GETTING THERE: COLLECTIVE CREATION AND PERFORMANCE
FOR A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

by

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Abstract

My task, when I set out to research and write my Master’s thesis, was to explore the ways in which theatre can contribute to engaging people on topics related to sustainability. I thus wrote a play about a young woman disillusioned by her life at home and at school. Her journey through her adoption story overlaps with her attempts to make an impact with her environmental activism. My methodology has come out of my feminist orientation which pervades my entire approach. This includes the choice of writing a play, the type and content of the play that I wrote, and the collaborative method by which I co-created and co-produced it. I have chronicled my collaborative creation process which includes devising, using Augusto Boal’s Image Theatre and techniques inspired by the UK theatre group Complicite. The text of the play is included as Chapter 6 and an archive video of the performance is linked as well. The accompanying analysis that looks at the role of culture within sustainability discourse and political theatre is a post-process reflection. The bulk of my work falls under the category of Performance as Research (PaR). As I hope my work demonstrated, performance offers particular insight into one’s culture and the values we live by, and thus our identities. This entire project is in line with the research method of autoenthnography, for the play reflects and chronicles my own struggles with sustainability and what action we can take to ameliorate the unsustainable society we currently live in.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

My task, when I set out to research and write my Master’s thesis, was to explore the ways in which theatre can contribute to engaging people on topics related to sustainability.

My methodology has come out of my feminist orientation which pervades my entire approach. This includes the choice of writing a play, the type and content of the play that I wrote, and the collaborative method by which I co-created and co-produced it. I have chronicled parts of my process within this document (Chapter 3) and the results (the play) can be viewed through a video archive and by reading the text (Chapter 6); the accompanying analysis (chapters 1 & 2) is a post-process reflection. The bulk of my work falls under the broad category of Practice as Research, or in my case, Performance as Research (PaR). We will further explore PaR below; however, I hope my work demonstrated that performance offers particular insight into one’s culture and the values we live by, and thus our identities; “performance has become one of the most influential contemporary paradigms for understanding identities and how we interact with and in the world” (Allain and Harvie, 2006, p. 1).

This entire project is in line with the research method of autoethnography. As you will see below, the play chronicles my own struggles with sustainability and what action we can take to ameliorate the unsustainable society we currently live in. Inspired by the feminist practice of acknowledging only partial knowledge and the need to lay bare the aims of the researcher and how the researcher’s own position impacts the questions they ask and how they ask them (see for example Rose, 1997) – I would like to begin by setting the stage of my own story and how I came to write a play for a Master’s thesis in Environmental Studies, for my story and experiences are
inherently linked to what I created. Kovach (2009) also writes in *Indigenous Methodologies* of the importance of the researcher outlining their purpose, and being clear in their own purpose.

I have grown up in the world of theatre; dancing and acting in plays has been a large part of my development, thus the world of theatre lives vividly in me. Hence I use the tools of this profession (theatre games for learning, and the art of writing and performing a play) to explore the topics that seem to me to be of great import.

During my undergraduate degree, I left a conservatory-like theatre program to study philosophy and environmental studies, as I was inspired to learn more about the world that I sought to make theatre about. My studies led me to a deep desire to make an impact on environmental issues as the more I learnt about climate change and global systems the more concerned I became for the state of our world. This led me to work in the youth environmental NGO sector for four years. I worked for the youth environmental movement with organizations like Canadian Organic Growers, the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition and the Sierra Youth Coalition. I often felt like I was working with a passionate, well-informed demographic who were unfortunately a minority and who were ideologically isolated from a public that didn’t understand our calls for action. I remember feeling very angry when someone tried to lecture me at an anti-Tar Sands demonstration about the necessities of a world that they claimed I did not yet understand adequately. This schism between the morally idealistic, well-intentioned politics of environmental and social justice movements and the general public deeply bothered me.

Around this time I read an article about a young woman who was arrested while protesting the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, as part of a national ‘No Olympics on Stolen Native Land’ campaign. At a protest in Guelph, the Olympic torchbearer tripped during her attempts to bypass the protesters. I felt that this incident was a rather symbolic instantiation of the clash of values I was
witnessing and I was drawn to write a story about it. Other frustrations at work gnawed at me. The programs we offered were financially difficult to sustain and while we had lofty goals I was concerned that we were reaching only a small segment of society already sympathetic to our aims. In the meantime it seemed to me that the rest of the world continued to operate at an ever-accelerating, unsustainable pace. I decided to return to my theatre roots and to school in order write a play about sustainability issues and to determine how other methods might be used to reach a larger audience.

Cara’s story comes out of my own struggles to make a positive impact upon the social and environmental crises. In order to make clear the connections between the play’s content and my analysis I will begin by outlining the plot. It is important to keep in mind that the plot summary changed as the work progressed; however, below is the final plot summary:

**Figure 1: Final Plot Summary**
Our protagonist is Cara, an undergraduate student who is feeling overwhelmed. The play opens at home where she is battling with her mother. The audience learns that Cara is adopted, and feels alienated by her mother and her home life. At school, she is learning about climate change, and struggling to write papers. She feels overwhelmed by ‘the state of the world’ and wants to write papers that access ‘solutions’ to the problems that she is learning about. She is also a student organizer, working within the campus sustainability movement; she is participating in organizing a bottle-water-free campus campaign. In a scene with a good friend of hers, the audience witnesses her discussing her despair over the futility of this campaign in terms of addressing the larger problems of the privatization of water. She then goes home to find that a letter has arrived from her birth grandmother informing her that her birth mother has died, offering her the name of her birth father: Arnold Wallberger. Following another fight with her mother, she decides to leave, quitting school, and hitch-hikes across the province to where the telephone directory tells her Arnold Wallberger resides. Here, the audience catches up with her at a coffee shop where two ‘radical’ activists are discussing the Olympics (it is 2008, in the lead-up to the 2010 Vancouver Olympics) and she agrees to join their anti-capitalist campaign in alliance with Indigenous resistance to the Olympics (this is based on a campaign that actually did occur). Some reasons for the resistance include the fact that the Games took place on unceded land and caused displacement for the population’s most vulnerable people. We find out in this coffee shop discussion that the address she had for Arnold was a dead-end. She is invited to stay with her new anarchist friends, and time passes until her friend Felix tells her that his uncle thinks he knows her father. She goes to meet Arnold, full of hope, only to find that he doesn’t seem to want to get to know her. The audience witnesses her disappointment, and then Felix, who has driven her in his cousin’s truck, discusses his doubts about the “No Olympics of Stolen Native Land” campaign that they are working on. Felix is Indigenous and takes the campaign very personally. Cara doesn’t understand his position very well. We hear a monologue where she explains that participating in a related action is what she must do. A dance scene follows which is meant to show us that she has tripped someone (this is an event which actually occurred in the lead up to the Olympics: the woman carrying the torch through Guelph, Ontario was tripped, as she attempted to bypass protestors). The audience then finds her in a holding cell. Here she is visited by the woman that she tripped, by Felix, and by her adoptive mother. Her adoptive mother tells her that her birth mother was an environmentalist and Cara finds this quite reassuring. These conversations prompt Cara to reflect on her actions and what she hopes to achieve with her activism. She asks her friend Felix for forgiveness for her ‘colonial’ mindset and suggests that she might write a book about her mother’s environmental work in the area. Finally the play ends with a concluding poem that is cut off mid-sentence.
The play is punctuated with movement and opens with an introductory poem. Two key movement scenes represent plot points – one stands in for Cara’s hitchhiking and is the beginning of her journey from home, another represents the protest that she attends that ends with the tripping. The inclusion of specifically non-textual elements in the play touches on a tension that runs through theatre studies that I will only briefly point to as this discussion itself could be the subject of a thesis. There is considerable debate around the value of the text versus the actual performance. As Drama departments evolved out of Literature departments, academic knowledge of theatre involved theory about the text of a play as opposed to its performance. As the theatre is primarily a lived event there was a movement to study the performance itself and the interpretation and meaning that is possible only through body, and through experience. By producing both a written play and a performance (with non-textual/dance elements), I hope that I am able to point to the merits of both the text (and the process of its generation) as well as the performance of a play.

Brecht and Boal are theatre practitioners whose experiences and practices have inspired parts of my approach. And though Brecht is revered within the canon for his play texts, he himself emphasized the importance of the actual performance (Bradley, 2006).

The type of theatre that one creates will depend on one’s aim. My goal was never to directly push a thesis on my audience; however in my journey towards sustainability I am committed to exploring issues that are contributing to environmental destruction and social injustice. The result of this commitment is that an informal critique of global capitalism is woven throughout my thesis.
It is important to consider what is meant by the term ‘sustainability’ and how it can differ in various contexts. The roots of the term’s current usage can be traced back to the concept of sustainable development which was first advocated in the 1987 report ‘Our Common Future’ by the UN Commission on Environment and Development. The report, often cited as the Brundtland report after the chair of the commission, articulated what is now often cited as the definition of sustainable development: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (1987, p. 37).

The goal of the concept of sustainable development was cited as providing “a framework for the integration of environment policies and development strategies” (1987, p. 33). Now, what development strategies are being referred to? The document cites that “The satisfaction of human needs and aspirations is the major objective of development” (1987, p. 43). This definition of course encompasses social considerations, which are presumed to be met by “achieving full growth potential” (1987, p. 37, my italics); further, it is recommended that “sustainable development clearly requires economic growth in places where such needs are not being met” (1987, p. 37). Meeting development needs is thus considered dependent on economic growth and “increasing productive potential” (1987, p. 37). The addition of ‘sustainable’ to these development models attempted to incorporate environmental concerns within an existing concept of development. Our models of sustainable development were thus birthed, and are often depicted as three circles or pillars of priorities: the social, economic and environmental.
However, development, like sustainability, is a discursive word, with varied definitions and uses. In Sklair’s (1994) discussion of development he emphasizes its distorted use under capitalism. He highlights that development in practice refers to economic growth while the social side remains unspoken as it is expected to be met through economic goals.

In terms of sustainability we end up with a term that reflects an inherent contradiction – trying to solve environmental problems but not acknowledging or challenging the larger system of capitalism within which these problems exist. Sklair (2001) also argued that by harnessing aspirations for change within the idea of sustainable development many were co-opted from working on specific environmental problems, and larger trends of continued growth and consumption were able to continue unabated.

The commonly cited origins of sustainability have thus been inherited from a goal of integrating environmental concerns within the existing development paradigms of a capitalist system. This capitalist system attempts to reduce everything to economic imperatives, and we then have to respond to a trend that attempts to monetize the value of resources and understands green products as the road to sustainability.

Hayim and Shlomit (2004) argue in their book *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception: A Basis for Sharing the Earth* that the capitalist worldview which attempts to reduce everything to economic imperatives is rooted in empirical values. They claim that the philosophical work of phenomenologists, and specifically Merleau-Ponty, is purposively disregarded by the ‘dominating corporate capitalist regime’ because empiricism and rationalism are unable to challenge the “technology-oriented capitalist mode of existence that holds that the beings exist in the world,
including other persons, are there solely in order to be resources that are exploited for the needs and pleasure of some human beings and the profits of some corporations” (2004, p. 5).

Through Merleau-Ponty’s particular understanding of the ‘flesh of the world’ and his discussion of the way the human body exists in the world he was able to “reject tenets and arguments of empiricism and rationalism” (2004, p.3). It is the conception of a being-in-the-world (as opposed to a subject which is in opposition to the object world) which Hayim and Shlomit contend would generate a basis for sharing the world with other beings and not destroying that which we are embedded within. This argument makes the link between one’s ontological position and how we interpret or place value on other beings and the physical world. Hayim and Shlomit’s position is useful in connecting trends in our actions to the cultural realm by claims that the maltreatment of the Earth is related to the empiricist’s worldview and its link to capitalist values. As the recognition that capitalist priorities are culturally reinforced becomes clearer it becomes possible to see that the current emphasis on economic priorities is cultural.

The cultural values behind decision-making practices are not always easily made explicit. In fact, our identities and values are often so engrained that we have trouble recognizing our own horizons of thinking or determining the origins of beliefs that we hold. In discussing how to bring about more effective policy towards sustainability Hawkes writes: “My starting point is the fact that all acts of public intervention (plans, policy, services, whatever) are fundamentally informed by sets of values [sometimes formally expressed, more often than not, simply assumed]” (2001, p. 5). Packalen makes a similar point: “Everything we do is culturally determined and that includes economic, profit-motivated actions” (2010, p. 118). Thus while “we have come to think of capitalism as natural and eternal” (Jameson, 1998, p. 4) this is not the case, as capitalism is a historically recent phenomena. The emphasis on pursuing economic goals in order to achieve
‘development’ is then culturally driven, and while the need to increase our ‘productive potential’ that can seem inevitable need not be a fixed priority.

A recognition of the role of culture as encompassing and determining our priorities and values has driven many to call for the inclusion of culture within discussions of sustainability. Hawkes wrote *The Fourth Pillar* based on the “acknowledgement among those who influence the ways our society manages itself that economic benchmarks alone are an insufficient framework upon which to evaluate progress or plan for the future” (2001, p. 11). He cites culture as “one of the most complex and contested words in the English language” and he identifies two inter-related definitions of culture:

1. the social production and transmission of identities, meanings, knowledge, beliefs, values, aspirations, memories, purposes, attitudes and understanding;
2. the ‘way of life’ of a particular set of humans: customs, faiths and conventions; codes of manners, dress, cuisine, language, arts, science, technology, religion and rituals; norms and regulations of behaviour, traditions and institutions. (2001, p. 3)

In his publication for planning departments he argues that linking culture to planning processes is a way to unify current trends towards increased public engagement and writes that “When culture is taken to denote the social production and transmission of values and meaning and it is recognised that the expression of social purpose and aspiration is at the heart of the public planning process, then the connection between culture and planning becomes clearer” (2001, p. 1). Hawkes maintains the need to include a category of assessment that examines larger questions of value and meaning which are not found in the social pillars that generally examine equity in their current form (2001, p. 13). He argues for the need to measure cultural vitality: “Cultural vitality is as essential to a healthy and sustainable society as social equity, environmental
responsibility and economic viability. In order for public planning to be more effective, its methodology should include an integrated framework of cultural evaluation along similar lines to those being developed for social, environmental and economic impact assessment” (2001, p. vii). International decision-makers have also advocated including culture in planning, and following Agenda 21 many cities have adopted culture in their municipal planning frameworks – including Kingston, Ontario, for example.

In Art and Sustainability Kagan traces how not only were international decision-makers recognizing the role of culture but how a call also came from artists; the “inclusion of a cultural dimension in the discourses on sustainability has developed gradually in the past decade, at different levels of discourse” (2013, p. 13). He cites the 1996 exhibition ‘Villette-Amazone’ organized in Paris by the French Committee for environment and sustainable development (Comité 21) that combined “ecological urbanism, architecture, technologies and artistic projects” (2013, p. 13). “It also was accompanied by a publication, a ‘manifesto for the environment in the 21st century’ written by Bettina Laville (the environmental adviser of French President Francois Mitterand) and Jacques Leenhardt (philosopher and sociologist)”. Laville and Leenhardt wrote that the authors aimed to “engage a reflection on the role of culture in the transformations of our relationships with the environment” and to “rethink man and his knowledges in the very midst of nature and no longer outside of it” (2013, cited in Kagan, 1996, p. 13). This approach highlights the educative possibilities of sustainability and the role the arts can play in generating our imaginative capacities and imagining other realities. Kagan quotes Morin and writes that “imagination is at the active and organizational heart of social and political reality” (2013, p. 13). Kagan’s difference in emphasis is reflected in his definition of culture: “Culture is a collective memory of a plurality of knowledge, know-hows and rules/conventions. Cultures, together with the individual minds, are also the ecosystems of ideas and mental images, i.e. of the ‘noological
sphere’ of human imagination and creativity. The noological sphere is capable both of
generativity and of regulation” (Kagan, 2013, p. 13). This capacity to regulate and generate our
noological sphere is best practiced through the imaginative practices of the arts.

Interestingly this is in line with Hawkes’ advocacy of arts as a way of learning and seeing the
world. He asks: “How can a community develop conscious, symbolic and effective expressions of
its own values, meanings and aspirations (that is culture) without having developed its own
creative capacities (that is, art skills)”? He continues to cite the merits of developing arts skills:
“Its techniques involve improvisation, co-operation, serendipity, trust, inclusion, openness, risk-
taking, provocation, surprise, concentration, unorthodoxy, deconstructions, innovation fortitude
and an ability and willingness to delve beneath the surface, beyond the present, above the
practical and around the fixed” (2001, p. 24). Thus Hawkes advocates including Community Arts
Indicators for city planning, within the pillar model, as part ensuring the presence of the fourth
pillar, culture.

Kagan (2013), however, takes a different approach and argues that sustainability is not best
represented by indicators within the pillar model, rather he considers sustainability a discursive
field where discussions about what we value and how we wish to live can thrive. “Within this
playing field and this conversation” Kagan’s focus rests “especially on the cultural dimension of
sustainability” (2013, p. 12). He argues that these questions are inherently related to what kind of
world we’d like to live in, and thus to cultural questions: “As a shared dream, vision and
worldview [...] as well as a conversation [...] sustainability reveals itself as a cultural
phenomenon, if culture is understood as value system and set of signifiers framing social
identities and dispositions to act and to believe” (2013, p. 13). These differing positions are
important reminders that sustainability is used in many ways.
While I am not advocating Community Arts Indicators, my work did engage non-professionals in a community arts project. With Hawkes, I believe having opportunities for developing artistic skills and participating in arts projects is important for engaged political action in the world. I intend to follow Kagan and use the discourse around sustainability as a lens, a way to question our actions and how we are living in the world, a way to examine the roots of these issues. I posit that by using culture, and specifically the arts, we can perhaps imagine, improvise, and devise our way out of existing paradigms and address the political issues we are facing through a creative lens.
Chapter 3  
Feminine Knowing

Being a female art-maker is a determining piece of my identity. Within the theatre tradition there is a lack of the female voice as non-male playwrights have traditionally gone unrecognized (Aston, 1995, p. 15). For example, within all the plays deemed influential in ‘the Canon’, not one play by a female playwright was recognized, even though female playwrights such as Hrotsvit, who said to have written the first ‘performable plays of the Middle Ages’ achieved significance (Aston, 1995, p. 24). Alas, Aston argues that without changes to the canon “it may not be possible to establish a tradition of women’s dramatic writing as a ‘norm’ rather than as an ‘alternative’ or deviant off-shoot of the ‘canon’ which perpetuates the dramatic forms and ideological concerns of the dominant (male) culture” (1995, p. 25).

As a woman, aware of the feminist struggle, who has encountered and recognized hierarchy and patriarchy, when writing I authentically (whether consciously or not) bring my feminist perspective to the work I create. For example, as a female playwright I wrote about a woman, and not in the way that women have been most frequently represented on stage: “placed on display for the male viewer” (Aston, 1995, p. 3).

My feminist stance is also evident by the situations that I wrote my character into: she is not involved in a love-story, for example, and the key relationships presented are between Cara and other women: her adoptive mother and her dead birth mother\(^1\). Examining Brecht’s use of the Gestus technique will help to see how my writing and positioning of Cara’s mother is feminist. Bradley (2006) writes about Gestus: “This is a problematic and complex term which Brecht used

\(^1\) Yes, in this show she has a relationship with a dead person.
in a variety of contexts, but in relation to acting it is best understood as a physical action or spatial configuration which reveals the ideological, social and economic relations between two or more characters” (pgs. 5, 6). She discusses how in the 1951 staging of The Mother, directed by Brecht, his placement of the characters in respect to each other on stage and in juxtaposition to set elements directed “the spectators’ attention to ideological and socio-economic factors” (Bradley, 2006, p. 6).

In my play (When I Get There) Cara and her mother (Janet) were always staged in opposition or circling around one another. Janet comes onstage in her emblematic housecoat, her cup of coffee, anxious, unaware of what Cara is up to, yet chasing after her in a sense. This is meant to remind the audience of the position that women have had in society. Her mother represents the idea of a housewife who is directionless without bearings in society except through her child. As Cara’s adoptive mother Janet has even less legitimacy in the world. Her mother complains about the invisible and unpaid labour she has undergone that Cara does not acknowledge or appreciate. (And neither does anyone else, for that matter.)

Cara exists in opposition to this, and she wishes at all costs to make her mark on the world, to be implicated, to have an impact (to not be like her mother). Cara says, “I’m not like you, I don’t have to stay here.” She is trying to become free of the (unsustainable) structures that she feels stuck in and sees as bars around her mother’s existence. Cara’s struggle to be implicated and to have an effect brings a feminist standpoint to bear on environmental issues, as she seeks a practical way to apply the theory she learns, to bring it back from the abstract to the everyday.

These choices were not all made consciously to represent feminism, but serve to reinforce the notion that women when listened to will bring forth different perspectives. This is different from
the first waves of feminist theatre which attempted to convince its audience of the feminist perspective. However, it is in line with varieties of feminism that are very clear on the importance of recognizing the intersections of race, gender and class. Thus, my capitalist critique and the attempt to include aspects of environmental justice by touching upon indigenous struggles in the story are also of a feminist nature. Feminism invites a political stance.

Philosophy has also been a male-dominated endeavor. Philosopher Hazel Barnes writes in *Resistance, Flight, Creation* from a first-person perspective of her struggle to find her place in academia and how she came to realize that she had “what today is called a male-trained mind” (2000, p. 29). She had to discover her feminist perspective and believes “there is a legitimate feminist standpoint in discussions of ethics, values, and rationality” (2000, p. 35). I sought to bring this perspective forward by emphasizing the impact of women running the practical elements of my thesis. I sought a majority of female collaborators in terms of decision-making and participation. Of course, male participation was important but as much as possible we sought to make ample space for the female perspective to emerge. As Barnes puts it: “everyone must agree that *all* voices should be heard, sometimes to insure that what passes for gender encompassing is indeed that and sometimes because what seems like an anomaly can prove to be a key to a larger vista”(2000, p. 34). Echoes of feminist demands and practices involving a non-hierarchical structure and collaborative work in the theatre (Aston and Harris, 2006, p.3) can be seen throughout my process.

Barnes’ writing touches on why performance is an ideal avenue for representing the unique feminist standpoint. She discusses how some female philosophers “have been particularly concerned with ways in which language has reinforced a narrow, restrictive view of what constitutes logical thought and its appropriate application” and how some feminists “have
accused traditional philosophers of pursuing abstractions so remote from everyday living that they have made of the discipline a sort of word game”(2000, p. 33). This points to why performance as research is so critical.

3.1.1 Why Performance as Research

There are many reasons to explore ideas using theatre. John Freeman (2010) writes of the “fusing of the creative and cognitive that is at the heart of practice-based research” (p. xiii). In fact, Performance as Research (PaR) “involves a research project in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where, in respect of the arts, a practice (creative writing, dance, musical score/performance, theatre/performance, visual exhibition, film or other cultural practice) is submitted as substantive evidence of a research inquiry” (Nelson, 2013, pgs. 8, 9). Reasons for this growing use of PaR are many; some are rather practical and include the need for funding activities of drama departments and differentiating drama departments - and the performance studies departments that are now popping up - from literature departments.

There are other critical reasons for exploring and expanding upon the knowledge generation accepted within the university. Simon Jones (2009), an early innovator in PaR, calls for a paradigm shift from an emphasis on knowledge relations where “abstractors are favoured over applicators as the primary knowledge-formulators” (2009, p. 23) and “matter, substance and thingness are implied” to a performative logic where knowledge is “something halfway between a noun and a verb – an event” (2009, p. 19). He argues that academic practice has traditionally been based on separating the object of study, and placing knowledge of this object “outside the flow of everyday life in order better to maintain its disciplinary boundaries” (2009, p. 23). Value is then attributed “in direct proportion to the extent that any discipline excludes the particularities of the everyday – its impurities.” This is accompanied by the demand that knowledge adhere to
scientific criteria. Thus the “highest virtue any specific body of knowledge can possess is reproducibility” (2009, p. 23).

Jones argues that the knowing experienced and developed in PaR has much to teach the academy: “due to the in-betweeness inherent in its ‘object’ of study, its disciplinary context and development, it inevitably challenges the extent to which abstraction as a principle underpins knowing in its own and thence any other discipline” (2009, p. 23). He makes the case that performance has a particular contribution to offer:

…the equal attention it gives to both the drawing apart and the returning to, since, for performance and the practice of it as an ‘object’ of research its signature modality is to mix – bodies and fleshes, audiences and spectators, actors and performers, dialects and texts, histories and places, motivations and suppositions, instances and theories. The very way of knowing the ‘object’ of performance studies revels in the irreversible mixing of the everyday, this ubiquitous state of in-betweeness and incompleteness, from which all other disciplines, at least in part, flee, and to which they only warily return, trying to hold on to their own terms of self-identity in negotiation with their paymasters. On the other hand, the practice of performance as a research object intensifies this mixing and makes ever more fluid, more radical and complex entangling its primary work. It models mixing per se; most profoundly between all sorts of embodied knowledges and textual practices. (2009, p. 24)

Jones makes the point that “performance works away at materializing ideas at their closest to the actual” (2009, p. 24). My reasons for writing a play are similar to these. A piece of art falls outside of the realm of the empirical approach. By “modeling the everyday not as idea, but as event, full of space and time, fleshes and texts” (2009, Jones, p. 24) a play has the opportunity to
show life in its complexities. The play can escape the tendency to understand life as an external problem that needs to be fixed while still exploring the issues that society is facing.

By undergoing research in this way, we are more able to see ideas enacted in their everyday context, the play requires the portrayal of complexities, and it can show the many pieces of the picture. PaR, and other community-based research methodologies, recognize that one’s perspective shapes how one sees, and that one’s perspective is embedded in a more layered fabric. This is rather different from the approach of writing a paper where the goal is to streamline elements in order to make a clear point. By using PaR I can more fully explore the multi-faceted environmental crises facing humanity and the related narratives framing these crises. It is also a way to explore how the environmental crises are being digested by people.

Through my play’s protagonist – Cara, a young woman who is attempting to sort through her role in the given social systems and their interactions with the natural world, and trying to find how she might be effective in helping to move the world along a more sustainable path – I can explore the roles towards change people can actually follow. Thus I am using art as a way of gaining a better understanding of societal structures and ways that one can have an impact on these pressing environmental problems. The character attempts to change the structures but comes up against other perspectives. There are echoes of my own trajectory on this journey towards agency and sustainable change in that I chose to write a play. The potential resolution for Cara, which I point to at the end of the play, comes in her mentioning that she might write a book about her birth mother’s story, which is related to environmental activism. The creative impulse is what I posit has the potential to impact the predominant method of knowing and being-in-the-world that is currently fixed by so many perspectives looking on and believing in the capitalist systems we have in place. While these systems are not indefinitely fixed, they are rather big and seemingly out of our hands, certainly for now, as larger values and frames would need to change
and be examined before the structures could really shift as drastically as ideally we might want them to if we actually wanted to fix these environmental problems. This gives me (and in the end the protagonist Cara too) the freedom and license to make art rather than trying to force the structures a certain way. As we look a little more closely at sustainability and the role of culture, we may start to see why making art about these issues is important.

Chapter 4 - Political Theatre

4.1 Art and Interpretation
The role of art in culture is clear, and yet it is paradoxically the lack of clarity in art’s interpretation and use that makes it so useful. It can be an interesting thing to attempt to tease out the exact benefits of art in our lives, yet throughout the ages it continues to affirm itself by existing, continuously evolving and changing while feeding its creators and viewers in some ephemeral way. It can function as a locus for knowledge translation, bringing ideas forth in an alternative medium. It is also a place to sift through the breadth of our emotional and psychic worlds.

4.1.1 The Language of Art
How do the arts speak to us? Many reference the unique languages of poetry, movement, gesture and images. Theatre in particular can encompass many of these languages, using music, dance and the pictorial images it generates to convey meaning. There is, of course, also the ability to communicate with words and to place contending positions and arguments up for interpretation. Meaning can also be created through atmosphere, the set or venue of the piece, and through use of archetypes and evoking feelings. In discussing collective creation Barton comments on “the culturally rich and phenomenologically multiplanal nature of an approach to expression that is as
deeply engaged with issues of physical gesture (tempo, rhythm, scale, direction, relation to gravity) as with spoken text” (2008, p. xix). Theatre-maker Joseph Chaikin (1975) refers to the tones that various plays generate.

This ability to create meaning is at the same time unpredictable, for the meaning interpreted also depends on the viewer. This relational aspect is another important attribute of theatre and performance as these art forms bring people together in a room; there is the opportunity for a spectrum of interaction. Theatre is inherently a collective pursuit towards the creation of a common goal, the piece for presentation. The troupe can involve a set designer, builders, lighting designers and technicians, a playwright, the director, actors, producers, choreographers – and the list can go on and vary considerably in its configuration. Alternatively, theatre can make its way with very little, as Grotowski emphasized in his *Poor Theatre* (1968) – for a body in a space and a viewer are all that is truly needed.

4.1.2 What is Theatre?

What is considered to be Theatre can be rather broad, from the ancient rituals and religious ceremonies, to today’s Olympic spectacle (which is treated as a product of capitalist values in the play). The political realm is sometimes referred to as a political stage. As Shakespeare wrote in *As You Like It*: “All the world’s a stage, /And all the men and women merely players” (Act 2, Sc. 7). Performance art, and its *Happenings*² are an example of theatre that involves a performance but does not necessitate acting, and has roots in visual art (see the work of Alan Kaprow and Marina Abramovic) and music practices (John Cage, for example). I will be dealing mostly with today’s mainstream ideas of a play. However, even this type of show is now influenced to various

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² See Michael Kirby’s Introduction to Happenings in *Happenings and Other Acts*, 1995 Ed: Sandford, Mariellen R.
degree by the different lines of theatre and performance. Thus it is important to keep in mind that the style and type of theatre that exists and has existed over time is rather broad – encompassing street performers, Commedia dell’Arte troupes, and more improvisational work. For an example of a broader account of theatre, let us look to the JEU theatre tradition of Jacques Lecoq. Here we find two stock characters that exist in opposition to each other. There is the clown: he is the character that loves the audience, and takes immense joy from making them laugh, yet the audience laughs at the Clown. The Clown exists in contrast to the Bouffon. The Bouffon is ugly, missing limbs and teeth, and, both clever and mean. He takes great joy in mocking the audience. Students of Lecoq learn that the Bouffon originates from long ago when all the outcast and disregarded people of a society would parade through the village and everyone would laugh at them. Once they reached the royal court their goal was to make the King and Queen laugh so hard that they would die. The Clown and the Bouffon tell society things about itself – whether or not the audience is listening, the clown who loves the audience is mocked and the Bouffon represents all that the general society hates about itself. This founding myth represents the essence of social satire that the performing clown and Bouffon aspire to today.

Theatre can mirror life re-enforcing particular values, while it also has the capacity to generate particular world-views and understandings through the values and aspects of life that are represented. It has long played an important role in determining and reinforcing culture. Plato famously banned the poet from his republic for - among other reasons - their ability to sway the public. Aristotle theorized about the capacity of art for transformation and his theories continue to carry weight. In his book, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1974), which describes his own poetics of theatre, Augusto Boal, a monumental figure in political theatre, examines Aristotle’s theories and system of poetics, showing it to be coercive. He writes that although Aristotle maintained the distinction between politics and poetry, he nonetheless “constructs the first, extremely powerful
poetic-political system for intimidation of the spectator, for elimination of the ‘bad’ or illegal tendencies of the audience” (1974, p. xiv). He further maintains that this system is in common use today, not only in the theatre but in movies and television “for repression of the people” (1974, p. xiv). Elements of this system stem from the introduction of the protagonist, the tragic hero. This event signaled a major shift from when theatre was experienced through the chorus and the masses were involved and represented. The invention of the protagonist by Thespis ‘aristocratized’ the theatre, according to Boal; this character is presented as an example of both what is to be followed and what should not be done. Other critical elements of Aristotle’s system include the tragic flaw (or hamartia), which is what must be destroyed in the main character as “it is the only trait that is not in harmony with what society regards as desirable” (1974, p. 34), and empathy. Empathy forms “the emotional relationship between the character and spectator” (1974, p. 35); according to Boal this relationship is defined by an inherent character-spectator bond whereby “the spectator assumes a passive attitude and delegates the power of action to the character… we live vicariously all his stage experiences… we feel that we are acting. We love and hate when the character loves and hates” (1974, p. 34). Boal then outlines how this system functions, following three stages whereby the hero’s tragic flaw leads to a catastrophe and suffering in “a violent form” (1974, p. 37) which leads the character and the spectator to catharsis, and finally, the purification of hamartia. Boal highlights how the empathetic capacity to be affected can lead the audience on the wrong path, and claims that this use of catharsis is a tool for keeping potential revolutions at bay. He warns us that the Aristotelian system “is designed to bridle the individual, to adjust him to what pre-exists” (1974, p. 47). He maintains that if “we want to stimulate the spectator to transform his society, to engage in revolutionary action, in that case we will have to seek another poetics!” (1974, p. 47).
4.2 After Aristotle

Others have admonished the Aristotelian system. Theatre-makers Brecht and Piscator sought to by-pass what they termed Aristotelian empathy, also believing that the plot should not be neatly wrapped up. They created theatre for the purposes of inciting action, calling for the spectator to seek solutions to the problems presented, as opposed to the “outbursts of desperation” (Bradley, 2006, p. 4) that Piscator claimed were the result of naturalistic theatre. Thus their style of theatre, the Epic Theatre, made use of stage effects to remind the audience that they were in a play and denied catharsis.

Boal begins his book Theatre of the Oppressed by stating that in it he “attempts to show that all theater is necessarily political, because all activities of man are political and theater is one of them” (1979, p. viii). Joseph Chaikin, part of a long-time radical theatre troupe, the Open Theatre, said it a bit differently in a dialogue that introduces The New Radical Theatre Notebook. He first made the point that theatre should not exist simply to serve “subversive forces” but continued on to state that the interesting thing about theatre is that since it “is about people and about situations to some degree, the political question continually comes up, heated” (1975, pg. 5). His interviewer agreed, commenting that Chekhov’s work, for example, encompasses all the critical human problems; as he put it “all those other questions come up without his needing to force them” (5, 1975). All theatre can then be understood as political, for even the absence of political content itself says something about the culture that demands and/or consumes it. Kirby engages with these questions and states that “As with any interpretive system, the political interpretation of performance depends upon the political knowledge of the interpreter” and that “the political concern and engagement must be in the work, not in the mind of the observer” (1975, 130).
4.3 Political Intentions

However, what of this theatre that does exist to serve subversive forces, as Chaikin describes above? For there must be some special place for theatre that intends to be political. I posit that the necessary criterion is exactly that, derived from the intentions and aims of the art makers. Thus if the playwright, the director or the band of actors putting their efforts to presenting a piece of work intend for it to have ramifications which have political consequences then we can certainly call it political theatre (as opposed to theatre which is political).

Brecht, a German playwright, is commonly recognized as one of the most prominent political theatre practitioners: "a seminal figure in the development of political theatre theories and practices around the world" (Martin and Bial, 1996, p. 1). He is also cited as one of the most “relevant intellectuals and artists” both in his time and presently (Fiebach, 2005, p. 53), though he is not always admired. Another account cites Brecht as “the most influential man of the theatre and the most vilified” (Needle, 1981, p. 1). Brecht credits Erwin Piscator for bringing politics to the theatre. Piscator began to develop the theories and practices of Epic Theatre due to a longing to connect the audience and what they were seeing with the political activities occurring in the lead-up to fascism in Germany.

There are times when there is a clear political goal (which could for example be resistance to Olympic development on Indigenous lands): times when it is necessary to pursue resistance overtly or perhaps to spread ideas secretly. When these political goals are overt the work produced is often called agit-prop (short for agitation propaganda). This is theatre which is generally in line with a political movement or takes a strong side on a particular political issue, what we might call narrow political theatre. Michael Kirby certainly takes a rather narrow look at
what is political theatre and defines it as that which “is concerned with government or … must take sides in politics” (1975, p. 129).

Kirby maintains that there is a draw-back to overt political works that attempt to convince people and change their minds regarding political issues, for “When a theatre tells its audience ‘I am right; you are wrong’ most spectators will intellectually support and elaborate their own position. An attack causes not surrender, but defense” (1975, p. 134). He does concede that this type of theatre can have some positive effects: “It can give emotional and intellectual support to those who already agree with its position. Just as a marching band helps to stir the soldier's patriotism, courage, and fighting spirit, political theatre can be the rallying point for the believers in a particular cause. It can give them the feeling that they are not alone in their beliefs, that others are actively involved and pursuing the same goals” (1975, p. 134). It can be useful for example at protest events which include theatre where those in attendance have entered in a contract and have chosen to be there. Other provocations such as Invisible Theatre – a form of satire in which the audience is unsuspecting, and believes that what they are witnessing is veritably happening – may also be quite effective. Related to this, agitprop can also be an important, visible sign of resistance when the means of the oppressed are limited.

Bertolt Brecht’s work would generally not fall under this narrow understanding of political theatre; political parties that he related to didn’t feel his work carried the right messages, and in fact Brecht was of the opinion that Piscator’s use of film too much resembled propaganda. Yet, as mentioned above, he is a widely regarded political playwright. This was partly due to the political nature of the content he covered: topics such as war, petroleum, and capitalism. His approach to political theatre is more in line with Arendt’s concept of what is political. In her book, *Politics and Theatre in Twentieth-Century Europe: Imagination and Resistance*, Margot Morgan employs
a broader definition of politics “that harkens back to a day when politics was considered possible in the course of daily life. Drawing on Arendt, I see politics as the space that exists between and among individuals in their attempt to create the new” (2013, p. 4). She goes on to quote Arendt: “The political realm rises directly out of acting together, the ‘sharing of words and deeds.’ Thus action not only has the most intimate relationship to the public part of the world common to us all, but is the one activity that constitutes it” (2013, p. 4). Finally Morgan writes, “Politics is intersubjectivity, communication, and the commitment to some form of community” (2013, p. 4).

However, by building on the tactics of Piscator and broadening his scope, Brecht’s theatre was political mainly in that it demanded that the audience think. Brecht employed devices attempting to jar the spectator into rational thought about issues of political import. He was concerned with creating characters and scenarios that audience members could not easily follow but which caused a certain sense of incomprehension, alienation, and reflection – this halting of the regular flow is meant to draw attention to the critical topics at hand such as the political realities and societal structures that have caused them. Various tactics were employed to move the spectator to alienation or in German the Verfremdungseffekt (which he employed in opposition to catharsis). These interruption tactics included a montage structure which lacks the prescribed formulaic arc of the story and does not have a resolved plot, interrupting an action or a song with a sudden change of direction, and an acting method which requires that the actor recite their lines in such a way as to comment on the character they are portraying. These tactics are meant to leave the spectator unsettled. We can now see some of these tactics put to use in performance art.

Another focus of Brecht’s was his teaching plays (Lehrstücke). Here was the beginning of collective creation, which has echoed throughout all experimental and alternative theatre to come. These experimental works of the 1920’s and 30’s were by Brecht and collaborators such as Kurt
Weill, Hanns Eisler and Elisabeth Hauptmann. These plays were meant to instruct the audience but more importantly the performers. They were created as learning exercises and “not necessarily to culminate in a finished, final product to be replicated during each performance” (2011, Hughes, 198). The performance and creation process were key, and not the play itself (Morgan, 2013, p. 65). Following audience feedback of He Said Yes Brecht re-wrote the play with a different ending; his preference was thereafter that both versions of the play be performed together. These teaching/learning plays exemplified the potential for theatre as a “collective laboratory” (Jameson, 1998, p. 11), where ideas for society can be tested, acted out, and lived through the theatre. He further states that Brecht’s collaborative method where the performance is presented in its unpolished form “allows us to see back down into the alternative gestures and postures of the actors trying out their roles” (1998, pgs. 11, 12). This experimental aesthetic is an “attempt to ward off reification” (1998, pg. 12) and Bradley reinforces this by arguing that “By transferring the emphasis from the performance to the staging process, Brecht challenged the dominant concept of theatre as the supplier of a product… Indeed, he even argued that the Lehrstücke did not need an audience: performance was only a possible by-product not an essential end-product, of rehearsals” (2006, pgs. 7, 8). This work created the roots for “collective creation in twentieth-century theatre” (Bessai, 2008, p. 64) and inspired Augusto Boal in his journey to create innovative theatre forms that served a greater social purpose.

4.4 Theatre of the Engaged

Brecht’s teaching plays inspired many theatre practitioners, most notable among them Augusto Boal, cited above, who also experimented with how to make art that enabled revolution. In his pursuit of avoiding coercive theatre, he too sought to engage his audience and presented ‘unfinished’ theatre. He crafted a style of theatre that invited the ‘spec-actor’ (Boal’s name for the audience members) up on the stage. He aimed to erase the dividing lines between the actors and the performers, and to open up possibilities for rehearsing standing up to power. These
experiments resulted in Forum Theatre, where a community creates a piece of theatre that exemplifies their struggle (of an unresolved conflict selected because it is a symptom of a larger oppression). At the climax of the story the play’s action stops. The play is then performed again for the audience. The second time through, with the aid of a ‘Joker’ (much like a facilitator, except Boal insisted the Joker’s role is more to be a ‘difficultator’ and draw out the complexities in any given situation), the audience can halt the action and step in for one of the actors in order to change the direction of the piece. Other styles of theatre within his Theatre of the Oppressed include Invisible Theatre (mentioned above in relation to narrow political theatre), and Image Theatre. Image Theatre is a series of exercises and games “designed to uncover essential truths about societies and cultures” (Jackson, 1992, p. xix). Through the dynamisation of images that participants make, related to their lives and struggles, the direction and intentions innate in the images are revealed, often including “unexpected universalities” (Jackson, 1992, p. xx). I made use of his Image Theatre techniques in my process, documented in Chapter 5.

Once exiled from Brazil for his political theatre work Boal traveled bringing his ideas and techniques to other parts of the world, such as Europe and North America. While working with people who were not facing overt repression he found himself asking ‘But where are the cops?’ – as he was used to working with a clear external oppressor (1995, p. 8). At first the concerns he came upon such as ‘loneliness’ and ‘fear of emptiness’ seemed trivial “for someone like me, fleeing explicit dictatorships of a cruel and brutal nature” (1995, p. 8) but he decided “to work with these new oppressions and consider them as such” (1995, p. 8). This led him to develop new techniques to deal with the character of troubles that people not directly oppressed were grappling with. The new exercises he developed built on his previous games (which aimed to develop the senses and abilities of the participants) by using the vocabulary of images for ‘psycho-therapeutic investigation’. He gave the name The Rainbow of Desire “to a collection of theatrical techniques
and exercises designed to harness the power of ‘the aesthetic space’ (the stage) to examine individual, internalized oppressions and to place them within a larger context” (xviii). The back end of the book states that these techniques “help us ‘see’ for the first time the oppressions we have internalized”; this is similar to the process of becoming aware of the cultural values which allow us to exploit the earth.

His focus continued to change and evolve until years later, upon his return to Brazil, his work and commitment to the Worker’s Party led him to campaign and be elected a Legislator in 1993. He then used theatre as a way to consult his constituents for their input in law-making – he reached the point where theatre was politics! Boal’s techniques involve his ‘arsenal’ of games and exercises which are for use by both actors and non-actors, though Boal argues that we all act in the world, thus we are all actors (1992, p. xxx).

4.5 The Devising Collective

The emergence of collective creation in Canada in the 1970s was linked both directly and indirectly to the development of collaborative ensemble work in the US, which began in the 1960s (Bessai, 2008, p. 70). These theatre collectives came about for a variety of reasons. Filewod argues that in Canada this emergence was “affected by two main political considerations: the consciousness of the collective and the analysis it develops in response to its material (which may or may not touch overtly on politics) and the external political and economic realities, which define possibilities of the work and, in a narrow sense, the quality of the work” (2008, p. 6). An example of the latter is suggested by Bessai (2008). She argues that the ‘conservative and formulaic’ programming that resulted from attempts to create a renowned national theatre in Canada meant that regional theatres of the 1970s were “unreceptive to new Canadian talent and uninterested in the development and performance of new Canadian work” (p. 63). In addition, the “new workers saw the Canadian theatre establishment during the late 1960s as either the last
vestige of British imperialism or the new frontier of American colonization” (Bessai, 2008, p. 63). Collectives thus formed ‘on a shoestring’ and created their own work, for local audiences, under the radar of mainstream regional theatres. In the UK, “a brief period of government subsidy of the arts (whether through the Arts Council or the dole) allowed for a flourishing of left-wing, activist companies” (Mermikides and Smart, 2010, p. 11).

To understand the impact of ‘the consciousness of the collective’ we must ask, who was creating from within a collective? Collectives of this time were ‘explicitly left-wing’ (Mermikides and Smart, 2010, p. 11). People drawn to the alternative theatre practices of the collective had alternative politics; they had something to say that wasn’t already being represented in mainstream theatre. Thus the impulse was to create their own work or put their own spin on existing texts. Therefore there was a prevalence of feminist collectives and activist collectives. Sainer (1997) emphasizes the political reasons undergirding collectives such as the Open Theatre: “The sixties saw the slow development, then proliferation of the ensemble. The disenchantment with commercial theatre paralleled a broader disenchantment with the culture at large, with America as a world power, with material well-being, with the ethic of the isolated figure laboring to merit the approval of society” (1997, p. 13).

The politics of the members of collectives dictated an attempt to work within a non-hierarchical structure, rejecting the authority of the director and, critically, the playwright. This points to the ways in which the form, cooperative and non-hierarchical, informs the method, all members of the collective contributed to the art-making. While some collective groups, such as Bread and Puppet, were made up of non-professional artists and existed solely for political reasons, Sainer also acknowledges that other, not overtly political, reasons existed for the turn to ensemble. This included the opportunity for “sustained, therefore serious, work” (1997, p. 13). There was a focus
on training the actor and their body, their creative impulse and experimenting with form. Through improvisational methods, they aimed “to stretch the creativity of the individual performer within the group context; and in the process, to explore radical means of engaging or encountering audiences” (Bessai, 2008, p. 67). She writes that the emphasis of many of the collectives was on the “exploration of acting techniques that were non-verbal and physically oriented (drawing to some degree on the psycho-physical theories of Jerzy Grotowski of the Polish Laboratory Theatre); [and] on the presence of the actor rather than the fictional character he traditionally portrays” (p.67). This move towards physical theatre “sought to reverse a dualism and hierarchy of word over body” (Mermikides and Smart, 2010, p. 9). Mermikides and Smart further reinforce this concept, stating that physical theatre “represents a challenge to the dominance of the text and the spoken word” (2010, p. 8). This shouldn’t be understood as a complete rejection of the word, as well-known practitioners, such as Artaud, Grotowski and Meyerhold, “while each espousing the belief that the body was the locus of a deeper, more primal truth than language, all worked with playtexts” (Mermikides and Smart, 2010, p. 9). They saw the play text as a “resource to be cut up” whose “meaning was challenged through juxtaposition with image, action, gesture and vocal delivery” (Mermikides and Smart, 2010, p. 9). This emphasis on the body as a source of meaning led to the development of various systems of training, to better allow the actor to communicate onstage. These systems understood the actor as creator, as opposed to the actor as merely interpreter. Barton cites “widely recognized figures such Eugenio Barba, Augusto Boal, Anne Bogart, Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, Jacques Lecoq, Philippe Gaulier, and Tadashi Suzuki” – who each have their respective systems that have been much used and studied – as being linked together due to “an altered conception of the role of the body in performance “ (2008, p. xix). Lecoq and the teachings at his school focus “on encouraging performers to work with simplicity and to use their bodies as the primary source of expression” (Allain and Harvie, 2006, p. 50).
The 80s saw the formation (especially in Europe) of groups that had learnt from Lecoq, Barba, and various other training systems mentioned above. The methods of creation born from the desire for a different kind of process developed a name by the 1990s: devising. Devising is a set of strategies that allows actors to become co-creators of a play’s contents; it “is a group activity and one that often contests the model of the singular creative artist” (Mermikides and Smart, 2010, p.1).

While I have attempted to trace some of the roots of devising, Mermikides and Smart (2010) highlight that “devising today encompasses a number of contexts, traditions, lineages and ideologies which have become intertwined” (p. 5). They also make the case that while devising “was once an alternative and radical form of theatre-making”, it “is now recognised as one of the major methodologies through which leading contemporary companies and practitioners create innovative work on an international scale” (2010, p. 4). In their book, Devising Process, they acknowledge the difficulty of constructing “any singular definition of devising or any set of definitions of strands of devising” and thus they do not even attempt to do so (2010, p. 3). They do affirm that the “original assumptions of devising are in flux” (2010, p. 5).

In his edited volume Collective Creation, Collaboration and Devising Bruce Barton discusses the conflation of collective creation and devising, as they are often used interchangeably. Barton attempts to clarify the overlaps and defining features of the theatre ground covered by these terms. He proposes some distinct boundaries, positing that:

- the collective aspect refers the ‘shared purpose and motivation’, the ‘ideology’ of the group;
• collaboration is the ‘self-imposed framework and structure’ or the ‘context’ of the work; and finally,
• devising is a ‘technique, the adopted strategies and rules’, the ‘process’ for creation (2008, p. ix)

He also argues that “the framework and structure of the theatrical exchanges in question are conspicuously not conventional nor habitual” (2008, Barton, p. xiii,xiv).

4.6 Applying Theatre
Boal’s work has inspired many theatre practitioners and collectives and played a role in the development of community-based theatre. His work is in line with alternative theatre practices described by Prendergast and Saxon (2009) that encompass “a web of performance practices that fall outside mainstream theatre performance.” These often “take place in non-traditional settings and/or with marginalized communities” which “most often take place… with participants who may or may not be skilled in theatre arts and to audiences who have a vested interest in the issue taken up by the performance or are members of the community addressed by the performance” (p. 6). They suggest that this work falls under a larger umbrella of applied theatre which has “historically been labeled with a number of diverse terms – grassroots theatre, social theatre, political theatre, radical theatre and many other variations” (p. 7).

My work embodies many of the concepts of applied theatre, a tradition that is heavily informed by the work of Brecht and Boal, and emerged from within the Canadian collective creation tradition. Boal’s techniques offer tools for devising under the umbrella of Applied Theatre. Boal’s tools for community engagement offer an important access to understanding one’s culture and reflecting upon our identities. His work is close to the type of community engagement advocated by Hawkes. Boal wrote that his work with theatre “is founded on the conviction that theatre is the
human language *par excellence*... The difference between humans and other animals resides in the fact that we are capable of being theatre...The theatre which is, in its most archaic sense, our capacity to observe ourselves in action. We are able to see ourselves seeing! This possibility of our being simultaneously Protagonist and principal spectator of our actions, affords us the further possibility of thinking virtualities, of imagining possibilities of combining memory and imagination – two indissociable psychic processes – to reinvent the past and to invent the future. Therein resides the immense power with which theatre is endowed” (1998, p. 7).

**Chapter 5:**

**Documentation of the Process**

As described in the introduction, I began with the aim to make change. I deeply wish to see a culture of sustainability take root and, like many who have gone before me, I sought to use the tools of the theatre as a force for change. I thus set out to create a play that contained ideas, would engage the audience and would have them think about environmental and social justice themes. I also sought to include a participatory element in the creation of the piece. My training with Daniel Mroz (of the Growtoski lineage: as a student of Richard Fowler’s who studied with Barba who studied under Grotowski) sparked in me a desire to experiment with devising content. Some critical aspects changed in my process and as I conducted research. First, I took a performance art class that broadened my theatrical landscape. I encountered the tension between theatre as literature and theatre as event and finally through my attempts to create collectively I was able to re-negotiate my scope and write my play with the input of my community.
5.1 Defining the Project

5.1.1 The Origins of the Play
I have long wanted to write a play. As an actor who then studied Philosophy and Environmental Studies, it seemed like a good way to bring my skills and interests together. Once I was accepted into the Environmental Studies program at Queen’s, I began working on a fictional story revolving around the tripping incident that occurred during protests of the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. I wrote character sketches and poems while exploring plot outlines and central themes. I started quite wide in my thinking and gradually narrowed in. When school began in the fall, I concentrated on my class work and being a teaching assistant. It wasn’t until the winter semester when I took a playwriting course with my co-supervisor John Lazarus that I really re-visited the play. At this time I created a (very different) one-act version of the play for a course that included the first attempts of the first few scenes. This was enough of a draft for me to begin applying for funding with a good idea of what the play was about and how it should be staged. At that time I defined the plot as such:

‘When I Get Home’ traces the journey of a young woman grappling with environmental issues who abandons her graduate studies to seek out her birth father. It is the year 2010 and when she arrives on a reserve she becomes involved with the “No Olympics on Stolen Native Land” campaign. Events lead to her incarceration and she must decide how she will move forward with her life.

5.1.2 Funding
Funding is critical to putting on a play. I thus set about applying for a project grant from the City of Kingston’s Arts Fund through the Kingston Arts Council. I attended grant information sessions offered by the Kingston Arts Council and submitted to their Community Arts funding category.
(To read the application in full please see Appendix A.) I requested funds to cover rental fees for the venue, set costs, props and costumes and for honorariums to ensure the participation of a committed ensemble and a talented crew. While I did not receive all the funds requested, the budget of $3375 that was granted went a long way towards the execution of the proposed project. Also, as the Kingston Arts Council requires applications from a company or a collective of at least three members; this meant that I began to assemble a team of people to work with. This team changed composition as the work progressed as did the outline of the project. In the grant application I outlined the collective’s mandate as such:

An anArc Theatre brings together five women who are committed to making a positive contribution to society through their work. With their passion and their diverse skill-sets they aim to create cutting edge theatre that examines social and environmental issues and that has the power

1) to create dialogue,
2) to inspire positive action,
3) and to re-frame issues in a more productive and inclusive narrative.

Our mission is symbolised in our name: the ‘an-arc’ sound represents a little bit of anarchy, in that we wish to encourage reflection on current systems. At the same time, an arc is what humanity needs to get through our current challenges. By envisioning solutions through characters that care deeply about the world we hope to put forth ideas that have buoyancy and that can contribute to building that arc. Finally, the capitalized letters of our collective spell ART. This part stands for a dedication to, above all, create work that speaks to people, and that enthralls our audiences. Outside conventions, into the heart of it, we wish to make ART.

Please note that we eventually changed the working name of the collective to the co-LAB-oratory, which included both Single Thread Theatre Company (more on them to follow) and anARc Theatre (with a slightly changed spelling).
Another requirement of the grant when applying as a collective is to find organizational sponsorship, to ensure the financial credibility of the project. I was lucky enough to be sponsored by Theatre Kingston, run by Brett Christopher. This sponsorship also covered our venue insurance for the production.

### 5.2 Phase 1 – The CO-creation

#### 5.2.1 Outreach

Felicia Latour, a young woman from the drama department whom recruited to the collective, agreed to direct the show. In the Fall of 2013, she and I crafted a call-out (see Figure 1 below) that was distributed in poster form at local coffee shops and a community-minded grocery store, in departments on campus, and via email through the Graduate Newsletter and through many department newsletters. We also spread the call-out through social media networks of like-minded local organizations such as Wintergreen Studios and Sustainable Kingston, and through our Facebook networks and email contacts. The Unitarian Church agreed to share the information with their congregation. The bulk of the interest we received was through the university and through word of mouth as I was able to interest staff from my partner’s farm workers and from the permaculture group I am involved with. I specifically recruited two people with film experience as I was hoping to integrate a multi-media aspect into the show. Due to the connection to Indigenous environmental justice issues in the plot that I had already conceived, I also spent time engaged in outreach to students connected with the Aboriginal Four Directions Centre (AFDC), which strives to be a key resource for Queen's Indigenous students and sponsors the work of the Kahswentha Initiative which seeks to:

- raise awareness among non-Aboriginal students, staff and faculty about Aboriginal peoples, cultures world views, and histories
- encourage knowledge sharing and dialogue among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff, faculty, and students who are interested in Aboriginal issues
• provide opportunities for co-curricular and experiential learning that are not often available within classroom settings

• foster relationships between Queen's University and local Aboriginal communities.

(Four Directions Aboriginal Centre, n.d.)

The Katarokwi Centre provides services and networking to the larger Kingston Indigenous communities; however, financial troubles overshadowed their ability to participate in the show. While my interactions with these organizations instigated some interest, and I had the opportunity to learn quite a bit in my interactions with the AFDC, no one who self-identified as part of Canada’s First Nations applied to participate in this phase of the show.

It was an interesting process to define who we wanted to work with. As I had already begun drafting the play I knew that I wanted to co-create parts of the show. However, I didn’t quite know how I would go about this. I envisioned two key scenes that I could work on with the collective: one was a scene about climate change and how it’s taught and the other was a scene where the protagonist arrives at a First Nations reserve. I thought that these scenes would contain the main ‘political’ or more didactic elements of the show, would depart from realism, and be highly stylized while serving to educate the audience.

Thus I knew that we needed to work with creative people who had an interest in these issues and how they would be represented on stage. Recruiting actors would also be necessary for the quality of show that I was hoping for, but I thought finding actors would perhaps be easier than finding collaborators, as actors abound on campus and in the local theatre community. We thus decided to start by recruiting collaborators. We crafted a call-out that would appeal to a wide audience of
people and made it clear that we sought people who would be able to commit to the project for at least a few months.

**Figure 2: Call for Applications**

**Call for Applications – An aRc Theatre’s Co-Creation Process**

An aRc Theatre will present *When I Get Home*, a play by Tracey Guptill for a week-long run in March 2014. This presentation will serve as part of her master’s thesis in Environmental Studies at Queen’s University. *When I Get Home* is the story of Cara, a young woman who drops out of school to find her birth father but ends up in prison. Cara’s story is driven by her response to current environmental crises.

*We are currently looking for Collaborators to take part in the show’s unique creative process.*

Collaborators will participate in devising sections of the show. These include: a section that examines the framing of environmental issues, and a section that highlights some of the challenges facing First Nations communities.

We are seeking a diversity of collaborators, ranging in age, background, interests and artistic aptitudes. Actors, dancers, poets, digital artists, activists and academics are all encouraged to apply. Participants should be keen to engage in and learn more about the collaborative creation process and have some interest in exploring social and environmental issues.

**Fall Creation Workshop:**

- **From October to December**, meeting twice weekly at Queen’s University, one day being an exploration of concepts and learning and the second involving creation and play.  
- Maximum Number of participants: 15

**To apply:** Please send a brief letter of interest outlining your relevant experience, reasons for applying, and general availability to Tracey Guptill at traceyanneguptill[at]gmail.com, **by October 3rd, 2013**. If you are being considered, you will be contacted for an interview. While the intensive nature of this process requires bold commitment and sustained engagement you will learn new skills and be an integral part of creating thought-provoking art.
5.2.2 Selection

Table 1 below contains the replies that I received, including one applicant who was not selected and is therefore unnamed. However, I am including his application to demonstrate the themes that people responded to. It seems that people picked up on various themes of interest including: prisoner justice, Indigenous solidarity, environmental issues and collaboration.

Table 1- Applicants and their interests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed Brand</td>
<td>I am none of the following, 'actors, dancer, poet, digital artist, activist or academic' and I will not be able to attend all the sessions because of travel. I am however interested in a new challenge/opportunity. I was not going to respond, but when I spoke to you yesterday I got the feeling that maybe I should. I would be interested in learning more about your project. I'm going to be away from Oct. 6 to Oct. 14; also the first week of December and 5 weeks from the end of January to the beginning of March, just so you know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Hanes</td>
<td>I would enjoy being involved because I have great enthusiasm and interest in a wide range of artistic endeavors, and I'm excited by the idea of connecting with people in the artistic community in Kingston. The environmental topics you will be tackling in your play are ones that I find very interesting and consider to be very relevant in today's world, and I welcome the chance to learn and help others learn about such issues. I am also excited by the idea of working collaboratively with others to create something unique and beautiful. I have a moderate amount of experience in theatre. Throughout my youth I took basic lessons at the Domino Theatre in Kingston. I have also been involved in high school plays and one musical production of Guys and Dolls. I went to university to study Film Production at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany Cheung</td>
<td>Ryerson and have been involved in multiple productions working on and around set. In my work on short films and features I was involved in the art department, building, sourcing and managing props. I have an interest in visual arts and also circus arts - though limited experience with the latter. It correlates with two of my passions, theatre and social issues. Although I am a first year drama student, I have developed a passion for provocative forms of theatre through conducting research in physical and in-yr-face theatre during my last two years of high school. The idea of exploring theatre that explores the extent of expression through physical representation to provoke the audience into experiencing emotions and ideas that are outside of their comfort zone truly excites me. In addition, I have also developed a passion and interest in social issues and justice from being involved with different local based charities in Hong Kong, where I was born and raised. In the past three years, I have had the privilege to gain a variety of experiences that have allowed me to develop my skills as a theatre artist. As a deviser and co-director of an independent production of Grapefruit, I explored the effect of taking taboo issues and putting them in a normalized context to provoke the audience into reconsidering how their circumstances when growing up effects their values. In addition, I took part as an actor and deviser in a production of Blackout, a play that deals with a teenager’s processing of memories leading up to his arrest for attempted murder. Moreover, I have taken part in many different workshops focusing on Physical Theatre and In-yr-face theatre hosted by the Hong Kong Arts Foundation and International Schools Theatre Association, that have taught me about the fundamental principles in creating and devising pieces in this style. My experiences and passion correlate with the aims of this piece and that I will be able to contribute and grow from taking part in this project. I understand that commitment is crucial is the development and creation of presentations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelby Cuncliffe</td>
<td>Second year at Queen’s as an Environmental Studies and Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Experience</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial student</td>
<td>Medial student, with a special interest in theatre and film - performed in a variety of community theatre productions as an actor, choreographer, stage manager, props assistant, costume team member, and set painter - 8 years of ballet as well as some training in stage combat. member of the Film Club, where we write our own scripts and then act them out - performing with the Limestone Teachers' Theatre Company; writing plays, working backstage at the Grand Theatre, creating puppets and props for various puppet shows and stage productions, interning with Bread &amp; Puppet Theatre in Vermont. I have a degree in biology and I have been a member and a chair of the South Frontenac Environmental Committee, plus I live on 50 acres so I have a close connection to the natural environment. Currently I am on two book groups in Federal Institutions and the chair of KCC which helps re-integrate ex-inmates into the Kingston Community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Kirby</td>
<td>My current focus (academic and otherwise) is exploring how circus forms can be used in telling stories of/embodying/intervening in social justice issues - a second year PhD student in Cultural Studies. I have an MA in Development Studies (work focused on opposition to 2010 Olympics, with a focus on non-Indigenous support for Indigenous peoples) and an undergrad degree in Development Studies and Environmental Studies. I have a background in social justice activism, have worked for the Saint Mary's University Women's Centre and NSPIRG and have been involved in grassroots feminist, anti-war, student and migrant justice organizing. Artistically, I have a background in dance and for the last several years have been focused on training, teaching and performing in the circus arts (mainly aerial work -- silks, rope, trapeze etc.). I also teach yoga and movement classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Scholz</td>
<td>&quot;This sounds like a great idea and an amazing opportunity. My experience is mostly short films and documenting projects I am doing. I use a canon t3i DSLR right now. It can record in HD but is best used on a tripod and in good lighting conditions or inside. I also do photography. I have a few other cameras I can use on the project. I think I mentioned...&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
at the meeting that I have a very open schedule and I am interested in as much work as you can give me.”

| Dale Tracy | - Recent PhD graduate from the English department at Queen’s.  
- Dissertation considered compassion and contemporary witness poetry’s response to suffering  
- Has experience participating in collaborative endeavours in the form of event organization as well as in volunteer work in co-developing and co-leading a short story and creative writing course for inmates at a penal institution (through the organization Book Clubs for Inmates)  
- Note taking for public forums by the Poverty Reduction in Kingston action plan presentation and the Sustainable Kingston Annual Community Forum |
| Mark Vardy | “I'm currently writing a PhD in sociology at Queen's on environmental and social change in the Arctic. I'm reasonably well read on environmental and political philosophies. I've taught two courses on climate change, one in sociology and one in development studies (though they were both on climate change, they were very different courses) and I'll be teaching a course on social theory in the winter term.  

I've had a long interest in art, politics and social change. I've worked as a journalist, freelance writer and government policy researcher (in BC). I'm also a single parent to a fabulous daughter who is now in her first year of university. Raising her taught me a huge amount about many things. And in fact, now that she has left home and is doing really well on her own, I feel like I've got a bit more time to devote to other things in life, such as the play you are presenting.” |

I held interviews to select amongst the interested participants and to ensure that a professional atmosphere was created immediately. Two applicants did not end up participating in the project, one due to availability issues (Ed Brand) and another because he was not asked to join the group.
as I felt the group dynamic might be thrown off by his participation. The questions I asked can be found in Appendix B.

During this preparation time I also met with Brett Christopher of Theatre Kingston. He offered guidance and good advice, which included reaching out to Liam Karry of Single Thread Theatre Company. He suggested that Liam and his company may wish to co-produce the show with anARc Theatre. As the attempts to produce the show with a student-run theatre company were not proving successful this option was exciting. I met with Liam and we had an excellent conversation forming an instant theatre connection; he agreed to not only co-produce the show but to participate in the collective creation process. Felicia Latour stepped down from directing the show as there wasn’t a finished script that she could begin working on (with an anticipated March production). She nonetheless continued to participate in the creation aspect of the show and joined the group that she had assisted me in gathering.

5.2.3 Getting Started
As written in the grant application: “This piece offers a way to explore larger themes of what we can do about major societal issues, while examining the systems and ways of thinking that are at the root of our ecological crises. We hope that it can also be used to build dialogue about important questions that are currently being processed by our society. These questions draw on the themes of capitalism and political action, environmental destruction, issues on Canadian reserves, law and incarceration, and spirituality.”

I initially expected to have Monday nights reserved for creating work and developing an ensemble and to use our time on Wednesdays for a more formal exploration of academic learning on topics such as climate change and capitalism. As we proceeded and my planning became more
concrete the Wednesday learning sessions became more impractical and I realized that I had a lot of ground work to cover before the group would be able to create together.

In planning I sought inspiration from a few key sources that were quite helpful. I had a base in working with Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed techniques (such as those as mentioned in Chapter 4) from taking a previous workshop in Forum and Image Theatre. I also referenced his books (especially *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*) and Cathy Plourde’s essay, about her use of Boal’s techniques while working with young girls which she presented at the Association for Theatre in Higher Education in 1998. I built from the structure of group work that I was familiar with, having created plays with drama students and led workshops for the environmental movement. Thanks to my work at the Sierra Youth Coalition, where our sustainability work was linked to a strong commitment to social justice, I ensured that we began with at least a quick overview of anti-oppression and a discussion about creating a safe space. This involved sharing some anti-oppression literature with the participants and discussing what these concepts meant in reference to our work. Finally, I found an extremely helpful handbook by a UK based theatre company named Complicite that is well-known for their devised work. They outline how to create work in a community and how to make use of inspiration from other texts and artworks.

After an excellent conversation with the First Nations playwright Daniel David Moses, in which he highlighted the importance of thanking people, I attempted as much as possible to make the experience worthwhile for the participants, regardless of my aims related to the show and my thesis. I tried then to ensure that the process had elements of a structured class, for which they might pay in another instance, so they felt they were being offered something worthwhile as well. We learnt theatre games and developed the capacities of the participants (in acting, movement, speaking, and collaboration). While I was also hoping to begin developing the ensemble of actors
for the show, I did not expect of the participants that they would necessarily stick around until the show.

I decided to have Mondays include more games and theatre development and for Wednesdays to include broad discussion of ideas and the content of the play. In the end the work we did on each night of the week was highly connected and that division mostly served for my planning. The structure of our work was changed from my initial thoughts when writing the grant, by much-needed room for group formation and the need to lead the participants in a worthwhile process. What I had anticipated we would be working on (devising two sections of the play) quickly adapted into something else, something perhaps more fruitful than what I had anticipated. An overview of our sessions follow in Figure 3 but a more thorough account of our activities can be found in the Appendix C. The diaries in Appendix D elaborate more fully on what we covered together and my thoughts about the process. I have also included a brief summary below.

**Figure 3: Co-Lab Weekly Sessions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Mondays – games and learning theatre skills</th>
<th>Wednesdays – Discussion and Showing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Get to know each other</td>
<td>Read Act 1 – identify themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Image theatre exercises</td>
<td>Group sharing on themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Image theatre continued</td>
<td>Identify what we liked, what to keep – what needs more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Storytelling</td>
<td>Read Act 2 – identify themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Characters and physicality</td>
<td>Discussion about environmental justice and representation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.4 How it Went

We began our work slowly, with the important work of getting people accustomed to each other and to the project. I started with trust exercises and exercises that would engage participants’ whole bodies, ensuring that they had a chance to introduce themselves and their context. We also undertook specific exercises with the goal of creating a safe space. On the Wednesday of the first week we began right away to work with the text that I had already created for the show, which was to change quite a bit! The text was an easy way to get the participants talking and thinking about the themes that I thought were of import in our exploration. They were incredibly apt at picking up what mattered from the text; it was weird to have them talk about ‘Cara’ and feel echoes of what they said resonate with my own feelings and experiences, as though secretly they were all discussing my thoughts and feelings. Our follow-up discussion about what can be done about these issues was useful for garnering an understanding of the participants and also for my ideas as I wrote about Cara’s ability to effect change.

As we began working with Image Theatre, I realized that it was important to introduce them to Boal’s image theatre exercises by relating the initial explorations strictly to their own lives and experiences. This was firstly because with Boal’s techniques it’s important that the explorations
be personal, and secondly because this linked well to explorations of Cara’s journey as it was really their own experiences that they were bringing to their interpretation of Cara. These initial personal exercises were also a great way to warm the group up to the language of images. They were then able to create the key images (up to where Cara decides to leave home) that captured for them what the play was about.

**Figure 4: Mark and Liam’s Images**

![Mark and Liam’s Images](image1)

**Figure 5: Tiffany, Jane and Alex’s Images**

![Tiffany, Jane and Alex’s Images](image2)
This process was quite helpful in arriving at an understanding of where the play was going, and it was a great way to explore different threads of the play, learning what aspects of the story were important to various participants. It helped me keep various interpretations of the piece in mind as I wrote. This process, and our physicality and character development work, also deepened my understanding of the characters, as seeing other people explore them, and put their own personal twists in, added levels to the characters.

5.3 A Collective or a Community?

I found it more difficult than I had hoped to directly include participants’ ideas, such as the materials they brought in for discussion, as these elements had more indirect effects. However, their input was critical in other ways, as mentioned above. Other concrete examples include
insight from discussions with Mark about climate change science. He suggested some reading that was quite thought-provoking about the political demands for climate change predictions, and how that affects the way climate science is generated. This made me think a lot about the paper Cara could be writing, and what she might be learning in school. Similarly, when working with Shelby as she prepared a PowerPoint presentation on Climate Change, I successfully updated my climate change science (and refreshed my knowledge of what Cara would be learning in school). It was really enriching to have other people thinking about and bringing their own ideas to my work.

The real benefit was having people to discuss plot lines with, receiving instant and constant feedback and getting ideas at unexpected times through the exercises and exploration we were doing together. I was inspired to write new scenes based on our experimentations, and the process resulted in new plot outlines and then eventually much clearer ideas that helped me re-write the entire play. We were also able to experiment a little with devices such as including the audience by using a game, though more time would be needed to successfully implement ideas like that. I imagine the process would have been quite different had the group had more trained actors in it, as it was more difficult for this group to simply create scenes and we had to warm up to story-telling. It proved to be critical to have people in the group who veritably understood the protagonist’s struggle. Luckily, we did have a few theatre-makers with us to balance things out, and everyone seemed to learn a lot from each other. I was impressed by how much people seemed to be benefitting from the process.

Together we formed a small community by meeting up twice a week, engaging in trust exercises and sharing discussion on important issues. Strong bonds were created through the group exploration. From the evaluation I conducted at the end of our work I gathered that the process
helped us all feel less alone in our consideration of these often overwhelming topics. In the end, I realized that the whole of our process together was a consultation with a community of people who cared about these issues that I wished to represent. Rather than us working together to present something to two focus groups as earlier intended, we instead performed for each other. Ironically, even though we did manage to create a version of the classroom Climate Change scene, I didn’t end up using the ideas that they tested out for that scene, though I do think they’re great ideas!

5.3.1 Representation

Our explorations stuck mostly to the story up to Cara’s departure from home, before she arrives at the reserve. We did venture beyond to examine what might happen once she left home. Through our journey, our discussions and my own processing, I decided to move Cara into an anarchist house when she arrives in the town where Arnold Wallberger lives, as opposed to having her camp out on the reserve as originally planned. Because we didn’t have any Indigenous participation in the consultation and the devising wasn’t working out quite as planned, it didn’t make sense to try and cover issues relating to First Nations reserves in Canada as we wouldn’t be able to spend enough time on that section or cover the topics authentically. And as I mention in my diaries, at a Writer’s Festival event Thomson Highway advised that the best way to bring Indigenous issues to the public is to allow the space for Indigenous people to speak for themselves. We discussed this as a group and Jane brought up the fact that we could still include Indigenous issues as they relate to Cara sorting out her colonial identity, and that seeing this on stage is critical and does not constitute appropriation of another culture’s narrative or story. In my mind the story still moves around Indigenous issues, for Cara becomes involved in the No Olympics on Stolen Native Land campaign, and her birth mother and father were environmental activists that were allied with the First Nations group trying to stop a clear-cut before Cara was
born (though the audience is not privy to these facts about her mother’s story, it still plays into the narrative and how I wrote the play). These facts tie in Indigenous issues but place them in periphery to Cara and her experiences, which is the relationship of settler audience members to Indigenous issues.

Another issue about representation came up later in the process as I attempted to write the sections where Cara is jailed. It became clear to me that I do not have the appropriate experiences to accurately depict what this might be like. Also, in consulting a lawyer friend I realized that unless Cara was a part of a much larger conspiracy or threat she would not be jailed for any length of time for the tripping.

5.4 Phase 2- The Dance LAB

5.4.1 Finding Our Way

Figuring out the next phase of the project involved quite a bit of discussion and reflection. I was quite pleased with the success of what I began to call Phase 1 and I was ready to move forward in terms of getting the project on its feet. I knew I wanted to explore movement and that the movement would be separate from developing the text-based scenes. I imagined that the dance or more idea-based scenes would weave in around the dialogue scenes but I wasn’t sure how all of this would come together. Liam (representing Single Thread Theatre Company) was the co-producer and was thus working through these questions with me. I also spoke with a mentor of mine, Daniel Mroz. We discussed the process of building an ensemble versus the benefits of hosting selection workshops, as I hoped the next phase would somehow encompass both of these elements. It took some time to settle on the format.

I started by trying to generate interest via email with my initial ideas (which can be found in Appendix E). I then invited a group of dancers and movers to meet to discuss how to proceed
based on those who showed interest. The first meeting went quite well. Liam and I agreed to have him help represent the project so the two of us created an agenda and ran the meeting. It was determined that all those present at the meeting were happy to share their expertise and to offer a class in exchange for the learning they would receive from other members of this impromptu dance collective. We decided to open the classes up to anyone interested in joining, even for one particular session.

At the outset, there was still the hope that we would debrief these dancing sessions with ideas so we tried to group the movement with themes related to the show. However we quickly realized that this would not be successful, due to timing constrictions and the move towards informal participation. We decided that with the structure of these sessions it was best to focus on simply offering the movement classes (training for the actor). By the end I realized that these movement sessions were also a perfect selection workshop (and that they did in fact generate some material); it was, however, often difficult to have confidence that the work we were doing had a direct aim, as I was sure that not everyone in attendance would participate in the final show. There was quite a bit of what Dale had prescribed in that first sharing session of Phase 1: action for no known result, without a clear timeline, doing for its own sake.

Over the Christmas break I felt there was no way the play would be ready for a March showing. I had been coordinating a sponsored rental of Modern Fuel, the small art gallery (as discussed in the grant application) but Liam had asked me what my ideal venue would be, regardless of budget. This spurred the potential of presenting the show outdoors later in the year (aiming for a July show). While delaying the show-time allowed phase 2 to progress without the pressure of an upcoming show deadline, I finally decided (in March!) that the end of April show date (on the weekend that Modern Fuel was available and had held for us) made the most sense. This choice
was made for many reasons; however, it was mainly due to the emerging style of the play (which would fit well at Modern Fuel) and to ensure the participation of collaborators who would only be around until April.

5.4.2 The Importance of the Body Work

There were some thematic underpinnings to the movement workshops that were important to their genesis. One of these is my faith in the curative powers of connecting to one’s body movements (this is also connected to Merleau-Ponty’s reintroduction of the body in philosophical inquiry). As Cara is struggling quite a bit to find her balance I had originally envisioned that she would take a taiji class while in prison (as I had originally thought she would spend quite a bit longer than a weekend in jail). This class would help her find some balance and clarity, which are both benefits of movement work that I wanted to share with the Kingston community as a part of my project. The concept of accessibility, both financial and physical, was also important. Thanks to the grant from the Kingston Arts Council, and the participants who were exchanging their expertise for learning, we could afford to offer these classes free to the community. We did our best to spread the word about these excellent workshops and each class had over 10 people in attendance, and up to 20. I conceived of this as an anti-capitalist community building piece of the project, giving what we could and enabling skill-sharing. Of course, in the end the project did benefit from this process as everyone who came to act in the show (the Oratory phase) joined us for the workshops at some point! The physical accessibility was related to the intuition that this neat community project and the movement classes should include space for those who may have more difficulty participating in these opportunities. If the dance workshops were trying to represent an ideal of community building then they shouldn’t be able-bodied-centric. We thus held the workshops at the H’art Studio (which has a ramp) and worked to adapt our teaching to be as inclusive as possible.
I also thought of this phase as the time to develop the movement vocabulary of the show. We had a broad range of styles to draw from. Here is the poster I circulated, with the Phase 2 schedule:

**Figure 7: Phase 2 Poster - Dance LAB**

This July anARC Theatre and Single Thread Theatre Company will present *When I Get Home*, a play co-created by Tracey Guptill and the participants of the coLABoratory.

We are inviting interested actors to participate in a complimentary movement series loosely related to the themes of our upcoming project: the story of a young woman searching for her birth father who ends up in prison in response to current environmental crises.

This seven part series of ensemble-building explorations will run every Wednesday from 4:15 - 5:30 pm at the H'art Centre at 237 Wellington Street, beginning February 12th.

Admission is free.

Please join us.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Led by</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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Please Note that there were changes made to this schedule. Andrew and I replaced the Healing Dance workshop with a Contact Improv dance class. Jennifer Tuner was accompanied by Jaspreet Bal for the Choral Work (singing) and Jane did the final workshop with David Parker: Partner Acro part 2.

It was interesting to reflect back on how these classes translated into the play. Once we were well into the Oratory phase I recognized that the Dance LAB served many purposes, as a place to generate material, find participants and discover the movement vocabulary. Participation requirements were rather low level and allowed busy people to continue to be involved with the project by showing up when they could as it didn’t matter if sessions were missed.

A brief summary of some of the benefits of each session follows:

- we ended up using Ballet in the prologue (see Figure 8 for a rehearsal photo of the show; this piece was choreographed to accompany my poem by Jane with input from Helana and me and was accompanied by David Parker’s live music);
we included some lifts and partner acrobatics from Jane’s classes throughout the dance scenes (see Figure 9 for pictures from that LAB session);

Figure 9: Partner Acro
• the scene that Kim Renders ‘workshopped’ with us during her session is the one that she ended up guest choreographing and stylizing for the show;

• Meredith who taught Latin Moves ended up being a key member of the dancing troupe;

• Andrew who offered the contact improvisation class with me was also an important member of the dancing troupe, and we ended up using this style of dance in our movement scenes quite a bit;

• Jennifer found a section of text that was perfect for transforming into a song for the vocal exploration that she led with Jaspreet. I had been hoping to include more singing in the piece and later when we were looking for ways to add more chorus stylization I was able to throw this song in!

• Jane agreed to join the core collective and become the show’s choreographer. In the final session we were able to start experimenting with movement to include in the show.

Please see Figure 10 for a picture of Meredith and Andrew ‘flying’ (with me as the base) at Jane’s second partner acro workshop.
The co-LAB-oratory co-sponsored a workshop with visiting artist Viktor Lukawski based in Lecoq’s physical theatre training. We advertised the workshop to our participants and through co-LAB-oratory’s networks. It was an excellent training for our participants and showed dedication on the part of those who came!

5.4.3 The Decision Not to Audition!
This Dance LAB process meant that we were able to find all the people needed through our networks. The LAB helped us establish a presence and a relationship with potential artists so we could select people we trusted and thus we’d been building our ensemble slowly but for quite awhile. This meant we were able to avoid auditions, which can be time-consuming. We invited
community members who were consistent in attending the workshops to be actors. This included Alex Richards, to play the part of Felix. In another interesting moment of synchronicity it turned out that he is grappling with his own Indigenous ancestry. We invited Lindsay to play the mother as she herself is a mother (of Hazel, whom we also integrated into the piece). And then, we were able to recruit two excellent actors who have graduated from the Queen’s drama department and who came to our acro workshop. We also recruited a local actor Matthew Davis early on who was unable to attend the movement workshops, but was keen to hear about how they were going and to offer advice throughout the process. As mentioned earlier Jane agreed to take on creating the key couple movement scenes to weave in and around the text, and she joined Liam (now our director and dramaturge) and me as the core members of the collective. This meant, in essence, that we were the people most responsible for the outcomes of the show. Andrew, Meredith, and I joined the chorus and then Jane was able to recruit Helana, Kim, and Karen to the chorus for a good number of dancers.

We then had a month to bring together a show. This is quite the quick timeline, especially working with non-professionals and not full-time hours. Somehow we managed…! I do know that pulling together the show was a bit of a crunch for our set and lighting designer, but she did an amazing job. The same can be said for our stage manager, the person whose job it is to ensure a smooth running of the show.
Chapter 6

The Play

When I Get There

Performance as Research for a Master’s degree in Environmental Studies

a coLABoratory production of anARC and Single Thread Theatre Company

Conceived by: Tracey Guptill

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Scene 0.5: Prologue
Scene 1: Friction with Mum
Scene 1.5: Transition in Gridlock
Scene 2: Climate Change Classroom (slide show. with the chorus. )
Scene 3: Campaign Crap
Scene 4: With Love, Beth – could they read it with me? the singers.
Scene 4.5: Hitching (film)
Scene 5: Coffee shop
Scene 6: Road Trip
Scene 7: Meeting Arnold
Scene 8: Debriefing Felix
Scene 9: Decision to Act
Scene 9.5: Protesting and Arrest
Scene 10: Kelly Visits
Scene 10.5: Personal Moment
Scene 11: Janet Visits
Scene 12: Felix Visits
Scene 12.5: Poem
Scene 13: Felix Returns
Scene 13.5: Final Movement

Archive Copy of the performance:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGVDRcno0C4
Original Cast

Cara Harris: Tracey Guptill
Janet Harris: Lindsay Rodgers
Professor Harkness: Matthew Davis
John: Alex Oliver
Jessie: Tiana Prince
Edward: Alex Oliver
Felix: Alex Richards
Arnold: Matt Davis
Kelly: Tiana Prince

Dancers: Andrew Burrows
         Meredith Dault
         Tracey Guptill
         Helana Marks
         Karen Raddon
         Kim McFarlane
         Dale Tracy

Original Production Team:

Producers: Tracey Guptill & Liam Karry
Director: Liam Karry
Choreographer: Jane Kirby
Stage Manager: Doulton Wiltshire
Technical Director: Melodie Ballard
Scene 0.5: Prologue

LX 3 – Wait 3 seconds in B/O then: slow fade up to ambient lighting

_Ballet with text_

Hegel is surprising me as well
So there's all this philosophy right
and it pissed me right off - i mean we're not going to figure this out
says part of me we've been trying so long and all it does is confuse us
- Hegel's talking all about the spirit and shit, but it's like he sees the
Goodness working itself out here

and Marx he comes along and he's all like - dude, there is no
guidance from above, it's us we're dealing with, it's us who's gotta
figure it out. But then. he forgets that there's so much at play, there is
this spirit to history and the ideas that have formed us, and they live in
us and they create the dialogues we have in our heads, the thoughts
we think and the way we think them, our analysis is based on what
has shaped us -

and it's all getting very confusing because it's these thoughts that has
created this society and this order to contain us but at the same time
it's created all this waste - the pieces left behind - people not really -
Pain, suffering for those not in favour.

Scene 1: Friction with Mum

At home, hallway and kitchen

Janet: Where are you going?

Cara: I'm going to school Mum – look I don't need you checking in on me.

Janet: Well do you have your lunch

Cara: Yes Mum. I have a lunch. (aside) do you have your pills
Janet: What’s that?

Cara: Nothing… Look I have to go it’s going to be a busy day.

Janet: Okay dear – I’ll make a nice supper, maybe something especially fortifying -you’re running around all the time, busy busy bee.

Cara: Wonderful. Great. Thanks. I have to go now.

Janet: Yes, yes. I know. What did you pack – are you sure you don’t need some extra protein? A boiled egg – I could chop up some celery too – an egg salad…? And what time will you be home?

Cara: Look Mum, I’ve got it. And I’ve got to go. I have a meeting – and I don’t know what time I’ll be home.

Janet: What kind of meeting? – and what do you mean you don’t know what time you’ll be home. I mean, you’ve got to know, what appointments do you have? What time do your classes end? I mean really, it’s not so hard to give me a time- is it? Even just approximately - especially if you’re going to need me to make supper. It’s –

Cara: Mum! There are a million things that could come up, I’m working on a campaign okay. We might have to… - (loud exhale/or sound of frustration) my god. How do you do this? Are you trying to make me late? You want A grades and yet you sabotage me. Look, I don’t care if you make me supper. You can flake out all you want – stay home all day, with your misery, and just leave me alone! Let me get out of here!

Janet: Who is miserable Cara? Look, it’s not an outrageous request, wanting to know when you think you might be back – I don’t think it’s very kind of you – to talk to me like this. I am –

Cara: My mother? (beat) As my guardian, are you really doing this right now!? I have responsibilities okay - and they kind of outweigh the importance of mashing potatoes – I have shit to do, and I’m leaving – NOW.

Janet: Where do you get all this anger, I’m just trying-
Cara rushes out the door

LX 5 – Slow fade to B/O as Cara rushes out
Cara: Bye!!

Scene 1.5: Transition in Gridlock

LX 6 – Lights up quickly with a sickly green/gray effect

Resisting structures - Movement sequence

LX 7 – Crossfade to bright classroom lights

Scene 2: Climate Change Classroom

In a University Classroom

Professor Harkness: Today we’re going to review the information that we’ve covered throughout the course, in preparation for the final exam next week. We began with the science of Climate Change – noting the various causes, I will expect you to be familiar with: the historical climate eras, Albedo, solar tilt, and the atmospheric and oceanic streams that effect climate.

One should also be able to explain how our current modelling systems developed. Please place particular emphasis on how we use ice cores and pollen to track historical changes.

Next, we moved on to social determinants of accelerated climate change that we are currently experiencing – here you’ll need to define the Malthusian position on population growth, and the concept of exponential growth. Please explain how to calculate one’s ecological footprint and who developed this concept. Who remembers how many earths it would take to sustain the world at the North American level of consumption?

Finally we mixed the social and the science and looked at effects, Adaptation and Migration, and Food security
We looked at the current level of warming and some of the impacts – flooding, increased extreme weather activity and we examined the ‘safe’ ranges, why 2 degrees is the threshold and how our systems will be affected if we surpass these boundaries ... Make note of the unanticipated and unpredicted speed of arctic melt.

Now. What are the root-causes of human induced climate change?

Cara: Anthropocentrism – Consumption and Population Rise

Professor Harkness: Excellent – now the big question, (joking) what are we going to do about this? Cara? How are we going to get out of this?

Cara: (bursting into tears) I don’t know. I don’t knowwwww! (We’re so Fucked)

*She runs out of class.*

Professor Harkness: Cara, I’m looking at this paper and it doesn’t make much sense to me. You can’t just hand in a draft and expect me to mark it.

Cara: Professor Harkness – I can’t finish this paper. There’s just no way I can get it done.

Professor Harkness: Cara, that’s a bit strong isn’t it?

Cara: But the subject, is so vast, it’s impossible to solve.

Professor Harkness: My dear. You picked the topic, if it’s too wide then you need to narrow in on something more manageable.

Cara: But. But. It’s not manageable – managing these issues isn’t going to solve them. And, and – I just don’t know what we’re going to do. I don’t know what to suggest – the whole thing is a big fat mess.

Professor Harkness: Cara, that’s no reason to hand in something incomplete.

Cara: But it is. Cause the problem is too large.
Professor Harkness: Cara, you do know that writing a paper isn’t what’s going to change the world.

Cara: Then why am I writing it? What am I doing here?

*Cara is wiped and has to go to the next meeting. She gathers herself.*

LX 8 – Lights fade to 30% during transition; then fade back up again

**Scene 3: Campaign**

*Meeting room on campus and then walking through campus*

John: The meeting is starting - Calling those who care about what happens to our world, it’s about action, about change, about working together to make things better, different – join us, here at this table… *(inviting audience members)*

Okay some of you are new, you should know that decisions here are made by consensus –

There are rules you should know, these include how to make decisions in a group. Spirit fingers means you really agree, when you have a proposal you’ve gotta make a P with your hands, in favour is thumbs up, not a fan, thumbs down, if you couldn’t live with the idea you can block, a big x!

Here’s my proposed agenda for our discussion on banning bottled water. Are there any amendments, anything to add? No? Good!

A quick update for those of your who weren’t at the last meeting:

Today we’re brainstorming how to get the president to agree to our proposal– some schools have undergone a whole awareness raising campaign, and we’re still going to do that, but a strategic point was raised at our last meeting – a university in Chicago *didn’t* even need a campaign, they just went straight to the president and voila, bottled water was banned on campus. Now, we still want people to be aware of *why* we’re banning it, so we’re going to ensure we have a sufficient campaign to educate people as to the environmental benefits – all the bottles that the campus won’t be sending to
recycling – and that the university has to pay to recycle – *speaking aside* that’s our big selling point with the president. *Returning focus* And there will also be an emphasis on how water should be free for the public, how it’s not a commodity and how half the time these companies are charging you for the free municipal water that they’ve bottled! Why not just carry the alternative with you!? So we need to figure out who’s going to visit the president with a proposal and who is spearheading the awareness campaign.

Cara, any thoughts? About the campaign? And who might lead those efforts?

Cara: Oh. yeah. Sure I’ll take up the campaign.

John: Great. I knew you’d be up for it! I’ll obviously meet with the president, as I’m part of the University’s Sustainability committee – so he knows me. Anyone want to come?

*Fade out of the meeting and transition into the walk-out*

John: Cara what’s up – you were kinda quiet, aren’t you excited for the next step? We’ve gotta ramp this up!

Cara: Yeah, I know. I know, but…

John: But! But? Cara what are the butts – we’ve got to get battle-ready, it’s not time for butts.

Cara: Right. I’m ready, don’t worry, you can count on me. See you tomorrow for the meeting!

John: Great! We’ll see you then. Dream of success, my dear friend!

*John continues walking home. Jessie catches up to Cara*

Jessie: Heyo

Cara: Hi

Jessie: Hey there

Cara: What’s up?
Jessie: How have you been?
Cara: Alright.
Jessie: How are you feeling?
Cara: Jesus.
Jessie: Yes?
Cara: What a question
Jessie: Tell me
Cara: No one really wants to know and I don’t want to be one of those.
Jessie: One of those?
Cara: People.
Jessie: A person? You don’t want to be a person
Cara: Shut up.
Jessie: Talk to me.
Cara: But I don’t have anything to say.
Jessie: You do.
Cara: Don’t tell me what I do or do not have.
Jessie: I wouldn’t but you just told me that I didn’t want to know, and I want to assure you that I am willing to hear what you think and what you have to say.
Cara: Would you want to hear anyone? Everyone? Or just me?
Jessie: That’s a good question. I don’t know.
Cara: Hmm.
Jessie: Hmmm.
Cara: Well. It’s this whole campaign. I just don’t see how it’s actually going to do anything.
Jessie: What do mean- it’s going to do a lot. If we win. The university will have to commit to adding in water fountains, people who want water at school will have to start bringing in bottles!

Cara: Or drink pop.

Jessie: The concept of water as a public good will be reinforced.

Cara: You think Banning Bottled Water is going to actually remind people that water should be free?

Jessie: I don`t know Cara, I haven`t done a survey. But it might. Especially if we rock this campaign.

Cara: I just fail to see how these tactics are actually going to help anything. I mean, did you know that there’s a pro-bottled water group forming - can you believe it? We’re actually facing organized opposition to this seemingly obvious decision.

Jessie: Really?

Cara: Yeah. It’s true, I feel like shaking them.

Jessie: Totally!

Cara: Yeah, I’m sorry but whose choice should it be about whether or not we run the earth into the ground,

Jessie: And eradicate millions of species?

Cara: Seriously. And the worst is that the people in charge of the ruination - people like that asshole who runs Nestle and is arguing that water ought to be ‘valued’ well those people are all bigger than us, they control more than us. Banning bottled water in one – or even a few! – Canadian Universities is not going to have an impact on the privatization of water…

Jessie: Cara…

Cara: There. You heard what’s on my mind – are you happy now? You sure you want to hear what I think now?
Jessie: Cara, I think you’re right – but I don’t think it means that we should give up. Just ‘cause people don’t agree, doesn’t mean we should stop trying. Little changes matter – it’s up to us to build a better world. If we stop what do you think will happen?

Cara: If we keep trying what do you think will happen?

Jessie: Well we’ll ban bottled water! And people will notice/

Cara: /Who’s going to notice? Our friends?

Jessie: Yes. And, others! People who can’t buy water on campus anymore.

Cara: And you think this will change their minds about whether or not to destroy the world. Look, it’s not up to people like us. We’re pawns – in a much bigger game. We can’t convince the rest of the world to stop consuming. In fact, we can’t even stop ourselves. We’re a part of this machine. There’s nothing we can do –

Jessie: Cara. I’ve always looked up to your passion – your dedication and your drive are really inspiring... I actually joined this group after you did a presentation in our class.

Cara: Oh yeah?

Jessie: Yeah. You’re changing the world all the time. But you know that it’s cool if you need a break. Seriously. You don’t have to be on, all the time.

Cara: Sure. Great, thanks for the advice but I’m sorry Jessie, how exactly does one take a break – the world can’t afford a break. We just need to do something real. Something that will actually have an impact. And I just don’t think banning bottled water is gonna hack it.

Jessie: Well, what else do you suggest?

Cara: I don’t know. But I’m not sure I can keep doing this…

Jessie: Well, I hope you do. We need you for this campaign to work.
Cara: Right, except now we’re not even doing a vote, we’re just going straight to the president. You don’t need me for that. Besides, I thought you said it was okay to “take a break”.

Jessie: It is! If that’s what you need. But you weren’t into that, you said, we needed to do something real, I just want to remind you that this is real Cara – this does matter.

Cara: Okay. Great. Thanks for the reminder. *(she has arrived at her bus stop or mailbox)*

Jessie: See you at the meeting tomorrow?

Cara: Yeah, sure.

Jessie: Bye.

Cara: Bye.

**Scene 4: With Love, Beth**

*In Janet’s kitchen. Cara has picked up the mail from the central box.*  
*Opens something addressed to her and begins to read it aloud:*

Cara: Dear Cara:

This is not an easy letter to write but I have wished I could write to you for so long that in a sense there is a relief in being able to do so.

I am your Grandmother – the mother of your birth mother, and I am writing because I have some unfortunate news to share with you. Your birth mother, Joan Desneigues, passed away last Friday, May 16. She was 37.

With her passing I am able to follow up with the request you placed with the Adoption Disclosure Registry. I have known that you were looking for us and I can now point you in the direction of your closest living relative, your father. His name is Arnold B. Wallberger.
I wish you so many blessings and I hope this information is of use to you.

With love,

Beth

Janet enters

Janet: Oh look who decided to show!

Cara: Yes, Mom. It’s late – I’m sorry I missed supper but our meeting went late... and...

Janet: Oh don’t worry about me. I ate all by myself –

Cara: Mom, please – it’s not a good time. What did you make? I’ll have some now.

Janet: (silent)

Cara: (serves herself something to eat. After a few bites speaks) My birth mother is dead.

Janet: Who?

Cara: Her name was Joan Desneiges. And she is dead.

Janet: I suppose you think that’s my fault.

Cara: What? No... Mom. I just wanted to let you know, I just found out myself and I kinda thought it was a bit of a big deal, ok?

Janet: Well I never stopped you from finding out any details. It was her who put a direct block on the information, that is not my fault.

Cara: Oh my god.

Janet: She was the one...

Cara: Are you really going to blame her – do you really need to thwart the blame from yourself that badly? Come on. The point isn’t whose fault it is, the point is that she’s dead. She’s dead. That’s all I said. Can we move on?
Janet: How do you know she’s dead?
Cara: Well-
Janet: How did you find out her name?
Cara: I got a letter.
Janet: From who!?
Cara: Look, Mom – I shouldn’t have brought it up – I just got the letter, I need time to process this. I don’t want to talk about it right now. It’s too soon.
Janet: Cara. You can tell me who sent it – and then process it all you want.
Cara: I don’t want to tell you – you’ve ruined it already. It’s already all a mess – you can’t have any more of it.
Janet: Honey I’m sorry – I didn’t mean it – look I know this must be hard for you. I’m trying to help, let’s start over. Just tell me who the letter is from.
Cara: No. No. NO. I won’t do it. Leave me alone.
Janet: Oh Cara... Stop, stop it honey.
Cara: No, I’m not stopping, actually – actually. Yes, I am. I am stopping - this stupid schooling, I am stopping that, and I’m leaving. I’m 19 and there’s nothing you can do or say to keep my here anymore. I am so sick of school, and of all of this.
Janet: Cara, please. Don’t be ridiculous. Your school is very important to you.
Cara: Who? Look Mom, you may think it’s imperative but all I see is a ticket to monotony, to filling in my role in this ridiculous system, where I can choose to cycle and compost, to wear my “wish the world were different” badge – maybe even work in an NGO but what will that do? I’ll just be slotting myself in to something that is so completely wrong. And I refuse. I refuse to give in and give up, I won’t play by their rules. Or yours. I’m not you. And I don’t have to stay here.
Janet: Cara, this is ridiculous.

Cara: Yes it is. I completely agree. It’s all ridiculous. The most ridiculous thing is you blaming a woman you don’t even know for your misery. There is nothing keeping me here now. I’m the one paying for my school, I owe you nothing. I’m leaving.

Janet: Oh you’re leaving are you?

Cara: Yes, I’m leaving tomorrow and there’s nothing you can do about it.

Janet: You stand there next to a table of food that I’ve made for you, made you for all of those 19 years – and you have the audacity to claim you’re leaving. Fine, leave! But give me the food back, give me the time I’ve spent raising you back – where is that dear daughter? (Throwing the food in the garbage)

Cara: (watches in silence)


Cara: Good! Then it’s all settled. Maybe you should leave too while I’m at it.

Janet: Excuse me?

Cara: You just sit here and complain about everyone else. How they don’t appreciate you, how we’re never around and you just serve serve serve. Well why don’t you stop then? Why do you just wait here for him to come home? He stopped coming home years ago, he’s never coming back. But you continue to wait and complain. To blame. I am so tired of it, I’m leaving, and maybe you should too.

Janet: You have no right... no right to talk to me like this. Who do you think you are?

Cara: Not your daughter.

LX 9 – Fade to B/O
Scene 4.5: Hitching

LX 10 – Fade up to “hopeful” amber lighting

Movement sequence with Jane, with video of the world passing

Optional: Projection of map of terrain she’s traversing - North Bay/Sudbury/Winnipeg-esque area

Scene 5: Coffee Shop

LX 11 – Crossfade into “coffee shop” lighting

Cara heads to a coffee-shop – where she can relax, collect herself, and figure out what to do next. She’s got her pack.

Edward: Where you headed?

Cara: Nowhere now.

Edward: Oh yeah? Then you’re coming from somewhere?

Cara: Irrelevant.

Edward: Fair enough.

Cara begins writing in her journal while Edward reads from a book, then

Felix shows up

Felix: Sweet pack.

Cara: Thanks.

Edward: So are we on track with the pamphlets?

Felix: Yeah I had my call with IEN last night, they like our wording for the most part – they suggested some minor changes but nothing drastic.

Edward: Cool man cool. What did they want to change?
Felix: Well they’re not sure about the TNCC analysis part. We talked about it for while and folks thought it might not be necessary really. A bit jargon-y and perhaps away from the central point.

Edward: Away from the central point, really? Um it is the central point. Common man, you’ve read Sklair’s book. You know –

Felix: Yeah but it's not really central to this campaign...

Cara: What campaign is that?

Edward: It’s about the people who control the world and how they control us.

Cara: Oh yeah?

Edward: Yeah.

Felix: Well, not exactly. The campaign is about the Olympics, and how they’re on unceded territory.

Edward: And it questions, just who benefits from the Olympics. It asks: who are they really for? We may think it’s a fun and games, entertainment and national pride. But, no. A circus organized for profit of the few at the expense of the many.

Felix: Right. But the especial expense of those who truly suffer under colonialism.

Edward: Exactly. But the culprit matters too! We have to identify the enemy.

Felix: Edward...

Edward: No! It’s important! The Transnational Capitalist Class musn’t remain unidentified! They’re the ones orchestrating the whole show. We are re-shaping the infrastructure of one of our cities, spending billions, to bring in profits and business to the top few who shape our minds through their control of media, selling us these competitive games and ideology of what life’s about. It’s a vicious cycle.

Felix: Well it’s a bit more complicated than that.
Cara: Can I help?

Edward and Felix speak at the same time:

Edward: Sure!
Felix: Maybe later.

Edward: (laughing) You'll have to excuse my friend here – he doesn’t always recognize an ally when he sees one.

Felix: I’m sorry I don’t mean to be rude. It’s just that we have a lot of work to do and this isn’t about socializing.


Cara: Look, I’m not here to socialize, come to think of it I’m not really here to organize – but my other project is at a bit of a stand-still at the moment. And if you guys are so busy with this campaign, you might need some help. I can guarantee that if you’re trying to stop the spreading of evil, I’m on your side.

Edward: What’s your other project?

Cara: (looking at Felix) I’m looking for a guy, Arnold Wallberger.

Felix: Don’t know him.

Edward: Who is he?

Cara: My birth-father.

Edward: Oh.

Felix: What’s the roadblock?

Cara: Well I went to the address I found on 411 – he’s not there. There was some other lady there, she said she moved in in September, and doesn’t know who lived there before, or anyone named Arnold.

Edward: Okay. So what now?

Cara: I’m not sure – figure out where I’m staying tonight I guess.
Edward: Oh that’s easy. You can stay with us. We have a spare room for cool trekkers and allies.

Cara: Oh yeah? Which one am I? A cool trekker or an ally?

Felix: You choose I guess.

Cara: Whereabouts?

Edward: Close to here – walkable. I can take you there after this meeting.

Cara: Okay. Should I...?

Felix: Stay for the meeting.

LX 12 – Slow crossfade to afternoon lighting

Narrator: And so, Cara was welcomed in. While they planned their campaign she adopted the refrain. Something seemed to resonate with these friends who share a belief some grief, but really it was hope that they could reach something of value that they could engender something of their hearts in the world.

**Scene 6: Road Trip**

*Cara is in the anarchist house and then in a truck with Felix, going to meet her father*

Edward: Cara!

Cara: Yes?

Edward: We’re leaving now! You sure you don’t want to come?

Cara: Yeah, it’s cool – I really do need to get back to my project, it’s been ages since I’ve done any research on Monsieur Wallberger.

Edward: Okay well good luck then! We'll keep our ears peeled for Mr Arnold as well.

Cara: Ha. Ha. Okay thanks friends. Good luck out there to you too – go change some minds and hearts!
Cara gets on the computer and Felix enters

Felix: Hey.

Cara: Oh hi. Everyone just left.

Felix: I know. (gives pause) I think I found him.

Cara: What?

Felix: Yeah. I think so.


Felix: Well my uncle. I told him about you. And he thought he remembered an Arnold – asked some of his friends, turns out the guy is still around. He has a shop just out of town, near the reserve – he does custom furniture.

Cara: No way.

Felix: I don’t want to get your hopes up before we know anything for sure. But this guy’s name is Arnold Wallberger.

Cara: Whoah, no way. (gives pause) Let’s go.

Felix: (laughing) I thought you’d want to get right to it.

Cara: You thought right. Let’s go.

Felix: Cara, do you know what you want to say to him?

Cara: Excuse me, I know you’re trying to be helpful here, but I don’t need you to manage this situation for me – you said you can bring me, so let’s go.

Felix: Okay.

Cara: Ok. How do we get there?

Felix: I’ve got my cousin’s truck.

Cara: (at the door) Great!
Narrator: And so they drove in the loaned vehicle and Cara marvelled at her mind. The while she revolved around buzzing and numbed reactions her mind kept returning to the rumble of the engine – how it must work, how it might work – and how it’s all dependent on something we pull from the earth and here she was, going to visit the land and her father. She was going to could be meeting him. Her father –

Felix: I’ll wait here.

[Turns on the Radio] - Canadian folk song about the value of human life and leaves

**Scene 7: Meeting Arnold**
Small carpenter’s shop, in a shed beside Arnold's house

Cara: Um... Hi?

Arnold: Hello

Cara: Hi Arnold.

Arnold: That’s me.

Cara: Yes. I’ve been looking for you.

Arnold: Who are you?

Cara: Right. Well. I'm Cara. Sorta.

Arnold: I see. And I’m supposed to know a Kara?

Cara: Well, you know you have a daughter...

Arnold: Yes. Her name was Jessica.

Cara: Right. Well her name changed.

Arnold: Oh. *(gives pause)* Your name was Jessica Desneiges-Wallberger.
Cara: Now it's Cara Harris. I'm your daughter.

Arnold: I see. Well.. What can I do for you Kara?


Arnold: Well... I got some work to do here. Thanks for stopping by.

Cara: Thanks for stopping by? Really?

Arnold: Well – what are you planning? To stay here?

Cara: Well I thought we'd at least have more time to talk.

Arnold: Well I'm busy with a job today – and I don't see what else we got to talk about...?

Cara: Maybe if I came by tomorrow...

Arnold: Listen little lady, it ain't really a good plan to stick around here. I can tell you. This place sorta sucks you in. Yer mother most definitely wouldna liked to see yo you here. What did she end up doing anyway?

Cara: I don't know. The terms of my adoption stipulated I not know anything. Any. Thing. The only reason I've got any information about you now cause Beth sent me a letter.

Arnold: *(gives pause)* Oh. I see.

Cara: You see.

Arnold: Yes. That Beth is still a meddler.

Cara: Meddler? Um – because she helped me find you?

Arnold: Listen, I'm not interested in talking about Beth.

Cara: Well what would you like to talk about?

Arnold: *(silent)*

Cara: As I'm sure you can imagine that there's some stuff I'd like to know.

Arnold: Like...
Cara: Like anything, her name, how you met, a story, do I look like her?!

Arnold: Oh you mean like all the things she stipulated you not know?!

Cara: Oh Christ.

Arnold: I think you've been here long enough for today. I told ya I have things to do.


Cara exits

LX 13 – Lights dim to 80%

**Scene 8: Debriefing Felix**

*In a truck.*

Felix: So you're ramping up for the campaign hey?

Cara: Yeah, I guess so. You don't have to make small-talk.

Felix: I'm not trying to.

Cara: Oh?

Felix: No.

Cara: Okay.

Felix: I guess I just want to talk about it cause no one has responded to my email.

Cara: Well Felix, I'm afraid it's a bit late for you to be re-thinking the whole campaign.

Felix: Well it's just that I've been thinking a lot – and talking to my uncle... and I really think it's important.

Cara: You think the words of our slogan matter that much?
Felix: Obviously. I mean c’mon Cara, it’s everywhere. Bumper stickers, lawn signs, in the papers even – those words are everywhere.

Cara: Yeah, exactly! Exactly the point Felix. The slogan is everywhere, the campaign has recognition, we can’t just detach our efforts from that based on a technicality. That's hardly solidarity.

Felix: Cara, it is not - a technicality. It’s the whole approach. We can’t be sending out the wrong message – It is not ‘land’ in the colonizers language that we’re fighting for. We need to be fighting for sovereignty. The approach needs to be from our own realm, to regain access to our own ways, not just to make gains in the world of the colonizer.

Cara: I can’t believe you want to talk about this right now.

Felix: I’m sorry. I know that was probably a big deal for you. I just thought – well I know that you’re going to the protest next week. But there’s another consult with the mining company coming up on the reserve. Maybe you could come and meet my uncle, we could focus our efforts on that. Instead of this protest. I guess I figured that you’d get it.

Cara: Look Felix, I can’t deal with this right now. I think the campaign is important. Point blank. I know that the question of land is not framed properly, I get it. It’s important. But we need to make a point that people can understand –

Felix: Why do’we’ always need to put things in the language of the oppressors, of the masses. Maybe the point isn’t about trying to convince everyone of something. Maybe the point is to actually figure something out.

Cara: And then watch the world around you fall to shambles? We’re not in control here. There’s other major interests pulling the strings – we need to fight them.

Felix: There are many battles. Everywhere. All the time.

Cara: Oh god. The sage speaks again.

LX 14 – As Felix exits: swift crossfade to ambient lighting
**Scene 9: Decision to Act**

Cara: I’ve been waiting for this. I’ve been waiting for something of import to happen in my life. I’ve been waiting for a way to make my mark to feel like my voice, my being is heard - that what I have to say that is of worth, is being listened to. In this world there’s so many voices ringing sometimes all I hear is the ringing of my own head, voices telling me how to act, what’s right, what’s wrong – diagnosing the problem, *why* things are like this, like that. This is something I don’t have to question, I know it’s right – I know it’s time.

LX 14 - “it’s time”: swift crossfade to gentle outside night lighting

**Scene 9.5: Protesting and Arresting**

*Movement sequence by Jane*

LX 15 – lights progress to increasingly suggest an aggressive police presence  
LX 16 – Sudden B/O

**Scene 10: Kelly Visits**

LX 17 – Slow fade up to white detention centre lights

*Cara is in the detention centre visitor’s room waiting. She’s pacing, talking to herself, and trying to figure out what to do.*

*Kelly enters*

Kelly: I've come to talk to you, I really just wanted to forget the whole thing happened, I wanted to forget about you - Not give you the acknowledgment of existence. But - this anger has been Surfacing in my dreams I keep waking up seeing your face, Feeling the fall.

I mean it's not like it was that big a deal.

Just a fall.

In a really big moment.
With a lot of cultural significance.

However it was also
Just a fall.
A little slip - of which I was able to pick myself up and keep going
The flame didn't even go out.
You didn't even accomplish that.
Just a slip - and some scratches

But that feeling.
Of fear. Falling forward - on my face
It won't go.
So
So
So
Soooo
I decided that I would come and see you
Meet you.
Tell you that you what you did
Was not cool
In fact.
It was despicable.
What the hell do you think you accomplished?
Cara: Look. You don’t know me and you certainly don’t understand why I did what I did. And I don’t expect you to.

Kelly: Is that it? You intervene directly in my life and you expect to just shrug me off? No sorry, we’re going to talk.

Cara: What do you want to talk about?

Kelly: I want to talk about what you did. And why.

Cara: I think I already stated my stance. You wouldn’t understand. There’s nothing to talk about.

Kelly: Umm, as I said – we’re going to talk. I want to know how you think your action is going to subvert the capitalist system. I know all about your campaign, I’ve heard the slogan, “No Olympics on Stolen Native Land”. But please tell me how you think your action is going to stop the Olympics or even come remotely close to addressing the Native land claims issues. You’re alienating the very people you are attempting to educate.

Cara: Oh, you’d like to talk about the campaign and capitalism even! Yes, let’s talk. Let’s talk about one should go about educating people. Maybe you and your friends can go to the Starbucks after your yoga class drink your latte and together discuss your concern about problems with the land claims process, interspersed with discussion about just how many new sweaters you’ll need for the season, oh and how maybe you can help alleviate consumerism with a clothing swap!

Kelly: Excuse me?

Cara: and about how deeply you have no idea about what’s actually happening to these people and what they go through.

Kelly: And you do? Have you talked to the people whose land you’re defending?

Cara: Yes.

Kelly: Oh really, I’m curious about whom you’ve consulted with?

Cara: We had organizing calls with groups all over Canada, with the Indigenous Environmental Network, with the woman who started the
campaign. Look, you’re not going to understand. You don’t understand real struggle –

Kelly: And you’ve struggled?

Cara: In my own ways. What’s important is that I’m trying to understand the suffering of others, I refuse to be complicit in this fucked up world.

Kelly: Look I’ve had my doubts too - but I'm not gonna just give up on everything. On this whole world. Check out where your perspective has landed you. What good is this doing? Sitting in a jail - you have jailed yourself. Congratulations - I'm sorry but I don't see any access to a world you could be helping. What can you do from in here?

Cara: Listen, I'm sure you're just happy to benefit off a system that props you up while it pushes others down. But I'm not. I'm not willing to just watch people suffer and the world self-destruct. Okay?

Kelly: No. Not okay.

Cara: I had to act. I had to do something. As I said I don’t expect you to understand, so I don’t think talking about it will do much good. Besides this is actually a detention cell, I’m not technically jailed yet.

Kelly: I'm not sure you understand what you've done.

Cara: I'm not sure you understand what you're a part of...

Kelly: And what do you suggest? Do you want to tear down every single institution in this world? Do you think that will help anything? What about the people who are happy, the women who have rights, all human rights for that matter? Do you think achieving these things was easy?

Cara: And you think we’re respecting human rights? Oh sure, some people are quite happy in our privileged bubble, there are people who are successful - fulfilled - but I'm not concerned with them – I want to speak up for the forgotten, the down-trodden, the people that your cushy little system steps on.

Kelly: I fail to understand how you are helping anyone. Please explain to me how your action helps the land claims process.
Cara: Look, that’s just one part of the problem. It’s just an example of the oppression our development (read: industrialization) has caused in the name of progress. Countless others suffer for your latte.

Kelly: Like who? You speak in grand generalizations, please offer some examples.

Cara: Wow. Examples. I have hundreds, thousands really cause I’ve got access to google. Farmers are being bankrupt in the name of cheap food and coffee beans, the economies of whole countries are directed towards the goal of serving our needs. Peasants are losing their livelihood thanks to our technological ‘advances’.

Kelly: Peasants?

Cara: Yes, have you heard of the Via Campesina? People reclaiming their traditional ways of life. The life of the peasant is admirable, sustainable even! But our search for ever-growing capital and cheap foods is bankrupting that very diverse lifestyle. One major economy is seeking to control everything, pushing new methods, new seeds, new tech that is all an experiment. One based on monoculture, GMO seeds and pesticides that deplete the soil - no longer growing foods for the local economy but producing larger yields of single crops but all at a cost. This whole process replaces traditional knowledge, making peasants reliant on the expert in Belgium or North America developing solutions to problems that the technology created.

Kelly: Whoa. Okay, okay that was a lot of talking. So you think what you did addresses the global food system?

Cara: What I did is a statement: that I’m not buying it. I’m not buying in, I won’t be coerced. I won’t participate in this. This system destroys. Do you know that we are in the middle of this planet’s sixth mass extinction – extinction. Mass. We’re not just losing some species here and there. We are decimating this planet’s diversity of life. This system is becoming so large and omnipresent that it is difficult to avoid it. I need a car to get around, I need a computer and social media skills, I need to work hard at some stupid job to carve out an empty life filled with tv, a life that was once fulfilled through community interactions.

Kelly: So you think you’re protecting the animals, and traditional ways of life?
Cara: Yes, and speaking for all the people who this system oppresses, pushes down – the poor. Cause in this system by definition people need to be exploited for it to work, for someone to get value from them – to pay less than they profit they need to use resources and people.

Kelly: And you expect to counter that with futile cynicism?

Cara: That's not how I'm countering it! I'm working with like-minded people and not compromising for false solutions. I refuse to be co-opted.

Kelly: And what will you and your five friends achieve? Seriously. I want you to think about it – is it your goal to explain to the rest of the world that who they are is wrong?

Cara: Look I told you I don’t think we’re going to come to any resolution here.

Kelly: Let me get this straight then Cara - what you think is actually correct and all the rest of us are ignorant so we should suffer? Cause we don’t think like you?

Cara: Just forget it.

Kelly: Cara, tell me why do you think you want everything to change so radically? Yes, I acknowledge that there are people suffering everywhere – but you hurt me, you’ve now passed on that suffering, and how has that helped? Really. Maybe you should stop acting on account of others, who are you to decide what they need? And how do you know you’re not just being manipulated by that same drive to be important to do something special... have you ever considered that you’re just a product of that same shit. Are you the queen, are you going to force people to be subjected to your understanding? The right one obviously. And really, tell me when you look inside - Why do you want everything to change so much?

Cara: Look. You don’t understand me – and I don’t care – Please leave.

Kelly exits
Scene 10.5: Personal Moment
Cara is in the detention centre visitor’s room waiting.

Cara: Fuck, fuck, - (more swearing).
I don’t know. I don’t know. Nononono... Maybe. Mayyyybe.

Cara. Who are you talking to?
Myself. You.

Isn’t that weird?

Well maybe. But really I don’t quite know what else to do at this point....

Why were you so mean to that woman?

Cause I’m deeply unhappy. Cause I’m a stain on existence.

Cara. We’ve been over this. You are a blessing. Your capacity to care is admirable, beautiful.

Then why did I make that woman so angry – why couldn’t I just tell her that I was sorry. That I didn’t mean it. That it was an accident, really. And that I’m sorry I ruined her big moment. I’m horrible and I’m sorry.

You are caring. You are passionate and you’re angry. Now aside from the world from all the things you can point to. Tell me, why are you suffering – not anyone else – why are you upset?

I don’t know. Maybe cause I’m adopted. Or cause my father left my mother -and she blames herself for not being able to have a child, so she smothers me. She smothers me to protect me from the fact that I wasn’t a worthy substitute for an actual daughter. I couldn’t make him stay. I wasn’t enough for us. We couldn’t be that happy family. She blames me too, but doesn’t want me to know. But I know. And my first mother.... (You) left me. I’m not enough for anyone.

But -what if that weren’t true. What if everything is okay? What if you are enough? What if you don’t have to BE anything. You don’t have anything to prove. What if love weren’t so scarce? What if it’s just
there. It is a given. Do you think you would want to change the whole world if you felt safe and at ease in it?

But I don't.

That's a horrible feeling to have I imagine. But maybe it doesn't have to be that way?

**Scene 11: Janet visits**

*Janet enters*

Janet: Hey there daughter.

Cara: Hi there mother.

Janet: Well I'm certainly glad that you're okay.

Cara: Yeah. Thanks – I'm doing fine.

Janet: I was a bit worried.

Cara: I can imagine. Yes Mom, I know I'm hopeless, you can't believe it. Just please, spare me the guilt-trip - okay?

Janet: I'm sorry to arrive unannounced. I just hoped we could chat a bit.

Cara: Of course. Of course we can. I'd love to talk. Please, let's talk.

Janet: Okay. As I said I wasn’t sure I should come. But with all that’s been happening.

Cara: Yes. It's been alot. I'm sorry if I worried you Mom.

Janet: Yes, you did – but I'm just glad you're okay.

Cara: I wasn’t ever in danger.

Janet: We couldn’t really tell from the news what was going on. But I figured you wouldn’t do anything stupid.

Cara: Oh you did, hey?
Janet: Yeah. I figured you weren’t with bad people… I figured you knew what you were doing. Really. Seeing the news, I kind of smiled inside and thought, that's my daughter doing what she believes in.

Cara: Thanks Mom.

Janet: So how are you doing in here?

Cara: Good. Okay. It’s a bit weird, being in this no-zone zone. Not quite knowing what’s coming next.

Janet: I can imagine. But your case is rather straight-forward isn’t it?

Cara: Is it?

Janet: I can’t imagine you meant to trip that woman, it was an accident right?

Cara: Umm. Well yes, but it’s more complicated than that. I think that the media attention for the campaign generated by my accident coupled with the stuff that happened at the other protest is really important. Whether warranted or not I think it’s an opportunity to bring more attention to these critical issues.

Janet: And how exactly would you do that? Bring more attention to these issues.

Cara: Well I would let them say I was conspiring with the people who planned the other events that happened.

Janet: Honey, I know you had nothing to do with lighting that cop car on fire. Do you even know those people?

Cara: Sorta, we had a few calls with them.

Janet: You didn’t help them plan what they did, did you?

Cara: No, but I could have known that it was gonna happen.

Janet: Did you?

Cara: It’s besides the point. The more attention to these issues the better.

Janet: Oh honey.
Cara: Mum you can’t tell me you’re proud and then just expect me to come home.

Janet: Cara.

Cara: Mum. It’s not gonna happen, I’m not gonna just come home and go back to what I was doing before. My world has changed, I know too much. I can’t just fit in to the cookie cutter existence, it hurts too many people.

Janet: Oh Cara ... you know it’s actually amazing really.

Cara: What is?

Janet: That – that you got involved in the same issues as your mother.

Cara: What things? My mother was involved in the same issues?

Janet: Well sort of. Your mother was an environmentalist –

Cara: She was? How come you never told me?

Janet: Cara, the adoption agreement stipulated that we not talk about her.

Cara: That makes so much sense. That’s ... it’s – wow.

Janet: I guess it is rather neat.

Cara: Oh mum. Thanks for telling me. I really, really, really appreciate it.

Janet: Ok good.

Cara: Yes. Very.

Janet: You know Cara, it’s really up to you about what to do next. I just want you to be happy.

Cara: Thanks Mum.

(Scene 12: Felix Visits)

Cara is in the detention centre visitor’s room waiting.

Felix enters

Felix: I had to come. Are you alright?
Cara: Yeah. Okay I guess.

Felix: So what’s the verdict? Did she mean it or didn’t she? Is it a conspiracy or was it an accident?

Cara: Oh I don’t know Felix. Does it even matter? I feel so tired in here; I don’t even care what happens next... I’ve been trying my best to sit still. You know, just stop imagining forward and sit with how things are… And I found that I wrestle, I felt all these feelings come up, this restlessness that doesn’t know which way is up and just what is sideways anymore.

I’m always working so hard to find some solution – I think I actually feel like somehow the whole world’s fate is up to me – but the funny thing is that the other side of that struggle is this incredible feeling of powerless and guilt, like I can’t do nothing against these surging powers that be – that it’s simply arrogance to feel like I have any say at all - and just maybe I did the wrong thing.

Felix: I thought you said it didn’t matter Cara.

Cara: Is that what I said?

Felix: Yes, just now.

Cara: Okay, but here’s the other thing I was thinking about – I tried to imagine, just say, what if – there was absolutely nothing I could change about the systems. Well – I guess I thought, if I couldn’t change it all. What would I do? Like this whole thing has been based on me thinking I had to solve something – that there was something to be done. And everywhere there’s encouragement – go do something, make your mark, be one of those who makes a difference. But it seems to me that that’s part of the same narrative - struggling within a paradigm of mattering and not mattering… But. I have a feeling that ...

Felix: Yes.

Cara: Well maybe I don’t want to figure out what we ought to be doing – or telling others that that is the way… maybe there’s some way to take a stand without trying so hard to shape things. Humans have become
so aware of their ability to shape things that it’s making us neurotic — over planners — calculating machines —

Felix: Wait, so what’s your point? That the world is set? So we should stop struggling? I don’t get it Cara. What are you getting at?

Cara: Well, maybe just by being different, in my body - in my actions, maybe I can participate actively in the ways things are. I can stop fore-casting and dooms-day saying and really start to be …

Felix: what? Are you trying to say there’s nothing wrong with how things are Cara? What if it’s not all okay – but you don’t need to panic about it? What if there’s no reason to freak out, but still a reason to act? Like, with the mining consult – it looks like we’re gaining ground, we’ve managed to save sacred lands, and have some impact on the process.

Cara: Oh Felix, I don’t want to talk about that whole thing. It’s depressing. You know they're just using you. Those consultation processes are simply sugar-coating. They get you onside and they get to keep doing this bullshit. I’d rather do nothing than help them legitimize their activities.

Felix: Oh? You would rather that nothing gets done. Well look back actually, if we do nothing, EVERYTHING they want gets done – when there was no consultation, there was only poison. Toxic waste left behind, no question about whether the land was a ceremonial site, no consideration of the path of wildlife. This process allows us to have some say Cara. And I don't think you have the right to criticize it from your position.

Cara: Oh-- Kay. And what position is that?

Felix: C’mom Cara? It's a fact, you haven't had to live through the same things, it's not your job to offer your two cents, I think your people have had quite enough say.

Cara: But you're being used Felix. By the powers we're fighting.

*Felix leaves angry.*
Scene 12.5: Poem

*Cara is trying to meditate*

Be Brave
Be Bold
and please

Keep standing for what you believe

It is not easy

but tell that to the seed pushing through
the crack in the concrete

She doesn’t stop to ask whether it’s all worthwhile.

You can trust your senses, your experience even your reasons
and your style

No need for overspecialization
no need for a narrative you can explain

Keep your beat and Life will send you a refrain
I believe in you Cara
I believe in your struggle
to free parts of society from an oppressive tyranny.

There is truth in the sadness you see
in the lost souls and the predetermined irony.

Your sense of anarchy had meaning
has substance
and a growth that fills longing

for more...
   internal understanding.
   outside grand-standing
   you had your reasons...
And while the seasons are changing
and the forces expanding
what will you choose?

How can you refuse to hear the pieces and parts inside you calling/yelling
sometimes screaming.

Listen, Cara, Listen – the worlds have things to tell you.

**Scene 13: Felix Visits Again**

*Cara is in the detention centre visitor’s room waiting.*

**LX 20 – Crossfade quickly to white detention centre lights**

Felix: I’m back – I just wanted to say I’m sorry.

Cara: Me too Felix – the last thing I should be doing is trying to get you to
do what I think is right.

Felix: Well know that I do like hearing your perspective Cara – I’m friends
with you because I like what you have to say.

Cara: Even if I can be rather forceful about what I think? That good ol’
colonial mindset, I think it so it must be right. I’m sure I could find a
study to back my position.

Felix: ah-ah. You’re great. And yes, I imagine you could.

Cara: P.S. you’re also great. Hey guess what!? My birth mother was an
environmentalist! cool huh?

Felix: Awesome. That makes total sense, she moves in you. You should
write a book about it.

Cara: Yeah I’d love to know what she was doing with Arnold in that
territory, probably good stuff.

Felix: Probably.
Scene 13.5 - Final Movement

LX 21 – Crossfade to ambient lighting

My frame of reference is shifting

The ground more secure?

While the Earth is undergoing chances
My panicked need to intervene diminishing
There is part a sense of futility mixed in with an awe/understanding

that the forces determining

are working at such a scale

That from where I sit... or stand.

From where I act,

the room for flexi---

LX 22 – B/O
LX 23 – Curtain Call lights and bring up house lights slowly

CURTAIN

LX 24 – Slow crossfade to postset
Chapter 7

Conclusions

In the end, we had an excellent production; we sold out all four shows, and received positive reviews. I believe the political content was well contained within the plot of the show and the piece was engaging. People were interested in how a play might count towards a thesis and we were able to publicize the show well, receiving ample media coverage. The participation of Liam as director, Jane as choreographer, Dale (who danced), and Alex Hanes (running the lights) proved that people from the initial phases of collaboration felt invested in the project. It really was a co-creation lab, an experiment with the tools of devising, with a writer at the helm, towards producing a collaborative show. We didn’t quite form a collective in the larger sense (though Liam, Jane and I truly started to form a small collective by the end). One can see via reflection that it was really me as a leader spear-heading the project but I had an incredible team helping, and support and insight offered through group exploration was invaluable, and truly changed the character and quality of the piece. Many people helped shape what we performed. The process veritably wrote this play as it wouldn’t be the same without the exact quality brought to the work by the participants at each phase of the project.

Upon looking back I can see clearly see links to political theatre as shaped by the work of Brecht, Boal, and physical theatre lineage – however, I didn’t always consciously know what I was doing as I did it. I just did it; that was the research – I had to trust that I ‘knew’ what I was doing, to follow impulses (my own and others), to experiment, and trust that the process would generate something worthy of academic knowledge in the end. Did it?
Yes, I think so. I know that the co-creation aspect impacted the lives of the participants in a positive way. I know that people who saw the show felt compelled to tell me how much it spoke to them, even audience members that don’t generally like the theatre! Themes of agency, adoption and political action resonated with those who spoke up about their experiences watching the show. The talk-back was successful in generating dialogue about what we can do about sustainability, and how art might be used to speak to political issues. I found that theatre is surely an incredibly valuable and useful for exploring the larger issues around sustainability, in a productive way, as the community involved in collective exploration of these ideas is able to bring abstract thoughts back to everyday experience. At the same time the process was cathartic for me. I feel less worried (paralyzed) by the overwhelming analytic understanding of the world’s situations (war, destruction, consumerism) and somehow more hopeful. A glimmer of the creative spark/spirit reminds me that all is not yet determined – and that there is much to do, even without knowing it all. I can act.
Appendix A

CKAF Grant Application

**Section 2: IDENTIFICATION**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name:</th>
<th>When I Get Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common Name of Organization/Collective:</td>
<td>An aRc Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Name of Organization/Collective:</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(the Legal Name of the Organization/Collective is normally the name in which the organization holds a bank account)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Name of Sponsoring Organization:</td>
<td>Theatre Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(if Organization/Collective is being sponsored by another organization for the purposes of applying to the CKAF)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing Address of Organization/Collective:</td>
<td>167 ½ Wellington St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City:</td>
<td>Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province:</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal code:</td>
<td>K7L 3E3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Person:</td>
<td>Tracey Guptill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>Collaborator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone (Day):</td>
<td>613-547-5787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:An.aRc.Theatre@gmail.com">An.aRc.Theatre@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile:</td>
<td>343-364-4080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Website: [An aRc Theatre](mailto:An.aRc.Theatre@gmail.com)

- Organization/Collective has no overdue reports for any CKAF program as of this deadline date.

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Please provide a brief paragraph (up to 100 words) of the project.

An aRc Theatre is a collective of 5 Kingston-based, female artists who offer the diverse skills and experience to create the cutting edge piece of theatre, When I Get Home. This piece will incorporate elements of media, visual & performance art, poetry, dance and collaborative creation.

A dedication to theatre excellence and its function as a tool for examining issues that reflect the very fabric of society will guide this collective as they grapple with themes both as great as capitalism, the ecological crises, and social injustice and as personal as the question of belonging.
**PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:**

Please ensure these totals are reflected accurately in your attached budget form.

Please ensure you are submitting only the budget for your project, and not the operating budget for the organization as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Revenues (including Funds from all Sources):</td>
<td>$6,929.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Being Requested from City of Kingston Arts Fund:</td>
<td>$5,029.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Normally, the maximum allowable grant will be $20,000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 3: ORGANIZATION INFORMATION**

**PERSONNEL**

Complete this section if you are an incorporated non-profit and/or charitable arts organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Paid Personnel</th>
<th>Number of Unpaid Personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artistic/Production/Technical:</td>
<td>Administrative:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic/Production/Technical:</td>
<td>Artistic/Production/Technical:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic/Production/Technical:</td>
<td>Administrative:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Volunteers: |

Board: Other volunteers: |

Please list the members of your Board of Directors, along with their office (if any) on the Board.
Please list the members of the organization or other participants who will be involved with the project, if known. Please also very briefly specify each person’s roles/responsibilities within the project.

Please list a brief bio for as many of the above participants as you feel will assist the jury in assessing your project. (maximum of 1 page of bios in total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Complete this section if you are an artistic or community collective applying via an eligible sponsor.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please list the members of the collective/group who will be involved with the project. Please also briefly specify each person’s roles/responsibilities within the project.

| Tracey Guptill – Collaborator (playwright/dramaturg) |
| Michelle Girouard – Collaborator (actress) |
| Felicia Latour – Collaborator (direction) |
| Melodie Ballard – Designer (props, set, lighting) |
| Claire Bouvier – Designer (costume) |

Please list any other participants who will be involved in the project, if known. Please also very briefly specify each person’s roles/responsibilities within the project.

| John Lazarus – a local playwright who will be reviewing the script as he sits on Tracey’s Graduate Committee. |
| Neven Lochhead – a local experimental artist who has agreed to tutor the collective in media experimentation this summer. |
| Andrew Burrows – Queen’s philosophy student that has agreed to help with any research needed. |
| Katarokwi Friendship Centre – an organization committed to serving the needs of Kingston’s indigenous community has agreed to help us network with their members. |
| OPIRG Kingston – this group is keen to set up a theatre working group that could participate in our student consultations. |

Please list a brief bio for as many of the above participants as you feel will assist the jury in assessing your project. (maximum of 1 page of bios in total)

Tracey Guptill was a member of Daniel Mroz’s Les Ateliers du Corps from 2009 to 2011. In 2010, the group performed Circe/Landfall for the Canada Dance Festival. In Ottawa she has also worked with: the Company
of Fools – playing Viola in the summer Torchlight Series, Third Wall theatre – playing Cecily (The Importance of Being Earnest) and Nina (The Seagull), and Odyssey Theatre – working with their Lazzi Lazzi troupe. She has studied theatre, philosophy, and environmental studies. Tracey is currently enrolled in the Queen’s Master’s of Environmental Studies program, where writing When I Get Home will contribute to her research that demonstrates how theatre can be a tool for raising awareness about environmental issues. Tracey brings organizational experience gained through coordinating the national Sustainable Campuses network, a program that unites Canadian students engaged in campus sustainability. She strives to bring her passions together whenever possible and teaches social change workshops using techniques inspired by David Diamond and Augusto Boal.

Michelle Girouard trained as an actor at the National Theatre School of Canada (2003) and pursued a BFA in Fine Arts with a specialization in theatre performance at Concordia University (2000). Her professional performance career, based in Toronto, expanded to include projects throughout Ontario, in New Brunswick and France. She enjoyed work through The Factory Theatre, The Canadian Stage Company, The Tarragon Theatre and Theatre Gargantua in Toronto as well as with Ottawa's Odyssey Theatre and Montreal's Infinite Theatre. She is currently teaching yoga in Kingston and is also a certified shamanic practitioner.

Felicia Latour is in her third year of her undergraduate degree at Queen’s University, studying Drama and English. Her current interests are in environmental theatre and devised theatre. She has accumulated experience in playwriting, directing, devising, acting, stage management, set construction and props management with various amateur and professional theatre companies in Kingston. Most recently she worked as the assistant director for the Queen's Drama Department's production of "Blood Relations" alongside Greg Wanless, and was a co-writer, performer and deviser for Colliding Scopes' production of "An Awfully Big Adventure: An Immersive Theatre Experience based on J.M. Barrie’s Peter Pan."

Melodie Ballard is a maker. She loves building, problem solving and creating. In 2011 she graduated from the St Lawrence College General Carpentry program, acquiring project planning, estimating, layout, and building skills. After graduating from the Carpentry program, Melodie went to Stratford, Ontario to take a six week Introduction to Production Arts course from the Artisans who work for the Stratford Festival. The course covered mask making, welding, carpentry, upholstery, puppet building, scenic painting, set design and building. She has over ten years experience in Kingston community theatre in a range of backstage roles such as Lighting Designer, Stage Manager, Set Designer, Master Carpenter, Technical Director, Props Builder and Mask Maker. Most recently, Melodie was the Prop Master for the Kinsmen’s production of Gypsy at The
Grand Theatre.

Claire Bouvier is currently an art high school teacher in Kingston. Since 2009 she has been the director and designer of several high-school fashion shows, as well as the stylist for high-school musicals, including Phantom of the Opera and Hairspray. She was the stylist and re-designer for two of Canadian musician Brendan Crosskerry’s music videos. Claire is the driving force behind the Claire Closet, a not-for profit that seeks to inspire young girls to find their self-confidence and personal style.

**HISTORY & MISSION**

How many years has your organization/collective been serving the Kingston community?
(if less than one year, please select “New Organization/Collective” below)

Please select one: ___New Organization/Collective ___ Existing Organization/Collective

Please describe the mission statement/mandate of your organization/collective, your reasons for coming together as a group, and the artistic and/or community purposes you represent.

An aRc Theatre brings together five women who are committed to making a positive contribution to society through their work. With their passion and their diverse skill-sets they aim to create cutting edge theatre that examines social and environmental issues and that has the power to create dialogue, to inspire positive action, and to re-frame issues in a more productive and inclusive narrative.

Our mission is symbolised in our name: the ‘an-arc’ sound represents a little bit of anarchy, in that we wish to encourage some positive re-framing and reflection of current systems. At the same time, an arc is what humanity needs to get through our current challenges. By envisioning solutions through characters that care deeply about the world we hope to put forth ideas that have buoyancy and that can contribute to building that arc. Finally, the capitalized letters of our collective spell ART. This part stands for a dedication to, above all, create work that speaks to people, and that enthralls our audiences. Outside conventions, into the heart of it, we wish to make ART.

Please briefly describe your organization/collective’s greatest accomplishments over its history (or, if more appropriate, over the past five years). If a new organization or collective (see above), you are not required to complete this question.

**ORGANIZATION STATUS**
Please complete the following statement (select one): “This organization/collective….

(a) [ ] is an incorporated non-profit organization.”  
Corporation # 
Date of Incorporation:

(b) [ ] is a charitable arts organization, registered with the Canada Revenue Agency.”  
Charitable Reg. #

(c) [ ] is a distinct and discrete arts organization (other than an academic unit of an educational institution), within a parent organization which is incorporated as a non-profit organization.”  
Parent Organization Name: 
Corporation # 
Date of Incorporation:

(d) [x] is a collective applying under the sponsorship of an incorporated non-profit and/or registered charity.”

(e) [ ] is a collective applying on their own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>only organizations/collectives applying under sponsorship must complete the following</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If you answered (d), provide the following required information about the sponsoring organization:

Legal Name of Sponsor: 
Theatre Kingston

Sponsor’s Mailing Address: 
336 A Barrie St. 
Kingston, ON 
K7K 3T1

Sponsor’s Phone Number: 
613-544-2021

Sponsor’s Email Address: 
brett@theatrekingston.com

Sponsor’s Website: 
http://www.theatrekingston.com/

Contact Person for Sponsor: 
Brett Christopher

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**Section 4: PROJECT DETAILS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Preparation Start Date:</th>
<th>September 17, 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(e.g. active preparation start date, rehearsal start date; the start of the project)

Project Event Start Date: 
May 13th, 2014
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Please describe the project, detailing both artistic and practical elements, including relevant artistic discipline(s), purpose, format, content, artists, participants, venue, partners, resources, organizational elements (etc.), as appropriate for the type of project. All artistic and practical elements should be reflected in your project budget. Project descriptions that do not confirm or provide examples of artists, content, and format may be viewed as lacking sufficient detail to assess the merits of the project.

‘When I Get Home’ traces the journey of a young woman grappling with environmental issues who abandons her graduate studies to seek out her birth father. It is the year 2010 and when she arrives on a reserve she becomes involved with the “No Olympics on Stolen Native Land” campaign. Events lead to her incarceration and she must decide how she will move forward with her life.

The playwright studies theatre, philosophy, and Environmental Studies; much of the material from the play stems directly from her experiences sorting through her education about the state of our natural world. This piece offers a way to explore larger themes of what we can do about major societal issues, while examining the systems and ways of thinking that are at the root of our ecological crises. We hope that it can also be used to build dialogue about important questions that are currently being processed by our society. These questions draw on the themes of capitalism and political action, environmental destruction, issues on Canadian reserves, law and incarceration, and spirituality. We will be working off a finished script (that will be reviewed by local playwright John Lazarus, who sits of the graduate committee of the playwright). However, as it is a layered story dealing with many themes, an important part of the process will be to heavily workshop key scenes and where beneficial to incorporate elements of the devising process.

The Collective will be looking for performers who will also be collaborators in the process of developing the final show and script. Good candidates will be thoughtful, vibrant, and keen to
go on a journey with the show. We will be looking for their input in each scene and the playwright will be there to capture character discoveries and any improvements to the text. This approach has many benefits; first, the medium of a more equally distributed creative team reflects the thematic issues that we’re taking on. Secondly, this will lengthen our creative process as a team and allow us to explore more fully how to use alternative media to convey the larger themes that influence the narrative of the piece. For example, while Cara (the protagonist) meets with members of the reserve, it may be effective to have a documentary of Attawapiskat projected on the wall. We are also interested in playing with how the show could have three potential endings, determined each night, perhaps through audience interactions, perhaps through a more subtle game. This plays into elements of performance art that will inspire this show. By experimenting with form and the use of media, and by including elements of poetry and dance inter-woven throughout the show, potentially in a prologue for each act, we expect this show to speak to audiences on many levels. While there will be a clear narrative to follow, it will not be a typical night at the theatre, which is exactly why we’d like the venue to be an art gallery. Bringing the audience to Modern Fuel will immediately put them in an alternative head-space for the show.

Our timeframe will also allow us the opportunity to engage with communities represented in the show. Because part of the show takes place on a reserve, the Katarokwi centre has agreed to help us host consultations with indigenous community members who can provide feed-back on how elements of their culture are being represented on stage. In addition, performer-collaborators will have the opportunity to engage with activists who were involved in the anti-Olympics campaign and who went to jail for their involvement in the G20 protests.

Costumes will be designed and gathered from local thrift stores by Claire Bouvier. She is also a high-school art teacher and is keen to have her Grade 12 fashion class participate in the project by sewing any materials that we will need constructed or altered from second-hand clothing stores.

The set will need to be quite versatile and an asset to experimentation. We have envisioned a circular platform that has the ability to spin; this diverse piece can represent various locations at once. Accompanied by a couple flats to help create a back-stage, we will be able to convey various scenes quite simply. Our collective includes a highly skilled carpenter who will be able
to build the set and orient any volunteers needed to help with construction. This construction will be a unique piece as nothing like it currently exists in our community, there will certainly be opportunities to re-use it.

As two of our collective members are students at Queen’s University rehearsal space will be accessible. For example, the Sutherland room in the Queen’s Centre is a beautiful space that is available for rental by students for free, availability can be guaranteed if booked in advance or if it is required at non-peak times.

We have been in contact with 5th Lane Theatre Company, a Queen’s University student company. There is the possibility of them producing the show in their season next year, however these discussions are still at an early stage and we have yet to determine whether our show is a good match for their mandate and vice versa. However, this demonstrates the excellent pool of resource in the Queen’s drama department where we could potentially find both a stage manager and a production manager. Another important aspect of our partnership with the Katarokwi Friendship Centre will be a network to recruit indigenous actors to portray indigenous roles in the play.

In order to encourage community participation and the direction of any energy created by the show we will host a talk-back session the Sunday after closing night. Local sustainability and social justice organizations will be invited to the discussion to share their informed ideas and to offer ways that interested community members can become involved in their work. This event will be facilitated and the emphasis will be on building dialogue and debriefing viewing experiences the show.

AUDIENCE: For projects that include public presentation, please describe your intended audience, why you think they will be interested in the project, and how you plan to reach them (outreach, marketing, publicity, etc.).

Our show will achieve its goals by appealing to diverse audiences. By involving a variety of groups in the creation process we will be creating a built-in audience of people invested in the show. This includes high-school students, indigenous community members and local activists. We also will appeal to our personal networks in the university (especially in the drama and environmental studies departments), in the yoga community, in art circles, and in the local
sustainability and farming movements. By including in our collective both on and off-campus members we hope to attract a diverse audience. In addition to advertising through social media to our targeted audiences, it is important that people who have no particular interest in the environment attend, hence the general appeal of the title of the show. We will also attract a wider audience by posterizing widely and advertising in community newspapers.

Our website will be a helpful resource that will also include links to community projects and organizations that are in line with our mandate of social justice and environmental awareness. We will create a poster image that will be easily shared on Facebook and link people to our Facebook event and to the website where they can find more in-depth information about the show and our process. Our website advisor has mentioned the possibility of setting up a discussion forum on the website as well.

SIGNIFICANCE: Please describe the outcome of the project in the context of the participants’ or the organization’s goals. Explain why this project is significant and how it will benefit the applicant and/or the community.

We aim to hit Kingston audiences with a powerful show that has the potential to re-contextualize how they understand current environmental issues and to stimulate thought about our individual and collective power to address these challenges.

The participants in this project, from set builders and community consultants to performers and audience members, will benefit from the experience of developing their creative capacities and participating in a meaningful project. Working on a project that addresses macro-scale problems through a more personal lens is quite the empowering experience:

The high-school students will have the joy of having their school project connect to community work happening outside their school;

Community members that participate in our consultation sessions will feel a greater connection with the show when they see it performed – and have the empowering experience of having their words potentially affect the presentation of artwork;

Artists involved in the creation of this piece will all be challenged significantly through the collaborative process and the creative energy needed for this kind of work;

Performer-collaborators will have the opportunity to greatly develop their skills by acting with a
script that is ever-changing while offering their perspective and engaging deeply with the
content of the piece,

The director will be presented with an opportunity to increase her abilities to juggle a piece that
is multi-dimensional. She will need to ensure that presenting ideas never gets in the way of the
story;

The playwright will have the challenge of keeping the script on track, assimilating new
information and ensuring that final script can be launched as a new Canadian script thanks to
this process;

Finally, the talk-back session will encourage community members to discuss the art and their
reactions to the ideas presented. This will offer the community a way to come together through
dialogue and discussion. It may even result in new partnerships or people volunteering with
local organizations!

CKAF OBJECTIVES: How does your project address the CKAF objectives, in particular,
diversity and increased access to local arts programming?

Our project increases access to local arts programming by offering seats at an affordable rate
(suggested $10 or pay-what-you-can), in addition we are also encouraging community
participation and audience feed-back. The show will help link audiences to social and
environmental issues and make a connection in their minds as to the importance of theatre in
helping to define and sort through those issues.

By including three particular cross-sections of the population (high-school students, indigenous
community members and activists) that may not be already have the privilege of seeing a lot of
theatre we invite them to learn more deeply about this art and to truly feel its power. Reaching
into those communities to cast culturally appropriate actors will increase the diversity of
perspective portrayed in the play. Diversity is also a criterion
that encouraged us to offer all performers a minimum honorarium. This ensures that we make
performing and collaborating in this show accessible to Kingston community members who may
not have the flexibility and access to these projects that Queen’s students do.

Finally, the inclusion of various elements of art (such as integrating media and performance art
elements) may result in a broader appeal than other theatre shows, and encourage the attendance
of people who may not attend the theatre but who are drawn to visual art or to poetry and dance.

**CKAF OBJECTIVES:** Is this a recurring Project? If yes, how does your project address the ckaf objective of innovation?

n/a

**EVALUATION:** Please describe how you plan to evaluate your project. An evaluation, which includes goals, criteria and process, will be required in your Final Project Report.

Goals stated throughout this application have included:

- to attract a diverse audience
- to create moving theatre that reaches people
- to integrate elements of performance art
- to effectively convey ideas while working through narrative
- to engage audiences after the show

We will be able to determine our success in large part through a number count! We aim to sell-out the 60 seats at Modern Fuel each of the five nights of the run. The success of our out-reach strategy will be easy to measure.

We will also garner a more in-depth understanding of how audience members responded to the work through the talk-back session that we will host. As mentioned, this session will give audience and community members opportunity to discuss the issues explored in the show in a moderated setting. A survey will be undertaken at this session as well (the format of this is yet to be determined as it could be done in an interactive way, rather than simply with a pen and paper). We will include questions to determine the context of the individual responding to the survey such as: “When did you see your last theatre show?” and questions to determine how the show was interpreted, “How would you describe what this show was about?”. We will also ask questions that identify whether any of the audience members changed their minds about questions surrounding the themes presented in the show. Success will measured in terms of whether we draw audience members who generally don’t attend the theatre, whether those people grasped the main themes of the show, whether they were moved, and whether or not they found that the show influenced their thinking about social and environmental issues.

Finally, a link to an online version of this survey will be found in the program. Not only will the information generated be useful in gauging our success, but the number of audience members
who choose to fill it out provides us with insight into the engagement level of the audience and their interest in following-up after our show.

It will also be important to determine our success at engaging with the Kingston community members who partook in the consultations. We will be able to solicit their directly through the consultation process, and take extra steps to follow-up with those who also made it out to the show. We would like to determine whether their felt their participation was meaningful.

Finally we will ensure a thorough debrief with the collective, the production team and the performer-collaborators. Our own insights will be important to chronicle. Our frame-work for evaluation will be based on the developmental evaluation model.

**BACKUP PLAN:** Please describe how you will carry out the project should you experience a shortfall in planned project revenue, or the loss of a key project component such as an artist, project partner or venue (What is your Plan B?).

Luckily the process of work-shopping and dramaturgy is rather flexible and can quite easily accommodate shortfalls and losses. This means that any Plan B necessary could be developed to simplify and adapt to the circumstances. We have a resourceful team, and a script that can be performed in a variety of performance venues with any skilled actor (thankfully the university and the Kingston theatre scene offer a large pool of potential performers). If we were to lose someone we may lose elements of the process, but we are committed to presenting this show! Our approach is fluid; we are open to and hoping for experimentation but we are also quite adaptable and dedicated to offering a high-quality final product.

**SCHEDULE:** Please list (in point form) the timelines and key milestones for your project:

Consultation and experimentation with Neven regarding potential film aspects
August 2013: Completion of the script

September 2013: Recruitment
recruit stage manager and production manager, promotions manager
individual auditions 3rd and 4th week
group call-back, September 28th, 29th
October 3rd: Casting Announced
October 7th: Weekly Rehearsals Begin – re-development phase
at this point we will meet twice weekly at the university

November: Community Consultations
week 1: meet with student groups to hear feedback on parts of Act 1
week 3: meet with indigenous community members for feedback on Act 2

December: short month, collaborators will have a piece of homework, something they will
develop on their own over the holidays to show the group when we reconvene

Fundraiser Party
playwright has time to fully integrate any major changes of play structure, concepts

set design is finalized

January: Rehearsals with new script
meet with high-school class to discuss the project

major set construction is complete by the end of the month

February: Show is choreographed, pieces are brought together

March: Final rehearsals
technical rehearsal and load-in: March 9th
dress rehearsal: March 10th
Show: March 11th – 15th
community talk-back session: March 16th
Appendix B
Interview Questions for Phase 1

What drew you to this project?
writing? poetry? (are you a fan of or do you write?)
music

Process:
What do you imagine will come from this process?
How do you see yourself contributing?
What are your views on political art? I.e. Where does the politics fall in terms of import over and above or within the art?
What would you like to bring? (that you would be disappointed if you weren't able to?)
How interested are you in body movement? (and learning to expand your body's range of movement) would you identify this a priority or even an interest?
How comfortable are you improvising, and sharing your work?
Are you comfortable dancing in front of others?

Groupwork:
Group dynamics - what are your greatest challenges?
Would you say you are introverted or extraverted
How do you deal with a group of the opposite?
What techniques have you developed for working in a group?

How do you think you would you handle making a scene about an issue that you and a group member disagreed upon profoundly?

I asked some people this question:
How do you feel about working and collaborating with people that are younger/ perhaps less well read?

Logistics:
What other commitments do you currently have?
Would you be able to fully commit to the twice weekly rehearsal schedule?
Do you anticipate missing any practices? (Hallowe'en!?)
Are you interested in - and able to - continue working on the show in the winter?
Thanksgiving monday?
Appendix C
Session Outlines

Co-Lab Weekly Sessions:

Mondays -
Monday, October 21st

Week 1:
- Exercise – Mapping where you’re from
  - Geographically
  - Artistically
- Name Games –
  - Name and a Gesture
    - with the ball
- Look into eyes around the circle, adding a clap
- Changing spots in the circle (with eye contact)
- Start Walking and Stopping at the same time
  - Add jump
  - add HA!
- Creating a Safe Space
  - What does that mean to you?
  - Step Up Step Back
  - Why is it important
  - What do you need for it to become a reality?
  - Principles of Anti-O?
  - Consensus Building and needed the space for disagreement
- Logistics: How this will work
  - Giving them a schedule with rooms bookings
  - Discussion about coordinating rehearsal times

Process:

- Discussing documentation, how they can join me in this
- Notebook – helps define structure and assess process, we can decide how we will document rehearsals – perhaps having one person each week taking detailed notes/sketches
- We will be building a library both literal and mental of provoking images and text.
Monday, October 28th

Week 2:

- Physical warm-up and check in
- Talk about Boal’s history and techniques

- Warm-up Games
  - Word Ball
  - Yes Let’s
  - Triangle (aka enemy & protector – bombs and shields)
  - Tangles & Knots
  - Colombian hypnosis (with inner monologue)

- Image theatre work
  - Handshake images – example then pairs
  - Tag shape into Tableaux
  - Sculpting the struggle (using Siren’s song to find group)

Monday, November 4th

Week 3:

- Physical warm-up and check in
- Refresh Safe Space – how to share with others but keep our work ‘sacred’

- Warm-up Games:
  - Group counting exercise
  - Finger follow – with eyes closed, like a dance, with give and take (half of group closes eyes, other folks choose someone to lead)

- Probe Images created last week:
  - Mark and the [bio]diesel car
  - Jane at the bike shop feeling oppressed

- Using the image as a source of critical reflection:
  - depict an ideal image of liberation from that oppression, and then a sequence of transition images required to reach it
  - Discuss discoveries

Monday, November 11\textsuperscript{th}

Week 4:

- Physical warm-up and check in
- Zip Zap Zop
Random Sound Storytelling:
In groups of 4 – each member creates a random sound – make a sequence for them, practice then perform. Now to make up and rehearse a story in which these sounds occur, in that same sequence. How to present? Narrate, acting…

Prepare a scene using the ten key images you agreed to use to tell the story; show exactly what you have written/use exactly the images you created.

Monday, November 18\textsuperscript{th}
Week 5:

- Check in
- Games:
  - Ninja
  - Zip Zap Zop

- Physicality and character work
  - Neutral Walk
  - Leading with various body parts, using weight
  - Embodying emotions
  - Think of: Who are the characters in the show so far?
  - Embodying characters, finding their physicality
  - Working with Tension (exercises and discussion)
  - Character work - improvising using physicality and tension

Monday, November 25\textsuperscript{th}
Week 6:

- Physical Warm-up and Image Check in
- Games:
  - Slow motion dueling
  - Simon Says
  - Cat and Mouse
- Discussion of Plot elements! (using new outline)
- Work in groups create a game for the audience
  - followed by interactivity brainstorm and discussion: What is a game?

Monday, December 2\textsuperscript{nd}
Week 7:

- Physical warm-up with Jane (running and tuck etc)
- Games:
  - Whoosh
  - Ninja
- Bring together what we’ve got into a cohesive piece
Monday, December 9th

Week 8:
  o Warm-up and check in
  o Groups practice their piece for presentation

Wednesdays -

Wednesday, October 23rd

Week 1:
  o Outline the story we’re working with
  o Read draft of script aloud as a group
  o Discuss script
  o Brainstorm the themes in groups of three, then discussion
    i Understanding the crisis
    i What are the key issues our world is facing?

          Trying to make change:
          i How can people effect change?
  o Next week you will bring in the content
    i Write/find pieces of poetry, prose or reminiscences – related to these
      themes (not necessarily to this story) to be read aloud, OR
    i Create visual material, collages, paintings, sketches, junk sculptures – all
      help to refine ideas about the look of the piece, the space it will inhabit,
      atmosphere, colours, weight

Wednesday, October 30th

Week 2:
  o Warm-up: Practice a song together
  o They read and share items they found – followed by group discussion

Wednesday, November 6th

Week 3:
  o Get into pairs to read review the text
    i Describe together the text in 10 distinct moments or sentences (write
      them down), share and compare. As a group choose the ten you will use,
      prepare a short scene using them. Show exactly what you have written
  o Reflection
    i What are the different emphases?
    i Do some versions have a greater sense of emotion?
    i Does the other tell the physical story more clearly?
• Do you begin to get a greater sense of what is needed to tell this story more fully?

Wednesday, November 13th

Week 4:

  o Discussion of work from last week and read through Act 2.

Wednesday, November 20th

Week 5:

  o Reading the new scene
  o Review a lecture by Bob Lovelace and discussion
  o Discussion about representation

Wednesday, November 27th

Week 6:

  o Check in
  o Discussion regarding how to identify the group - the remaining sessions and moving into the Future of the Project
  o Segue into ways to resolve the plot

Wednesday, December 4th

Week 7:

  o Split into groups to work of parts of our presentation, come up with your favorite parts and tie them together.

Wednesday, December 11th

Week 8:

  o Presentation of work and group celebration (thank-you party/evaluation)!
Appendix D

Diary Entries and Collaborator Contributions

Monday, October 21st-

The mapping game revealed that we’re working with people from all across Canada, though there were some significant hot-spots and we also have a group member from Hong Kong (though she also feels connected to Vancouver). Some Scotland representation as well, though we didn’t dig too deeply into ancestry...

Good sense of play in the group tonight, people were open to the games and eager to stretch at the outset. Would love to try Alex’s rock paper scissors with a large raucous group! (It involves meeting a dueller and the person who loses then becomes the cheerleader for the victor. Until there are only two duellers left and alllll their supporters!)

When working on how to create a Safe Space I appreciated the open minds and honest contributions. We decided it would be great to start each session with a quick Check-in, we also discussed maintaining a sacred space, whereby what happens stays within the group (no Facebook! :) - we discussed the need to allow room for error and also making space for diversity (don’t assume who’s in the room) - maintaining hope, and the reference to Fresh Water reminded us of physical health and the world outside the created environment we are relating in.

Figure 11 Participants Mapping:
Wednesday, October 23rd -

We began by reading from the pieces of Act 1 that have been drafted. The group then split into two and brain-stormed the themes they picked up on. I noticed the difference in how the two groups organized themselves and their process, finding unique ways to work with the same directions. This reminded me why I love collaborative creation and freedom! We managed to identify three overarching themes: agency, systems and journey.

**Figure 12: Brainstorm Results**

Next as the protagonist is overwhelmed by the world’s problems (esp Climate Change) we discussed what in our own minds are the problems we see. A short summary of those:

- the distribution of wealth
- consolidation of power
- Food Security (or lack thereof - if the systems we have in place were to collapse, our food would be on rather short supply)
- Passivity/apathy
- Colonization (and how to live in its wake)
- the reshaping of the Canadian identity into a Conservative image
- our lack of connection to the environment around us (our anthropocentrism)
- the complexity

Then we discussed how to “make change” in these contexts - I was happy to be reminded of the concept that we can change our mindset - rather than trying to fix these problems a whole shift happens when we remember we are human, when we play, experience, enter our bodies rather than being so caught in our thoughts (that this action can change how we see and understand things). But we were reminded also that it’s important to think about these things, to cultivate an awareness and attempt to understand. And though we can’t “fix” everything there is a diversity of ways to get involved - municipal politics matter, our voting matters. (while it’s tempting to say “oh the big systems are too much out of my hands, or that politics are rubbish, the politicians we vote in have major ramifications on policy decisions that affect people’s daily life - such as immigration policy)
Also, the point that we can’t predict the future was brought up; that the element of surprise that remains is perhaps encouraging, unexpected things can emerge, especially if people keep working away at their piece.

Monday, October 28th:
It was great to work with Image Theatre today. We started up with a discussion of Boal and his work and then we were able to get right into working with his techniques. We ended up in two groups (using the mermaid song game, which I love). In these groups I had them share stories of a time where they felt they had experienced oppression and had to make a choice in their reaction. I sat with the one of the groups and had a chance to hear all their stories (before the group chose one to put into an image). Kevin’s was particularly interesting to me as it was related to mental health, however it didn’t quite fit the model of an oppression with a choice, so the group chose to animate Mark’s story.

As a large group we had time to see one of the groups’ chosen image. That group had chosen to make an image from Jane’s story. We tried to figure out exactly what was happening. It was related to treatment she received from bike mechanics when bringing her bike in for repair, and how she had brought in her partner in order to help smooth out this mistreatment, but in reality it had worsened the situation. We ended by creating a larger group image…

**Figure 13: Working It – First Image**

Wednesday, October 30th:

We shared our pieces today and I was so grateful to be working with such an eclectic yet connected group. Opening with Alex’s passages was a gift - there seemed to be a summary of
what we would discuss within them - I especially liked the aspect that emphasized the need to walk away from all the noise and as a storyteller bring back something that might be of use.

Shelby’s presentation was awesome - she spoke so well on the subject and it was really useful to look at the facts of climate change again (and how students are learning about them now). In my own research, I have been reading some of the articles that Mark suggested - and I truly love the soft side of science, reading about the scientists’ processes and how their discoveries are interpreted or need to fit within the public’s and policy maker’s expectations. I think it is such an important lens to apply if we really want to understand ourselves and the data we are examining. He offered a helpful summary of the article he brought in, that contextualized some of our “knowledge” about the changing climate - it was related to an interesting conversation about migration that Shelby’s presentation sparked (Mark suggested that the data shows that people likely won’t actually be moving in our direction en masse, folks are more likely to work within their familial and community networks). This also led us to discussing ZOMBIES and the process of ‘othering’ that can justify closing our doors to those in need…. all that fear based stuff.

In addition:

- Kevin’s talked about why he was motivated to work on these issues using his approach of land sufficiency and growing food.

Jane brought in an excellent video (see the resources below), of people dancing melting ice, and read excerpts from an article by Naomi Klein that we discussed:

Glaciology by Brandy Leary (choreographer)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nypwrrMteaM

Description of Glaciology piece
http://buddiesinbadtimes.com/blog-playlist-brandy-leary-slow-down/

Naomi Klein - Science, Climate Change, Direct Action
http://www.newstatesman.com/2013/10/science-says-revolt

Tiffany brought in some awesome photos that really demonstrated the consumer culture of Hong Kong and describe how now being in Canada has changed her purchasing habits. She’s struck by just how much she would buy daily at home for no real reason.

At the end of it all Dale read some thoughts and excerpts she had prepared, we all felt the power of her words and named her contribution: Dale’s antidote! :) It said something so profound about the value of art and offered grains of truth that I hope we can incorporate into our process.

Here are Dale’s notes from what she said to us:

Martha Nussbaum devotes a section of Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions (Cambridge 2001) to compassion. Drawing on arguments from the philosophical tradition, Nussbaum suggests that “we need to turn to works of art” to “mak[e] people capable of
inhabiting, for a time, the world of a different person, and seeing the meaning of events in that world from the outsider’s viewpoint” (431). Rather than “inhabiting” another’s position, I understand feeling compassion as inhabiting relationship. To imagine ourselves in the place of another is always still to imagine that other from our own position; I see the most value, then, in attending to one’s own position from the perspective of its connection to that of another.

I believe that whether or not compassion leads to action is a separate issue outside of compassion proper. I resist this teleological (goal-oriented) model of knowledge-brings-feeling-brings-action.

So, I don’t think of a goal as a straightforward causal relation in which one person passes on information, thus forming the next witness in a chain of witnesses toward a more ethical future. An alternative to this chain of witnesses is with-ness as a space of attention and reflection.

My ideas come out of the ideas I see in contemporary witness poetry (poetry that responds to mass suffering). In 2006 Caribbean-Canadian poet Dionne Brand wrote a long poem called Inventory that records and responds to global atrocity and violence. Her speaker’s response to suffering is to endure the painful wait of watching attentively. This poem is about what might constitute adequate engagement with suffering caused by war, prejudice, fundamentalism, and other human violence.

Here is a selection:

she has to keep watch at the window
of the television, she hears what is never shown,
the details are triumphant,
she’ll never be able to them in time

…the waiting, she can’t bear the waiting,
the metal, metal, metal of waiting,
she sits devoted, the pairing knife close
to a harvest of veins
now everything is in her like ends and tastes,
the loosening clasp of affinities
everyone grows perversely accustomed,
she refuses
If they’re numb over there, and all around her,
she’ll gather the nerve endings
spilled on the streets, she’ll count them like rice grains
she’ll keep them for when they’re needed

…the will store the nerves’ endings in glass
coloured bottles on a tree near the doorsteps,
for divine fierce years to come
when the planet is ruined, the continent
forlorn in water and smoke (pages 28-31)

I think that something art and the study of art can do for us, is to teach us how to wait with a thought, an idea, a fact. Especially through the slow complexity of poetry, I think readers can learn how to wait in a time and place that emphasizes factuality, linearity, action, and efficiency. One way to have agency in such a structure is to refuse to privilege action and speed in one’s own
movement through the world, a privilege that is so closely related to capitalism’s goal-oriented logic of accumulation where time is money so time must be spent effectively. Uncertainty and curiosity are partners; the moment one stabilizes an answer is the moment one might cease reaching. Poetry helps us to be uncertain and curious. As a form of thinking and communicating, poetry asks its readers not to fear confusion, but to wait with it, establishing a relationship through which to consider differently, if without clear conclusion.

I think that considering art provides strategies for living that derive from and account for life’s relationality. It is in relational space that we find how we as individuals connect—literally, emotionally, intellectually—with the world around us. I value the capacity of waiting in the connective space between two points to overwhelm assurance, productivity, and efficiency. I hope I live a mode of engagement that is not afraid to move slowly, or nowhere.

Week 3:

Monday, November 4th

I was so impressed at our ability to count as a group, it shows that we’re really forming a cohesive entity! This concentration game involves everyone closing their eyes and attempting to count in a group, ensuring that each number is vocalized by one person and no one overlaps. Often in drama classes we work very hard to reach 20 – as the group must start again as soon as two people speak as the same time or say the same number. However, we were much more patient as everyone listened very well to each other. We reached up to 100 easily! The leading warm-up, where one person leads another via connected finger tips, was good for continuing to exercise our skills at listening to each other and following someone else’s lead. It also takes quite a bit of trust to close one’s eyes and allow another person to lead you around the room. It was interesting to watch the various pairs as their levels of comfort are quite apparent in the movements they make (walking slowly versus dancing and jumping, etc).

Next we re-visited the tableaus from last week which capture a moment in time dramatizing an oppressive situation. We used the image that we didn’t see as a group (Mark’s) as a source of critical reflection. The group was asked to depict an ideal image of liberation from that oppression, and then a sequence of transition images required to reach it.

We ended up only working on one of the images. Mark’s story involved a time when he was living in Victoria as a young single father. He got a job that involved driving to work and the need to buy a car, which conflicted considerably with his environmental values. He was inspired by some folks who drove a biodiesel vehicle, and went about with the research of which type of car would be easily converted, he ended up with an old Mercedes Bens but as single father attending school and working didn’t end up having time to convert it. Thus he ended up with a particularly gas-guzzling vehicle that he needed to use to get to work. This story was depicted with an exasperated Mark seated at the driver’s seat of four chairs, with Alex being road kill (to symbolize the death he was causing) at the front of the vehicle and Tiffany sitting as Buddha near the gas tank.
In trying to create the ideal situation of liberation, I thought that because we were dealing with somewhat abstract, Western “oppressions” it might be difficult to work with the images created. However I was pleasantly surprised by the practical solutions that were used to help Mark achieve a less environmentally destructive form of transportation. One example is that one of the images involved a childcare collective, something that is feasibly achievable.

**Figure 14: Mark's Decision**

In pairs the collaborators then described the text in 10 distinct moments/sentences. Then they crafted the images that would show the story. We had time only to show the images, we will work with them next week.

[Note: By now, Kevin Scholz was no longer joining us.]

Entry by Mark about working with Liam on the key show images:

**Monday November 4, 2013**
**9:17 PM**

Just finished the exercise in which Tracey directed us to compose scenes that depict the key events in Act 1. I was partnered with Liam. I understood he had some experience in the theatre, but had no idea how much until I started working with him. I’m sitting now in the ARC, upstairs in the seating area in the corner behind the top of the stairs, not in common ground. And I’m going to try to get this written down now as a way of processing the experience.

So we went through the script, and identified key moments and themes. I noticed Liam was pretty skilled at this aspect. He distilled key moments pretty rapidly and articulated them well, but I also contributed to the exercise and felt like we were contributing fairly equally. And indeed, we continued to contribute equally to the process as we moved into the phase of composing actual
scenes, but the fact that I experienced it as equal kinda goes to show how well Liam does this stuff. It’s hard to recapture the exact dialog or exactly how the process unfolded. But after we talked through the script we got up to compose the actual scenes, which we hadn’t yet scripted, and it was in that process of actually coming up with scenes that Liam’s experience and knowledge came through. He kinda coached me through the process.

I should back up a bit.

When we were dialoging about the events of Act 1, before starting to act it out, we came up with the image of a rat in a maze. Cara is a rat in a maze (cue the Smashing Pumpkins song) and she realizes this. The award or prize she gets for reducing water bottle use is just a piece of cheese at the end of the maze. She wants to blow the maze up. But in discussing all this, we decided it would be too hard to physically recreate the maze. See? I was thinking about it in literal terms. Like I wanted to construct a maze out of folded up tables, or get a roll of masking tape and outline one on the floor. But when we started to construct the actual scene (not just talk about the main events of Act 1) Liam was like, “you are in a maze” (paraphrasing here).

Essentially he was saying, the maze exists, it is real, and you are really in it. Now how does Cara see it? How does she be within in? I was like, “jeez this is hard.” I was still trying to show the maze in literal terms. Through dialog, as we were composing the tableau, we got to a point where I was describing the maze as a grid. A series of pigeon holes. We are boxed in by all these walls that are a series of pigeon holes that entice you in, look comforting, but are ultimately destructive. Liam asked me what they look like. I said they’re made of chrome, highly polished. But beyond each pigeon hole is one of those machines that grind up tree limbs. A tree chipper. So if you reach in through any one of the multitude of the 5 x 5 holes that form the grid-like patterns on the walls that box us in – say you reach your arm about 12 inches in – it will be grabbed by the limb chipper, suck you in and rip you to shreds. Cara realizes this while her mother is consciously bearing all her attention onto the TV. The TV and fitting in within these boxes is Cara’s mother’s concern. And Cara is in a dynamic relation with her as well as with the reality that she perceives herself to be living within.

So how does this filter into a scene? A single posed event that can speak to it? Well, that was the process that Liam coached me through. It was a pretty great experience because it felt truly collaborative but he was using his expertise and experience in the theatre to get me to interact
with the dynamics at play in such a way that was like, “just be with it” (again paraphrasing). I dunno the exact thing. But I’m reminded of what an old writing teacher of mine liked to say: “Show, don’t tell.” What she was saying was: don’t tell me what you know; show me that you know it. It’s kinda the same thing here, except the meaning of the word “show” is different. I feel like it’s as if in theatre you are encouraged to “be” rather than to “act”. Like don’t act, just be. I remember in high school drama class, the hardest thing to do was just stand in front of the class, as if you are on stage, and not do anything, to just be. So yeah, tonight’s experience was really educational and eye opening for me!

I should say – just so you all know – it is not just Liam that I have learned and am learning from. I’ve learned a ton from everyone. The reason I’m writing about this particular experience (and I hope I’m not gushing too much, but I’m doing this stream of consciousness thing and in a bit of a rush because I wanna get home and eat some food) is because I was speaking with Tracey after tonight’s class about why we only did three scenes. It’s not that Liam and I thought that there were only three worthwhile events in the first act. It’s because the process of sculpting the first scene took up all our time. I don’t know if I described it in enough detail above, but there was a great learning process through which Liam coached me from being all cognitive to being more experiential, and that process took some time. We did the second two scenes in three or four minutes. And so, yeah, when I was telling Tracey just now the reason we only did three scenes, she said “write that up! Journal it and post it to the google site!” So I am, but not because Liam’s been the only person I’ve learned from. Okay, it’s now 9:47 and I should wrap this up and get home to eat!

Quick edit: it’s now 10:32, and I’m home, and I’ve eaten, and I’ve edited the above account a little bit for clarity. Looking forward to the next session!

Wednesday, November 6th

The images that people created to demonstrate Act 1 were really neat to see. This week we reviewed what people had shown on Monday and discussed what each series emphasized about the story. It was interesting to take a place in one of the images and particularly as it was the role of the mother. We’ve been working hard at trying to expand her character and deepen her motivations so that she becomes a character that is easier to understand and empathize with. The images tended to reflect aspects of the characters and story that the crafters seem to identify with (of course!) The images that Shelby helped create interestingly really highlighted the school element and the stress of the student, while Jane’s series emphasized the relationship with the
mother. The first series was focussed on the element of constructed social systems and how they impact our lives, these were crafted by the theatre man (Liam) and the sociologist (Mark). We discussed what we as a group felt was critical to the story. We also went deeper and analyzed each image in the various series discussing what they communicated and how.

Week 4:
Monday, November 11th

This week I started to move the group towards acting. We’ve been using a lot of drama exercises and warm-up games but the group hasn’t yet worked towards the skills needed to perform in a piece of theatre – or really to devise a scene. So I had them create a sequence of random sounds and then to warm them up to the idea of making a scene, they then created and performed a story that involved the sounds of their sequence. The pieces were highly entertaining and made it possible for people to ease into making a short piece of the play so far from their images.

Wednesday, November 13th:

We read through Act 2 and 3 and had a rather full discussion involving topics such as: audience participation, science, and colonialism. We talked about how we might show that Cara is finding agency by having a change in the language she uses and how she alters her framing of the world around her. People seemed to like the idea that her resolution would be a shift, a change that indicates she takes a step in the right direction but that not everything would be neatly tied up and resolved.

I want to try to incorporate pieces from the text and media that people have previously brought in. My aim for next week is to figure out how we can include more of the groups’ perspective, and to see if we can experiment with playing games with the audience as a way to include the audience and their ideas in the show as well.

Week 5:
Monday, November 18th

Today we worked quite a bit with physicality – which is the key to my approach to theatre. It is remarkable how much our emotions can be physically manifested, how simply taking on the stance of an angry person can help call up the emotional state (or the appearance of it) and adopting the physicality of a character can deeply inform the actor about that character in a way that creating their history and intellectually identifying intentions cannot. I had everyone write out the inner monologues of a couple of the characters they discovered in the movement exploration, in order to attempt to get them to link speech to all the physical work we’ve been doing.

It was a joy to watch others discover how leading their walk with a particular body part could alter so much and also to see them experiment with the various levels of tension we carry in our bodies. We then brought this work to bear on characters from the show, and what emerged was,
once again, things that I hadn’t ever thought of! For example, in a skit that Mark and Jane presented they played Felix and Cara’s mom visiting her in the prison, and that seems like a neat way to bring together diverging elements of Cara’s life.

Notes from co-Laborators –

Dale’s Summary: What I learned in adopting the walk of various characters:
Felix: I felt he was laid back, but also straining forward from his core. He felt grounded, but in two conflicting ways (from the relaxed shoulders but differently from the leading hips). I felt like he was trying two modes at once, both of which would be successful approaches on their own, but which created dissonance in interaction.
Father: I felt not strong and powerful, but the pressure to be strong and powerful. He felt like he was trying to rigidly maintain the appearance of the supremacy he felt was his role to have.
Cara: When I tried to walk like Cara, I felt the wonder and curiosity that I imagine would have led her to attend closely to the world and wish to change it. To me, it felt like these feelings are held down by the strain of all the bad she feels like she needs to fix.

Wednesday, November 20th

Today we started by reading the new scene…

We went through the slides of a couple Bob Lovelace lectures – this led to a good discussion and then led into a talk about representation in artistic work.

I have been starting to question just how much I want Cara to explore political indigenous issues. I went to the Writer’s Fest and saw Leanne Simpson and Thompson Highway speak about indigenous sovereignty and storytelling. At the talk someone asked about how to spread the word about these issues (in a world rife with misunderstanding about Canada’s First Nations) and the response came clearly: leave the room for indigenous peoples to speak.

I came to the group with these thoughts, and some articles that John had sent me when we talked about my concerns earlier this week. We read through the article reviewing ‘Pig Girl’ that highlights the challenges the piece has received from activists about the representation of Indigenous women (who have been raped and murdered) in a play written by a white woman. It was a helpful discussion; Jane in particular has thought critically about the intersection (and not) of art and social justice and her insight really struck me. While representing indigenous struggle directly is more problematic, putting the struggle of the colonizer onstage as she attempts to sort through her role in these issues is critical. While this will by necessity touch on indigenous issues (and may offend some people), the perspective is clearly one looking in from the outside (and it is important to put these stories up for viewing and sharing – to stimulate the thinking of the colonizer)…
Week 6:

Monday, November 25th

Warm-up was particularly fun with an Image Check-in today – gotta keep things energized! People are feeling the academic crunch, Shelby is especially feeling stressed, and so I’ve relieved her of her commitment having her come only if she feels able, as she’s feeling overwhelmed with school and I don’t want to contribute any additional stress...We had a good discussion of the plot elements using a new outline) that I drafted based on our explorations with the character work and especially from creating the 10 key images.

Liam offered a particular insight in our discussion, asking: “who is Cara’s Horatio?”. He suggested that Cara doesn’t have to be the one spear-heading the bottled-water free campus campaign, as it’s important that she is not the central impetus of everything! This is a good thought to consider... We also spent some time discussing how we should have the audience experience the climate change lecture. We discussed whether the goal should be to scare the audience, so they feel how Cara feels (frightened and overwhelmed) or whether they should be able to sit and watch how this information is being processed by Cara... no clear result on this as of yet. There are pros and cons to both I think.

We finished today by working in two groups to create a game for the audience – I left it rather open and the two games ended up being quite divergent! One left no room to decide whether you’d like to participate or not, the whole group had to choose a side of the room based on their answer to a called out question and in the other there was the opportunity to sit back at watch the action as the group decided how to save the sinking life boat.

Some Notes from the co-Laborators:

Dale’s thoughts on games:
In terms of what games I think an audience would play:
I think a game in which everyone responds together is more likely to make people feel comfortable than a game in which people have to single themselves out. I liked the “choose a side game” though, if I had an out (like being an anonymous part of an audience) I absolutely wouldn’t have responded to several of the questions because choosing a non-grey-area-side is so uncomfortable.

Jane’s thoughts on games:
One of the interesting things about both the games is that there were no winners and losers--I suspect in another context if we were to define games that would emerge as at least part of the definition. In ‘playing’ the other group’s game I noticed it was very easy to not play--it was easier, safer and more entertaining (this actually gives me some insight into the meaning of entertainment) to watch them play lifeboat without ever actually having to step out on a limb and play myself. In some ways (particularly reflecting on Dale’s comment) I think this was good because it gave the audience an “out” so that they didn’t need to participate if it was really going to be uncomfortable for them, though perhaps the out was too easy an attractive in this case. In
our game I can see situations in which the game would be so uncomfortable for people that it would be important to have a way out--ie. I can imagine it being a triggering/difficult experience for some people to choose a side of the gender binary, for example (even if we often have to make such choices in everyday life, which was part of the point of the exercise). So my question is--what is the line between encouraging participation in a game and forcing it?

Mark’s thoughts on the games: amazing how different they were in terms of how the groups interpreted the scope of what was possible!

Wednesday, November 27th

Today we discussed the name of the group – trying to find a common way of identifying what we were doing together. We’ve done this before and come up with various ideas, settling as a group on the fact that it was an exploration and that we should call it “Adventure Time” – but it seems that different people have been calling what we were up to different things. I called the meetings my “Collab Sessions” – short for collaborating sessions. Jane and Dale said the meetings were part of the “Play Thing” and Mark called it the ‘Climate Change Play Group’ – which we all quite liked – I mentioned that the ‘play group’ part reminded me of an aspect of my philosophy that I tried to bring to the organizing of this group which was the importance that adults have time to play. This comes from the work of Jacques Lecoq who described his style of theatre as ‘JEU’ which is French for game. And I think that throughout my years of theatre training the importance of play in life has been imprinted on me, by learning the importance of it on the stage. We touched on how this type of activity has been beneficial to everyone involved, that it served to de-stress them, to re-arrange their brains, to help adjust perspective, and that it was a great way to put a different spin on much of the work they were up to in the University setting.

The aspect of our work that was unknown and experimental seemed to resonate as important to people. That it was a co-Laboratory with Players struck me – a place to experiment with others. This also tied in with the fact Tiffany commented on how she would never have met most of the people involved and what a varied group of interesting people it was. We agreed on The co_lab Play Group. [This evolved into me resting on the co-LAB-oratory.]

We finished with a discussion of the remaining sessions and what we’d like to see happen. People weren’t keen on having a performance for external eyes, but happy to prepare something more shaped for each other. And we also talked about moving into the Future of the Project and how each person may or may not like to be involved. It’s great to hear that while not all are up for fully participating in the next phase, everyone wants to stay in the loop and help in some way!

Week 7:

Monday, December 2nd

Jane led the physical warm up, which was nice as we’ve been building on sharing leadership within the group. Felicia then led everyone in a game of Whoosh while I set up technology in a room upstairs.
The key to today was working on bringing together what we’ve got into something solid, so I set up the files with plot outlines and so they could access files with any previous pieces they may like to integrate (from looking at pictures or videos or session summaries) and suggested aspects of the piece they might like to work on. We then decided as a group that it was realistic to work on two scenes and to split into two groups who each decided what aspect of the show they would like to create into a solid scene. Liam, Jane and Dale worked on the Climate Change lecture scene while Tiffany, Mark, Felicia, and Alex worked on the opening scene with the Mom.
Appendix E

Phase 2 Email Invite and Journal Entry

Dance LAB – Invitation Email:

Hello,

I hope that you have been enjoying something you love lately, whether that be the company of friends, family, or some eggnog :) 

I am currently preparing for the next phase of development for the play I am creating for my master’s degree in Environmental Studies. anARcTheatre and Single Thread Theatre will be producing the show at the end of April 2014.

For phase two of the co-Laboratory efforts I am looking for people who are interested in exploring movement and themes related to the play in an ensemble. These themes include environmental justice, decolonization, activism, and our responsibilities to ourselves and others. I am envisioning a group learning laboratory where for seven weeks we will have the opportunity to share our dance knowledge and the chance to learn from others. I am still developing the format, and I would love to hear your ideas/feed-back. However here is the general vision: we will meet once a week, with each week having a different dance focus. For example one week we will explore contact improv, while the next we may learn some all-abilities dancing, and then perhaps some Latin moves. Each of the seven to ten core ensemble will lead the focus of the class once. Each week we will spend an hour as a group learning and experimenting with that style of dance and then we’ll have 30 minutes to use that style as a creation base. We will be creating in and around the themes of the play (this part will likely be led by me). I can see this process generating many ideas for the chorus that will eventually be cast for the show. It will also be an opportunity to sort through the show’s larger themes in community (which is an important part of the creation of this show).

If you are interested in potentially being in the show this will be an important orientation, or you may simply be interested in having some structured time for the company of friends and dancing!

Please let me know if this might interest you and when you’d be available. I’m hoping to work with people who can commit to meeting weekly. However I am also thinking that we could have a core group of 7 to 10 but then open up the dance class part to anyone who is interested (potentially charging them $5 to help pay for the space rental?). I may be able to rent a proper studio so that we’re not contending with the JDUC floors. When would your ideal 1.5 hour dance class be? Could you make it for a Monday or Tuesday lunch? There is also room for core ensemble members who won’t lead a class, so don’t fret if you’re not an expert at any particular style but would still like to participate!
I’d love to hear your thoughts and what timing might work for you!

Tracey

Journal Entry (from when I initially tried to follow up the dance sessions with a discussion of the related themes):

**Ballet and woman's struggle for selfhood**

February 12-14
7:10 PM

Emily began the class with names and a question of what brought folks there. I then led a break the ice name game which helped people identify with the others in the group and hopefully to help them feel more comfortable. The energy of a group certainly changes quickly from a somewhat awkward anticipation and hesitancy to a feeling of collective relief once people have something to do.

We began with arm circles and while some people certainly needed more time to grasp the movement I also noticed others who were quick to play. Emily encouraged us to find levels and the move about. It was a nice exploratory start to what segued into the more "regimented" (as she described them) dance exercises. We did barre work in the centre. We began with an awareness of our posture and then instructions on how to attain the balletic posture. This included 'hooking our pelvis in' and 'knitting in our ribs'. It was excellently described and had me reflecting on my childhood dancing and just how much contorting I had to do to create the proper body position.

As it is an all-abilities class, we have people in the class whose bodies can't make these shapes... I couldn't help thinking about them and how they might be feeling as we contorted ourselves into balletic posture.

In the discussion afterwards we debriefed on how people felt about the experience. We talked a bit about how difficult it is to do something that seems effortless. And how women are often the ones on display in ballet. We also discussed all the multi-tasking, that there's always many things to be thinking about (hands, feet, timing, etc).

The breadth of the discussion focussed on learning this technique or the "rules". Some discussed how it felt like being broken down (makes think of a horse) or feeling held back. And how the feeling of being unable to do the exercises can become a barrier to learning (someone mentioned feeling as though one is going two steps back for every step forward).

Others talked about the freedom that comes from perfected any technique, how after 10 000 hours (this is apparently the hours to put in in order to be an expert at something) one is able to express themselves (beautifully) through this form. We pondered: Is there a way to be open to the world while working within the given rules?

There was a discussion of how modern dance broke this rigidity down, while there it still has a form and the need for training it was argued that there is more room for individual bodies,
selves and expression through modern dancing... (Different personalities respond to different styles)

As I walked home this question struck me as a metaphor central to what the character Cara is attempting to figure out.
Does she have to learn the "rules"? (Of society, expectations)
How rigid are they? (Classical, modern?)
Can she use them as a jumping point for her own creative engagement in the world?
And what does it mean that the technique is designed for able bodied people? That not everyone will be able to learn the technique in order to ‘fly’?

Imagined direction for dance involves... Struggling with the technique, the style but then managing to use it in a way to express one's self
Bibliography


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