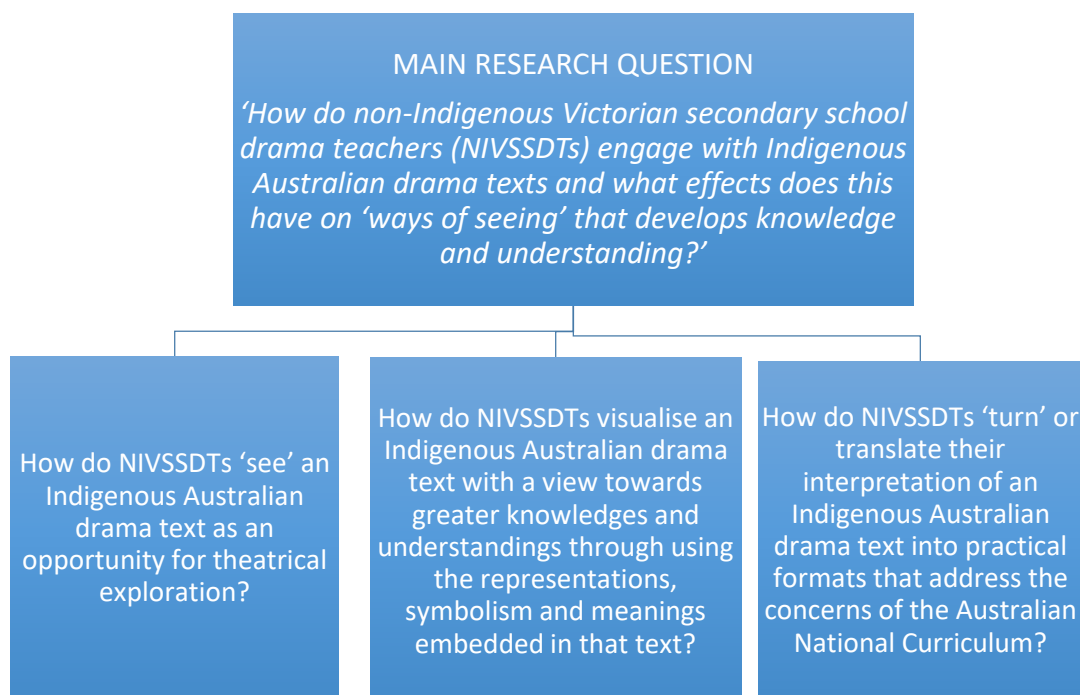
3.1 Introduction to Methods and Design

The purpose of this study was to explore how NIVSSDTs engage with and teach a drama text. The main research question was:

‘How do non-Indigenous Victorian secondary school drama teachers (NIVSSDTs) engage with Indigenous Australian drama texts and what effects does this have on ‘ways of seeing’ that develops knowledge and understanding?’

In this chapter, I explain and justify the research design adopted by me in this study. Since the research involved the systematic examination of the cultural phenomena of teachers’ engagement and the approaches they took to position ‘a way of seeing’ their engagement and teaching of a specific form of drama text, an ethnographic approach was chosen. The use of this qualitative research approach as a means for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals ascribe to the social or human problems in the context of their work as drama teachers is considered appropriate by researchers such as Creswell (2013). Using ethnography helped participants explain features of contextualisation as well as their lived experiences and perspectives as NIVSSDTs engaging with an Indigenous Australian drama text. My approach used the theoretical lens of visibility to analyse NIVSSDTs’ data on their ‘ways of seeing’ their engagement with an Indigenous drama text. Two of the key proponents of significant theories of visibility, whose work helped elucidate this area of research and allowed observation and theoretical positioning of cultural knowledge, were Jay (1994, pp. 289-291) and Hall (1980).

Specific research sub-questions focused the construction of the research design as well as allowing for the creation of avenues of sub-division of the central question. Figure 2 shows the main research question and sub-questions.

Figure 2: Main research question and sub-questions

3.2 Methodological Orientation

The research approach chosen for this study was ethnography. Traditionally, Indigenous Australian knowledge transfer and its connection to cultural production, Indigenous protocols, story ownership, sense of place, identity and spiritual beliefs (Casey, 2012, pp.13-23) is complex. I have attempted to embrace elements of Indigenous Australian methodological orientation through constant consultation with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders at the local level and through my university. I have also attempted to provide a more collective sense of ownership of my project and its data through sharing the data with my participants at all stages of the research. Through data collection via semi-structured interviews, participant journals and focus group discussions, an ethnographic approach allowed me as a researcher to classify data in a contextual way (Creswell, 2013, pp. 91-93) that was conducive to the conduct of the study and the examination of my research questions. The choice of an ethnographic approach allowed this study to examine the behavioural aspects of engagement and knowledge building by NIVSSDTs. The opening up of data to the continuous scrutiny and input from

Indigenous Australian knowledge holders and my NIVSSDT participants also helped to provide a more indigenous methodological alignment to the research.

3.3 The Research Framework

As Chilisa (2012, pp. 49-50) notes, there is a tendency for academic representations of Indigenous concepts to re-colonise Indigenous people and perspectives. Chilisa advocates adopting research frameworks and methodological orientations that she labels ‘third space methodologies’. In this context, interpretivism is useful because it allows framing of knowledge in a more relational ethical framework. Relational epistemology is concerned with knowledge as a shared construction deriving from the interpretations, interactions and relationships of groups of people (Wilson, 2001, p. 177).

The overall research framework is presented in Figure 3. It includes the methodological orientation, epistemology, research methodologies, research approach and data gathering strategies used in this research.

Figure 3: Overview of the structure and design of the research framework

Methodological Orientation	Interpretative Paradigm
Epistemology	Interpretivist through the lens of relational epistemology
Research Methodologies	Ethnographic inquiry Case study
Research Approach	Ethnography
Data Gathering Strategies	Semi-structured interviews Visual journals, PowerPoints and photo-blogs Focus Group Discussions
Theoretical Framework	Analysis of data using theories of visuality

3.3.1 Selection and justification of the research methodologies.

The ethnographic inquiry methodology was chosen as one methodology because of its ability to focus on uncovering meaning and perceptions of participants in a study. The use of a case study was chosen as a complementary methodology because of its ability to elucidate behaviour within real-life contemporary situations (Stake, 1995). This study is therefore interpretivist in its approach and involved a case study of four NIVSSDTs and an ethnographic study of the interpretation of an Indigenous drama text by these teachers.

As a research approach, ethnographic research is deep rather than broad in its focus. It supports what the anthropologist and post-colonial scholar Clifford Geertz (1973, p. 6) calls ‘thick description’, allowing different perspectives and understandings to be illuminated. There is the potential for ethnographic methodology when applied to research involving Indigenous cultures to reinforce colonial readings (Villenas, 1996). In an attempt to minimise the impact of these tendencies I chose to appropriate the ideas and concerns raised by Connell in *Southern Theory: the Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science* (2007). Connell cites examples of ethnographic research that has attempted to counter colonial tendencies through focusing on the specificity of the Australian context and the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous social and cultural constructs (Connell, 2007).

Other ways in which I have attempted to minimise this tendency in my own work include highlighting and questioning dominant practices of academic knowledge production and validation. In order to accomplish this, I extended the ethnography by critiquing the practices and conceptualisations revealed in the findings by consulting with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders and drawing on the texts of critical Indigenous scholars writing about indigenous knowledges in educational contexts. I also opened at many points the data audit process to the NIVSSDTs participants by sharing transcripts of interviews, analysis of visual journals and transcripts of the focus group discussions. This reinforced what Chilisa

(2012) considers necessary for more open ethnographic study processes where a more relational approach is taken within the confines of ethnographic research. The choice of ethnography as a research approach allowed the focus of the study of non-Indigenous teacher knowledge building and engagement with an Indigenous Australian drama text to be approached from a number of perspectives.

A case study was used as a complimentary methodology in this study since it can function to unify observations made about interaction in a real-world context (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). As Yin (1981, p. 99) states, a case study is a helpful methodology when studying knowledge utilisation. My study involves observation, description and analysis of NIVSSDTs examining an Indigenous text and their utilisation of their own knowledge in approaching and teaching such a text. A case study methodology has the flexibility and continuity to allow a researcher to record, explore, describe and explain the study's context while isolating elements of a phenomenon (Yin, 2003, pp. 12-15). The phenomena considered in this case study were the engagement of the NIVSSDTs with an Indigenous drama text and the effect that their engagement had on their 'ways of seeing' in relation to the development of knowledge and understanding. As a methodology, case studies have been used widely in research into Indigenous and specifically indigenous cultural contexts (Smallacombe et al., 2006).

3.4 Research Methods in the Research Design

Now that the theoretical framework and methodology of the study have been outlined, the research design is addressed so that the research methods and approaches can be explained and explored in more detail and aligned with the methodology in relation to how they provided opportunities for answering the research question. Figure 4 outlines the research design.

Figure 4: Research design

Research Method	Ethnography
Participants	Purposeful selection Range of representative participants Four participants
Data Gathering Strategies	Documentation and monitoring of information, reviews and other information distributed by curriculum boards, subject associations and networks on the Indigenous drama Semi-structured interviews with NIVSSDTs Visual journals Focus Group Discussions
Data Analysis and Representation	Document comparison and analysis Semi-structured interviews answer comparison using theories of visuality as basis for analysis Analysis of journal data in terms of theories of visuality Open comparison through focus group discussion Thematic analysis and coding using theories of visuality and Australian Indigenous methodologies
Verifications	Observation, classification, thematic analysis

3.4.1 Ethnography as a research method.

The choice of ethnography as research method allowed me to conduct an in-depth study that revealed deep and credible understandings of the study participants. It also allowed the synthesis of data through *etic* scientific perspectives while developing cultural interpretations (Creswell, 2013, p. 92). As a method, ethnography helped reveal and allow the study of both interpretative and behavioural aspects of non-Indigenous teacher engagement with an Indigenous Australian drama text.

3.4.2 Timeline and context for selecting the study's play and performance.

To contextualise the selection of the Indigenous Australian play and performance chosen for this research and the collection of data from the participants, I will first outline the schedule and tasks specifically undertaken in the lead up to and implementation of collection of data for the research. Figure 5 outlines the timeline of events and processes undertaken by I in relation to events and outcomes, bodies responsible and the processes undertaken:

Figure 5: Timeline table of the process and events undertaken

Date	Event/Outcome	Body/Individual Responsible	Process
<i>May 2016</i>	Theatre companies invited to draft submissions for the 2017 VCAA VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama playlists	VCAA	Invitation posted on VCAA website, publicised through Drama Victoria
<i>July 2016</i>	VCAA closed submissions for inclusion on 2017 VCAA VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama playlists	VCAA	Submissions made by theatre companies; closure date posted on VCAA website and announced in VCAA June newsletter and on Drama Victoria website
<i>July-August 2016</i>	In late July/early August 2016, members of the VCAA Drama and Theatre Studies panel shortlisted plays	VCAA VCE Theatre Studies and Drama playlist panel	Theatre company submissions reviewed, shortlisted and assessed for suitability; 16 plays and productions were chosen
<i>September 2016</i>	VCAA enters into agreements with theatre companies and provides guidelines	VCAA consults with subject panels	VCAA and theatre companies enter into agreements; the VCAA provides guidelines to theatre companies chosen
<i>November 2016</i>	VCAA publishes the playlists for VCE Drama and Theatre Studies for 2017; Indigenous play is on the list	VCAA	VCAA announces the playlist on their website, in the VCAA November newsletter and at the Drama Victoria state conference
<i>January 30, 2017</i>	I posted invitations for participants in the study on the Drama Victoria VCE Theatre	I	The administrator of the Drama Victoria VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama forum group was contacted and

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	Studies and VCE Drama forum group		shown the invitation; approval was granted to send invitations
<i>February 5-March 7 2017</i>	I communicated with volunteer participants and permission forms are signed	I and participants	I replied to potential participants providing them with information; permission forms were distributed and participants signed forms
<i>March 17-March 19 2017</i>	Data collection using semi-structured interviews	I and participants	I developed the questions for the semi-structured interviews and sent copies of the questions to the participants
<i>March-July 2017</i>	Data collection by participants with their students using visual journaling as documentation tool	The participants	The participants documented their processes of engaging with and teaching the Indigenous Australian drama text with guidance given by I when requested
<i>July 29, August 20, 2017</i>	Focus Group Discussions 1 and 2 conducted with participants	I and participants	The participants engaged in focus group discussions

Year 12 VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama teachers in Victoria were two groups that met the criteria outlined for participating teachers and classroom practice. I had initially planned to start data collection during 2016 but only 1 of the 16 plays in VCE drama and theatre studies could be considered an Indigenous Australian play. *Bright World*, co-written by Yorta Yorta and Kurnai Aboriginal nations' playwright Andrea James and non-Indigenous playwright Elise Hearst, appeared on the 2016 VCE Drama Unit 3 playlist (VCAA, 2016). This play was jointly written by an Indigenous Australian playwright and addresses Aboriginal activist William Cooper's 1938 deputation and his visit to Melbourne's German embassy to protest the increase in the Nazi persecution of Jews. This meant that the multi-faceted focus of the play on Indigenous Australian activism and Jewish persecution would make exploration of teacher engagement with Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives more complicated. In addition, the fact that the majority of the actors in the performance of the play were non-Indigenous Australian actors meant that the opportunity for the teachers and their

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students to obtain the benefits of a question and answer session with a primarily Indigenous Australian focus might be jeopardised. The research data collection was therefore postponed until 2017. I waited for the publishing of the VCAA 2017 VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama playlists. In the event that the VCAA would not choose an Indigenous Australian play for the list, I made arrangements through Drama Australia (the national Australian association of Drama teachers) to potentially study drama teachers in NSW or Queensland.

Another important process and procedure that must be discussed here is the VCAA selection of plays and performances for the VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama playlists, especially the process followed for the selection of the 2017 playlists. In VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama courses, students and teachers are required to both read the play and see the play in performance. The selection and publication of the 2017 VCE Drama and VCE Theatre Studies playlist began in 2016. In May 2016, the VCAA invited theatre companies in Victoria and other states touring shows in Victoria in 2017 to make submissions. In early July 2016 submissions closed, and in August 2016 members of the VCAA Drama and Theatre Studies Play Selection panel met to select a shortlist of plays and productions. In September 2016, the VCAA entered into selection agreements with theatre companies and in late September 2016 the VCAA Drama and Theatre Studies Play Selection panel made their final decisions on plays and productions. In November 2016, the 2017 playlist was published on the VCAA website and in the November VCAA newsletter updates.

As part of VCE Theatre Studies students must read and see at least two plays, one play for Unit 3 and one for Unit 4 (VCAA, 2014b). In VCE Drama courses, students are only required to read one play and see a production of that play for Unit 3 (VCAA, 2014a). When making selections, the VCAA Drama and Theatre Studies Play Selection panel considers the appropriateness of the text in the context of study by senior secondary school students and also takes into account the sensibilities, expectations and standards of the larger Victorian

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community. The teachers select two or more plays to study and attend the performance of from a list of approximately 16 plays for each of the two subjects. There are approximately five plays for VCE Drama Unit 3, six plays for VCE Theatre Studies Unit 3 and five plays for VCE Theatre Studies Unit 4. The panel also considers the following areas, which they suggest should be foci for teachers in making their own selection from the shortlist:

- Dramatic merit;
- Subject matter;
- Themes; and,
- Ways in which the play and production may support rigorous and sustained study in relation to the key knowledge of the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies study design (VCAA, 2017a).

At this point it may be useful to return to the features of Indigenous Australian drama discussed in Chapter 2. We may consider an Indigenous Australian drama to be a play written by an Indigenous Australian person, persons or group, or one where substantial Indigenous input in process and product has helped embody Indigenous ownership. However, as previously discussed, Indigenous Australian drama also attempts to express the unique cultural heritages of different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, nations and cultures (Casey & Craigie, 2011, p. 2). These aspects of Indigenous Australian drama are likely less able to be judged in relation to broad categories such as ‘dramatic merit’ adopted by the VCAA and the VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama panel.

The cultural specificity of the performative, cultural and ritual elements of each of the Indigenous Australian nations in Australia may continue to make it more challenging for bodies such as the VCAA and the VCE Drama and VCE Theatre Studies play selection panels to fairly judge and evaluate Indigenous Australian texts by their own criteria of dramatic merit, representation of significant subject matter and themes. Furthermore, the VCE Theatre Studies’

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assessment of the ability of students to rigorously study stagecraft, dramatic elements and conventions in an Indigenous drama script and in performance may be more difficult to judge than with other texts. The complex juxtaposition of stage conventions such as language and silence, past and present performance contexts along with the fluidity of stylistic elements in many Indigenous Australian drama plays and performances sometimes make it difficult to categorise the theatrical form or style of some Indigenous plays and theatre performances.

Non-Indigenous theatre stage conventions and stylistic elements as exam study foci and curriculum emphasis for VCE Theatre Studies teachers compounds the difficulty in studying the engagement of teachers of VCE Theatre Studies and their students with an Indigenous Australian drama and its performance. The VCE Theatre Studies study design emphasises the key knowledge and skills assessed in the VCE Theatre Studies areas of study (Study Area 3) as being motivation, interpretation, expressive skills, the use of focus in the performance space, use of language, the actor/audience relationship, acting and theatrical style (VCAA 2014b, p. 27). These elements (especially motivation, use of language, the actor/audience relationship, and theatrical style) are often difficult to analyse in Indigenous Australian drama and performance. This problem is made more challenging when plays involve the use of Indigenous Australian languages or specific motifs, symbols and representations specific to Indigenous Australian groups, nations and experiences. More complex issues, such as Indigenous Australian community engagement and discussions of who has the rights and ownership to tell, represent and act in certain Indigenous Australian stories, are cited by non-Indigenous filmmakers such as Rolf de Heer (Wright 2011) and theatre directors such as Scott Rankin (Lehman 2017). However, these are not discussed or addressed in detail by education bodies such as the VCAA and VCE Theatre Studies study design and assessment criteria.

When the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving* was chosen by a VCAA Drama and Theatre Studies panel and was added to the 2017 VCE Drama and Theatre Studies playlist, I re-read

this play and found production information about the theatre company producing the play, the performers and the context in which the performance might take place. I was familiar with the play and had seen the original production with Indigenous Australian actress Deborah Mailman. I believed that the episodic form of the drama and the confronting nature of the play's themes, along with the way it addresses the grief of Indigenous Australians and the hope of reconciliation, would make it both an important play to centre a research study around and a play that might be popular with VCE Theatre Studies teachers. The fact that the play was a touring production mounted jointly by the Grin and Tonic Theatre Troupe and the Queensland Theatre Company made me feel confident that the performance that the teachers and students attended would be both comparable to the original production and contemporary in interpretation. I then examined the teacher notes booklets for shows that the Queensland Theatre Company and Grin and Tonic Theatre Troupe had produced for previous touring productions and for this production (Queensland Theatre Company & Education Queensland, 2017). From these documents, I was confident that sufficient information, discussion points, and production and contextual information would be provided for VCE teachers to study this play and production.

I then conducted some preliminary research on the Indigenous Australian actress Chenoa Deemal, who was cast to perform *The 7 Stages of Grieving*—a one-woman show that requires an actress to act as an Indigenous Everywoman telling stories of tragedy and hope of different Indigenous Australian people and their experiences. Deemal's performances in Indigenous Australian plays, as well as in more classical theatre such as plays by Shakespeare and Brecht, made me confident that Deemal would give a noteworthy performance.

3.4.3 Participants and participant selection.

Participant selection for this study was done through criteria and guided selection. Four volunteer participants were approached through Drama Victoria and their VCE Theatre Studies

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online forum group. This group is a Facebook and email forum group where Drama Victoria members who teach VCE Theatre Studies are invited to post material, questions, discussion and request centred on the teaching of VCE Theatre Studies. Drama Victoria designates experienced teachers to update lists and monitor posts, questions and answers on this forum group. Drama Victoria has helped facilitate many projects through its network and forums, and the use of ACU ethics procedures and protocols along with Drama Victoria's own procedures and protocols for research procedures strengthened my research conduct.

In using the forum and selecting participants, I also chose not to select any participant with whom I have had an established prior professional or personal relationship. Although an open invitation was posted on the Drama Victoria VCE Theatre Studies forum, I looked to select a broad range of experienced female and male teachers who approximately were representative of the present group of Victorian Secondary school VCE Theatre Studies and Drama teachers. I also selected only teachers who were intending selecting the Indigenous Australian play *The 7 Stages of Grieving* to study with their students in 2017. Statistics obtained from QTC ticket sales suggest 374 Victorian students saw the play in the 2017 Victorian tour and 52 schools attended performances (Queensland Theatre Company, October 12, 2017). Only 53 of the 715 Theatre Studies students who sat the exam chose to write about *The 7 Stages of Grieving* on the 2017 Theatre Studies exam (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2017b). These considerations along with other criteria are outlined in Figure 6, along with the rationale used as a basis for selection of 'information-rich' participants:

Figure 6: Criteria used for selection of 'information-rich' participants

Selection Criteria	Rationale
Participants were chosen for their expertise and no participants have a professional or personal relationship with The Researcher	<i>To build on professional knowledge and practices in the area of drama education</i>
Participants all have at least three years of teaching experience with drama or theatre studies	<i>To ensure a rich data set from the four participants</i>
Participants all currently (at the time of the research) teach VCE Theatre Studies or VCE Drama	<i>To ensure comparability of data through participants studying the same Indigenous Australian drama text in the same time period</i>
Participants have some familiarity with Australian National Curriculum Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum priorities	<i>To ensure that the Australian National Curriculum contexts of the implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are understood to some degree by participants to examine expertise</i>
Participants are part of a forum or network of teachers	<i>To ensure that the participants chosen have an ongoing relationship and commitment to sharing and developing expertise and knowledge</i>
During the period of the research participants chose to explore and teach an Indigenous Australian drama text	<i>To ensure the comparability of participants and data sets and the interest or commitment of the participants to the area being studied</i>
Participants as a group broadly represent the current cohort of Secondary Victorian Drama and Theatre Studies teachers in terms of Gender, Age and School Context	<i>To ensure that the participants studied and the data analysed are broad and representative of the general cohort of Drama and Theatre Studies teachers in Victoria, Australia</i>

The inclusion of at least three years of teaching experience in the criteria for participant selection was chosen to ensure participant understanding of the complexities of the research

and Indigenous perspectives and to provide the opportunity for greater insights into the themes and issues central to the study.

3.4.4 Participants and identification.

Since qualitative research requires both standardisation of procedures and purposeful selection of participants who may be comparable but who also help investigate the research questions, I decided that having a range of participants who volunteered or were self-selecting would be both purposeful and help enhance my understanding of the way NIVSSDTs engage with an Indigenous Australian drama text as an opportunity for greater understanding.

As Yin (2009) explains, case studies centre on the study of cases in a real-life contemporary context or setting. The four case study participants were all NIVSSDTs who chose the same Indigenous play text to study with their Year 12 VCE Theatre Studies classes in the 2017 Victorian academic year. The study centred on the engagement of the participants as teachers with an Indigenous Australian drama text. In seeking participants for the study, I looked for participants who met the following criteria:

- Teachers studying the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving* in 2017 in Victoria;
- Teachers who were seeing a performance of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* where the performer or performers were Indigenous Australians;
- Teachers who were planning the same or a similar curriculum with similar educational outcomes;
- Teachers who were part of a range of individuals in terms of gender, age, educational settings and experience; and,
- Teachers who would be willing to contribute to over six month's research with a broad range of data collection methods including interviews, making or compiling a visual journal and participating in focus group discussions

I posted an invitation for participants on the Drama Victoria VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama forum groups. This was determined to be the best and most immediate way to

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directly approach VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama teachers since it allowed teachers who had already chosen the play and production of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* to be targeted. For teachers who were still undecided about their VCE Theatre Studies play text choice, this might have provided an added incentive to select this play and production. When initially I received only two responses from female drama teachers in their 40s, I posted a second invitation and received two more responses, one from a male teacher in his 40s and one from a male teacher in his 60s.

These four NIVSSDT participants seemed both gender representative and age representative of individuals who I had met in Victoria at Drama Victoria conferences, although no exact statistics are available regarding the gender and age distribution of Australian drama teachers. The average age of the participants was 50, which is older than the average age of 43 for Victorian teachers (Vukovic, 2014). The fact that two of the teachers taught in government secondary colleges, one teacher taught in a Catholic secondary school and one teacher taught in an independent school meant that I also seemed to have a range of participants from different school contexts. The average number of Indigenous Australian plays taught over their teaching careers by teachers in the study was 4.6 plays. One teacher had significant experience teaching Indigenous Australian plays over many years, while for another teacher this represented his first experience studying and teaching an Indigenous Australian play. This meant that diversity of experience was also represented in the overall range of participants.

In addition, the sample size of four participants was also important. The qualitative research sample size for this study was predetermined as this same size was deemed sufficient to render rich, diverse data for the study. The demographic information of the four participants is presented in Figure 7:

Figure 7: Demographic information of the four participants

Participant	Age	Gender	School Setting	Indigenous	Years Teaching Drama	No. of Ind. Aus. Drama Texts Studied and Taught
A	48	Female	Government, suburban	No	12	4
B	48	Female	Catholic, regional	No	21	2
C	43	Male	Independent, regional	No	16	1
D	61	Male	Government, urban	No	26	13

As a means of identifying the data sources and maintaining confidentiality, the following coding was applied to the data. Data that might inform classifications, subject matter and themes extracted from one-to-one semi-structured interviews and visual journal entries. At this point, I should explain what a visual journal is and why its use is an appropriate form of data collection.

A visual journal is a regularly maintained journal kept usually by a visual artist which contains words, sketches, photos, collages and artist reactions (New, 2005, pp. 2-3). While visual journals are common to professional artists and student work in the visual arts (Machina, 2011), their use in research is less common as a method of data collection from teachers. La Jevic and Springgay (2008) conducted a study with preservice teachers and Rose (2017) advocating the use of visual research methods and data sources in research in visual methodology. In the context of my data collection, teacher generated visual journals involved collections of notes, photos, drawings, diagrams and sketches collected over the period of teaching and engaging with the Indigenous Australian drama text. Since most of the participants sent me this as PowerPoint presentations, I decided to use the slide format as a way to make the data analogous.

The ability to identify and track data to its original source while maintaining anonymity was ensured through substituting the names of participants with pseudonyms using names derived from the first four letters of the alphabet (i.e. A = Alison, B = Bernadette, C = Corey and D = David). The pseudonyms assigned to participants maintained the same gender as the original participant. The background or context assigned to each pseudonym was based on the original context of the participant but the generalisation of details and the non-naming of the specific schools or school contexts was implemented to ensure further confidentiality. The initial semi-structured interviews were coded using a kaleidoscope approach as advocated by Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg and Coleman (2000) for organising and analysing data. This allowed a constant comparison method allowing for cross-case analysis using both Indigenous Australian methodology and theories of visuality. The visual journals were coded using a similar approach, although a greater emphasis was placed on visual methodologies at this point during the coding. The focus group discussions were also coded in the same way but a greater focus was placed on Indigenous Australian methodologies and theories.

3.5 Data Collection

Using interpretivism allowed for data gathering to involve exploration and inspection. It helped me as researcher to interpret elements of the data in the study to integrate human concerns and allow analysis of social constructions of engagement and elements of shared meanings and understandings. This helped to focus the research on engagement, knowledge building and understanding while employing multiple methods to reflect different aspects of the data collected. In this study, the initial data collection occurred through semi-structured interviews with each respondent, the second through participant's visual journals and the third through focus group discussions

The first stage of semi-structured interviews was organised to allow for some modification in lines of inquiry, thus providing space for themes to emerge that were not

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predetermined. As a data collection method this allowed sound initial data to be collected in a context which was rigorous and comparable while allowing for easy classification of data (Creswell, 2013, p. 93) The second stage involved participants keeping visual journals which allowed them greater autonomy to record in visual ways the process of their teaching and engagement with the Indigenous Australian drama text selected. The third stage of data collection involved focus group discussions which facilitated more direct participation and interaction between the participants while allowing multi-vocality and a range of different perspectives. The data collection and specific data gathering methods were linked to specific research sub-questions in the study with the exception of the final synthesis, which was connected to the main research question. Figure 8 shows the stages of data collection and links them to the method, evidence and the reason for the approaches undertaken:

Figure 8: Criteria stages of data gathering, methods and evidence

Purpose of Data Collection	Method	Evidence/ Artefacts	Why This is an Appropriate Method
Conducted semi-structured interviews to understand how respondents engage with an Indigenous drama text and what they 'see' in that text	Semi-structured interviews	Opinions, experiences, initial perceptions or 'ways of seeing', basic understanding of types of engagement	Familiar and flexible way of asking informants about their opinions, experiences and perceptions; comparable data received because many of the same questions are asked
Invited informants to keep visual journals as they worked with the selected text to highlight key issues and themes highlighted in research and theories of visuality	Visual journals	Narratives within journals relating to critical incidents when engaging with an Indigenous drama text	Supports a process of reflexivity and allows informants to interpret and contextualise their own understanding, knowledge and biases, as well as acknowledge the narratives and context of the informants

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Survey informants' reactions to interpretations of the way they engage with and see an Indigenous drama text	Focus Group Discussions involving the informants	Specific reactions and responses from informants in relation to thematic and scopical elements raised by applying the lens of visuality and Indigenous Australian research perspectives to earlier responses	Allows multi-vocality and multi-perspective responses from different informants while involving the informants in the articulation and representation of the findings and encouraging them to articulate different paradigms of interpretation
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It should be noted that due to illness, Participant D (David) was unable to be physically present at first focus group discussion. Consequently, David was given a transcript and audio recording from the first focus group discussion and was given the option of providing an audio or written response to the first focus group discussion with his responses. This formed the basis for the second focus group discussion. David decided to respond in writing and a copy of his responses was shared with the other participants, who had the option to review and respond to them.

To maintain the integrity of the interpretative perspective of the study, all data collection strategies were guided by both Indigenous research perspectives (Chilisa 2012, pp. 161-163) and the sub-questions or primary question of this study. This was done to create a consistent and guided line of inquiry during data collection (Yin, 2003). The gap of almost six months between the initial data collection in the semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussion gave the participants time to reflect, thus optimising the potential for rich and diverse data collection (O'Donoghue, 2007).

3.6 Analysis of Data

To analyse the data an interpretative paradigm was applied using both the lens of theories of visuality and the work of Indigenous Australian researchers. Visuality allowed the

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observation of personal positioning and spatiality of cultural knowledge to be theorised in terms of how these are positioned, viewed and communicated (Jay, 1994, pp. 289-293). In this study, visuality helped interpret data about the perspective of NIVSSDTs in engaging with Indigenous drama texts. It also helped to elucidate the perceived relationship between the way that NIVSSDTs position knowledge and the way that these teachers choose to approach strategies for teaching an Indigenous drama text. Concepts of visuality provided a framework to examine perceptions and positioning of an Indigenous Australian text. The main foci this study used, informed by conceptualisations of theories of visuality, were:

- Representation and signification (Jay, 1994 & Barthes, 1977);
- Reception theory (Hall, 1980);
- Heterotopias and ‘otherness’ (Foucault, 1986 & Jay, 1994);
- Scopic regimes (Jay, 1994); and,
- Visual regimes of colonisation (Smith 2005).

These foci within theories of visuality were appropriate because each could be related to Dikovitskaya’s notion of ‘cultural turn’ (2005) while also being examined in relation to thematic areas highlighted by Indigenous Australian academics, such as Yunkaporta’s eight stages of cultural interface (2009), Blair’s insights into privileging Indigenous Australian Knowings (2015), Foley’s Indigenous standpoint theory perceptions (2003) and Bawaka’s (2015) understandings of Indigenous Australian ‘more-than-human’ knowledges. In practical terms, critical guidance by my Indigenous Australian academic supervisors and local Indigenous Australian knowledge holders helped to refine the analysis of the information and patterns in the data.

The data analysis followed a process suggested by Creswell (2013, pp. 180-186), which involved:

1. Highlighting of certain information for description;

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2. Identifying patterned regularities;
3. Contextualising data patterns with the framework from the literature; and,
4. Displaying findings in tables, charts and figures to compare results.

The diversity of documents and data collection methods helped to reveal insights into the research problem (O'Donoghue, 2007) using theories of visuality as a lens through which the data analysis is 'seen'. The research questions were used as the focus of the analysis and the discussion of the data, while a kaleidoscope approach as advocated by Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg and Coleman (2000) was used for organising and analysing the data to facilitate a constant comparison method, allowing for cross-case analysis. Figure 9 presents the data gathering methods and the analysis foci while contextualising the areas of visuality used.

Figure 9: Data gathering and analysis

Timeline	Data Gathering Methods	Analysis	Areas of Visuality Used
March 2017	Semi-structured interviews	Analysed data through highlighting and describing information that relates to research sub-questions, Yunkaporta's eight-way Aboriginal pedagogy framework (2009) and visual methodologies; Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg and Coleman's kaleidoscope approach is applied (2000)	Representations and signification, reception theory, heterotopias and scopic regimes
March-June 2017	Visual Journal started	Analysed initial visual journal entries in terms of the themes emerging from the literature and the structured interviews; analysed data collected	Representations and signification, reception theory, heterotopias, scopic regimes, visual regimes of colonisation and discourses of vision

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		from visual journals in terms of visuality	
August 2017	Focus group discussions	Coding and comparison of data and refining of the data collected using Yunkaporta's eight-way Aboriginal pedagogy framework , theories of visuality and kaleidoscope approach	Representations and signification, reception theory, heterotopias, scopic regimes, visual regimes of colonisation and discourses of vision
September 2017- November 2017	Synthesis of data gathering methods	Synthesised data and analysis based on comparing and displaying findings in relation to the primary research question	Representations and signification, reception theory, heterotopias, scopic regimes, visual regimes of colonisation

Systematic and thorough processes were maintained in order to explore emerging themes and data relating to the research sub-questions, providing an integrated approach (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). The semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussions were recorded and a verbatim transcript was produced to allow ease of data analysis. Notes were also taken during all data collection. The visual journals were created in a format chosen by the participants. Most participants chose PowerPoint as a format since this allowed them to share material with both their students and me with greater ease. In organising this material for discussion and analysis, I maintained the organisational headings of slide numbers (see Appendices 5-8).

3.6.1 Managing and analysing data.

Since data collection and data analysis were conducted simultaneously for much of the study, the data analysis techniques were comparative, which also helped to reduce large volumes of data and aided identification and analysis of data in terms of reoccurring themes

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985), Indigenous Australian methodologies, theories of visuality and the development of emergent understandings and answers to the research questions.

Note taking, re-reading of data, identification of patterns and categorisation and coding were the primary techniques consistently used (Barbour, 2005). Data management was assisted by the use of a program called *Compendium* which is a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis System (CAQDAS), but this database was only used in a preliminary way since manual coding was found to be more conducive to productive data management and analysis using both visual methodologies and Indigenous Australian research constructs and approaches. The advantages of using this combined approach and constant comparison were that these helped manage and improve the validity of data analysis. The disadvantages were the tendency towards more open and interpretational processing of data. Manual processing, re-reading and manual identification of patterns helped to both complement data processing and reduce the idiosyncratic elements of interpretation, allowing greater scope for comparison and unified analysis.

3.6.2 Coding.

Both open coding and selective coding procedures were used. Open coding was used initially to allow for detailed examination and comparison of similarities and differences between different types of data and emerging phenomena (O'Donoghue, 2007). Initial analysis of the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews, the journals and the focus group discussions were organised chronologically according to stages of the study. Further organisation and coding of the data was completed through grouping and coding the data according to emergent themes using Indigenous Australian methodologies and theories of visuality. Visuality allowed the observation and analysis of personal positioning and spatiality of cultural knowledge to be theorised. Indigenous Australian methodologies allowed these

conceptions to be speculated on and contextualised in terms of Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’.

During the coding, organising and describing of the data, the concerns raised by Van Wagenen (1990, pp. 74-110) were taken into account so as to emphasise the primacy of the description of the data and evidence gathered as it applies to the strategies of investigation applied. Primary evidence was revealed through the description of the case studies individually. However, to give primacy to the constructs of Indigenous Australian knowledge systems, the eight stages of Yunkaporta’s eight-way Aboriginal pedagogy framework (2009) are used to describe these case studies. This allowed for what Van Wagenen (1990) describes as the integration of descriptive and inferential evidence whereby primary evidence is described and suppositions are tested, allowing multiple classification analyses. This also permitted me to value and even ‘privilege’ the use of Indigenous Australian epistemologies.

Next, the primary evidence was described and the results were revealed using the three sub-questions first and ending with the primary research question. This allowed for foci of visibility and Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’ to be directed towards a kaleidoscope approach (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg & Coleman, 2000), facilitating constant comparison while elucidating results that help answer the research questions. Figure 10 presents the coding and management approaches, theories and systems used.

Figure 10: Coding approaches for organisation and management of the data

Coding Approach Taken	Data Analysed	Organisation Structure	Rationale
Using eight-way Aboriginal pedagogy framework (2009)	Semi-structured interviews, visual journals and focus group discussions	Organised by case study individuality	To place a crucial focus on Indigenous Australian knowledge systems and give primacy of description

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			to the case studies individually
Using the research questions, starting with the sub-questions and ending with the primary research question	Semi-structured interviews, visual journals and focus group discussions, with focus on data collection points with the most relevance to each question	Organised by individual case study with focus initially on relevant theories of visuality and ending with focus on relevant Indigenous methodologies	To support a kaleidoscope approach (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg & Coleman 2000) that allows theories of visuality to help focus analysis of data using Indigenous knowledge systems and methodologies

3.6.3 Verifications and legitimisation of findings.

The study's theoretical perspective of interpretivism was concerned with data quality, which aimed to reflect the true circumstances of human interaction. In attempting to verify and legitimise the soundness of the data and the underlying assumptions made in the study's analysis and its findings I used the four alternative criteria suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), of Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability. These have been used in a number of ethnographic studies in the field of Indigenous research (Moreton-Robinson, 2004; Smallacombe et al., 2006). These criteria are applied to the data throughout the process of my research comparing the data and findings to those from previous studies that researched non-Indigenous school educators teaching Australian Indigenous subject matter and texts, including the studies conducted by Moriarty (1995) and Harrison and Greenfield (2011). Many of the elements identified by these researchers are also evident in Wood's 2017 study of the teaching of an Indigenous Australian drama text. However, Wood's use of auto-ethnography in examining the 'whiteness' of his personal narrative as a non-Indigenous teacher using an Indigenous Australian drama text broadened the way which I examined notions of credibility and dependability in my conduct of the study.

3.7 Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability

The participants were crucial in legitimising the results of the study. To enhance the overall credibility of the research, prolonged and persistent observation, consistent verification and participant checks were initiated. I sought to establish and build rapport with the participants as well as to attempt to make engagement with them prolonged and consistent in order to enhance the potential for rich data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304). The fact that the study used multiple methods of data collection and that the participants were given some opportunities to review data, especially before and after the final data collection point, allowed me to evaluate the internal consistency of emerging themes and phenomena in the study.

Transferability of research findings is one of the objectives of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although this study involved NIVSSDTs and an Indigenous drama text, the observations and results of the study may have some transferability regarding how non-Indigenous Australian teachers interpret, construct, visualise and examine Indigenous material, knowledge and texts. In the context of the ongoing debate around the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in the Australian National Curriculum, particularly in light of the Australian Department of Education's 2014 *Review of the Australian Curriculum*, the findings of this study are aimed at theory building and may have direct relevance and transferability to the wider Australian school education context of non-Indigenous teacher's engagement with Indigenous Australian perspectives in the Australian National Curriculum. In turn, some transferability may be possible to other similar international educational contexts where Indigenous texts, knowledges and subject matter are taught by non-Indigenous educators.

Although a more traditional perspective of dependability may be seen to rely on an assumption of repeatability or the ability to replicate results, this research is made dependable

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based on I's account of and approach to the context of the research and how the research was conducted.

Consistent evaluation of the data through manual review and the kaleidoscope approach (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg & Coleman, 2000) facilitated constant comparison and allowed for consistent auditing of the data to ensure dependability. This data was also compared to supporting literature and documents, allowing what Bassey (1999) describes as the provision of data checkpoints to ensure greater dependability of the data and the analytical procedures.

As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), five strategies were used by me in this study to confirm results. These strategies were:

- Documentation of the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study;
- The use and documentation of the application of visibility theory perspectives and Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing';
- I took on a 'devil's advocate' role at some points in the research;
- I actively searched for and describing negative instances that contradicted prior observations; and,
- Conducting an open data audit that examined the data collection and analysis procedures to assess the potential of bias, prejudice or distortion.

All the documents, records and transcripts from the data collection and analysis process were systematically collected, maintained, audited and authenticated by an independent auditor as part of the research process. As a method of confirming the quality of the data and results of the analysis of data, validity and reliability were consistently considered. This study used some of the statistical procedures and instruments utilised in previous studies focusing on non-Indigenous teachers approaching Indigenous perspectives, material and/or texts (Harrison & Greenfield, 2011; Yunkaporta, 2009).

Because this study involved an Indigenous Australian drama text, part of the open data audit process was conducted with an Indigenous Australian person from the nation from which

the Indigenous Australian text was derived. This supported what Chilisa (2012) has described as a more relational approach to the confirmation of the results.

3.8 Ethical Issues

To conduct research that is ethical requires balancing the value of advancing knowledge against the issues and concerns of the individuals, groups and cultures who are directly or indirectly part of what is being studied. Issues such as confidentiality, privacy, informed consent, protection from harm, ownership of data and the manner in which findings are reported, presented and published are all crucial parts of the ethical considerations of any research (Bassey, 1999). As such, these were all aspects and considerations given continuous attention throughout every element of the research process.

Some ethical considerations around the teachers who participated were their confidentiality and how I stored any information gathered during the data collection period and how information was retained it afterward. All the participant teachers were assured of the confidentiality of their identities. All semi-structured interviews of participants were entirely voluntary, and this research strove to make this transparent to all participants. The voluntary nature of participation in this research is documented in the consent forms. Sufficient information was provided so that potential participants were able to make informed decisions about their involvement in this study (Simons, 2009). Consent in writing was also obtained from all of those who chose to participate in this study. Participants received a copy of their consent form, which outlined the research and the timeline for participation. It was made clear to participants at all times that their involvement was voluntary and confidentiality was maintained during all data collection processes.

All participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities, and as suggested by Wallace (2010) the schools at which they teach are not identified. Some photographs in the visual journals where school uniforms appear were altered to remove school identification. An

external transcriber was employed to record the transcripts of the interviews. After the semi-structured interviews, all participants received a copy of the interview transcript, and the opportunity was afforded them for right of reply in order to clarify or add further detail to the interview (Simons, 2009). All transcripts, notes, visual journals, audiotapes and digital recordings were kept secure during the entire research process in a locked facility.

Since this study also used Indigenous Australian material as the text for investigation, larger ethical concerns regarding Indigenous Australian perspectives and the use of Indigenous Australian material, stories and texts needed to be addressed within this research. Indigenous academic consultants reviewed and advised me throughout most stages of the research process. The protocols and ethical procedures of Australian Catholic University were used when engaging with Australian Indigenous material, perspectives, culture and peoples. The Indigenous Australian subject matter central to the study, in addition to the length of the study, meant that continuous contact with participants and the Indigenous Australian supervisor of this research was necessary. Expectations of the study and how findings were communicated to the participants, Indigenous stakeholders, the university and the wider community followed the guidelines of Australian Catholic University. Ethical approvals were obtained from both the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee and the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee and suggestion and changes from these bodies were applied.

3.9 Summary of Research Design

An interpretative approach was adopted for the research design, as this approach is most consistent with an exploration of engagement and understanding of NIVSSDTs when dealing with an Indigenous Australian drama text. The application of the strategies of the research design were viewed through interpretivism. As a methodology, a qualitative approach was taken that utilised ethnographic inquiry and case study methods. The core research approach

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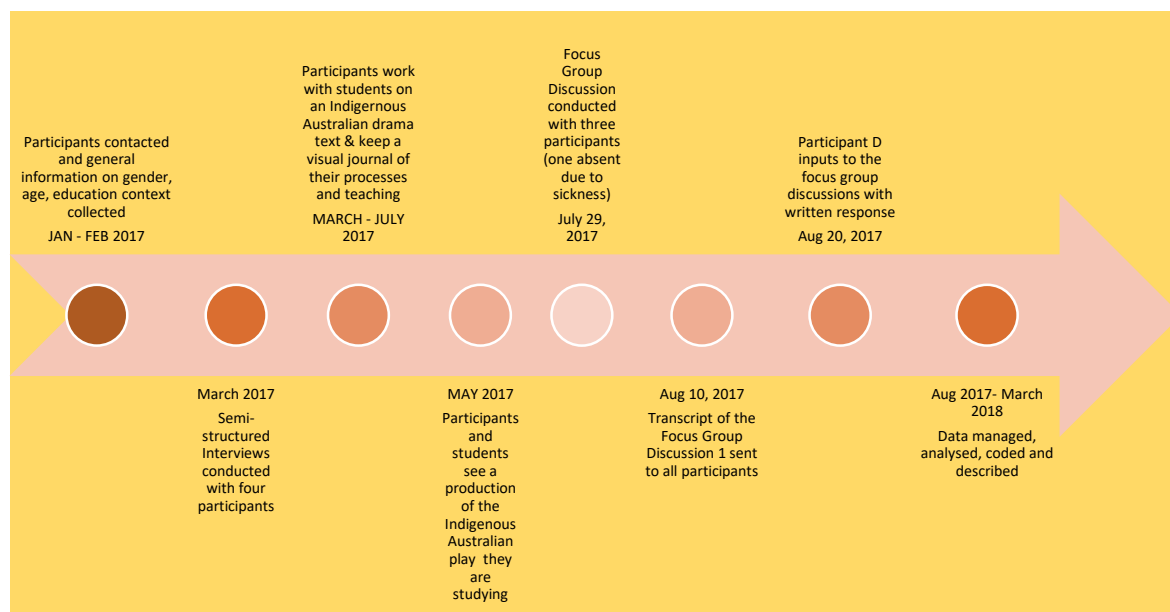
taken was ethnography. The theoretical frameworks used were visuality and Indigenous Australian Knowledges. The participants studied in the research were non-Indigenous Australian drama teachers from Victorian secondary schools teaching VCE Theatre Studies. The study investigated how NIVSSDTs engage with an Australian Indigenous drama text to examine their 'way of seeing'. The case design and data analysis were informed by 'theories of visuality' and Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing'. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to knowledge about social, cultural and political issues surrounding the engagement of non-Indigenous teachers with Indigenous cultures and knowledges.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction to Findings

The chapter will present and describe the findings from the examination of the four participants studied in this research using the three sub-questions. The four case studies are presented in alphabetical order (i.e. Participant A, B, C and then D). The data was collected in three phases. Phase 1 consisted of the semi-structured interviews, phase 2 was comprised of the visual journals and phase 3 were the focus group discussions. The sequence of contact with participants and timeline for collection of this data are shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Timeline of data collection and other significant data events



The findings for each participant are first investigated in relation to the three research sub-questions. Then, these findings are further focused and examined using a kaleidoscope approach (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg & Coleman, 2000). The two methodological lenses used in my application of the kaleidoscope approach were theories of visibility and Indigenous Australian methodologies. To help scrutinise the data further, privileging and focusing on Indigenous Australian approaches, the findings are closely evaluated in terms of Yunkaporta's

(2009) eight-way Aboriginal pedagogy framework. Finally, discussions of the data are opened up to allow more general evaluation using other aspects of Indigenous Australian methodologies and approaches, including those of Blair (2015) and Foley (2003). The use of these approaches helped manage and validate discussions of the data while also serving to integrate common elements of the data in the discussion. My intention in doing this was to deliberate on insights into theoretical and pedagogical ideas that might provide understanding in the answering of my research question while privileging Indigenous Australian methodologies and ‘ways of Knowing’.

In sub-question 1, I asked the participants how they see an Indigenous drama text as an opportunity for theatrical exploration. The question itself positioned NIVSSDTs as observers of their own engagement and/or potential engagement. This question was designed to elucidate findings from the first data source—the four semi-structured interviews conducted with the four participants. Although these interviews were used as a primary source of information for discussion of this sub-question, the opportunity for further exploration of elements of this question was evident in the individual visual journals and the focus group discussions.

In sub-question 2, I endeavoured to probe how participants visualised an Indigenous Australian drama text for the purpose of them gaining insights, knowledge and understanding. This question primarily concentrated on the second data collection phase, i.e. the visual journals of the four participants. Other information, discussion points and explanations were found in the third data collection phase, i.e. the focus group discussions. The insights offered in the focus group discussions were also used to reveal how NIVSSDTs visualised an Indigenous Australian drama text to further their own knowledge and understanding of that text and Indigenous Australian perspectives in order to engage with that text in a teaching process.

In sub-question 3, I investigated how participants ‘turn’ or translate their understandings of an Indigenous drama text into practical formats. The intentional use of the words ‘turn’ or ‘translate’ in this question refers to the ‘cultural turn’ movement (Dikovitskaya, 2005 & Steinmetz, 1999) and focus on meaning and meaning-making as situated in an interpretivist research approach as well as the complex interrelationships between power and knowledge. The writers of the Australian National Curriculum documents frame this engagement in terms of cultural identity (ACARA, 2009, p. 6), and the framing of engagement with Indigenous Australian cultures under the umbrella of the discourse of cultural identity challenges the constructs of knowledge and identity in the Australian educational curriculum.

The understandings, examinations, strategies and narratives of the participants in interacting with an Australian Indigenous drama text were coded using themes and conceptual frameworks primarily derived from Indigenous Australian academics. Yunkaporta’s (2009) eight-way Aboriginal pedagogy framework (the Story, the Map, the Silence, the Signs, the Land, the Shape, the Backtracking and the Home-world) was used as the primary conceptual framework through which the data was initially viewed. Primary evidence was collected through descriptions of each of the case studies individually within the lens of the Indigenous Australian knowledge systems fundamental to Yunkaporta’s approach. Yunkaporta’s approach also helped to circumvent ‘hybridity of border thinking and constructs’ (Blair 2015, p. 15) while attempting to privilege the landscapes of Indigenous Australian theories and theorists.

4.2 Teacher 1 – Alison

Alison is a 48-year-old female NIVSSDT who has taught drama for 12 years. During the period of my research, she was teaching in a suburban Melbourne Victorian suburban secondary government school. She has taught approximately five Indigenous Australian play texts in her teaching career.

As indicated in her semi-structured interview (see Appendix 1), Alison was conscious of the horrific effects of colonisation on Indigenous Australians. She used teaching Indigenous Australian history and stories as a way to promote understanding. For her, exploring an Indigenous Australian drama text was an opportunity to challenge her own perceptions of Indigenous Australian histories, cultures and knowledges. Alison's engagement comes from her empathy for Indigenous Australians, particularly through the lens of historical events. Her personal interactions with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders have enriched her teaching practice. One of the central findings of this study is that teachers like Alison, who are empathetic towards Indigenous Australian perspectives and who seek out and consult Indigenous Australian knowledge holders directly, tend to engage with an Indigenous Australian drama text in ways that effectively enrich their knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian perspectives and 'ways of Knowing'.

4.2.1 Alison in relation to sub-question 1.

In sub-question 1, I asked the participants about how they see an Indigenous drama text as an opportunity for theatrical exploration. Alison's emphasis in her teaching on more specifically historical and sections of the text, such as the 'Invasion Poem', reflected her perception of colonialism (as a significant socio-political and historical event) as an entry point for engagement with the play. In this sense, Alison saw the study of an Indigenous drama text as an opportunity for theatrical exploration of engagement with the consequences of colonialism. Perhaps the reason Alison why framed her exploration of the text in terms of Indigenous Australian experiences of colonialism is that she saw the study of an Indigenous Australian play text as an opportunity to move beyond colonisation towards reconciliation through recognition and atonement.

When asked about her reasons for choosing the Indigenous Australian drama text *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, Alison discussed her work with an Indigenous Australian elder on various

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plays. When working on this project, she had found that the school where she taught at the time had been built on a sacred Indigenous Australian site. In response to this knowledge, she actively sought out a local Indigenous Australian elder to create a theatrical exploration of this (Appendix 1, 02:48 – 04:52). This recollection indicated a unity of Alison's engagement with Indigenous Australian experiences and cultures that has led her to actively engage in partnerships with local Indigenous Australian knowledge holders in meaningful discourse. What was also striking in Alison's explorations was that she used the process of studying an Indigenous Australian drama text as an opportunity to connect with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders.

Alison stated in the semi-structured interview that she was looking forward to studying and seeing a performance of this Indigenous Australian play again. This enthusiasm was related to the opportunities she saw for theatrical exploration. She considered her explorations as enriched by her use of some visual representations of Indigenous Australian cultures such as the map of the Indigenous Australian nations (see Appendix 5, Slide 6). While Alison did not seem to use visual representations of Indigenous Australian cultures with any specificity, this still acted as a positive backdrop and discussion point for her and her students about the rich diversity of Australian Indigenous cultures (See Appendix 5).

In her semi-structured interview, Alison stated that she thought that exploring the experiences and language of the Australian Indigenous drama text was most effectively done through movement work (Appendix 1, 16:53-19:45). She considered movement and gesture, as opposed to facial expression and vocal work, as a more neutral way for students to explore the play and its characters. She was conscious of not allowing her students to stereotype, or create derogatory portrayals of Indigenous Australian characters. This indicated that Alison saw that study of an Indigenous Australian play as a way of extending the explorations of her

students in performance and acting elements while also trying to create approaches for non-Indigenous students to explore Indigenous Australian characters in a respectful manner.

4.2.2 Sub-question 2 and how Alison visualised an Indigenous Australian drama text.

Alison was concerned for the way that Indigenous Australian stories, histories and connections to the Land have become lost, obscured and built over by non-Indigenous people and cultures (Appendix 9, 61:48 – 65:42). In particular, Alison showed an awareness of the importance of Country to Indigenous Australian contexts through the way she worked with local Indigenous Australian Elders and knowledge holders. These ideas are explored in the interview with Alison (Appendix 1) and the Focus Group Discussion 1 (Appendix 9). What is most evident in this data is that Alison saw the purpose of the study of an Indigenous Australian drama text to be creating theatrical explorations that embrace Indigenous concepts such as Country and the Homeworld through the perspectives of Indigenous Australian narratives.

Empathy for Indigenous Australian perspectives is apparent in the sensitivity with which Alison approached character representations (Appendix 6, Slides 1 & 2) and the visual representations of Indigenous Australian motifs and symbols (Appendix 6, Slide 3). She showed growth in knowledge of Indigenous Australian ways of portraying character in play texts, as well as an understanding of the specific cultural ownership of certain motifs, symbols and designs in relation to Aboriginal Australian nations (Appendix 1, 05:56 - 08:39). Another level of knowledge and growth of understanding is evident in the way that her students questioned whether the use of Indigenous Australian dot painting motifs was potentially disrespectful and questioned whether permission should be sought for use of images and motifs (Appendix 1, 06:38 – 07:05 and Appendix 5, Slide 3).

A perspective more empathetic to Indigenous Australian standpoints is evident in Alison's later work in the process of exploration. More traditional Western approaches are used when examining the play after seeing the performance, and story, imagery, expressive skills,

gesture and facial expression were used as mechanisms to discuss the performance of the play (Appendix 5, Slide 14). Alison also tended to separate these elements and encouraged her students to discuss discrete aspects of the performance as separate staging elements rather than integrating them with the story in a way more conducive to Indigenous Australian drama as discussed by Indigenous Australian theatre theorists, such as Casey (2004 & 2012). In this sense, Alison's later explorations can be seen as moving towards a greater reliance on more non-Indigenous constructs and approaches in order to build knowledge and understanding. One example of this is the use of black and white images of predominately male Indigenous Australians in her later exploration sessions. These photographs often depicted more stereotypical images of Indigenous Australian males in remote settings with no contextual information about the Indigenous Australian nation, culture or historical background of the photographs or their subjects (see Appendix 5, Slides 26-31). Indigenous Australian protocols about the use of images of deceased persons are strict and complex, and information regarding this use is widely available in education documents such as the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guidelines for Drama/Theatre Education* produced by Drama Australia (2012). Alison's use of these photographs as projected backdrops for exploratory performances by the students can be seen as culturally insensitive and derogatory, directly undermining the understanding and empathy shown towards Indigenous Australian perspectives evinced earlier in Alison's explorations and process.

4.2.3 Alison's responses to sub-question 3 regarding her 'turn' or translation of an Indigenous Australian drama text.

As an NIVSSDT, Alison 'turns' or translates her understandings of the Indigenous Australian drama text *The 7 Stages of Grieving* into practical formats, addressing some of the concerns of the Australian National Curriculum and foci of the VCE Theatre Studies curriculum and exam criteria. In investigating the Indigenous Australian drama text as a way

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to elucidate meaning against a backdrop of horrific historical atrocities committed against Indigenous Australians, Alison explores the complex interrelationships between power, disempowerment and knowledge for Indigenous Australian peoples and cultures. She also addresses some of the topics of interest to the Australian National Curriculum (ACARA, 2009) by helping her students practically discover the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders through the consequences of colonial settlement for Indigenous Australian communities, past and present.

Alison ‘translated’ her perceptions into a range of practical physical explorations using Western theatre practitioner techniques, such as Grotowski’s ‘Poor Theatre’, Boal’s ‘Image Theatre’ and Artaud’s ‘Theatre of Cruelty’ (Appendix 5, Slides 15-17). Encouraged by Alison, her students framed historical events, stories and themes from the Indigenous Australian drama text (particularly taken from Scene 10, entitled ‘Invasion Poem’) towards creating a more situationally empathetic standpoint (see Appendix 5, Slides 16-24). This work was extended by Alison to include exploration of material through the use of certain emotional and thematic words from the play such as grief, loss, mourn, pain, guilt, love, emptiness and nothing (see Appendix 5, Slides 23 and 24). From one perspective, Alison’s desire to further her knowledge and the knowledge of her students through framing her engagement in terms of empathy appears successful. However, other elements must be taken into account in discussing and analysing Alison’s explorations and translations in her practical work.

In her translation of her explorations into practical formats, Alison used photographs predominantly depicting Indigenous Australians in positions of slavery, servitude and in more remote locations (Appendix 5, Slides 25-34). This is ironic when we consider the authentic, positive and genuine empathy evident in the way that Alison attempted to approach and engage with Indigenous Australian culture, history, people and perspectives in her early explorations. When guided by Indigenous knowledge holders Alison’s engagement was more individual and

direct, as seen in the interview (Appendix 1) and the first focus group discussion (Appendix 9). However, when working independently, the approach taken by Alison may appear to show some deficiency in her understanding of how to embed Indigenous Australian perspectives in her work with students. Alison's practical work with her students meets many of the objectives of the Australian National Curriculum to practically explore the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the consequences of colonial settlement for Indigenous communities. Nevertheless, the lack of continuous use of specific Indigenous Australian standpoints, unified contexts, cultures and Country, may make Alison's work eventually devalue rather than privilege Indigenous Australian cultures and knowledges. In terms of the elements of the Australian National Curriculum, Alison could be seen here as acknowledging the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but there is no evidence of her directly privileging Indigenous Australian perspectives in her later practical explorations.

4.2.4 Alison's engagement and growth of knowledge using visual methodologies.

The use of visuality or visual methodologies provides a rich lens through which to view Alison's engagement. Her emphasis on specific sections of the text, such as the 'Invasion Poem', reflects her perception of colonialism as a significant historical event and an entry point for engagement with the play. These events may be motivated by her empathy for Indigenous Australians' experiences of colonisation and dispossession, but on another level, she may frame her exploration of the text in this way because she sees the study of an Indigenous Australian play as an opportunity to move beyond colonisation towards reconciliation through acknowledgement and expiation.

Aspects of Alison's engagement can be examined in terms of reception theory (Hall, 1980). When asked about her reasons for choosing the Indigenous Australian drama *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, Alison described how she previously sought out a local Indigenous

Australian elder to create a play with her students (Appendix 1, 02:48 – 04:52). This indicated in Alison's actions what Hall (1980) identified in his reception theory as the framing of knowledge in a meaningful discourse (pp. 136-137). Alison demonstrated what Hall (1980) described as conversion of a point of contact into a narrative that becomes a communicative event with meaningful dialogue (pp. 133 & 137).

While Alison stated that she saw it as important to use visual representations such as the map of Indigenous Australian nations to strengthen awareness and engagement, a scopic regime analysis using the ideas of Smith (2005) might interpret the simple use of devices such as a map as more of an aestheticization or idealisation of Indigenous Australian relationships to Country when specific calibration and contextualisation is not evident (pp. 484-486). In this sense, we may see Alison's aestheticization or idealisation represented by the Horton *AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia* she uses in her classroom. This reflects a complex combination of the desire to engage authentically with Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives with the potential to reinforce a visual regime of neo-colonialism. However, it should be noted that the genuine connections and previous engagement that Alison has had with Indigenous Australian cultures and individuals diffused some elements of neo-colonial perspectives potentially evident in these processes and representations.

The use of visual teaching materials as a learning tool is a regular feature of Alison's explorations. Alison visualised and used representations of Indigenous Australian people (particularly those of historical nature) to develop understanding of the historical atrocities inflicted on Indigenous Australian peoples. In terms of Hall's reception theory (1980), Alison's visual representations attempt to create a meaningful discourse and narrative, representing a negotiated position (p. 137). However, the lack of representations that embed or privilege Indigenous Australian perspectives and viewpoints in her visual representations was an

impediment for Alison, keeping her from moving more towards what Hall (1980) described as oppositional positioning.

In her visual journal, Alison indicated that she engaged with local Indigenous Australian knowledge bearers and that she used information from this engagement to create spaces and opportunities for students to explore these perspectives. The mention of the use of symbolic elements of Wurundjeri culture such as pebbles (as opposed to the dot painting elements that Alison initially wanted to use) exhibits some understanding of the specific symbolism of individual Indigenous Australian cultures. More problematic pictorial elements in Alison's visualising of her explorations involved her use of images, specifically her primary use of predominantly black and white photographs of deceased Indigenous Australians in rural, outback and remote Australian locations (Appendix 5, Slides 25-34). This could be seen by many as disrespectful to some Indigenous Australian people and their cultures. The use of these images by Alison is prefaced with a short statement about Indigenous Australian protocols surrounding photographs and representations of deceased Indigenous Australian people were intended to be used to challenge stereotypes. However, without the identification of specific contexts, cultures and Country of those represented, it is possible that Alison reinforced dominant paradigms through the use of this material. This would seem to indicate what Hall (1980) describes as hegemonic positioning, where dominant conventions are used to represent Indigenous Australians and their cultures (p. 136). Alison's engagement as reflected in her visual journal does not suffer from the trivialisation of Indigenous Australian cultures, however it does indicate what Smith (2005) describes as some assimilationist and colonialist perspectives (pp. 289-290).

Visual methodologies reveal that Alison's engagement with the play and the knowledge of Indigenous Australian histories, peoples, cultures and perspectives was primarily built through the historical lens of colonisation. This may represent an objectification of Indigenous

Australian history and experience in terms of primarily colonial experience, and may also indicate Alison's desire to acknowledge and understand the effects of colonisation on Indigenous Australian nations, cultures and peoples. Another perspective is that this historicalization is an honourable point of initial engagement and indicative of the empathy that Alison identified as important to her engagement (Appendix 1, 09:25 – 09:42) and her use of the play as an opportunity for atonement and reconciliation. It is ironic to note that Alison ultimately still chose the events of colonisation as a central framing point for her engagement, as in terms of Hall's reception theory (1980) this point of engagement can be considered to affect Alison's 'way of seeing', creating a more hegemonic positioning whereby ideological reproduction is inadvertent but still reinforced (pp. 136-137).

4.2.5 Alison's engagement and growth of knowledge using Indigenous Australian perspectives.

Alison's engagement and the growth of her knowledge was analysed through the lens of Indigenous Australian methodologies. To help inspect the data privileging and focusing on Indigenous Australian approaches, the findings were closely examined in terms of Yunkaporta's (2009) eight-stage model of cultural interface. Following this, discussions of the data were then opened up to permit more wide-ranging inspection using other aspects of Indigenous Australian methodologies and approaches, including those of Blair (2015) and Foley (2003).

4.2.5.1 Alison's engagement using 'the Story' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

The Story of Alison's engagement with Australian Indigenous culture, history and perspectives as told in the first focus group discussion (Appendix 9) begins in earnest at university, when she discovered some of the horrific historical events surrounding Indigenous Australian peoples. She states,

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I was quite horrified when I was 19 and I went to university and I discovered that wells were poisoned and all of these things add up. At first, I didn't believe it. That's not - they are not my ancestors and after more discovery and research I found it was right. I was horrified... (Appendix 9, 45:01 – 45:32)

These realisations have led Alison to engage with individual Indigenous Australian cultures and people in more direct ways, perhaps indicating what Yuval-Davis regards as productive cultural interaction (Yuval-Davis 2006, pp. 199-201). As revealed in her semi-structured interview (Appendix 1) and in the first focus group discussion (Appendix 9), Alison has also sought guidance from Indigenous Knowledge Elders on more than one occasion in her teaching.

In her interview, in the first focus group discussion and in her work with students, Alison chose to tell personal stories of the Indigenous knowledge keepers she had encountered. Sometimes these stories were distressing for Alison to retell.

The difference is that I haven't been in their shoes, I haven't actually experienced this and an Indigenous teacher would have their life stories... give the example of a young performance artist who was recording with us in Mont Albert... He came down from Queensland and he was recording and he came back from the Mont Albert train station and he said to me, he was all of nineteen, and he said to me, 'Someone wanted to give me money to have sex with them' and I said, 'What?' (Pause) And for him it was something that happened all the time but for me, I was so angry, and [it was] because he was an Aboriginal boy. (Appendix 1, 25:47–27:03)

Alison was concerned by the way Indigenous Australian history and stories are hidden. She was also concerned with her perception that non-Indigenous Australians are not conscious of Indigenous Australian history prompting her to make her initial contact with an Indigenous Australian Elder.

One of the English teachers said to me 'Do you realise that _____ (name of previous school withheld) is built on sacred aboriginal ground?' And I said ah, 'What?

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What?’ And that sent me on a journey and what happened is I ended up contacting an Aboriginal elder _____ (female Indigenous Australian Elder's name withheld) and we wrote a play together. (Appendix 1, 02:55 – 03:39)

This sense of awareness and empathy is something that Alison appears to pass on to her students. This can be seen, for example, when her students were creating a play with Indigenous subject matter and she suggested some elements of dot paintings be used for the set (see Appendix 5 Slide 3 and Appendix 1). Her students made her conscious of the inappropriateness of this proposal.

A: ... the students said ‘Miss you can't do that’ and I said ‘What?’ And they said ‘You can't do that, you have to ask for permission, you can't just put dots on stage. We have to make sure that that's acceptable’. (Appendix 1, 06:50 – 07:28)

This is significant and unusual in the context of this study, that Alison encouraged her students to speak up and question the appropriateness of statements and actions even when this involved the actions of their teacher.

The story of Alison’s visual journal (Appendix 5) shows how Alison began work with her students on the play through using a map of Indigenous Australian nations and their homelands (Appendix 5, Slide 6). The later stages of Alison’s visual diary explored how students reflected on scenes from the play through lesson outlines and videos. This part of the visual journal again reflected how discussion and the use of physical theatre forms, such as Boal’s Image Theatre and Grotowski’s Theatre of Cruelty, were important for Alison’s students as they studied the play (see Appendix 5, Slides 14-22).

4.2.5.2 Alison’s engagement using ‘the Map’ from Yunkaporta’s cultural interface model.

The Map of the learning journey of Alison’s engagement as revealed through the semi-structured interview, the visual journal and the first focus group discussion showed her conscious engagement with Indigenous Australian histories, peoples and perspectives. She saw

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Indigenous Australian plays and as vital signposts on a map that started at a point of some ignorance and moved towards deeper engagement and reconciliation.

Alison began with empathy towards Indigenous Australians and their histories and stories. She initially envisioned starting the process of exploration of the with her students by having them reconnect with the location of their school, thinking this would lead them to further acknowledge the local Indigenous histories, cultures and aspects of the notion of Country.

We are in Wurundjeri land and there is a spot on the hill that is local land, so start at a local point, and then have them think ‘What does it mean for us?’ Then, moving into the world of the play, I will use the PowerPoint, which will lead us on to various aspects of research...Then, I mean the pre-text is ‘What do you know about aboriginal culture?’ [and] ‘What do you actually know?’ ... ‘What about here on this land here? What do you know about here?’ (Appendix 1, 14:41 - 16:15).

Alison originally also thought that the theatrical approaches of Realism and Stanislavski’s ‘Magic If’ would be useful for students to explore the issues and perspectives in the play. However, as her visual journal showed, physical theatre techniques became more important when combined with more open small group discussion (Appendix 5, Slides 9-12 and 14-22).

When recalling what happened when the students saw the performance, Alison admitted that the students reacted more to the imagery, the non-verbal (presumably physical and gestural) elements and the use of sound in the production.

The words were used for inclusion and exclusion and privilege. Some of the images of this play are very moving, so confronting, and if you just let that emerge it is amazing how students start to react to it. So, when we actually saw the play the students were very confronted by the non-verbal, the sound – it just sucked you up, there was no voice, [you had a feeling of] being taken away, drawn in. (Appendix 9, 50:40-50:54)

The final signposts in Alison's map of her engagement with the Indigenous Australian text involved students discussing and physically exploring the play. It is interesting to note that Alison was able to have students revisit the words of the text through using them as a backdrop for performance explorations (Appendix 5, Slides 23 and 24). While the final exploration, which involved students writing their own script outline in parable form exploring issues and histories surrounding Indigenous Australians, could be seen on some level as a form of cultural re-appropriation, it also could be interpreted as a valuable form of exploration and a genuine attempt by Alison for students to engage with and represent the ideas of the text dramatically.

4.2.5.3 Alison's engagement using 'the Silence' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

The Silence for Alison is not just the non-verbal or the thoughts that are best expressed in actions and gestures, it is also the silence and lack of acknowledgement that she feels non-Indigenous Australians, historical documents, institutions and politicians keep about Indigenous Australian culture, history and peoples. When starting work with students on the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, Alison began by considering the Silence about Indigenous Australian cultures, histories. She felt that Indigenous Australian cultures had to be recognised more and she started by asking her students to read a statement of acknowledgement and respect and then encouraged them to think about how these statements have significance for Indigenous Australian cultures (see Appendix 5, Slide 6).

When Alison began exploring the play prior to viewing the performance, she encouraged her students to represent more difficult aspects of Indigenous histories, stories and individual experiences, such as 'invasion', 'dispossession' and 'colonisation', in non-verbal ways.

I think the language is important, but I think through movement...I will go back to the 'Invasion Poem' again—what I might do is say to the students, 'How would you create this through movement?' (Appendix 1, 17:01 – 17:33)

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After seeing the play with her students, Alison seemed struck by the non-verbal elements in the performance, such as the interaction of the Indigenous Australian actress Chenoa Deemal with projected imagery and multi-media production elements in the performance space. She saw the device of projecting words onto the actress as symbolic of the actress forging her own Indigenous identity in the performance space.

The sign or image or the ideas which were really striking to me and my students was the idea of not having a voice... (Appendix 9, 62:01-62:15)

In reflecting on her engagement with the play and Indigenous Australian issues in the focus group discussions, Alison revealed concern for the way Indigenous Australian histories, issues and communities have been silenced. She saw that one of the difficulties in using the play to approach these elements was addressing the gap of understanding between non-Indigenous Australians who have grown up in privileged backgrounds and the silence that surrounds Indigenous Australian stories and disempowerment.

4.2.5.4 Alison's engagement using 'the Signs' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Alison appeared to recognise that Indigenous Australian paintings and symbols are specific to individual Indigenous Australian nations and cultures and she sought the guidance of Indigenous Australian Elders on matters of their use. She saw that problems arise when non-Indigenous Australians attempt to represent Indigenous Australian cultures and she encouraged her own students to be critical and question appropriation and misappropriation. When Alison attempted to describe some of the signs or symbols of her engagement with Indigenous Australian perspectives she continuously returned to 'stepping into others' shoes' (Appendix 1 and Appendix 9) as a symbol of her belief in empathy as the key to engagement.

That is really important to me, and I say that is the one thing you get from the moment that you've stepped inside someone else's shoes—where a student says, 'I have never seen it from that perspective'. (Appendix 1, 01:56 – 02:02)

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A more problematic use of ‘signs’ and symbols in Alison’s explorations was her use of black and white photographs of deceased Indigenous Australians as stimulus for and backdrop to student dramatic explorations (Appendix 5, Slides 25-34). This could be seen by many as being disrespectful to some Indigenous Australian people, while also perpetuating stereotypes of Indigenous Australian cultures since most of the images are of Indigenous Australian males in rural, outback and remote Australian locales or in tribal or less contemporary contexts. Census statistics would belie these portrayals as inaccurate representations (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

However, it seemed evident from her statements in the interview (Appendix 1) and the first focus group discussion (Appendix 9) that Alison attempted as a teacher to confront and challenge stereotypes through the use of these teaching materials. The practical work of her students, as shown in the visual journal (Appendix 9, Slides 10-12 and 14-22), appeared to also indicate that Alison used more stereotypical images of Indigenous Australians as catalysts for discussions. In this sense, photographs like those that Alison used can be seen as signifiers that are questioned and challenged. However, one significant finding when considering aspects of Alison’s use of resource materials like photographs is that greater thought and critical thinking needed to be involved in the choice and use of photographs of Indigenous Australians when presented in educational contexts.

Although the use of language aspects from the Indigenous Australian in explorations can be most readily identified as belonging to Yunkaporta’s third stage, the Silence, Alison pinpoints the loss of Indigenous Australian languages and her feeling that Indigenous Australian cultures and peoples have ‘lost their voice’ as a significant ‘sign’. She does this by connecting the loss of language to staging elements used in the performance (Appendix 9, 61:55-62:05).

4.2.5.5 Alison's engagement using 'the Land' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Alison worked with her students on understanding the engagement of Indigenous Australians with 'the Land' or 'Country', to increase her students' and her own awareness of the Indigenous Australian peoples' connection to Country. Alison was conscious that some schools she had worked in have been built on sacred Indigenous Australian land sites, and she seemed concerned that her students were not conscious of the local Indigenous history and culture of the land they study on.

While Alison acknowledged that the emphasis that the Australian National Curriculum and Australian Victorian Essential Learning Standards (AUSVELS) place on Indigenous Australian perspectives, may be of some help, ultimately she felt this had little impact on her teaching. She saw that acknowledging Indigenous Australians and the Land publicly at occasions like assemblies was important, but she ultimately endorsed building knowledge and understanding especially through plays and performances with Indigenous Australian subject matter.

I mean, we have been doing the AUSVELS, which is the Victorian version of the National Curriculum, and to be honest, it has been a bit of a hole in our curriculum...but it is an interesting thing, because it has taken me a long time in this school's culture to just establish the performing arts. And this is like, with 'Cloudstreet' for example, I said to a kid, this is really important that we are acknowledging the land. (Appendix 1, 20:35 – 21:09)

In the context of studying the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, Alison put particular emphasis and energy into working with students on the 'Invasion Poem' in the play. Even in the early stages of this research, Alison mentioned during her interview that the 'Invasion Poem' was a part of the play she wanted to concentrate on.

I looked at *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. One of the poems, 'The Invasion' which is interesting, and with 'The Invasion' what I did was I made a PowerPoint and it's interactive... [Participant A shows the interview a screenshot of a PowerPoint with words]. Words come up from the

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text, such as ‘pain’, and what I actually did was read the ‘Invasion Poem’. So, I gave the students a visual backdrop, just to give them the context, the world of the play, and this was striking with imagery—well I thought it was striking. (Appendix 1, 11:52 – 12:26)

While the ‘Invasion Poem’ is a section of the play that Alison personally felt created a sense of Indigenous Australian connection to the Land, it is the further in-depth work with this poem done by her students which revealed the importance that Alison placed on Indigenous Australian relationships to Country. The physical sense of the connection between Indigenous Australians and the land was given particular emphasis in later explorations in Alison’s theatre studies classes (Appendix 5, Slide 14). It is interesting that only one or two of the photographs of Indigenous Australians used as stimulus by Alison showed representations of Indigenous Australian subjects in photographs on their Country (Appendix 5). A number of the photographs shown in her visual journal display Indigenous Australians in environments and circumstances created by non-Indigenous colonialists (Appendix 5, Slides 27, 28 and 29). While these representations in themselves may not seem derogatory since the majority of contemporary Indigenous Australians live in cities and towns (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017), some tendencies towards limited visual representations are still evident in Alison’s visualisations

4.2.5.6 Alison’s engagement using ‘the Shape’ from Yunkaporta’s cultural interface model.

For Alison, the notion that Yunkaporta (2009) calls ‘the Shape’ took on different meanings and approaches during her process of engaging with the play and performance of *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. Initially, she seemed to see the Shape in terms of the episodic structure of the play itself. Later in the process, as revealed in the first focus group discussion (Appendix 9), she saw shape more in terms of her engagement with the text and Australian Indigenous history and happenings that made her aware of the changing levels and depth of her engagement.

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I think, for me, I find this emotionally— I find the journey of this play very draining and I find that really... [Pause]. I found when I did the play previously at _____ [name of previous school that Participant A worked at has been removed] and the thing is I came to one of the schools that seems to me one of the ‘whitest’ schools in the state...so I had to adapt to that culture. And the thing is, that play coming back on the playlist has absolutely [pause] has shaken me up. So, I say to myself ‘What have you been doing? What have you been doing? There is no Welcome to Country at this school, there is nothing. No one here acknowledges anything and the play has come back to me to say ‘wake up, wake up’. The thing is that we get caught up in our lives, [but] awareness and Indigenous culture is always an undercurrent and [there is an] underlying sense of responsibility as a teacher and as an educator to ensure that there is that balance. (Appendix 9, 75:09 - 76:54)

In trying to give a form to the shape of her engagement, Alison said she identified it as the shape of a whirlpool. In both the focus group discussions and the semi-structured interviews, she explained this by revealing instances when she became aware again of the effects of colonialism.

It’s like, for me, swirling. A little whirlpool and it’s like when you’re in it, like *The 7 Stages of Grieving* this year, I’m immersed in it. I am right in it. Now, the local issues and other stuff and what happened at _____ [name of previous school Participant A taught in has been removed] sent me in and now I am right up to the top of it but it is all happening underneath. It’s all happening. It is like, I took my son down to Gippsland and we had a profound experience and we decided to go to an Aboriginal museum down there and it hit us like a ton of bricks. One farmer killing 10,000 Indigenous people and they have got it here in this tiny little museum...I have told the kids of my experience of this...It jolts me, it is like an electric shock. But it is interesting in the culture of a school and the school I am in, how do we as teachers [confront it], I mean there are so many issues that schools are trying to make priorities, and yet this is the land we are living on, this is where the schools are. There is a memorial on the hill 2 km away from my school and on that hill there were Wurundjeri living, breathing—and I say to the kids ‘Where are they now? Do you know any Aboriginal people now?’ (Appendix 9, 77:12 – 79:42)

4.2.5.7 *Alison's engagement using 'the Backtracking' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.*

As an NIVSSDT, Alison consistently backtracks, reforms and reconstructs her own understanding of Indigenous Australian culture and 'ways of Knowing'. She revealed in her semi-structured interview that she saw drama as a vehicle for potential engagement with Indigenous Australians.

...the process of [for] every drama student is to step into someone else's shoes and understand the world from another person's perspective...This is a subject where there are no boundaries, and where you should exercise your imagination. (Appendix 1, 02:23 – 02:35)

Alison saw engagement and understanding as also coming from the way she attempted to engage her students in the stories and issues revealed in the play. Important in her backtracking of the effectiveness and potential engagement created by her explorations and teaching is her feeling that student engagement fluctuates during the 'journey' of exploring an Indigenous Australian play text.

I mean, it is great, the kids go through the journey of understanding with the play and they engage in the stories and the issues—and then they disengage and there is nothing. (Appendix 9, 82:24 – 82:52)

For her, this student 'disengagement' seemed to be part of a larger cultural and political disengagement, which she referred to consistently in her semi-structured interview (Appendix 1) and the first focus group discussion (Appendix 9). Alison also argued that assessment and examination foci in the Victorian education system heighten fluctuations in engagement, particularly when applied to the study of an Indigenous Australian drama text at the senior secondary school level.

Our culture disengages. I mean I have other things too and the students have lots of subjects in Year 11 and Year 12, and they say, 'That is really great. I really care about these issues and Aboriginal culture'. Then they move on. I mean, what is the point of education here? Is

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it to give them [School Assessed Coursework] SACs and tasks to pass their VCE or is it to make them think, engage and want change and [to] change things. I am sure my principal would say, 'You have to be really careful there'. (Appendix 9, 82:54 – 83:28)

The sense of cultural 'disengagement' by non-Indigenous Australians from Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' is something that Alison found disturbing. Her work on the play has made her once again think about how much non-Indigenous Australians have to learn from Indigenous Australian cultures and people.

The thing is, the biggest issue for me is that we have assumed so much about Indigenous culture. But the absence of real knowledge is a worry. Indigenous 'ways of Knowing' and the magic of the knowledge about the land, going back to the Land, and the way that Indigenous people have lived from the land – you know what, we are losing all that, and we could learn from them. We might need that knowledge again the way the world is going and all that richness of learning we are losing...I saw a documentary, and there was a point when I wanted to do it—all these people who go up to the Outback and they are going to teach and save the cultures, they last a year and they come back, you know... 'What is genuine authentic help to the Indigenous communities?' 'How do we give genuine, respectful help to people who have been so fragmented?' And sometimes these people, these communities are just trying to keep it together themselves. (Appendix 9, 83:34 – 86:03)

4.2.5.8 Alison's engagement using 'the Homeworld' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

For Alison, finding the 'Homeworld' and connecting with local Indigenous Australian Elders and knowledge holders was an important aspect of her engagement with the Indigenous Australian text. As previously mentioned, she has consulted and jointly devised dramatic works with Indigenous Australian knowledge experts on the local level. In the semi-structured interview, Alison recalled how when teaching at a previous school she contacted a local Indigenous Australian Elder to hear the stories about this area. Her networking and consultation with this Indigenous Australian knowledge holder did not end with that project and has become a larger, continuous part of her engagement more broadly with Indigenous Australian cultures,

peoples and perspectives. In engaging specifically with the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, Alison was able to use some of the knowledge and understanding she has gained from her contact with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders. She conveyed to her students the importance of empathy and attempting to see the world from other people's perspectives. This is evident not only in her statements about empathy in the interview (Appendix 1) and the first focus group discussion (Appendix 9), but also in the videos of her students exploring the text prior to seeing the play in performance (Appendix 5, Slides 9-12).

The fact that the performance seen by Alison and her students involved an Indigenous Australian performer and that the same performer conducted a question and answer session after the performance appeared to have provided another point of engagement for Alison. However, she did have concerns that her students hesitated from more committed and deeper levels of engagement and an ultimate sense of responsibility that the process offered for non-Indigenous Australians. She saw the process of exploring and teaching an Indigenous Australian play with her students as an opportunity for non-Indigenous Australians to take greater responsibility for the actions perpetrated against Indigenous Australians.

The play, and all its elements, and the comedic elements, it was really interesting when we came back to discussion of the play after seeing it, that feeling in the students of 'Okay, we've experienced that'. I think there was a feeling with the students of realising 'Oh, this is an assessment task, when did that happen?'...So, the students see the performance, then do the 'Invasion Poem' at school after, and one of my top students, a really creative boy, he just changed. His reaction to this text just changed and I could see that he pulled himself back and stepped away from the impact. He did the exercise and they went through it and they had some really good discussions but, then I questioned myself, 'Should they be changed by this?' I am asking myself these questions and some kids seem to feel 'These are my ancestors that did this and we've got to take responsibility'. And of course, there is that other attitude—'I didn't do it. I didn't do this'. (Appendix 9, 65:53–67:58)

It is interesting to note that Alison 'backtracks' to realise the importance of the real connections she has made with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders. This suggested that

she believed her engagement and her challenging of her students is part of her ongoing commitment to and empathy with Indigenous Australian people, culture, history and perspectives.

... the culture of a school and the school I am in, how do we as teachers, I mean, there are so many issues that schools are trying to make priorities, and yet this is the land we are living on, this is where the schools are. There is a memorial on the hill 2 km away from my school and on that hill there were Wurundjeri living, breathing—and I say to the kids ‘Where are they now? Do you know any Aboriginal people now?’ (Appendix 9, 77:12–79:42)

4.2.5.9 Alison’s engagement and knowledge through the wider lens of Indigenous Australian perspectives.

Alison’s discussion methods and the way she encouraged her students to explore scenes from the play in physical ways showed that movement explorations helped her to represent and visualise aspects of the Indigenous drama text. These explorations orchestrated by her as a teacher displayed Yunkaporta (2009) identified as the modelling of Indigenous knowledge in action (pp. 159-161). The openness that is revealed through Alison facilitating these physical explorations with her students further indicated her willingness to explore and build understandings of Indigenous stories, history and culture for the mutual benefit of her and her students through practical activities.

One disadvantage of this this method was the linear approach that she adopted when working on physical representations. Blair (2015) highlights how new elements are incorporated in learning and cultural interaction through Indigenous ecological diversity when built around the circular integration of connections, voices, relationships and ceremonies (pp. 70 & 142-143). The living processes, patterning and inter-relatedness of Indigenous Knowings that help to embody and establish Indigenous Australian ways of Knowing seemed to be excluded from Alison’s engagement using physical and movement-based explorations. Despite Alison’s earlier awareness of the loss of stories, languages and voices of many Indigenous

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Australian cultures and her consciousness of the symbolic and real connections of Indigenous Australians to the earth and land (Appendix 9, 61:48-63:35), she was not able to embrace these elements in any sustained or unified way in her practical explorations with her students.

The question of how Alison as an NIVSSDT ‘turns’ or translates her understandings of the Indigenous Australian drama text *The 7 Stages of Grieving* into practical formats is expanded when her approaches to Indigenous Australian perspectives are considered. In order to address the concerns of the Australian National Curriculum, Alison translated the text into a practical opportunity to re-engage with Indigenous Australian history, perspectives and stories. Alison concentrates on exploring power relationships in her work with students and she specifically explores with this by highlighting the horrific historical atrocities committed against Indigenous Australian peoples. This historical emphasis addresses elements of the Australian National Curriculum (ACARA, 2009) in terms of helping her students practically discover the story of the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and of the consequences of colonial settlement for Indigenous nations.

I approached it from the point of view of storytelling before we even started... even before reading the script or anything else, the fact that Australian history, initially when I was growing up, I did it from my own perspective, was quite biased, and what I received in my own education, when I look at it now, I think it is quite disturbing. (Appendix 9, 41:46 – 42:14)

Yet, this approach is problematic when we consider Foley’s (2003) Indigenous standpoint. Foley (2003) might consider Alison’s methods and practices as valuing Indigenous Australian perspectives while physically and metaphysical distorting Indigenous Australian history, perspectives and knowledges by objectifying them (pp. 44-49). Foley (2003) might see Alison’s methods as superficially addressing some aspects of Indigenous Australian viewpoints rather than embracing the holistic ‘ways of Knowing’ evident in the Indigenous Australian stories presented in the Indigenous Australian drama text studied.

On another level, Alison's use of some techniques and teaching resources, such as photographs of Indigenous Australians in remote Australian settings and representations of depravation, may reinforce stereotypes and non-Indigenous prejudicial perspectives of Indigenous Australian people and cultures. Alison's techniques and approaches as indicated in her visual journal (Appendix 5) do, through their representations and lack of specific cultural contexts, display some aspects of what Yunkaporta (2009) sees as assimilationist perspectives, whereby Indigenous cultural knowledge is represented in a way that reinforces Western artistic and aesthetic constructs and approaches (pp. 122-124). Alison's visual journal (Appendix 5), further showed how physical drama exploration work by students using Western non-Indigenous approaches, such as those of Boal's Image Theatre and Grotowski's Poor Theatre techniques, may be both positive and assimilationist in their effects. As an Indigenous Australian researcher, Blair (2015) validated the methods of Boal specifically as a way to illuminate Indigenous Knowings and Indigenous research methodologies by unifying space, place, dance, use of body, community engagement and association to convey transformative moments (pp. 209-210). However, Blair (2015) warns of the hybridity of some of these approaches when specific sense of the relationships to Country and stories are not emphasised or reinforced (pp. 19-21).

Alison's discussion methods and the way she encouraged her students to explore scenes from the play like the 'Invasion Poem' in physical ways displayed what Yunkaporta (2009) identifies as the modelling of Indigenous knowledge in action (pp. 159-161). However, her physical explorations with her students seem to work from Indigenous content initially and through a linear process, progress to physical representations based on Grotowski's 'Poor Theatre', Boal's 'Image Theatre' and Artaud's 'Theatre of Cruelty' (Appendix 5, Slides 15-17). This progression starts from a point of valuing Indigenous Australian content but ceases to integrate and use Indigenous Australian methods and representations later in the processes.

Blair (2015) advocates continuous incorporation of Indigenous Knowings through adapting an Indigenous ecological diversity when built around the circular integration of connections to Country, voices, relationships and ceremonies (pp.70 and 142-143). Despite Alison stating that she values the symbolic and real connections of Indigenous Australians to the earth and land (Appendix 9, 61:48-63:35), she seems unable in her explorations with her students, to assimilate what Blair (2015) described as the living processes, patterning and inter-relatedness of Indigenous Knowings (pp.142-143).

4.3 Teacher 2 – Bernadette

Bernadette has taught drama for twenty-one years and she is a 48-year-old NIVSSDT who teaches in a regional Victorian Catholic secondary school. She has taught four Indigenous Australian dramas. The way her school creates connections with Indigenous Australian communities and individuals through events such as assemblies and her school's direct contact with a remote Indigenous Australian community were perceived by Bernadette as central to her engagement with Indigenous Australian culture, history and perspectives. Important points for Bernadette's engagement with Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives were her studies at university and her ongoing interest in feminism. She believes emotional engagement and empathy are vital to growth of understanding and knowledge when studying a play like *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and she thought attending a performance actively helped her students engage more with Indigenous Australian perspectives.

4.3.1 Bernadette in relation to research sub-question 1.

When Bernadette was asked about her rationale for choosing the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, she mentioned previous Indigenous Australian plays and plays with Indigenous Australian content that she had worked on. It is significant to note that Bernadette almost exclusively chose Indigenous Australian plays when they were present on the senior playlist.

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This may suggest that she valued Indigenous Australian plays when nominated for a VCE Theatre Studies playlist for study. One of the foci for her choice of Indigenous Australian plays are those that concentrate on the Stolen Generation. The reason for this choice may be her own interest in this period of Australian Indigenous history and the horrific effects of these experience on Indigenous Australians. Another reason may be the relatively high profile of many of the Indigenous Australian plays that explore the Stolen Generation.

In affirming her belief and commitment to plays with Indigenous Australian content, Bernadette chose to explain this as an Indigenous ‘angle’ (Appendix 2, 01:09–03:07). Her use of the word ‘angle’ rather than ‘perspective’ is significant, since it indicates her own particular way of ‘seeing’ Indigenous Australian perspectives. Her choice of the word ‘angle’ suggests that she sees Indigenous Australian perspectives as either a part of, an adjunct to or a diversion from her own NIVSSDT perspective or position.

Bernadette viewed studying this play was part of the wider context of her and her school’s engagement with Indigenous Australian culture. She noted how her school exhibits active curricular and extra-curricular commitment to and contact with Indigenous Australian communities, cultures and perspectives, and she expressed her intention to use *The 7 Stages of Grieving* as an opportunity to engage students in broader discussions about social justice (Appendix 2, 03:22–05:06). This indicates a more complex set of approaches to Indigenous Australian history, perspectives and peoples that moves away from the more non-Indigenous hegemonic perspectives suggested by other aspects of Bernadette’s engagement. While Bernadette’s school facilitates experiences that value Indigenous Australian cultures, peoples and communities through direct interaction, she saw the significance these experiences as a part of her own growth in her appreciation of Indigenous Australian peoples, cultures and ultimately perspectives.

4.3.2 Sub-question 2 and how Bernadette visualised an Indigenous Australian drama text.

Bernadette visualised *The 7 Stages of Grieving* in a way that engaged with and revealed the meanings embedded in that text in specific ways. She emphasised in her semi-structured interview (Appendix 2) and her visual journal (Appendix 6) that she believed her exploration of the play would instil a sense of space, rituals and historical elements, awareness and empathy in her students. Evidence of her belief is shown in a variety of ways in her visual journal (Appendix 6) in addition to the specific contexts and aesthetic aspects that she emphasised in her explorations and teaching of the text.

The concentration by Bernadette on the exam framework, social and political contexts, theatrical conventions in the play script and Indigenous Australian cultural conventions (Appendix 6, Slide 1) suggest that her primary emphasis was not on growth of understanding of Indigenous Australian perspectives but on the use of an Indigenous Australian play to examine the play within the confines of a non-Indigenous exam situation. One example of the lack of flexibility inherent in this approach is demonstrated in Bernadette's discomfort with the forthright and assertive performance style of Indigenous Australian actress Chenoa Deemal. One of the reasons for this uneasiness was Chenoa Deemal's use of her own Indigenous Australian language. Another seemed to be the physical, gestural and focal elements of her performance. Yet another source of Bernadette's disquiet may lie in her loss of authority as a teacher and exponent of drama in a space where she feels comfortable and more authoritative. Her perception of feeling on the periphery as a 'white person' watching performances of plays like *The 7 Stages of Grieving* (Appendix 6, Slide 4 and Appendix 9, 36:43–39:37) is complex in terms of the way that she visualises both the play text and the text in performance.

Also important to Bernadette's visualisation of the play text is the way she framed many elements of her explorations in terms of the context and elements of the exam framework (Appendix 6, Slide 1 and Appendix 9, 04:34–05:03). This suggests that the framing of many

of the activities, methods and conventions used by Bernadette structured the elements of her explorations in terms of the criteria and content of the VCE Theatre Studies exam formats. This shifts the framing of the imagery and cultural codes that Bernadette saw in the play into terms of what might be valued in exam settings.

4.3.3 Bernadette's responses to sub-question 3 regarding her 'turn' or translation of an Indigenous Australian drama text.

Bernadette appeared to 'turn' or translate her interpretation of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* into practical formats through primarily selecting elements of the play that she saw as best able to address the core elements of the VCE Theatre Studies exam tasks. In doing this, she can be seen as interpreting and translating events, stories and their dramatic representations within the constructs of her fields of expertise in drama, theatre and the VCE Theatre Studies curriculum. She states criteria in the first focus group discussion that her primary consideration when studying the Indigenous Australian drama was the assessment for the Exam Performance Text Analysis task (Appendix 9, 28:59–29:27). In addressing her engagement with and translation of Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives into practical formats, Bernadette did acknowledge the very strong knowledge and connection Indigenous Australians have to land, story, spirit, belonging and dreaming (Appendix 9, 29:52–31:26).

Bernadette's translation of her interpretations and understandings of Indigenous Australian stories, cultures and histories seemed to be 'translated' initially within the landscape of her own non-Indigenous beliefs and perspectives. The 'turn' of her non-Indigenous cultural positioning and attitudes about Indigenous Australian identity and perspectives appeared to have occurred in increments, particularly when early in the exploration process when great empathy is shown in close explorations of sections of the play text such 'The Invasion' poem. However, more hegemonic, non-Indigenous perspectives and approaches are evident in Bernadette's visual journal (Appendix 6) when she frames her work in terms of the VCE

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Theatre Studies curriculum and the VCE Exam Performance Text Analysis task criteria. This repositioning of her explorations objectifies Indigenous Australian stories, experiences and perspectives, re-calibrating and appropriating them in terms of non-Indigenous constructs that alter their foci and the relationships between the stories and perspectives they explore.

One aspect of the relationship between power and knowledge evident in Bernadette's practical explorations is how she sought to value and categorise the Indigenous Australian stories and perspectives in *The 7 Stages of Grieving* in terms of the VCE Theatre Studies Exam criteria. For her, exploration of Indigenous Australian cultural and performance perspectives was less important than the Western performance constructs embedded in the exam criteria, including acting style, motivation, interpretation, expressive skills, the use of focus in the performance space, use of language, the actor/audience relationship, acting and theatrical style (VCAA 2014b, p.27). Bernadette demonstrated this in her practical explorations and her aestheticization of Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' (see Appendix 6, Slides 1-11). Bernadette displayed a complex combination of idealisation of Indigenous Australian relationships to Country (see Appendix 2) and a denigration of these relationships by calibrating knowledge and meaning primarily in terms of Western theatre paradigms and theories (see Appendix 9).

Further aspects of Bernadette's 'cultural turn' are evident in her reflections on her practical explorations and the tendency that she has towards shifting power and knowledge constructs away from Indigenous Australian perspectives towards Western non-Indigenous processes at crucial points during her exploration processes. On another level, Bernadette's methods may simply reflect her inability to accommodate and translate Indigenous Australian symbolic, visual and non-verbal aspects of drama performance into theatrical constructs which she believes are useful to examination of texts. However, this is compounded when we take into account other aspects of her 'translations'.

Bernadette's feelings of alienation and disempowerment, which arose when she felt confronted in her position as a non-Indigenous audience member by the use of Indigenous languages in *The 7 Stages of Grieving*'s, may be interpreted as a signifier of prejudice or disempowerment or an opportunity for a more negotiated engagement (Appendix 9, 22:29–23:58). She compares the feeling she had to that of an English as a Second Language (ESL) student when reflecting on her viewing of the performance. She also stated that she found Chenoa Deemal 'unapologetically forthright and assertive' (Appendix 6, Slide 4) and that she felt on the 'peripheral' when Indigenous Australian languages were used during the performance and not 'translated' for the predominately non-Indigenous audience (Appendix 9, 22:35–23:58). This indicates that the performance and the play succeeded in unsettling 'settler' Australian audience members like Bernadette putting Indigenous voices and language in the foreground and perhaps replicating the feeling of alienation that a non-Indigenous Australian may feel in a strongly Indigenous place.

4.3.4 Bernadette's engagement and growth of knowledge using visual methodologies.

When Bernadette affirmed her belief and commitment to plays with Indigenous Australian content she chose to explain this content as an Indigenous 'angle' (Appendix 2, 01:09–03:07). In visual methodologies, 'angle' along with 'focus' and 'position' illustrate the reality of perception. Her positioning of Indigenous Australian perspectives is perhaps informed by cultural perspectives that relegate Indigenous Australian perspectives to the status of mere diversions from dominant non-Indigenous or Western constructs. Bernadette could be seen as thus using this Indigenous Australian play as an opportunity to reiterate her own perspectives of Indigenous Australian culture while ultimately reinforcing dominant cultural biases and attitudes about Indigenous Australian cultures.

Bernadette's feeling of alienation as a non-Indigenous Australian viewing a performance in which Indigenous Australian languages were used (Appendix 6, Slide 4 and Appendix 9, 36:43–39:37) is a complex reaction that reveals elements of how she views the performance space as well as the dichotomies of meaning she gains from performances and imposes on them. Aspects of Bernadette's viewpoints, such as her realisation that she feels that the majority 'white' audience was placed at the fringes during the performance causing her unease and estrangement, can be viewed in terms of Foucault's (1986) concept of heterotopias—spaces in which power is contested.

The estrangement felt by Bernadette can also be understood in terms of Hall's reception theory (1980) as demonstrating dominant or hegemonic operant systems both in terms of her emphasis on VCE Theatre Studies exam perspectives and her feeling of alienation when confronted by Indigenous Australian languages in performance. However, her visual representations and engagement emphasise social contexts, political movements and some unified perceptions of relationships between the land, language, culture and Indigenous Australian perspectives (see Appendix 6, Slides 1-6). This suggests her engagement with the play text is in transition or movement towards a more negotiated operant position.

The focus by Bernadette on the exam context, social and political contexts, theatrical conventions in the play script and Indigenous Australian cultural conventions (Appendix 6, Slide 1) firmly placed her visualisation of the text in terms of Hall's (1980) concept of hegemonic positioning. A striking example of this can be seen in her admission that she felt uncomfortable with the Indigenous Australian actress Chenoa Deemal's outspoken performance style in the performance space. Bernadette felt that the majority 'white' audience were relegated to the peripheries and made to feel like outsiders (Appendix 6, Slide 4). This suggests that she visualised the text in terms of dominant or hegemonic operant systems, reinforcing dominant cultural biases and attitudes about Indigenous Australian cultures.

Bernadette's translation of her interpretations and understandings of Indigenous Australian stories, cultures, histories, perspectives and knowledges, especially those revealed in her visual journal (Appendix 6), appeared to show subtle oscillation between dominant operant systems that reinforced dominant cultural biases and attitudes about Indigenous Australian identity and a more negotiated position. Further repositioning and objectifying of Indigenous Australian perspectives and knowledges is seen in the exam foci used by Bernadette throughout the exploration process and her shifting of power and cultural codes from Indigenous perspectives to 'angles' of more hegemonic standpoints.

For Bernadette, more importance is put on Western performance constructs to serve exam criteria than on exploration of Indigenous Australian cultural and performance perspectives. While Bernadette exhibited instances of deep engagement where genuine moments of realisation and knowledge building were indicated, her resistance to embracing Indigenous Australian ways of Knowing creates a poverty of vision in her perspectives and approaches. Smith's (2005) discussions of the visual regimes of colonisation indicate that Bernadette's reliance on the constructs of VCE Theatre Studies criteria re-calibrates Indigenous Australian ways of Knowing and obliterates more unified Indigenous Australian knowledges and values (pp.490-491). Bernadette exemplified this through her practical explorations and her aestheticisation of Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' (see Appendix 6, Slides 1-11).

4.3.5 Bernadette's engagement and growth of knowledge using Indigenous Australian perspectives.

Both Bernadette's engagement and the growth of her knowledge about Indigenous Australian cultures, histories, peoples and perspectives are multifaceted, involving a number of techniques and approaches. In this section, I discuss her engagement and knowledge expansion through the lens of Indigenous Australian perspectives beginning with Yunkaporta's

(2009) eight-stage model of cultural interface. Here, specific aspects of Bernadette's engagement are discussed in relation to the knowledge she exhibited throughout the duration of this research. The discussion then shifts to broader discussions about Bernadette's knowledge and engagement through framing her explorations using Indigenous Australian approaches, such as those of Blair (2015).

4.3.5.1 Bernadette's engagement using 'the Story' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

As an experienced drama teacher, Bernadette saw her school's connections with Indigenous Australian culture and direct contact with a remote Indigenous Australian community as central to her engagement with Indigenous Australian culture, history and perspectives (Appendix 2, 03:15 - 05:06). This is fundamental to Bernadette seeing the narrative of her cultural interface as effective, ongoing and constructive. Other elements of 'the Story' of her engagement with Indigenous Australian perspectives and culture come from the connection she sees between the growth of her political awareness at university and her consciousness of Indigenous Australian stories and history.

Central to Bernadette's engagement with 'the Story' were her university studies in sociology and politics and her active interest in feminism. This is supplemented by the time Bernadette has spent in remote Indigenous Australian communities through her school.

Two of the things I have studied in my life have been sociology and politics, so I am quite interested in social structures and I have spent some time in my life in Indigenous communities—my school has a few connections with Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory...I think that one of the other things in terms of Story is that I am interested in feminism and I am interested in the personal as political and the political as personal. I teach in an all-girls school but I do have a boy from another school who comes into my class. So, the story of introducing this text was very much about making it personal and finding anecdotal ways of connecting to the text...finding parallels as much as possible between the stories and storytelling which was in the text [*The*] *Seven Stages of Grieving* and

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the personal stories of the students. And this is a text that features women's stories quite prominently, I think it is still balanced but there is a strong women's voice in that text.

(Appendix 9, 34:15–36:09)

One of the primary reasons that Bernadette decided to choose *The 7 Stages of Grieving* was because she wanted her students to experience this text and value the stories and knowledge in the play.

It occurs to me that we privilege a text, which is one of the reasons I chose [*The Seven Stages of Grieving*] where we had a choice of six plays and production we could take the students to—because I did want the students to have an experience of a text like this... and experience [the play] in a number of ways, and I wanted to 'privilege' an Indigenous drama text and I made that choice last year. (Appendix 9, 108:01–108:47)

Indigenous Australian rituals are important for Bernadette. Rituals such as 'Welcome to Country' are significant for her as are the performance rituals done by Chenoa Deemal when performing the play. The use of Indigenous Australian music elements and performance rituals form part of the overall framework of the story of the play in a performance context for Bernadette.

Prior to seeing the play we had a significant welcome to Country done in the space just before the play. And they played the didgeridoo and we had a student from one of the local high schools who was Indigenous who followed around the visitors with clapsticks to keep the beat and an Indigenous local woman... Then the actor came out... [and enacted out] pouring of the rocks, sort of glow-in-the dark or phosphorescent rocks, and all of those rituals. I would call them sacred rituals in a performative space, you know the link, the morphing between what is sacred and what is performed... (Appendix 9, 57:38–58:20)

4.3.5.2 Bernadette's engagement using 'the Map' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Mapping the journey of Bernadette's engagement as shown through her semi-structured interview (Appendix 2), her visual journal (Appendix 6) and the first focus group discussion (Appendix 9) revealed that Indigenous Australian plays and characters are vital landmarks for

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her as points of engagement and understanding of reconciliation. The images that Bernadette chose to use to describe her map were a tornado or a spiral that moved as she led her students through prepared material about the play and revisited scenes for exploration.

It's big and it is like a [hand gestures indicate a tornado] like a tornado... And I suppose, each time we came back to a scene [there was] that circular movement of going through a scene and going somewhere else and coming back to that scene. Each time we came back to a scene, we had more to say... We found more connections, so we would be going deeper so that is where the spiral comes down to a point. (Appendix 9, 36:48–37:32)

Some indication of the way that Bernadette mapped this journey of exploration can be found in her visual journal (Appendix 6). In a number of slides Bernadette took a photograph of the notes she put on a whiteboard for her students (Appendix 6, Slides 5–11). It is interesting to note that although Bernadette later chose to describe her map in terms of the image of a spiral, her notes as she presents them to her students are linear, using bullet points and other direct techniques to address the VCE Theatre Studies Study Design (VCAA, 2014b). These elements also seemed to act as guiding signposts, helping students to navigate their explorations of the play.

After Bernadette and her students saw the performance, spatial, set and other stagecraft elements became the focus of her journey with her students. Bernadette was able to connect these elements to broader elements of Indigenous Australian history and she felt a genuine sense of the emotional impact of the performance and its imagery.

But after we saw the production the visuals of it had such an impact on us even though they had been described in the text. That idea, that image of taking the pebbles and placing them completely outside of what had been established as the performance space, the ceremonial performance space. That visual of taking a child, the metaphor of the pebble, of taking a child out of its community and placing it somewhere else gave us such a sense of what is at the heart of the Stolen Generation... The emotion that that aroused in us all [the teacher and her students], how potent that was as an image, people being disconnected. Have I gone too far away from the question? (Appendix 9, 38:20–39:37)

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Other important parts of the map of Bernadette's journey were the theatrical techniques and structures she used to explore the play. In her semi-structured interview, she emphasised how important the language of the text was to her and how she encourages students to use the words in the text and explore it moving around the classroom. She appeared to encourage students to freely explore the text, allowing the language and its rhythms and meanings to the centre of her exploration processes.

Oh yeah, it's a beautiful piece with vignettes, so we will start and get onto the floor with it. We will do a 'jazz read', 'punctuation read' and letting the words tumble out, getting awash with the words...I will perhaps give them a scene to work on in pairs and perhaps I'll set one as the director and give the other one the acting...And then they would present the work and they would talk about what they had noticed, [and] others would talk about their response to it. Others would talk about it not having seen the text before. Approaching it in very practical [way], you know, getting up on the floor as a way in, not just a practical way but a way in through the body. (Appendix 2, 10:45–12:01)

Physical and movement exploration of the text was an important part of the way that Bernadette mapped her work with students. Also important to this was Bernadette's focus on theatre approaches such as Brechtian stylistic elements (Appendix 6, Slides 5, 6 and 8). In the first focus group discussion, after Bernadette and her students had seen the show and explored the text at length in class, these stylistic elements were mapped in terms of what happened during the performance rather than in terms of Western theatre constructs, forms and theories. This helped to chart these elements for students more in terms of the performance.

4.3.5.3 Bernadette's engagement using 'the Silence' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

For Bernadette, 'the Silence' is embedded primarily in Indigenous Australian protocols and rituals as well as in performance rituals and non-verbal storytelling elements such as actions and gestures. Like Alison, for Bernadette 'the Silence' also includes the silence about

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Indigenous Australian culture, history and peoples as well the way that imagery, gestures and spatial elements were used in the performance of the play studied (Appendix 9, 51:23–58:20).

In the work she does in class with students, ‘the Silence’ did not seem to be a central aspect of Bernadette’s teaching, except during movement exploration work and Epic Theatre work in which the projection and sign techniques of Brecht were used (Appendix 6, Slides 1, 2, 5 and 9). This work took on greater potency for Bernadette in terms of the use of these and other non-verbal elements in the performance. She commented that she felt that the actress also used non-verbal elements to invite her and other audience members into the performance space in a way that made her feel privileged and obligated to acknowledge the sacred and important aspects of Indigenous Australian stories.

Then the actor [actress] came out and created that liminal space with the pouring of the rocks, sort of glow-in-the dark or phosphorescent rocks and all of those rituals, I would call them sacred rituals in a performative space, you know the link, the morphing between what is sacred and what is performed... it can often be a private ritual that an actor and company goes through but this was about making explicit the place and space we were going to...you are about to engage in something different and sacred and important and we must acknowledge it. (Appendix 9, 56:10–57:34)

Gestural elements of the performance and the actress’s manipulation of the earth and pebbles were potent non-verbal elements for Bernadette. For her, the actress’s transformation of set elements combined with her creation of symbolic shapes and purposeful gestures created a strong, silent language that reinforced the messages and contexts of the play beyond the use of text and words. The use of actions, at certain points in the performance, was seen by Bernadette as representative of the destructive impact that non-Indigenous Australians have had on Indigenous Australian cultures. This seemed to elicit a reflective attitude, which made her contemplate the collective responsibility that must be taken by non-Indigenous Australians for this destruction.

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So for me, this moment of beginning was very important and that made other moments powerful, like that moment in the play when the actress sweeps her hand through the beautiful circles she has created to destroy what she established and it has so much more impact because we saw it being made and we bought into it and we agreed that were entering somewhere sacred and so the potency of that gesture had a real kind of impact. I mean, what if we had established a culture here and it was just destroyed and wiped away? (Appendix 9, 57:36–58:20)

4.3.5.4 Bernadette's engagement using 'the Signs' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Bernadette has considerable knowledge of theatre and drama and the reading of verbal and non-verbal signs to elicit meaning in plays during performance. After seeing the play in performance, she looked to place a great deal more emphasis in her work with students on the signs and signifiers shown in the performance of the play. Early in her visual journal, Bernadette revealed how she worked with her students on representing political and social issues in performance. She saw the use of projections onto the actress's body and clothes in the presentation of the play from a feminist perspective and used this in her teaching.

We discussed the idea that emerged out of the feminist movement that the political is personal and the personal is political, as well as discussing ways in which the body has been reclaimed (usually by women) as a site of empowerment and resistance to the dominant patriarchal hegemony. We spoke particularly about the references in the playscript to words appearing on the dress of the performer...and ceremonially painting the body, as examples of reclaiming culture and identity from colonial attitudes. (Appendix 6, Slide 1)

The use of space and the gestures in Deemal's performance were highly important to Bernadette as a set of signs. She appeared to see these signs as adding layers of meaning to the words spoken. She felt that gestures sometimes became more important in communicating meaning during performance, particularly when Indigenous Australian languages were used and Bernadette had to rely on movements and gesture to engage with and glean meaning from some stage sequences.

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The space and the gestures were very important in the performance but with the script... the words were shown as a site of privilege and exclusion both ways. When Indigenous languages [are used] I feel excluded because I don't know what is being said and on this occasion the actress used her own local language, which was not in the printed text that we had read. It did mean the same thing in the end but we weren't to know that because I was expecting other words and, so, words and signs and symbols—so the gestural stuff—I was describing was very important ... (Appendix 9, 58:31 - 59:43)

For Bernadette, the way the actress used her body in space during the performance also became a way that themes such as power and disempowerment, language and the loss of language could be explored and engaged with. This was particularly significant for Bernadette when the actress's body was used in the production as a surface for the projection of images, words and letters during the presentation.

... using the body in the space as a site of the story ... and to have the actress ending up with a 'Z' as a way of marking her as the lowest of the low and the way that words position us and the way that words can exclude, or include us... Yes, the gestural and the visual stuff was important ... and maybe teaching Indigenous languages is the space that has to be reclaimed because words have been done their worst in squashing and leeching so much in terms of voice and culture from Indigenous people. (Appendix 9, 59:52 - 61:36)

4.3.5.5 Bernadette's engagement using 'the Land' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

To increase her awareness of the connections that Indigenous Australian nations and peoples have to 'the Land', Bernadette appeared to find engagement on one level through the initiatives of her school and on another through the process of studying the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. For some teachers, the regular use of 'Acknowledgement of Country' can eventually become a routine that lacks meaning and significance. For Bernadette, however, 'Acknowledgement of Country' and 'Welcome to Country' are two ceremonies that appear to resonate with her.

We have Welcome to Country a lot at school and the Indigenous connection to land at my school is very important...and every time I hear an acknowledgement of Country it reminds

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me of something I am normally oblivious to the rest of the time, that I don't have it. For me it's a reminder of an intelligence and a 'way of knowing' and an awareness [about]... Indigenous people... There is such a clarity in the difference of my way of existing on this land and the Indigenous way of existing on the Land and I admire that. (Appendix 9, 70:05 - 71:08)

Perhaps for Bernadette these ceremonies reveal to some extent the importance of the relationships that Indigenous Australians have to the land. In the focus group discussions, Bernadette isolated the moment in the performance when the actress built piles of stones on stage. She saw this as important as an image for building knowledge about the relationships of Indigenous Australians to Country. In this understanding, Bernadette exhibits some awareness of what some Indigenous Australian theorists like Casey (2012, p.27) call the 'story mass', which involves understanding story, culture and communities being connected through the embodiment of cultural knowledge in symbolic actions and storytelling.

...there is a bit here and a bit there but it is certainly not complete. So, I suppose as an image it is like those mounds of stones—so there is a bit here and there but it is all connected to a bank of cultural knowledge or story. My knowledge is a satellite. (Appendix 9, 71:39 - 72:18)

Bernadette's awareness of the special relationships that Indigenous Australian nations and peoples have to Country is significant for her perspective on teaching an Indigenous Australian play text. She sees these connections as evident in the relationships and ceremonies that her school engages in with local and remote Indigenous Australian communities (Appendix 9, 70:05 - 71:08).

4.3.5.6 Bernadette's engagement using 'the Shape' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

For Bernadette, 'the Shape' did not seem to take form until she saw the play in performance. This is reflected in the imagery she used to describe shape in terms of the shape of her developing awareness and understanding through the process of studying this Indigenous Australian play. She sees this process as having the shape of piles of stones, which she sees as

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representative of the building of her knowledge. These ‘mounds of understanding’ or ‘ways of Knowing’ (Appendix 9, 37:15–38:02) were for her an eclectic mix of her studies at university, her interactions with Indigenous Australian cultures and her experiences seeing and teaching Indigenous Australian plays.

Bernadette’s focus in her university studies on politics and feminism is cited by her as helping her to understand and engage with Indigenous Australian perspectives. She stated that she is interested in social structures and the political as personal and the personal as political (Appendix 9, 33:53–36:18). This often seemed to translate to her using her own personal stories and the stories of her students as starting points for exploration processes into other areas. She contextualises this in a statement she wrote on her classroom board before practical explorations with her students as, ‘personal experiences that represent the experience of many’ (Appendix 6, Slide 6). This, along with notes she gave to her students about shifting power structures in the play including what she terms the movement from patriarchal to matriarchal to matrilineal lines (Appendix 6, Slide 8) gives the sense of the shape of the matrilineal elements in the play as embedded in the stories revealed.

The shape of Bernadette’s knowledge about Indigenous Australian culture, stories and perspectives is also informed by her visits to remote Indigenous Australian communities. This also seemed to be represented in the spiral shape she refers to in discussing her exploration and understanding of the play (Appendix 9, 36:28–37:10). Bernadette highlights the way different elements (such as performance rituals, stories and more of what she identified as ‘academic’ elements such as politics and sociology) build and shape her understanding and knowledge (Appendix 9, 72:35–73:30). She specifically recognised her knowledge of the Stolen Generation as growing over a number of years and she sees direct interaction with Indigenous Australian cultures through her school as building on the shape of her experience and learning in a methodical way (Appendix 9, 73:47–74:52).

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A sense of the shifting of the shape of Bernadette's engagement with and understanding of Indigenous Australian experiences, cultures and perspectives is also evident in the progression of her explorations seen in her visual journal (Appendix 6). Bernadette moved from broad personal statements and observations describing her interactions with teaching the play other similar theatre exploration experiences (Appendix 9, Slides 1-4), to more contextual information about *The 7 Stages of Grieving* (Appendix 9, Slides 5-6), to information more centred on the VCE Theatre Studies exam criteria (Appendix 9, Slides 7- 12), including sample answers for the exam. The re-shaping of Indigenous Australian perspectives, stories and ideas in the text into an almost exclusively exam-based framework can be seen in some ways to undermine the experiences and growth described by Bernadette as a spiral and mounds. This reframing imposes the shape and paradigms of non-Indigenous conceptions of theatre and ideas about what knowledge is valid in education on discussions, explorations and examination.

4.3.5.7 Bernadette's engagement using 'the Backtracking' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Bernadette saw her understanding and engagement with Indigenous Australian cultures as growing through experiences in which she has come into contact Indigenous Australian culture. While she recognised feeling that the nature of her knowledge was incomplete, she felt that the continuous study of Indigenous Australian plays helped build a strong sense of Indigenous voices in education.

I think my understanding has grown through this play. I feel like, sometimes I dip into Indigenous culture spasmodically. I think it is good, even powerful to look at something like a play like this that gives such a strong voice to stories and experiences that are probably quite common for a particular group but not my experience directly really. I think it is good through studying and doing Indigenous plays that it [Indigenous Australian cultures] keeps appearing and emerging on my radar. (Appendix 9, 86:22 - 86:53)

When ‘backtracking’, Bernadette was particularly struck by the humour of Indigenous Australians, which she found both disarming and engaging. This caused her to pause and contemplate her position of privilege as a non-Indigenous Australian.

There have been some things that have been reinforced. One of the things that was reinforced was the humour of Indigenous Australians. My own personal experience is that there is something quite particular about Indigenous Australian humour that is both disarming and quite non-confrontational even though the material dealt with might be difficult for a ‘white’ privileged person to listen to. (Appendix 9, 87:05–87:58)

Certain other aspects of Indigenous Australian culture and its representation in Indigenous Australian plays prompt Bernadette to re-engage with Indigenous Australian culture and perspectives. For Bernadette, an important value of Indigenous Australian drama is that it gives a strong voice to Indigenous Australian stories and experiences.

In ‘backtracking’ and trying to connect to Indigenous Australian culture through the play, Bernadette acknowledged that the stories and issues raised in the play were important to her. However, she also recognised that she tended to focus on more familiar drama aspects, such as dramatic structure and dramatic form.

The content is certainly Indigenous and the idea of ritual in the play [and] the performance—you find that in a whole lot of theatre. There is a particular quality in the actions, the story and the content that makes it Indigenous. For me, I still have a question about what makes an Indigenous piece of theatre. Is it just the content and the stories? Is there—I don’t know if there is anything which is particularly Indigenous Australian in terms of structure and form. (Appendix 9, 88:51 - 89:53)

4.3.5.8 Bernadette’s engagement using ‘the Homeworld’ from Yunkaporta’s cultural interface model.

For Bernadette, ‘the Homeworld’ can be seen as represented through engagement with and connection to Indigenous Australian cultures explored in the play. Some connections were

made through rituals, research or her understanding of some political contexts. She particularly engaged with ritual and spatial aspects of the performance of the play.

... it [ritual and spatial elements in the performance] was particularly strong because I knew that this student had come from another school that my friend teaches at, and the manner in which the Welcome to Country was done was not tokenistic—and sometimes it can be...but here it was genuine and strong and created a sort of force field. Then the actor [actress] came out and created that liminal space with the pouring of the rocks sort of glow-in-the dark or phosphorescent rocks and all of those rituals, I would call them sacred rituals in a performative space ...the morphing between what is sacred and what is performed, you know, it's so strong for me... I thought this was a beautiful way to begin, a beautiful type of storytelling and a great way of making prominent a quality of theatre that perhaps is not always foregrounded—preparation of the space. (Appendix 9, 54:43 - 56:20)

The research Bernadette conducted is evident throughout her visual journals (Appendix 6). It is interesting to note that despite her earlier emphasis on political and social contextual foci, Bernadette chose to focus on analysis of the production later in her exploration of the play. She contextualises these elements to help form connections to the 'Homeworld', or local perspectives of Indigenous Australian cultures.

I did some research, partly because I was meant to interview Chenoa Deemal, the actress who did this production, for an Education Department broadcast. So, I had done a little research around the original production with Deborah Mailman and around Chenoa Deemal and some analysis of the text... I did try to feel that m[y understanding by analysis of the play and the history of the production and the people involved in the first production and this one, prior to going to this performance. (Appendix 9, 92:09–93:05)

Bernadette made examining the performance a central part of her process of engagement. She saw the production choices made in the performance of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* as confrontational, even though she thought helped accentuate larger contextual and thematic issues evident in the play.

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Yes, the performer being Indigenous seemed central to the text and the performing of it. One of the things that struck me with having an Indigenous performer is how confrontational and unapologetic it was. I probably would go so far to say that at times it was aggressive. And I quite liked that, maybe it is masochistic, the ‘white’ sense of guilt. I quite liked how unapologetically this Indigenous actor [actress] presented stories of Indigenous injustice and powerlessness and disenfranchisement and dislocation and that it was not necessarily conciliatory. I liked that...there were quite a few moments in the performance which were not polite or about being sensitive to a predominantly ‘white’ audience. It was about being ‘loud and proud’ and declaring the true experience of being Indigenous. (Appendix 9, 93:14–94:52)

Bernadette was able to use moments from the performance to elaborate on what she thought was the way forward for developing a ‘Homeworld’ of genuine engagement between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians.

... we feel like we made progress [towards reconciliation] and nothing happened and we feel like we are here again. And enough time has passed since Rudd’s ‘Sorry’ speech for us to think... And what we have seen in the interim is business as usual because there are vested interests that will not give up anything...What ‘white’ people need to actually do is give up a bit of space to Indigenous people. They need to give up some power and...[this is] one of the things that I was so aware of through the performance and the Q & A. I mean, it was important that Kevin Rudd said ‘sorry’ and that was very powerful...But you can’t help but think that a couple of years after that they can put those words and the speech into this performance and the makers of the production have to stop before they reach the word ‘sorry’ because the job is not finished yet and in some ways it doesn’t feel like we have come very far anyhow. (Appendix 9, 95:46–98:09)

4.3.5.9 Bernadette’s engagement and knowledge through the wider lens of Indigenous Australian perspectives.

Bernadette used the ceremonies and connections that her school community had established to engage with Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives. She seemed to value the opportunities that studying an Indigenous Australian play and seeing an Indigenous Australian actress perform that text provided. The experience of exploring the play both through the play text and through a live performance shifted non-Indigenous perspectives for

Bernadette to the periphery. She acknowledged the objective of including an Indigenous Australian drama text in the VCE Theatre Studies curriculum for an exam task meant that the text for her was seen primarily through the lens of the exam.

For Bernadette, the performance of the play was a vital cultural artefact that had to be understood in different ways from the written text. Emotional engagement and an openness of mind and propensity for understanding were important to her. She explained that she believed the process of having students study an Indigenous Australian drama was important, and she felt that this study itself privileged the text (Appendix 9, 108:01–108:47). This is an important finding that may reflect colonial undertones, and it is important to acknowledge the belief of some non-Indigenous Australian drama teachers that an Indigenous Australian text is ‘privileged’ by being placed on a VCE play text list. More specifically, she seemed to feel that placing an Indigenous Australian play on the exam text list privileged it even more. This concept of privileging texts by choosing them for exam text should be critically considered, particularly in terms of how Indigenous Australian texts are ‘framed’ and taught within mainstream, and specifically matriculation, curricula.

The first thing I thought was to compare how this Indigenous text might be taught if it was an English subject task. One of the things that we do in drama [is] we look at a cultural artefact, a performance, and we try to understand it on other merits than just how it is written as a text. We talk about how we have responded emotionally often to what we have read and seen... It occurs to me that we privilege a text... and this is a text they will spend a very long time with... and I wanted to privilege an Indigenous drama text. (Appendix 9, 106:28 – 108:18)

The fact that students spent a considerable amount of time studying the play in VCE Theatre Studies before seeing it in performance was perceived by Bernadette as helping increase empathy among students for Indigenous Australian culture in general. She saw this as particularly important in relation to Indigenous Australian cultures, perspectives and ‘ways of knowing’. However, as Yunkaporta (2009) argues, effective cultural interface encompasses

valuing Indigenous Australian knowledges in their own contexts and narratives, and Bernadette's shifting of the focus of her teaching from the Indigenous stories and contexts in the play to more VCE Theatre Studies perspectives may suffer from what Blair (2015) refers to as a hybridity of border thinking, which involves colonial pillaging of Indigenous perspectives and stories (p. 19). The centrality of the relationships, continuity, holism and spirit of Indigenous ways of Knowing is lost in Bernadette's re-framing of these elements in terms of the constraints of the VCE Theatre Studies exam context.

Foley (2003) maintains that one of the barriers to the understanding and valuing of Indigenous knowledges is the dominance of Western ethnocentric research. He maintains an approach that privileges and values Indigenous processes as well as Indigenous cultural viewpoints and perspectives to validate the contributions of Indigenous standpoints as autonomous and complete in themselves (pp.45-46). By proposing the implementation of Indigenous epistemology and Indigenous standpoint theory, Foley (2003) believed that approaches that value and privilege Indigenous 'ways of Knowing' could emerge and become part of education practices (pp. 44-45). When considering Bernadette's response of feeling like an outsider when watching an Indigenous Australian play being performed, it is possible on one level to see this as a response of a non-Indigenous audience member who lacks real empathy for and understanding of Indigenous Australian perspectives. However, since empathy is one of the key elements that Bernadette states she seeks to develop in her students with regard towards Indigenous Australian culture, other viewpoints must be explored.

4.4 Teacher 3: Corey

At 43 years old, Corey is the youngest NIVSSDT in this study and even though he has taught drama for 16 years, this was the first time he had explored an Indigenous Australian play text with his students. He teaches in an Independent regional Victorian school. Corey's engagement with the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and Indigenous Australian perspectives

centred on cultural and historical aspects. He primarily emphasised physical approaches to exploring the text and on the ritual, symbolic and aesthetic aspects of Indigenous Australian culture and perspectives. Seeing performances by the Indigenous Australian dance troupe Bangarra Dance Theatre has helped to develop Corey's understanding of Indigenous perspectives, and he used representations of Indigenous Australian culture as his primary approach to exploring the Indigenous Australian drama text studied.

4.4.1 Corey in relation to research sub-question 1.

In the semi-structured interview, Corey indicated that because of his dance background, he gravitated towards more movement-based and aesthetic representations of Indigenous Australian culture (Appendix 3, 01:49–02:49). He later indicated that the ritual and symbolic aspects of Indigenous Australian culture are central to the approaches he relied on when teaching *The 7 Stages of Grieving* (Appendix 3, 06:01–07:10). The emphasis he placed on aesthetic representations is interesting when viewed through the lens of visual methodologies.

Corey aestheticised Indigenous Australian culture, often generalising complex relationships and representations in terms of aesthetic forms and artistic expressions with which he felt comfortable. This type of visual regime in the context of engaging with Indigenous Australian history and culture is contextualised by Smith (2005) as representative of the transformation of Indigenous experience and relationships into abstract aesthetic ideas, embodying symbolism as a potential tool of the visual regime of colonisation. Since Corey is relatively new to teaching Indigenous Australian drama texts, this type of aesthetic abstraction may be seen as a specific starting point for drama teachers who do not have extensive experience teaching Indigenous Australian subject matter. This may also be indicative of a more widespread inclination amongst non-Indigenous Australian performing arts teachers to concentrate on aesthetic representations when working with Indigenous Australian texts.

Another potential perspective on Corey's aesthetic abstraction is offered by Foucault's (1986) notion of heterotopias, which are unreal spaces or dichotomies of meaning. Corey's overreliance on abstraction in movement forms as a way of explaining and representing Indigenous Australian cultural constructions and expressions can be seen to disconnect Indigenous Australian perspectives, peoples and culture from their real relationships to Country, place and stories. He also alludes to his use of Indigenous Australian Dreamtime stories in his work with students (Appendix 3, 01:31 and 11:45), his use of animal movements (Appendix 3, 11:50) and ritual dance (Appendix 3, 06:32–07:10). Corey's engagement may indicate a form of cultural displacement that isolates aspects of Indigenous Australian culture and perspectives, disconnecting them from the Country, peoples, histories and stories fundamental to the space these elements normally occupy. Ultimately, Corey does not seem to be aware of the cultural disruptions evident in his approaches. This suggests that certain theatrical explorations and approaches commonly practiced by Australian drama teachers lend themselves to aestheticization and thus create heterotopias that diminish Indigenous Australian perspectives.

4.4.2 Sub-question 2 and how Corey visualised an Indigenous Australian drama text.

Coming from a dance background, Corey visualised *The 7 Stages of Grieving* through physical representations and explorations. The kinaesthetic ways he signified the multifaceted Indigenous Australian cultural experiences, history and perspectives represented in the play are evident in Corey's visual journal (Appendix 7). By using tableaux and Image Theatre to have his students identify physical signs and symbols in specific and passages in the play (Appendix 7, Slides 4 and 5), Corey appeared to aestheticise Indigenous Australian culture. Within the subjects of drama and theatre studies, aesthetic explorations are a common method for approaching play texts to gain a practical understanding of plays. However, a more Indigenous Australian perspective could interpret Corey's aesthetic approaches to the text as representative

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of a form of colonialisation. In fact, the Indigenous Australian stories and cultural representations in the text may be seen as being repositioned, re-calibrated and potentially obliterated by the aesthetic approaches favoured by him. Elements of these processes and their effects are evident in both Corey's visual representations of his explorations (Appendix 7) and his reflections on his processes (Appendix 9, 01:04-22:06).

In his visual journal, Corey tried to balance stereotypical and ultimately disempowering images of Indigenous Australians (Appendix 7, Slide 1) with a range of images that depicted modern, successful Indigenous Australians (Appendix 7, Slide 2). These contemporary representations are primarily affirming, showing Indigenous Australian hip-hop artists and video clips from Indigenous Australian television programs such as *Cleverman*, *Black Comedy* and *Redfern* (Appendix 7, Slide 3). The more open nature of these representations and their use would suggest that Corey's work here represented his movement away from a hegemonic position towards a more negotiated position as reflected through both what is exemplified and how he characterised these elements in his teaching.

The ritual and symbolic aspects of Indigenous Australian culture are the focus of the middle sections of Corey's visual journal and explorations (Appendix 7, Slides 4 and 5). His approaches to these elements appeared to indicate a more limited representation of Indigenous Australian culture and viewpoints. Part of the problem was in Corey's use of generalised representations of Indigenous Australian cultures and his lack of specific attempts at connecting his depictions to specific Indigenous relationships to Country and Indigenous ways of Knowing. Corey's representations indicate the limitations of primarily using Western dramatic exploratory techniques such as tableaux (Appendix 7, Slides 4 and 5) and motivations, intentions and emotions (Appendix 7, Slide 7) without attempting to connect those to specific Indigenous Australian knowledges and practices.

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Corey's visualisation of parts of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* involved a number of elements and a range of approaches, techniques and materials. The use of positive contemporary representations of Indigenous Australians (Appendix 7, Slide 3) and the work of contemporary Indigenous Australian poets such as Cec Fisher (Appendix 7, Slide 6) demonstrated that Corey chose material that is reflective of a broad understanding of Indigenous Australian culture as not merely stereotyped or belonging to the past. However, Corey also maintained that he worked with Dreamtime stories and other elements of Indigenous culture and explored and represented these aspects in movement and dance, which ultimately segregated events, relationships, symbols and stories in the drama text (Appendix 7, Slides 6, 7 and 8).

In visualising elements from the Indigenous Australian play text studied, Corey appeared to segregate different elements from the text and explore these features in isolation from historical elements (Appendix 7, Slide 1) to his investigations of current affairs (Appendix 7, Slides 2) to narrative explorations (Appendix 9, Slide 3) to Boal Image Theatre style explorations by his students (Appendix 9, Slide 4). The inability or resistance of Corey to unify and synthesise these elements showed some of the limitations of the way he visualised his exploratory processes. Corey's visual representations may selectively separate elements of Indigenous Knowings while not directly engaging with or privileging Indigenous Australian connections, voices, relationships and ceremonies and their connections to Indigenous Australian narratives.

4.4.3 Corey's responses to sub-question 3 regarding his 'turn' or translation of an Indigenous Australian drama text.

In translating or 'turning' his interpretation of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* into practical explorations, Corey relied on balancing physical approaches with the constraints of the drama text being studied in the context of the VCE Theatre Studies curriculum (Appendix 9, 01:04–

04:26). He found continuity in physical explorations and translations of the Indigenous Australian stories, history and cultures evident in the Indigenous Australian play studied. His use of primarily physical explorations may be seen on one level as a direct and effective translation of the ideas and contexts represented in the scene into practical movement formats. From another viewpoint, however, Corey's explorations can be seen as simplistic aestheticisations of complex and unified elements characteristic of Indigenous Australian cultural representations and narratives. This suggests Corey's translations are representations of a re-calibration and perhaps colonial aestheticisation of Indigenous Australian experience. Specifically, Corey's focus on more ritualistic and symbolic elements in the text and his physicalisation of these elements into actions imitating spears (Appendix 9, 08:34–10:41), which he saw as 'the traditional corroboree side of Indigenous culture' (Appendix 9, 10:09–10:15) is indicative of what Smith (2005) characterises as a tendency of non-Indigenous approaches towards cultural 'obliteration' (p.490).

In attempting to translate the stories and perspectives in the Indigenous Australian drama text into practical formats, Corey is drawn to symbolic action and the abstraction of dance. This is evident in the emphasis he placed on the ceremonial aspects in the performance of the play and his use of 'iconic' movements and symbolic shapes in the practical explorations he used with students (Appendix 9, 06:45-10:41). While Corey's physical abstractions as cultural translations may be seen by him as a diversification and broadening of his perspective, they can act as a displacement or fragmentation that effect displacement and deviation from Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives.

In terms of Indigenous Australian perspectives and ways of Knowing, Corey's translations of the stories, cultures and perspectives in *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, tends to reflect what Yunkaporta (2009) isolates as the deficient nature of non-Indigenous Australian engagement that segregates the artefacts of Indigenous Australian culture without engaging

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with their processes and perspectives (pp.124-125). His physical explorations are not overt in their representations of colonial discourse, but his emphasis on movement work does tend to function as a form of cultural displacement. The diversity of Indigenous Australian movement forms used by Corey range from more 'traditional' Indigenous Australian animal motif movements (Appendix 9, 08:34-10:41) to modern Indigenous Australian hip-hop forms (Appendix 9, 13:15-15:24). However, eventually these translations become what Yunkaporta (2009) categorises as a dissipation of Indigenous Australian perspectives, community, interpersonal relationships and stories (p.125). This is particularly interesting in light of the work of Indigenous Australian researchers like Casey (2012) who see storytelling as central to understanding Indigenous Australian cultures and describe representations of Indigenous Australia not as a landmass but as a 'story mass', linking the land, communities and histories in a form of visual/verbal mapping (p.270).

In his cultural translations, Corey ultimately re-calibrates and relocates the cultural forms and representations in *The 7 Stages of Grieving* in a way that does not present these practices and forms within the landscape of Indigenous Australian culture. He also separated individual movements, gestures and moments from the play and production and emphasised and interpreted these in a significant portion of his explorations with his students (Appendix 9, 08:34-10:41). The hybridity and singularity of his movement-based approach ultimately can be seen as a hybrid approach, where Indigenous narratives are co-opted into the domains of Western narratives (pp. 15-20). Corey's translation of his understanding of aspects of the Indigenous Australian drama text ultimately offered an interpretation that does fulfil some aspects of the Australian National Curriculum but undervalued elements of Indigenous Australian cultures and relationships embedded in Story, Country and Indigenous Australian ways of Knowing.

4.4.4 Corey's engagement and growth of knowledge using visual methodologies.

Corey's dance and movement background meant that he tended to use more physical techniques to approach the play. His use of tableaux and Boal's Image Theatre when approaching some sections of the play (Appendix 7, Slides 4 and 5) meant that even historical and cultural contexts in the play were aestheticised. In terms of Jay's scopic regimes (1994) and Smith's notions of aesthetic historicalization (2005), Corey's aestheticism can be seen as representative of a form of colonialisation. The way that he approaches the portrayal of Indigenous Australian stories, cultural representations and perspectives involved repositioning and objectifying these elements. This is evident, for example, in explorations where his students use still images to represent different moments from the play (Appendix 7, Slides 4-8). Corey's visual representations of his explorations (Appendix 7) and his reflections on his processes (Appendix 9, 01:04-22:06) seemed to indicate that he was pleased with these explorations and did not see the offensive nature of these representations such as those where students use a stick as a spear to represent some elements of Indigenous Australian experiences (Appendix 9, 0:8:34-9:39 and 10:41-10:39). He appeared to regard these explorations as transformational and highly effective as investigations.

The ritual and symbolic aspects of Indigenous Australian culture are the focus of the middle sections of Corey's visual journal (Appendix 7, Slides 4 and 5) and his approaches to these elements appeared to indicate a more limited representation of Indigenous Australian culture and perspectives. Part of the problem was Corey's use of generalised representations of Indigenous Australian cultures and his lack of attempt to connect his representations to specific Indigenous relationships to Country and Indigenous ways of Knowing. In this sense, Corey's representations indicate the limitations of primarily using Western dramatic exploratory techniques such as tableaux (Appendix 7, Slides 4 and 5) and motivations, intentions and emotions (Appendix 7, Slide 7) without attempting to connect them to specific

Indigenous Australian knowledges. Visuality considers these attempts to use theatre exploration techniques such as Boal's Still Images and Stanislavski's approaches of character intentions as the establishment of a negotiated position. However, as Corey engages with ritual and symbolic Indigenous Australian elements without specifically connecting them to more complex and unified Indigenous knowledge and cultural constructs seems to suggest what Jay (1994) refers to as a narrowing of his scopic regime.

Corey's use of primarily physical explorations may be seen as what Smith (2005) calls an aestheticisation of complex and unified elements, characteristic of the repositioning through calibration, obliteration and symbolisation of colonialisation (pp.489-490). Specifically, Corey's focus on more ritualistic and symbolic elements in the text and his physicalisation of these elements in actions (e.g. imitating spears (Appendix 9, 08:34–10:41), which he saw as 'the traditional corroboree side of Indigenous culture' (Appendix 9, 10:09–10:15)) showed a tendency to use non-Indigenous approaches and physical abstractions as cultural translations.

4.4.5 Corey's engagement and growth of knowledge using Indigenous Australian perspectives.

As an experienced performing arts teacher who is new to using an Australian Indigenous play text to engage with and learn from Indigenous Australian cultures, histories, peoples and perspectives, Corey is an interesting case study. Many thought-provoking insights can be gained from examining his engagement through the lens of Indigenous Australian methodologies and approaches. In particular, Yunkaporta's (2009) eight-stage model of cultural interface provides insights into Corey's engagement and methods, and helps identify what may be common pitfalls for NIVSSDTs and non-Indigenous Australian drama and performing arts teachers in general when approaching and working with Indigenous Australian texts.

4.4.5.1 Corey's engagement using 'the Story' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Although Corey has seen performances of Indigenous Australian theatre and dance, teaching *The 7 Stages of Grieving* was his first experience of teaching an Indigenous Australian play to students. However, coming from a dance and primary school teaching background, Corey used Australian Indigenous 'Dreamtime' stories as stimulus for performance explorations with students in secondary school drama education.

What I've done in the past with dance classes is...published Dreamtime stories and created dance works of that. So I've never used the actual text as such. (Appendix 3, 01:20–01:38)

Using movement and dance as a way to explore and engage with a text was a technique and approach that Corey felt comfortable with, and in the semi-structured interview he indicated that this is the approach he believed he would use for some time. His view of the suitability of this approach was bolstered by his attendance of a recent production of *Terrain* by the Australian Indigenous dance theatre troupe Bangarra Dance. One of the aspects of this specific work that particularly engaged Corey was the way that the story was revealed through movement and symbolic elements (Appendix 3, 02:31–02:46).

That *The 7 Stages of Grieving* was being studied as an exam text for Corey's year 12 theatre studies students was something that he emphasised in the semi-structured interview, his visual journal and in the focus group discussions. This assessment context seemed to both focus and limit the nature of Corey's explorations and engagement with his students (Appendix 7, Slides 3-9). This emphasis on the assessment context can be contrasted with Corey's teaching philosophy and approach, which he stated centred on both Process Drama and an explorative approach to working in drama with particular emphasis on developing the interpersonal and collaborative skills of his students (Appendix 3, 00:27–01:09) within the parameters of the VCE Theatre Studies exam foci.

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For Corey, engagement with and understanding of Indigenous Australian history and culture was initially primarily influenced by Australian Indigenous dance productions by Bangarra, such as *Terrain* and *Macq*. His initial point of engagement with Indigenous Australian drama texts seemed to be with movement, ritual and symbolism because, as Corey himself admitted, the contemporary history of Indigenous Australian peoples is something outside his comfort zone. This finding is interesting, as it indicates that some non-Indigenous Australian drama teachers might gravitate towards engagement with ritual and symbolism of Indigenous Australian culture through movement due to a feeling of discomfort (Appendix 3, 05:01–7:08).

As Corey moved through the process of exploring and engaging with the Indigenous Australian drama text, photographs and imagery were often used as stimulus for discussions and reflections. Images of the landing of the British in Australia, which emphasised colonisation, were contrasted with images from The Canning Stock Route Project or *Ngurra Kuju Walyja*, an Indigenous Australian intercultural and intergenerational community project that took place from 2006-2008 and used the contributions of over 120 local Indigenous artists to tell the historical, cultural and personal histories and connections to Country of a number of Indigenous Australian communities through art and the words of local artists (Appendix 7, Slide 1). Corey and his students explored Indigenous Australian history from a number of perspectives and he attempted to have his students use these visual stimuli with Boal-style Image Theatre to create physical representations of what the students saw in the performance and what they discussed in class (Appendix 7, Slide 5).

After seeing the production, however, it seemed that the story of Corey's engagement with the play was predominantly focused on eliciting written responses from students in preparation for examination writing assessment tasks that students were required to complete (Appendix 7, Slide 6). Corey also encouraged students to draw images of moments from the

performance to help them write about the play's structure, form, connections to historical events and themes (Appendix 7, Slides 7 and 8). The physical work using Boal's Image Theatre techniques may have helped students conceptualise these elements, but Corey's stark departure from physical and movement-based exploration to a more written, examination-based focus, or as he described it 'the lens of the exam', is interesting to note. This is something that caused concern for him and it was the most significant element of the process that he identified in the first focus group discussion.

With the story...I felt like I didn't have a very, um, oh, how do I say it? It didn't 'flow', [that is] my continuation as I moved through the unit was a bit haphazard, because...I had in my mind constantly this...pragmatic side, that I have to teach these students to analyse a text and that is in some ways prescribed by the VCAA...The objective of the task [the VCE Theatre Studies exam task that this Indigenous Australia drama text was selected for] takes priority over a number of other things. I'm in complete agreement [with the statement that exam tasks should take priority] because my focus was on how I can look at the text through the lens of the exam since we may be extracting examples for their performance analysis—for this high-stakes task—because it is not just a coursework task but for the exam. (Appendix 9, 02:58 - 05:03)

4.4.5.2 Corey's engagement using 'the Map' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

In attempting to describe the map of his journey through the process of exploring the first Indigenous Australian play he has worked with and his engagement with Indigenous history, people, nations and perspectives, Corey used the image of an Indigenous Australian painting with yam motifs, which three of his students showed him during 'Aboriginal Week and Sorry Day' events at his school.

Oh, I think definitely a painting would be the best way to map it, yeah, with a bit of everything. I liken it to a painting I saw. We have three Aboriginal students and as part of our Aboriginal Week and Sorry Day they present, and they showed this wonderful picture. I don't have a copy of it for today but I will try to send you one...It was a picture of how the...yams, yams or something is like that—it's like a potato essentially. It had a central tree and it shoots off different branches, and there is this central picture of kinda circular drawings and...it

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looks like a Western concept map, kinda like that, and I link it to that kinda intricate shape.
(Appendix 9, 05:31 - 06:45)

Corey chose an earth-based motif for the map of his engagement, perhaps to exemplify the practical nature of his work with students concentrating on physical approaches. In his semi-structured interview, he described this work as ‘grounded’ like a ‘corroboree’ (Appendix 3, 12:15–12:38). Later, however, Corey’s reflected on his engagement as as being sporadic. This reflection may come from his eventual diversion away from movement-based exploration to written description and analysis more conducive to VCE examination elements. In this sense, the map of his explorations moves from more direct representations of Indigenous Australian perspectives (Appendix 7, Slides 1-3), to more abstract physical representations (Appendix 7, Slides 4 and 5), to more objectified explorations with an exam focus (Appendix 7, Slides 6 and 7).

In choosing the image of an Indigenous Australian ‘dot’ painting to map or conceptualise his journey, Corey chooses forms of engagement which encourage aestheticism and abstraction. Although some ‘dot’ painting techniques were used by multiple Indigenous Australian nations, the popular Indigenous Australian dot painting techniques come from the Indigenous Australian people who live near Papunya, or the Central and Western deserts near Alice Springs. These are used to both map knowledge and stories about the land and water sources as well as to disguise sacred designs, motifs and knowledge from non-Indigenous people. While sound teaching techniques may be evident in approaches chosen by Corey, non-Indigenous Australian drama teachers like Corey should probably avoid approaches which tend to homogenise and aspects of Indigenous Australian cultural traditions in a way that obscures the diversity and individual representations that serve to ‘map’ aspects of Indigenous Australian cultures and their representations.

4.4.5.3 Corey's engagement using 'the Silence' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

For Corey, 'the Silence' is most evident in the non-verbal or movement and dance work he does with his students. For him, this is a way of exploring the play more practically as well as a method for probing the more hidden layers of meaning in the text. Early in his semi-structured interview, Corey mentioned the influence of the dance work of the Indigenous Australian dance company Bangarra Dance Theatre and the way he admired their methods of demonstrating story through movement and symbolism (Appendix 3, 02:10–02:50). This sense of representing Indigenous Australian events and history in a non-verbal way is also evident in the physical exploration that Corey and his students engaged in when they worked with material and scenes from *The 7 Stages of Grieving* (Appendix 7, Slides 4 and 5). These non-verbal explorations could be classified as the primary way Corey explored the 'the Silence' in the Indigenous Australian play he taught. An interesting aspect of Corey's teaching is that power and relationships are also explored and represented in physical work. This often gave silent representations more complex elements of empowerment and disempowerment.

When asked during the first focus group discussion to reflect on the Silence and non-verbal aspects that he engaged with, Corey expressed how he was affected by the way the actress in the performance put on ceremonial paint in front of the audience. He saw this as both dramatic and representational of a dramatic performance element that signalled her entering into the world of the character she was about to portray.

I liked the image of putting on the paint [Participant C executes an action with two fingers of his right hand of putting on ceremonial paint. This is a reference to a gesture made by the Indigenous Australian actress in the performance of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* attended by Participant C and his students]. That really resonates, it has a dramatic element signalling 'I am about to put on my costume or makeup'. (Appendix 9, 07:11–07:28)

Corey was struck by the actress's interaction with tactile set elements such as sand during the performance and the way she transformed these elements for many purposes and

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used them to signify several things. On another level, however, he saw that the actress's forming of circles on the floor during the performance acted as a silent gesture that helped trace and mark her stories and journey. Corey also felt that the sand accentuated and emphasised Indigenous Australian connections to the land.

And I also like the use of the sand [an element also from the performance of the play seen by Participant C]. We saw the sand and it was done in circles on the floor [laughs]. That connection with land resonates really well with me and that's something that I try to really encourage with the students. (Appendix 9, 07:33 - 07:59)

4.4.5.4 Corey's engagement using 'the Signs' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Corey's dance background appeared to give him a particular language and way to engage with the signs and symbols in a written drama text and how these signs and symbols were manifested in a drama text as a performance. He appeared to understand in more practical and kinaesthetic ways that signifiers can represent complex Indigenous Australian culture, experience, history and perspectives. In his explorations with students using tableaux and Image Theatre (Appendix 7, Slides 4 and 5), Corey encouraged his students to identify physical signs and symbols in postures, gestures and tableaux arrangements framing these elements more within the spatial constructs of non-Indigenous Western performance perspectives (Appendix 7, Slides 3, 4 and 5).

During the first focus group discussion, Corey mentioned an exploration that he orchestrated with his students in which the students used Indigenous Australian poet Cec Fisher's poem *Memories and Pain* (1991) a number of Image Theatre tableaux characterise the signs, symbols and images in the poem. He explained how the students used a stick as a symbolic prop in a transformational way to sometimes represent a gun, which he saw as a Western cultural construct, and at other points represent a spear, which Corey saw as representing some aspects of Indigenous Australian culture (Appendix 9, 08:34-10:49). It is

interesting to note here that while Corey's enthusiasm for his students symbolically using objects may be indicative of valid drama explorations in terms of what he calls 'iconic' or 'ritualistic' aspects, the specific symbolism of these elements in Indigenous contexts or representations of Indigenous Australian nations, cultures and peoples may be lost in such explorations.

Corey also saw symbolic elements in moments in the performance of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* where the actress used and created circle shapes with sand on the stage. He saw this as noteworthy and he also related this to other units of work done with his younger students, where he emphasised what he termed the 'ritual' or more 'iconic' aspects of Indigenous Australian traditions and cultures. While this terminology is crude and perhaps derogatory, it does reveal the tendency of even teachers experienced in dance and movement to stereotype and generalise more symbolic elements of Indigenous Australian cultures.

4.4.5.5 Corey's engagement using 'the Land' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Corey appeared to engage with, and find connections to, the relationship of Indigenous Australian nations and peoples to 'the Land'. Abstraction is often evident in his representations of 'the Land' and sometimes the immediate connections to the stories, situations and places represented in the text are not entirely apparent. He seemed to indicate awareness of the Indigenous Australian connections to Country but admitted that he did not fully understand the exact nature of this relationship and how it manifested (Appendix 9, 11:08–12:52). It may be that for Corey as a NIVSSDT, abstraction is a way by which he represents areas of knowledge which he is confused about or lacks knowledge in.

It is significant that although the NIVSSDTs in this study seemed to recognise a significant connection between Indigenous Australian peoples and 'the Land', most teachers stated that they did not really understand this connection. Corey attempted to put some emphasis on the Indigenous Australian connection to land when he worked with students, and

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he reinforced a connection to place and land through using Indigenous Australian Dreamtime stories in many classes. This would seem to indicate Corey may in some ways rely on methods which reinforce his own conceptions of significant aspects of Indigenous Australian perspectives, while disregarding research or explorations which could enrich his understanding of the special and complex relationship that Indigenous Australians have to Country through sourcing and using Indigenous research, voices and perspectives.

I think it has really reinforced what I already knew because I have used the land a lot, I am quite familiar with that connection and I use a lot of Aboriginal tales and Dreamtime stories as inspiration with any work I do with the Indigenous stuff. I try to enforce—um, that's really harsh isn't it? I encourage, that's better, I encourage an understanding of the Dreamtime stories [when] dealing with the same thing. And that comes across in the readings, that animals and them [Indigenous Australian peoples and the Land] were the same thing and weren't necessarily separate. (Appendix 9, 11:08–11:54).

Different types of grounded movements that Corey saw and identified in Bangarra Dance Theatre performance works (Appendix 3, 11:09–12:38) were exemplified by him as symbolising Indigenous Australian peoples' connection to 'the Land'. Corey also attempted to visualise these ideas through his use of stimuli, which suggested and depicted representations of Indigenous Australian nations and peoples' connection to Country, such as The Canning Stock Route Project (Appendix 7, Slide 1). Evidence of exactly how Corey engaged with the Indigenous Australian relationship to the Land in his practical work is not apparent throughout the exploration and process stages of his work as documented in his visual journal (Appendix 7). After seeing the performance, Corey explained in the first focus group discussion how the performer used coloured sand and pebbles in the performance space. He felt that this acted as a powerful metaphor not only representing Indigenous Australian cultures' connection to Country, but also functioning as an individual symbol and reminder for the audience of the specific connections that Indigenous Australian actress Chenoa Deemal has to her clan, the Thitharr Warra.

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So within this text, even though it [Indigenous Australian relationships to the Land] wasn't addressed in the Q & A at the end of the play, having the coloured sand or the pebbles and how that represented the Aboriginal performer's own land - she came from the coast so using the blue stones helped with her interpretation of the text itself. There were a lot of things in there that weren't scripted that she created [herself or] with the help of the director. So that connection with the land and the building, and everything coming out of the land and the way she moved around that space, for me was more about reinforcement than learning... that I am on the right track. So, for me, that Land connection is really strong. (Appendix 9, 11:54 - 12:52)

Corey eventually used what he witnesses in the performance to reinforce his sense that his approaches and teaching methods are 'on the right track'. It is interesting to note that a deeper sense of the individual and specific nature of Indigenous Australian connections to 'Land' and 'Country' appeared after Corey had seen the play enacted and represented in a live performance by an Indigenous Australian performer, as very little of his explorations and examination with students address the specific relationships that different Indigenous Australian nations have to particular places and Country.

4.4.5.6 Corey's engagement using 'the Shape' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Corey saw 'the Shape' of his engagement and understanding of Indigenous Australian culture, histories, peoples and perspectives as something that was able to grow through the process of exploring and engaging with his first Indigenous Australian play text. Although his sense of Indigenous Australian culture sprang initially from his dance background and his interest in dance performances, the fact that Corey exposed his students to a range of content, from traditional Indigenous Australian dance forms, to eclectic dance sequences such as those performed by Bangarra Dance Theatre, to Indigenous Australian hip-hop, meant that Corey and his students are less likely to categorise the shape of Indigenous Australian cultural structures into simple stereotypes.

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When introducing the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving* to his students, Corey provided a range of source and background materials, from historical events, to famous Indigenous Australians to current affairs articles to clips from modern Indigenous Australian television programs across a range of genres (Appendix 7, Slides 1, 2 and 3). For Corey and his students, this helped conceptualise Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives as a living, growing entity that has many forms and expressions. However, as Corey noted in the first focus group discussion, while he was conscious of not stereotyping or disrespecting Indigenous Australian culture, he and his students still struggled with how they gave shape and form to Indigenous Australian subject matter.

One thing that came up working with the students is their apprehension dealing with the issues. There is a sense that, we had a big chat about it, that 'Is it okay to be teaching something that is not our culture, and are we doing it the right way?' So, engaging with them [about how to approach Indigenous Australian drama] and I guess there was a fear with them, 'Oh, I don't want to dance like an Aboriginal because I am feeling like I am imitating or disrespecting them'. So, there was that apprehension that I wasn't expecting. But in terms of the Shape, for me, I have not had the chance to look at modern Aboriginal works and texts and I feel that I need to do a lot more. I have, through [the] Aboriginal dance and music I have tried to use, I teach hip-hop to year seven's, and as much as I can I try to use Australian and Indigenous hip-hop music...because, as an aside, most of it is fairly positive... But in terms of a text, a drama text, I think I need to look at how Aboriginal culture has moved on and it's not the traditional natives around a corroboree dancing for tourists. So how has it evolved and [how it is] shaped now? I really need to look at that, so that is, I guess, where my darkness lies, and I am still learning that. But I engaged with, and found a particular insight with this particular text. But that's my darkness, my area of focus in future (Appendix 9, 13:15 - 15:24)

After attending the performance of the play, Corey shifted his focus to the examination constructs and work done for examination purposes. Specific scenes and textual elements in the play were evaluated, but more non-Indigenous stagecraft and design constructs and tasks seemed to shape the material and approaches taken during this phase of study (Appendix 7,

Slides 7-12). This seemed to be indicative of not only Corey's work, but also the work of other NIVSSDTs in this research. Contexts and interpretation appeared to be the only areas that Corey and his students were able to apply and shape using a range of diverse approaches and perspectives conducive to Indigenous Australian standpoints.

4.4.5.7 Corey's engagement using 'the Backtracking' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

When 'Backtracking' and considering how his understanding of the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving* has grown, Corey emphasised how storytelling and movement were strong elements that he considered in his teaching (Appendix 9, 01:04-04:26). He believed that his physical approaches and his replication of structures and strategies he had used in previous Aboriginal dance units made the techniques he used effective. He did acknowledge that eventually he found that his approaches were a bit haphazard and that he eventually came to depend on the more pragmatic structures he felt were necessary for the exam content (Appendix 9, 02:58-03:55).

When asked to backtrack and engage with more specific elements of his approaches, Corey isolated the power of storytelling and the performance prowess of the Indigenous Australian actress Chenoa Deemal as central to his engagement with and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures. He saw his engagement as growing through seeing a performance of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and through the experience, contact and physicality of seeing an Indigenous Australian actress in a drama performance.

I think [in backtracking] the power of storytelling [was important]. I think there was a lot of shift[ing] in the performance between the actress and the character and it was, um—I don't think that she fully became the character. She never fully became a realised character, like she would drop in and become somebody totally different and there was always that sense, 'I am still me telling the story even though I am putting on an accent or something or changed my physicality' ... (Appendix 9, 15:41-16:48)

Corey had also mentioned in the semi-structured interview that he had assumed his students would find storytelling through movement and symbolism one of the most interesting aspects of studying this text (Appendix 3, 02:05–2:38). However, as Corey progressed through his explorations, the narrative elements of the text seemed to become less important for him as a teacher. Corey felt that this text and Indigenous Australian storytelling as a whole strikes a balance between verbal and non-verbal communication features in the way that narrative is revealed.

...that storytelling aspect [] was really important and it occurred to me that in this play, or [this] performance, language is going to be really important, like sharing, having shared language. I've got a couple of (as we all do) ESL students, and finding that, again Indigenous storytelling and engaging with this text, the balance between the physical and the narrative is really important. But, it is still, I find, all very verbal, because traditionally they didn't write anything down in a book, so it is a verbal means of communication and having a shared language is really important. And how you build that—I am not really sure yet how you do that, maybe it involves a little bit more preparation. (Appendix 9, 16:49 - 17:42)

4.4.5.8 Corey's engagement using 'the Homeworld' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

In trying to establish his base or Homeworld for connecting and engaging with Indigenous Australian culture and perspectives, Corey did not choose to reach out to any local Indigenous Australian Elders or knowledge holders, citing time as one of the reasons for this. He mentioned that he had consulted Indigenous Australian dancers on previous projects and in fact he did have an Indigenous Australian hip-hop group work with his class soon after they finished work on *The 7 Stages of Grieving*.

So, I didn't really get any one Indigenous person in [my class], I relied entirely on what was presented and the forum after the show that we saw. I just didn't really have time. I have Indigenous dance connections that I have used in the past... After the fact, we did in fact have an Indigenous dance group come in, and my year 12 saw them. It was a hip-hop group, but by that stage we had already finished with the text. (Appendix 9, 18:50–19:53)

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When the concept that the play might have been primarily written for an Indigenous Australian audience rather than a non-Indigenous audience was presented, Corey was perplexed, as if it had not occurred to him that the play could have been written with an Indigenous Australian audience in mind.

[I am] not really sure how I feel about the notion that the text is written for their [Indigenous] culture. I mean it may be written *for* them but I also feel we have to engage with it and—I don't know. I guess I want some more clarification of that notion. Is that a defensive question or comment? (Appendix 9, 19:53–20:12)

In reflecting more on what he had learnt from the experience of teaching his first Indigenous Australian play, Corey seemed to see the play and the performance as an act of reconciliation, a bridge that ultimately values Indigenous Australian cultures with honesty. He mentioned a Bangarra Dance Theatre production he had seen and drew parallels between the way both productions were able to approach difficult experiences and subject matter without simply condemning non-Indigenous people or seeking to merely evoke sympathy. It appeared that this honest revelation and retelling of Indigenous Australian events and experiences is what Corey most engaged with.

What I liked about this play and what I like about Bangarra Dance, [and] certainly with this text, is that they have bridged that gap nicely, reinforcing their cultures and telling it how it was, honestly. I think that there is sense of honesty with the stuff that I have experience, even though this is my first experience of teaching an Indigenous Australian play. The only thing I have based it [my teaching of an Indigenous Australian play] on is my experience with Bangarra. One of the most moving productions I saw was Bangarra's performance of *Macq* last year, which was the story of Governor Macquarie signing off on the massacre of thousands of Aboriginals who were encroaching on farmland. Their performance was very honest and it was one of the best dance performances I have ever seen that told a story. I feel that they did an excellent job, it didn't become a 'white bashing' exercise or become a 'feel sorry for us because we were persecuted for all these generations'—it was a very honest portrayal, a balance, a useful bridge between the two cultures. (Appendix 9, 20:39–22:02)

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In reflecting on his engagement throughout the entire process of teaching the play, Corey seemed to think that teachers should engage more with local Indigenous Australian communities in the initial stages of working on Indigenous Australian plays and material. He also appeared to want the horrendous acts committed against Indigenous Australians to be acknowledged, but ultimately wanted a positive message to dominate the dialogue about these issues.

I think that it [teaching Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives] is important. As much as possible, we as teachers should be turning to the local Indigenous community and getting their input. There is, of course, a cost factor around it, but I think it is necessary to engage the local Indigenous community in the early stages, getting a local Indigenous community centre if we can. For me, for us, I think it is important for us [drama teachers] to provide—I don't want to be biased—but to provide [information and material stating] is how it's been and let's show that...I would like to see it be a positive message. I think there is a lot out there which is negative, I'd rather make anything we deal with, I mean not so much just positive, but increasing awareness on both sides that we have to come to an agreement so let's find a balance...I mean, not to ignore the terrible things that have happened in the past, but in terms of moving forward there needs to be an aspect of that [] to it. Yes, discuss the past because it is vital because their [Indigenous Australians'] ancestors play a vital part in their daily beliefs, despite the fact that many modern Indigenous people might not have any direct connection [to their ancestors and their ancestral homeland] (Appendix 9, 24:19–27:03).

4.4.5.9 Corey's engagement and knowledge through the wider lens of Indigenous Australian perspectives.

Corey engaged with *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and Indigenous Australian experiences, history, culture and perspectives primarily through movement and dance. He found that this more physical approach worked particularly well with this play. Corey saw the text in terms of its physicality and this became his primary mode of engagement and working process (Appendix 9, 01:04–01:56).

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The physical approaches Corey used, along with movement-based and aesthetic representations of Indigenous Australian culture and perspectives (Appendix 3, 01:49–02:49), often led to the fusing of cultural elements, which some Indigenous Australian academics such as Yunkaporta (2009) might identify as cultural displacement. The aesthetic representations of Corey's explorations through the use of shape, form and movement (Appendix 3, 07:35–07:44), may be interpreted as an attempt to represent Indigenous Australian cultural constructs without actually pursuing an understanding of the unified landscape of Indigenous Australian perspectives and Indigenous Australian 'ways of seeing'.

The aesthetic representations of Indigenous Australian cultures undertaken by Corey, may unify his sense of the play and of Indigenous Australian stories and culture in general. However, as Blair (2015) asserts, Indigenous ceremonies and dance are layered in learning and experiences (pp.61-68). In this sense, Corey's initial representations can be seen as embodying an approach in which Western Eurocentric attitudes seek to position singular aspects of Indigenous Knowings rather than engaging with the unique holistic systems of Indigenous ways of Knowing. Corey's overreliance on aesthetics and the abstraction of dance and movement forms as a way of explaining and representing Indigenous Australian cultural constructions undermines the importance of Country in Indigenous Australian perspectives. Furthermore, his use of Indigenous Australian Dreamtime stories in his work with students (Appendix 3, 01:31 and 11:45) shows an active disregard for the context of these stories in relation to different Indigenous Australian nations and cultures.

Furthermore, Corey aestheticised Indigenous Australian culture, often generalising complex relationships and representations in terms of aesthetic forms. He alludes to his use of Indigenous Australian Dreamtime stories (Appendix 3, 01:31 and 11:45), animal movements (Appendix 3, 11:50) and ritual dance (Appendix 3, 06:32–07:10) in his work with students as productive engagement with Indigenous Australian cultural forms. This simplification of

complex ceremonial actions or eliding them simply with body movements is a tendency that teachers are often cautioned against (Wood, 2017 & Yunkaporta 2009) to the point that Indigenous knowledges are used in teaching rather than taught and engaged with in the constructs of the complexities and pitfalls of cultural engagement.

However, there is a gap between the methods and approaches Corey uses and the place that Indigenous Australian movement and dance hold in Indigenous Australian cultures. As Blair (2015) states, ceremonies and dances are a form of learning involving layers of experiences, a variety of ceremonial forms and a complex set of relationships (pp.69-70). By contrast, Corey's engagement tended to separate movement and representations based on what he identifies as aesthetic qualities. By Corey simplifying complex ceremonial actions and embedding his understanding of their significance primarily in terms of body movements, he perhaps is representing a tendency that some teachers have of using and replicating Indigenous knowledge structures rather than attempting to research and examine the importance or significance of that knowledge in specific Indigenous contexts and ceremonies. A warning is perhaps evident to teachers like Corey here that they do not have to enact, know or replicate cultural acts and ceremonies so much as be aware of the complexity of knowledge constructs behind culture and ceremonies and attempt to the contextual complexity of cultural knowledge to their students.

4.5 Teacher 4 – David

David is a sixty-one-year-old urban Victorian Government secondary teacher who has taught thirteen Indigenous Australian plays in English, literature and drama classes over his twenty-six years of teaching. He is conscious of Australian Indigenous history and this informs his desire to increase his own understanding of Indigenous Australian perspectives. His continuous questioning of his own understanding of Indigenous Australian history and culture allowed him to engage critically with the Indigenous Australian play text. Despite having

taught many Indigenous Australian plays, during the years of his teaching David has had little or no direct contact with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders.

4.5.1 David in relation to sub-question 1.

In the semi-structured interview, David revealed that he has taught 13 Indigenous Australian plays in theatre studies, drama and English. This is a large number of Indigenous Australian plays for any teacher to have taught considering the average number of Indigenous Australian plays taught by NIVSSDTs in this study is 5.7. This is a sign of the long-term commitment David has shown and in itself this may be considered an effective type of engagement. He also emphasised that he had always tried to give a sense of the historical perspectives of Indigenous Australian culture and people when providing exploratory opportunities in drama (Appendix 4, 04:12–04:55 & Appendix 8, Slides 1-10).

On one level, we can see David's emphasis on history in his explorations (see Appendix 8, Slides 1-7) and cultural representations (see Appendix Slides 8 and 9) as embedding Indigenous Australian stories and histories in the curriculum. The use of maps and timelines of events and historical massacres (Appendix 8 Slides 1-6) can be seen to contextualise knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian historical experiences for his students early in their explorations. However, from another perspective it could be argued that way utilises historical events, lacks specific Indigenous Australian contexts (Appendix 8, Slides 10-13) and ultimately frames these events and representations from non-Indigenous colonial perspectives.

David recognised theoretical and practical connections between history, representation, reality and cultural aspects of Indigenous Australian experiences. In his responses and commitment to exploring a range of perspectives from Indigenous Australian cultures, he used historical signposts such as the massacres and Frontier Wars, to frame knowledge in a meaningful discourse as embedded in a communicated narrative of Indigenous Australian

history. This is reinforced by David's empathy, respect and cultural sensitivity when approaching Indigenous Australian texts (Appendix 4, 05:34 – 06:41). For David, his positioning is one in which historical events act as signposts that help focus and re-orientate Indigenous Australian cultural constructs and expressions.

4.5.2 Sub-question 2 and how David visualised an Indigenous Australian drama text.

David visualised an Indigenous Australian drama text with a view towards using explorations of representations, reality and culture as a way of building his understanding and knowledge of Indigenous Australian cultures, history, language and peoples. In his visual journal, he used a range of resources and materials, many of which were historical in nature, to both signpost and provide an overview of Indigenous Australian history, language and perspectives. He embraced adaptive and oppositional elements, such as the Frontier Wars, while establishing situational levels in which more straightforward linear historical narratives acted to contextualise Indigenous Australian history and culture for him and his students. Indications of this are evident in the many elements, processes and teaching aids used by David in his exploration work, such as a map of Indigenous Australian languages and nations (Appendix 8, Slide 1), a map of the Frontier War massacres (Appendix 8, Slide 4) and lists of significant historical atrocities (Appendix 8, Slide 5) committed against Indigenous Australian peoples and cultures. What characterised the growth of David's knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian perspectives is not so much the use of these methods and resources but the way he attempted to integrate these elements using theatrical approaches such as those of Boal, Brecht and Grotowski (Appendix 8, Slides 11 and 13). David used historical events as both a point of focus and a discourse of plurality, which helped to form a more complete picture of Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives for his students.

David's framing of events such as the massacres of Indigenous Australians in terms of a map and a list of dates and events can also be seen to have elements of Western and non-

Indigenous perspectives. His approach while connecting many of the events and features does not seek to unify the stories or standpoints that the perspectives of Indigenous Australian locals, Elders or researchers could provide. His more linear visual representations of historical events (Appendix 8, Slides 4 and 6) in addition to his concentration on predominantly male Indigenous Australians (Appendix 8, Slide 7) limited his perspective.

While earlier in the exploration process David put some emphasis on elements that Yunkaporta (2009) might identify as the Story, his fragmented use of history, mapping and contemporary representations of Indigenous Australians in his visual journal (Appendix 8, Slides 1-7) exemplified an engagement with content rather than Indigenous Australian standpoints and perspectives in the methods of teaching. While he may see his presentation of the Frontier Wars and contemporary events, such as the racism suffered by Adam Goodes, as embracing and even valuing Indigenous Australian experience, his visual discourse itself does not seek to privilege Indigenous Australian perspectives.

4.5.3 David's responses to sub-question 3 regarding his 'turn' or translation of an Indigenous Australian drama text.

David's emphasis on history and historical events, combined with his use of more political practical theatrical exploratory techniques such as those of Boal's Image Theatre and Brecht's Epic Theatre (Appendix 10, 10.2 and Appendix 13, Slides 11 and 13) appeared to frame his knowledge in a meaningful discourse. The exploration of these strategies used by David also indicated a potential diversity and plurality in the approaches used by non-Indigenous drama teachers like David who embrace historical events as signposts to advocate methods and new perspectives in exploring Indigenous play texts into practical formats.

In his explorations, David sought to address and explain historical and cultural aspects of Indigenous Australia from historical events to contemporary depictions of Indigenous Australian perspectives evident in media representations (Appendix 10, 10.2). In this sense, his

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practical applications addressed more controversial aspects of Indigenous Australian history, such as the Frontier Wars, while also utilising contemporary cultural experiences such as Indigenous Australian music and media presentation events to advocate empowerment of Indigenous Australians (Appendix 10, 10.2-10.4). His use of discursive or disruptive elements of Indigenous Australian history, experiences and culture in his practical explorations examine more oppositional elements within the constraints of his own non-Indigenous Australian perspectives, history, narratives and space. However, David's interpretations and practical translations can also be seen as reinforcing a form of a visual regime of colonialisation where Indigenous history and culture are re-orientated in what Smith (2005) describes as the historical spatial relationships of colonial Western European constructs (pp.490-491). This is evident in more cursory explorations that David employs, such as having students attempt to represent the complexity of Indigenous Australian colonial history in still images (Appendix 8, Slide 10).

In translating his perspective of the play into practical exercises and exploratory workshops, David encouraged his students to use primarily non-naturalistic political and didactic techniques, such as those of Brecht (see Appendix 8, Slide 13). The primary reason for this choice was that he felt his students were more familiar with these techniques (Appendix 4, 08:45-09:10). Another reason may have been that David believed these techniques raised issues for discussion and created a more empathetic standpoint in his students' approach to the play. However, it is interesting to note that the more David and his students worked on these elements, the less time and focus was spent on the actual events, stories and issues present in *The 7 Stages of Grieving*.

David's interpretations and practical translations and explorations are diverse in the materials and content he used. He embraced resources that addressed everything from historical to contemporary cultural representations (Appendix 10, 10.2). However, while David showed breadth in the ways he engaged with Indigenous Australian cultures, his engagement often

lacked depth. While David was able to connect to historical and contemporary events well and translate these into practical explorations, he did, by his own admission, avoid the important act of real connections to the stories, voices, practices and Country of Indigenous Australians (Appendix 10). The effect of this is that David did not appear to be able to ‘turn’ or move towards embedding Indigenous Australian into one framed by Indigenous Knowings embodying the Indigenous Australian relationships.

4.5.4 David’s engagement and growth of knowledge using visual methodologies.

David’s long-standing commitment to teaching Indigenous Australian plays and his use of historical events can be viewed in terms of Jay’s (1994) theories of visuality as an open or broad scopic regime informed by elements of de-colonialisation and postcolonial theory. In terms of Jay’s (1994) scopic regimes and Mirzoeff’s (2011) notion of discourses of vision, David’s engagement can be framed by conceptual interactions between representation, reality, history and relationships to Indigenous Australian cultures. These different points of focus can be seen to create what Jay (1994) referred to as a ‘complex vision’, which fluctuates between a discourse of plurality and a more singular ‘scopic regime’ (pp.16-19). However, the complexity of David’s use of historical signposts appeared to advocate a discourse configuration that allowed new perspectives to emerge.

These positionings can be analysed further in terms of the visual methodology of Hall’s reception theory (1980). From the perspective of this theory, David could be seen to frame his engagement in terms of a fluctuation between negotiated and oppositional positioning while still allowing for oppositional readings and a dialogue between the ‘politics of signification’ and the ‘struggle in discourse’ (pp.137-138). The presence of a negotiated position (Hall 1980) using mixed adaptive and oppositional elements is also reinforced by David’s approach to Indigenous Australian subject matter that involves combining empathy, respect and cultural sensitivity (Appendix 4, 05:34–06:41). Further examples of David’s explorations seemed to go

beyond the confines of negotiated positioning, such as his use of Indigenous Australian languages (Appendix 4, 13:02–13:43 and Appendix 8, Slide 8) and visual representations, which reinforce more discursive viewpoints of Indigenous Australian colonial and post-colonial experiences (Appendix 8, Slides 4, 5 and 6).

However, David's persistent framing of events such as the massacres of Indigenous Australians using Western constructs such as timelines and maps (Appendix 8, Slides 4 and 5) does not seek to unify the stories and standpoints present in Indigenous Australian perspectives. His brief attempts to embrace these perspectives through discussing the achievements of well-known Indigenous Australians (Appendix 8, Slide 7) and including information about some Indigenous Australian languages, films and television shows (Appendix 8, Slides 8-10) seem tokenistic and are not supported by activities that reflect on or reveal the significance and context of these in Indigenous Australian cultures. Other instances of short-sightedness were evident in David's disregard Indigenous Australian women in his visual representations and perspectives. Ultimately, one of the obstructions to David being able to move genuinely from a negotiated position to a more oppositional position is the fact that he does not actively acknowledge a broad range of Indigenous Australian standpoints and perspectives.

David's emphasis on history and historical events combined with his use of more political practical exploratory techniques such as those of Boal's Image Theatre and Brecht's Epic Theatre (Appendix 10, 10.2 and Appendix 8, Slide 13) appeared to exemplify what Hall (1980) describes as limited but negotiated framing of knowledge (p.36). Some elements of oppositional positioning are seen in David's use of controversial aspects of Indigenous Australian history (Appendix 10, 10.2-10.4 and Appendix 8, Slides 4 and 5) particularly because he attempts to actively acknowledge and empower Indigenous Australian perspectives on these events. Also, David's use of discursive or disruptive elements of Indigenous Australian history, experiences and culture in his practical explorations (Appendix 8, Slides

10-13) embrace more oppositional elements within the constraints of his own non-Indigenous Australian perspectives, history, narratives and space.

However, as Smith (2005) notes, the spatial relationships in Indigenous Australian cultures are often orientated in different conceptual ways, where narratives and memories are represented as continuing actualities (pp.489-491). In this sense, David's interpretations and practical translations can also be seen as what Smith (2005) labels a form of a visual regime of colonialisation where Indigenous history and culture is re-orientated within the historical spatial relationships of colonial Western European constructs (pp.490-491). However, David's framing of Indigenous Australian perspectives through the focus of history and historical events may be seen as exemplifying less a visual regime of colonialisation than what Smith (2005) identifies as framing events through aesthetic historicalisation (p.494).

Overall, theories of visuality help us to see David's engagement and growth of knowledge as conceptually complex, exhibiting what Jay (1994) identifies as a broad 'scopic vision'. His use of historical signposts reveals a discourse configuration that allows new perspectives and even oppositional elements to emerge. His use of history and visual representations highlight more discursive viewpoints of Indigenous Australian colonial and post-colonial experiences while also exhibiting what Smith (2005) describes as aesthetic historicalisation (p.494). Yet, in terms of Hall's (1980) reception theory, David does engage constructively with Indigenous Australian cultures and builds his knowledge base while fluctuating between a negotiated and an oppositional positioning of that knowledge.

4.5.5 David's engagement and growth of knowledge using Indigenous Australian perspectives.

When inspecting David's engagement and the growth of his knowledge, a greater sense of the strengths and weaknesses of his engagement becomes evident. Yunkaporta's (2009) eight-stage model of cultural interface in particular provides insight into David's commitment

to Indigenous Australian perspectives. Further understanding of the nature of his knowledge is revealed by viewing his engagement through the broader lenses of Indigenous Australian methodologies and approaches.

4.5.5.1 David's engagement using 'the Story' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Through his teaching, David's story reflects genuine continuous commitment to engaging with Indigenous Australian culture. This engagement over a prolonged period demonstrates that he values Indigenous Australian perspectives as represented in drama form.

I teach theatre studies, drama and English, so I made a note of all of them [the Indigenous Australian plays he had taught across a number of years] just in case. [Pause for 8 seconds]. Here we are. For theatre studies in 1998 we did *Stolen* by Jane Harrison. In 2000, we did *The Sunshine Club* by Wesley Enoch. In 2002 I did *Belonging* by Tracey Rigney. I did *Yanagai! Yanagai!* by Andrea James in 2003 and 2006. Then in 2008, I did *Jandamarra* by Steve Hawke and Scott Rankin. Then [in] 2011 I did *Namatjira* by Wayne Blair. Then in 2014 I did *Walking into the Bigness* by Richard Frankland and Wayne Blair. And this year [2017], I will take the theatre studies students to *The 7 Stages of Grieving* by Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman. In drama, in 1992, we studied *Bran Nue Dae* by Jimmy Chi. In 2002, we studied *Conversations with the Dead* by Richard Frankland. In 2004 we did *The Sapphires* by Tony Briggs. In 2015 I studied with the students *Black Diggers* by Tom Wright and *Beautiful One Day* by Ilbjerri Theatre Company. This year [2017], I will take my students to *Coranderrk* by Giordano Nanni and Andrea James at the Ilbjerri Theatre Company. In English in 2002, 2003 and 2004 we did *Stolen* by Jane Harrison. In 1997, 1998 and 1999, and in 2014, 2015 and 2016 we studied *No Sugar* by Jack Davis. So, I have taught 13 Aboriginal plays all up. (Appendix 4, 01:33–03:37)

In the semi-structured interview, David emphasised how he used Indigenous Australian history and visual material with his students (Appendix 4, 03:51–04:32). His visual journal emphasised and directly addressed aspects of Indigenous Australian history even prior to colonisation involving trade with other cultures such as the Macassans from Sulawesi (Appendix 8, Slide 2 and 3). This can be seen as representing the story and engagement of

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Indigenous Australian cultures with history not as framed primarily by colonisation, but as changed by it.

David's preliminary work with his students refers to the colonisation period as the Frontier Wars, and he details the massacres of Indigenous Australian during this period (Appendix 8, Slides 4 and 5). He explained the rationale for this approach that he wanted to give a sense and a timeline of Indigenous Australian history while offering a more critical approach.

Part of the story which I wanted tell to students was to set the scene with the initial work and give a background. I gave them a background to pre-colonial history of Aboriginal people. I then wanted to point out what happened during the Frontier Wars. I wanted to give them a sense of history and when different things happened and the fact that so many people died and we are only now back up to the same numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as before colonisation since the Frontier Wars and disease and other things. This helped also to set a context and background for studying parts of the play, like scene 10, the 'Invasion Poem'. (Appendix 10, Focus Group Discussion 2, 10.2).

David then addressed more modern aspects of Indigenous Australian history with his students. He covered events from the 1967 Referendum to the recent media representation of figures like Adam Goodes (Appendix 8, Slides 6 and 7). In this context, the story that David reveals about his engagement with Indigenous Australian perspectives is that he believes historical and contemporary stories and representations are important to give a sense of an ongoing narrative of cultural interface between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians. This involves understanding the initial effects of colonisation while facing and acknowledging the ongoing negative elements of the present cultural interface story, which include racism.

4.5.5.2 David's engagement using 'the Map' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Mapping his journey through the process of exploring the play, David used a range of elements. David's visual journal reflected that the map of Indigenous Australian nations was a

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significant map used at various stages during this process (Appendix 8, Slide 1). In his early work with students, he tried to provide a balance of information about pre-colonial Indigenous Australian history and cultures and modern events.

I like the idea of creating a map to describe my journey with *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. So, I begin with the history and what is known and what is around me. That's the first signpost. I make sure that I don't just try to portray Aboriginal culture as in the past. I used the map of different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their homelands with my students. I put it up in the drama room and I often found the students often looking at it and being amazed and working out where people were and what was in their homeland. (Appendix 10, 10.3)

David initially described his 'map' as similar to an Indigenous Australian dot painting. Later he framed it in terms of the Fred Williams' *You Yangs* paintings, with an aerial view of the landscape. It is interesting to note that his desire to initially use Indigenous Australian imagery and an Indigenous mapping method without acknowledgement of the specific Western Desert cultures these techniques derive from is replaced by seeing his map in terms of the more hybrid approach of Fred Williams, which involves him playing with distancing and objectivity through perspective.

I also looked for modern signposts events and markers, which are modern and break the stereotypes. It probably looks overall like a combination of an Aboriginal dot painting like some of the others but I think it has to be a bit Western like a Fred Williams painting, the *You Yangs*, which is a bit Aboriginal but is also like a Westerner looking from above looking down at the patterns. (Appendix 10, 10.3)

Maps and a timeline of events that affected Indigenous Australian cultures historically (Appendix 8, Slides 1-6) are also used by David while working through the play scene by scene. He sometimes attempted to use these historical mapping elements to engage with specific elements in each scene (Appendix 8, Slide 6 and 13). In this sense, this historical mapping acts as an external element meant to inform the way his students engaged with the play. Other more

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internal mapping signposts come from the play itself, such as when David uses Indigenous Australian language used in the play to act as mapping signposts for his students (Appendix 8, Slide 8). He also sought at points to embrace more specific cultural elements in the play and to signpost places and scenes in the text that combined language and cultural elements in a more complete way.

I suppose the second bit of the map was working on the text and the scenes and getting the sense of what part of Aboriginal history or experience each part of the play was about. The Prologue, which is like a welcome and a warning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, then the Sobbing scene which is like a communal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander funeral. Then the Purification, which is spoken in an Aboriginal language. We listened to a website which had some Aboriginal languages...Then Nana's story, which is beautiful since it gives the sense of an Aboriginal girl remembering her grandma after her death. I got the students to talk about how different cultures approach death. The Aboriginal thing of not using names or using photos of the dead was discussed. That was an important point for me and I hope for the students. Then all the other family stories in the play, like touchstones or memories, places or circles we visited. I had different groups do these stories in different places. (Appendix 10, 10.3)

One dominant mapping element of David's engagement with this play was the way that he continued to concentrate on using modern and contemporary cultural methods to engage with this text. This happened with his use of Indigenous Australian films, television shows and songs. If one of the purposes of a map in Western non-Indigenous cultures is to show physical features, then David's use of these cultural elements as physical landmarks works well. However, it is interesting to note how he uses some more Indigenous Australian techniques to map out certain cultural elements, such as the use of Western Desert style circle mark mapping (Appendix 8, Slide 12) and the way he used songs such as Yothu Yindi's 'Treaty' to have his students explore one scene from the play.

We then visited the other scenes and got the sense of the play. We talked about the last scene and tried it out before we saw the performance—Walking Across Bridges. We talked about

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reconciliation and narrowing the gap and the cashless card stuff. I played the students the song 'Treaty' by Yothu Yindi, which came out during the 1990s and they did the Walking Across Bridges scene scored to 'Treaty'. So, when we saw the performance and she used the Rudd 'Sorry' speech without using the word sorry, we found that that shifted our interpretation or our map. I think we were conscious that we ended up in a different place (Appendix 10, 10.3)

4.5.5.3 David's engagement using 'the Silence' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

'The Silence' for David is broad in terms of social, historical and cultural elements. He mentioned in the second focus group discussion that 'the Silence' for him is our silence about Indigenous Australian history in terms of the Frontier Wars.

I think that when I read the play, I was thinking, like some of the other teachers said, [about] the silence about Aboriginal history and the Frontier Wars and all the slaughters and also the fact that we are silent about Aboriginal knowledge. (Appendix 10, 10.4)

David committed to addressing areas of silence including post-colonial and pre-colonial Indigenous Australian historical events in his explorations (see Appendix 8, Slides 1, 2 and 3). He highlights the colonisation period as the Frontier Wars and combined this with maps and statistics addressing 'the Silence' about Indigenous Australian history (Appendix 8, Slides 4 and 5).

In the process of exploring the play, David used Boal's Image Theatre techniques to have students represent the play's narrative and symbolism.

When working with the students on the play, the gestures and still images, the Image Theatre gave the feeling of trying to sum up the story, the feeling and the experience in a scene in a single image. The movements which my students did as a montage and transitions between scenes gave a sense of connections. So, the Silence is also the silent connections, maybe deep Aboriginal symbols and connections. (Appendix 10, 10.4)

During his explorations with his students prior to seeing the performance, David also used Brechtian techniques such as the use of visual projections and placards to accompany

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movements and tableaux enacted by his students (Appendix 8, Slide 13). He extended this work after seeing the projections used in the production accompanied by non-verbal and ceremonial codes such as body paint.

Then when we saw the performance, the Silence became both the projections and the unspoken or unheard words, like Rudd's 'Sorry' and the hand movements the actress made in the sand to create new shapes and tracks in the sand. And also the putting on the paint to prepare for telling the old stories in a new way in the future. Like continuing the culture from the Silence to being outspoken. (Appendix 10, 10.4)

It is interesting to note that David chose to focus on the lack of acknowledgement or 'the Silence' and even though he is a teacher who has seen a large number of Indigenous Australian plays. During the second focus group discussion, he realised for the first time that perhaps non-Indigenous Australians are not the first intended audience for Indigenous Australian plays, and he reflected on the potential for theatre and drama as arts forms and study areas to perhaps be seen as reinforcing a new form of colonialism in the way they approach Indigenous Australian plays and performances.

I don't know whether it belongs here but I want to write about another Silence. I noticed in the [first] forum [focus group discussion], you mentioned or pointed out in another part (I think the Homeland questions)...that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have said that Aboriginal and Torres Strait people are their intended or first audience. I went back to the play script and I checked in the preface and Wesley Enoch did say and I quote here '*The 7 Stages of Grieving* has been developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences, acknowledging a sense of recognition and shared history'. I had forgotten or not really read that, and I checked *Stolen* and Jane Harrison said the same...We as primarily 'White' Western drama teachers choose not to see this or emphasise [it]. Aren't we being silent on this and trying to ignore that we are guests or a second audience? Are we inviting Aboriginal theatre makers into our space but then not accepting them and their stories as told for themselves? Is this a silence and a new form of colonialism? Also, where are the Aboriginal drama teachers? Are we being silent about not really welcoming them into our space and allowing our space to change and be their space also? (Appendix 10, 10.4)

4.5.5.4 David's engagement using 'the Signs' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

David has taught and seen a large number of Indigenous Australian plays and as an experienced drama and theatre studies teacher he has considerable experience with identifying signs and symbols in both a play text and a performance text. In the semi-structured interview, he identified the use of language in *The 7 Stages of Grieving* as an important signifier that he used to explore Indigenous Australian plays (Appendix 4, 07:02–07:11). His visual journal also documented his emphasis on Indigenous Australian languages in the play (Appendix 8, Slides 8 and 12). In addition, he used a broad range of visual materials to explore symbolic elements and contemporary representations.

I like to use lots of pictures and slides and I do a bit of background to Aboriginal beliefs and the Dreamtime. I address the symbolism in Aboriginal culture and I want them to be sensitive to that but I don't want them only to see the Aboriginal culture in the past. Strong modern images like the racist boeing which happened to Adam Goodes, Australian of the Year and a great AFL footballer, are good to use so that students can see that Aboriginal stories and experiences and history are still ongoing. (Appendix 8, 07:15–08:08)

David and his students did further work using the sign and placard exercises from Epic Theatre techniques (Appendix 8, Slide 13). The purpose of using these techniques may have been to cultivate more objective responses in his students. This 'dialecticising' of the events and representations in the text showed itself primarily in David encouraging his students to use visual projections, placards and props in their explorations.

... the projections described in the script become symbols. In the script, the eucalyptus leaves became an important symbol for me and the students. The sound of the clock in The Invasion scene was used by my students to show how Aboriginal culture is timeless but that the Invasion was a time bomb which came and went off. The sound of hammering in scene 16, The Bargaining, along with the use of the sign 'For Sale' done like a cross on a grave became a symbol for the loss of land for Aboriginal people and the dispossession. (Appendix 10, 10.5)

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Like the other NIVSSDTs in this study, David found the use of sand and pebbles to be a powerful symbol during performance. It may be that these teachers chose to engage with stagecraft elements that were multi-layered enough for students to write about on the exam. However, since David, a teacher who has taught and seen 13 Indigenous Australian plays, also focused on this element, the power and potency of such simple representations of an individual Indigenous Australian's connection to Country cannot be underestimated.

The coloured sand and the pebbles became the strongest symbol for me and the students after the play. The actress used the pebbles and the sand to create shapes and arrangements and some of the stones and sand, if not all of them, are from her own land. This was in the program or teacher's notes and she mentioned it in the Q & A, and it also seemed there in the she created shapes and arrangements and then destroyed or rearranged these shapes. So, the use of the land and the symbols. (Appendix 10, 10.5)

The symbolic use of space during the performance was seen by David as a potent performance representation of the relationship of Indigenous Australians to Country. He saw a connection between this use of space and the use of space in a performance of the Indigenous Australian play *Namatjira*, where relatives of artist Albert Namatjira sketched their country on stage during the performance. He reflected on his opinion that Indigenous Australian plays tended to use sets and props in symbolic ways that sometimes elude non-Indigenous audiences.

I think that Aboriginal plays and performers use sets and objects in a personal and symbolic way. I think we as Westerners may read these signs in a different way or simply reduce them to a backdrop when they are active actors in an Aboriginal play or performance. Maybe we read the symbols in a different or less specific way. (Appendix 10, 10.5)

4.5.5.5 David's engagement using 'the Land' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

Engagement with Indigenous Australian relationships to 'the Land' was not emphasised by David in the semi-structured interview. He mentioned that he liked to acknowledge the local Wurundjeri as the original inhabitants of the land on which he teaches (Appendix 4, 13:09–

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13:21). His visual journal, however, shows a more complex story. David seemed to almost continuously mention the relationship that Indigenous Australian nations and individuals have with Country. The strongest and most significant references to this appeared to begin after he used a map of the original 500 Indigenous Australian nations (Appendix 8, Slide 3). He also used the Indigenous Australian film *Ringbalin*, which shows a group of Indigenous Australians reviving dances and songlines to try to end a long drought (Appendix 8, Slide 9).

David identified that he wanted to make himself more aware of the local origins and stories of Indigenous Australian nations. He mentioned that the endeavours of other drama teachers on this research project had inspired him to talk to his principal about establishing better connections with his local Indigenous Australian communities.

I think it was interesting that a few of the other teachers mentioned that their schools were built on important Aboriginal land and places, and I should look into it and identify [sic] what is in my region. I think working on this play and this project has made me want to find out more about my own area and place and the names and what languages were used here. Also, I have now talked to my principal about us at my school setting up better connections with the local Elders and getting the [Indigenous Australian] knowledge out in my school. (Appendix 10, 10.6)

The map of Indigenous Australian nations used by David (Appendix 8, Slide 1 and Slide 13) extended into other work. Later in his exploration process, David delineated areas of his drama room to reinforce the sense of the relationships that different Indigenous Australian nations have to Country.

The students and I found the map of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes or nations and their homelands very useful. We used this and even marked out the areas in the drama room, the main ones at least, to get the sense of [their] size. (Appendix 10, 10.6)

The experience of seeing Indigenous Australian actress Chenoa Deemal perform and enact some elements of Indigenous Australian relationships to Country using sand and pebbles brought from her own Thitharr Warra country in the Cape York Peninsula had an impact on

David and his students. This appeared to awaken a personal examination of identity and place, which led to a deeper engagement with understanding connections to Country.

Some of the girls in my class started bringing some rocks from home in their pockets to school after we saw the play and they said they felt stronger and more collected in their identity. So, we talked a lot about the land and I played a bit of film to my students, *Ringbalin – Breaking the Drought* which shows how some Aboriginal people try to use songlines and dances to try to break the drought on the Murray River. The students and me saw [] the knowledge of the land and the connection to land in [a] different, unusual way...I think that the students and me felt we didn't quite understand this, but we wanted to appreciate it more and maybe finding out more and thinking about it more, and using earth in the drama class or performing outside the classroom more would help us. We did do some lessons outside because I and the students thought we should do this and the work we did outside had a different feel. It was more expansive and some movement and elements had to be simpler to be deeper to show that relationship. (Appendix 10, 10.4)

4.5.5.6 David's engagement using 'the Shape' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

David divided his sense of 'the Shape' of his thinking and conceptualisation of Indigenous Australian culture, peoples and perspectives into two areas—the shape of his conceptualisation of the play and his conceptualisations of Australian Indigenous perspectives. Both seemed to be represented by winding, non-linear circular patterns signifying his engagements from different standpoints and perspectives.

In his initial explorations with his students, David used more visual components to represent significant events and elements (Appendix 8, Slides 1 - 3). His transition to a more linear timeline for the invasion, colonisation and Frontier Wars is perhaps symbolic of the way that David represents these oppressive periods when teaching them (Appendix 8, Slides 4 - 7). The representation of the exploratory work done by him on the play text is also circular and less linear in shape, perhaps because of the range of material he used (Appendix 8, Slides 10 - 15).

When describing the shape of his own understanding of Indigenous Australian culture and ‘ways of Knowing’, David appeared to have been struck by the circular shapes made by the actress in the sand during the performance of *The 7 Stages of Grieving*.

The circle shapes that the actress made in the sand seem to show the way that Aboriginal knowledge is shaped and the way it is transmitted or passed on. The use of circles in the performance also became important because I think that we sometimes, as drama teachers, think about the performance area like a stage—a proscenium arch—and the audience has one place and the performer has another. But in this play and in this performance the circle is a special shape and we can watch the performance from different areas. We are sometimes directly performed to but sometimes we see the performer’s back and the shape of the performance is like something we are observing from the side. (Appendix 10, 10.7)

At some points during the journey of his engagement with the text David encouraged his students to assume more critical perspectives, evaluating the events and elements from the play with more distance.

Also [for me the Shape is] the changing shape of how we viewed the actress. Sometimes letters and photos were projected onto the actress and the shape of her body changes with what is projected on to her. It also changes the shape of how we saw the performance. Sometimes we have to just look at the overall shape rather than looking at one thing on the stage. (Appendix 10, 10.7)

In describing the Shape, David also used the metaphor of a turbulent sea to describe his feeling of being overwhelmed. He evaluated the sense of the shape of his own engagement with Indigenous Australian plays from a more distanced perspective. He saw that choosing to study an Indigenous Australian play was an active choice that, for an NIVSSDT like David, often involved a feeling of being overwhelmed by the process. He contextualised his feelings in terms of the shape of a large Australian Indigenous (probably Western Desert style) dot painting.

So, what was the shape of my understanding? I started thinking I would just work through this play like an English text and engage more with the performance and stagecraft elements

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and then see the performance and get the students writing about it. I forgot that every time I see an Aboriginal play, it affects me. I just can't jump through the hoops. Maybe that is why fewer drama teachers seem to go to, and choose Aboriginal plays to study. It is just so draining. You can't but be affected. The shape feels complex and overwhelming like a grand, huge Aboriginal dot painting that covers a whole wall. I feel overwhelmed, it has huge concepts and local knowledge and learning, and I think about how little I know about (and have not moved on or further in what I know about) Aboriginal culture. (Appendix 10, 10.7)

4.5.5.7 David's engagement using 'the Backtracking' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

David saw his understanding and engagement with Australian Indigenous cultures as growing through his experiences exploring another Indigenous Australian play with his students. He used studying this play as an opportunity to reinvigorate his engagement with Indigenous Australian histories, cultures and stories.

I suppose, when thinking back, that my way of understanding this play and backtracking through my understanding of the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving* (and more generally, Aboriginal cultures and perspectives), I see that the play has given me a chance to revisit my connection to Aboriginal culture and history. I have re-realised the power of storytelling to tell individual stories that tell a larger cultural or historical story. (Appendix 10, 10.8)

In backtracking and reflecting on the experience of exploring and teaching Indigenous Australian dramas, David came to the conclusion that although he has engaged with Indigenous Australian culture, he felt that he values but does not understand the connections that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have to Country.

I see that there are ways of Knowing that connect to the land and the experiences [of Indigenous Australians] that I understand some aspects of, but I don't understand what it means. Like the connection to land and the songlines—I know that they have significance but I realise that the connections are deeper and have relevance [that I don't comprehend] (Appendix 10, 10.8)

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David admitted that choosing to study an Indigenous Australian play is always something he finds personally confronting. He felt many drama teachers avoid teaching this material, but he saw it as a way of bridging cultures.

Through doing this play I have expanded my understanding of the stories and experiences of the individual Aboriginal history. I think that it is vital to study and teach Aboriginal plays, as they build our understanding and engagement. (Appendix 10, 10.8)

The specific significance of teaching *The 7 Stages of Grieving* for David appeared to lie in revisiting Indigenous Australian history and culture and using it as a starting point to reflect on how far his engagement with this history and culture has progressed. He seemed to believe that this engagement with stories, histories and cultures was necessary to build understanding.

I think I engaged with the play as, unlike other plays, it is an Everyman or Everywoman play that gives an overview of Aboriginal history and culture... It links *Five Stages of Dying* by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and the seven stages of Aboriginal history and it tells the history and the stories. Aboriginal culture is the oldest living culture and we have to find a way to connect to it and understand it. (Appendix 10, 10.8)

When thinking about the approaches he used, David isolated his studies in history at university as providing a focus for engagement with Indigenous Australian cultures. He did, however, worry that his method is more Western and may be counterproductive, and backtracked and contemplated whether his use of Indigenous Australian knowledge and culture may ultimately be a form of re-colonisation.

I seem to break down what I do and teach in smaller packages. I start with general history stuff probably because I did history at university along with English and drama. I think that we are learning more and I have to keep updating my knowledge... I know that Aboriginal knowledge is not passed on in bits but in wholes, so I am conscious of breaking down things too much and passing it on to students. The problem is that Western teaching involves breaking things down into bits and parts for students. I feel like I look at the play and I

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deconstruct it and I try to find or offer the students a relevant history or approach and then I help them to put it back together. (Appendix 10, 10.8)

Ultimately, David thought that studying an Indigenous Australian drama through seeing a performance helped challenge non-Indigenous Australian audiences. He saw that the humour and style of the performance were confronting for non-Indigenous Australian audiences.

I think the play confronts us as a white audience with these difficult issues and also with stories and humour. I feel that although the play may be for an Aboriginal audience, [] it is also for us and it throws it back to us and asks us what we are going to do about this history, these stories and this Aboriginal heritage. I think that this adds a sense of perspective. (Appendix 10, 10.8)

4.5.5.8 David's engagement using 'the Homeworld' from Yunkaporta's cultural interface model.

For David, the Homeworld or base for engagement with Indigenous Australian histories, cultures and perspectives involves an evolutionary progression. He appeared to see the process of choosing Indigenous Australian plays as helping him to reconnect with Indigenous Australia and expanding his knowledge and understanding.

I think that it has changed a lot since the beginning. Maybe one of the reasons I keep choosing and getting students to study Aboriginal texts is that I always think that I have something to learn. I think I have had to reform the way I teach a bit. I can't just collect stuff on Aboriginal history and culture and give it to students and see the play. I think some things are hitting me more now [that] I am older. (Appendix 10, 10.9)

In working with students on an Indigenous Australian play, David used contemporary stimuli, from photographs to television shows (Appendix 8, Slides 6, 7 and 9). Through the use of this type of material David sought to stimulate critical thinking approaches in his students while expanding his own understanding of Indigenous Australian cultures as ever-evolving.

Kids get more exposure on television and through the media now and they really want to know what happened during the Frontier Wars and how [we could have just] taken the land from Aboriginal people. I don't have the answers and I feel like I am exploring this with the

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students. The students see, and I see, more positive images of Aboriginal people, like in football with Adam Goodes and with Deborah Mailman on mainstream television and the new *Cleverman* Aboriginal series. And then things come up, like the booing of Adam Goodes and the cashless welfare card, and me and the kids think ‘What is going on in this country?’ It is interesting because I had a great discussion after seeing the play and before the students started writing seriously on the play. (Appendix 10, 10.9)

Like the other NIVSSDTs in this study, David felt that the exam focus of VCE theatre studies ultimately undervalued the exploratory work of students. He suggested that theatre studies as a subject, and perhaps the VCAA exam board, needed to find ways to value the concepts at the forefront of Indigenous Australian cultures and stories.

The other aspect of this, as the other teachers mentioned, is that we go through all this exploration and history and we experience all these stories and then we have to forget most of it for the exam focus. It seems like hypocrisy that in drama we are on about empathy and getting other viewpoints and then we have a task where we discuss the play and the performance in terms only of our definitions and focus, like our stagecraft definitions, our storytelling traditions and our concepts of things that are important like style and form. It struck me that Aboriginal plays have come from a different set of traditions and we seem to want to fit them and change them into our traditions. (Appendix 10, 10.9)

David recognised that his sense of ‘the Homeworld’ or the place of this play in the greater landscape of Indigenous Australian knowledge and perspectives was limited by the lack of contact he had with Indigenous Australian people during his process of exploring the play with his students. He indicated that he did not know how to initiate such contact. The only direct contact with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders that David had during the process of studying this play was with the performer Chenoa Deemal during the performance and the post-show question and answer session.

I have not gone out of my way to make contact with Indigenous Australian Elders or locals. We went to the Q & A and we got the input and perspective of the Indigenous actress. I didn’t quite know how to do this [make contact with Indigenous Australian Elders or locals] and I thought having the actress there would be enough. I know [the importance of this contact]

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now looking at what some of the other teachers in this research did, and I have started to move forward. I have talked to my principal and I think I can go forward [with making contact]. I think I realise how important this can be and I know how I can go forward with this. (Appendix 10, 10.9)

4.5.5.9 David's engagement and knowledge through the wider lens of Indigenous Australian perspectives.

In David's work there is an emphasis on what Yunkaporta (2009) identifies as the Story. The breadth of this emphasis is evident in David's use of a diverse array of Indigenous Australian narrative elements. These range from Dreamtime stories, to narratives from the Frontier Wars to contemporary Indigenous Australian accounts such as those relating to Adam Goodes (Appendix 4, 07:45–08:08 and Appendix 8, Slides 4-9). His initial engagement does not trivialise Indigenous Australian perspectives and 'ways of Knowing' but rather appears to value them by exploring a range of events, methods and experiences. However, David does not directly privilege Indigenous Australian standpoints either. He uses elements of Indigenous Australian narratives to separate features of Indigenous Australian stories rather than to exemplify what Yunkaporta (2009) calls effective cultural interface, which involves valuing and approaching learning through narrative. David exhibits what Yunkaporta (2009) sees as a common shortcoming of non-Indigenous teachers—by engaging with the content and 'what' he is teaching rather than embedding Indigenous Australian perspectives in 'how' he teaches, he fails to embed Indigenous Australian perspectives in his teaching process.

There is also a sense of a fragmented disunity in David's approach, where he 'cherry picks' aspects of Indigenous Australian culture, stories and perspectives in his teaching. He is conscious of this and he does admit that he may be missing 'the whole picture and all the relationships' (Appendix 4, 15:09–15:34). Blair (2015) saw the unity and the metaphor of a circle as a central way to embody the relationships, continuity, holism and spirit of Indigenous ways of Knowing. She maintained that space, patterning, connections and relationship to

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Country, family, kinship are important features of Indigenous Knowing (p.21). Thus, David inadvertently frames Indigenous Australian perspectives in terms of Western spatial constructs, patterning, connections, relationships and knowledge paradigms, undervaluing and selectively disconnecting crucial aspects of Indigenous Australian perspectives and narratives from Indigenous Australian ways of Knowing.

While earlier in the exploration process David put some emphasis on elements that Yunkaporta (2009) might identify as the Story, his fragmented use of history, mapping and contemporary representations of Indigenous Australians in his visual journal (Appendix 8, Slides 1-7) exemplified engagement with content rather than embedding Indigenous Australian standpoints and perspectives into the methods of his teaching. While he may see his presentation of the Frontier Wars and contemporary events such as the racism suffered by Adam Goodes as embracing and even valuing Indigenous Australian experience, his discourse does not seek to privilege Indigenous Australian perspectives. Ultimately, the fragmented disunity in David's approach lacked the harmony embodied in more Indigenous Australian approaches where, as mentioned above, Blair (2015) notes that the relationships, continuity, holism and spirit of Indigenous ways of Knowing create the space, patterning, connections and relationship to Country that are central to understanding Indigenous Australian Knowings (p. 130).

David's use of discursive or disruptive elements of Indigenous Australian history, experiences and culture in his practical explorations can be seen as an attempt to include more oppositional elements within the constraints of his own non-Indigenous Australian perspectives, history, narratives and space. However, as Smith (2005) states, the spatial relationships in Indigenous Australian cultures are often orientated in different conceptual ways, where narratives and memories are represented as continuing actualities (pp. 489-491). Nevertheless, while David's practical translations exemplified the first stage of Smith's

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conception of colonisation repositioning, i.e. calibration (2005, pp .490-491), he does not directly demonstrate the second and third stages of Smith's repositioning visual regime, which involve obliteration and symbolisation (2005, p. 491).

While David seemed able to connect to historical and contemporary events well and translate these into practical explorations, by his own admission he appeared to avoid the important act of real connections to the stories, voices, practices and Country of Indigenous Australians (Appendix 10). In his practical translations he can be seen to ultimately offer what Blair (2015) describes as a hybrid approach (pp. 15-16), which acknowledges Indigenous Australian history but does not move towards embedding this history in Indigenous Knowings that are present in relationships between and within individuals, clans, nations and Country.

From an Indigenous Australian perspective, David's engagement with an Indigenous Australian drama text seemed to lack the unified or holistic conceptual framework that Yunkaporta (2009) saw as necessary for effective cultural interface. David does appear to place some emphasis on certain Indigenous Australian elements and methods, such as contextualising traditional Indigenous Australian stories, historical events such as the Frontier Wars and contemporary Indigenous Australian events (Appendix 4, 07:45–08:08 and Appendix 8, Slides 5-7). However, without examining these elements in terms of the overall context of the play or Indigenous Australian perspectives, David's engagement values and respects Indigenous Australian perspectives without actually embedding Indigenous Australian knowledges and processes in his teaching. In terms of engagement, it is also possible to see David as positioning himself on what Blair (2015) describes as a cultural border, where aspects of Indigenous Australian culture are assimilated while the through line of the discourse of Indigenous voices, narratives, experiences and 'ways of Knowing' are undervalued as mechanisms for engagement (pp. 15-20).

Indigenous standpoint theory as outlined by Foley (2003) might consider David as engaging with Indigenous Australian subject matter while not valuing, validating or privileging the Indigenous approaches and perspectives that develop more shared understandings involving Indigenous stakeholders and knowledge holders. In his engagement, David seemed to ultimately favour embracing what Foley (2003) termed the physical and metaphysical distortions of Western Eurocentric perceptions of Indigenous Australian perspectives and knowledges (pp. 44-49) rather than the deep, unified ‘ways of Knowing’ evident in the Indigenous Australian drama text and its performance or engaging directly with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders.

4.6 Summary of the Findings

The following is a summary of the major findings from my investigation of NIVSSDTs regarding how they engaged with an Indigenous Australian drama text.

- Alison saw the study of an Indigenous drama text as an opportunity for theatrical exploration which she enriched by connecting directly with local Indigenous Australian knowledge holders.
- The empathetic standpoint of Alison when combined with her predominantly Western theatrical exploration techniques acted to establish a more negotiated positioning to her explorations of Indigenous Australian subject matter and perspectives.
- In her approaches to character representations and use of motifs, symbols and designs, Alison acted with some understanding and empathy for the specific cultural identities of different Indigenous Australian nations.
- The lack of specificity and sense of place evident in Alison’s visual representations of Indigenous Australian cultures worked less effectively than other exploratory techniques.

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- Alison's 'hybrid' approach combined with her segregation of elements in her explorations acted to inhibit her understanding of the specific sense of the relationships to Country and stories important to Indigenous Australian cultures and ways of Knowing.
- Bernadette's general understanding of the broader elements of Indigenous Australian history, Aboriginal and Feminist studies developed at university. This understanding, along with her empathy for Indigenous Australian cultures as enhanced by her involvement with her school's programs with local and remote Indigenous Australian communities, acted to shift her to a negotiated positioning in her engagement with Indigenous Australian perspectives and ways of Knowing.
- Non-verbal aspects in the performance of the text by an Indigenous Australian performer along with an emphasis on performance rituals helped to both enhance Bernadette's understanding of Indigenous Australian perspectives and reinforce stereotypes by encouraging her to aestheticise these aspects in unspecific ways in her explorations.
- Bernadette saw Indigenous Australian perspectives as an adjunct to her own NIVSSDT perspectives.
- Bernadette's feelings of alienation during an Indigenous Australian drama performance when Indigenous Australian languages were used, shows both a reaction to a sense of a loss of authority and a reluctance to genuinely engage with Indigenous Australian languages and cultural forms.
- The concentration by Bernadette on exam criteria and frameworks acted to inhibit her exploration and understanding of Indigenous Australian perspectives and ultimately reinforced hegemonic or dominant positioning and knowledge paradigms.

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- Some of the more contemporary representations used by Corey helped to move him away from a hegemonic positioning towards a more negotiated positioning in his engagement.
- Corey's movement based approach tended to aestheticise the complex and holistic relationships of Indigenous Australian cultures.
- The overreliance of Corey on the abstraction of dance and movement forms actively limited his vision and undermined the specific contexts of stories and cultural expressions encountered in Indigenous Australian nations and cultures.
- Many of the exploration techniques used by Corey tended to hybridise his representations of Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives.
- Corey's reliance on Western approaches and the 'lens of the exam' moved him from negotiated to more hegemonic positioning which reinforced stereotypes and limited aspects of his engagement.
- David's extensive use of historical material sometimes challenged stereotypes and created a critical awareness of Indigenous Australian cultures reinforcing some oppositional readings and allowing for a fluctuating between negotiated and oppositional positioning.
- David's use of Indigenous Australian nation maps and some Indigenous Australian languages helped to deepen his engagement and move much of his explorations from hegemonic to a more negotiated positioning.
- The linear representations and lack of specificity of the representations used by David limited his perspective and reinforced a more negotiated positioning.
- The singularity of some of David's engagement acted to position his approaches on a cultural border where Indigenous standpoints were distorted and not directly validated or privileged.

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- The range of techniques and approaches used by David along with his lack of consultation with Australian Indigenous knowledge holders displayed a breadth rather than depth of engagement with Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives.

Chapter 5 will discuss these findings and more general observations centred on the primary research question. The discussion will use both Indigenous Australian methodologies and theories of visibility as methodological lenses to focus discussion and analysis.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the Findings

5.1 Introduction to Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss my findings in relation to the primary research question. This question was:

‘How do non-Indigenous Victorian secondary school drama teachers (NIVSSDTs) engage with Indigenous Australian drama texts and what effects does this have on ‘ways of seeing’ that develops knowledge and understanding?’.

A kaleidoscope approach (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg & Coleman, 2000) was used to help organise and focus the discussion in this chapter. The two methodological lenses applied to analyse the data were Indigenous Australian methodologies and theories of visuality. This helped manage and validate discussion of the data while also serving to integrate categories and their properties into the discussion. My intention in doing this was to discuss insights into theoretical and pedagogical ideas that might provide assistance in answering my research question.

The function and purpose of my research question was established in my literature review and methodology chapters. The discussions in this chapter seek to isolate some of the important factors in engagement by NIVSSDTs with Indigenous Australian culture, peoples, history and ‘ways of Knowing’ as facilitated by the study and teaching of an Indigenous Australian drama text. An inductive analysis system was used to facilitate discussion of the patterns, themes and categories that emerged from the data in relation to the research questions. The conceptual lens of ‘theories of visuality’ was then applied to inform the way these patterns, themes and categories were viewed.

In asking my primary research question, I am responding to the challenges that come from Australian teachers being mandated to teach Indigenous Australian perspectives

(ACARA, 2012). I ask this question in a context where Australian government reviews (2014) acknowledge that there is a risk that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, culture and heritage is being addressed by teachers in tokenistic and superficial ways. Also important to the background to this question is the fact that non-Indigenous academic research identifies most non-Indigenous Australian teachers as struggling to identify and teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledges (Harrison, 2011). Most importantly, this landscape is also framed by observations by Indigenous Australian academics. Yunkaporta (2009) acknowledges the difficulty Australian non-Indigenous teachers face in teaching Indigenous Australian perspectives when they have not been shown or taught how they are to do this (pp. 5-12). Blair (2015) sees hybridity of border thinking, constructs and the co-opting of Indigenous Australian narratives as a major impediment for non-Indigenous Australian educators (pp. 15-20). Also important to discussions surrounding the primary research question is the concept of engagement in educational contexts. Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018) work on engagement in education offers insights into the nature of engagement and the indicators and agents for facilitation of such engagement. In particular, Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018) identification of the three major indicators of engagement as being behavioural, emotional and cognitive (pp. 28-32) helps to reveal the functionality of engagement in education as situational and reliant on situational elements with a basis in shifts and negotiation of power (pp. 23-24).

On the following page, Figure 12 presents some of the most significant elements discussed and analysed in this chapter.

Figure 12: Discussion and analysis elements of participants

Participant	Age	Gender	School Setting	Years Teaching Drama	Visual Meth. Observations	Indigenous Australian Meth. Observations
A	48	Female	Government suburban	12	Engagement with Indigenous Knowledge holder promoted negotiated positioning (Hall 1980); some aestheticisation exhibited in physical explorations indicated hegemonic positioning (Hall 1980); some aesthetic abstraction evident (Smith 2005)	Boal's Image Theatre and Grotowski's Poor Theatre used along with Indigenous Australian Elder displayed hybrid approach (Blair 2015); dissipation of Indigenous perspectives in later exploration (Yunkaporta 2009)
B	48	Female	Catholic regional	21	Indigenous Australian perspectives seen as an 'angle' and framed within exam context indicates hegemonic positioning (Hall 1980); some negotiated positioning (Hall 1980) reflected in some explorations and processes; some elements of the visual regimes of colonisation observed (Smith 2005); B's sense of alienation in performance context revealed heterotopias, contested spaces or dichotomies of meaning (Foucault 1986)	Reference to Indigenous 'angle' and exam foci reflected use of Western constructs and discourse, indicating hybridity of border thinking (Blair 2015) and dissipation of Indigenous perspectives (Yunkaporta 2009); sense of alienation in performance context showed fear of loss of authority and inability to see Indigenous standpoints (Foley 2003)
C	43	Male	Independent regional	16	Aesthetic and movement work embodied aesthetic abstraction (Smith 2005) and aspects of heterotopias (Foucault 1986); fluctuation in other explorations from hegemonic to negotiated positioning (Hall 1980)	Ritual and symbolic aspects of C's explorations show limited cultural interface and perspective (Yunkaporta 2009), as well as colonial hybrid border thinking (Blair 2015)
D	61	Male	Government urban	26	Historical elements and practical explorations broadened scopic regime (Jay 1994) but also produced aesthetic historicalisation and some elements of visual regimes of colonisation (Smith 2005), limiting the discourse of vision (Mirzoeff 2011); fluctuated between negotiated and oppositional positioning (Hall 1980)	Historical and contemporary event approach lacked Indigenous unified or holistic conceptual framework (Yunkaporta 2009 & Blair 2015); breadth rather than depth of understanding shown (Yunkaporta 2009 & Foley 2003).

5.2 Discussion

The NIVSSDTs who participated in this research indicated a tendency to ‘see’ or frame an Indigenous Australian drama text from one of two primary positions, i.e. either a hegemonic position or a negotiated position (Hall, 1980). While both of these positions are constructive, neither matches the effective cultural interface approach advocated by Yunkaporta (2009). Dichotomies of meaning and contested visual regimes revealed by the participants are discussed using Foucault’s (1986) heterotopias, while colonisation of space and the visual regimes of colonisation discovered in NIVSSDTs’ explorations are discussed using the work of Smith (2005). Insights into the drawbacks of non-Indigenous Australian approaches that undervalue and do not privilege Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’ and standpoints are examined in light of research by Blair (2015) and Foley (2003).

In her semi-structured interview, Alison commented on how she attempts to address aspects of Indigenous Australian history, cultures and protocols in much of the work she does when working on an Indigenous Australian play (Appendix 1, 02:48–03:32). For her, studying Indigenous Australian plays with significant Indigenous Australian subject matter was important for developing empathy and emotional engagement for herself and her students. This may suggest what Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018) identified as an emotional engagement point (pp. 30-31). This initial engagement point seemed to be followed by decision-making and thought processes prior her commitment to working on the play and her interaction and collaboration with Indigenous Elders on various projects. These types of processes are seen as effective in engagement in educational contexts in the work of Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018, pp.31-32 and 51-52).

Concern is shown by Alison for the way that her students ‘disengage’ from Indigenous Australian culture and issues. Through the process of teaching the Indigenous Australian play *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and seeking the help of Indigenous Australian knowledge holders,

she seemed to develop through her exploration process a growing understanding and respect for Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing'. According to the indicators outlined by Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018, pp. 172-174), this indicated that direct social interaction with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders has led to forms of collaboration that increased both Alison's engagement and the engagement of her students. However, as also specified by Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018), engagement is situational, malleable and negotiable, often involving power struggles in social interactions (pp. 23-24). In this sense, power struggles within the classroom may also be a significant part of Alison's interactions with her students and her use of Indigenous Australian knowledge holders may be a method by which Alison defuses these power conflicts.

The historical elements of Indigenous Australian perspectives used by Alison may represent either an objectification of Indigenous Australian history and experience or may indicate a form of reconciliation. However, the framing of much of Alison's engagement in terms of the events of colonisation suggests what Hall (1980) describes as hegemonic positioning based on historical and ideological reproduction (pp. 136-137). Other elements of Alison's engagement indicated a shift from hegemonic positioning to a more negotiated position through her focus on the diversity of Indigenous Australian languages, cultural practices, representations, motifs and protocols in both her exploration of the text and the viewing of the text performed by an Indigenous Australian actress (Appendix 1, 05:56–08:39 and Appendix 9, 59:43–61:36).

The use by Alison of visual aids which represent aspects of Indigenous Australian history and cultures as shown in her visual journal (Appendix 5, Slides 25-34) may be seen as opening up to her students a wider perspective which is more inclusive of Indigenous Australian perspectives. However, the standpoint of a visual scopic regime as outlined in Smith's work (2005) indicates that these elements could be engaged by Alison as simply

fragmented tokens that fluctuate from historicalization to aestheticization (pp. 484-486). In this sense, Alison's engagement may be actively disengaging Indigenous Australian histories and cultural expressions from relationships to Country exhibiting what Smith (2005) saw primarily as re-colonisation based on calibration and symbolisation (pp. 490-491).

Bernadette engaged with an Indigenous Australian drama text to 'see' and develop knowledge and understanding, primarily using drama elements and the parameters of the VCE Theatre Studies curriculum. She used traditional VCE Theatre Studies mechanisms for textual engagement, focusing on the language of the text, character relationships and character motivations (Appendix 2, 03:07–03:55). From the perspective of theories of visibility, this can be understood in terms of Hall's reception theory (1980) as demonstrating dominant or hegemonic operant systems in terms of her emphasis on VCE Theatre Studies exam perspectives. The engagement of Bernadette may be seen as also suffering from elements of distortion of perspective. Her emphasis on the priorities of the VCE Theatre Studies exam task, and her focussing of her exploratory techniques around the lens of the exam (Appendix 9, 04:34–05:03) reframes the Indigenous Australian content and stories of the play. Furthermore, her reference to Indigenous perspectives as an Indigenous 'angle' (Appendix 2, 01:09–03:07) can be seen to either demean Indigenous Australian perspectives or, at the very least, frame them as an adjunct to non-Indigenous Australian perspectives. In visual analysis, angle, focus and context are elements that are seen to refine and construct perspective. In this sense, Hall's reception theory (1980) may describe Bernadette's positioning here as firmly dominant or hegemonic. From an Indigenous Australian perspective, Bernadette's choice of the word 'angle' seems to indicate what Indigenous Australian academic Blair (2015) describes as hybridity of border thinking and constructs whereby Indigenous Australian perspectives are co-opted into Western narratives and perspectives (p. 19). It is interesting to note that Bernadette believed she was privileging the Indigenous Australian drama *The 7 Stages of*

Grieving by choosing it as a text for her VCE Theatre Studies class (Appendix 9, 107:07–107:25).

Some of the major observable behavioural responses of Bernadette's engagement are decision-making and thought processes that provide a focal object for her engagement. On one level, this may seem effective, but without other crucial engagement elements such as socially interactivity and collaboration (Bartlett & Elliott, 2018, pp. 21-24), the shortcomings in Bernadette's engagement become apparent. For Bernadette, this is made more apparent by her feeling of alienation when witnessing a performance of the play. She felt challenged by seeing an Indigenous Australian actress perform with confidence "claiming" the performance space. While Yunkaporta (2009) may see this as an indication of a loss of credibility, centrality, privilege and expert status (pp. 120-125), Foley's (2003) may categorise this as more of a lack of empathy and an active rejection of Indigenous standpoints (pp. 45-46).

Analysis of Bernadette's initial engagement using Hall's reception theory (1980) demonstrates dominant or hegemonic operant systems. Yet, her visual representations and engagement emphasise social contexts, political movements and some unified perceptions between the land, language and culture and Indigenous Australian perspectives (see Appendix 6, Slides 1-6), suggest a transition or movement towards a more negotiated position. Nevertheless, the formal structures provided by Bernadette's school that support engagement with local and remote Indigenous Australian individuals, communities and cultures ultimately reinforce Bernadette's own sense of authority and privilege, especially within the environment of a theatre and the performance environment, where she feels comfortable and authoritative. Conceivably, indirect formal engagement such as that experienced by Bernadette through her school's involvement with Indigenous Australian individuals and communities may foster what Blair (2015) describes as the repositioning of Indigenous Australian perspectives exclusively in relation to Western knowledge constructs and value systems (pp. 15-20).

Corey engaged with an Indigenous Australian drama text to ‘see’ and develop knowledge and understanding primarily using movement, aesthetics and drama elements from the VCE Theatre Studies exam assessment reports and handbook. In the semi-structured interview, Corey emphasised how he based much of his explorations of Indigenous Australian subject matter on aesthetic representations of Indigenous Australian culture centred on movement-based depictions of ritual and symbolic aspects of Indigenous Australian cultures (Appendix 3, 01:49–02:49). From the viewpoint of visual methodology researcher Smith (2005), this would seem to suggest that Corey’s engagement represents an aesthetic symbolisation which calibrates and potentially eliminates Indigenous Australian perspectives (pp. 490-491). Using Foucault’s (1986) fifth principle of heterotopias, we may see Corey as isolating cultural constructs leading to spatial and cultural displacement (p. 26).

In the focus group discussions, Corey emphasised his desire to explore dance and movement work with his students in ritual ways rather than investigating Indigenous Australian stories, words and language in *The 7 Stages of Grieving* (Appendix 9 01:04-01:36). This is indicative of what Hall (1980) terms a dominant or hegemonic positioning, whereby independent coding not linked to place and situation serves to displace context so that hegemonic signification is embedded (p. 136). However, not all of Corey’s work can be considered hegemonic in its positioning. The use of a diverse range of positive contemporary elements of Indigenous Australian cultures Hall’s reception theory (1980) explored in the movement-based work of Corey reveals his explorations at some points in his teaching to move from a hegemonic positioning to one more indicative of a negotiated positioning whereby situational logics reinforce differential discourses (p. 137).

In terms of the five elements of engagement highlighted by Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018), Corey centred on a definite focal object in his movement and aesthetic explorations. However, his observable behavioural responses, while involving decision-making, emotion

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and commitment, seem to lack what Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018) identify as collaborative and critical thinking responses (p. 24). This deficit may limit the outcomes of Corey's engagement with Indigenous 'ways of Knowing'.

Corey's emphasis on ritual and symbolic aspects of Indigenous Australian culture in his visual journal (Appendix 7, Slides 4 and 5) when analysed in terms of Yunkaporta's (2009) perspectives on cultural interface are restrictive. While, he does attempt to actively move away from stereotypes, as shown in his contemporary representations of Indigenous Australians (Appendix 7, Slide 3), eventually Corey's aesthetic use of movement and dance explorations tended to segregate and separate events, relationships, symbols and stories in the drama text (see Appendix 7, Slides 6, 7 and 8). These separations are indicative of a common shortcoming in cultural interface between Indigenous Australian and non-Indigenous Australian perspectives in school education settings as discussed by Yunkaporta (2009, pp. 123-125).

For Blair (2015), Indigenous Australian movement and dance involves learning that is layered and embodied in experiences, ceremonies and relationships (pp. 69-70). By contrast, Corey's engagement with dance tended to isolate movement and representations for their aesthetic qualities. His initial representations can be seen as embodying a type of engagement that Blair (2015) described as centred on Western Eurocentric attitudes that seek to position singular aspects of Indigenous Knowings rather than engaging with the unique holistic systems of Indigenous ways of Knowing (pp. 15-17 and 130). In particular, Corey's lack of understanding and engagement with the Indigenous Australian notion of Country, identified by Blair (2015) as both personified and a space where Knowings are learnt and lived through ceremony, is an impediment to Corey's engagement with more holistic Indigenous Australian ways of Knowing. The aesthetic and movement-based approach he used and his overemphasis on abstraction demonstrated the hybridity of border thinking and constructs, which Blair (2015) warns is potentially a new form of colonial pillaging (pp. 15-21).

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The resistance of NIVSSDTs like Corey to using Indigenous Australian performance systems does not imply a lack of critical research and theory in this area, but rather a lack of will, interest and/or training to seek out this knowledge on the part of NIVSSDTs. This also indicates another aspect of Foucault's (1986) heterotopias, whereby dichotomies of meaning are created because of a lack of knowledge (pp. 24-25). From this perspective, Corey may not actively embrace Indigenous perspectives due to inconsistencies in his perceptions and constructions of significance shaped by an ignorance about Indigenous Australian standpoints and ways of Knowing.

David's use of historical elements to explore Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives did help both him to engage with Indigenous Australian subject matter. The extensive use by him of visual materials such as maps were also a vital part of his exploration process. David's use of these materials may be seen to exemplify a calibration of Indigenous Australian history and cultures in terms of what Smith (2005) identifies as aesthetic historicalisation (p. 494). Another perspective on this is that David demonstrates what Mirzoeff (2011) framed as a broadening of a discourse of vision which seeks to broaden cultural interface and effective cultural dialogue (pp. 22-25). Hall (1980) would probably regard David's engagement and his commitment to exploring a range of perspectives towards Indigenous Australian culture through using historical signposts and communicated narrative as revealing a negotiated positioning. Furthermore, his emphasis on empathy, respect and cultural sensitivity when engaging with an Indigenous Australian text (Appendix 4, 05:34–06:41), along with his awareness of some elements of local Wurundjeri culture (Appendix 4, 13:02–13:43) and his explorations of the Frontier Wars (Appendix 8, Slides 4 and 5) seemed to indicate a combination of Negotiated and Oppositional positioning (Hall 1980, p. 137).

The engagement of David can also be considered in light of recent work by Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018). David appeared to demonstrate a commitment to learning that involved

dynamic participation and co-participation through the subject material he chose and his use of thoughtful collaborative activities. Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018) may regard this as meeting many of the requirements for effective engagement, such as the use of focal points, situational exploration and sustained engagement (pp. 23-24). However, the lack of unity and commitment to different types of participation that utilise Indigenous Australian systems of knowledge may have meant that some of the more operative engagement elements described by Ng, Bartlett and Elliott (2018, pp. 23-24) are absent in David's explorations.

From an Indigenous Australian perspective, fragmentation is evident in David's approaches, and he himself admitted that he may have missed 'the whole picture and all the relationships' (Appendix 4, 15:09–15:34). His engagement through the stimulus material he uses, the elements of the text he explores and the historical and contemporary events he critically engages with (Appendix 10, 10.2) appeared to represent what Yunkaporta (2009) would identify as a breadth of engagement rather than a depth of understanding (pp. 5-6 and 152). Blair (2015) would seem to indicate David's segregation of Indigenous Australian history and perspectives from relationships and holistic Indigenous ways of Knowing (pp. 15-17) is the source of this disunity and lack of depth.

Foley (2003) may see that David engaged with Indigenous Australian subject matter while not valuing, validating and privileging the Indigenous approaches, cultural viewpoints and perspectives. David's concentration on historical aspects from Western Eurocentric perspectives may exemplify what Foley (2003) calls physical and metaphysical distortions (pp. 44-49). In this sense, David's approach can be viewed as ignoring the deep, unified Indigenous Australians 'ways of Knowing' and engaging with an Indigenous Australian play from a Western rather than Indigenous Australian standpoint.

5.3 Conclusions from the Discussion

The data collection I undertook in this study utilised three data collection methods at three different points over an approximately six-month period. Specific elements of engagement were more prominent at different stages during this data collection process. The kaleidoscope approach advocated by Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg and Coleman (2000), used to focus the discussion and analysis, helped facilitate the use of both visual methodologies and Indigenous Australian pedagogy and methodology. This is significant in that the conceptual lens of Western non-Indigenous theoretical constructs of visual methodologies inform the way that patterns, themes and categories of Indigenous Australian methodology and epistemology are framed. This allowed parts of this research to contribute to knowledge about social, cultural and political issues surrounding non-Indigenous engagement with Indigenous cultures and ‘ways of Knowing’ in a way that placed more emphasis on Indigenous Australian foci.

The significant observations in the discussions of this ethnographic study were addressed in the investigation of how NIVSSDTs engaged with an Indigenous Australian drama text to examine a ‘way of seeing’ to develop knowledge and understanding. Based on this, the primary research question asked, *‘How do non-Indigenous Victorian secondary school drama teachers (NIVSSDTs) engage with Indigenous Australian drama texts and what effects does this have on ‘ways of seeing’ that develops knowledge and understanding?’*. This was supported by three research sub-questions used to underpin the research.

The primary insights discovered through discussion and analysis of the interpretative elements of the data reveal differences in what NIVSSDTs involved in this study ‘saw’ when teaching an Indigenous Australian play text. Visual methodologies suggest two dominant positions were adopted by NIVSSDTs studied - ‘dominant or hegemonic operating positioning’ and ‘negotiated positioning’ (Hall, 1980), although fluctuations between these positions were evident for all participants during the process of exploring the play text. The adoption of these

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positions varied depending on the approaches taken to the text, the stage at which the explorations took place and the supplementary teaching material used by the NIVSSDTs. When the NIVSSDTs investigated, concentrated on exam criteria elements such as style, motivation, interpretation, the use of focus in the performance space, the actor/audience relationship and movement aspects of the play text, more dominant and hegemonic positioning seemed to be evident. This positioning might shift to a more negotiated position if a more complex adaptive methodological framework system, such as that suggested by Boisselle (2016, pp.186-190) were adopted by curricula, examination boards and to help develop an effective way of combining and valuing Indigenous and Western knowledge in school examination education contexts (pp.186-190).

A more effective negotiated positioning is evident when the NIVSSDTs investigated used exploratory tasks that concentrate on story, themes and contexts using historical material. These explorations also seem more flexible in their positioning when centred on Indigenous Australian perspectives or contemporary visual and audio-visual representations of Indigenous Australian individuals and cultures. Considerable variation was evident in the materials and approaches used by the NIVSSDTs studied. However, the dearth of meaningful consultation with and/or use of Indigenous Australian approaches, theories and frameworks is indicative of a significant lack of vision and perspective by NIVSSDTs examined. Progression, negotiation and growth of awareness and understanding about Indigenous Australian knowledges is evident in how some NIVSSDTs visualise an Indigenous Australian drama text in exploration phases. However, assimilationist perspectives and hegemonic operant systems still tended to dominate the approaches and perspectives NIVSSDTs used over the six-month process of exploring and teaching an Indigenous Australian play.

In this study, NIVSSDTs tended to 'see' studying an Indigenous Australian drama text as an opportunity to theatrically explore Indigenous Australian narratives and histories that

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they felt they had a connection to, an interest in or a limited understanding of. Empathy by NIVSSDTs is evident, and this seemed to have developed through tertiary studies, personal interest or a direct or indirect connection to Indigenous Australian people or communities. It is interesting to note that of the participants who were educated in Australian schools between 1964 and 1993, none identified their interest and empathy for Indigenous Australian perspectives as originating during their school years. The NIVSSDTs involved in the research saw teaching an Indigenous Australian text as an opportunity to explore and engage with Indigenous Australian perspectives. However, a lack of contact with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders meant that they were inclined to embrace some selective elements of Indigenous Australian stories and narratives without developing more authentic and intercultural relationships with Indigenous Australian people and cultures. Yunkaporta (2009) regards the development of direct and authentic intercultural interactions as an indispensable step to appreciating Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’ and creating intercultural understanding in education (pp. 124-125).

Aesthetic-, abstract-, curriculum- or subject-based concerns and conceptualisations generally drove the final theatrical explorations of the NIVSSDTs in this study. Most framed Indigenous Australian perspectives, at least in the final stages of their explorations, in terms of Western spatial constructs, patterning, connections, relationships and knowledge paradigms. There was a tendency for some NIVSSDTs to aestheticise or abstractify Indigenous Australian culture, relationships and representations through objectification or historicalisation. Smith (2005) argues that this aestheticisation is a limiting approach, since it demolishes and reconstructs the Indigenous Australian cultures engaged with through a process of calibration, obliteration and symbolisation (pp. 490-491). Another mode of viewing this engagement is as a cultural fusion that ultimately dissipates Indigenous Australian content and interpersonal relationships. This type of aestheticisation can also be viewed in terms of Foucault’s (1986)

notion of heterotopias, which function within unreal spaces or dichotomies of meaning through displacing place and meaning (pp. 22-24).

In this study, the hybrid approach of many NIVSSDTs tended to suffer from what Blair (2015) describes as positioning Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' on a border or the periphery of Western knowledge constructs, ultimately diluting Indigenous voices and relationships (pp. 15-12). This is problematic as it ultimately undervalues the unifying elements of Indigenous Australian cultures and relationships of Indigenous Australian communities to their stories, Country and 'ways of Knowing'. Collectively, the NIVSSDTs in this study have taught many Indigenous Australian texts and have identified a diverse array of strategies and approaches for theatrical exploration. However, without a depth of engagement with Indigenous Australian perspectives, such as the relationship to Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' and Indigenous Australian standpoints, these theatrical explorations can be seen to undervalue Indigenous Australian perspectives in the drama studied, perhaps even 'whitewashing' the text.

Most of the NIVSSDTs in this study did not have a process of consultation or engagement with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders. Foley (2003) regards such consultation or engagement as vital to developing empathy, impartiality and legitimacy, which help place focus on Indigenous standpoints (pp. 45-46). Other Indigenous researchers such as Chilisa (2012) identified embracing the frameworks of Indigenous or 'third space' epistemologies as crucial to understanding and privileging Indigenous cultures and perspectives (pp. 20-25). A poverty of vision appeared to be evident among NIVSSDT participants and although a growing understanding of Indigenous Australian culture was evident, a more shared understanding of the perspectives of Indigenous Australian communities and knowledge bearers and a consideration of Indigenous standpoints was lacking. Further limitations were evident in the perspectives and conceptual approaches

exhibited by the participants. The collective and shared knowledges and perspectives of Indigenous female standpoint theory as suggested by Moreton-Robinson (2013) might bring balance and objectivity to the engagement of NIVSSDTs if embraced.

In terms of the work of Indigenous Australian academics such as Blair (2015) and Yunkaporta (2009), the NIVSSDT participants in the study can be seen as having a tendency to visualise the Indigenous Australian drama text as a potential vehicle for gaining knowledge and understanding. However, the use of Western or hybrid constructs undermined the understanding of the distinctive holistic systems of Indigenous Australian Knowings. Some NIVSSDTs even displayed some of the elements of what Yunkaporta (2009) classified as an assimilationist perspective (pp. 124-125), particularly when cultural knowledges and aesthetic constructs were explored. Other elements of Blair's (2015) hybridity of border thinking (pp. 18-20) were evident in the visual and discursive explorations of the NIVSSDTs examined in the study. This was particularly evident when Indigenous Australian cultural or historical events were emphasised, and this type of thinking tended to lead to cultural fusion that undermined the content being examined. These features are important to note, since without NIVSSDTs seeking to unify and connect these elements to specific Indigenous Australian relationships to Country and Indigenous ways of Knowing, these approaches reinforced Western Eurocentric and sometimes colonialist constructs, approaches and perspectives.

With regard to how secondary drama teachers 'turn' or translate their interpretations of the Indigenous Australian drama text *The 7 Stages of Grieving* into practical formats that address the concerns of the Australian National Curriculum, the NIVSSDTs studied translated different aspects in different ways. Many teachers explored the text with practical exploration techniques, such as those of Boal and Grotowski, to re-engage with Indigenous Australian history, perspectives and stories. Hall's reception theory (1980) indicated that these exploratory

techniques were primarily conducted from a negotiated position that mixes adaptive and oppositional elements while establishing situational levels.

An overreliance on the VCE Theatre Studies criteria re-calibrated Indigenous Australian ways of Knowing, reinforcing Western, non-Indigenous knowledge and values. Yunkaporta (2009) highlights the shortfalls of this type of engagement in that it re-appropriates Indigenous Australian culture without engaging with Indigenous processes and perspectives (pp. 124-125 & 152). The reliance by some teachers primarily on the Exam Performance Text Analysis as the lens for their engagement with *The 7 Stages of Grieving* may be indicative of a fear of a loss of authority. On a positive note, exam emphasis or focus may also be seen as an opportunity for the conceptual frameworks within Foley's (2003) Indigenous standpoint theory to be engaged with for a better understanding of the unity and 'place and space' of Indigenous ontologies and Indigenous epistemological positions (pp. 44-46).

The lack of importance that some teachers in this study placed on Indigenous Australian stories and their specific contexts and meanings undermines what Casey (2012) described as a 'story mass' linking land, communities and histories in a form of visual/verbal mapping (pp. 23-27). The complex unified relationship between Indigenous communities, Country and their stories is identified by Blair (2015) as an important repository of Indigenous Knowings (pp. 142-143), and some of the translations of the NIVSSDTs studied sought to relocate the cultural forms and representations in *The 7 Stages of Grieving* without representing these practices and forms within the landscape of Indigenous Australian cultures and experiences. The framing of the emphasis of the Australian National Curriculum on generic cultural identity means that a discursive cultural interface tended to be emphasised between Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures in which the Indigenous Australian processes and 'ways of Knowing' are not valued as holistic systems in themselves.

More conventional and ‘traditional literature style’ methods of teaching an Indigenous Australian drama text were adopted by some of the NIVSSDTs in the study. These methods focused on elements such as the language of the text, character relationships and character motivations. As an approach and primary way of engaging with the text, these methods seemed to encourage more hegemonic positions of engagement that hinder broader and deeper understandings of Indigenous Australian peoples, cultures, perspectives and ‘ways of Knowing’.

Most NIVSSDTs in this research isolated narrative, characterisation, contextual and spatial elements. This represents a type of limited engagement that Yunkaporta (2009) sees as centred on Indigenous Australian content without engaging with Indigenous Australian perspectives (p. 152). The colonialist tendencies of these approaches are compounded when the study revealed that at least one NIVSSDT felt that the majority ‘white’ audience was sometimes placed on the periphery by an Indigenous Australian performer during the performance of *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. This feeling was particularly evident when specific Indigenous Australian languages and cultural forms were used in performance. This may indicate a fear on the part of some NIVSSDTs of a loss of credibility, privilege and expert status. On one level, this could be seen as an impediment towards developing knowledge and understanding and effective cultural interface. Another perspective could be that this peripheral placement is a productive and generative space in which non-Indigenous audiences can place themselves and interrogate their ‘otherness’. This displacement may help non-Indigenous audiences and more specifically ‘white privileged’ non-Indigenous Australian audiences to experience cultural alienation which may help to bridge understanding building empathy for the societal constructs which systematically marginalises Indigenous Australian peoples. The potential for transformative understanding in this experience of giving up power and expertise may in fact be indicative of an imperative signpost of learning in this process.

All the NIVSSDTs involved in this study used some movement and physical drama techniques such as those of Brecht, Boal and Grotowski as methods of exploration and engagement with the Indigenous Australian theatre text. Some teachers used movement and aesthetic representations as their primary way of engaging with the text and Indigenous Australian cultures and perspectives. This type of exploration, when seen in terms of the models of Yunkaporta (2009), presents useful points of entry for engagement and cultural interface (p. 124). However, Yunkaporta (2009) also reinforced the connection of this mode of learning to the Land and highlights the tendency of some non-Indigenous teachers to disregard this connection and explore aspects of Indigenous Australian culture through cultural fusion, which ultimately dissipates Indigenous Australian content, community and interpersonal relationships (pp. 124-125). Blair (2015) explains the complexity and difficulty of engaging with Indigenous Australian ceremonies and dance, and she described how these practices are not simply performances but practices that layer learning and embody experiences and ‘ways of Knowing’ (pp. 69-70). In this sense, while the physical, movement and aesthetic explorations by the NIVSSDTs in this study may initially further effective engagement, they could also eventually dissipate it since these practices position singular aspects of Indigenous Knowings rather than engaging with the complex embodiment in ceremonies and stories of Indigenous communities.

When some NIVSSDTs were confronted by aspects of the production spoken in an Indigenous Australian language or representations using specific cultural symbols that they did not understand, they identified and described their discomfort in terms of disempowerment and exclusion. There is an irony in the use by a privileged non-Indigenous Australian teacher, as it is often used to describe the horrendous acts of colonisation, dispossession and historical destruction of cultures, languages, knowledges and peoples suffered by Indigenous Australians. This indicates what Blair (2015) described as a direct rejection of the Indigenous

Australian discourse through rejecting Indigenous languages, voices and experiences (pp. 15-20). This may ultimately represent an act of conscious disengagement or realignment of engagement away from important aspects of Indigenous Australian cultures and ‘ways of Knowing’. Foley’s (2003) Indigenous standpoint theory may see this feeling of alienation and disempowerment by NIVSSDTs when confronted as an audience member by Indigenous Australian languages as indicative of a feeling of a loss of authority (pp. 44-46). Perhaps the realisation of this reality may be a point of change whereby greater engagement and understanding can be derived through understanding and engaging with Indigenous ontologies and Indigenous epistemological positions through engaging with Indigenous Australian drama in Indigenous Australian languages in performance contexts.

One significant observation from this study is that direct, personal engagement with local Indigenous Australian knowledge holders is an effective form of engagement for non-Indigenous drama teachers. This type of connection helps non-Indigenous Australian teachers engage with an Indigenous Australian play text because it assists in situating teacher engagement in a more negotiated position, where more effective cultural interface is possible. Since personal engagement with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders was not a direct focus of this study, exploration of this may be a productive area for further research.

This study’s indication that more formal, institutional, semi-direct engagement can reinforce hegemonic positioning is also noteworthy. This type of engagement is more indicative of hybrid thinking, where Indigenous Australian perspectives and knowledge systems are repositioned only in relation to Western knowledge constructs and value systems (pp. 15-20). Since this study did not directly study this type of engagement, this may be an area for further investigation as well, since the reasons that such engagement may reinforce more hegemonic or dominant positioning are not apparent in this study.

The study I undertook revealed that historical contexts and events can act as a useful point of departure for effective engagement. However, without other, more direct forms of engagement, such as connection with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders or theories and knowledge systems, these perspectives may be limited in their efficacy. The use of these contexts and approaches independently may be predisposed towards abstraction, historicalization and aestheticisation of Indigenous Australian histories, cultures, peoples and relationships to country, undermining a unified and constructive understanding of Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’ and effective cultural interface. This study used the input of Indigenous Australian knowledge holders, models and methodologies. Yunkaporta’s eight-stage model of cultural interface (2009) was explicitly used to structure and focus data collection in the focus group discussions. The input of these Indigenous Australian perspectives yielded both useful data and allowed for the exploration, observation, interpretation and description of useful aspects of the engagement of NIVSSDTs with both an Indigenous Australian drama text and with Indigenous Australian perspectives and ‘ways of Knowing’.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

There are many insights provided by this study regarding the engagement of NIVSSDTs with an Indigenous Australian drama text. While different ‘ways of seeing’ that develop knowledge and understanding were explored, a number of limitations of the study should be addressed.

First, this research was conducted as part of a Doctorate of Education degree. As a result, the educational focus of the study means that wider sociological, political and cultural aspects of the engagement of non-Indigenous Australian educators with Indigenous Australian peoples, cultures, perspectives and knowledges are not addressed in detail. Extrapolating findings from this study to the broader context of engagement of non-Indigenous Australians with Indigenous Australian peoples, cultures, perspectives and ‘ways of Knowing’ should be

done with caution, although the study may provide some preliminary findings that could underpin such explorations.

Second, while the ethnographic inquiry methodology and the use of a case study examining four NIVSSDT participants helped uncover the perceptions of engagement of the participants in the study, this interpretivist approach restricts the breadth of the study and its application to other contexts. The choice of ethnography as a research approach allowed the focus of this study on NIVSSDT knowledge building and engagement with an Indigenous drama text to be approached from a number of perspectives. However, my perspective as a non-Indigenous Australian researcher attempting to record, explore, describe, analyse and explain the engagement of non-Indigenous teachers with Indigenous Australian cultures, perspectives and knowledges means that my ‘ways of seeing’ this engagement are ultimately limited by my own non-Indigenous context. As inferred in the study itself, interaction with Indigenous Australian knowledge holders and their ‘ways of Knowing’ is essential to effective and respectful engagement by non-Indigenous Australian teachers with Indigenous Australian subject matter and perspectives.

5.5 Recommendations from the Study

Embracing Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’ in drama and other subjects can and should be a rewarding and enriching experience. Here are some recommendations from the study that can help to navigate this journey:

1. The VCAA should review the way it addresses responses to exam questions which address Indigenous Australian texts and look to include some broader criteria focussed on contexts which could open up valuing of more culturally diverse responses.
2. Drama Victoria could look towards providing more regular workshops using local Indigenous Australian knowledge holders to encourage avenues for Victorian

drama teachers to increase their knowledge base and open up direct dialogue with local Indigenous Australian knowledge holders.

3. Drama Australia should examine addressing the need for an updating of their guidelines and protocols document (Drama Australia, 2012) with the view towards creating a more dynamic online resource which gives samples of projects and people who effectively showcase the principles of the guidelines. These new protocols could also be tabled by Drama Australia representatives at an International Drama Education Association (IDEA) conference to start a process of international drama educator guidelines and protocols for working with Indigenous material, cultures, groups and individuals.
4. Drama Australia through its teacher network should conduct a survey of the teaching of Indigenous Australian cultures in drama classrooms to get a sense of how Australian drama teachers are addressing Indigenous perspectives.
5. More mandatory university units should be implemented in Australian Indigenous cultures and languages for all Australian education students and drama teachers specifically. This would help to privilege Indigenous Australian Knowings and languages and have an effective influence on teaching practices while developing better cultural dialogue. A similar survey could be conducted by Drama Australia through the IDEA network to find out information about the units taught in a range of institutions which train drama teachers in many other countries in the world.

Epilogue

I started this thesis with a story and I will end with a story. When living on Borneo, I took my son and a few of his friends out into the jungle for a trek. Although we had used a map, we got ourselves a little lost since what was mapped and what the terrain was really like differed significantly. We were near the sea because we could hear the waves and we could smell salt in the air. My son's friends wanted to follow the river down to the sea. My son and I looked at one another and shook our heads because we knew that the river contained crocodiles and dangerous snakes. It was then we noticed the slow trickle of a fresh water stream. My son and I consulted and suggested we move up the stream since we thought it might lead to a hill or rise from which we could see the landscape. The others reluctantly agreed. Sure enough, as we followed the fresh water stream, the foliage became thinner and we started to move up a small hill. As we reached the top of the hill, there was a clearing with a view. And what a view it was. We could see where we had come from, we could see the sea and we could see the dense hills and jungle behind us. We could also see the intricate beautiful patterns of the mangroves, lagoons, swamps and ponds of the *Ganma*.

Where is my place? What is my landscape? What is my story? How do I tread with soft padded feet? I think my place is to walk in the *Ganma*, the place where the rivers of the waters of Indigenous Australian Knowings meet the salty sea of Western knowledge in the murky lagoons, swamps, ponds, islands and channels of cultural dialogue. This landscape, this dialogue and my journey is my story. I hope I am traversing this landscape with respect and mindfulness. I hope I tread on this ground respecting the peoples and cultures whose knowledge, 'ways of Knowing' and traditions have cared for this land for over 120,000 generations. I want my passion for honouring the stories, lessons, relationships and Knowings of the First Nations peoples of Australia to help me travel through this landscape with soft

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padded feet while contributing to ongoing discussion, dialogue and reconciliation. This study sought to make real-world observations regarding cultural interface in Australian education in the hope that the over 70,000 years of Indigenous Australian understandings can enrich our present day ways of Knowing. This can be achieved through acknowledging the rich Knowings of the past, establishing dialogue with the knowledge holders of the present and moving toward a future where we can tread with 'soft padded feet', enriching our journey and vision with every step.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Semi-Formal Interview – Alison

The following interview was conducted between the Researcher Mark Eckersley (listed in the interview as Interviewee or later 'I' and Participant A listed later as A.

Date of Interview: March 17, 2017

Start Time of Interview: 1:00pm (AEDT)

End Time of Interview: 1:33pm

Mode of Interview: Skype Interview (only audio recorded)

Interview Topic: Engaging with and Teaching an Indigenous Drama text

Interviewer: [00:00:00] OK, before we begin the interview itself, I'd like to confirm that you have read and signed the informed consent form, that you understand that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, that you may refuse to answer any questions, and that you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Participant A: [00:00:19] Yes, I had read it and understand this.

I: [00:00:20] I am interviewing Participant A for this research. So, how long have you been teaching Drama in schools?

A: [00:00:29] Ah, I have been teaching always part-time because I was a performer myself, so my journey in teaching has been mixed with performing. I went full time at the school I am at now _____ (school name withheld) and, yes, I have been mainly in the private system then I went into the public system when I had my second child, and the long service leave they would give me time so I went to _____ (school name withheld) which is only five minutes from where I live.

I: [00:00:54] That's great. So, what is your philosophy or approach to teaching drama?

A: [00:01:01] Ah, firstly, that every student can benefit from the experience of learning drama. Without doubt in my mind I believe, whether it is developing self-confidence with their expressive skills at that level, whether communication in group work and collaboration, learning to work with

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other people or learning to accept differences. Ah, I think that one of the key philosophies I say is that the process of every drama student is to step into someone else's shoes, and understand the world from another person's perspective. That is really important to me and I say that is the one thing you get from the moment that you've stepped inside someone else's shoes and where a student says, "I have never seen it from that perspective" Then, I think, I have done my job, and, of course, my philosophy, is something like what Einstein says, "Imagination is far greater than knowledge". This is a subject where there are no boundaries, and where you should exercise your imagination.

I: [00:02:35] That seems very comprehensive and sound. You have chosen to teach an indigenous drama text with your class this year, have you taught or used an Australian indigenous drama text with students before?

A: [00:02:48] So while I was at _____ (name of a previous school) we had a subject called Year 8 Production, and while I was there, one of the English teachers said to me "Do you realise that _____ (name of previous school withheld) is built on sacred aboriginal ground?" And I said ah, "What? What?". And that sent me on a journey and what happened is I ended up contacting Aboriginal elder _____ (female Indigenous Australian Elder's name withheld) and we wrote a play together called _____ (name of play withheld) based on the life of _____ (name of historical Indigenous male figure withheld). That experience was over a year, the subject was for a year, it took me on a journey where I went out to Lilydale just before the school (a Lilydale Indigenous School) closed down, I can't remember exactly when that was, I went to that school environment, actually a week before the Principal got sacked, out of that experience I met _____ (female Indigenous Australian Elder's name withheld) daughter and I think working with _____ (female Indigenous Australian Elder's name withheld) helped me with how to approach the writing was a very interesting process. Ah, it was incredibly invaluable in teaching, and it's interesting that when you are teaching Drama, because we would have Year 8 Production Period 1 on a Friday...

I: [00:04:52] (Interviewer laughs)

A: [00:04:54]...and we would be waiting for (female Indigenous Australian Elder's name withheld) and her sense of time was, I got the same thing at the moment because I'm teaching 'Cloudstreet'

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Wesley Enoch's play (the play version was adapted from Tim Winton's novel 'Cloudstreet' by Nick Enright & Justin Monjo but Wesley Enoch did direct a production of this play) and I got asked by _____ (name withheld), an local person on the council whose Indigenous, and really you have to have understanding of that sense of time which is different. It's hard in the school environment.

I: [00:05:43] You are obviously showing that a different understanding is needed, do you think that you taught the indigenous drama text in a different way to the way you teach other drama texts?

A: [00:05:56] Ah yes. I think, and this came up with 'Cloudstreet' that you need to do your research particularly on ah, um, respecting the culture. So for example, with 'Cloudstreet' we had this idea of painting this Indigenous river on centre stage with dot painting it going to be moving, an Indigenous river in dot painting, wonderful visual, and then, and its interesting because I had not come back to an indigenous setting for a while not since _____ (previous school's name withheld) and the students said "Miss you can't do that." and I said "What?" and they said "You can't do that, you have to ask for permission, you can't just put dots on stage. We have to make sure that that's acceptable." So I went "oh, okay". So considering Indigenous artwork, and we know with , anything where we are using projections with Indigenous people, we need permission and moreso now. So what I did was, with Cloudstreet, I rang up _____ (name of female Indigenous Australian elder withheld) and I rang up _____ (name of Indigenous Australian male elder) and I said "How do you feel?" and I think what was interesting was that _____ (name of female Indigenous elder withheld) said "Oh, that's wonderful, I would like to see what you are doing, but you know, here in Victoria it's pebbles not dots. And I said, "Yes, that would be right because 'Cloudstreet' is set in Perth". And she said, "Oh that's fine." So being connected to a community (an Indigenous Australian community) is a very important thing. Because I think, as a 'white' woman, an Australian teacher, representing what has happened here (reference to what 'white Australians have done to Indigenous Australians) there is a lot of respect that has to go with that journey. And that's good, because my students are very aware of those things too.

I: [00:08:39] It's good that the students pointed out that, what do you think are the benefits and challenges of teaching or using an Australian indigenous drama text with students?

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A: [00:08:45] Ah, well, I think it is important that we are able to step into the shoes of others and understand their perspective, because what horrified me, I was at a private boy's school and bullying occurred and I was horrified at the response of these boys to this incident and if we can, ah, if we can encourage student to, like use the 'magic if' and to step into the shoes and understand what it would be like, challenging them, to think about the perspective of the Aboriginal people, I think we may get empathy and that is why we are teaching Indigenous plays and that is why it is so important. Because it is important.

I: [00:09:42] It is important. How do you address or think you can address Australian Indigenous culture, symbolism, language and history when you deal with an Australian Indigenous drama text?

A: [00:09:57] Don't assume anything and in make sure you have done the research and make sure that, for example, the original production of '7 Stages of Grieving' they used a huge ice block that melted onto the stage, I mean, how exciting, I am looking forward to how they are going to do that in this production. But, you know, I think we always need to think about connecting things to the story because we always have a reference with that and that perspective, all the time we have that in the text, and when you are using artwork, if you are using any artwork, make sure that you are talking about what's in the text, you can't just use any artwork, when you put it in a play, it has got to be relevant to actual context because if you look at one of the pictures I've got of Indigenous culture in my room, the map, of the different nations, the cultures, do you realise how many there are, and how it is divided? It's not just the states we have divided them into, I mean, you know, there are lots and lots of different places, just even within Victoria. So we have to be respectful of what went on for 50,000 years before we arrived. I think that is the way I approach those things.

I: [00:11:41] Actually, you've covered most of those elements well. Probably the last thing is just the language. How do you address or think you can address Australian Indigenous language when you deal with an Australian Indigenous drama text?

A: [00:11:52] Well, like with the '7 Stages of Grieving', I wish I could just show you. What I did was, I put photographs back in it then, I looked at the '7 Stages of Grieving', one of the poems, 'The Invasion' which is interesting, and with 'The Invasion' what I did was, I made a PowerPoint and it's interactive and I will just show you this. (Participant A shows the interview a screenshot of a

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PowerPoint with words) Words come up from the text such as 'pain' and what I actually did was read the invasion poem. So I gave the students a visual backdrop, just to give them the context, the world of the play, and this was striking with imagery, well I thought it was striking. It was interesting because I did it in a Year 10 class. (Participant A reads words from the PowerPoint which are from the play text '7 Stages of Grieving') "Nothing, Nothing, I feel nothing." And I timed my delivery with the appearance of the visual backdrop. To give it a sense and emphasise the words superficially but also emphasise the deeper meaning. So I was really using 'Teacher-in-Role' as a way of talking about the language. And I emphasised things like saying "Nothing. Nothing. Nothing." Three times. Also some of the language in the text is, what do you say, colloquial, and it, shows, do you know what I mean, the different ways some Aboriginal, Indigenous people speak, and you need to be aware of that which is why it is very hard.

I: [00:14:21] You have obviously done work on this play 'The 7 Stages of Grieving' before but doing it again, what do you think are some of the ways that you will initially approach or prepare to teach this text?

[00:14:32]

A: Um, well I do use research but, and that is useful, but because Joy said she was going to come in for 'Cloud Street', I wanted to use her, to make it a little more real, a real voice. And for them (the students) to get a real sense of the voice that is there in the community firstly, and because I am at a more 'white' school, at Eltham High they would get that. These kids don't have any exposure. Um, but we are in Wurundjeri land and there is a spot on the hill that is local land, so start at a local point, and then have them think "What does it mean for us?", then moving into the world of the play, then I will use the Powerpoint, which will lead us onto various aspects of research, and then, I mean the pre-text is "What do you know about aboriginal culture?", "What do you actually know?", "What our starting point here?" because it is pretty horrific, it's pretty horrific actually. "What do you actually know?". (The next few sentences are done in the voice of a student). "Oh, something about sorry and the Stolen Generation." (Done as herself as teacher) "What about here on this land here? What do you know about here?" So, well, we will start from that, and then move into areas of research and the the 'Invasion' poem, and then, if I was to workshop scenes it would be using Stanislavski's 'Magic If' and

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Realism and different acting techniques to try to create perspective and, you really have got me thinking here, and there are lots of notes I've made.

[00:16:53]

I: How do you think you will have students engage with this Australian Indigenous drama text in practical ways?

A: I think the language is important, but I think through movement, because I think to say those words, and this is what I have found really hard, in 'Cloudstreet' with the Blackman character, because the student who played him is as white as white can be, because you need to be really careful because the words, the voice, the rhythm of the language, because for me you have to be careful. And, I will go back to the invasion poem again, What I might do is say to the students, "How would you create this through movement?" And I don't want facial expression, I want movement and I want gesture, no facial expression, I want just the movement. And then I would say "Tell me the story". I, um, would then use the text, more as a narration and get the sense of the narration, because that particular one is a narration. I think the idea of students mimicking the accent in some of the other monologues is a problem for me, it definitely is a problem. I would definitely have to talk through with the kids, that definitely cannot afford to stereotype the voice and the sound that is implied. You have to take an approach as a teacher which has a detached perspective, or get an indigenous person to come in and enjoy them reading it, and to be honest with you, as much as I love Joy, she's like "Oh, yeah, do whatever" and she is happy for the kids to do anything and she is bold.

[00:20:01]

I: Have the Indigenous aspects of the Australian National Curriculum helped with this? How do or how will the Indigenous aspects of the Australian National Curriculum help you to teach this Australian Indigenous drama text to your students?

[00:20:16]

A: Ah, I mean, we have been doing the AUSVELS which is the Victorian version of the National Curriculum, and to be honest, it has been a bit of a hole in our curriculum, and I have been addressing the simple things like ensuring in our performances, in our assemblies, we should be acknowledging the indigenous people of our land, but it is an interesting thing, because it has taken me a long time in

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this school's culture to just establish the Performing Arts, and this is like, with 'Cloudstreet' for example, I said to a kid, this is really important that we are acknowledging the land.

I think what is important is the viewpoints. It mentions enriching drama making, and I think, we simple do not talk about Indigenous cultures , and I think that the experience of doing a play, like the 'The 7 Stages of Grieving' and, for me, when I step into the world of that play, I find it, myself, incredibly troubling, because you can't just simply escape, you can't escape what has happened, the words that they say, because, there is a journey, which you have to prepare kids to take. Their journey. But you want the other viewpoints. We want kids, and I think Drama is the best way, understand different viewpoints. Imagine if this was you. And it is good to see that when we are looking at the Victorian Curriculum, that these things are coming up in our schools at the moment.

[00:22:18]

I: What do you think you look for initially in an Indigenous drama text to teach it to students?

[00:22:28]

A: Ah, I think I initially look at the accessibility. That is really important, and story. The accessibility of it and the ability for the students to connect with it on some level, or have some road in to make a connection. I think that's really important. The story having impact. The thing about, 'The 7 Stages of Grieving' is, I think, the dramatic form is particularly appealing, in the way they have broken up the play, I mean the very short scenes in the play. I think that is really appealing because it is like bitesize, and that really shocks them and that is really appealing too.

[00:23:52]

I: And are there any protocols or procedures you follow when you teach an Indigenous Australian play?

[00:24:02]

A: (Pause) I think it is about starting with considering some of the things we need to consider and respect. (Pause) So what I was saying about starting off with the land, right here, that we are on right now, do you know the protocols when you perform a play or a presentation, this idea of acknowledging the people of the land, the Wurundjeri people and things like that. Also what I

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mentioned before about the artwork and being culturally sensitive to what we are doing. And these are the things I would talk about.

[00:24:49]

I: How might an Indigenous Australian teacher view an Indigenous play differently to you?

A: Oh, that is such a good question. (Pause) Such a really good question. I think there is no way I can really understand this. I as a Performing Arts teacher do my best as an Australian white person to present the play empathetically with what I understand of Indigenous culture. (Pause) And using what I have empathized with and understood. The difference is that I haven't been in their shoes, I haven't actually experienced this and an Indigenous teacher would have their life stories and I give the example of a young performance artist who was recording with us in Mont Albert and he came down from Queensland and he was recording and he came back from the Mont Albert train station and he said to me, he was all of nineteen, and he said to me, "Someone wanted to give me money to have sex with them." and I said, "What?" (Pause) And for him it was something that happened all the time but for me, I was so angry, and because he was an Aboriginal boy, and I was ready to storm down there and wait for that man at the train station, I was totally enraged, it was heartbreaking. But for him, this is what life is. So an Indigenous teacher would understand and bring those stories and experiences that I just don't have. The day to day life experiences that are so incredibly precious.

[00:27:39]

I: (Pause) What do you think an Indigenous Australian teacher might see or emphasize in an Indigenous play that non-Indigenous teachers might not?

[00:27:51]

A: I think certain aspects, I mean, its interesting, every person has an individual, and we can't just put all indigenous people into one group teaching a text, they all have their own experiences, good, bad, ugly too, which they bring to seeing, reading and performing the text, all performing arts people do. I don't want to stereotype what they might see or bring to it, but I would suggest that it might be things that they see and that they might relate to. I would suggest too, issues that, um, they feel, they personally think are relevant to their community at the time. I feel a bit funny answering that, that I would know what they would see or do there.

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I: What do you think are the implications of Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers having different perceptions or visions of an Indigenous Drama text to teaching that drama text? [00:30:49]

A: Ah, um, the implications, I think it comes back to being respectful again. Teachers need to ensure that students understand, and, as a Performing Arts teacher, I've grown up in this country, and this is who I am and this is what I am bringing to you. I understand what I am bringing to it is through research and practice and, can I be honest with you?

[00:31:26]

I: Of course, yes.

[00:31:35]

A: I have not met an Indigenous Performing Arts teacher, I don't know of one, so right there, I have not met one in Victoria, have you?

[00:31:47]

I: Not teachers within schools, but as performing artists working in education.

[00:31:56]

A: So, it's an interesting question, because it shows we are not there yet. I know an Indigenous Performing Arts person called _____ (name withheld) who works for the council, he is working two or three days a week, and he is the closest thing I've got for a reference. I think that is an interesting question since we don't really have a context for it.

[00:32:39]

I: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

A: No, that seems good.

I: Well thank you so much for a wonderful interview.

[00:32:58] END OF INTERVIEW—(4 AUDIO FILES TOTAL); VERIFIED THAT THIS IS AUDIO FILE 1.

Appendix 2 - Semi-Formal Interview - Bernadette

The following interview was conducted between the Researcher Mark Eckersley (listed in the interview as Interviewee or later 'I' and Participant B listed later as B.

Date of Interview: March 17, 2017

Start Time of Interview: 1:59:45pm (AEDT)

End Time of Interview: 2:20:30pm (AEDT)

Mode of Interview: Skype Interview (only audio recorded)

Interview Topic: Engaging with and Teaching an Indigenous Drama text

Interviewer: [00:00:00] OK, before we begin the interview itself, I'd like to confirm that you have read and signed the informed consent form, that you understand that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, that you may refuse to answer any questions, and that you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Participant B: [00:00:13] Yes, I understand this and I read the form.

I: [00:00:15] I am interviewing Participant B for this research. So, how long have you been teaching Drama in schools?

B: [00:00:18] Ah, this is my 21st year teaching classroom Drama. Before that, I was a specialist Speech and Drama teacher for about four years.

I: [00:00:23] And through all those years of teaching Drama, what is your philosophy or approach to teaching drama? (PAUSE)

B: [00:00:28] Well, certainly my approach is ensuring that students are active, that they are involved and make lots of decisions. Ah, my approach to drama has shifted away from Process Drama because that was the area I trained in earlier on and I do more text-based work and my approach is to get students to analyse for themselves and make decisions and to do more design stuff. Um, ah, in terms of the philosophy, it came very much from that Dorothy Heathcote 'Drama as a Learning Medium' text and, um, so I think my philosophy has to do with that idea that drama is an opportunity to create community and to find ways that we can in that Drama space like resolve conflicts and explore

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conflicts and develop empathy which develops different points of view. I think, ah, in terms of philosophy, um, it is very much that empathetic way of engaging with others, you know. (1:49)

I: I know. Now, you have chosen to teach an indigenous drama text with your class this year, have you taught or used an Australian indigenous drama text with students before?

B: I have, yeah. Last year, we did a couple of texts, um, were connected to VCE Theatre Studies, and the first was we went to see 'Jasper Jones' which has an Indigenous character in it, and um, we also looked 'Children of the Black Skirt' and that's got in it, well it's about, um, you probably know that text, well I suppose it is a bit of historical drama you know in a sense because it is about, um, some of the circumstances of the Stolen Generation, and the kids in institutions, in the early part of the 20th Century. So we have done that, and over the years I have taken students to see productions by Bangara and we saw 'Stolen' a long, long time ago.

So overall, I do like to introduce students to drama texts, to theatre texts that have got an Indigenous angle or component. (3:07)

I: Do you think that you taught the indigenous drama text in a different way to the way you teach other drama texts?

B: Ah um, I think there are probably subtle differences. I think that the language is different and it is about what you can see and what are the motivations of the characters and the relationships between characters, all those sorts of things, um, we have at _____ (name of school withheld), a very strong Indigenous unit, so we, um, ah, a Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander coordinator and we've got a lot of students who identify as having Indigenous backgrounds and it's at the forefront of what we do at assemblies and at all of our events we always have a welcome to country and some of our students go to the Northern Territory two or three times a year so we have a strong connection to Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and I think that when I am working with an Indigenous play I would avail myself of the knowledge and expertise and I, um, suppose some of the expertise, to what might be the peculiarities of Indigenous perspectives. So that is I guess, the, it's not a particularly rigorous way of approaching an indigenous text to ensure that we are approaching all the sensitivities but, um, we, um, certainly have a way of approaching the text which sometimes

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includes conversations with the students that includes systemic injustice or, you know, broader social issues, that are going to be present and threaded through the text.

(5:06)

I: Do you think that there is any special knowledge needed to teach an Indigenous Drama text?

B: I think the more one knows the better one will teach it. I think one should necessarily avoid teaching an Indigenous text if one doesn't have particular insights or, um, a particular background. I think that the teaching of a text or the engagement text is enriched if one has a particular knowledge or interest, I think I have a good interest in Indigenous culture, but I wouldn't say I am an expert, but I wouldn't be afraid about doing or engaging with an Indigenous text or a text that has Indigenous subject matter or Indigenous characters and I think that I would make that aspect an explicit part of the conversations I have with students.

I: Do you think are the benefits and challenges of teaching or using an Australian indigenous drama text with students? **(6:11)**

B: I certainly think that it is about visibility in some ways, it has big benefits, I mean, I teach in a girl's school, and I have the view that we should do texts that have strong female characters, or are written by females, and I think it's the same with Indigenous texts. I don't want to sound tokenistic about it but if we don't make some space for texts that have come from marginalised or disenfranchised people or stories that are not necessarily in the main frame, we are just condemned to teaching the cannon or what male view of life. I do think that there are certain benefits, challenges, and there are many texts and I think that in terms of the work that we do in class, I think I would be sensitive to a text which has many Indigenous characters if I don't have students in my class who have that background and whether that is right or wrong, I think that one has to be sensitive to the authenticity of that voice, so that would be the benefits and challenges I can think of. **(7:45)**

I: How do you address or think you can address Australian Indigenous culture, symbolism, language and history when you deal with an Australian Indigenous drama text?

B: [00:08:01] Well, I certainly think we would have as a starting point research. We are going to see '7 Stages of Grieving' so it will be notes on that. So, um, I think engaging with background information is important and doing background research is important. Um, I think it is also important,

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as much as possible, which cultural group, which Indigenous group or nation is being represented or whose stories are being told. I think it's important to know the distinction between different people from different parts of Australia. If you're a desert people you might have a different perspective, like, you know, a different lifestyle. So, having some sense of what might be significant or important in terms of those peoples and the, um, lifestyle. I think, as much as possible, finding out about that. And sometimes this is easier and more accessible because theatre companies actually provide it.

I: [00:09:19] What are the different ways you think you prepare to teach an Indigenous Drama text?

(PAUSE)

B: [00:09:24] Um, we have looked at 'The 7 Stages' even though we are not going to see it until May.

So the first thing we usually do is start with the text, we normally start reading the text. I normally start a class with précising the text, the synopsis and giving a bit of a sense of where this text sits, in terms of style, or perhaps if I have seen the production, I might give the students a little bit of a sense of the features, or how that was interpreted when I saw it. So we start with reading the text and we read it together as a class. I did give my Year 12's the text to read as homework but when we get to actually working on it, we will look at the text together, we will read it through and we will stop and discuss things that we find confusing or interesting and we start to make the links. That would be the initial approach, um, I will also give the students some bits of particular research that they have to go away and do that might relate to other productions that have happened or some of the, um, historical contexts. That sort of stuff.

I: [00:10:37] How do you think you will have students engage with this Australian Indigenous drama text in practical ways?

B: [00:10:45] Oh yeah, it's a beautiful piece with vignettes, so we will start and get onto the floor with it. We will do a 'jazz read', 'punctuation read' and letting the words like tumble out, getting a wash with the words. Um, I will also set the girls, um, ah, well I've got a boy in my class too, so I will set some practical work for them to do. S, um, I will perhaps give them a scene to work on in pairs and perhaps I'll set one as the director, and give the other one the acting. Um, I might get a couple of actors to work on it and they would work on a scene for twenty/thirty minutes. I might, sort of, walk around them, feed in some suggestions, ask them some questions, that kinda thing. And then they

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would present the work and they would talk about, what is it they had noticed, others would talk about their response to it. Other would talk about it not having seen the text before. Approaching it in very practical, you know, getting up on the floor, as a way in, not just a practical way but a way in through the body.

I: [00:12:01] How do or how will the Indigenous aspects of the Australian National Curriculum help you to teach this Australian Indigenous drama text to your students?

B: [00:12:14] It probably hasn't helped so much because, um, um, I've kept my eye on AUSVELS and the Victorian Curriculum and I suppose I am looking it as a cultural text, not necessarily as an Australian Indigenous text but as a cultural text, the way I might look at a text from Germany or Spain, or something.

I: [00:12:41] What do you think you look for initially in an Indigenous drama text to teach it to students?

B: [00:12:49] Um, I guess from my understanding of it, we are looking at texts from a variety of cultures and the curriculum and the text has the purpose of broadening the kid's experiences of life, culture, landscapes and, what's the word I am looking for, sets of values, perspectives. So I suppose it's about perspectives. And I try to connect in with a lot of the stuff that the kids have done in History. Um, a lot of them do, we've got a subject called 'Black-Tracks' which very much has a focus on the Indigenous experience with European settlement and the struggle for rights and all those sort of things. So, um, I will probably connect it in with history and that and, ah, those perspectives.

I: [00:13:46] And are there any protocols or procedures you follow when you teach an Indigenous Australian play?

B: [00:13:56] Ah, well I don't think that there are particular protocols or procedures. I suppose I haven't thought about it. I guess, I would have at the forefront of the conversation that introduces the text, an Indigenous text or one that has got an Indigenous component to it, and because we often have students that have go an Indigenous background, I would, I might use that as the opportunity for them to offer an Indigenous perspective, at some point, but I guess you know, I guess it is much more about having inclusive language and bringing the knowledge that the students have already got about Indigenous issues to the conversation and my understanding too of Indigenous issues to the

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conversation. It is certainly a component of the conversation but I don't think I would have a protocol or procedure to start a text.

I: [00:14:52] How might an Indigenous Australian teacher view an Indigenous play differently to you?

B: [00:14:59] Um. I think, I guess it would depend on how strong their connection is to their Indigenous background and, um, I also think that it would depend a little bit on which nation they belong to. So, something from Gippsland is going to have great insight different to what someone from Broome might have experienced, kind-of-thing, so, um, I would imagine that an Indigenous teacher might have a little more authority, um, or perhaps wouldn't be as 'ginger' in approaching it. Because I am not Indigenous, I haven't had that life and that set of experiences and I think an Indigenous teacher would have stories to tell that would be personal and that would offer insights into texts, certainly Indigenous texts and certainly Indigenous actors I have spoken to can tell stories of what their life is like and things I have never had to go through and I think that there is that, um, history, that personal history that I think would be a component to the teaching of Indigenous texts by an Indigenous teacher, that I just don't have access to.

I: [00:16:34] What do you think an Indigenous Australian teachers might see or emphasize in an Indigenous play that non-Indigenous teachers might not?

B: [00:16:44] Um, there are sort of 'winks and nods' in texts and in that community. And I can that as a woman there are even 'winks and nods' in plays by women that women pick up on, and, um, I imagine it would be the same for an Indigenous person and, it might have to do with a sense of humour, you know. Um, I have spent a little bit of time with Indigenous people and there is a quality I recognize of being particularly Indigenous and it is, you know, a sense of humour and a gentleness and it is a connection that is, um, quite particular, a particular sense, um, (pause) a way on seeing the world I guess which is quite delightful sometimes. And I think there would be elements of what it means to be in a community, you know. Um, thing to do with, um, family, um, food, I don't know, you know, all that cultural stuff which is shared. Um, I am sure there would be, um, a level of meaning that is there for an Indigenous teacher that I don't see.

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I: [00:18:18] What do you think are the implications of Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers having different perceptions or visions of an Indigenous Drama text to teaching that drama text?

B: [00:18:31] (Pause) Well I guess for the students they're going to have different insights. Um, ah, and I am sure there are things I can bring to the study of a text, give my knowledge, you know and my expertise and all those sorts of things which are quite unique and particular. Um, I think, um, we all do the best we can. And I think that the other thing is, I think, in terms of just because you teach it, it doesn't mean they learnt it, you know. I might offer things to students, they might pick up on some of it, they might pick up on a lot of it. Some of them might pick up on things you're not intending them to (laughs) and that sort of stuff, and I am sure it must be the same for an Indigenous teacher. Um, I think for those students that have got an Indigenous teacher, teaching them an Indigenous text, there are going to aspects of that learning that are, um, going to be enriched in ways that are only possible by having an Indigenous teacher but it is going to be about one aspect of the production because there are so many aspects of a play, aren't there? I mean, there are so many layers, meaning and significance, and, um, an Indigenous aspect to a play is one of those layers, um, but there's all that other stuff too, so I guess, so there is going to be a set of, um, implications and hopefully the teacher does the best they can and, um, honours the text the best they can given their background.

I: [00:20:36] Is there anything else that you would like to add?

B: [00:20:38] No. all is good.

I: [00:20:41] Well thank you so much for a wonderful interview.

[00:20:45] END OF INTERVIEW—(4 AUDIO FILES TOTAL); VERIFIED THAT THIS IS AUDIO FILE 2.

Appendix 3 - Semi-Formal Interview – Corey

The following interview was conducted between the Researcher Mark Eckersley (listed in the interview as Interviewee or later 'I' and Participant C listed later as C.

Date of Interview: March 17, 2017

Start Time of Interview: 3:01:08pm (AEDT)

End Time of Interview: 3:17:59pm (AEDT)

Mode of Interview: Skype Interview (only audio recorded)

Interview Topic: Engaging with and Teaching an Indigenous Drama text

Interviewer: [00:00:03] How long have you been teaching drama in schools?

Participant C: [00:00:09] In a Secondary system, twelve years. In the primary school system about four.

I: [00:00:15] Okay, if you had to describe what your philosophy or approach to teaching drama is, how would you actually describe that?

C: [00:00:27] Most of what I do is probably process with a process model. I'm not so fussed about the final product, I'm more interested in how it's getting achieved and what's being explored. Occasionally I have to focus on the product because of theatre studies VCE you have to produce work obviously but most of it is process and I like to think that I'm more about the interpersonal development of the students so teaching interpersonal skills, relationship and collaborative skills along with that side. I know it's not officially drama syllabus kind of stuff but that interpersonal relationship I think is really important.

I: [00:01:11] And you chose an Indigenous text to do with your class this year, have you taught or used Indigenous text before in the past?

C: [00:01:20] Not specific ones. No. What I've done in the past with dance classes is what I've used is published dreamtime stories and created danceworks of that. So I've never used the actual text as such.

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

I: [00:01:39] Do you think that you will teach an Indigenous text in a different way to the way that you teach other drama plays?

C: [00:01:49] Absolutely. Well yes and no. Because of the constraints or the outcomes used for theatre studies, I've got to teach in a specific way of looking at specific elements like the stagecraft elements so that the production elements as well as the acting that goes toward it, so I've kind of have a model of teaching it anyway. What I will do for this is approach it a bit like my dance classes. I want them to get more of a physical feel for the movement. We've looked at Bangarra Dance, for example, and their recent production here was *Terrain*, so that was really interesting so they've got an understanding of storytelling through movement and also movement and symbolism. So they have a way in already. But in terms of actual text, I've never used any Indigenous texts in script form, no.

I: [00:02:50] Do you think at this point there may be any specialist knowledge or understanding that you think they will need to approach Indigenous work like that? (PAUSE)

C: [00:03:03] I haven't really a specific way, but in terms of the text, I want to be treating the content with respect. I don't know if it's a political correctness thing but I sort of feel that I would need to do a lot pre-reading and a lot of background work myself, but I'd also be definitely approaching other people as we do have a few local Indigenous groups we can actually get in to do some other workshops and I have done that in the past.

I: [00:03:42] Okay, so reaching out to those, what do you think are some of the benefits to teaching or using an indigenous drama text? Do you think there are benefits, and what do you think they are? (PAUSE)

C: [00:03:51] I'd like to think that one would be helpful to reach the cultural gap that we've got in Australia. So, I think, um, it's a little bit esoteric maybe or wishful thinking, I don't know but I'd love the idea that we could actually learn more and we could potentially embrace the culture more or be more respectful of the work, maybe the traditional values of at least. But I also feel that we need to push an Australian voice in theatre and drama as well, and keep pushing it forward. Which is nice to see in, I know in theatre studies we are doing that anyway, there are a lot of choices for their monologues, they come from Australian playwrights and I like the idea that we're using non-white (for lack of a better word) text, I think it's really important to develop and foster even further.

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

I: [00:04:46] And how do you think you can or think you do address indigenous culture symbolism language and or history in the way you will deal with an Indigenous text? (PAUSE)

C: [00:05:01] I'm hoping some of the pre-work we've done with *Terrain* and Bangarra will help with that symbolism. With the history side of things I also want to turn to Bangarra Dance Theatre because they did a fabulous performance piece last year called *Macq* that is based on Governor Macquarie and what he did, um, which essentially lead to the total annihilation of tribes at the time. So there was a wipe out of many many tribal areas. So in terms of a narrative or history I might look at, will definitely look at their education resources. Not only Bangarra, but I find that I go a lot to sort of I guess, that I try all of those resources first.

I: [00:05:54] What are the ways you will initially approach or prepare to teach this Indigenous text?

C: [00:06:01] I will look at website stuff first about the play. Use some of my existing knowledge about Indigenous dance and try to use a physical approach to the storytelling and try to use a physical way into the text. I run a unit of Dance in Year 8 called Ritual Dance so I have the resources to help with those discussions about Ritual Dance as a, I suppose, genre of dance. So I will start with the rituals of more ancient Aboriginal culture and work my way up into the history, the more modern history. I am so unfamiliar with the modern history, modern aboriginal stories, it is so out of my comfort zone, so I will start with the ritual stuff first.

I: [00:07:10] How do you think you will have students engage with this Australian Indigenous drama text in practical ways? (PAUSE)

C: [00:07:18] Um, the movement is going to be very important for me, I guess cause of my dance background. I sort of have to be guided by what's in the VCE guidelines and the outcomes, so, um, I probably will, I can't see myself altering my approach too much just because it is an Indigenous Drama text, read the script, isolate the themes and issues, which I would do for any text, where and when it is set, um, approach it that way, because they have to interpret the text because that is the way this course works, interpretation.

I: [00:08:19] You also teach Junior Drama, so how do or how will the Indigenous aspects of the Australian National Curriculum will help you to teach this Australian Indigenous drama text to your students? (PAUSE)

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

C: [00:08:33] I don't think that the Australian Curriculum goes into that much detail. I must admit, because we are an independent school, we are not, mandated as such, we can set our own agenda. We have to be mindful of the National Standards. I am new, but not quite new to the National Standards, and I haven't done a lot of research into it but what I have found, it hasn't been exactly helpful, what they have provided has not been helpful, they have provided some good links to good resources, definitely, but, um, but it's nothing that I probably couldn't have found myself, and I feel like the curriculum is very broad, which is probably a good thing, but the guidelines are like Australian Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders and Asia, so it comes, and in the wording perspectives comes a lot, so I would like to be more specific but.

I: [00:09:36] What do you think you look for initially in an Indigenous drama text to teach it to students? (PAUSE) What will you start with? (PAUSE)

C: [00:09:51] First thing I look for are the issues raised. Um, that would be the springboard and then, um, I would look at the historical elements, then we, ah, I always like to go with these issues first because you can explore, ah, things more freely, you don't get too stuck on an area, or we look at the designs, what would they look like, and the historical facts, then the interpretation, then the acting. So when we have established the common themes whether they be present day or historical events and work backward that way.

I: [00:10:56] And are there any protocols or procedures you follow when you teach an Indigenous Australian play or Indigenous subject matter?

C: [00:11:09] What I tend to fall back on is the traditional relationship with the land, that the Aboriginal people have, and it comes under a lot of work, particularly dance work, so I will always be fascinated by that link, because there is not really another link others have between plants, animals and humans and even nature itself, and I love using the old Dreamtime stories that you can find because people become animals and animals become people, that's a pretty crude way of putting it, and that has an importance and particularly coming from a dance background you can see it influences a lot even today. For example Bangarra is a contemporary Aboriginal dance troupe and a lot of their work is very grounded, and also a lot of dance is what we would call in the dance world aerial, a lot of lift work but a lot of Bangarra's work is close to the ground, and that makes Bangarra's

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work very special, in their approach to contemporary dance. So a lot of their work is going back to the ground, the corroboree.

I: [00:12:39] What do you think an Indigenous Australian teachers might see or emphasize in an Indigenous play that non-Indigenous teachers might not?

C: [00:12:49] (PAUSE) I would assume that they would look for commonalities like background or familiar facts or historical background or inaccuracies so they will be looking at how it relates to them. Probably, I have a more global perspective, I look at the technical aspects, the lighting etc., and I would assume they are going for the narrative and the emotional context and the sense of place, whereas I would assume I am going to be more global in my perspective. I'm trying to put the Theatre Studies framework over the top, but centrally they would be looking at the symbolism, and the emotional context and look at the acting and how that relates to what is presented on stage. I mean, I would look more at the production elements and how that is telling the story, and I think they would engage more with the context, the emotional context. I feel like, that because they might have a more personal interest, obviously related to the situation or the topic, they might look at that context of time/place in greater detail whereas I might be looking at, whether it's right or wrong, the practicalities of it, the story is presented this way, its acted this way, and what is supporting that in terms of production elements.

I: [00:15:05] You have pointed out possible different perspectives, what do you think are the implications of Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers having different perceptions or visions of an Indigenous Drama text to teaching that drama text? (PAUSE)

C: [00:15:24] I think that, ah, maybe, for me, my worry, my concern, is that with the text, I wouldn't engage with the text as much, and, I haven't read the text yet, because it hasn't arrived yet, and if the text has a social change element to it, if it advocates some kind of social change, in what is presented, I guess the implication is for me, and I mightn't engage with that as much because I have to focus on how this story, and being told. And I think that in terms of an Indigenous teacher, they might, focus on, okay a change in this is a change in this, and even if they look at the production elements, they may get a totally different angle, and engage, maybe, with that social change, assuming its present of course.

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I: [00:16:41] That's great. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

C: [00:16:46]. No. That's good.

I: [00:16:48] Well, thank you so much for a great interview.

[00:16:51] END OF INTERVIEW— (4 AUDIO FILES TOTAL); VERIFIED THAT THIS IS
AUDIO FILE 3.

Appendix 4 - Semi-Formal Interview – Participant David

The following interview was conducted between the Researcher Mark Eckersley (listed in the interview as Interviewee or later 'I' and Participant D listed later as D.

Date of Interview: March 17, 2017

Start Time of Interview: 5:00pm (AEDT)

End Time of Interview: 5:17pm (AEDT)

Mode of Interview: Skype Interview (only audio recorded)

Interview Topic: Engaging with and Teaching an Indigenous Drama text

00:00

Interviewer: Before we begin the interview itself, I'd like to confirm that you have read and signed the informed consent form, that you understand that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, that you may refuse to answer any questions, and that you may withdraw from the study at any time.

(00:28)

Participant D: Ah yeah, I've read it.

(00:30)

I: Do you also understand it?

(00:32)

D: Yeah.

(00:34)

I: I am interviewing Participant D for this research. So, how long have you been teaching Drama in schools?

(00:37)

D: I have been teaching for 26 years. I have taught Drama for most of those years. I've taught in the government system, the Catholic and the Independent school systems.

(00:43)

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

I: What is your philosophy or approach to teaching drama?

(00:45)

D: I think Drama is about exploring situations, people and contexts. I think that students in Drama explore things in a practical and real way. I try to teach it in a very active and physical way. I believe that students learn in drama about themselves and how to work in groups.

(01:18)

I: You have chosen to teach an indigenous drama text with your class this year, have you taught or used an Australian indigenous drama text with students before?

(01:33)

D: Yes, I have. I have done a few. I wrote them down here to help me remember. (Pause for 6 seconds). I teach Theatre Studies, Drama and English, so I made a note of all of them just in case. (Pause for 8 seconds). Here we are. For Theatre Studies in 1998 we did 'Stolen' by Jane Harrison. In 2000, we did 'The Sunshine Club' by Wesley Enoch. In 2002 I did 'Belonging' by Tracey Rigney. I did 'Yanagai! Yanagai!' by Andrea James in 2003 and 2006. Then, um, in 2008, I did 'Jandamarra' by Steve Hawke and Scott Rankin. Then 2011, I did 'Namatjira' by Wayne Blair. Then in 2014, I did 'Walking into the Bigness' by Richard Frankland and Wayne Blair. And this year (2017), I will take the Theatre Studies students to 'The 7 Stages of Grieving' by Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman. In Drama, in 1992, we studied 'Bran Nue Dae' by Jimmy Chi. In 2002, we studied 'Conversations with the Dead' by Richard Frankland. In 2004, we did 'The Sapphires' by Tony Briggs. In 2015, I studied with the students 'Black Diggers' by Tom Wright and 'Beautiful One Day' by Ilbijerri Theatre Company. This year (2017), I will take my students to 'Coranderrk' by Giordano Nanni and Andrea James at the Ilbijerri Theatre Company. In English in 2002, 2003 and 2004, we did 'Stolen' by Jane Harrison. In 1997, 1998 and 1999 and in 2014, 2015 and 2016 we studied 'No Sugar' by Jack Davis. So I have taught 13 Aboriginal plays all up.

(03:37)

I: Wow, that's a lot. Do you think that you taught the indigenous drama text in a different way to the way you teach other drama texts?

(03:51)

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

D: Well, um, I do teach things differently when I do them in English, since I teach it more like a text, though I like to even give English students a chance to act out parts of the play to get the sense of what it might look like on stage. But, for Drama and Theatre Studies I do it the same way. I always try to with an Aboriginal, sorry, an Indigenous play, give a sense of the history and I use lots of pictures and visual stuff to help students. I am a bit careful with stopping kids from doing what they think an Aboriginal voice is like because I think it can become racist or disrespectful. I also wouldn't let a student do a speech from an Aboriginal play in performance because I think it would be disrespectful and take something away from the play.

(05:23)

I: What do you think are the benefits and challenges of teaching or using an Australian indigenous drama text with students?

(05:34)

D: As I said, one of the challenges is getting them to understand the culture and history and not to do an accent and be respectful. I think that it is good to do these plays because they are part of our culture and students need to understand the history and the stories and empathise with Aboriginal culture and what the people have been through. I think it helps them to understand and empathise. Also when they see a play with real Aboriginal actors, I think that for some of the kids I teach, that is the only time they have seen an Aboriginal person and it helps them to see and hear what is a different world to them but it is a vital lost part of our culture.

(06:41)

I: How do you address or think you can address Australian Indigenous culture, symbolism, language and history when you deal with an Australian Indigenous drama text?

(07:02)

D: I address it through having the students learn some of the Aboriginal words and language used in the play. I like to use lots of pictures and slides and I do a bit of background to Aboriginal beliefs and the Dreamtime. I address the symbolism in Aboriginal culture and I want them to be sensitive to that but I don't want them only to see the Aboriginal culture in the past. Strong modern images like the racist booing which happened to the Adam Goodes, Australian of the Year and a great AFL

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footballer, are good to use so that students can see that Aboriginal stories and experiences and history are still ongoing.

(08:08)

I: What do you think are some of the ways that you will initially approach or prepare to teach this text?

(08:19)

D: Um, I will prepare some research on the history of Aboriginal culture and the production history of the play but I won't share this with students straight away. I will start with the students by having the students discussing and sharing what they know about Aboriginal history and culture. Then we will read the play out aloud. I tend to try to read the one in one class, in one sitting so the students get the flow and sense of the whole play. It will be easier with '7 Stages of Grieving' since it is shorter and has short scenes. I will get students to note down on a large sheet of paper what they notice. I want them to get a sense of the stories and get a sense of character. I will probably use a freeze frame or Boal's Image Theatre to get a sense of the themes in each scene. I will then share my research with them and have them share their research.

(09:17)

I: How do you think you will have students engage with this Australian Indigenous drama text in practical ways?

(09:26)

D: I will use Image Theatre to get the student to act out and get a sense of the action or the stage picture of each scene. I will maybe also get them to select a piece of music from some Aboriginal music artists and bands to score the scene to help them get used to the stage picture or what the scene might look and feel like in a performance space. I would like to bring in a local Elder or local Aboriginal artist but I have never done that I don't know quite how to get that sort of thing happening. So I might try to start with using Growtowski's Poor Theatre to try to create some individual scenes creating the set, story and sense of the scene with their bodies. I will probably have some students read out some of the text and words and add this to the movement work I do with them. I like to have student start with physically exploring the play first.

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(10:49)

I: How do or how will the Indigenous aspects of the Australian National Curriculum help you to teach this Australian Indigenous drama text to your students?

(11:02)

D: I hope it will help. All the teachers at my school have tried hard to develop units and work for the Australian Curriculum and AUSVELS. I worked on a Year 7 curriculum group and we tried to create cross-curriculum units for Year 7 and we integrated the subjects for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit. Many of those students are now in Year 10, 11 and 12 and I hope they have learnt a bit about Aboriginal history and culture and I hope this will help. We do this in the early secondary years so I hope it will help and broaden their understanding.

(11:51)

I: What do you think you look for initially in an Indigenous drama text to teach it to students?

(11:59)

D: I just hope each time that it is on the playlist and the curriculum because I think students have a lot to learn from Aboriginal culture, particularly when they see a play. I think I look for a play that will let students enter a bit into the world, the history and experiences of Aboriginal people. I think most Aboriginal plays are accessible to the students and '7 Stages of Grieving' has short scenes and explores different experiences and I think this makes it more accessible to students.

(12:51)

I: And are there any protocols or procedures you follow when you teach an Indigenous Australian play?

(13:02)

D: I use the Drama Australia guidelines and I use your blog too Mark. I try to be respectful and start with things like a welcome to country and acknowledgement of the local Aboriginal people – it's the Wurundjeri where I teach. I try not to use images of Aboriginal people who are dead. I want students to get a modern sense of Aboriginal culture and history.

(13:43)

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I: What do you think an Indigenous Australian teacher might see or emphasize in an Indigenous play that non-Indigenous teachers might not?

(14:01)

D: Um, gee, I saw that question and I think that is hard. I think an Indigenous teacher might emphasize the language more and maybe see relationships which I don't see. They might also understand the situations and stories more and find some bits that I find shocking, a bit more humorous.

(14:38)

I: What do you think are the implications of Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers having different perceptions or visions of an Indigenous Drama text to teaching that drama text?

(14:59)

D: I think we all will have different perceptions and see different things. I think that an Aboriginal, an Indigenous teacher would join the dots and get the whole picture more but a teacher like me is picking up on bits and sometimes maybe that means I miss the whole picture and all the relationships because I pick up on and focus in on certain aspects I think are important. I think also I worry about the students doing well on the exam so I keep coming back to how to write about things in the exam for the examiners and maybe an Aboriginal teacher wouldn't keep focusing on that because they see other things as more important.

(16:15)

I: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

(16:19)

D: Um. Just that I think it is important to keep doing Aboriginal plays. I think that the VCAA should make sure there is at least one on the list every year in Theatre Studies, Drama and English. It gives a different perspective and helps students and teachers to think and see different things, different perspectives.

(16:58)

I: Well thank you so much for a great interview.

(17:02)

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END OF INTERVIEW—(4 AUDIO FILES TOTAL); VERIFIED THAT THIS IS AUDIO FILE 4.

Appendix 5 - Visual Journal for Alison

SLIDE 1

Visual Diary Index

Three plays

Cloudstreet - 'Blackman' - 'Ghosts of aboriginal girls '

Seven Stages of Grieving

Parable of colonisation – a play inspired by indigenous issues present day.

SLIDE 2

Our Journey with Indigenous text, began reading through the play and discussing the characters and themes in Cloudstreet, our Theatre studies and school play for 2017. The theatre studies class was concerned about how we would approach the character of The 'Blackman' and the windowless room that told the story of the ghosts of indigenous girls who haunted the space because they had been part of the stolen generation.



The issues with playing the Blackman and the girls were dealt with great sensitivity. It was agreed that we should not make the character of the Blackman 'black' we wanted to give a sense of his spirit. So in fact the part was played by a blonde haired male student , with no affectation. Throughout the character development process we discussed the importance and relevance of the character to the entire play, the students felt the indigenous themes were paramount as the past can 'catch up with you' so to speak and lest we forget the lessons learned. It was agreed that he needed to be portrayed as timeless all knowing, with a sense he was the past the present and the future in one character. He needed to be portrayed as genuine and real- ethereal and relevant to the spiritual struggles within the play . He could not be overplayed.

SLIDE 3

THE SET

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We wanted to paint the floor with aboriginal art work, dot painting to symbolise the water – Margaret River. I wanted the dot painted rivers to flow into the circular stage that would be Cloudstreet. We discussed the ebb and flow of water, the sea, students researched art works and then we were met with an interesting response by a group of students within the class who said this might be perceived as disrespectful and we should ask permission before we assume it is ok to use any aboriginal replicated style in our performance.

I was very pleased with the concern and response and so I rang [REDACTED] council (name of city council hidden) and spoke to a local indigenous artist worker who offered to come down and check our work, even work with us. I also followed this up by calling [REDACTED] (Name of Indigenous Elder hidden) who I had written a play with at [REDACTED] (Name of School hidden). The Response by both of them was very supportive and encouraging .

[REDACTED] (name of Indigenous elder hidden) pointed out that dot painting was not Wurrundjeri, local artists , that they used pebbles to symbolise rivers in their art work, but was very interested in what we were doing.

SLIDE 4

The Seven Stages of Grieving

Visual Diary

SLIDE 5

Samples of lessons

SLIDE 6

LESSON - Respecting culture

Learning intention: to understand the cultural considerations when performing aboriginal plays

Please note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this website may contain images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material

Read the statement above before we look at the sites below,

What is the reason this is a problem for aboriginal people?

<http://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>

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<http://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/calling-shots-aboriginal-photographies>

SLIDE 7

Lesson

The 7 phases of Aboriginal history and the 5 stages of dying

The 7 phases of Aboriginal history	The 5 stages of dying
1. Dreaming	1. Denial and
2. Transition	isolation
3. Genocide	2. Anger
4. Protection	3. Bargaining
5. Assimilation	4. Depression
6. Self-determination	5. Acceptance
7. Reconciliation	

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SLIDE 8

Learning intention: to discover what the seven stages of Grieving are and how it applies to the play

FOCUS QUESTION: Where do you think that the

7 Stages of Grief

(Modified Kubler-Ross Model)



* The model is extracted slightly from the original Kubler-Ross model, which does not explicitly include the Shock and Testing stages. These stages however are often useful to understand and to facilitate change.



Seven Stages of Grieving would appear in the play?

Shock? Are they in order?

TASK 1.

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If we have a look at the dramatic FORM and STRUCTURE of the play we can see it uses the Stages of grief to share the stories.

TASK: Looking at the play. Link each STAGE with the form of the play this can be completed in groups of three.

SLIDE 9

Reading the script and an example of analysing the dramatic meaning.

(00:00:59 video of students reading the text and offering comments has been deleted)

SLIDE 10

Pre-Show

Reading the script and an example of analysing the dramatic purpose.

Examples of analysing the script and dramatic meaning.

Emphasis and the purpose of repetition.

(00:00:15 video of student and teacher has been removed.) Full transcript below:

(00:00:00)

(Female Student 1 explains to Alison)

FS1: It shows a greater impact.

(00:00:04)

A: So, when we repeat things, phrases, it emphasizes things. It also emphasizes the idea of memory.

(00:00:15)

SLIDE 11

Pre-Show

Reading the text in a neutral tone makes it less confronting and in a sense more authentic. The imagery is quite confronting and it is important not to detract from the words in a reading.

(00:03:43 video reading has been removed.)

(Note: Students are on the floor sitting in a semi-circle. The students are in a relaxed position.

Students are relaxed but engaged. Words from *Seven Stages of Grieving* are read by Female Student 2 in a flat neutral tone.)

SLIDE 12

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

Pre-Show

Discussion on our role telling these stories in *Seven Stages* and approaching character and the ideas expressed in the play.

(00:04:27 Video discussion by students have been removed. Some of the elements covered were discussion about how opinions change and mature from Year 7 to Year 12. The students point out that they think they have developed and changed. One student states that she thinks that plays like *The Seven Stages of Grieving* should be read, studied or seen in performance by younger students such as Year 7's. This opinion seems widely endorsed by other students stating 'yes' or nodding. The same student points out that plays like *The Seven Stages of Grieving* help students to become aware of Aboriginal people and communities and opens up the eyes of students (non-Indigenous) to things they don't see or are ignorant of or isolated from. This prompts the students to tell other stories of prejudice against other groups such as African Australians. A student talks about how until they did plays like this one with their teacher (Alison), they hadn't really thought about prejudice or the fact that their own school was predominantly 'white' in its racial or cultural mix. The teacher (Alison) then talks to the student about the role of artists and drama to raise these issues and put ourselves into the position or 'shoes' of others even if we don't understand or directly experience their worlds. It should be noted that the students talk with power and passion when they tell stories and talk about how this play has opened their eyes to the experiences of others who suffer prejudice.)

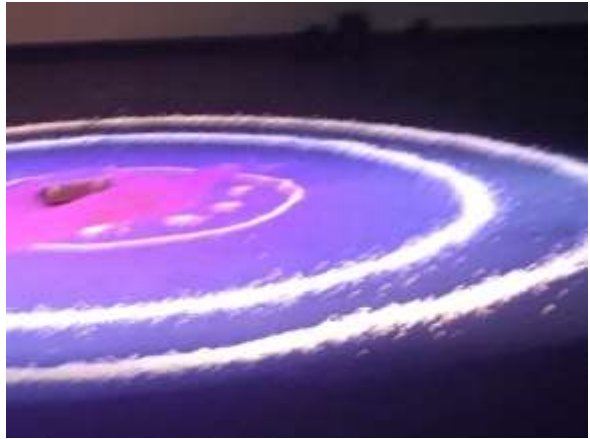
SLIDE 13

The Show

Performance. The students had a very positive response to the play in production and the issues expressed. The Visual stories using the projected imagery on the screen and the symbolism were key in getting concepts across non-verbally they felt as well as the overwhelming use of sound to create the mood.

Four photos are also present on the slide. Three photos of the set of the production of *The Seven Stages of Grief* are shown. The photo of the students and the teacher (Alison) in the foyer of the theatre is deleted. The students are shown to be excited, relaxed and energetic.

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS



SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

SLIDE 14

Lesson – Invasion Poem

Learning intention: read the Invasion poem from Seven Stages of Grieving and watch the PowerPoint and create an interpretation to present to class.

‘Seven Stages of Grieving ‘ slides to accompany script invasion.pptx>>

What is the poem about?

What mood does the imagery set?

Looking at the style of the writing how would that impact the delivery of the script and language?

Using the expressive skill of movement and gesture dramatise this poem. Discuss perhaps a neutral facial expression when performing and how that might impact the story.

SLIDE 15

Post Show

Because of the time frame students explored the Invasion poem post performance using the Style of Theatre of Cruelty.

(00:00:36 The video has been deleted due to it containing visual and audio of students. The students are in groups and one group is interviewed by the teacher about the task they are doing. The students state that have been asked to explore and present ‘The Invasion Poem’ from *The Seven Stages of Grieving* using the style of Theatre of Cruelty. One students points out that the objective of using this style is to shock the audience.)

SLIDE 16

Post Show. (00:00:06) The video has been deleted due to it containing visual and audio of students.

Two students discuss what physical relationships they will use on stage. It seems that the students have decided to use different levels on stage to show the power relationships in ‘The Invasion Poem’.

SLIDE 17

This slide seems to be a mistake and is a repetition of SLIDE 16.

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

SLIDE 18

Post Show

(00:01:02) The video has been deleted due to it containing visual and audio of students. A group of students discuss how they can show or represent physically Indigenous Australian rituals and attitudes to death. It is noted that the students speak with respect about Indigenous Australian attitudes to death.

SLIDE 19

Post Show

(00:02:49) The video has been deleted due to it containing visual and audio of students.

The students talk about the meaning of individual words in the text of 'The Invasion Poem'. The teacher suggests different interpretations. The students and the teacher discuss different ways this can be represented.

SLIDE 20

(00:00:07) The video has been deleted due to it containing visual and audio of students.

The students seem to be trying to find ways to physically represent power and status relationships on stage.

SLIDE 21

Post Show

Planning and rehearsal stages - Work in progress.

(00:00:44) The video has been deleted due to it containing visual and audio of students. Students are trying out in the rehearsal room different movements to show aspects of 'The Invasion Poem'.

SLIDE 22

Performance Example students were given one class . This is the run-through using the powerpoint in the background as a backdrop.

(00:00:44) The video has been deleted due to it containing visual and audio of students. One group of students do a moved reading of one part of a scene from *The Seven Stages of Grieving*. Stylistic movements are used by the students to represent but also comment on the dispossession and sense of powerlessness of an Indigenous Australian shown in the section of the scene. The words are spoken in a neutral emotionless tone. Some words are spoken in a choral chant. As an audience to this video, the

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

researcher feels great sympathy for the Indigenous Australian family and their perspective. Events of the Stolen Generation are depicted. Below I have put the text from the scene depicted and still frames from the video with the faces and other identification markers of students erased.

SLIDE 23

The following slide uses words from the text and also words taken from the reactions expressed by students in a brainstorming activity. It was used as a brainstorm, a stimulus and a backdrop to mini-performance or performance presentation explorations done of the play text done in class by the students.

SLIDE 24

The following slide uses words from the text and it was used as a backdrop to mini-performance or performance presentation explorations done of the play text done in class by the students.

SLIDE 25

The following slide uses a photo taken of two Indigenous Australian males with ceremonial face paint. It was used as stimulus and a backdrop to mini-performance or performance presentation explorations done of the play text done in class by the students.



SLIDE 26

The following slide uses a photo taken of two Indigenous Australian males, an adult male and a young boy. The adult male is shown with ceremonial face paint. It was used as stimulus and a backdrop to

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

mini-performance or performance presentation explorations done of the play text done in class by the students.



SLIDE 27

The following slide uses a photo which probably depicts an Indigenous family in the late 19th or early 20th century family. It was used as stimulus and a backdrop to mini-performance or performance presentation explorations done of the play text done in class by the students.



SLIDE 28

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

The following slide uses a photo which depicts Indigenous Australian males enslaved and chained. It was used as stimulus and a backdrop to mini-performance or performance presentation done in class by the students.



SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

SLIDE 29

The following slide uses a photo which depicts a more contemporary Indigenous Australian male enslaved and chained. It was used as stimulus and a backdrop to mini-performance or performance presentation done in class by the students.



SLIDE 30

The following slide uses a photo which depicts a large group of Indigenous Australian female children taken in a group photo. It was used as stimulus and a backdrop to mini-performance or performance presentation done in class by the students.



SLIDE 31

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

This slide used one photo which depicts Indigenous Australian males and females probably in domestic service or domestic slavery. It was used as stimulus and a backdrop to mini-performance or performance presentation done in class by the students.



SLIDE 32

This slide used three photos which depicts Indigenous Australian females probably in remote or very remote communities. It was used as stimulus and a backdrop to mini-performance or performance presentation done in class by the students.



SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

SLIDE 33

This slide used three photos which depicts Indigenous Australian males probably in remote or very remote communities. It was used as stimulus and a backdrop to mini-performance or performance presentation done in class by the students.



SLIDE 34

This slide used one photo which depicts the face of an Indigenous Australian male with ceremonial face paint. The Indigenous Australian male is looking directly at the camera and the viewer. It was used as stimulus and a backdrop to mini-performance or performance presentation done in class by the students.



SLIDE 35

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

This slide is a title slide for commentary on work done on a dramatic parable play written by students in response to exploring, studying and seeing the production of *The Seven Stages of Grieving*

SLIDE 36

We are in the early stages, but the final performing arts drama performance is a play devised by students typically from year 10 /11 for the 7-10's to play . Where we can we follow a theme to ensure the continuity of the learning and ideas. FYI here is the email exchange on where the year 10 students play is currently at.... EMAIL

Sure. After lots of thought and discussion with a few people, I think I decided that it would be best to use the story through a new or undefined race who represent aboriginals, rather than stating them as aboriginals directly. Let me know what your thoughts are on this, as it can be changed if you detest. So far, the plot itself mirrors the horror and pain the aboriginals had to go through during colonisation and following - with the beginning setting up the calm, comfortable world called 'Old Country', where they respected nature and the animals around them, including an addition of the 'Natural Spirit', which lives in the bush with them (who will come into greater importance later on). The Indigenous Family are introduced, including the Elder figure - Uncle - and a teen boy, Djalul, who is respectful of nature and his family, yet also reluctant to follow aboriginal culture.

After this has been established, there is an invasion in the middle of the night while the family sleeps. Red light will wash over the stage, and the intensity will rise as the colonists kill Uncle and Kalina. The rest of the family escapes, however falls into confusion and chaos as they try to stay safe and understand what is happening. Soon after, the children are taken by the invaders, and the mother, Merri, is left in despair on her own. As the children are inducted into the invaders lifestyle and stripped of their own culture, the Natural Spirit comes through the doors of their cell in the middle of the night. The Natural Spirit guides the children out of the building and back towards their family, however a colonist suddenly appears and kills the natural spirit. The children are taken back to their cells.

The colonists return to the Family's home, Creation Rock, and tear down the sign for Old Country, replacing it with the title 'Valley of Wealth' - their new country. Act 1 ends on the image of the Natural Spirit's corpse lying on Creation Rock above this newly erected sign.

The next act continues several years after the first, with the two races being forced to live together despite not working out the issues. At this time, published history has changed to teach children that the colonists were here first, and they let the indigenous people live there through their kindness. The ranger who killed Uncle is paired off with Djalul as they are forced to work together.

Appendix 6 – Visual Journal for Bernadette

Slide 1

Observations about exploring *The 7 Stages of Grieving* as a playscript and a play in performance.

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

What has emerged as a result of looking at the Indigenous playscript *The 7 Stages of Grieving* by Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman is very much a result of the context in which it was studied. The text was used for assessment purposes, so our examination of the playscript and the play in performance was through the prism of the criteria published by the VCAA for Outcome 3.3.

In my classes, I had to do a lot of backfilling with major social and political movements of recent times, in order that the students understood some of the contextual influences on the text and some of the deeper significance of moments within the text.

We discussed the idea that emerged out of the feminist movement that the political is personal and the personal is political, as well as discussing ways in which the body has been reclaimed (usually by women) as a site of empowerment and resistance to the dominant patriarchal hegemony. We spoke particularly about the references in the playscript to words appearing on the dress of the performer, and the subsequent actions of taking off the dress and ceremonially painting the body, as examples of reclaiming culture and identity from colonial attitudes

Slide 2

We made links between the establishment of a performative space (through the pouring of stones into a circle) and traditional indigenous cultural practices relating to ceremonies and gatherings and Dreaming. To begin the performance with a ritual that connoted sacred moments enabled my students and me to see clearly the cultural importance of storytelling, and the priority it took for the playwrights and creative team behind the production.

The performance we saw at GPAC began with a substantial, rather than a token, Welcome to Country. A local Wathaurong man led the Welcome, emerging ceremonially painted from the stage left curtain with his didgeridoo, ahead of a local high school indigenous student, who hit the clap sticks. The Wathaurong man traced Welcome around the entire performance space. A local indigenous woman then Welcomed the audience in Language and in English. The Wathaurong man then played out himself and the two indigenous women, through the stage left wing.

Slide 3

One of the changes to the script with which I was disappointed was the abandonment of the Smoking Ceremony. Having worked in GPAC before, I know the smoke alarm system is a bit of a pain, and the

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

company need a lot of time to turn it off, and it costs money, so this may be the reason the Smoking was abandoned.

We spent some time in class discussing the theatrical style of the production, as this is a key component of the VCAA criteria. Our discussion settled on the idea that although the content of *7 Stages* was indigenous, the form didn't appear to be. I don't have enough expertise in Indigenous Theatre to make any authoritative judgement about theatrical styles used or appropriated by Indigenous Theatre makers. I would assume that collaboration might be a common feature, but that is speculation. I would observe that this is the aspect of studying the text of which I felt least confident. I settled on Brechtian Theatre (this was later clarified by Mark as being Lehstucke Devices).

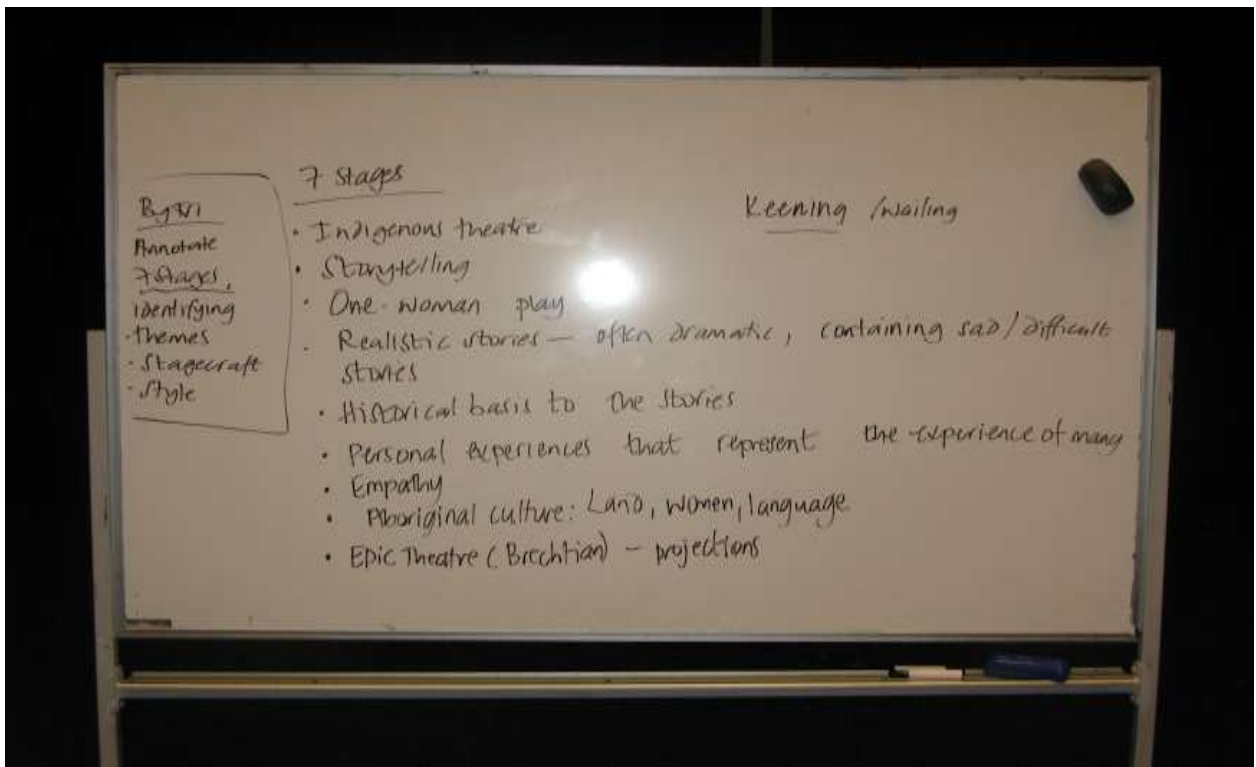
Slide 4

Another observation I would make about seeing the performance was that the writing and the performing were unapologetically forthright and assertive. There is a real confidence in the claims to dignity and equality present in *7 Stages*. For a cultural group that often occupies a marginal or peripheral place in Australian society, *7 Stages* claimed the centre and relegated white Australia to the margins of the story. It gave a majority white Audience a taste of what it feels like to be located at the edges. The experience reminded me of a feeling I had when I went to see a Back to Back production. Back to Back Theatre Company is based in Geelong and is unique in its vision and practise. The company is led by Artistic Director Bruce Gladwin and it is made up of actors, all of whom have an intellectual and/or physical disability. The actors are professionals (i.e. employed by Back to Back) and work in an ensemble mode to create, develop, perform and tour productions (nationally and internationally). I had the great pleasure of working with the company when they undertook a project that invited community actors to augment the ensemble for a short season of a play called *Hell House*. Subsequently, I attended a matinee performance, presented by Back to Back's workshop class, Theatre of Speed. The audience was mostly made up of Back to Back actors. Sitting in this audience, I couldn't help but notice how joyful, liberated and vocal the actors were in a context in which *they* were the majority. I had such a sense of being an outsider, which was fascinating to experience. I had such a strong sense of how guarded and withdrawn these people are when they are in the minority.

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

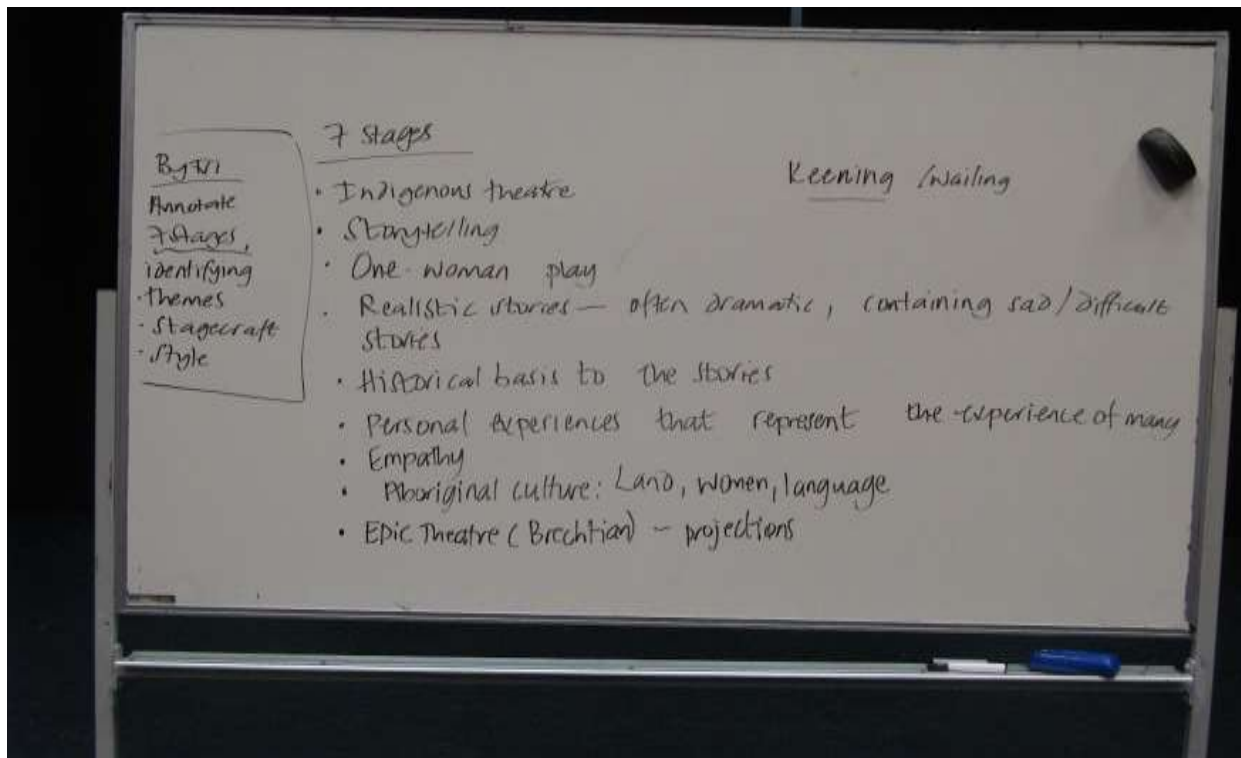
So, for me, the feeling of being placed on the periphery as a white person, watching *7 Stages*, evoked a clear sensation of what must be a daily experience for so many marginalised people. I think this was a really successful aspect of the production, and it enabled some semblance of empathy for the people whose stories were represented so powerfully in the playscript and production.

Slide 5

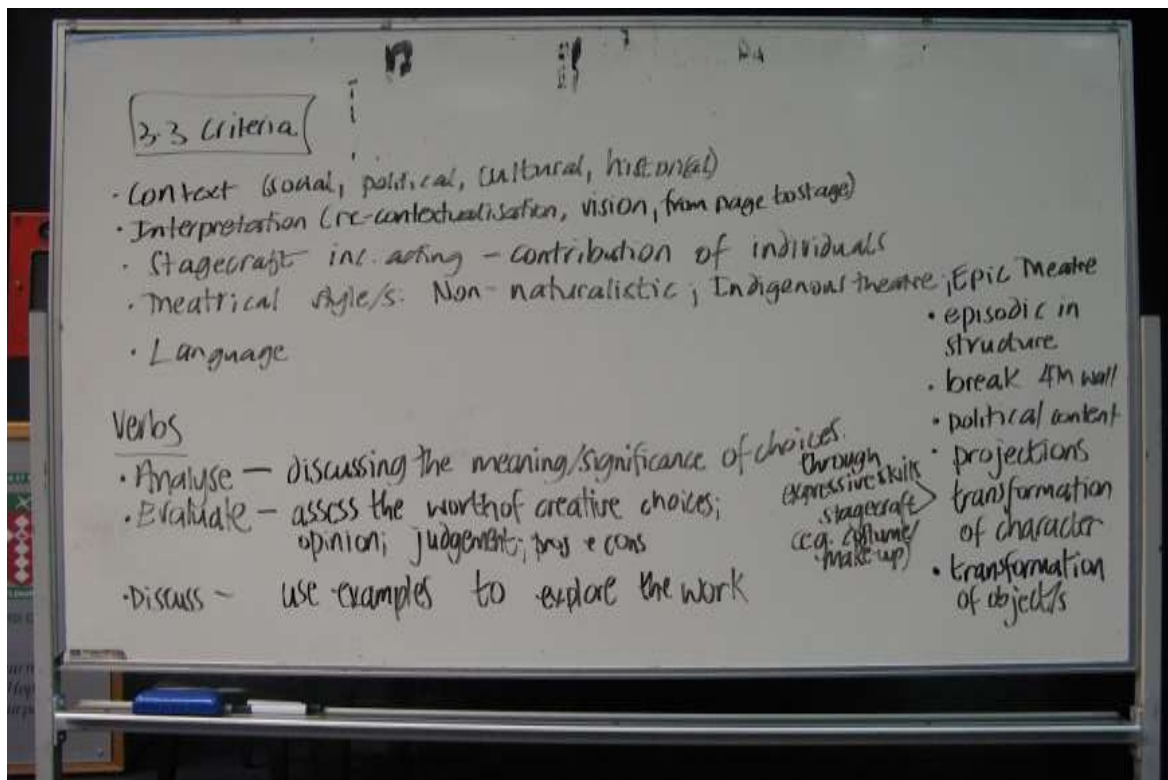


Slide 6

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS



Slide 7




Slide 8

7 Stages of Grieving

Focus for the Performance Analysis

- Contexts — historical, political, cultural, social
- interpretation of the playscript through acting & other stagecraft
- Style Epic Theatre / Brechtian Theatre (Bertolt Brecht)

Matriarchal Patriarchal matrilineal


Slide 9

7 Stages

Stagecraft inc. acting

Shadows on US wall (lx positioned on floor)

Projections — letters on walls; images going into the distance; explanations.

Grave effect on back wall (For Sale scene)

Stones — glow-in-the-dark; blue (ocean) circle — pulling the stones from the earth; / culture; orange — children / mums

White circle — breaking the storyline / dreaming / protection

Use of mic — convention of stand-up comedy.

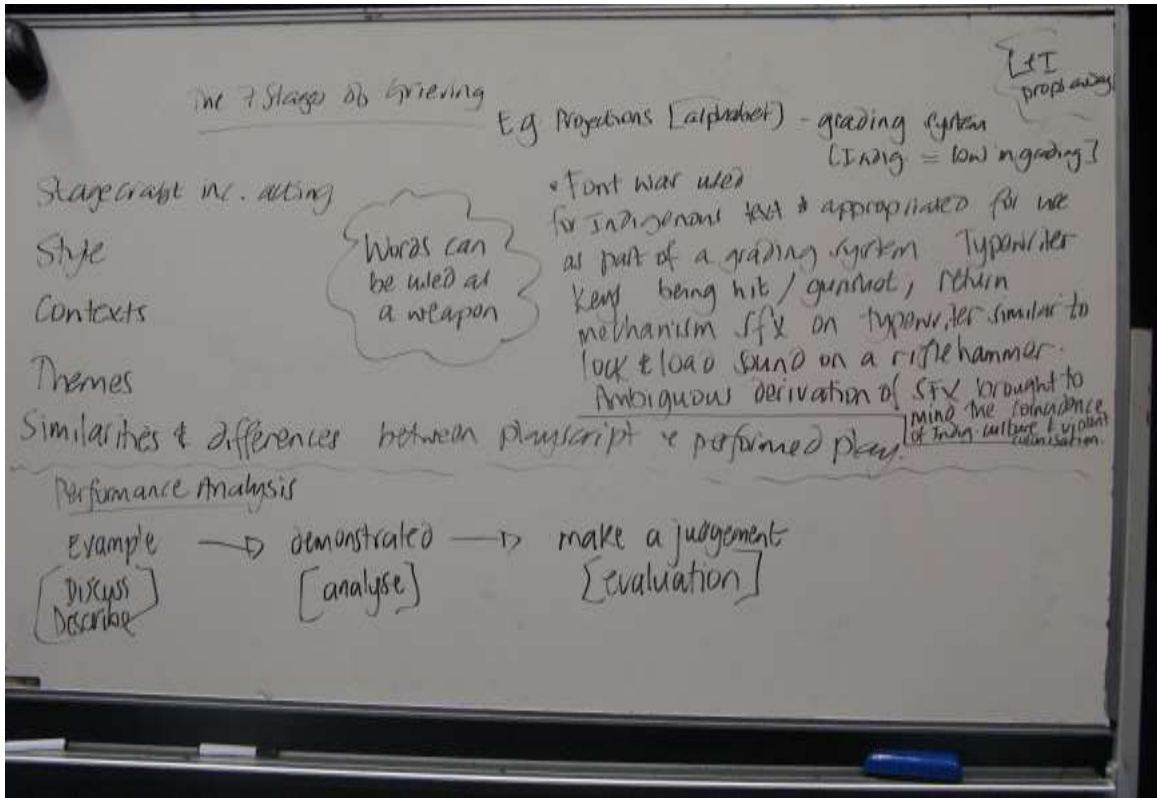
Painting skin — wearing her culture explicitly.

EIL MORAIS

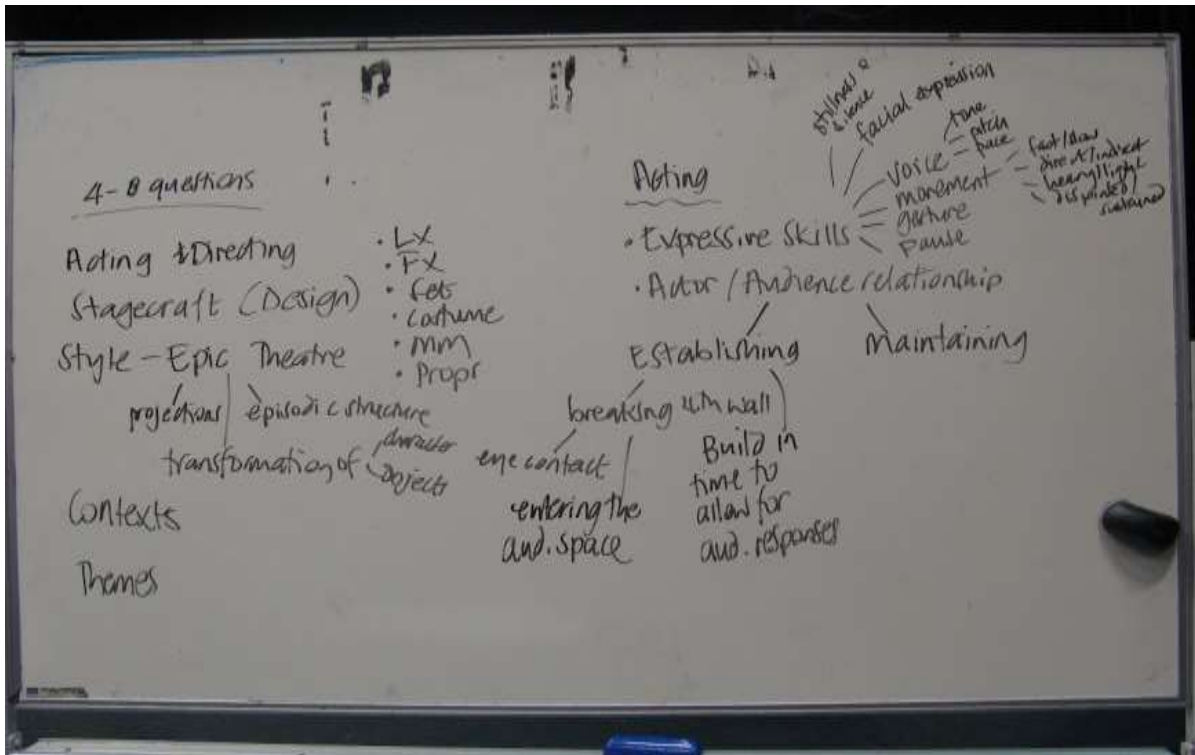
hegemony-dominant thinking

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

Slide 10



Slide 11



Slide 12

SAMPLE ANSWERS FOR *The 7 Stages of Grieving*

Analyse how one area of stagecraft was used by the actor to communicate one context evidence in the play script.

The political context of the fight for Land Rights was evident in the scene 'Bargaining,' when Deemal brought out of the large suitcase the prop of a white wooden cross with the words, 'For Sale' painted in black. The action of placing the cross in the pile of red earth signified to the audience the ongoing struggle for indigenous people to have the historical doctrine of Terra Nullius overturned. The often bitter disputes over Land Rights was identified in this moment from the production, highlighting one of the political contexts found in the play.

With reference to two examples from the performance, discuss one similarity and one difference between the play script and the performed play. In your response, evaluate these two examples.

One difference between the playscript and the performed play was the inclusion of an extract from Kevin Rudd's Apology. This was inserted into the performance during the stirring and uplifting final scene, 'Walking Across Bridges'. Including lines such as 'the time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future' introduced a more optimistic note into a play characterised by grief, anger and sadness. The Apology Speech was a powerful, symbolic moment in the recent history of Australia, and the inclusion of some of this text was appropriate and relevant in the final scene of the play. The choice to stop short of quoting the word 'sorry' from the speech was a meaningful choice, indicating that although progress has been made in the interim between the writing of the original playscript and this production, there is still much more work to be done to heal the relationship between white and black Australia. The unfinished business of Reconciliation was movingly presented in a visual way, too, with the projection of the word running down the walls and disappearing as 'rain' washed the word away. These choices left the audience in no doubt that QTC's interpretation of Enoch and Mailman's playscript was not entirely optimistic.

How effective was the QTC production of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* in realising key ideas in the playscript? In your response refer to direction and one other area of stagecraft.

One theme explored in QTC's production of Enoch and Mailman's playscript *The 7 Stages of Grieving* was that of identity and belonging. This was most noticeably evident in the set design. In the course of the play, the actor Chenoa Deemal created a performance space by placing concentric circles of stones and powder around a mound of red earth. The innermost circle was made with eight small mounds of orange rocks, representing indigenous people belonging to different skin groupings. The middle circle was light blue, representing the sea of Deemal's country in Far North Queensland. The outermost circle glowed in the dark, much like the stars in the night sky. The finished set was reminiscent of dot paintings, typical of indigenous artists from the Arrerndt people in the desert country of central Australia. The set design in the QTC production differed considerably from that described in the 1996 script, and beautifully evoked familiar as well as privately meaningful symbols of identity and belonging. Deemal used her own language when 'purifying' the space with the words 'I am woman. I am strong,' instead of the language of Mailman recorded in the playscript. Ideas of identity and belonging are at the heart of the playscript (in the scene 'Aunty Grace,' to name just one example), and director Klarwein handled this theme sensitively and imaginatively, adding personal touches that enhanced his interpretation of Enoch and Mailman's script.

Analyse how one area of stagecraft was used by the actor to communicate one important context evident in the playscript.

The actor Chenoa Deemal used props such as a judge's wig, Regency collar and a Union Jack flag to establish the historical context of European settlement of Australia in the scene '1788.' The props served a functional purpose in locating the scene in an historical era, but they also served to highlight in an ironic way ideas of land ownership. An indigenous actor wearing colonial clothes and sticking a Union Jack into a pile of red earth signified to the audience the arrogance of early European settlers claiming Australia for the British Empire.

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

Appendix 7 – Visual Journal for Corey

Slide 1

Journal

Week 1

OWN RESEARCH

<http://theatrestyles.blogspot.com.au/2014/01/a-matter-of-style-origins-of-drama-and.html> □

Read script:

Episodic nature of text has links to Brecht – perhaps follow this in acting exercises.

Storyteller as the function of imparting message.

Mix of telling and ‘actor in role’

Imagery important (Use these to invoke discussion)



Credit: Cook Landing At Botany Bay, Emmanuel

Phillips Fox / Superstock / Getty Images



Canning Stock Route Project

<https://www.creativespirits.info/resources/infographics/aboriginal-history-19001969#axzz4ncNz0kHW>

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS



From: Gizmodo.com

Slide 2



Reviews: <https://dailyreview.com.au/the-7-stages-of-grieving-theatre-review-bille-browntheatre-brisbane/21087/> <http://artsreview.com.au/the-7-stages-of-grieving-2/>

Education Pack (Teacher Notes)

<https://www.gpac.org.au/assets/Uploads/The-7-Stages-of-Grieving-EducationResources2.pdf>

ACTIVITY

Students to research modern indigenous culture

Three areas covered – art/music; current affairs; pop culture

Feedback from task

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

Discussed hiphop culture <https://www.facebook.com/AboriginalRap/> History – corroboree- modern music (eg Yothu Yindi

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Indigenous_Australian_musicians Played songs from modern hip hop artists Art work shown from various artists:



Slide 3

Current affairs group

Discussed various articles

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/deaths-in-custody-confronting-the-truth-20160415go7bek.html>

also “4 corners” report: <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2016/07/25/4504895.htm>

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/law/royal-commission-into-aboriginal-deaths-in-custody#axzz4ncNz0kHW>

Pop culture;

Group watched various TV shows to compare “Clever Man”, Black As (ABC documentary); “Black Comedy”; Various shows on NITV

Discussions covered use of humour to tell a message; rise of aboriginal actors in TV/film (significantly Deborah Mailman); prevalence of Docudrama style shows eg “Redfern”

Whole group:

looked at various article/stories from Stolen Generation

<http://www.australianstogether.org.au/stories/detail/the-stolen-generations> *very accessible information and video interviews*

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

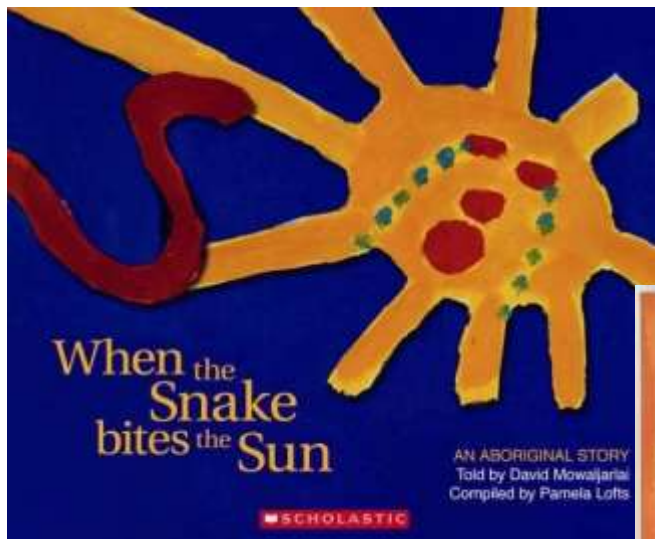
Slide 3

WEEK 1cont. & 2

Dreaming activity

Reference - <http://dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/story-list/>

Step 1: Teacher read dreamtime story student created tableaux to recreate story



Step 2 animate tableaux

Step 3 link tableaux with constant movement

Step 4 added moments for dialogue

Step 5 create or find traditional music for soundtrack

Step 6 performance

Other Activities

See following documents for activities carried out during WEEK 2 & 3 or preparations. All activities were modified from the Education Teacher Notes provided by QTC.

Slide 4

Activity 1: Memories and Pain

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

Examples of poem tableaux



SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

Slide 5

Activity 2: About the text and acting exercise.



Recreating Capt. Cooks landing from the play



Recreating a scene from play

Activity 3: Design work & Script excerpts.

Neglected to collect samples... students sytill have some in folios I hope

Activity 4: *Read whole play in class and at home several times.*

Activity 5: Summarised - <http://theatrestyles.blogspot.com.au/2014/01/a-matter-of-style-origins-of-drama-and.html>

The idea was to re-shape previous performances or create new scenes using some of the ideas noted down, but we ran out of time due to various school events.

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

Slide 6

WEEK 4

AFTER VIEWING THE PLAY

After viewing the play the focus becomes preparation for the SAC

The text “Acting Smart” provided us with activities to complete and discuss. Students had to complete the following:

Answer the questions on pages 74 – 75 when seeing the play and afterwards

Do exercises on pages 76 – 77

Do the questions pages 79 – 82

Read the student samples and answer the questions on them pages 83 – 86

Memories and pain *Cec Fisher*

Cec Fisher (a.k.a. Cecil Fisher)

Also writes as: Black Banjo - Cec Fisher

Born: 18 Apr 1933 Cherbourg, Queensland ; Died: 19 Feb 2009

He was educated to Year 4 level and sent out to the workforce at 14 years of age. He had many occupations, including stockman, railway fettler and he served in the Korean War. In addition, Fisher was a Brisbane witness at the Stolen Children Inquiry in 1996. Through his poetry Fisher explores the history of the Indigenous people in Queensland from the Dreamtime to the present day. Credited with 206 literary works.

Memories and Pain

You came ashore

Pale like the spirit people

Took our land

Forest rivers hills and plain

Gave us Christianity

Changed our future

Left us with memories and pain

You killed our ancestors

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

Or imprisoned them

Our mother earth you plundered for your gain

From her breast rich mineral ores you extracted

Helplessly we watched

Left with memories and pain

Regardless of the policies

Reconciliation and the rest

Thoughts of our aboriginality will always remain

Time will never diminish the black deeds of history

We will carry forever the memories and the pain

Slide 7

Script Investigation Part I: About the text

Complete a collage of images from past and current shows.

a. What do the images tell you about the play?

What does the title make you think the play is going to be about?

What do you know about Aboriginal and Indigenous culture in Australia?

Can you name some prominent Indigenous Australians?

Can you name some landmark cases or historical moments that have affected Indigenous Australian history?

Do you know what the play is referencing when it discusses “The 7 Stages of Grieving”?

One actor performs the play. What do you think the challenges are in performing a solo work?

SCRIPT EXCERPT:

PHOTOGRAPH STORY

A chair scrapes across a wooden floor, footsteps recede, a clock ticks. Projected are images of an open suitcase filled with family photographs, old and new. The progression of slides brings us closer into the details of the photographs.

“In the house of my parents where I grew up, there’s a suitcase, which lives under the old stereo in the front room. The room is full of photographs, trophies, pennants, memories of weddings, birthdays,

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

christenings and family visits. A testimony to good times, a constant reminder. But this suitcase, which resides under the old stereo tightly fastened, which lies flat on the floor comfortably out of reach, safe from inquisitive hands or an accidental glance.

In this suitcase lies the photos of those who are dead, the nameless ones and here they lie, passing the time till they can be talked of again. Without a word we remove the photo of my Nana from her commanding position on the wall and quietly slip her beneath the walnut finish. And without a sound push her into the shadow.

Everything has its time ... Everything has its time ... Now.”

In pairs read the scene aloud.

Try out extreme possibilities as actors might do during rehearsals.

Go through the scene twice, trying out two contrasting sets of desires, movement, and intentions.

Replay the scene in a range of different scenarios and locations/contexts, for example; as a hurried mobile phone conversation, in a very noisy assembly, passing notes between each other in class.

REFLECTION: How do the circumstances and surrounding affect what is being said?

Slide 8

Script investigation Part II: Plot

This is the actual action that happens on stage.

Reduce the whole story into a brief paragraph that includes all the main events.

Discuss themes and issues: Outline the themes and issues that you feel are important in the play. [The themes and issues carry the message of the play and are important in helping the audience gain meaning from the performance].

DRAMATIC FORM: ONE PERSON PERFORMANCE/MONODRAMA

This is the term used to refer to a one-woman show. In *The 7 Stages of Grieving* there is only ever one actor on stage. She performs a number of monologues and transforms into or role-plays a variety of other roles/characters as she recalls them from her memory.

DRAMATIC STRUCTURE: EPISODIC

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

The 7 Stages of Grieving has 24 short scenes, each with its own complication. This type of structure is referred to as episodic and it greatly affects the shape and rhythm of the play (i.e. it doesn't drive straight to a climax then have a resolution as in Realism).

The episodic structure of the play influences the use of time, place, rhythm and character. It enables:

time to jump between past, present and future;

place to shift and change without changing the set;

rhythm can rise and fall freely without losing underlying tension;

a large variety of characters can be used, each episode can involve new characters without needing to introduce them thoroughly. The exposition stage in Realism carefully introduces each character's personality and history.

You will now design for two stagecraft areas.

When considering designs use the information on form and the episodic nature of the piece, and use these to help influence your work.

Annotate designs highlighting your interpretation of the play and don't forget to also consider how your design will help to communicate the play's themes and issues.

In addition, consider: What does the character want to achieve by the end of the play? To find the character's motivation, ask yourself the question: Why does the character want to achieve their goal?

Slide 9

1 Prologue

A large block of ice is suspended by 7 strong ropes. It is melting, dripping onto a freshly turned grave of red earth. The performance area is covered in a thin layer of black powder framed by a scrape of white. Within the space there are projection surfaces.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we would like to take this opportunity to warn members of the audience that the following performance contains names and visual representations of people recently dead, which may be distressing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. All care has been taken to acquire the appropriate permission and to show all proper respects. Thank you.

5 Photograph Story

A chair scrapes across a wooden floor, footsteps recede, a clock ticks. Projected are images of an open suitcase filled with family photographs, old and new. The progression of slides brings us closer into the details of the photographs.

In the house of my parents where I grew up, there's a suitcase, which lives under the old stereo in the front room. The room is full of photographs, trophies, pennants, memories of weddings, birthdays, christenings and family visits. A testimony to good times, a constant reminder.

But this suitcase, which resides under the old stereo tightly fastened, which lies flat on the floor comfortably out of reach, safe from inquisitive hands or an accidental glance. In this suitcase lies the photos of those who are dead, the nameless ones and here they lie, passing the time till they can be talked of again. Without a word we remove the photo of my Nana from her commanding position on the wall and quietly slip her beneath the walnut finish. And without a sound push her into the shadow.

Everything has its time ... Everything has its time ...

9 Black Skin Girl

The Woman dances around, childlike, singing. Letters of the alphabet appear on her dress. At first it is a game but one from which she tires. She attempts to evade the letters by removing her dress. She is left topless with the letter Z on her chest.

Bului yuli mie

Bului yuli mie
Bului yuli mie
Naia gigi warunguldul
Naia gigi warunguldul

(repeat)

Script excerpts:

Translation:

Bului yuli mie

[*Black Skin Girl*]

Naia gigi warunguldul

[*I will be strong always*]

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

Slide 10

VCE Theatre Studies,

Practise SAC: Production Analysis

Unit 3 Outcome 3

Context/Themes/Issues:

Analyse how one or more of the playscript's contexts (*Time, Place, Culture*) was interpreted for an audience. Remember to reference the playscript and mention what was delivered on the stage.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the interpretation. Explain if the interpretation is true to the meanings discovered within the playscript? What are the things the audience should have focussed on? Were key themes and ideas communicated effectively to the audience?

Theatrical Style and Stagecraft:

Identify the theatrical style and discuss the most prominent features in terms of Acting and/or one of the following areas of Stagecraft:

Lighting

Properties

Costume

Sound

Make-up/Hair Set

Direction

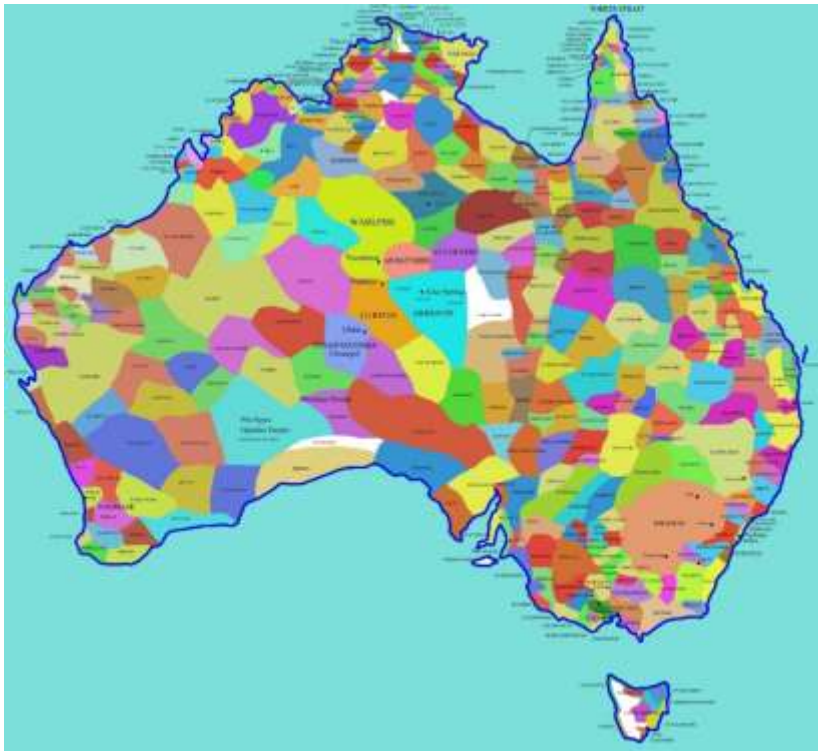
Theatre Technologies

The important thing here is to stick to the obvious features and discuss how theatrical style influenced the delivery of the message/intention and any similarities and differences between what was indicated or possible in the playscript and what was actually presented to the audience

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

Appendix 8 – Visual Journal for David

Slide 1 - Map of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Nations and Languages



Slide 2 – Timelines of the History of Australia



<https://australianmuseum.net.au/indigenous-australia-timeline-1500-to-1900>

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Slide 3 Aboriginal Contact with Macassan Traders.



<http://australianindigenoudrama.blogspot.ae/2014/03/australian-indigenous-drama-great.html>

Slide 4 **Map of Frontier Massacres**



Indigenous Deaths due to Colonialization and The Australian Frontier Wars
The Australian Frontier Wars is a term used to describe a series of atrocities and battles that were fought between Indigenous Australians

and British Colonialists and Settlers over 146 years from 1788 until 1934. Some of the horrendous events were:

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1789 Smallpox Epidemic spreads through Indigenous communities around Sydney. One theory is that it was spread on purpose.

1816 – Appin massacre – 14 to 20 Dharawal men women and children driven off a cliff in reprisal for the deaths of 6 white settlers

1828-1832 Tasmanian Black War or Genocide – 22,000 Indigenous people killed.

1833–34 Convincing Ground massacre of 60-200 Gunditjmara men, women and children.

1838 – Waterloo Creek Massacre – Police killed 50-120 Kamilaroi Indigenous people.

1842/43 – Evans Head Massacres – 100-120 Bundjalung men, women and children killed.

1838-1951 Macleay River massacres – 15 massacres – over 250 Djangadjarea people killed.

1840-50 – Gippsland Massacre - 250-1000 Indigenous Australians killed.

1840 - The Whyte brothers massacre 20 – 80 Jardwadjali men, women and children killed.

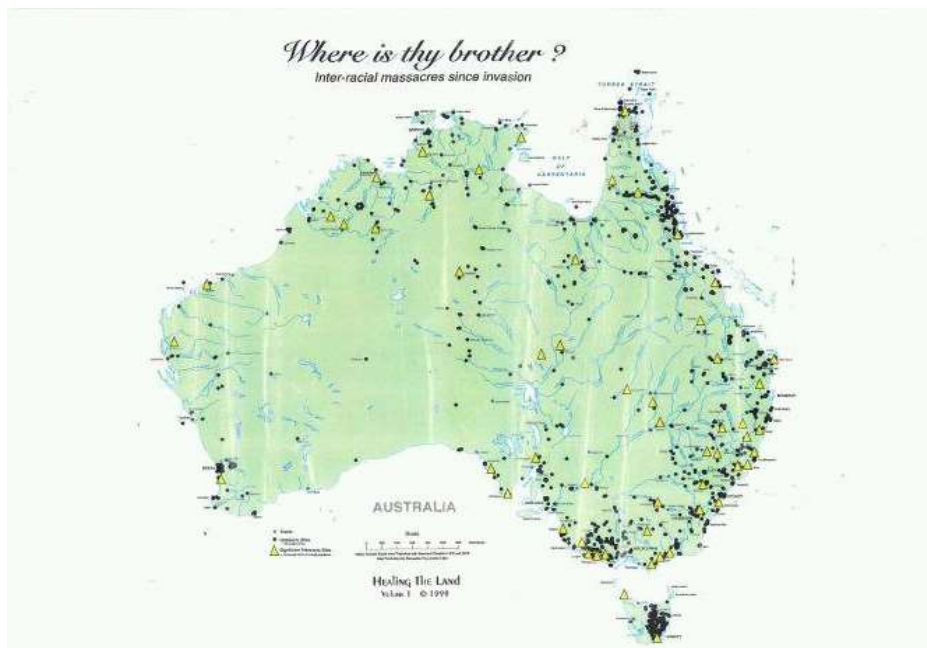
1843 – Warrigal Creek Massacre - 100-150 Indigenous people killed.

1890–1926 – Kimberly Killings – 5,000 – 25,000 Indigenous people killed over many years.

1849 – Upper Burnett Massacres – 100-200 Indigenous people killed.

1879 Selwyn Range, NW Queensland Massacres. Over 300 Indigenous people killed.

Slide 5 **Map of Inter-Racial Massacres**



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Slide 6 Events in the 20th Century Indigenous Australian History

1901: Commonwealth of Australia formed. Indigenous Australians are excluded from the census and the lawmaking powers of the Commonwealth Parliament.

White Australia Policy. Indigenous people are excluded from the vote, pensions, employment in post offices, enlistment in Armed Forces, maternity allowance.

1957: National Aborigines Day Observance Committee (NADOC) formed with support from Federal and State Governments, churches and major Indigenous organisations. Its aim is to promote Aboriginal Sunday as a day to draw community attention to Indigenous people in Australia.

1958: The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines (later the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders) begins a ten year campaign to end Constitution's discrimination against Indigenous people.

1962: All Indigenous people are given the vote in Commonwealth elections.

1967: Referendum held – 90.7% of Australians vote YES to count Indigenous Australians in the census and to give the Commonwealth Government the power to make laws for them.

1970-1971: Aboriginal Legal Service and Aboriginal Medical Service set up in Redfern (grassroots activists include Mum Shirl, Fr Ted Kennedy), along with Aboriginal Housing Company.

Neville Bonner becomes the first Indigenous member of Parliament when he filled a casual Senate vacancy.

1972: Tent Embassy established outside Parliament House. It adopts the Indigenous flag.

Whitlam Government elected; White Australia policy abolished. Department of Aboriginal Affairs established. Self-determination adopted as policy for Indigenous people.

Neville Bonner is elected on the Liberal Party ticket in Queensland.

1975: Whitlam hands back title to Gurindji people.

Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) passed.

Aboriginal Day extended to National Aborigines Week.

1978: Pat O'Shane becomes the first Indigenous law graduate and barrister.

1985: Uluru handed back to traditional owners.

1987: Hawke sets up Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

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1988: Bicentenary protest sees tens of thousands march on Australia Day.

NADOC changes its name to include Torres Strait Islanders; it is now NAIDOC

1991: Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody presents report.

1992: Mabo decision by the High Court overturns terra nullius and rules that native title exists over unalienated Crown land, national parks and reserves.

First “Survival Day” concert held at La Perouse (in 1998 the event moves to Waverley Oval near Bondi Beach).

10 Dec: Paul Keating's Redfern Park speech for the launch of the United Nations International Year for the World's Indigenous People

1993: Native Title Act.

1995: HREOC National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families announced.

Mid-1990s: NAIDOC wound up as ATSIC assumes responsibility for NAIDOC Week;.

1996: Howard Government elected.

The High Court rules in the Wik decision that native title and pastoral leases can co-exist.

Commonwealth Parliament makes statement of commitment to Reconciliation.

1997: Bringing Them Home, the report of the inquiry into the Stolen Generations, is released. It recommends a national sorry day to commemorate the history and effects of removing children from their families.

PM Howard makes a personal apology to the Stolen Generations, but refuses to make an official apology on behalf of Australia.

At the National Reconciliation Conference on 27th May, hundreds of people turn their backs on Howard during his speech, in protest at his refusal to apologise to the Stolen Generations.

“Sea of Hands” outside Parliament House in Canberra in support of reconciliation and the Wik decision.

1998: Native Title Amendment Act 1998 is passed; seen by many to reduce native title rights for Indigenous people.

First National Sorry Day – over 1 million signatures collected in Sorry Books.

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John Howard & Liberals re-elected; commits to reconciliation by 2001 in his election victory speech.

2000: Corroboree 2000. Handover of Document for Reconciliation at Sydney Opera House, more than 300 000 join in the Bridge Walk.

2004: Federal Government introduces legislation to abolish ATSIC.

TJ Hickey is killed while being followed by police – the Redfern Riot erupts.

Mulrunji Doomadgee dies in police custody, sparking a riot on Palm Island.

2005: ATSIC abolished; National Indigenous Council to replace and advise. NIC is not elected, meets four times a year.

2006: Aden Ridgeway chairperson of National NAIDOC committee.

2007 - 21st June: Howard Government announces its intervention into Northern Territory Indigenous communities.

2008 - 13th February: Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says 'Sorry' to the Stolen Generations.

2010 - 8th November: Prime Minister Julia Gillard announces plans to recognise Indigenous Australians in the Constitution.



Prime minister Gough Whitlam pouring sand into the palm of Gurindji leader Vincent Lingiari in the moment that triggered Aboriginal land rights.

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Slide 7

Famous Aboriginal Australians

[William Barak](#)

[Bennelong](#)

[Jandamarra](#)

[Truganini](#)

[Yagan](#)

David Unaipon

Cathy Freeman

Neville Bonner

Archie Roach

Adam Goodes

Albert Namatjira

Eddie Mabo

In April 1993 Australian Rules footballer Nicky Winmar responded to on-field racist abuse by lifting his jersey and pointing to his chest as if to say ‘I am Black! I am proud.’



Some Murri language from the play

Bului yuli mie

[Black Skin Girl]

Naia gigi warunguldul

[I will be strong always]

Adam Goodes Celebration Dance and Booing Controversy



<http://www.theage.com.au/afl/afl-news/adam-goodes-booing-controversy-could-be-significant-moment-in-race-relations-20150803-giqkeg.html>

Slide 8 Aboriginal Languages

Wurrundjeri Language

Bik = land, country

Boorondara = shade, darkness, night

Munyi gurrabil = they two

Munyi gurrabila = they

Nyilum bik = poor soil / hard land

Wangal = you and I

Wangan = we two

Wominjeka = hello / welcome

Yabba = to talk

Yarra = flowing, (also means "hair"). Is thought to have mistakenly given to the Yarra River

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Slide 9 – **Eight Aboriginal Films and Television Programs**

<http://mashable.com/2016/07/05/indigenous-australian-film-tv/>

1. *Beneath Clouds*

Director Ivan Sen's 2002 debut film, *Beneath Clouds*, is an unsettling take on the road movie.

2. *Redfern Now*

ABC's *Redfern Now* is a television series written, directed and produced by Indigenous Australians.

3. *Cleverman*

Cleverman is a television series that could have come from straight from Marvel studios. It shows the first Indigenous Australian superhero.

4. *Bran Nue Dae*

Bran Nue Dae is an Indigenous Australian musical.

5. *Ten Canoes*

Ten Canoes was the first film to be spoken entirely in Aboriginal Australian languages.

6. "Sand," *The Turning*

Anthology film *The Turning* is based on the book by Tim Winton.

7. *Samson & Delilah*

Samson & Delilah is confronting, honest and unlike anything you've ever seen.

8. *The Sapphires*

The Sapphires tells the story of four young women and their journey from singing in a small town talent contest to winning a spot performing in Vietnam for the troops.

Slide 10

Lesson 1

Students create a timeline of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history.

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Slide 11

Lesson 2

Students create Still Images of aspects of modern Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and still images from the performance that they remember.

Slide 12

Lesson 3

Students bring stones and soil from their home and we go outside and the students tell their own stories of sense of identity and place. Students create a sculpture of their own story and sense of place using the stones, earth and objects from the garden in the school.

Appendix 9 – Forum 1

FORUM TRANSCRIPTION

The following forum was conducted between the Researcher Mark Eckersley (listed in the interview as Interviewee or later 'I') and three participants in the study. Participant A is initially listed as Participant A and later as A. Participant B is initially listed as Participant B and later as B. Participant C is initially listed as Participant C and later as C. Participant C had to leave the forum earlier, so his input tends to dominate the first part of the forum, however he was given an opportunity to respond to other participants during the forum and others were given the opportunity to respond to him during the forum. All participants were given a transcript of the forum and any of the responses of the participants to the forum done after they received the transcript, are written at the end of the transcript.

Date of Forum: July 29, 2017

Start Time of Forum: 10:10am (AEDT)

(Recording stopped for 4 minutes and 30 seconds to await the arrival of Participant A)

End Time of Forum: 12:11:33pm

Mode of Interview: Forum (only audio recorded)

Forum Topic: Engaging with and Teaching an Indigenous Drama text

Forum Recording Length: 1 hr 57 min 02 Secs (Expressed in minutes as 117:02)

Forum

(00:00)

Interviewer:

So 'Hi' and welcome. So to start, in continuing ACU's commitment to Reconciliation and in line with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions, we acknowledge country as we pass through. Today, we acknowledge and pay respects to the First Peoples, traditional custodians

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of the lands and waterways, the Wurundjeri people and we thank them for their continued hospitality.

I would like to start off the forum with just informally addressing my Primary Research question and trying to get a snapshot of your viewpoints and opinions. So to start:

How do you see you engaged with this Indigenous Drama text and how did this affect the way you see Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' and understanding of Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives?

Participant C, would you like to respond to this?

(01:04)

Participant C: Basically, I wanted to make sure that I, um, took a more physical approach, um, to the text. Especially since there is not too much in terms of dialogue throughout the script itself, so and that was one of my goals because I have a Dance background as well.

Um, I followed a similar structure to our Aboriginal or Indigenous unit that we teach in Little V Dance.

(01:36)

I: What year level is that taught in by the way?

(01:38)

C: It's a combination of Year 7 and 8 that we do in our curriculum. So I decided to have a bit of experience teaching contemporary dance from Bangara (an Indigenous Australian dance company) so I used a lot of their inspiration there. So, movement was a big part of the way I approached it and I wanted to , not so much teach dance to my Year 12 students...

I: Yes.

C: But to think about the text and its physicality.

(02:09)

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I: Okay. Now we might move onto the main part of the forum. Because one of our participants has to finish up in about 25 minutes, we might let him go first and then we might respond at the end of his comments. To give some structure to this, I will use an eight stage model developed by the Aboriginal academic Yunkaporta in 2009. After the first participant gives his responses then each participant will go through the questions one by one and we will respond after each forum response focus question. So we might start with Stage 1 - Story. What has been the story of your engagement with this Indigenous Australian Drama text and how might this link to the story of your engagement with Indigenous Australian cultures in general?

(02:58)

C: With the story, I think it's more, I felt like I didn't have a very, um, oh, how do I say it? It didn't flow, my continuation as I moved through the unit it was a bit haphazard, because we, I had in my mind constantly this, the pragmatic side, that I have to teach these students to analyse a text and that is in some ways prescribed by the VCAA. I had this constant battle during... I guess within myself, not that it was truly visible, trying to balance, I really wanted to enforce and encourage students to engage with the content (of the drama text) in terms of giving them an understanding of Indigenous culture but I always hampered by the fact that I have to teach this knowledge and they have to understand the context or how stagecraft is being used so I felt that I keep jumping around in my approach so I didn't ever feel comfortable that the natural flow of the work and that the natural flow of my message was ever really continual or steady, it tended to be haphazard.

(4:26)

I: I see. Okay, if we were to move on, but firstly do you have anything you want to respond to there?

(4:34)

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Participant B: I do relate ----- (Name of Participant C deleted) to the same thing. The objective of the task (the VCE Theatre Studies exam task that this Indigenous Australia drama text was set for) takes priority over a number of other things and I'm in complete agreement because my focus was on how I can look at the text through the lens of the exam since we may be extracting examples for their performance analysis for this high stakes task because it is not just a coursework task but for the exam.

(05:03)

I: We might talk about that a little more latter. To move onto the second stage, The Map - If you had to map or describe the map of your learning journey dealing with this Indigenous Drama text what would it look like or what would be two or three signposts of your map? If it was a map, what would it look like. Would it look like a topographical map or a painting, if your journey of engagement was a map, how would you describe your experience?

(05:31)

C: Oh, I think definitely a painting would be the best way to map it, yeah, with a bit of everything. I liken it to a painting I saw. We have three Aboriginal students and as part of our Aboriginal Week and Sorry Day they present, and they showed this wonderful picture, I don't have a copy of it for today but I will try to send you one...

I: That's okay. That's good.

C: It was a picture of how the, what is it, yams, yams or something like that, it's like a potato essentially.

(06:12)

I: Yes.

C: It had a central tree and it shoots off different branches, and there is this central picture of kinda circular drawings and all of that. And I got a feeling that I am sorta there and I jump

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back over here. So for me, it was again, a bit sporadic. In many ways its looks like a Western Concept Map, kinda like that, and I link it to that kinda intricate shape.

(06:45)

I: We might moved onto the next stage and I have looked at _____ (name of Participant C deleted) journals already. Thinking of the visual journals. Could you express in a gesture, a movement or set of still images, something important you explored or have realized or was a pivotal point for you?

(07:11)

C: I liked the image of putting on the paint (Participant C does a definite action with two fingers of his right hand of putting on ceremonial paint. This is reference to a gesture done but the Indigenous Australian actress in the performance of 'Seven Stages of Grieving' seen by Participant C and his students). That really resonates, it has a dramatic element signaling like 'I am about to put on my costume or makeup'.

(07:28)

I: You mean from the actual show that you saw?

(07:30)

C: Yes, but I also mean just in general. And I also like the use of the sand (also from the performance of the play seen by Participant C). We saw the sand and it was done in circles on the floor (laugh). That connection with land resonates really well with me and that's something that I try to really encourage with the students.

(07:59)

(High wind outside interrupts recording for a few moments. No speaking evident)

(08:12)

I: Okay, if we were to take that directly to the concept of The Signs - Looking at your visual journal and thinking back on your exploration of this Indigenous Australian Drama text (in

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class and in seeing the performance by an Indigenous Australian performer) what are some of the signs or symbols which you think are important or which have resonated to you and your students?

(08:34)

C: Um, one that came up that the students used that came up in the early stages of our work, we had done the poem in the early stages of the play, 'Memories and Pain' and I let them go and explore that sort of poem and the idea of using a stick as a spear or a gun. So depending on how they were interpreting the poem whenever there was a mention of I suppose Western culture it became a gun but it could also become a spear, so um that transformation of that symbol, that solid object became that sign and was used by a lot of the different student groups I had which is interesting. I like the symbol of, for me, the circle shapes. I like that ritualistic feel, I use it a lot in my Dance unit that I teach to those Year 8's and try to encourage that because I try to, I guess I get a little stuck, I guess that it is a kinda flaw, I get stuck on trying to capture the traditional corroborate side of Indigenous culture and I forget that, this may sound stupid, but I forget that things have moved on. Watching a play like this, a modern play, its the first one I've studied mind you, um, I get stuck with let's try to use the traditions we can, such as circular movement, we incorporate a lot of the iconic movement in terms of creating the animals, the kangaroo and the emu appears in a lot of their movement, physical shapes, things like that. I think that the circle symbols are important for me and I try to encourage that since with a circle there is no true leader, your in a circle, everyone has that ability to share. (10:41)

But for them (Participant C's students), the weapon or the stick became really important for the students, it became that stick of authority or defense or attack or something like that.

(10:49)

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I: It's wonderful imagery. Now, I know you have already mentioned The Land before but how do you think this Indigenous drama text has increased your awareness of the connections of Indigenous Australian nations and peoples to The Land?

(11:08)

C: I think it has really reinforced what I already knew because I have used the land a lot, I am quite familiar with that connection and I use a lot of Aboriginal tales and Dreamtime stories as inspiration with any work I do with the Indigenous stuff, and I try, I enforce, um, that's really harsh isn't it, I encourage, that's better, I encourage an understanding in the Dreamtime stories that is dealing with the same thing and that comes across in the readings and that animals and them (probably meaning Indigenous Australian peoples and The Land) were the same thing and weren't necessarily separate. So within this text, even though it wasn't addressed in the Q & A at the end of the play (meaning the performance of the play and the Q & A which Participant C and his school group saw) having the colored sand or the pebbles and how that represented the Aboriginal performers own land, she came from the coast so using the blue stones helped with her interpretation of the text itself. There were a lot of things in there that weren't scripted that she created or created with the help of the director. So that connection with the land and the building, and everything coming out of the land and the way she moved around that space, for me was more about reinforcement than learning. Telling me, I've been on the right track. In saying that, if I want to have a balanced argument within myself, I probably get stuck on that and forget other elements. So for me, that Land connection is really strong.

(12:52)

I: In terms of the overall shape, how would you describe the Shape of your understanding of this Indigenous Drama text? What are some areas which are illuminated or lit? What areas

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still remain in darkness? How has studying this play illuminated some of your understanding of Indigenous Australian cultures and what aspects still remain a mystery or in darkness?

(13:15)

C: Um, one thing that came up working with the students is there apprehension dealing with the issues. There is a sense that, we had a big chat about it, that 'Is it okay to be teaching something that is not our culture, and are we doing it the right way?'. So engaging with them and guess there was a fear with them, 'Oh, I don't want to dance like an Aboriginal because I am feeling like I am imitating or disrespecting them. So, there was that apprehension, that, um, I wasn't expecting. But in terms of The Shape, for me, I have not had the chance to look at modern Aboriginal works and texts and I feel that I need to do a lot more. I have through Aboriginal dance and music, I have tried to use, I teach Hip-Hop to Year 7's, and as much as I can I try to use Australian and Indigenous Hip-Hop music, as much as possible because, as an aside, most of it is fairly positive and any Indigenous Hip-Hop music has a really strong message that I just try to incorporate as much as I can. But in terms of a text, a drama text, I think I need to look at how Aboriginal culture has moved on, and its not the traditional natives around a coroboree dancing for tourists. So how has it evolved and shaped now? So I really need to look at that, so that is, I guess, where my darkness lies, and I am still learning that. But I engaged with and found a particular insight with this particular text. So that's my darkness, my area of focus in future.

(15:24)

I: So, in terms of Backtracking - How has your understanding of this play and Indigenous Australian cultures and 'ways of Knowing' changed from the beginning? What have you had to change or reform or reconstruct?

(15:41)

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C: Um, I think the power of storytelling. The way in the performance the Aboriginal actress layered character. I think there was a lot of shift in the performance between the actress and the character and it was, um, I don't think that she fully became the character. She never fully became a realized character, like she would drop in and become somebody totally different and there was always that sense, 'I am still me telling the story and even though I am putting on an accent or something or changed my physicality, it was still that storytelling aspect that was really important and it occurred to me that in this play or the performance, language is going to be really important, like sharing, having shared language, like I've got a couple of, as we all do, EAL students, and finding that, again Indigenous storytelling and I guess, engaging with this text, the balance between the physical and the narrative is really important but it is still, I find, all very verbal, because traditionally they didn't write anything down, in a book, so it is a verbal means of communication and so having a shared language is really important. Um, and how you build that, I am not really sure yet how you do that, maybe it involves a little bit more preparation.

(17:42)

I: Okay. So —— (Name of Participant C deleted here), getting onto The Homeworld as a focus, have you consulted or sought the help or guidance of an Indigenous Australian from your own community when dealing with this play? I know you had a forum or Q and A with the Indigenous Australian actress after her performance so you can refer to that if you want. What have you learnt from doing this? (Pause) If not, how might you do this and what do you think you may have to gain by this? If you think that perhaps this play was written primarily for Indigenous Australians from different Indigenous nations, what do you think that we as non-Indigenous teachers need to consider as both educators and audiences to such a drama performance? (Pause) So we are probably not the first audience or the original target audience for the play text.

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(18:50)

C: So, I didn't really get anyone Indigenous person in, I relied entirely on what was presented and the forum after the show that we saw. I just didn't really have time. I have Indigenous Dance connections that I have used in the past, yeah, um, we just really didn't have the time to do that. After the fact, we did in fact have an Indigenous Dance group come in, and my Year 12 saw them. It was a Hip-Hop group in fact, but by that stage we had in fact already finished with the text. Um, I find, I not really sure how I feel about the notion that the text is written for their (Indigenous) culture. I mean it may be written for them but I also feel we have to engage with it and I don't know. I guess I want some more clarification of that notion. Is that a defensive question or comment.

(20:12)

I: I think it is just a comment. Why I brought it up is that it is something Indigenous playwrights like Jane Harrison and Wesley Enoch in the preface to this play have stated and I often forget about this myself. I think if we look at they number of Indigenous Australian plays that are written and performed, I think also that many Indigenous Australian writers may feel also comfortable with the form. Perhaps Indigenous Australian writers have appropriated this form because they may feel comfortable with it. Maybe we are guests to these performances even though we may be in the majority in number in the audience.

(20:39)

C: What I liked about this play and what I like about Bangarra Dance, certainly with this text, is that they have bridged that gap nicely, reinforcing their cultures and telling it how it was, honesty, I think that there is sense of honesty with the stuff that I have experiences, even though this is my first experience of teaching an Indigenous Australian play. The only thing I have based it on is my experience with Bangarra. One of the most moving productions I saw was Bangarra's performance of 'Mac' last year, which was the story of Governor Macquarie

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signing off on the massacre of thousands of Aboriginals who were encroaching on farmland. Their performance was very honest and it was one of the best dance performances I have ever seen that told a story. I feel that they did an excellent job, it didn't become a 'white bashing' exercise or become a 'feel sorry for us because we were persecuted for all these generations', it was a very honest portrayal, a balance, a useful bridge between the two cultures. I don't know whether I have answered the questions.

(22.06)

I: I think that there is a lot that has been revealed in what you have said. I might just see what others have to say in response and then we might come back to the primary research question. So —— (Name of Participants have been removed) is there anything in what —— (Name of Participant C has been removed)? Are there anything that resonated with you?

(22:29)

B: Well, I am in furious agreement, because, yes I was nodding away, yes, yes, yes, in agreement because I did feel, um, I had a sense that, in a way that the tables were turned a bit, in that that the play we read and the performance we saw, made the Indigenous culture central and Western or Western Australian culture peripheral. So there were times, you talked about EAL students —— (name of Participant C has been removed) and there were times when we were sort of like EAL students (Participants and the Interviewer laugh) because they would use an Indigenous language that was not translated to us as an audience. So it repositioned the audience so I am interested in the what you brought up about the way that Indigenous Australian playwrights talk about appropriating form and who there audience is and there is no question that in the majority of Indigenous play performances I have seen are not Indigenous but I had a sense of being on the periphery, which wasn't a bad thing, it think it was just the way that the text positioned who the expected audience was. So I very much

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agree with what —— (Participant C's name has been removed), I think that it is an interesting perspective when we talk about this an, um, an approach.

(23:58)

I: So I know you have to go —— (Participant C's name has been removed) and the last thing before you go, I would like to come back to my primary research question. How do you see you engaged with this Indigenous Drama text and how did this affect the way you see Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' and understanding of Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives?

(24:19)

C: I think that it is important, as much as it is possible, we as teachers should be turning to the local Indigenous community and getting their input. There is of course a cost factor around it but I think it is necessary to engage the local Indigenous community in the early stages, getting a local Indigenous Community centre if we can. For me, for us, I think it is important for us to provide, I don't want to be biased but to provide this is how its been and let's show that. So, we need to be honest with the approach in terms with how we deal with the content itself. Um, and we don't necessarily have to take one side. I'm probably being political there. i think also, I would like to see it be a positive message, I think there is a lot out there which is negative, I'd rather make anything we deal with, I mean not so much just positive but increasing awareness on both sides that we have to come to an agreement so let's find a balance.

(25:52)

I: Do you think that Drama can help to find that balance or reconciliation?

(25:56)

C: I think if we are careful, we can consider it with whatever text we look at and if we make it real, I mean there are so many local Indigenous communities around and connections and

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you can't just say this will work for all Indigenous groups and communities. So there is a lot of that already, so feel that in terms of balance. I mean not to ignore the terrible things that have happened in the past but in terms of moving forward there needs to be an aspect of that moving forward aspect to it. Yes, discuss the past because it is vital because their (Indigenous Australians) ancestors play a vital part in their daily beliefs, despite the fact that many modern Indigenous people might not have any direct connection. Incidentally I liked that scene in the play where she is trying to work out who she can marry and who she can connect to. It was fantastic, because even modern day Indigenous people may not have that connection. I think reinforcing that connection, dealing with the past but reinforcing and building a bridge and we need to keep with it.

(27:22)

I: Thank you ——— (Name of Participant C removed). Good luck with your rehearsal and thank you so much for your input. I will share with you the transcript when I have typed it up. You have a good day.

(27:37)

C: Yeah, you too. Enjoy.

(Recording was stopped for 4 minutes 30 Seconds to await the arrival of Participant A)

(27:37)

I: So, some very interesting points were raised by ——— (Name of Participant C removed). So ——— (Name of Participant B removed) we might move onto your responses to the same questions and now that ——— (Name of Participant A removed) has arrived we might get her to respond to the same questions. Because ——— (Name of Participant A removed) was not here when I did the acknowledgement of the place and the original Indigenous caretakers, I will repeat that acknowledgement.

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So to start, in continuing ACU's commitment to Reconciliation and in line with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions, we acknowledge country as we pass through. Today, we acknowledge and pay respects to the First Peoples, traditional custodians of the lands and waterways, the Wurundjeri people and we thank them for their continued hospitality.

I would like to return to addressing my Primary Research question and trying to get a snapshot of your viewpoints and opinions. So to start:

How do you see you engaged with this Indigenous Drama text and how did this affect the way you see Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' and understanding of Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives?

(28:57)

B: I related very much to what ————— (Name of Participant C removed) was saying that the imperative of this task and the reason we were looking at this text is because it was an assessment task for my Year 12's. I also took my Year 11's to see the production and it was an assessment task for my Year 11's as well. So we very much looked at the text and the performance through the lens of the assessment criteria for the Exam Performance Text Analysis task.

(29:27)

I: Was this exam focus or lens just the focus for the Year 12's or was the exam focus also the major focus for the Year 11's too?

(29:35)

B: I also looked at it through that lens for the Year 11's because I do a lot of modeling with Year 11's of how the Year 12 course goes so they get a little bit of a dummy run of the Year 12 course. So I still looked at in that, I suppose (looks through her notes). I suppose it is

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interesting in terms of ‘ways of Knowing’ because I was thinking when ——— (Name of Participant C removed) was talking I was thinking about culture and I was thinking particularly how differently Indigenous Australian people talk about land. And I know everyone is different but there just seems to be a very strong knowledge, not just intuition, knowledge of land. That the land is alive with story, with spirit, with belonging, with culture, with dreaming. And there is a landscape, I suppose, that is visible and prescient and present, that I don’t have. So that ‘way of knowing’ is quite different, quite ‘other’ from my bank of knowledge. I am conscious too, and this is something we will probably talk about in a moment, I am conscious how much of a word person I am.

(31:26)

I: I probably am too. I am conscious of particularly how I have changed in the course of my research from using in relation to Indigenous Australian culture ‘knowledges’ to now using ‘ways of Knowing’ because it acknowledges knowledge as an ongoing process rather than an end point or product. Initially my journey was to use ‘knowledges’ to embrace different Indigenous perspectives but I now see it for myself as something that is as much about the process as what is produced. When you just talked about the relationship with the land ‘ways of Knowing’ seems a good way to describe it.

(32:01)

B: It is interesting. And it is so, I don’t know how strong it is for Indigenous people but I would imagine there would be a parallel with how I come to know things primarily through words and how Indigenous people, particularly those who live in communities with a strong connection to their nation, their place and their land, how they must get such rich understanding, and a rich understanding of life and themselves from something is non-verbal, visual, pictorial, kinesthetic and environmental. So I guess for me, especially with the stuff I was recording in the visual journal, it was all just words, words, words and Ian was talking

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about dance and his approach to the text through movement and maybe I could have gone that way too but I just know that I default to words.

(33:11)

I: I might get more specific and use the eight stage model developed by the Aboriginal academic Yunkaporta in 2009. So we might start with Stage 1 - Story. What has been the story of your engagement with this Indigenous Australian Drama text and how might this link to the story of your engagement with Indigenous Australian cultures in general?

(33:30)

B: (Pause) So, I suppose the story of my engagement relates to the story. Obviously with this task as an assessment task there is a framework provided but for me always my way into any task with students is with story, and I can often find ways to make a biographical link.

(33:51)

I: Biographical with the authors of the text or biographical with the students?

(33:53)

B: Biographical with the students and me. So I will talk to the students and give biographical details from my own life to try to illuminate salient points and get students to relate parts of their lives as a way of moving towards what we are moving towards. So, two of the things I have studied in my life have been Sociology and Politics so I am quite interested in social structures and I have spent some time in my life in Indigenous communities, my school has a few connections with Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and so I have a particular interest in the ways that communities are structured. So one of the things that I talked about with the students was patriarchy and matriarchy and the structures of society. I think that one of the other things in terms of story is that I am interested in Feminism and I am interested in the personal as political and the political as personal and so I teach in an all girl's school but I do have a boy from another school who comes into my class. So the story

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of introducing this text was very much about making it personal and finding anecdotal ways of connecting to the text which comes from a different culture and one that I am not deeply knowledgeable about but finding ways, finding parallels as much as possible between the stories and storytelling which was in the text 'Seven Stages of Grieving' and the personal stories of the students. And this is a text that features women's stories quite prominently, I think it is still balanced but there is a strong women's voice in that text. I suppose it was anecdotal and engagement through the strong stories in the text.

(36:18)

I: So, let's move onto Yunkaporta's (2009) second stage, The Map. If you had to map or describe the map of your learning journey dealing with this Indigenous Drama text what would it look like or what would be two or three signposts of your map?

(36:26)

B: It would look like a spiral (laughs) and not just a concentric circle (hand gestures emphasized this). In a way it's about coming around and not just covering material that has existed before, we are covering new material.

(36:41)

I: How is the spiral moving?

(36:43)

B: It is moving down and out. It's big and it is like a (hand gestures indicate a tornado) like a tornado. It is interesting that you ask that because I wouldn't have imagined it any other way. And I suppose, each time we came back to a scene, so that circular movement of going through a scene and going somewhere else and coming back to that scene. Each time we came back to a scene, we had more to say, not less. We found more connections, so we would be going deeper so that is where the spiral comes down to a point. ———- (name of Participant C removed) mentioned the scene where... Scene 17 from the text, I think it is

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called homecoming. The scene where the actor describes the connections, the skin groupings, the skin connections which determine who you can marry in Indigenous cultures and who you can't marry and for us we came back to that scene over and over again. So we looked at it before we went to the performance and we love it. We loved the focus of that scene which is something quite foreign to me and my students and all of us which was the rules that apply in Indigenous culture to who you connect to and who you can get married to and have children with. So that was quite a new thing. But after we saw the production the visuals of it had such an impact on us even though they had been described in the text. That idea, that image of taking the pebbles and placing them completely outside of what had been established as the performance space, the ceremonial performance space. That visual of taking a child, the metaphor of the pebble, of taking a child out of its community and placing it somewhere else gave us such a sense of what is at the heart of the Stolen Generation, I mean, its a complex issue but to take someone out of their family, out of their community takes them away from all that knowing and all of those rules that make a social structure that make a community and make it cohesive and flourish. The emotion that that aroused in us all (the teacher and her students), how potent that was as an image, people being disconnected. Have I gone too far away from the question?

(39:37)

I: No, that is good. That is great.

(39:42)

B: But in terms of a signpost, that scene we returned to over and over again and we went deeper and deeper into what it meant to us to experience that scene.

(Participant A enters. The recording is stopped for 1 minute)

(40:10)

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I: So we might backtrack a bit to the first Primary question of engagement now _____ (Name of Participant A removed) is here and I might backtrack and get us to summarize a bit of what Participant C said and I might get you _____ (Name of Participant B removed) to summarize a bit of what you have said. How do you see you engaged with this Indigenous Drama text and how did this affect the way you see Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' and understanding of Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives?

Participant C said because he comes from a dance background that engaged through movement and a physical approach and engaged with the bits of the play that depended on movement and gesture. He also pointed out the problem with his engagement was that this being an exam assessment task for Year 12 meant that there were constraints and he and his group had to analyze the text in a particular way. _____ (Name of Participant B removed) mentioned the same problem but _____ (Name of Participant B removed) also mentioned that dialogue and speech were also an initial point of engagement yet the conflict was that it was also a text being studied for an exam. So _____ (Name of Participant A removed) How do you see you engaged with this Indigenous Drama text and how did this affect the way you see Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' and understanding of Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives?

(41:46)

Participant A: Well as I said in the notes I sent you, (see XXX) I approached it from the point of view of storytelling before we even started and that the actual definition of History, HIS-story and the fact that, even before reading the script or anything else, the fact that Australian history, initially when I was growing up, I did it from my own perspective, was quite biased, and what I received in my own education when I look at it now, I think it is quite disturbing. (Pause) So we had a discussion about that and then we shared the stories of their (Participant

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A's students) experiences. But really the stories regarding the school environment. The students were quite specific. It was really interesting.

(42:47)

I: ————— (Name of Participant B removed) mentioned before that she had studied sociology and was particularly interested in the women's perspective in the play. Do you (referring to participant A) what you have studied at university or your perspective as a female has an influence on the way you engaged with this text or Indigenous Australian culture?

(43:21)

A: For me that didn't come into it. Male or female perspective wasn't really important to me, although that seems interesting. My experience when I did a play with ————— (Name of Indigenous Elder who worked with Participant A is removed) in 2002 is that culturally in Indigenous culture, women are at a better point than men in Indigenous communities and she had said to me that that had been the biggest challenge because in Indigenous culture, men have been so ripped apart in terms of identity. So I was always aware of those aspects. So when I saw a female telling all of the stories in 'The Seven Stages of Grieving' it made sense, it is really what she had told me. It was really quite powerful.

(44:30)

I: In relation to the story of your engagement with this text and Indigenous Australian culture, we might get more specific and use the eight stage model developed by the Aboriginal academic Yunkaporta in 2009. So we might go back to Stage 1 - Story. What has been the story of your engagement with this Indigenous Australian Drama text and how might this link to the story of your engagement with Indigenous Australian cultures in general?

(44:59)

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A: My story. Well as I said, I was quite horrified when I was 19 and I went to university and I discovered that well were poisoned and all of these things add up. At first I didn't believe it. That's not, they are not my ancestors and after more discovery and research I found it was right. I was horrified. That happened at university. I went on and I was a performer and doing lots of things and at a school I taught at ————— (Name of school removed) the issues came back because the school was built on Indigenous land. One of the staff just casually through it at me 'Well you know this school is built on a sacred site'. So once again I became interested in this and I did some research and I was doing a Year 8 production at the time. So there a story that needed to be told and I did some more research and I brought it along here today, I did research to establish that work, that program, and I connected with ————— (Name of an Indigenous Australian elder who Participant A has worked with is removed here) and her daughter and she is actually quite significant within the Victorian Indigenous community. She will, when I was doing the play with her, she invited me to something she was doing at the Victorian Arts Centre where she was doing something for the Opening Ceremony, so she is very highly regarded in the community. And of course, ————— (Name of Indigenous Elder's daughter has been removed) is a very famous person as well, and that's when I came across, while I was doing that play, this play 'The Seven Stages of Grieving' and I was just blown away. it has a huge impact on me. Cause the Indigenous playwright Jack Davis' work was circulating around at that time but this play spoke to me and I could see how powerful the storytelling was.

(48:01)

I: Let's move onto Yunkaporta's (2009) second stage, The Map. If you had to map or describe the map of your learning journey dealing with this Indigenous Drama text what would it look like or what would be two or three signposts of your map? You mentioned

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some moments at university, working with Indigenous elders and the impact this text had when you found this text. How would you describe your map?

(48:41)

A: We had done the play 'Cloudstreet' earlier on and we had this discussion about how we establish, see and represent Indigenous characters. So it is all about the makeup, the costume and the person which are stagecraft elements but we discussed how this had to go out the window a bit because if you want to get authentic about Indigenous characters we had to get deeper. So there was a lot of discussion about what that looked like. And in 'Cloudstreet' we had a very 'white' guy playing this Indigenous character but it had to be quite real without stereotyping or having affectations dominate and all of that and we wanted to strip that back. When we were reading the play we stripped it right back so we could listen to the words and get the meaning so that we are getting a sense of the meaning and message. The words were used for inclusion and exclusion and of privilege. Some of the images of this play are very moving, so confronting and if you just let that emerge, it is amazing how students start to react to it. So when we actually saw the play, the students were very confronted by the non-verbal, the sound, it just sucked you up, there was no voice, being taken away, drawn in.

(50:54)

I: That might be a good Segway through to the third stage - The Silence. So taking a look at your visual journals - Could you express in a gesture, a movement or set of still images, something important you explored or have realized? I might start with _____ (Name of Participant B removed) on this. What was the silence, the gestures, the movement, the still images that was important to you, or that you explored or realized?

(51:23)

B: The beauty of the way, the way that they used the space. The imagery, the use of the pebbles, the way the photos were placed around the space. The unravelling of that was just so

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powerful for me and my students. In fact we saw two plays, we saw another not Indigenous 'The Faith Healer' and the students were more blown away by 'Seven Stages of Grieving', I think they engaged with the imagery, the projections, the letters and the way that the actress interacted with those objects and things and that non-verbal stuff was very powerful for the students because there is something that occurred that can't be articulated and they were central in a way that I think only the Performing Arts can do which the students saw and they got it and there was this sense of realization. A sense of 'Is that what it feels like?'. So also, the way that the sound was used, so loud and immersive had an impact. The actual way that the space was used, the way that the story unravelled within that circle and the photographs and having the screen and the way it was used with images, words which started to make me think of words, letters, text and it was that realization for my students and me, imagine what it would be like look at words and letters and not be able to understand them.

(53:45)

I: So ——— (Name of Participant B removed) what for you is The Silence. Could you express in a gesture, a movement or set of still images, something important you explored or have realized? ——— (Name of Participant C removed) said he worked with his students on using a stick as a gun or spear and other movement work.

(54:10)

B: So prior to seeing the play, we had a significant welcome to country done in the space just before the play and they played the didgeridoo and we had a student from one of the local high schools who was Indigenous who followed around the visitor with clapsticks to keep the beat and an Indigenous local woman who did a welcome in her local language and in English and the didgeridoo player is ——— (Name of Indigenous person removed) I know him from other things and he blew and traced a greeting and traced the welcome around the whole performance space and I always get quite affected by that kind of thing and it was particularly

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strong because I knew that this student had come from another school that my friend teaches at and the manner in which the Welcome to Country was done was not tokenistic and sometimes it can be and its there and lets get down to the business but here it was genuine and strong and created a sort of forcefield. Then the actor came out and created that created that liminal space with the pouring of the rocks sort of glow-in-the dark or phosphorescent rocks and all of those rituals, I would call them sacred rituals in a performative space, you know the link, the morphing between what is sacred and what is performed, you know, its so strong for me and to establish what you're about to see slowly and you are take your time and we are all going to enter into this space and be there together and I thought this was a beautiful way to begin, a beautiful type of storytelling and a great way making prominent a quality of theatre that perhaps is not always foregrounded - preparation of the space. I mean actors do their warmups and all that kind of thing and they often do that kind of thing away from the prying eyes of the audience and it can often be a private ritual that an actor and company goes through but this was about making explicit the place and space we were going to, your not just watching television, or a film, you are about to engage in something different and sacred and important and we must acknowledge it. So for me, this moment of beginning were very important and that made other moments powerful like that moment in the play when the actress sweeps her hand through the beautiful circles she has created to destroy what she established and it has so much more impact because we saw it being made and we bought into it and we agreed that were entering somewhere sacred and so the potency of that gesture had a real kind of impact. I mean what if we had established a culture here and it was just destroyed and wiped away.

(58:20)

I: That sort of leads onto the next bit what are the signs and the symbols there. The Signs. Thinking about the play and looking at your visual journal and thinking back on your

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exploration of this Indigenous Australian Drama text, what are some of the signs or symbols which you think are important or which have resonated to you and your students?

B: The space and the gestures were very important in the performance but with the script, the text, I would agree with ————— (Name of Participant A removed) that the words were shown as a site of privilege and exclusion both ways, when Indigenous languages I feel excluded because I don't know what is being said and on this occasion the actress used her own local language which was not in the printed text that we had read, it did mean the same thing in the end but we weren't to know that because I was expecting other words and, um, so words and signs and symbols, so the gestural stuff I was describing was very important but I think too the way that the text examined words and language...

(59:43)

A: And the ways they could be manipulated...

B: And changed by people, so all the stuff in the play with the letters which appeared as projections on the cyclorama and the way the actress was just standing there and she ended up with a 'Z' on her body which was different to what was described in the written text and I was interested in that alternative interpretation of that scene because I think the idea of text and using the body in the space as a site of the story, the set, the political power or disempowerment. I think that that is an important sign a potent symbol which is about power and voice and voicelessness and to have the actress ending up with a 'Z' as a way of marking her as the lowest of the low and the way that words position us and the way that words can exclude, or include us, as people like us have power and privilege and access to opportunities or those who experience the opposite of that. Yes, the gestural and the visual stuff was important but the centrality of words and the power and examination of words which was undertaken in the performance and the way that words had been used against Indigenous people and maybe teaching Indigenous languages in the space that has to be reclaimed

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because words have been done their worst in squashing and leeching so much in terms of voice and culture from Indigenous people.

(61:36)

I: Now ——— (Name of Participant A removed) you put in the written notes you sent me some notes about the hand of the mouth image and some other signs. Thinking about the play and looking at your visual journal and thinking back on your exploration of this Indigenous Australian Drama text, what are some of the signs or symbols which you think are important or which have resonated to you and your students?

(61:48)

A: I think that we are very much on the same page here, especially the idea of not having a voice. So the sign or image or the ideas which were really striking to me and my students was the idea of not having a voice and there are letters and words which were put upon the actress and shape her identity or try to shape her identity but then the wonderful thing about this play is that she shines through that and I think that and also the way that the sound worked. The actress would express something and tell the story and then the sound would make it feel like it was sucked back inside and it was gone. That story that she told doesn't exist anymore and it vanished into nothing. And the implication of that is, looking at the Indigenous communities more broadly and the way they have been silenced and how things have bubbled and merged over the last 30-40 years. So that was really significant as a symbol. And of course the earth and the dirt and the stones.

(63:35)

I: Maybe let's move onto the importance of The Land. How do you think this Indigenous drama text has increased your awareness of the connections of Indigenous Australian nations and peoples to The Land?

(63:52)

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A: Well, I think what the text does, or what it did when I first read it, it makes you want to enquire. Because, it is presented, the stories are presented in a way that made clear sense to me. And this is sometimes the problem, in bridging that gap of understanding. I have grown up in a privileged environment, in a privileged family, I have had an education that has told me certain stories that (pause) aren't quite right, and I think that is the important thing with this text, the journey that it sets. And it is interesting, the impact that it had on my students, I use the word disempowerment before and I think, and you will see it on the video part of my visual journal, the students talk about their situation of disempowerment within their own school environment and there is a real sense after we saw the play and did 'The Invasion' poem from the play, and we explored it, there is a real sense of disempowerment, and there is real attitudes by the kids.

(65:42)

I: Do you mean they connect to play through their own sense of disempowerment or is it a realization of Indigenous disempowerment?

(65:46)

A: No, its actually about them (the students) as teenagers. It about them because I think that they think ideally 'What can I do? What can I offer? How can I fix this?' You know what I mean? The play, and all its elements, and the comedic elements, it was really interesting when we came back to discussion of the play after seeing it, that feeling in the students of 'Okay, we've experienced that'. I think there was a feeling with the students of realizing 'Oh, this is an assessment task, when did that happen?' Because when we were exploring it beforehand without seeing the performance it was a different connection with the ideas, the story and the words, not the imagery, that came later. So, the students see the performance, we then do 'The Invasion' poem at school after, and one of my top students, a really creative boy, he just changed. his reaction to this text just changed and I could see that he pulled

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himself back and stepped away from the impact. He did the exercise and they went through it and they had some really good discussions but, then I questioned myself, 'Should they be changed by this?' I am asking myself these questions and some kids seem to feel 'These are my ancestors that did this and we've got to take responsibility'. And of course there is that other attitude. 'I didn't do it. I didn't do this.'

(67:58)

B: The John Howard defense. (General laughter)

(68:01)

A: 'I didn't do this. My ancestors did. And I do emphasize with it but hey, its not my responsibility.' Um, so that is the interesting thing is the disempowerment. At the end of experiencing what was in the play, what are the next steps, you know. And they are very aware now of respecting culture. I was really surprised how educated they are now on respecting culture. Like when we did 'Cloudstreet', they said 'Well, you can't paint an Indigenous design on the floor Miss, you can't paint a dot painting on the floor. Miss you can't do that, you have to ask permission.' So they have a really good understanding of respect and what it looks like but they just don't know the next step.

(69:48)

I: Getting back to the connection to The Land. How do you think this Indigenous drama text has increased your awareness of the connections of Indigenous Australian nations and peoples to The Land?

(69:51)

B: I think I expected to be presented with an Indigenous experience of land and, um, there is always for me a depth that feeling and it was there in the mound of earth which was a central part of the set. We have Welcome to Country a lot at school and the Indigenous connection to land at my school is very important and I mean, I wouldn't say it's front and centre, that

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would be going too far but its never forgotten and every time I hear an acknowledgement of country it reminds me of something I am normally oblivious to the rest of the time, that I don't have it. For me it's a reminder of an intelligence and a 'way of knowing' and an awareness that Indigenous people do have and its quite central to their being and its not central to mine. There is such a clarity in the difference of my way of existing on this land and the Indigenous way of existing on The Land and I admire that.

(71:08)

I: Now if we move onto the next stage as defined by Yunkaporta's (2009), How would you describe the Shape of your understanding of this Indigenous Drama text? You did mention the spiral or whirlpool before.

(71:11)

B: So how would you describe the Shape of your understanding of this Indigenous Drama text? What are some areas which are illuminated or lit? What areas still remain in darkness?

(71:15)

B: I think it is a bit like the piles of stones which were created in the play, in the performance in scene 17. My knowledge is building, but there is a bit here and a bit there but it is certainly not complete. So I suppose as an image it is like those mounds of stones so there is a bit here and there but it is all connected to a bank of cultural knowledge or story. My knowledge is a satellite.

(72:18)

I: So if it is like mounds, what are those mounds of understanding, knowledges or 'ways of Knowing'? Are they ideas, stories, mounds of understanding? Are they experiences? What are in those mounds?

(72:35)

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B: yeah, well I suppose they come from an eclectic mix of experiences. Some have been real, some academic (through Sociology, Politics and those kinds of things). There is a bit of knowledge through looking at creation stories, dreamtime stories that I have looked at sometimes in my own reading and sometimes in teaching or for use with students. There is a bit of knowledge through visiting Indigenous communities. One of the things which was in the script which was not performed when we saw it, was the Smoking Ceremony. I was quite sad that there was no smoking ceremony because I remember being smoked by some Aboriginal elders up in the Centre of Australia.

(73:30)

I You saw it in GPAC didn't you?

(73:31)

B: Yes, we did.

(73:32)

I: I understand that the reason having spoken to them at the venue that they could not do the Smoking Ceremony was because of Smoke Alarms, Fire Safety, Health and Safety regulations at the venue. There was a request apparently to do that, and it was part of some performances around Australia and it was performed with that ceremony at some other venues.

(73:47)

B: I guess as a kid I had friends who were Aboriginal and who it turned out were Stolen Generation. I didn't think about it in the 1970's. They had been stolen and adopted into 'White' families. I suppose when I think about it now in terms of knowledge and having an interest in Indigenous film too. It seems a bit more mainstream now and reading different books and texts that have to do with Indigenous stories like 'My Place' by Sally Morgan or Patrick White's stories about early colonization and that sort of thing. So those mounds come

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from quite disparate experiences and places and a set of life experiences which have come across my path without me necessarily taking a methodical and dedicated pathway in trying to understand Indigenous culture.

(74:52)

I: It's a lovely image. So if you _____ (Name of Participant A removed), How would you describe the Shape of your understanding of this Indigenous Drama text? is there a specific image or shape you got from the text or from the performance?

(75:09)

A: I think, for me, I find this emotionally, I find the journey of this play very draining and I find that really... (pause). I found when I did the play previously at _____ (Name of previous school that Participant A worked in has been removed) and the thing is I came to one of the school that seems to me one of the 'whitest' schools in the state next to _____ (Name of school close to Participant A's present school has been removed) so I had to adapt to that culture and the thing is that play coming back on the playlist has absolutely (pause) has shaken me up. So I say to myself 'What have you been doing? What have you been doing? There is no Welcome to Country at this school, there is nothing. No one here acknowledges anything and the play has come back to me to say 'Wake up. Wake up'. The thing is that we get caught up in our lives and awareness and Indigenous culture is always an undercurrent and underlying sense of responsibility as a teacher and as an educator to ensure that there is that balance and it is interesting this year, because I did 'Cloudstreet' and now 'Seven Stages of Grieving' and it is interesting because now I have a Year 10 Literature student who is writing a play which is going to be a parable about Colonization. The idea in Shaun Tan's book and this child is really quite bright and doing a lot of research and to do that you have to come from a place of a lot of research.

(77:10)

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I: What is the shape of all that engagement, all those experiences?

(77:12)

A: It's like, for me, swirling. A little whirlpool and its like when are in it, like the 'Seven Stages of Grieving' this year, I'm immersed in it. I am right in it. Now, the local issues and other stuff and what happened at _____ (Name of previous school Participant A taught in has been removed) sent me in and now I am right up to the top of it but it is all happening underneath. It's all happening. It is like, I took my son down to Gippsland and we had a profound experience and we decided to go to an Aboriginal museum down there and it hit us like a ton of bricks. One farmer killing 10,000 Indigenous people and they have got it here in this tiny little museum. There giving their story from their perspective. I have told the kids of my experience of this. Their story and they have the evidence or proof of this. It jolts me, it is like an electric shock. Um, but it is interesting in the culture of a school and the school I am in, how do we as teachers, I mean, there are so many issues that schools are trying to make priorities and yet this is the land we are living on, this is where the schools are, there is a memorial on the hill, 2 km away from my school and on that hill there were Wurundjeri living, breathing and I say to the kids 'Where are they now?' 'Do you know any Aboriginal people now?' I didn't, growing up in Warrandyte which is name after an Aboriginal word. And I ask the students, 'Do you know Aboriginal people?' And I think that it is like that, all of a sudden I get a jolt. So yeah, the shape of it can be, I get quite shocked by it, I get right and into this place and I think what can I do, what should I be doing. There are all these stories. I told this one, in the visual journey.

(80:20)

I: That probably leads well into the next stage of the eight stage model developed by Yunkaporta in 2009. Backtracking - How has your understanding of this play and Indigenous

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Australian cultures and 'ways of Knowing' changed from the beginning? What have you had to change or reform or reconstruct?

(80:38)

A: Well, can I just say, you doing this project for me has been inspiring, that someone is actually doing something like this.

(80:49)

I: A bit like you, I am doing it out of a bit out of a sense of responsibility. My story is I have always grown up being involved in social justice and Indigenous rights through my mum.

When I was a student at the VCA, I had the chance toward with Bob Maza on the First Indigenous Playwright's Conference. I was going up to the national Playwright's festival to Canberra but myself and two other VCA mates absconded for a week, we got in trouble for that, and we were welcomes as non-Indigenous theatre people into this wonderful opportunity. That sense of responsibility that was built on there in 1987 is carried with me.

(81:51)

B: The stories. The sense of responsibility to carry the stories.

(81:57)

I: I don't want those stories to go again into the whirlpool of darkness again. The momentum of 1967 when my mum like others pushed for and voted in the referendum the momentum was then lost, when Whitlam poured soil into Vincent Lingiari's Hands to symbolize the giving back of the traditional lands, the promise was not fulfilled, when the Barunga Statements on bark paintings was presented to Bob Hawke in 1988, a promise was made of a treaty and this promise ended up as empty and worthless as the acknowledgement of dispossession and the promise that Non-Aboriginal Australians should try to imagine and value the Indigenous Australian viewpoint Paul Keating made in the Redfern Speech in 1992,

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and as ultimately empty as Kevin Rudd's apology to The Stolen Generation in 2008. I hate feeling that we come around the whirlpool and we end up the same point with no progress.

(82:24)

A: I mean, it is great, the kids go through the journey of understanding with the play and they engage in the stories and the issues and then they disengage and there is nothing.

(82:52)

I: What do you think is the source of the students disengaging?

(82:54)

A: Our culture disengages. I mean I have other things too and the students have lots of subjects in Year 11 and Year 12, and they say, 'That is really great. I really care about these issues and Aboriginal culture.' Then they move on. I mean, what is the point of education here? Is it to give them SAC's and tasks to pass their VCE or is it to make them think, engage and want change and change things. I am sure my principal would say, 'You have to be really careful there.' (All laugh). But at the same time, at the same time, these things go round. I mean we have Donald Trump now and the threat of Artificial Intelligences taking jobs and it goes around and we don't want to learn from this. The thing is, the biggest issue for me is that we have assumed so much about Indigenous culture. But the absence of real knowledge is a worry. And Indigenous 'ways of Knowing' and the magic of the knowledge about the land - going back to The Land, and the way that Indigenous people have lived from the land, and you know what, we are lose all that, and we could learn from them. We might need that knowledge again the way the world is going and all that richness of learning we are losing. I mean, all those languages and cultures lost in Australia. And is it wrong to say 'We are going to come in and document all your languages, and I am going to do this and do that...' I saw a documentary, and there was I point when I wanted to do it, all these people who go up to the Outback and they are going to teach and save the cultures, they last a year and they come

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back, you know, 'what is genuine authentic help to the Indigenous communities?'. 'How do we give genuine, respectful help to people who have been so fragmented?' And sometimes these people, these communities are just trying to keep it together themselves.

(86:03)

I: So what is the experience for you, ————— (Name of Participant B removed) in terms of Backtracking - How has your understanding of this play and Indigenous Australian cultures and 'ways of Knowing' changed from the beginning? What have you had to change or reform or reconstruct?

(86:22)

B: I think my understanding has grown through this play. I feel like sometimes, I dip into Indigenous culture spasmodically. I think it is good, even powerful to look at something like a play like this that gives such a strong voice to stories and experiences that are probably quite common for a particular group but not my experience directly really. I think it is good through studying and doing Indigenous plays that it keeps appearing and emerging on my radar.

(86:53)

I: Is there something this time that emerged that didn't appear before? Or is there some understanding that was built upon? Or something that was changed, reformed or reinforced?

(87:05)

B: There have been some things that have been reinforced. Um, one of the things that was reinforced was the humor of Indigenous Australians. My own personal experience is that there is something quite particular about Indigenous Australian humour that is both disarming and quite non-confrontational even though the material dealt with might be difficult for a 'white' privileged person to listen to, so I guess (looking through her written notes), the scene where the character is going about her normal day and we hear and see the racism she

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encounters particularly when she goes into a shop to look for a dress and she is treated like a shoplifter and watched. All those kinds of things. So that was a familiar thing and a nice reminder which is some kind of reminder of the aspects of Indigenous Australian culture that aren't grim or depressing and make me feel the burden of responsibility which you two were talking about. Um, although I have seen a lot of theatre, I think Indigenous Theatre is not something that I have seen a lot of to be able to talk about what makes a piece of theatre Indigenous, was new soil for me to till, a new frontier to go into and explore. I hesitate to extrapolate generalities. This wasn't a play, one play and the content is Indigenous. I don't know whether the form is. Because I have seen episodic plays before. The content is certainly Indigenous and the idea of ritual in the play, the performance, you find that in a whole lot of theatre. There is a particular quality in the actions, the story and the content that makes it Indigenous. For me, I still have a question about what makes an Indigenous piece of theatre, is it just the content and the stories. Is there, I don't know if there is anything which is particularly Indigenous Australian in terms of structure and form?

(89:53)

A: That's a great question.

(89:55)

I: That's a great question. I don't really know the answer. As you probably know Kevin Gilbert's 'The Cherry Pickers' is probably the first play written by an Indigenous Australian but that is fairly realistic with some symbolic bits and Jack Davis' plays were written in the 1970's and 1980's and they were fairly realistic. Eva Johnson's plays in the late 1970's and 1980's have some elements like this and 'Bran New Dae' isn't realistic but 'Seven Stages of Grieving' is probably the first Indigenous Australian play that does things in this way or in this combination with a Western episodic form. Some Indigenous Theatre writers like Bob Maza and Wesley Enoch have commented that they felt comfortable with the theatre form -

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maybe a form of appropriation of the form. I sometimes think of it as Indigenous Australian artists recolonizing our Western forms to tell their untold stories. It certainly has reinvigorated Australian theatre.

(90:40)

B: I like too, I suppose the other thing looking back is that I did grapple with that question of or the fact that we have one person, one Indigenous actress and she is speaking for a lots of different people and groups and I think that I grapple with that question about how much we can generalize about a culture's experience. How valid is it to generalize and that question of when an individual speaks how much is subjective and how much is objective or more broadly true?

(91:45)

I: I might get on to the last stage of the eight stage model developed by Yunkaporta (2009) - The Homeworld - Have you consulted or sought the help or guidance of an Indigenous Australian from your own community when dealing with this play? What have you learnt from doing this? If not, how might you do this and what do you think you may have to gain by this? If you think that perhaps this play was written primarily for Indigenous Australians from different Indigenous nations, what do you think that we as non-Indigenous teachers need to consider as both educators and audiences to such a drama performance?

(92:09)

B: I did some research, partly because I was meant to interview Chenoa Deemal the actress who did this production for a podcast or a broadcast an Education Department broadcast so I had done a little research around the original production with Deborah Mailman and around Chenoa Deemal and some analysis of the text. So I didn't speak with or consult with another expert in person but I did try to feel that my understanding by analysis of the play and the history of the production and the people involved in the first production and this one, prior to

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going to this performance but the only other conversation I was a part of was the conversation, the Podcast with the actress Chenoa Deemal and the Q & A with the performer afterwards. Did that change it for you, as a teacher, as a performer?

(93:11)

I: And what did you learn from that?

(93:14)

B: Yes, the performer being Indigenous seemed central to the text and the performing of it. One of the things that struck me with having an Indigenous performer is how confrontational and unapologetic it was. I probably would go so far to say that at times it was aggressive. And I quite liked that, maybe it is masochistic, the 'white' sense of guilt. I quite liked how unapologetically this Indigenous actor presented stories of Indigenous injustice and powerlessness and um disenfranchisement and dislocation and that it was not necessarily consolatory. I liked that. There was not a lot of, there were quite a few moments in the performance which were not polite or about being sensitive to a predominantly 'white' audience. It was about being 'loud and proud' and declaring the true experience of being Indigenous. There is also a section in this production which used a fragment from Kevin Rudd's 'Sorry Speech' and one of the things that the performer Chenoa Deemal talked about in the Q & A afterwards was that they decided to quite deliberately stop before Kevin Rudd uses the word "sorry" because the project is not complete.

(95:31)

A: Yes, she did that at our Q & A too.

(95:33)

B: And you were talking before Mark (referring to the Interviewer) to that feeling feeling cheated and we feel like we made progress and nothing happened and we feel like we are here again. And enough time has passed since Rudd's 'Sorry Speech' for us to think. I can

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remember that moment watching it on the TV with my homeroom at school and we sat down and cried as we heard our Prime Minister finally say 'sorry'. I mean, how hard can it be to genuinely say 'sorry' and he finally said it and we cried and we thought 'this is it, this is a watershed'. And what we have seen in the interim is business as usual because there are vested interests that will not give up anything. I went recently to see Clementine Ford speak months ago and she is a feminist and she talked about the space that men allow women to occupy and it is a bit like how much space 'white' people give Indigenous people. I mean she was saying this as a privileged 'white' women but it is actually not enough to just say 'sorry'. What 'white' people need to actually do is give up a bit of space to Indigenous people. they need to give up some power and some of the opportunities that come to them more easily, in the same way that men may need to give up some things so that women can gain some more equality. And that is one of the things that I was so aware of through the performance and the Q & A. I mean, it was important that Kevin Rudd said 'sorry' and that was very powerful and I just rewatched that speech as part research for the production and it still brought me to tears to see those cut-away shots to Stolen Generation people outside watching the broadcast and the sharing and the hugging and the non-verbal connections and the sorrow that was pouring out as a consequence of those words. But you can't help but think that a couple of years after that they can put those words and the speech into this performance and the makers of the production have to stop before they reach the word 'sorry' because the job is not finished yet and in some ways it doesn't feel like we have come very far anyhow.

(98:09)

I: Now ————— (Name of Participant A has been removed) in some ways you have a different set of experiences since you have had active interaction with a number of Indigenous elders and performers. These relationships have been ongoing with consulting with you and helping with the drama work you do. You have you consulted or sought the

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help or guidance of Indigenous Australians. What have you learnt from doing this? If not, how might you do this and what do you think you may have to gain by this? If you think that perhaps this play was written primarily for Indigenous Australians from different Indigenous nations, what do you think that we as non-Indigenous teachers need to consider as both educators and audiences to such a drama performance?

(98:41)

A: Well with ————— (Name of Indigenous Elder consulted by Participant A has been removed) I rang her regarding the play 'Cloudstreet' with our Milinbik and with an Indigenous artist, local Aboriginal artists and I didn't even realize that we had a local Indigenous artist.

(99:03)

I: That is an Indigenous artist attached or working for your local city council?

(99:06)

B: Yeah, but he was actually a consultant for the council first up but after a little more probing, I found he was an artist. My experience of Aboriginal (pausing searching for the word) timing. Trying to connect is sometimes difficult because with some Aboriginal people, there sense of timing is very different and this sometimes is very difficult to get to work with a school and school timetables and timings.

(99:48)

I: You have persisted though.

(99:50)

A: Yes. I persisted because I thought it was important and with ————— (Name of Indigenous Elder consulted by Participant A has been removed) and this personal contact is important. One of the things I say to every single Drama class I have is the one thing I want you to get from this class is the experience, the ability to step into someone else shoes and just seeing

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the world from someone else perspectives. And you really can imagine their reaction - 'Oh, Oh!'. And I think that is what I try to say to the students with this experience. Try to step into the shoes of what it would be like to be an Indigenous person. And, I mean, as I try to imagine it, the things that I feel as I do that, and I had a boy, an Indigenous lad who was doing a recording in a studio we have and he was 19 and he had come down from Queensland and we were in Mont Albert and he came back from the train stop and he said to me, 'Someone has just tried to pick me up and pay me for sex as a prostitute.' He was only 19 and he had just come down from Queensland and the rage that that I felt, the rage that someone on the Mont Albert train line thought that it was acceptable to come up to him and ask that because he was Aboriginal, because of who he was. There are experiences that Indigenous people face everyday and if I can just get my kids to understand and experience a bit of that and get them to connect to the stories, or even my experiences. I mean, just imagine, this is the power of our subject, 'put those shoes on, feel the words, experience the stories, just stand in their situation'. You walk into a shop like the Indigenous character in the play and other people look 'what is she doing in my shop?' Getting treated like a thief with suspicion all the time. 'What does that feel like?' 'How does that impact everything you do?' You know. (And this is the amazing thing about connection to Joy. Joy is her name. Joy by name, Joy by nature. With all the things she has seen and all the things she has experienced, she is the most positive person I have met. You know, it is the sense of positivity that she says the women have in her culture. It is the women that are leading.

(103 min 4 secs)

I: Amazing. This forum and these discussions could keep going. So, we might end the forum with just coming back to the Primary Research question and trying to get a last overview of your viewpoints and opinions. You might also want to offer any other insights or any open responses too. So to finish, How do you see how you and us as drama teachers, engaged with

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Indigenous Drama texts and how did this affect the way you and us see Indigenous Australian 'ways of Knowing' and understanding of Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives?

(103:32)

A: I suppose it is just what I said before. I see that as Drama teachers it is we encourage students to just step into others shoes and attempt to understand other people's perspectives. It was interesting with this production, the clothes that the Indigenous actress wore really aggravated me - three quarter pants but... I got it, trying to step into her interpretation and I thought why would she dress this character in that Western working class clothes, but this is what it is all about and things that come up. Um, so...

(104:49)

I: So what is it about stepping into someone else shoes in Drama that helps to engage and understand with Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives?

(104:56)

A: The sense of hope. I think Drama can give hope. I think Drama can help with you wanting to find out more. That, you will, when you step in, you might say 'I don't know if I believe that'. It will challenge certain preconceptions. I am talking more specifically about 'Seven Stages of Grieving', challenge some of the perceptions that are out there. Because even if the stories in this play are real or imagined, they are put in the play as a perspective and they are presented with a different voice, an Indigenous female voice. So the question for us and students are, are you going to step into this world and finding out more about this, it is an invitation, the stories are an invitation. These stories are not represented enough so I suppose, that is the key thing for me.

(106:14)

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I: So ————— (Name of Participant B has been removed) How do you see how you and us as drama teachers, engaged with Indigenous Drama texts and how did this affect the way you and us see Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’ and understanding of Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives?

(106:28)

B: The first thing I thought was to compare how this Indigenous text might be taught if it was an English subject task. One of the things that we do in Drama, we look at a cultural artifact, a performance, and we try to understand it on other it on other merits than just how it is written as a text. We talk about how we have responded emotionally often to what we have read and seen. What we endeavour to understand is what the creators of the written text and the performance are doing. we often come to a text in Drama with an open mind and an open heart and a willingness, an eagerness to understand it. The understanding comes later, about how successful it was and the choices that were made. It occurs to me that we privilege a text, which is one of the reasons I chose ‘Seven Stages of Grieving’ where we had a choice of six plays and production we could take the students to, because I did want the students to have an experience of a text like this, and is a text they will spend a very long time with and experience in a number of ways and I wanted to ‘privilege’ and Indigenous drama text and I made that choice last year. I think that when students particularly in Year 12, they look at it for a month or so during the semester and they see the production then we revise work on it before the exam so it is something that sticks with them, it is with them for a long time and it is not disposable or not like an optional text like in English as a subject where they can choose another text for the exam or only write on two texts. They have an investment in the play and the process and I think that one of the things that we can do in Drama is approach it from a number of perspectives and one of the perspectives we approach it from is the perspective of ‘empathy’ and endeavoring to understand it from an Indigenous perspective.

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get into the body of it, get into the skin of it. And when the student read the words they are the character. There is a very real connection and an emotional connection that is made to the text that I don't think happens in any other subject. So we have the opportunity to put something in front of our students that we know they are going to engage with deeply and over a very long time and that the students will in the seeing of it in performance have an experience that will stay with them for a very long time. This will communicate things to them that they will not get in other subjects and can't be communicated in any other way. I think that is the essence of the methodology in drama teaching that engages kids not just on an intellectual level. Sometimes in English a text, students can simple say 'I liked it' or 'I didn't like it'. Students don't have that opportunity to say that in Drama because the discussion of a dramatic text has to be nuanced, has to be complex, a text has to be investigated from a range of different perspectives so it has to be looked at in terms of the design, the expressive skills, the actor's relationship to space all those sorts of things as well as the themes and content, so many things that they have to look at. So I think that is what can all happen when a Drama teacher privileges and Indigenous Drama text.

(111:08)

I: I will get all of you a copy of the transcript of this forum to give any more responses you have to what you have said or what has been raised by this forum. It will take me some time. There is a lot of wonderful ideas and perspectives that have been raised in this forum but just to end, is there anything else you want to say in this forum context. You will get a chance to write a response to this forum but is there anything else you would like to add.

(111:33)

B: I just wanted to say one thing. One of the other programs we have in my school is a 'Justice and Democracy' program. my school is a Brigidine School so we do a lot with Social Justice and Environmental Issues and Feminism and the program is really strong and one of

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the things that I think is very applicable here is our programs are not about fund raising and simply holding a cake stall but it is about engagement and raising awareness and it doesn't mean preaching to other people but raising your own awareness is the first step and if with that information you want to do something then do. Be informed, don't just go off half-cocked before you know the terrain. And with the conversation we have been having, I know that we have made an important first step with our students which is about awareness raising or adding to their awareness. And if they want to go out into the world and use that awareness and do wonderful things, then we have helped that.

(113:14)

I: Thank you for that. ————— (Name of Participant A has been removed), is there anything you want to add?

(113:18)

A: Well, I am interested in what you are going to do with this and like interested to see after you have completed this process what you think will happen and what you are going to do with this interns of the impact on other Drama teachers, on our community? Because I really think it is important.

(113:48)

I: I think it is important and that's why I am doing this study. I will answer that question as best i can in a second but I might just ask you, what do you want me to do with the information and the insights we have gained? What do you want to see done? It will be put into a Doctorate submission and it may end up in papers but what do you want to be done? I guess you are asking and wanting more than that.

(114:18)

A: Well, I suppose it is this idea, next steps, what is the next step? I mean, I know you are doing this for a Doctorate and that is a good thing for a Doctorate, I am not making any

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judgements here, but I am just wondering how it goes further and makes changes and what are the next steps here?

(114:55)

I: What do you think for you would indicate that this has moved onto a bigger picture and made ‘the next step’? Would it be that an Indigenous Drama text is on the VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama playlist for the exam each year? You seem to be both nodding agreement there so I guess that is one thing you want. Would it be to look at the way that we teach this and have some of the insights inform the way that we do teacher education and perhaps make it compulsory for training teachers and teachers to have regular training and workshops in Indigenous Australian cultures, perspectives, histories and ways of engaging with Indigenous Australian cultures and peoples so that teachers are invested in this? Also do you want Drama Victoria and Drama Australia to make a greater commitment to this in training and engaging with Indigenous Australian communities? Do you want every Drama teacher in Australia to have some contact with Indigenous Australian Drama texts and Indigenous Australian performing artists to help them engage with greater insight and respect, valuing Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’? Maybe if our country does not keep moving along with this, maybe each year at Drama Australia and Drama Victoria we can check where we are and that we have moved on and keep it a priority. Maybe we need actively engage with encouraging some or more Indigenous Australian to become Drama teachers or consultants to us so we can at least move further along. Are these the sorts of actions that you would like to see that show greater engagement? I mean, these are the sorts of things I have thought about.

(115:57)

A: I mean, that is spot on. There the sorts of things I hope happen and that I am looking for. We have the National Curriculum and the Victorian Curriculum talk about teaching

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Aboriginal perspectives and texts but I don't know how many schools, myself included, make the effort or enough of an effort.

(116:17)

I: At one point in my Doctorate work I was going to do a more Quantitative study and do the number crunching on the number of Indigenous Australian texts used and what types of texts but I think that I found the number of Indigenous Australian texts used and teachers who used them seemed to me very small. Why I did this data collection this year rather than last year is that no Indigenous Australian play text was on the VCE Theatre Studies and VCE Drama play lists last year. And this year this text was on it and wonderful teachers like you all were doing it. Indigenous Australian texts seem to come and go on and off the lists. I would personally like there to be at least one Indigenous Australian drama text on the list each year.

(116:36)

B: (Participant B mentioned here some information which was relevant about text selection but the information and statements made may jeopardize the anonymity of participants so it has been removed from the transcript)

(116:42)

I: But maybe the VCAA can take on recommendations and take on board some of the recommendations that come from you and this study. Maybe I can make recommendations to the VCAA and other Australian curriculum boards. Thank you so much for the forum today and all the information and insights you have given me for this study. I will send you a transcript of this forum as soon as I transcribe it. Thank you all so much.

(117:02)

END OF INTERVIEW— (1 AUDIO FILE TOTAL); VERIFIED THAT THIS IS
TRANSCRIBED FROM AN AUDIO RECORDING

Appendix 10 - Forum 1A - Addition

FORUM 1A TRANSCRIPTION

The following Forum 2 is the response of Participant D to the Forum 1. He was unable to be at the Forum 1 due to sickness. He was forwarded the transcript of Forum 1 along with the 10 questions used as basic structure for the response of each participant. Participant answered these questions in an email while also referring a little to the responses of some of the other participants.

Date of Forum 1A Response: August 20, 2017

10.1

How do you see you engaged with this Indigenous Drama text and how did this affect the way you see Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’ and understanding of Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives?

I think I engaged with *The Seven Stages of Grieving* as an important play in Australian theatre which was written and performed in the 1990’s but is still relevant today. I see it as still relevant in the themes, ideas and scenes in it but I am glad that the performance gave a modern 2017 interpretation especially when they played the Rudd Sorry Speech but stopped short of us hearing sorry. I know the other drama teachers mentioned this but it was important for me too. I think the play shows how cultures can be bridged and reconciled and this play does it. It joins *Five stages of Dying* by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and the seven stages of Aboriginal history and Wesley Enoch writes that in the introduction to the play. I think the play itself and the production I saw helps show how Aboriginal culture is a mixture of the past and the modern and that it goes on. I think the play made me revisit my own attitudes and how I teach about Aboriginal history and culture. It also made me think that we haven’t

come very far since the 1990's. I think it made me more angry and passionate again that we have maybe have gone backwards, in terms of reconciliation. I think it also made me look at the history again and there seems to be more proof now that Aboriginal culture in Australia is the oldest so I had the chance to revisit this and see what we know now.

10.2

What has been the story of your engagement with this Indigenous Australian Drama text and how might this link to the story of your engagement with Indigenous Australian cultures in general?

I think because I have taught quite a few Aboriginal plays in English and Drama over the years. I think as a teacher that teaching Aboriginal plays and in Drama and Theatre Studies going to see the plays is my major contact with Indigenous people and their culture. I think I mentioned 13 in the interview including Stolen, Bran Nue Dae, The Sapphires and Namatjira. I also mentioned we did No Sugar in English but I forgot we also did Aboriginal books like Sally Morgan's My Place and Mudrooroo's Wild Cat Falling. Now I think about it, I also saw a number of Aboriginal bands during the 1980's and 1990's like Coloured Stone, Yothu Yindi, Archie Roach, No Fixed Address, Warumpi Band and Us Mob. I also still see quite a few Aboriginal films now and I did before but the plays are the main thing. I also follow football and a lot of our students do too, so in English and Drama I use events and people in the sports arena like Adam Goodes and the horrible booing incident in 2015 and the 1993 incident where Nicky Winmar who played for St Kilda was racially abused by Collingwood supporters and he raised his shirt and proudly pointed to his skin colour as if to say I am black and I am proud.

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I saw that two of the other Theatre studies teachers have a lot of contact with Aboriginal locals. I wish I could do that more. My school doesn't do anything but raise the flag next to the Australian flag every Monday and give an Acknowledgement at the important assemblies but it is all a big tokenistic.

So during teaching this play, I tried to reconnect. I started with the history before white people, colonists arrived. Then the Frontier Wars which I find interesting having taught year 8 and 9 History. Then I dealt with modern history and major events like the Adam Goodes and Rudd's Sorry Speech. I also used the modern television stuff that the students might have seen like Black Comedy and Cleverman which help break down the stereotypes.

Part of the story which I wanted tell to students was to set the scene with the initial work and give a background. I gave them a background to pre-colonial history of Aboriginal people. I then wanted to point out what happened during the Frontier Wars. I wanted to give them a sense of history and when different things happened and the fact that so many people died and we are only now back up to the same numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as before colonisation since the Frontier Wars and disease and other things. This helped also to set a context and background for studying parts of the play like Scene 10 The Invasion Poem. We then worked on the scenes mostly using Image theatre, Boal's stuff and some of Brecht's techniques like using masks, placards, narration and montaging scenes.

After that we saw the performance and the use of the stones, the earth and the circles and the physical arrangement of space became more important in our work. We still did practical

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work after that since I think that Aboriginal theatre is about the stories told in the space as a physical thing. After that, like the others particularly _____ (mentions the name of Participant C) I had to concentrate on the writing and the preparation for the exam. One of the things that I realised after seeing the performance was that I hadn't really done much with my students on some of the individual and personal stories in the play such as Nana's Story, Story of a Father and Aunty Grace. I had done some explorations on the floor with Photograph Story since the images are so strong and the idea of them being in a suitcase is dramatically effective. I also did some work on Home Story since it explains complex matters of families, alliances and clans. I think I wanted to do work on these scenes because I think that I didn't quite understand the power of simply telling stories and the Aboriginal actress helped to show this and give it a sense of importance I had to address. I think I at first ignored these story scenes since I didn't understand how powerful it is on stage to have someone from an Aboriginal background tell the stories we don't here that they see as passing on knowledge which has been lost.

10.3

If you had to map or describe the map of your learning journey dealing with this Indigenous Drama text what would it look like or what would be two or three signposts of your map?

I like the idea of creating a map to describe my journey with *The Seven Stages of grieving*. So I begin with the history and what is known and what is around me. That's the first signpost. I make sure that I don't just try to portray Aboriginal culture as in the past. I used the map of different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their homelands with my students. I put it up in the drama room and I often found the students often looking at it and being amazed and working out where people were and what was in their homeland. I also looked

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for modern signposts events and markers which are modern and break the stereotypes. It probably looks overall like a combination of an Aboriginal dot painting like some of the others but I think it has to be a bit western like a Fred Williams painting the You Yangs which is a bit Aboriginal but is also like a westerner looking from above looking down at the patterns. I suppose the second bit of the map was working on the text and the scenes and getting the sense of what part of Aboriginal history or experience each part of the play was about. The Prologue which is like a welcome and a warning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people then the Sobbing scene which is like an communal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander funeral. Then the Purification which is spoken in an Aboriginal language. We listened to a website which had some Aboriginal languages because I think that we can't let these languages to get lost. Then Nana's story which is beautiful since it gives the sense of an Aboriginal girl remembering her grandma after her death. I got the students to talk about how different cultures approach death. The Aboriginal thing of not using names or using photos of the dead was discussed. That was an important point for me and I hope for the students. Then all the other family stories in the play like touchstones or memories, places or circles we visited. I had different groups do these stories in different places. Then Black Skin Girl which we tried with projections in a Brechtian Epic Theatre way but it was much more powerful in the performance. Then Invasion Poem. The scene after that I got one of the Sudanese girls in the class to do Murri Gets a Dress and because it is like a stand up comedy scene and people are always accusing Africans of stealing and they get blamed like some Aboriginal people, it worked. She said the words and performed it and it would have lost something if one of the more European kids did it. We then visited the other scenes and got the sense of the play. We talked about the last scene and tried it out before we saw the performance – Walking Across bridges. We talked about reconciliation and narrowing the Gap and the Cashless card stuff. I played the students the song Treaty by Yothu Yindi which came out during the 1990's and

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they did the Walking Across Bridges scene scored to Treaty. So when we saw the performance and she used the Rudd Sorry speech without using the word Sorry, we found that that shifted our interpretation or our map. I think we were conscious that we ended up in at a different place.

10.4

Could you express what the silence is – is there a gesture, a movement or set of still images?

I think that when I read the play, I was thinking like some of the other teachers said, the silence about Aboriginal history and the Frontier Wars and all the slaughters and also the fact that we are silent about Aboriginal knowledge. When working with the students on the play, the gestures and still images, the Image Theatre gave the feeling of trying to sum up the story, the feeling and the experience in a scene in a single image. The movements which my students did as a montage and transitions between scenes gave a sense of connections. So the silence is also the silent connections maybe deep Aboriginal symbols and connections. Then when we saw the performance, the silence became both the projections and the unspoken or unheard words like Rudd's Sorry and the hand movements the actress made in the sand to create new shapes and tracks in the sand. And also the putting on the paint to prepare for telling the old stories in a new way in the future. Like continuing the culture from the silence to being outspoken.

I don't know whether it belongs here but I want to write about another silence. I noticed in the Forum, you mentioned or pointed out in another part, I think the Homeland questions. You mentioned that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have said that Aboriginal and Torres Strait people are their intended or first audience. I went back to the play script and

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I checked in the preface and Wesley Enoch did say and I quote here “The 7 Stages of Grieving has been developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences, acknowledging a sense of recognition and shared history.” I had forgotten or not really read that and I checked Stolen and Jane Harrison said the same. So I think there is a silence here. We as primarily ‘White’ Western Drama teachers choose not to see this or emphasise. Aren’t we being silent on this and trying to ignore that we are guests or a second audience. Are we inviting Aboriginal theatre makers into our space but then not accepting them and their stories as told for themselves? Is this a silence and a new form of colonialism? Also where are the Aboriginal Drama teachers? Are we being silent about not really welcoming them into our space and allowing our space to change and be their space also?

10.5

What are some of the signs or symbols which you think are important or which have resonated to you and your students?

The symbols which worked for me and my students were different when we read the play compared to when we saw the performance. So at first we thought the suspended ice dripping onto the red earth in the first production and in the script. I used the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag with my students to get them to think about the symbolism of these two symbols as a sign and what they mean to Indigenous Australians. Then the projections described in the script become symbols. In the script the eucalypt leaves became an important symbol for me and the students. The sound of the clock in The Invasion scene was used by my students to show how Aboriginal culture is timeless but that the Invasion was a time bomb which came and went off. The sound of hammering in Scene 16 The Bargaining along

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with the use of the sign For Sale done like a cross on a grave became a symbol for the loss of land for Aboriginal people and the dispossession. The earth running through the hands of actress in the original script in the scene Home Story was important too and the creation of different piles to explain different Indigenous groups and people and marriage and rules and inter marriage. Then the last symbolic element we played with before seeing the performance was the suitcase and what it means to put your memories in photos and earth in the suitcase. We talked about what this symbolises and how the earth is an actual memory for Aboriginal people as real as the photographs.

So the coloured sand and the pebbles became the strongest symbol for me and the students after the play. The actress used the pebbles and the sand to create shapes and arrangements and some of the stones and sand if not all of them are from her own land so this was in the program or teacher's notes and she mentioned it in the Q & A and it also seemed there in the way she created shapes and arrangements and then destroyed or rearranged these shapes. So the use of the land and the symbols. Also the actress using the floor. In theatre we often think of the stage space as a horizontal barrier, a surface that we walk across or place furniture on and here in the play, the actress used it as a backdrop, a set and a space which she inhabited. I think that this symbolised the Aboriginal relationship to land really well. I also remember the Aboriginal play Namatjira years ago and having real relatives of Albert Namatjira were sketching out the landscape in chalk during the play. I think that Aboriginal plays and performers use set and objects in a personal and symbolic way. I think we as Westerners may read these signs in a different way or simply reduce them to a backdrop when they are active actors in an Aboriginal play or performance. Maybe we read the symbols in a different or less specific way.

10.6

How do you think this Indigenous drama text has increased your awareness of the connections of Indigenous Australian nations and peoples to The Land?

I probably have dealt with this already but I will go over this again because I think that it is very important. I think it was interesting that a few of the other teachers mentioned that their schools were built on important Aboriginal land and places and I should look into it and identifying what is in my region so I think working on this play and this project has made me want to find out more about my own area and place and the names and what languages were used here. Also I have now talked to my Principal about us at my school setting up better connections with the local elders and get the knowledge out in my school. The students and I found the map of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes or nations and their homelands, very useful. We used this and even marked out the areas in the Drama room, the main ones at least to get the sense of the size. The play gives a great sense of that in some scenes like Bargaining and the use of the For Sale sign and how terrible it is to think we can sell the land. Then the scene Homestory where tribes and families and connection to land and intermarriage are explained using soil and land. We talked about and came back to this scene a lot since the students and I found it strange but deep and connected. When we saw the performance, the individual actress had and showed her connection to her own homelands and she brought some of it to the performance. This was powerful, carrying your land and identity with you. Some of the girls in my class started bringing some rocks from home in their pockets to school after we saw the play and they said they felt stronger and more collected in their identity. So we talked a lot about the Land and I played a bit of film to my students, Ringbalin – Breaking the Drought which shows how some Aboriginal people try to use songlines and dances to try to break the drought on the Murray River. The students and

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me saw that the knowledge of the land and the connection to land in different unusual way. We looked again at how the actress use the earth, the land in the performance and the kids even imitated what the actress did, the gestures and the shapes that she made and we talked about how unusual and special this Aboriginal relationship with the land is. I think that the students and me felt we didn't quite understand this but we wanted to appreciate it more and maybe finding out more and thinking about it more and using earth in the drama class or performing outside the classroom more would help us. We did do some lessons outside because I and the students thought we should do this and the work we did outside had a different feel. It was more expansive and some movement and elements had to be simpler to be deeper to show that relationship. I think also in the Question and Answer section after the performance with the actress Chenoa Deemal, the students and I only asked about exam stuff and stagecraft stuff. I have just realised that we lost the opportunity to really ask Chenoa who is Aboriginal after all, about how and why she used her own language at points and how she connects to the stories and language in the play and how her sense of her culture and place might be different to the one she saw in the play. I think I just got in the habit of asking and clarifying Theatre Studies exam questions and I think we kept our focus too narrow.

10.7

How would you describe the Shape of your understanding of this Indigenous Drama text?

There are two things I want to bring up here, the shape of my understanding and the shapes that came up in the play and the performance. I will start with the play and performance. The circle shapes that the actress made in the sand seems to show that way that Aboriginal knowledge is shaped and the way it is transmitted or passed on. The use of circles in the performance also became important because I think that we sometimes as drama teachers

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think about the performance area like a stage, a proscenium arch and the audience has one place and the performer has another but in this play and in this performance the circle is a special shape and we can watch the performance from different areas. We are sometimes directly performed to but sometimes we see the performers back and the shape of the performance is like something we are observing from the side. Also the changing shape of how we viewed the actress. Sometimes letters and photos were projected onto the actress and the shape of her body changes with what is projected on to her. It also changes the shape of how we saw the performance. Sometimes we have to just look at the overall shape rather than looking at one thing on the stage.

So what was the shape of my understanding. I started thinking I would just work through this play like an English text and engage more with the performance and stagecraft elements and then see the performance and get the students writing about it. I forgot that every time I see an Aboriginal play, it affects me. I just can't jump through the hoops. Maybe that is why fewer Drama teachers seem to go to and choose Aboriginal plays to study. It is just so draining. You can't but be affected. The shape feels complex and overwhelming like a grand huge Aboriginal dot painting that covers a whole wall. I feel overwhelmed, it has huge concepts and local knowledge and learning and I think about how little I know about and have not moved on or further in what I know about Aboriginal culture. The shape is like a huge turbulent sea and I entered it and I used some stuff I had used before and some new stuff and then I find that the students engage with something that seems simple like the map of Indigenous nations. So the shape of my understanding grows. If I had to say describe the shape, it has a circular shape and it has many circular shapes within. The overall history and the Aboriginal peoples and their cultures have their individual cultures and stories but their connections in terms of history and experience and I feel quite often the only part of the

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shape I can come to are the obvious bits, the historical oppressions, the slaughters, the denial of rights that even go on now. I want to enter the smaller shapes and understand more the individual cultures but I want to see if when I zoom out, does that change the way I look at the overall. We are not separate from that history but we are part of it and we have new things to change in the shape and the way we perceive it. I think I have a role to play with putting the shapes and map there for my students when it would be easier to choose a nice safe play to study and see.

10.8

The Backtracking - How has your understanding of this play and Indigenous Australian cultures and 'ways of Knowing' changed from the beginning? What have you had to change or reform or reconstruct?

I suppose when thinking back that my way of understanding this play and backtracking through my understanding of the play *The Seven Stages of Grieving* and more generally Aboriginal cultures and perspectives, I see that the play has given me a chance to revisit my connection to Aboriginal culture and history. I have re-realised the power of storytelling to tell individual stories that tell a larger cultural or historical story. I see that there are ways of Knowing that connect to the land and the experiences that I understand some aspects of but which I don't understand what it means. Like the connection to land and the songlines. I know that they have significance but I realise that the connections are deeper and have relevance.

Through doing this play I have expanded my understanding of the stories and experiences of the individual Aboriginal history. I think that it is vital to study and teach Aboriginal plays as

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they build our understanding and engagement. I think I engaged with the play as unlike others plays it is an Everyman or Everywoman play that gives an overview of Aboriginal history and culture. I see it as still relevant today because it revisits themes and events and asks us have we advanced, have we changed? It links *Five stages of Dying* by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and the seven stages of Aboriginal history and it tells the history and the stories. Aboriginal culture is the oldest living culture and we have to find a way to connect to it and understand it.

I seem to breakdown what I do and teach in smaller packages. I start with general history stuff probably because I did History at university along with English and Drama. I think that we are learning more and I have to keep updating my knowledge. I think that we don't understand the way things like songlines and knowledge is passed on. I know that Aboriginal knowledge is not passed on in bits but in wholes so I am conscious of breaking down things too much and passing it on to students. The problem is that Western teaching involves breaking things down into bits and parts for students. I feel like I look at the play and I deconstruct it and I try to find or offer the students a relevant history or approach and then I help them to put it back together. Seeing the performance of the play is a big help to put it back together for me and the students. Seeing an Aboriginal actress putting it all together helps to makes sense of it all. After doing all this work on the play, it is a shame that the students and I have to reconstruct only what is needed for the exam. It is shame that all the things we discover and experience with the students and the play and the performance are then reduced down to only what is needed for the exam. It feels like all understanding of the whole is lost and real Aboriginal knowledge is lost or undervalued or even reconstructed only in a Western way that suits Western way.

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Thinking about the backtracking and looking at the journey, what has been most prominent is that the stories in the play and the performance still have power and are relevant. The play seems universal in its themes and the main actress is like an Everywoman taking us on a journey. I think that I started to understand how the play is also probably originally for a specific Aboriginal audience and the new production involved a lot of translation and re-positioning. Firstly, the actress had to translate the words and experiences in some sections, speeches and scenes into her own language and her own stories. Then she needed to make the very personal parts of the play and her relationship to her land and she did this by bringing earth and sand from her own home. This made me see how important this was to her and this play. Then bits like the use of the Sorry speech but leaving out the word sorry is also a translation for a modern society. Maybe that is why some Aboriginal plays are not revived a lot. It requires an Aboriginal actress and the directors and designers to translate to another Aboriginal culture and language bit changed and then thinking whether what the play is saying has changed due to historical, social and political events.

I think that the play was engaging in reading it and in the performance. Both raise difficult questions and confront me and the students with difficult issues. I think the play confronts us as a white audience with these difficult issues and also with stories and humour. I feel that although the play may be for an Aboriginal audience that it is also for us and it throws it back to us and asks us what we are going to do about this history, these stories and this Aboriginal heritage. I think that this adds a sense of perspective. It also makes me as a drama teacher thinking how are we as drama teachers trying to value Aboriginal plays and how do we have active and productive ways to value in the assessment criteria and the way we approach these plays and performances and value what these plays are really doing.

10.9

Homeland - How has your understanding of this play and Indigenous Australian cultures and 'ways of Knowing' changed from the beginning? Have you consulted with any Indigenous Australian elders or 'knowledge holders'?

I think that it has changed a lot since the beginning. Maybe one of the reasons I keep choosing and getting students to study Aboriginal texts is that I always think that I have something to learn. I think I have had to reform the way I teach a bit. I can't just collect stuff on Aboriginal history and culture and give it to students and see the play. I think some things are hitting me more now I am older. Kids get more exposure on television and through the media now and they really want to know what happened during the Frontier Wars and how can we just have taken the land from Aboriginal people. I don't have the answers and I feel like I am exploring this with the students. The students see and I see more positive images of Aboriginal people like in football with Adam Goodes and with Deborah Mailman on mainstream television and the new Cleverman Aboriginal series and then things come up like the booing of Adam Goodes and the casless welfare card and me and the kids think what is going on in this country. It is interesting because I had a great discussion after seeing the play and before the students started writing seriously on the play. I thought I would give them a little background on the Closing the Gap statistics and stuff. We looked at the stats the higher infant mortality rates, the huge problems with diabetes and other health issues and the lower life expectancy rate. We also discussed the lower education rates and unemployment rates. The kids seemed split on opinions. They valued the cultural aspects and the stories from the play and what we covered but they wanted an instant solution. One student even suggested that we should move them all to the cities and make them eat our food and make the kids go

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to school. The others came down hard on her but it brought up very interesting things. If we value Aboriginal culture and their stories and relationship to land how do we value this and give more self-sufficiency? I think that the students and I started to realise how difficult these problems are but that we need to talk about these things and the students concluded that big dialogue needs to happen between Aboriginal groups and the government. The students and I concluded that we need a treaty now and to start the dialogue.

The other aspect of this as the other teachers mentioned is that we go through all this exploration and history and we experience all these stories and then we have to forget most of it for the exam focus. It seems like hypocrisy that in Drama we are on about empathy and getting other viewpoints and then we have a task where we discuss the play and the performance in terms only of our definitions and focus like our stagecraft definitions, our storytelling traditions and our concepts of things that are important like style and form. It struck me that Aboriginal plays have come from a different set of traditions and we seem to want to fit them and change them into our traditions.

Getting to the last question, I have not gone out of my way to make contact with Indigenous Australian elders or locals. We went to the Q & A and we got the input and perspective of the Indigenous actress. I didn't quite know how to do this and I thought having the actress there would be enough. I know now looking at what some of the other teachers in this research did and I have started to move forward and I have talked to my principal and I think I can go forward. I think I realise how important this can be and I know how I can go forward with this.

10.91

How do you see how you and us as drama teachers, engaged with Indigenous Drama texts and how did this affect the way you and us see Indigenous Australian ‘ways of Knowing’ and understanding of Indigenous Australian people, culture and perspectives?

So to look at this last general question. I think we engage through doing history, background and using contemporary issues and culture. I think that I use the language and the stories in the play and I engage with those stories as a way of understanding Indigenous culture and people. I use a lot of the techniques of more political theatre like Brecht’s Epic Theatre techniques and Boal’s Image Theatre to engage with the story but also to give time to look at the issues and perspectives shown in the play. I think this means I probably look for more political and disruptive perspectives. I think that because the exam stuff concentrates more on the stagecraft and symbolic elements that I make this a focus seeing the performance. I am also conscious now that perhaps we need to look for allowing the Aboriginal perspectives to dominate more especially in Drama. We need to value the authentic Indigenous voices in the stories and in the way they are told. I now know that I want to engage more with my local Aboriginal culture and this may change the way I teach and do these things. Perhaps I depend too much on my own techniques and knowledge in drama to really approach and examine Aboriginal plays from an Indigenous perspective. Maybe I fear using Aboriginal approaches or bringing in local Aboriginal people because I feel in control as a teacher and I don’t want to lose control over the way I do things. I don’t want to go back to having students act out Dreamtime stories or pretending to do Aboriginal dances. I want the authentic stories told and understood in authentic ways. We need as drama teachers find better ways to value Aboriginal people, culture and really value their perspectives especially in drama where we claim we are embracing other people perspectives. We need to value it through keeping this

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dialogue and talking going that this project has started and then we need to get it changed by boards like the VCAA allowing broader criteria that values different experiences not just a David Williamson or Summer of the Seventeenth Doll style play. Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander plays may be stories about the past and issues but they also help to change the way we think about theatre and Australian society in general and the way we move forward in the future.

END OF FORUM 2 RESPONSE.

Appendix 11 - Chronological list of Indigenous Australian plays and performances

(This list was first compiled by me for my 2013 book *Australian Indigenous Drama*. The list has been updated and revised for the purpose of this thesis)

1968: Gilbert, Kevin. *The Cherry Pickers* (Published by Burrumbinga Books in 1988).

1971: Gilbert, Kevin. *Evening of Fear*. Performed at the Mews Theatre Sydney. 1971.

Gilbert, Kevin. *The God's Look Down*. Performed at the Wayside Theatre. Sydney. 1971.

1972: Charles, Jack & Maza, Bob. *Jack Charles is Up and Fighting*. Performed at the Nindethana Theatre/New Theatre Melbourne. Melbourne. 1972.

Maza, Bob and Foley, Gary. *Basically Black*. Performed at the National Black Theatre & Nimrod Theatre. Sydney. 1972.

Romeril, John. *Bastardy*. Performed at the Nindethana Theatre. Melbourne. 1972.

1973: Davis, Jack. *Steel and the Stone*. Performed at the Bunbury Arts Festival. Western Australia. 1973.

Williams, Harry. *Mission Urban Identity*. Nindethana Theatre. Melbourne. 1973.

1975: Davis Jack. *The Biter Bit*. Performed at the Black Theatre Arts Center Redfern. 1975.

1976: Bostock, Gerry. *Here Comes the Nigger*. Performed at the Black Theatre Arts Center. Redfern. 1976.

1977: Read, Bill. *Truganinni*. Heinemann Publishers. Sydney. 1977.

1978: Merritt, Robert. *The Cake Man*. Performed at the Black Theatre Arts Center. Redfern. Published by Currency Press, 1978.

1979: Davis, Jack. *Kullark*. Performed at the National Theatre Company WA. Published by Currency Press, 1983.

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- Hewitt, Dorothy. *The Man from Mukinupin*. Currency Press. 1979.
- 1981: Keneally, Thomas. *Bullies' House*. Currency Press. 1981.
- 1982: Davis, Jack *The Dreamers*. Performed at the Swan River Stage Company. 1982.
Published by Currency Press, 1983.
- Everett, Jim. *Put Your Boots*. Performed at the Salamanca Theatre. Hobart. 1982.
- Merritt, Robert. *Short Changed*. Performed at the Wayside Theatre Sydney & Edward Street Theatre, Brisbane. 1983
- 1984: Johnson, Eva. *Tjindarella*. Performed at the First National Aboriginal Women's Art Festival. Adelaide. 1984.
- Johnson, Eva. *Onward to Glory*. Play Reading held at First National Aboriginal Women's Art Festival. Adelaide. 1984.
- 1985: Davis, Jack. *The Honey Pot*. Performed at the Melbourne Next Wave Festival 1985.
Published by Currency Press, 1986.
- Davis, Jack. *No Sugar*. Performed at the Perth Playhouse Company 1985. Published by Currency Press. 1986.
- 1986: Davis, Jack. *No Sugar*. AETT. (Remounted production). Dir. Andrew Ross.
Performed at the Fitzroy Town Hall. Melbourne. 1986.
- Maza, Bob. *Mereki*. Performed at the Toe Truck Theatre. Sydney. 1986.
- Strachan, Tony. *State of Shock*. Currency Press. 1986.
- 1987: Bennett, Bill. *Backlash*. Performed at the Belvoir Street Theatre, Sydney. 1987.
- Everett, Jimmy. *Cultural Lesson*. Performed at the Belvoir Street Theatre, Sydney. 1987.
- Fransis, Gordon. *God's Best Country*. Currency Press. 1987.
- Motherwell, Phill. *Steal Away Home*. Currency Press. 1987.
- Harding, John. *The Rally*. Radio Play. First aired July 1987 on 3CR. 1987.

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Walker, Vivian. *No Trouble*. Performed at the Universal Theatre. Melbourne. 1987.

Walley, Richard. *Coordah*. Performed at the Western Australian Theatre Company. 1987.

1988: Davis, Jack. *Barungin*. Performed at the Marli Biyol Company (in association with the AETT). 1988.

Davis, Jack. *First Born Trilogy*. Performed at the Marli Biyol Company (in association with the AETT). Hammersmith, London, U.K. 1988.

Foran, Barney. *Come Hell or High Water*. 1988.

Johnson, Eva. *Murras*. Performed at the Belvoir Street Theatre. Sydney. 1988

Maza, Bob. *The Keepers*. Performed at the Belvoir Street Theatre. Sydney. 1988.

Mooney, Ray. *Black Rabbit*. Currency Press. 1988.

Nowra, Louis. *Capricornia*. Currency Press. 1988.

Oodgeroo & Kabul (Vivian Walker). *The Rainbow Serpent Legend*. Performed at the Expo '88. Brisbane. 1988. (Multi-media Presentation)

Walker, Vivian. *No Trouble*. Performed at the Universal Theatre. Melbourne. 1988 (Revived)

Walker, Vivian. *Kadi*. Performed at the Expo '88. Brisbane. 1988

1989: Bennett, Roger. *Up the Ladder*. Performed at the Darwin Theatre Company. 1989.

Davis, Jack. *Moorlie and the Leprecorns*. Performed at the Marli Biyol Company. Perth. 1989. Published by Currency Press in 1994.

Johnson, Eva. *Mimini's Voices*. Performed at the Magpie Theatre Company. Adelaide. 1989.

Harding, John. *Not Just Bricks and Mortar*. Performed by the Ilbijerri Theatre Company (commissioned for the Aboriginal Housing Board). North Melbourne,

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Melbourne.1989.

Kelly, Ray. *Get Up and Dance*. Freewheels Theatre. Newcastle. 1989.

Walley, Richard. *Munjong*. ANTT. Performed at the Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne. 1989.

Watson, Maureen. *Mairwair*. Access Arts Queensland. Performed at the Kangaroo Point, Brisbane. 1989.

Weller, Archie. *Nidjera*. Performed by the Melbourne Workers Theatre. 1989 (Toured 1989 and 1990).

1990: Bennell, Eddie. *The Silent Years*. Performed by the Deckchair Theatre Company. Perth. 1990.

Chi, Jimmy and Kuckles. *Bran Nue Dae*. Performed at the Octagon Theatre. Perth. Published by Currency Press & Magdabala Books. 1990.

Davis Jack. *Rainmaker*. Performed by the Spare Parts Puppet Theatre. Perth. 1990.

Johnson, Eva. *What do they call me?*. Performed at the National Lesbian Festival. Melbourne 1990. Australian Gay and Lesbian Plays. Published by Currency Press. 1996.

McCarthy, Steve, Cheryl Buchanan. *Jalalu Jala: Land Law and Lies*. Performed at Street Arts. Melbourne. 1990.

Walker, Vivian. *Munjong*. Aboriginal National Theatre Trust. Performed at the Victorian Arts Centre. 1990.

Weller, Archie. *Nidjera*. Performed by the Melbourne Workers Theatre. 1990.

1991: Manning, Ned. *Close to the Bone*. Performed at the Eora Centre for Visual and Performing Arts. Sydney. 1991. Published by Currency Press 1994.

Narogen, Mudrooroo, Heiner Muller. *Aboriginal Demonstrators Confront the Declaration of the Australian Republic on the 26th January 2001 with the Production*

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of Deruhtag by Heiner Muller. Performed at the Belvior Street Theatre. Sydney. 1991.

Published by University Press. 1993.

Formation of the Ilbijerri Theatre Company in Melbourne. It remains the longest surviving Indigenous Australian theatre company.

Hardy, John. *Up the Road.* Performed by the Ilbijerri Theatre Company. Melbourne. 1990.

Harding, John. *Not Just Bricks and Mortar.* Performed by the Ilbijerri Theatre Company. Melbourne. 1990.

Cragie, Cathie. *Koori Love.* Performed at the Belvoir Street Theatre. Sydney. 1991.

1992: Bennell, Eddy. *My Spiritual Dreaming.* Performed by the Deckchair Production. Perth. 1992.

Davis, Jack. *Wahngin.* Performed by the Black Swan Theatre. Perth. 1992.

Davis, Jack. *In Our Town.* Currency Press. 1992.

Johnson, Eva. *Two Bob in the Quid.* Performed at the Junctions Theatre. Adelaide. 1992.

Morgan, Sally. *Sister Girl.* Performed by the Black Swan Theatre Company. Perth. 1992.

Watson, Maureen. *Through Murri Eyes.* Performed at Street Arts. Brisbane. 1992.

Walley, Richard. *Balaan, Balan Gwdha.* Performed by the Up Front Community Theatre. Playhouse. Canberra. 1992.

1993: Early, Eric. *The Custodians.* Currency Press. 1993.

Johnson, Eva. *Heart Beat of the Earth.* Performed at the Second World Indigenous Youth Conference. Darwin. 1993.

Smith, Michael & Knight, Ingle. *Wicked.* Performed by the Aboriginal Youth Theatre. Perth. 1993.

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Murray, Peta. *One Woman's Song*. Performed by the Queensland Theatre Company.
1993.

Nowra, Louis. *Radiance*. Currency Press. 1993.

Summons, John. *Massacre at Myall Creek*. Cambridge University Press. 1993.

Establishment of the Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company in Western Australia. Yir-raarh
Yaarh-kin means "Stand Tall" in the Noongar language.

1994: Collie, Therese & Craigie, Cathie. *Murri Time*. Performed by the KITE Theatre.
Brisbane. 1994

Lawford, Ningali & Robyn Archer. *Ningali*. Performed by the Deck Chair Theatre.
Fremantle WA. 1994.

Lee, Gary. *Keep Him My Heart*. Darwin. 1994.

Nowra Louis. *Crow*. Currency Press. 1994.

Pell, Kelton. *Bidenjarreb Pinjarra*. Performed at the Actors Center. Perth. 1994.

Shea, Glen. *Food for Thought*. Performed by the Ilbijerri Theatre Company.
Melbourne.

Parsons, Nick. *Dead Heart*. Currency Press. 1994.

Enoch, Wesley & Deborah Mailman. *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. Performed at the La
Boite Theatre. Brisbane. 1994. Published by Currency Press. 1997.

1995: Bennett, Roger. *Funerals and Circuses*. Currency Press. 1995.

Everet, Jim. *Changing Time*. Performed by the Salamanca Theatre Company. Hobart.
1995.

Morgan, Sally. *The Flying Emu*. Performed at the Polygot Puppet Theatre. Melbourne.
1995.

Morgan, Sally. *Sally's Story-Our Story*. Performed at the Come Out Festival. Brisbane.
1995.

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Sam, Maryanne & Cornelius, Patricia. *Oh My God, I'm Black*. Performed at the Melbourne Workers Theatre. 1995.

Thomson, Phil. *Bidenjarreb Pinjarra*. Performed by the Pinjarra Project & Black Swan Theatre Company. Perth. 1995.

1996: Chi, Jimmy. *Corrugation Road*. Performed by the Black Swan Theatre. Perth. 1996.

Janson, Julie. *Black Mary*. Aboriginal Studies Press. 1996.

Kelly, Ray. *Somewhere in the Darkness*. Performed at the Sydney Theatre Company. 1996.

Lewis, Tom E. & Mac Gudgeon. *Thumbul*. Performed at the Gasworks Theatre Melbourne. 1996.

Morris, Mary. *Shark Island Stories*. Griffin Theatre Company. Sydney Festival. 1996.

1997: Close, Jo-Ann. *Runamuck*. Performed at the Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company. Perth. 1997.

Cheetham, Deborah. *White Baptist Abba Fan*. Performed at the Olympic Arts Festival. Sydney. 1997.

Love, Owen. *Black Genius*. Main Street Theatre. SA. 1997.

Koorie Klowns. *Oogadee Boogadee*. Performed at the Melbourne Workers Theatre. 1997.

Purcell, Leah & Scott Rankin. *Box the Pony*. Performed at the Olympic Arts Festival. Sydney. 1997.

Sketchley, Maudie. *Head Space*. Performed at Artrage. Perth. 1997.

1998: Graham, Trevor. *Mabo - Life of an Island Man*. Currency Press. 1998.

Harrison, Jane. *Stolen*. Currency Press. 1998.

Cruel Wild Woman. Directed by Lynette Narkle. Performed at the Festival of Perth. Perth, W.A. 1998.

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1999: Shea, Glenn. *Missed Possession*. Performed at the National Theatre Melbourne for the We Iri We Arts Festival, St Kilda.

2000: Enoch, Wesley. *The Sunshine Club*. Performed by the Sydney Theatre Company.

2000

Winmar, Dallas. *Aliwa*. Sydney remounted Sydney production. 2000. Published by Currency Press. 2002.

2001: Anderson, Tammy. *I Don't Wanna Play House*. Performed at the Playbox Theatre, Melbourne. 2001.

Bovell, Andrew. *Holy Day*. Currency Press. 2001.

Thomson, Phil. *One Destiny*. Performed at the Black Swan Theatre Company. Perth. 2001.

2002: Frankland, Richard J. *Conversations with the Dead*. Performed at the Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne. Published in *Black Inside*, Currency Press. 2002.

Harding, John. *Enuf*. Performed at the Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne. Published in 'Black Inside'. Currency Press. 2002.

Jamieson, Trevor & Rankin, Scott. *The Career Highlights of Mamu*. Performed by the Black Swan Theatre Company. Performed at the Playhouse Theatre, Adelaide. 2002.

Lawford, Ningali & Hung Le. *Black and Tran*. Performed at the Adelaide Festival. Adelaide. 2002.

Milroy, Jadah. *Crow Fire*. Performed at the Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne. Published in *Black Inside*, Currency Press. 2002.

Purcell, Leah. *Black Chicks Talking*. Performed at the Sydney Festival, Sydney Opera House. 2002.

Rigney, Tracey. *Belonging*. Performed at the Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne. Published in *Black Inside*, Currency Press. 2002.

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- Rrurrambu, George. *Nerrpu*. Performed at the Melbourne Festival, Melbourne. 2002.
- Sam, Maryanne. *Casting Doubts*. Published in *Black Inside*, Currency Press. 2002.
- 2003: Enoch, Wesley. *The Story of the Miracle at Cookie's Table*. Performed at the QPAC, Brisbane. Published by Currency Press. Sydney. 2003.
- Thomson, Katherine. *Wonderlands*. Currency Press. Sydney. 2003.
- 2004: Briggs, Tony. *The Sapphires*. Performed by the Melbourne Theatre Company. Melbourne. 2004.
- 2005: Briggs, Tony. *The Sapphires*. Performed by Company B. Sydney. 2005.
- Enoch, Wesley. *Black Medea*. Performed at the Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne. Published by Currency Press. Sydney. 2005.
- 2006: Aboriginal Dance Theatre. *Visions of a Nomad & Nunukul Yuggera*. Performed at the Theatre ann het Spui. Amsterdam, Netherlands. 2006.
- Jamieson, Trevor & Rankin, Scott. *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. Performed at the Perth Festival, Perth & at the Sydney Opera House, Sydney. Theatre.
- 2007: Blair, Wayne. *Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train*. Performed at the Belvoir Street Theatre, Sydney. 2007.
- Chopped Liver*. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company, Melbourne. 2007.
- Valentine, A. *Parramatta Girls*. Performed at the Belvoir Street Theatre, Sydney. Published by Currency Press. Strawberry Hills, Sydney. 2007
- Sam, Maryanne. *Lessons in Flight*, a short play about the story of two estranged sisters who reunite in a hospital ward. Performed at Sydney Festival.
- 2008: Hawke, Steve. *Jandamarra*. Performed by the Black Swan Theatre Company. Performed first at the Perth International Arts Centre. 2008.
- Yibiyung*. Performed by Company B. Belvoir Theatre, Sydney. March 2008.
- Songlines of a Mutti Mutti Man*. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company,

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Melbourne. 2008.

Jacki Jacki in the Box. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company, Melbourne. 2008.

Dirty Mile. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company, Melbourne. 2008.

Chopped Liver. Revised production performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company.

National Tour. 2008.

2009: *Sisters of Gelam*. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company, Melbourne. 2009.

A Black Sheep Walks into a Baa. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company.

Performed at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. 2009.

2010: Rankin, Scott. *Namatjira*. Performed at the Belvoir Street Theatre, Sydney 2010.

Charles, Jack. *Jack Charles Vs The Crown*. Performed by the Ilbjerri

Theatre Company. Performed at the Melbourne International Arts Festival. Melbourne.

2010.

James, Andrea, Maza Long, Rachael & Nanni, Giordano. *Coranderrk: We Will Show the Country*. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company. Performed at the La Mama Courthouse Theatre. Melbourne. 2010.

Black Sheep: Glorious Baastards. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company.

Performed at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. 2010.

Body Armour. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company, Melbourne. Victorian Tour.

2010.

2011: Cheetham, Deborah. *Pecan Summer*. Performed at the Victorian Arts Centre. 2011.

Jamieson, Trevor & Rankin, Scott. *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. Performed at the Malthouse Theatre. Melbourne.

Foley, Gary. *Foley*. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company. Victorian Arts Centre. 2011.

Waddawewant. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company. Performed at the Worawa

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Aboriginal College. 2011.

Kribb, Reg. *Krakouer!* Performed at the Seymour Centre, Sydney. July 2011.

Rankin, Scott. *Namatjira*. Performed at the Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne. 2011.

2012: Blair, Wayne. *Bloodland*. Produced by the Sydney Theatre Company and Bangarra Dance Theatre. Sydney.

Valentine, Alana. *Head Full of Love*. Performed by the Queensland Theatre Company (first performed in Darwin, N.T. & Cremorne Theatre in Brisbane, Q.L.D).

Yarrabah! The Musical. Developed by Rhoda Roberts, Shenzo Gregorio, Opera Australia & the Yarrabah Community. Performed in Yarrabah, Queensland.

Terrain David Page & Frances Rings. Bangara Dance Theatre. Adelaide Festival. Adelaide.

Lui, Nakkiah. *I Should Have Told You Before We Made Love (That I'm Black)*.

Performed at the Belvoir Theatre Company.

3rd Indigenous Theatre Forum. Darwin, Northern Territory.

Bindjareb Pinjarra. Performed by the Ilbijerri Theatre Company. Performed at the Footscray Arts Centre. Footscray.

2013: Bovell, Andrew. *The Secret River* (Based on the novel of the same name by Kate Grenville). Performed by the Sydney Theatre.

Lewis, Tom, E. and Kantor, Michael. *The Shadow King*. Performed at the Sydney Festival (NSW), Brisbane Festival (QLD), Perth Festival (W.A.) and the Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne (VIC).

Bangarra Dance Theatre. *Terrain*. Performed at the Arts Centre, Melbourne.

Meyne Wyatt, Leah Purcell & Rachael Maza. *Beautiful One Day*. Performed by the Ilbijerri Theatre Company. Performed at the Belvoir Theatre, Sydney (NSW) and North Melbourne Meat Market (VIC).

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Lui, Nakkiah. *This Heaven*. Performed at the Belvoir Theatre Company, Sydney.

Lui, Nakkiah. *Blackie Blackie Brown: The Traditional Owners of Death*. Performed at the Belvoir Theatre Company.

Tanderrum. Ilbijerri Theatre Company. Melbourne Festival. Melbourne.

2014: Harrison, Jane. *The Visitors*. Performed by the Melbourne Theatre Company at the 'Cybec Electric Festival'. Melbourne (VIC).

North West of Nowhere. Performed by the Ilbijerri Theatre Company. North Melbourne Meat Market. (VIC).

Wright, Tom. *Black Diggers* (directed by Wesley Enoch). Produced by the Queensland Theatre Company. Performed at the Sydney Opera House at the Sydney Festival, Sydney (NSW).

2015: *Blak Cabaret*. Performed at the Malthouse Theatre. South Melbourne.

Milroy, David. *King Hit*. (Production Remounting). Performed by the Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company. Perth. 2015.

The Giants. Performed by the Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company. Performed at the Perth International Arts Festival. 2015.

Lui, Nakkiah. *Kill the Messenger*. Performed by the Belvoir Theatre Company.

2016: Bovell, Andrew. *The Secret River* (Based on the novel of the same name by Kate Grenville). National Tour. Performed by the Sydney Theatre Company.

Bangarra Dance Theatre. *Terrain*. (Remounted National touring production).

Performed at the Riverside Theatres, Parramatta.

James, Andrea & Hearst, Elise. *Bright World*. Presented by Theatreworks at Acland Street, St Kilda.

Lui, Nakkiah. *Power Plays*. Performed at the Belvoir Theatre Company.

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2017: Bangarra Dance Theatre. *One's Country – The Spine of Our Story*. Performed at Carriageworks, Sydney.

Bangarra Dance Theatre. *Bennelong*. Performed at the Riverside Theatres, Parramatta. Toured nationally.

Enoch, Wesley & Mailman, Deborah. *The Seven Stages of Grieving* (updated and revised production). National tour produced by Grin and Tonic Theatre Company and The Queensland Theatre Company.

Ilbjerri Theatre Company. *Tanderrum*. Performed in Federation Square, Melbourne.

James, Andrea & the Ilbjerri Theatre Company. *Coranderrk* (Revised production with additional scenes). Performed by Ilbjerri Theatre Company. Victorian state tour.

Yirra Yaakin. *Boodjar Kaatijin*. Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company. School Tours in Western Australia.

2018: Alberts, Jada. *Brother's Wreck*. Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne. Toured nationally.

Bangarra Dance Theatre. *Dark Emu*. Performed at the Sydney Opera House. Toured nationally.

BighART. *New Roebourne Project*. Iremugadu, Pilbara Region, WA. Project and performances.

Beckett, Katie and Ilbjerri Theatre Company. *Which Way Home*. Produced by Ilbjerri Theatre Company and Regional Arts Victoria. Victorian state tour.

Charles, Jack. *Jack Charles Vs The Crown*. Performed by the Ilbjerri Theatre Company. Performed on an international tour including at the Shizuoka Arts Theatre, Japan.

Ford, Matt & Simpson, Dane. *Aborigi-LOL*. Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne, Victoria.

James, Zac & Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company. School Tours in Western Australia.

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Michael, Ian & van Helten, Seanna. *Hart*. Produced and Toured by She Said Theatre Company and Regional Arts Victoria. Touring show. Victoria.

Appendix 12 – Indigenous Australian Drama texts listed on the Playlists for VCE

Theatre Studies and Drama

1992 Chi, Jimmy and Kuckles. *Bran Nue Dae*. Performed at the Victorian Arts Centre.

1995 Bennett, Roger. *Funerals and Circuses*. Performed at the Universal Theatre, Fitzroy.

1996: Chi, Jimmy. *Corrugation Road*. Performed by the Black Swan Theatre at the
Victorian Arts Centre.

1998 Davis, Jack. *No Sugar*. National tour by the Black Swan Theatre Company.

1999 Harrison, Jane. *Stolen*. Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne.

2000 Enoch, Wesley. *The Sunshine Club*. Performed by the Sydney Theatre Company.
Performed at the Malthouse Theatre Company.

2001 Anderson, Tammy. *I Don't Wanna Play House*. Performed at the Playbox Theatre,
Melbourne.

2002 Rigney, Tracey. *Belonging*. Malthouse Theatre Company production.

Frankland, Richard J. *Conversations with the Dead*. Performed at the Malthouse
Theatre, Melbourne.

2003 James, Andrea. *Yanagai! Yanagai!* Performed at the Malthouse Theatre.

2004: Briggs, Tony. *The Sapphires*. Performed by the Melbourne Theatre Company.
Melbourne. 2004.

2008 Hawke, Steve & Rankin, Scott. *Jandamarra*. Performed by the Black Swan Theatre
Company. Performed at the Malthouse Theatre.

2011 Blair, Wayne. *Namatjira*. Performed at the Malthouse Theatre.

2014 Frankland, Richard & Blair, Wayne. *Walking into the Bigness*. Malthouse Theatre
Company.

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2015 Wright, Tom. *Black Diggers* (directed by Wesley Enoch). Produced by the Queensland Theatre Company. Performed at the Victorian Arts Centre.

Meyne Wyatt, Leah Purcell & Rachael Maza. *Beautiful One Day*. Performed by the Ilbijerri Theatre Company.

2016 James, Andrea & Hearst, Elise. *Bright World*. Presented by Theatreworks at Acland Street, St Kilda.

2017 James, Andrea & the Ilbijerri Theatre Company. *Coranderrk* (Revised production with additional scenes). Performed by Ilbijerri Theatre Company. Victorian state tour.

Enoch, Wesley & Mailman, Deborah. *The Seven Stages of Grieving* (updated and revised production). National tour produced by Grin and Tonic Theatre Company and The Queensland Theatre Company. Performed at various venues in Regional Victoria.

2018 Beckett, Katie and Ilbijerri Theatre Company. *Which Way Home*. Produced by Ilbijerri Theatre Company and Regional Arts Victoria. Victorian state tour.

Michael, Ian & van Helten, Seanna. *Hart*. Produced and Toured by She Said Theatre Company and Regional Arts Victoria. Touring show. Victoria.

Appendix 13 - Research Portfolio

Publications:

Eckersley, M. (2018). "Signposts and Messagesticks: An Ethnographic Research Presentation of the Study of Non-Indigenous Victorian Secondary School Drama Teachers' Engagement with an Indigenous Australian Drama Text".

Paper and performance presented by Mr. Mark Eckersley. Drama Australia Conference, Victorian College of the Arts, Southbank, Victoria, Australia (December, 2018).

Eckersley, M. & Boisselle, L. (2017). "Border Crossings – The Place of Culture in teaching and Learning".

Paper presented by Ms. Laila Boisselle and Mr. Mark Eckersley. HCT Education Conference, HCT RAKWC. Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates (May, 2017).

Eckersley, M. (2016). Using Drama to Develop Communication Skills in the 21st Century Classroom. International Journal of Bilingual & Multilingual Teachers of English. Bahrain: University of Bahrain Scientific Publishing Centre. Vol.1. July, 2016.

Eckersley, M. (2016). "Intercultural Dialogue with Indigenous Cultures and Knowledge Systems".

Paper presented by Ms. Laila Boisselle and Mr. Mark Eckersley. HCT Spring Mini-Conference, HCT RAKWC. Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates (April, 2016)

Eckersley, M. (2015, December). Using Drama to Develop Communication Skills in the 21st Century. Paper presented at the International Conference on 21st Century Education, HCT Dubai Men's College, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Eckersley, M. (2015). A Matter of Style: Theatre Styles from Across the World. West Footscray: Tasman Press.

SIGNPOSTS AND MESSAGE STICKS

Eckersley, M. (2014, October 2-4). New Perspectives: Teaching Indigenous Perspectives in the Australian National Curriculum. Paper presented at Evolve 2014 Drama Australia Conference, Hobart, Australia.

Eckersley, M., & Gow, M. (2014). Michael Gow's Away - Insight Guide. Cheltenham, Vic.: Insight.

Eckersley, M. (2013). A Year with the Bard. Seddon, VIC.: Tasman Press.

Eckersley, M. (2013). "Exploring Cultural Diversity through Asian and Indigenous Perspectives".

Workshop Leader, University of Melbourne Carlton, Australia (May 2013)

Eckersley, M. (2013). Literacy Across the Curriculum and the SLIP Program. Melbourne: CEO.

Eckersley, M. & Davis, J. (2013). No Sugar - Insight Guide. Cheltenham, Victoria: Insight.

Eckersley, M. (2012). Australian Indigenous Drama. Altona, VIC: Tasman Press.