In the Realms of Fantasy: Finding New Ways to Tell our Stories

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Abstract

This article describes some key moments from my doctoral research project which invited six international drama educators to embody their stories of the battles and barricades inherent in drama education using imagination and role play. Instead of a traditional qualitative interview I devised a framing device – the Museum of Educational Drama and Applied Theatre – and took on role of an Archivist’s Assistant to facilitate the generation of stories. Inspired by arts-based research and performative inquiry this method offers an alternative to traditional qualitative interviews by suggesting that drama can be used to embody stories in a dyadic situation. This research resulted in the development of a play which re-imagined and re-enacted some of those stories.

Biography

JANE LUTON is an arts-based researcher and has been a head of drama in secondary schools in England and New Zealand. She has recently achieved a PhD in education with a creative practice component, the first of its kind undertaken at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland. Her research explores how drama educators deal with the battles and barricades inherent in teaching drama and how she re-found a passion for her pedagogy when it was lost to melancholia. She has co-authored four drama study guides published by ESA (NZ) for year 12 and 13 New Zealand students and teachers and had articles and chapters published in peer-reviewed journals and books.
Introduction

In 2014, I undertook doctoral research with six international drama educators. These practitioners represent drama pedagogy in England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. My research explored the battles and barricades that drama educators can experience in this often marginalised pedagogy and what can sustain us. I will share some key stories in this article that I feel were enlivened using a new research tool ‘embodied reflections’. In order to do so I will use extracts from the transcriptions of the researcher-participant interactions and brief scenes from a play I subsequently devised. Embodied reflections aim to engage participants and researchers through the imagination and through engagement with drama.

Initially I was inspired by the work of arts based researchers whose work I experienced at the Applied Theatre symposiums held at the University of Auckland in New Zealand. Demonstrations and discussions of their work showed that as drama educators we can use our own art form to generate stories for as Victor Turner (1988) suggests we come to know ourselves through performance as both observers and actors. Joe Norris advocates ‘Playbuilding’ (Norris, 2009) to generate data and so I experimented with ways to use drama strategies to interview my participants. I was determined to capture the unspoken language of the body even though I could not bring my participants together in one place to carry out a collaborative drama workshop. This meant that I needed to ensure my interviews offered opportunities for enactment for as Kvale suggests a sedentary interview may not offer this possibility (Kvale, 1996). Drama is by nature a group activity rather than a solitary pursuit. Peter Brook declares that all that is required for theatre to take place is for one person to walk across an empty space while another observes (Brook, 1968). This significant concept supported my development of embodied reflections and helped me transform a dyadic interview into a framed dramatic encounter as I invited my participants to share their stories individually with me, the sole observer, as they performed in the empty space. I acted as facilitator and audience and each session was recorded by one static video camera on a tripod.

I invited my participants, who agreed to relinquish their anonymity, to experiment with embodied reflections. Professor Andy Kempe, Professor John O’Toole, Mr Ron Price, Associate Professor Peter O’Connor, Professor Jonathan Neelands and Associate Professor Lynn Fels, agreed to share their stories of drama education practice with me, each taking part in two ninety minute sessions.

I crafted the method as a drama teacher using drama conventions and theatrical techniques ‘to unfold its meanings or themes in time and space’ (Neelands, 2010, p. 49) so that it did not become a collection of disjointed and random drama activities. In doing so I drew on my experience of creating a drama lesson. My participants were not asked to portray in depth roles but rather to demonstrate their stories as a ‘street scene’ (Willett, 1964) as Brecht advocates in his description of Epic theatre. The construction of an illusion is not required, rather, it is a re-imaging of events that have happened. The element of tension, central to all forms of drama, is introduced in the metaphors of ‘battles and barricades’ stimulating the participants to critically consider and confront what they perceived to be some of the difficulties faced by drama educators in their practice. These warlike metaphors reflected some of the dramatic and at times vociferous language used in the academic debates (Hornbrook, 1989) that surrounded drama education as I entered this world as a drama teacher in 1989.
New Zealand tensions

In New Zealand while drama is a subject within the curriculum there are still tensions to be faced particularly in the juggling of ideals that surround the purpose and goals of drama education. Peter O’Connor advocates that drama’s power lies in its ability to explore themes of social justice and to create a democratic relationship between student and teacher in the classroom (O’Connor, 2010). He suggests that drama is less effective at the centre of the curriculum (O’Connor, 2009). Zoe Brooks has written about the problems of drama assessment because it’s “emphasis on public perceptions rather than the living process of the classroom can stifle the very energy that gives drama life” (Brooks, 2010, p. 8). Tracey Lynn Cody’s research shares stories of those who feel being a drama teacher “means a far greater workload involving many more hours than other subject areas seem to require” (Cody, 2012, p. 172). Some teachers describe their role as a “bloody foot soldier” (Cody, 2012, p. 172) but Cody believes that the “artistry of teachers may well flourish – provided their passion is not crushed through cumbersome workload pressures” (Cody, 2012, p. 185). This research acknowledges these tensions and enables drama educators to reflect on their journeys using their own art form.

Imagining the Museum

Each dyadic encounter began with an invitation to my participants to imagine that a Museum of Educational Drama and Applied Theatre (MEDAT) was to be opened and as representatives of inspiring practice, they were being asked to contribute stories and artefacts. Money was to be no object so my participants could imagine the creation of multimedia displays and holograms, to which Andy Kempe replies with laughter:

so we really are in the realms of complete fantasy (Andy Kempe, embodied reflection, England, May 2013).

And John O’Toole confirms:

that’s a relief because it’s going to be very expensive. (John O’Toole, embodied reflection, Australia, January 2013)

My particular framed scenario was inspired by the many happy hours I spent with students at the Theatre Museum, Covent Garden in London. Sadly, unable to survive financially, it was closed in 2007 and its contents removed to other locations. My museum would be a place to explore, critique and celebrate drama education.

During my research I see a performance of Kushner’s Angels in America (1992, p. 21) and am struck by Harper Pitt’s suggestion that the mind:

shouldn’t be able to make up anything that wasn’t there to start with, that didn’t enter it from experience, from the real world. Imagination can’t create anything new can it? It only recycles bits and pieces from the world and reassembles them into visions.

The imaginative process, Eisner suggests, is essential to research (Eisner 1991, p. 186) and as a central tenet in drama and theatre my participants readily embraced the idea of working in an imagined space.

In the Faculty of Education at The University of Reading, Professor Andy Kempe drew the curtains around the space and illuminated the studio with stage lighting. He sat to listen to my introduction to the Museum then rose, hands in pockets, and walked slowly around the newly constructed drama studio:
Well … So there’s a question then what do we fill it with? Do we fill it with artefacts and books and stuff --- do we divide it into I don’t know different things that might be covered in drama in education so for example, plays, physical theatre, mime, Masks, puppets, film, multimedia … I’d much rather drama in education was about the thing itself rather than individuals who just happened to have made a living out of it … Particularly if you want it to be an interactive space because that’s what I’d want it to be. (Andy Kempe)

For Andy MEDAT must exhibit the heart of drama education and for him as he will demonstrate it is a playful space yet one in which serious subjects can be explored. In this moment my participant and I as the researcher engaged in a shared act of imagination and entered the fantasy world.

Each of these educators reflected on their stories through the creation of maps and metaphors, movement and monologue, symbols and images bringing their stories alive for me the researcher and subsequently for an audience. I provided several resources and pre-texts to stimulate reflection and a box of props which changed and altered according to requests my participants made. These props included two white masks, small foam people shapes, paper, pens and several balls of coloured wool. The props grew in number during the research as participants challenged me about why certain items had not being included. In a drama studio in Brisbane John O’Toole inquired:

I’m just looking in your little yellow box you don’t have a scarf, how could, how could any drama teacher not come with the scarf either some kind of hairbands or scarf to drape over yourself to play the old woman? Don’t you ever play old women in your dramas? You’ve got to have a scarf especially if you’re a bloke if you can play an old woman. How can I be a mother of the IRA boy who’s been killed unless I’m wearing a scarf? (John O’Toole)

This questioning of the items in the prop box sheds light on John’s approach to drama education through process drama and his interest in the use of simple items to signify role and deepen the drama.

In order to facilitate the process I assumed the role of the Museum’s ‘Archivist’s assistant’ to encourage storytelling rather than intrude into the stories. In this role I can defer to an imagined Archivist inviting my participants to speak to her on a prop telephone to discuss their artefact choices. As a result they often answered questions of their own making. Peter engaged his belief in the imaginary situation and focused completely on the unseen character:

Peter: Uh right [Holds phone in left hand to ear] Ah right. Hello lovely to talk, yes, wonderful [Crosses his legs, his right arm leans on table, relaxed] well look I’ve got three things here that I think you’d be interested in [Picks up video in cardboard case, smiles, nods as if responding to the Archivist]

After explaining the importance of the items he decided when to finish the call:

So those are the three things that I’ve got for the museum. Anything else you need to know just let us know. [Cheerily] Thanks, Bye! [Smiles, puts down phone, picks up coffee cup] (Peter O’Connor, embodied reflection, December 2012)
Margins and circles: the importance of space

John O’Toole considered how to create a symbol of what drama education means to him. He debated the ‘the real lovely dramatic dilemma’ of demonstrating drama that is ‘live and visceral’ and ‘moving and evanescent’ in a possibly static display (John O’Toole, embodied reflection, Australia, January 2013). This struggle became an embodied one as he moved chairs from a stack and began to re-create the space of the drama classroom and explained the relationship between teachers, students and space. He then opened the door of the studio and, with his back and hands against the wall, entered hesitatingly:

there’s no comfortable setup of chairs so they sidle around the edge or talk to each other and pretend that they’re not there … so the empty space is a challenging and intimidating space. (John O’Toole)

He re-enacts the children as they enter the studio, an event he has overseen on numerous occasions. He also demonstrates his empathy – his ability to understand how a child might feel on entering the space for the first time. I can imagine the children timid, nervous as they hang back preferring the edges, not wanting to step into the open space.

As Andy Kempe enters his dedicated drama studio he has to clear the space of desks and chairs before the embodied reflection can begin – he is not alone in this being the first act of a drama lesson. Lynn Fels, visiting Auckland from Canada, does not have the luxury of a drama studio to carry out her embodied reflection and instead is faced with a small seminar room whose central feature is a large boardroom table. This reminds her of the difficulties she faces preparing the space for drama:

the first barricade I always confront is this very situation here where we don’t have an empty space we have a space of tables and chairs (Lynn Fels, embodied reflection, Auckland, March 2013)

As John O’Toole re-enacts the preparation of his drama space he suggests that:

one of the characteristics of drama education is you have to spend an awful lot of time moving furniture (John O’Toole)

The re-enactment of this shared activity reveals a ritual which instead of being a barricade to beginning a drama class can be a ritual to be embraced. The ritual is significant in its signal that a special space is being prepared in which drama can occur.

In a studio on the Westwood campus at Warwick University, Jonothan Neelands acknowledged that the drama space is often at the edges of the school and is:

sometimes referred to by the rest of this University as Siberia and it’s a safe place. (Jonothan leans on the back of one of the chairs) and drama studios dedicated drama studios like this, are often on the margins of institutions of schools and other places. In our schools they are often in mobiles out on the edge of the playground. You know people worry about that and they worry about the lack of respect and status but I actually embrace it it’s important for me to be on the margins it’s important there’s a safe space here where people can come to where things are different. (Jonothan Neelands, embodied reflection, England, May 2013)

I observe as Jonothan creates a circle of chairs within the studio carefully and methodically describing it as:
the quintessential shape, the symbol that holds it all. (Jonothan Neelands)

This circle of chairs:

symbolises that although I am the teacher and I have responsibility for what goes on I want to try and find a different way of being with you as learners.

He unwinds a ball of red wool slowly creating an inner circle while a song he has specifically chosen plays on the studio sound system. He then steps outside the circles and, using his voice and gesture for emphasis, begins to share the significance of this space within his practice. This circle of chairs with its inner circle of red wool is a symbol of the democratic process he places as central to his classroom. He reflects on the importance of engaging young people in critical thinking, empathy and making decisions for the common good (Embodied reflection, Jonothan Neelands, May 2013). His students learn they can choose to cross the line between reality and fiction. They can choose to assume a role and by so doing help shape the drama occurring in the space. His students experience:

the illusion at least of equality of power.

It is a place where there is an insistence:

on equality of participation and freedom of voice but also restraint in speech and action.

For John O’Toole the circle counteracts the potentially intimidating nature of the empty space as students and teachers sit on the floor together making eye contact in ‘a genuinely dialogical and democratic space’. The circle is created by several participants and these embodied explorations enable me to understand it in a new way as both a symbol of drama education and a practical application of space. At the denouement of the embodied reflection I inform my participants that there is to be a final exhibit for people to visit before leaving the museum. It is to be called dreams of the future for drama in education and I invite them to contribute to this exhibit. Andy Kempe lays out the little foam people on the floor – a little clichéd he suggests but a symbol ‘that probably speaks for itself’:

Figure 1. The future of drama education.

Personal Artefacts

My participants all bring artefacts along to MEDAT and these heighten the storytelling process. Peter O’Connor offers as one of his artefacts a small painted yellow rock
decorated with a smiley face given to him by a boy with special needs. He then re-enacts the moment he receives the rock while in role as ‘Roger the Monster’ in a process drama. Peter drags two chairs to the centre of his playing space and creates a small area to represent the place where this imaginary character lives. He is:

an animal which lives in a cave in the drama room. This animal was completely devoid of social skills as he was afraid to mix with other people because fun was made of him’ (O’Connor, 1989, p. 6).

Peter places the yellow rock downstage on the floor, returns and leans on the chairs putting one foot behind the other. He thinks for a moment, then slowly crouches on the floor and sits huddled between the chairs. His head is bowed, his shoulders bent forward, his legs pulled up; he looks down at the carpet. He appears to be making himself small and insignificant to embody this low status character.

Roger listens to the voices of the imagined children but keeps his eyes downcast, his legs tightly crossed in a defensive attitude. His right hand clasps his left hand. In role as Roger, Peter talks almost to himself; his statements reflect uncertainty and are asked with a rising inflection.

Peter: it’s nice of you to say goodbye… I can’t believe …that I have to leave… What? You’ve got gifts? …Gifts to say that we’ll always be friends? Gifts to say goodbye? You’ve painted this rock? Is it for me? For me to keep forever? Oh I’ll keep it forever. *(Peter gets up from the floor)* …there you go. *(Peter O’Connor, embodied reflection, New Zealand, December 2012)*

As soon as the last line is delivered Peter breaks out of role, stands up and quickly walks forwards to pick up the rock saying:

there you go – that’s the moment.

He crosses to the table, picks up his mug of coffee and sips.

This has been a precisely controlled performance beginning with an intake of breath before he performs – the taking in of life. Peter communicates Roger’s fear, his lack of social skills and as he does so he moves from the real to the performed, from Peter to Roger. As the researcher I am drawn into the scenario –this is more emotional for me than a story re-told through words alone. Freed from writing, as the entire process is video recorded, I can engage as an audience member, observe small performative details, and feel some inner sense of what they may be telling me. This re-enactment
brings me closer to the original moment as I imagine being in the classroom with the
students as they encounter Roger. I not only hear the words, I see them re-enacted as
a sense of the context is conveyed. I hear the whispered voice, see the downcast face. I
interpret what they mean to me and allow them to resonate with special moments I have
experienced in the classroom.

Meeting Heathcote and Bolton through role playing

At the outset of the embodied reflection I invite my participants to create their family
tree of drama education in order to contextualise their practice and understand what
influences and inspires their work. These are presented in different ways – Jonothan
draws a large map of the world in green pen on a white board, Lynn drapes coloured
wool around the space and Peter draws a forest of trees. John O’Toole decides that
having written about his first encounter with Dorothy Heathcote it would
be quite nice to show in some ways a little brief episode. (John O’Toole)

He begins by moving towards the upstage door in the drama studio. He opens it and
then slams it shut behind him as he sweeps back into the space. He plays the role of
Dorothy Heathcote and his story lifts off the page and onto the stage – energetic, and
alive capturing the excitement of John as a young man encountering Heathcote for the
first time. My transcription of this scene includes the non-verbal language in a series of
stage directions:

(John has walked up to the blue door on the back wall and is about to open
it) the big double door … it burst open and in swept this big brown dress
(John opens the door then it slam shut behind him he increases his body size
to demonstrate) waving a ship’s rope above its head which it threw at the
nearest group of people. It landed on me and one of the girls from the other
course and she shouted ‘pull you buggers pull!’ (John has demonstrated this
in a northern English accent) So talk about her –teacher in role, we all lifted
and pulled like mad – and that was my first ever live glimpse of Dorothy
Heathcote and she wasn’t always as spectacular as that she could use the
quiet registers too. In later life, I thought what a clever intervention that was.
(John sits). (John O’Toole, embodied reflection, January 2013)

John uses his voice, body, movement and space to share with me the excitement of
the original event. Having never met Heathcote I am engaged in this re-enacted event
as I might be in a theatre. I feel the “tingle” or “goose-bump moment” (Probyn, 2004, p.
29) in my body. I experience the emotion of the moment as if I had been there. Then
suddenly in his continuing embodied story I catch my first ever glimpse of Gavin Bolton.
John starts to lower his voice; he pulls a chair up close to the camera, sits down and
becomes a headshot in the viewfinder. He begins to give an embodied demonstration
of Gavin in action. As he recounts his story, he moves between the role of narrator and
the role of Gavin, speaking to a group of imagined children gathered around him on the
floor:

Gavin was very quiet, was very contained, in his teaching he’s even quieter
(John starts to lower his voice hunch over gets a chair and sits on it and
gives an embodied demonstration of Gavin in action, he pulls the chair up
close to the camera so we just see a headshot) ’Now what are we going to
make a play about? Now it’s no use saying stupid things’ (John gets up and
stops to use his own tone of voice) so he’s very quiet, but sharp as a tack,
... but wonderfully supportive he’s an amazing teacher, astonishing teacher, of which unfortunately there’s very little record left I think of physical, visual records of his work. (John O’Toole)

This re-enactment is in direct contrast to the energy of his role as Dorothy for Gavin is portrayed as quieter, commanding the space through stillness and eye contact. This is the first time I have encountered Bolton as a living figure outside of his books. Later I will have the chance to re-enact this scene in the drama I devise and in that moment I am [my name], playing John, playing Gavin. I transcend time and space and connect to this practitioner as seen through the eyes of John O’Toole.

Rallying drama educators over the barricades

The Archivist

(Trying to hush the group, SFX dies away)

Excuse me, excuse me Ladies and gentlemen, the Museum would like to invite you to create a battle speech, for the opening of this museum; a rallying cry, based on Henry the Fifth. (Aside to audience) Now John had described drama as being a naughty and transgressive medium. Andy suggests we be playful... be a bit devilish, chucking in the hand grenade. (Back to participants) Oh by the way the Minister of Education will be present... (Battles and Barricades: A drama about Drama)

I invite my participants to create a speech to welcome visitors to our imaginary Museum on its opening night and offer them as a dramatic lure a copy of the speech from Shakespeare’s Henry V which begins ‘once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more’. I explain that the Minister for Education is among the visitors. I choose this character to act as a focus for the rallying cries but as a result it offers a tension in the creation of the drama. John comments after listening to my request:

so what you’re, the archivist is pointing out is that we have multiple audiences and conflicting audiences with conflicting expectations. (John O’Toole, embodied reflection, January 2013)

The presence of a possibly critical observer, forces the participants to consider the content of their rallying cry. The speeches that ensue express the concerns, desires, hopes and dreams of my participants. They petition the imaginary Minister to consider the value and importance of the role that drama education can play in the lives of children. The speeches are poetic and emotional and delivered as if they matter, as if they are real. As the researcher I enjoy the moment I throw in the ‘hand grenade’, relishing the way that drama allows and in fact demands that we construct a tension for actors and audience to wrestle with. For Peter this is an opportunity to ‘stir the blood’ (Peter O’Connor, embodied reflection, December 2012) and connect to teachers. For Lynn Fels it is a chance to advocate quietly for drama education. She asks rhetorically:

So the minister right? I’m talking to those who would take all this away. (Lynn Fels)

She steps on a chair and onto the large boardroom table in the centre of the space where she stands towering over me as I remain on the floor. She holds a scroll in her hands on which she has written her speech – there is a palpable emotion in the room which I feel. She is about to address the person who threatens the existence of drama education passionately and playfully:
Listen to the child within you, listen to the child you’ve left behind
Can you hear her call, do you feel his presence there with you?
Once you were a child at play, once you were a child
This thing that we call drama this too is a child at play, forgive yourself, come
into play, what we call drama plays us, plays us into being, breathe (Breathes,
steps back, drops paper to the ground). (Lynn Fels, embodied reflection,
March 2013)

The decision to include the Minster ‘of’ or ‘for’ Education amongst the audience incites
passionate stories of drama education in England. Jonothan Neelands, Ron Price and
Andy Kempe suggest it is a difficult and dark time for drama education threatened as it
is by the government represented in the persona (at that time) of the Secretary of State
for Education Michael Gove.

Andy: Is this to everybody or just to the minister?

Researcher: This is for everybody who is going to be there, but he will also
be there.

Andy: …but he will also be there… Okay alright.

(Keeps writing)

(13 minutes)

Andy: Bit rough (laughs) okay so these crowds of people wanting to come into
our Museum of drama education and amongst them (Said through clenched
teeth) our esteemed Minister of State for Education (Andy Kempe)

Ron Price explains:

we just reel from being constantly being ‘done with’ by ministers trying to show
how clever they are so they can move up the ladder. (Ron Price, embodied
reflection, England May 2013)

Gove becomes the antagonist of the drama; the personification of the ‘knowledge
based curriculum’ as Andy explains:

when he is talking about knowledge what’s he talking about? He’s talking about
rote learning and knowledge of facts and figures but with no understanding.
(Andy Kempe)

The last lines of his rallying cry demand:

Are
any of you so mean and base as to
destroy what here has been made?

I feel the emotions that are being expressed and I almost believe that Michael Gove is
there, watching and listening. Andy looks directly into the camera and indicates one of
the displays he has created in the drama studio. A table is balanced on top of another –
it’s white surface facing outwards onto which Andy has stuck green cardboard stars
to represent the difficulties inherent in assessing drama. As he creates this exhibit he
reflects on the difficulties of assessing students in drama using levels, suggesting that
teachers may want to ‘show the parents that the children are progressing but it’s a load
of nonsense really’. On the chair beside this exhibit hang the two white masks staring blankly out at the audience. He finishes his display by tying two labels to the legs of the chairs to demonstrate his dissatisfaction with ‘labelling for labelling sake’.

**Embodied reflections: A Street corner demonstration?**

The research provided an opportunity for drama practitioners to use their skills and knowledge of drama pedagogy to tell their own stories. As I engage with the embodied stories I begin to reflect on my own teaching pedagogy. This reflection is heightened, more emotional and subjective because I connect on an emotional level with my participants, breathing the air they breathe, sharing the space they are in, hearing the sounds they hear and being in their re-imagined world. This research tool embraces theatricality enabling stories to be embodied, incorporating critical reflection and as Andy plays with some of the props he explains:

> I think – what I mean by the aesthetic knowledge when I can see and feel things in three-dimensions then I can start making links between them (Andy Kempe, embodied reflection, May 2013)

This ability and need for arts-based researchers to ‘feel’ research is vital for it: recognizes that we know the world through all our senses, through our bodies, and that we can sometimes better represent that knowledge through our bodies rather than through what comes from our mind alone. (O’Connor & Anderson, 2015, p 26)

Through drama and theatre the actor and audience, participant and researcher can investigate, communicate and share their world in a ‘narrative made visible’ (Esslin, 1987).

I see my participants as the witnesses standing on the street corner (Willett, 1964) of drama education praxis. Like the actors in Brecht’s epic theatre they demonstrate the battles and barricades they have experienced first-hand but also use the ‘magic if’ (Stanislavski, 2013) to re-enact events and heighten them as significant in their education journeys. They use their imaginations to see the possibilities for the future of drama education. As re-enactors of their own stories they choose how to interpret my research questions and the Archivist’s assistant reminds them there are no wrong answers in drama only opportunities to explore.

In the act of embodiment using their tacit and deep understanding of drama strategies and theatre forms these educators communicate the unique history of drama education. They demonstrate their ability to manipulate these forms to affect me the researcher/Archivist’ assistant/audience as I stand throughout each embodied reflection engaged, fascinated, surprised, shocked, laughing, and even crying. My research may never allow me to fully comprehend drama education, even after years of practice, for as Andy suggests:

> its greatest strength is that you won’t ever make sense of it …and that keeps us going because it’s like if we ever found the answer well it would be a bit pointless carrying on wouldn’t it? (Andy Kempe)

It is a thought echoed by Jonathan Neelands as he offers his first edition copy of *Making Sense of Drama* (Neelands, 1984) to the Museum. As he does so he writes in black pen on an orange label:
While exploring Nadine Holdsworth’s research on theatre practitioner Joan Littlewood I realise that my participants are the embodied archives of drama education. Holdsworth met with the Archivist Murray Melvin at Stratford East in London. Melvin had personally worked with Littlewood and Holdsworth felt he was ‘an embodied archive, activated through memory, imagination and storytelling’ (Holdsworth, 2011, p.31) which brought a uniquely human aspect to her research. One of the human faces of this research is shown as John re-enacts that first lively encounter with Heathcote. I in turn feel some of the excitement and aliveness of this original event through his re-enactment. It appears from my research that an embodied and dramatically framed method can add life to qualitative interviews. Just as Joe Norris uses playbuilding to generate data so the embodied reflection can offer researchers a way to draw on the creativity and imagination that lies at the heart of drama and theatre to carry out a dyadic interview. It offers a possibility to lift the interview from a sedentary practice to one which draws on voice, body, movement and space to deepen the story telling process. Embodied reflections require an empty space, a framed scenario to give purpose to the story telling and an agreement to engage in an act of imagination using drama conventions. It is vital that drama teachers share the battles and barricades as well as the hero discourses and using our own art form we can re-cycle stories of the real world, re-assemble them into visions (Kushner, 1992) and find new stories with which we can connect.

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