Museum Theatre as a Way to Teach Aboriginal History in Taiwan

Abstract

The various aboriginal histories of Taiwan have been marginalized by the dominant Han people’s historical narratives. Nevertheless, their lives and stories have always been part of the history of Taiwan. This paper aims to use the process of making museum theatre about the Papora aboriginal people to reclaim their subjectivity by recovering their lifestyles and stories in the historical period. The theories of multicultural education and history teaching have been employed to advance the argument that the pedagogies of drama education used in the case study of the scripting, production and educational program of the Legend of King Dadu can effect and impact on the undergraduates and fifth graders in terms of their understanding and critical thinking of aboriginal history in Taiwan. The strategies, procedures and pedagogies of the project have been demonstrated and analyzed accordingly in this paper. I also argue that the implementation of this kind of educational action is also an active social intervention by taking part in the emerging political movement of the ‘Reclamation of the PingPu People’s Name,” a process that started in the 1990s.

Introduction

Aboriginal History has been incorporated into history teaching in Taiwan in these ten years during which multicultural education has become part of the guiding principle of national primary school education policy for the social sciences. However, scholars have pointed out serious problems in present classrooms including the inadequacy of indigenous historical materials in existing textbooks, the perpetuation of indigenous stereotypes and racism, as well as the lack of respect for indigenous people’s subject positions, as well as their different cultural identities in existing historical narratives. (Mo & Wang, 1997, p. 105-109; Tan, 1998, p.130-137) During this research, I have also found out by checking existing textbooks that the aboriginal
history in Taiwan tends to be dealt with separately in the pre-historical period and has become isolated, marginalized and fragmented from the rest of Taiwan’s history. (Tan, 1998, p. 136-143; Sun, 2006, p. 69-72) This kind of portrayal also exacerbates the primitive conception and perception of aboriginal people in Taiwan, turning them into ‘authentic’ cultural fossils found in traditional museum exhibitions rather than real living people.

Fragmentary descriptions of indigenous people have been inserted into the dominant historical discourse of the Han people according to the latter’s dominant perspective and position which undermine many historical facts concerning their dominance over the aboriginal people politically, economically and socially. (Sun, 2006, p. 72-74) The various historical realities about how multiple indigenous peoples in Taiwan came to terms with the later batches of people who came to the island (such as the Han Chinese, the Dutch, the Spaniards and the Japanese) are not selected out as essential materials to teach our children. There is a great gap between the ideal of multicultural education in education policy for the social sciences and the reality of the inadequacy of indigenous cultural education in primary schools. The problem lies in the lack of both good-quality teaching materials and effective pedagogy. If university education also aspires to fulfill the ideal of multicultural education the way educational policies aspire and require, it faces similar problems and probably even worse. University students in Taiwan generally show lack of interest in history since it is always interpreted by the dominant political discourse in Taiwan. History tests always involve lots of memorization of facts, dates and numbers rather than engaging issues and stories stimulating for developing historical thinking. In view of these challenges in our history teaching, the museum theatre project that I did from 2008 to 2009 aspired to offer some alternative solutions for these emergent problems in history teaching.

Research Background and Question

My Department of Drama Creation and Application at the University of Tainan has collaborated with the National History of Taiwan in Tainan in creating and producing four interactive museum theatre performances by undergraduate students to promote the history of Taiwan primarily to fifth graders. I have devised and directed
two of these museum theatre performances and one of them is called the ‘Legend of King Dadu’, inspired by the story of the leader of the Dadu tribe of the Papora people in Central Taiwan in the 17th Century. Based upon existing and newly-found historical documents that the museum researcher has provided, we collaborated to develop the story that describes and portrays how two generations of King Dadu faced the challenge of outsiders including the Dutch, the Japanese and the Han Chinese with dignity and courage. The tribe had underwent genocide as well as gradual economic and political dominance by the Han people in the 18th century and were forced to run and hide in the jungles where they barely survived.

This play is being planned to be eventually performed at the National History Museum of Taiwan when it opens in 2011 and it has gone through a try-out performance involving undergraduates in the auditorium of the university as well as a pre-performance educational practice performed before a class of fifth graders in the university’s collaborative primary school. This particular play involved a working process in three phases: 1) Scripting phase 2) Rehearsal and production phase with the undergraduate students, and 3) The phase of pre-performance educational program designed and performed before fifth graders. This process involved three parties: the university, the museum and the primary school.

The research questions that I have set out in terms of this process include the following: 1) To understand how to devise a good interactive museum theatre performance that will engage its participants, 2) to understand how the museum theatre is going to help university students and primary school children learn about aboriginal history in 17th century Taiwan? How does this rehearsal process help university students better understand the Papora people and its culture? How does the pre-performance educational program teach primary school children about this period in Pingpu history and how does this help them develop the ability of thinking in terms of history? 3) What do these students learn about the history of Taiwan from this museum theatre project? What are the problems and difficulties they encountered in the learning process? I would like to use the methodology of a reflective practitioner to explore and examine related literature reviews as well as the
rehearsal and teaching diaries and accounts, together with students’ response to questionnaires as a way to find answers to these questions.

**Critical Literature Review**

According to the principles and goals of multicultural education and social science education, values and attitudes as well as social participation are highly considered as foremost issues that students need to learn. (Bai, 1999; Chun, 2001) However, scholars also point out the obvious lack of means for primary teachers to teach emotional understanding in a multicultural setting and to raise children’s consciousness of the values and attitudes of multiculturalism. Meanwhile, the ability for students’ active social participation is also hard to cultivate using existing pedagogical methods emphasizing the mere transmission of knowledge. (Bai, 1999; Chun, 2001) Let alone can one find in the existing social science education approaches that can deliver the awareness that critical multiculturalism aspires to achieve – i.e. to respect cultural differences as well as to be aware of the complicated relationships among power, knowledge construction and cultural identity. (Sun, 2006, p.129-130; Tan, 1998, p.130-137; Banks, 1994, p.105-106).

How are we going to make up for this obvious lack? Researches on the concepts and approaches of multicultural education as well as the concepts and pedagogies of history teaching might be helpful to start with.

Bennet (1995) defines multicultural education in terms of four dimensions and establishes a strong active relationship between ‘knowing’ and ‘doing’ multiculturalism: the movement, the curriculum approach, the process and the commitment. In Banks’ research, he came up with four effective approaches to integrate multicultural content with existing curricula with the goal of realizing multicultural education: 1) The Contributions approach, which emphasizes the heroes and cultural components of ethnic groups 2) The Additive approach, which consists of the addition of contents, concepts and perspectives to the curriculum without changing its structure 3) The Transformation approach, which changes the curriculum to enable students to view concepts, events, issues and themes from the perspective of diverse cultural, ethnic groups 4) The Social action approach, which enables students to identify important social problems, collect data, make decisions
and take reflective actions to help resolve the issue or problem. (2001, p.240-241)

These approaches will be employed to examine how the scripting and educational process of this particular museum theatre project can put these innovative educational designs into action.

The other significant theoretical model needed to be examined in this research is the concept and pedagogy of history teaching. In terms of updating the literature of history teaching, narrative, empathy and dialogic discussions have been considered as the most crucial aspects to stimulate students’ historical thinking. (Dickinson & Lee, 1978; Egan, K, 1989; Davis, Yeager & Foster, 2001). These three aspects can find their parallel in the dramatic strategies drama educators employ in their teaching. On the other hand, the pedagogy of history teaching suggests that role playing and dramatic play along with issue discussion as the effective ways to learn history. However, there is no vast systematical application of dramatic strategies yet in Taiwan’s history classes. Here is where I find a strong foundation to apply dramatic strategies in teaching history and in encouraging students’ historical thinking. Here I also find that a strong argument can be built to argue that dramatic strategies in drama in education can help develop students' historical thinking. Dramatic strategies help to build historical understanding through narrative re-enactment, to establish historical empathy through physical, sensorial and emotional embodiment and re-enactment in rehearsals and classroom exercises, to encourage reflection and social action by reflective interactive exercises, and to prompt students to make historical reflections, make decisions and take social actions in the framework of the theatre.

I would further apply these stated theories to develop the above argument and demonstrate how the scripting, production and teaching process of the museum theatre can put multicultural education into action for university and primary school students.

**Scripting**

In the scripting process, the museum researcher, Sh, Wen-Chen and I have held many script meetings before I started the formal drafting of ‘the Legend of King
Dadu'. We have discussed the historical viewpoint and the perspective that we would like to create in the play is to present this story from the aboriginal viewpoint rather than from the Han people. These will be based on the newest findings and research about those historical figures portrayed in the play. The challenge that we face is that we are Han Chinese and we have to be vigilant to avoid falling into the cultural hegemony that the Han people often commit in re-constructing historical narratives about the Pingpu people. We likewise have to avoid speaking for the aboriginal people as well. We agreed to present the aboriginal perspective in re-constructing this historical story as well as to re-establish the Pingpu cultural identity, particularly that of Papora people, by representing this story. We remained critical about the Han people's perspective in regard to King Dadu's choice and mentality when facing outside challenges from different cultures and ethnic groups in 17th Century Taiwan.

In terms of augmenting the contents of existing aboriginal historical materials in present primary school social science textbooks, the play serves as an additive historical content to the existing curriculum structure by providing extra issues and themes about the Pingpu people in 17th Century Taiwan. It can be viewed to be based on the contributions approach in Banks’ terms by focusing on the stories of Pingpu heroes – the two different King Dadu’s for students to better understand Papora culture. We also conducted a field trip to Puli where descendants of the Dadu tribe dwell today and interviewed the local historical researchers as well as members of the tribe about how they viewed this legend and their ancestors’ history. The trip is much more meaningful than informative to us since the Pingpu people are still seeking their cultural and political identities in an ongoing political movement of reinstituting their tribal names. (Shieh, 2010) That movement echoes aboriginal scholar Sun Da-Chun’s concept about re-establishing aboriginal histories to re-construct cultural identities by representing their ancestors’ story as a way to reconstruct their history, culture and identity. (Sun, 2000, p. 21) This critical context has made us more cautious in perspective taking when scripting.

After three months of script meeting discussions with the museum researcher, conducting field trips to tribe members and reviewing the artifacts and archives in the museum collection, I began the drafting process alone. Based on the principle of emphasizing on the theme about foregrounding Pingpu cultural identity as well as
upholding the dramatic effects to engage the audience, I weaved the historical facts with the fictional parts. For most parts of the play, I got consensus from the Pingpu local history and community worker that I worked with and we agreed on the disagreement with the representation of one of the two kings in the play. I have intentionally separated the play into two parts in this interactive-and-guide museum theatre project: 1) The dramatic episodes of King Dadu’s story and 2) The interactive part inserted in between the episodes to stimulate participants’ discussion and participation related to the heated issues in the play. The following table illustrates how these two elements interweave in the play. A prologue, epilogue, four acts and eight scenes in addition to four interactive parts constitute the whole play that tells the story of how two generations of King Dadu of the Papora people dealt with the outsiders’ challenge in 17th Century Central Taiwan. (Wang, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dramatic/Interactive</th>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Storyline or Action</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td></td>
<td>The modern tribal elder tells the story of King Dadu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Act I</td>
<td></td>
<td>First King Dadu led the worship ritual</td>
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<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Act II</td>
<td></td>
<td>Secret meeting among northern tribe, the Japanese and the Dutch</td>
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<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Act III</td>
<td>Scene I</td>
<td>Dutch general declared war against King Dadu’s tribal villages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interactive Part 1</td>
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<td>King Dadu asked participants whether he should fight with the Dutch or not.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Act III</td>
<td>Scene II</td>
<td>Signing the peace pact between King Dadu and the</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Dutch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Act III</td>
<td>Scene III</td>
<td>The future King Dadu, Maloe disagreed with the pact due to the loss of his beloved during Dutch invasion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interactive Part 2</td>
<td>Maloe asked the participants how he should deal with his Dutch enemies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Act IV</td>
<td>Scene I</td>
<td>Maloe faced growing inner conflicts in the tribes because of the Dutch economic and political intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Act IV</td>
<td>Scene II</td>
<td>Maloe’s argument at the local meeting held by the Dutch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Act IV</td>
<td>Scene III</td>
<td>Maloe secretly planned to defend from Han general who wanted to drive the Dutch away and take the island.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interactive Part 3</td>
<td>The modern tribal elder asked participants how Maloe should respond to General Zheng’s plan of driving the Dutch away</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Act IV</td>
<td>Scene IV</td>
<td>The Dutch and the Han people have power struggle in business dealings at the local meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Act IV</td>
<td>Scene V</td>
<td>General Zheng sent businessmen to coerce Maloe to help them to fight with the Dutch.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>The birth of the new King Dadu before wartime and the modern elder delivers the true story of the genocide massacre of Papora later in history.</td>
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<td>Interactive Part 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The modern tribal elder asked the participants to review the incidents they saw and express how they would do differently if they were the members of the Papora or the people from the outside. The final representation of the beginning tribal ritual with singing and dance in the end.</td>
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The dramatic parts in the play are designed to represent and recover the forgotten and untold stories of King Dadu of the Papora people, one of the Pingpu ethnic groups which is not mentioned in today’s historical textbooks, and to present how the Papora people and heroes led their tribes to come to terms with the power struggles and challenge from outsiders. The historical content of this story can serve as a model of transformation approach in Banks’ terms since it can ‘enable the students to view concepts, events, issues and themes from the perspective of diverse cultural, ethnic groups’, in this case, from the perspective of the Papora people. This represented the marginalized events, issues and themes such as how this particular branch of aboriginal people dealt and coped with the different intentions and needs of different people from outside Taiwan in the 17th Century. It tackles the issues of war and peace the Papora people had to face when the Dutch wanted to engage in business with the aboriginal people. They requested to draw tax from their trade with
the outside world. Later when the Han general Zheng wanted to seek alliance with the Papora people in their fight against the Dutch, the Papora rejected this coercion and shrugged off the suggestion. That resulted in a fight against Zheng, leading to the genocide of the Papora in the hands of General Zheng’s army. Above all, the dramatic part of the play aims to build a narrative and emotional understanding for undergraduate and primary school students about this particular indigenous tribe and the history of their struggles rather than confine their stories in pre-historical cultural archives.

As for the design of the interactive part in the play, it aims to achieve participants’ active participation in crisis resolving and problem solving processes at various points in this series of historical events through dialogical discussion involving undergraduate students and primary school children. These employed the DIE (Drama in Education) strategy, which can also contribute to fulfill the social action approach since the interactive framework this kind of performance offers helps prompt participants to express their opinions and suggestions through the designed interactive strategies and stimulates them to take imaginary social actions in the dramatic framework.

Rehearsal and Production

On the relationships between culture, embodiment and performance, scholars such as Hallbach and Connerton argue and demonstrate that culture is manifested and defined by social practice which is transmitted by bodily practices such as gestural systems, rites and ceremonies which embody cultures. (Halbwach, 1992; Connerton, 1989) Bourdieu calls this kind of practice “habitus” which is passed down and inscribed corporeally as is conditioned as well as carries the possibility of agency when subjects intend to express intentional subversion of certain social customs through performance. (Bourdieu, 1977) These insights illuminate the rehearsal and production process of this historical representation of the Papora people’s legend in the context of the imminent crisis of this disappearing indigenous culture in contemporary society. The challenge I and my undergraduate students face is how we are going to reconstruct their culture and ways of living through a re-enactment of their rituals and customs using voice and physical movement. How are we going to
Research in New Zealand Performing Arts: Nga Mahi a Rehia no Aotearoa

embody the social relations through building character relations in the play when their own tribal members acknowledged that they have no memory of this old legend of their ancestors and when their traditional way of life has been adjusted to fit modern society? Although the local activist of the Pingpu people knew the story well and showed great passion in sharing her researches and knowledge with us, I was struck by the perplexed look of one of the tribal members (he is a local house builder) when I interviewed him about the legend of King Dadu. He said he did not know the story and addressed to me that it is therefore even more important that we do this play so that more people may know about their ancestors and their own roots. As in Connerton’s (1989) account, cultural memory is not simply passed on, it is made anew. Bodies can re-enact new visions of a collective past. Drewal finds in her research about Yoruba ritual that even traditional rituals which have apparently fixed somatic practice respond to historical circumstances and are always in the process of change. (Madison, 2005) So this rehearsal and production journey of King Dadu is actually an imaginative journey of re-creation and re-interpretation of this Papora story in response to the urgent need of reconstructing the history, culture and identity of this tribe which has been striving to recover its political and social identities in these ten years. (Wikipedia, 2010)

The structure of the rehearsal and production is based on rigorous research into the historical records, documents, paintings and maps about the Papora. Each undergraduate student had to do and present a thorough research paper as well as report on the specific aspect of his or her work in the production. For example, a costume assistant had to collect and select Papora characters’ images and descriptions about costumes. An actor playing King Dadu needed to find descriptions and pictures of this legendary king. All these are done so that they can build their creation and imagination based on historical facts. The team learned much in this research stage for later application in their creation and gave their imagination substance and weight to develop on.

In the production process, all design aspects were supervised by a professional designer teacher who discussed with me, the director, who made decisions about the artistic aspects of the design based on historical research findings. The students
assisted in stage and property construction, costume making, and music recording. In these production processes, students applied their previous knowledge gained from their research to build the material environment of Papora, the plates, pots, urns, bows and arrows they used, the natural environment of plain, trees and stones where they lived, hunted and gathered, the costume they wore and the food they ate as well as all those props and costumes for the Dutch captain or minister, the Japanese businessman, the Chinese businessman and the Northern tribal Masai people of Taiwan. The research, reproduction and recreation of the material culture in 17th century Taiwan, in itself, was an effective way to learn history through the art-making process.

As for the rehearsal process, the actors went through a series of sound and movement workshops after the research period with the goal of exploring the possible gestures, postures, and movement styles that the Papora might have adopted in their life in the natural environment. For example, the actors were asked to imagine acting and re-acting with movement in the tribal life according to the gender division of labour. The women were responsible for farming and weaving and the men went hunting and gathering outdoors on the plain or in the mountains. The actors also re-constructed and re-enacted the Pingpu ritual of worshipping ancestors as well as the racing ritual for the young hunters in the tribe based on the director’s design and instruction adopted from existing historical records. They learned and re-embodied the Pingpu song and dance for the ritual according to the recording that we gathered from the field trip to the ethnic community in Puli. They also did an image representation according to Pingpu pictures in books to explore what their physical postures and gestures were like and what their inner life and monologues might be as a way of re-capturing and re-interpreting the spirit of the indigenous people. In the workshop period, students found it very difficult to imagine how the Pingpu people acted and reacted. They commented that it is hard for them to imagine the physical stamina of the Pingpu people living in the wild in the 17th century. Sometimes they felt they overdid it by making the characters they portrayed look too artificial and stereotypical but, through more exercises and practice, they gradually assimilated their roles. One thing we had to be wary about was that they tend to ‘essentialize’ the Pingpu characters when overdoing their accents by
imitating what they saw and heard on the mass media of how aboriginal people talk. I would persuade them to avoid this kind of imitation since it is like an obvious gesture of discrimination towards the aboriginal people who are thus made to look as ‘strange’ and funny ‘others’.

After the workshop, the play entered into the formal rehearsal phase, including both the dramatic episodes and the interactive parts. The undergraduate students were changing slowly from rejection of this unfamiliar people and their history to accommodation, understanding and empathizing with the Pingpu characters and the historical challenges and difficulties they faced. Gradually they were able to represent and re-enact this story in the try-out performance before another class of undergraduate students. The rehearsals took them about three months at the end of which they were still ill at ease to give a smooth performance. The challenge was huge and I had run into their resistance and their doubts about the efficacy and value of this performance quite often in the process. Nevertheless, more than 90% of them expressed in their questionnaire after the try-out performance that they had learned a lot in this research, production and rehearsal process about the Pingpu culture and some of them even actively went to attend the ritual held in a local village near Tainan to understand their culture in more detail. (Wang, 2009) Through the physical, verbal and linguistic experiential way of learning through rehearsals, these undergraduate students learned about social and cultural life through embodiment and performance. Through re-building and re-construction of the sets, props, costumes and music of the Papora people based on facts and combined with imagination, they learned about their material culture by doing and experiencing manual labour. Above all, the art-making process is an essential way to research and re-interpret the story of the Papora people and to transform their research into an action of performance that embodies the disappearing Papora culture and history in the hope of recovering and reasserting its ethnic identity. In addition, the undergraduate students also got the chance to brush up on their interactive DIE techniques by facing the challenge when facing real fifth graders from the audience asking unexpected questions and they still had to achieve the ultimate goal of developing the children’s multiple perspectives towards the historical dilemma faced by the characters they played. They have to go through lots of trial and errors for the
interactive part of the play in the rehearsal process. This point will be further tested and discussed in the next phase.

**Pre-performance Educational Program**

The university students had to help my research assistant (who is a primary school teacher as well as my student at the graduate school) to carry out the pre-performance educational program for the children going to see the performance of ‘the Legend of King Dadu’. I planned the curriculum design with my assistant beforehand and trained my undergraduates with him before we went to the social science class to teach the fifth graders for two hours. The following table illustrates how the curriculum is designed into the interactive and dramatic part corresponding to the structure of the play.

The Curriculum design of the pre-performance educational program is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Content</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing facts</strong></td>
<td>Background sharing</td>
<td>About the culture, ways of living, geography and history of the Papora People and peoples in the 17th century, sharing of the existing sculpture of the Dutch surrender in 17th century to General Zheng with the absence of Pingpu People who are one of the original and earliest inhabitants on the island of Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive Part 1</strong></td>
<td>Songs and movement of the Papora</td>
<td>Learning song and movement of the Papora with a competition game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive Part 2</strong></td>
<td>hotseating</td>
<td>Lead children to ‘hot-seat’ and interview the five different ethnic groups in the 17th Century to understand the place where they lived, ways of living and aspirations in life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Part 1</td>
<td>Cross-cutting between two groups of people</td>
<td>Use a simple dramatic scene between the aboriginal group and the outside group to present the struggles of aboriginal people in times of war and peace</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Part 3</td>
<td>Tap and talk</td>
<td>Lead the children to use tap and talk to listen from the perspectives of five different ethnic groups and let the children speak for them in first person to make a choices of their own about how they would solve the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Part 4</td>
<td>Group sculpture</td>
<td>Ask the children to work as five groups to work out a new sculpture of the Dutch surrender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing facts</td>
<td>Sharing the story of the genocide of the Papora and their migration to Puli in the 18th century</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Part 5</td>
<td>Drawing and sharing</td>
<td>Ask the children to draw the most impressive character, tell us why and use one sentence to express their feelings towards the characters played by undergraduate students.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The children took the educational program passionately and engagingly. This could be seen from their active participation in all activities. Some of them could even remember minute details in the story after the class. There were many multicultural educational goals being reached during the class. Judging from Banks’ model of approach, this class can be viewed as using the contribution and additive approach to tackle the issues and themes in an aboriginal people’s heroic legend by delivering the hidden and uncovered history of King Dadu when he faced the challenge of the
Dutch who requested that he opened up the market of his tribes otherwise they would wage a war against them. The section of the interactive part 2-hot-seating also corresponds to the transformational approach as it made students view these issues and themes of war and peace from the perspective of the Papora people as well as other racial groups such as the Dutch, the Japanese, the Han and the Masai people in northern Taiwan. As in the section of interactive part 3, the children got the chance to use ‘tap and talk’ to listen to the multiple perspectives of the five ethnic groups towards the incident, of whether one should use strategies of war instead of peaceful measures to make business with the Papora people. They were also able to express what they thought and felt using ‘tap and talk’ to speak for the character in the first-person. This particular interactive part resonates with the social action approach as the children were expressing through the characters in the play what they thought and felt and what they would wish to do to solve the problem if they were in the same situation as the characters. As much as in the section of interactive part 4, the children were given the task to make a new sculpture of the Dutch surrender so as to express what they had learned in the previous activities about this power struggle of ethnic groups in 17th century Taiwan. Each of the five groups represented the sculpture with the absent King Dadu in the original sculpture and expressed his dignity in choosing to stay independent for his tribes in dealings with outsiders even at the threat of war from the Dutch or the Han general. This indicated that the children learned through this educational program that King Dadu played an important part in the early history making of Taiwan, something they could not learn through present textbooks.

In the section of interactive part 3, children were asked to go to stand beside the character that they agreed most to solve this crisis of war and peace. Most of them chose to stand beside the Japanese businessman who represented the peaceful opinion to negotiate with the Papora instead of declaring war against them. This indicated that most of the children chose the use of peaceful measures to solve the conflict in the designed dramatic framework in the class. This echoes the social action approach that Banks proposed to stimulate children to reflect and make choices which might lead to social change. On the other hand, in the section of interactive part 2-hot-seating, the children can take more time in hot-seating and
interviewing each character from different ethnic groups so that they can have the opportunity to understand the differences and be aware of the complicated power struggle relationships among the groups. This understanding of the cultural differences and complicated hierarchal power structure among ethnic groups are the fundamental principle in critical multicultural education. (Sun, 2006, 52-58)

However, some problems also emerged during the class that required further exploration such as the problems of representations of racial stereotypes and of falling into the trap of binary construction of power between ethnic groups in the dramatic part. These would lead to the perpetuation of stereotypes in children’s understanding of the ethnic groups portrayed and the fixation of binary power structures in children’s perception. Due to the shortage of class teaching time, the dramatic part of the curriculum suffered sometimes from the exaggeration of type characters such as in the need to emphasize the mercantile capabilities of the Masai people, the actor kept on counting the money in his hand so that the children took him only as a greedy person. The same situation also happened to the Chinese businessman who is portrayed as cunningly making profit from all other ethnic groups. These exaggerations helped to make the character strong and clear but they reduced them into racial stereotypes hard to subvert. However, the binary construction of power structure, such as the Han people as the strong and powerful and the aboriginal as the weak and powerless, needs to be contested and changed rather than perpetuated. This problem dawned on me when I heard one of the fifth graders say she agreed with the Japanese since she felt that King Dadu’s tribe was too pitiful to be attacked. What we would like to demonstrate in our educational program is the actual challenge that King Dadu and his tribes faced during the outsiders’ invasion in the 17th century, their societal and emotional struggles, as well as their courage and dignity in solving these problems. I was worried that this dramatic representation would only give the children the impression of their weakness rather than their strength. I might think of adding more dramatic representations of King Dadu’s strength when fighting against the Dutch invasion as well as his wisdom in accepting the peace pact the Dutch offered after their second attack against the tribes. More time must be devoted to class teaching to provide the
multiple aspects of the characters in the dramatic scenes in order to resolve the previous problems.

Conclusion

Going through the three phases of scripting, production and rehearsal and pre-performance educational program from June 2008 to June 2009, this project is coming to a temporary end and is anticipating outdoor public performances outside the history museum on its opening in 2011. In this article, I have applied the concept and pedagogy of multicultural education as well as concepts of performance studies to evaluate and examine the educational impact this project has made so far on its participants, mainly undergraduates at NUTN and the primary fifth graders attending the educational program. The conclusion I make now is only tentative from what has been experienced and observed so far. I found several findings that I could share in terms of the content, context and pedagogy of this kind of art-informed and art-making educational project to teach aboriginal history.

Firstly, in terms of the content, the project aims to recover and reclaim the marginalized Papora story of King Dadu in the Pingpu people’s history in 17th century Taiwan. The researcher from the museum who provided the original historical documents and perspective, and myself, as the playwright and director, are determined to present the perspectives of the Papora people from their subjective positions and standpoints as well as show respect for the cultural identity of the Papora people from the start. I argue that this insistence of their subjectivity subverts the dominant perspective of the Han people towards aboriginal cultures and histories in existing textbook and it disrupts the essentialist and authenticity approach in representing aboriginal cultures. We instead intend to represent the changing reality of this tribe and to portray their identity formation as a becoming process undergoing right here and now by presenting the two modern tribal characters in the play. The grandmother tells and passes on this story to her granddaughter who is a direct descendant of King Dadu.

Secondly, in terms of the pedagogy, the art-informed research process has helped undergraduates know and understand material culture, and social, economic,
political as well as emotional life. With the art-making process during production and rehearsal, they were able to transform this knowledge and understanding derived from combining their research with imagination to embody and represent the Papora people’s way of life. The undergraduates learned about the Papora people and their history by experiencing total immersion, physical and emotional, during rehearsals and in their try-out performances. The primary school children learn about the Papora people through the research assistant who led the undergraduates to guide the children in their participation in the interweaving dramatic and interactive educational activities. In the dramatic part, the children were engaged emotionally in King Dadu’s struggles with outsiders and empathized by his dilemmas and conflicts – whether they should maintain their traditional way of life while risking war or open up his tribe as one of the business markets for the outsiders and thus keep the tribe safe and at peace. In the five interactive parts, the children were given chances to participate in and discuss dialogically King Dadu’s problem and to express their own feelings and thoughts about it. They also made reflections and choices as well as offered their alternatives to solve the pressing problem faced by the tribe. This learning process experienced by the undergraduates and the primary children echoes Bennet’s ideals for multicultural education: it is curriculum, commitment, process and movement. The first three elements seem to speak for themselves in the process I just summarized.

As for the movement, I have to come to the third point about the cultural and social context of this educational practice. Since the 1990s, the Pingpu peoples in Taiwan, including 10 small sub-groups, have been advocating through a political and social movement to reclaim their tribal Pingpu names. Although their efforts found support from the southern local governments, they were not approved by the central government and their claims have not been granted by the Council of Aboriginal People.(Wikipedia, 2010) This is the specific political and cultural context of this play’s educational practice. I would argue this performance and educational practice is part of the movement to reclaim the names and identity of the Pingpu people. As Conquergood considers performativity a tool for radical intervention in social and cultural politics and a tool for real–world activism, the performance and educational practice of ‘the legend of King Dadu’ aspires to respond to the Pingpu people’s
urgent political need to be recognized as a independent and a unique people in Taiwan. (Madison, 2005 165) During and after the performance and the educational process of the play, I hope the participating undergraduates and primary school children are stimulated more or less to take their social action to support the reinstitution of the Pingpu's tribal names and their specific culture for now and in the future. The movement of multiculturalism shall thus go on through continuous curriculum as an ongoing process as well as through repeating many likewise cultural performances to represent and reaffirm their identities with greater commitment. This project is just a start.

References:


**Biographical Note:**

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She currently teaches theories and practice of applied drama and theatre and works as an Assistant Professor at Department of Drama Creation and Application at National University of Tainan, Taiwan. A teacher, director, playwright and researcher in the field of Applied Drama and Theatre, she has written her PhD thesis *Reminiscence Theatre-Devising and Performance* and got her PhD in 2007 at Royal Holloway, University of London. She has also published three books on theatre in Chinese: *Stage Vision, the Art of Directing: Peter Brook* and *With Wings I fly Across the Darkness*. She has two newly published museum theatre plays in 2009: *The Country Farmer Enters into the City of God* and *The Legend of King Dadu*.

Footnotes
1. She (Miss Zhang, Li-Peng, the local Pingpu history researcher and community worker) considers the second King DaDu has led the insurgency and died in the war against general Zeng though there is not any historical proof to assure its certainty. I imagine the second King DaDu survived the war and kept the tribal legacy to stress the importance of the maintainance of their tribal culture and heritage.
2. Interactive-and-guide museum theatre is what I define and coin the newly devised museum theatre which consists of the double function of providing guide to and interaction with its audience.