BACKYARDS AND BORDERLANDS: SOME REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCHING THE TRAVELS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS DOING DRAMA

Chris Hatton
University of Sydney

Abstract

This paper reflects upon an international research study that explores the way adolescent girls manage 'girl-friendly' drama processes in single sex school settings. This research suggests that narrative-based drama methods can offer girls the enactive space to explore their lives and to play with the workings of culture, gender and identity. Such methods in the drama classroom can affirm and celebrate the particularities of participants' lives, so that the drama classroom becomes an important site for renewal and transformation, where the boundaries between the lived and the possible are blurred as stories are staged. This paper argues for gender-sensitive drama practices in girls' education. The research at the centre of this paper highlights the way dramatic processes can give us the space to play in our own backyards and known worlds, whilst venturing to new lands with new vistas and possibilities.

Chris Hatton *is an experienced drama educator with research interests in girls' education, narrative inquiry and feminist approaches to drama pedagogy. She has recently returned to her own backyard, Australia, after a time lecturing in Drama Education at the University of Edinburgh. She is currently completing her PhD at the University of Sydney. Her practice-based research involves tracing the way girls learn in drama in two school performance-oriented case studies in London and Sydney.*

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My travel companions

This research focuses on two case studies — one in a big multicultural girls' school in Sydney and the other in a large multicultural comprehensive girls' school in southeast London. The first study was completed in my own backyard, my own teaching context in Sydney, tracing the learning process through a performance project conducted with a 30-strong ensemble of girls aged 15 - 17 from various cultural backgrounds, along with

their mothers. This work explored the mother-daughter relationship from a daughter's point of view. This troupe was a large one, comprised of girls from different year groups and different cultural backgrounds such as Italian, Lebanese, Chinese, Tongan, Malaysian, Portuguese, Anglo-Irish and Anglo-Australian. Devising performance was the focus of the work and it used a narrative approach to capture a dramatic snapshot of the group; their views, experiences and relationships in a multi-vocal collective performance. The first study was conducted over a four-month period but my teaching and mentoring relationship with those girls has extended beyond that time and school and into the present. The second case study was much shorter in duration but used a similar methodology. This time my travel companions were a single GCSE class in a girls' school in southeast London. Like the first case study, the group was culturally diverse but drew from a whole set of cultural backgrounds unfamiliar to me such as Indian, Ugandan, Somalian, Ghanaian, West Indian as well as drawing from the traditionally white working class communities of the area. Unlike the first study, the terrain set for travel in the second case study was foreign to me in a number of ways. I was an Australian and an outsider and even though I had taught drama in this school some years before, I was a new and temporary teacher in this context, working alongside their regular class teacher. Unlike the first case study, I did not know these students until the research project unfolded. In this case study the more general thematic focus of 'a girls own drama' was used with the aim to create a drama performance that gave an authentic representation of who they were in that place and time. Such a general theme gave us a way in to the devising process as we moved from the known worlds of backyards to the borderlands of storying and performance.

Mode of transport — Narrative drama

The methodology used blended playbuilding (Tarlington and Michaels, 1995) and performance processes with narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). As a researcher I was interested in exploring the potential narrative methods offer to the teaching of classroom drama and also the way narrative analysis can help the researcher to unpack the 3D spaces of teaching and learning in drama. Narrative is an essential component of the drama learning experience — teachers help students to understand, devise, structure, deconstruct and stage stories in their classroom dramas. Narrative methods tap into the human need to story ourselves and our lives, to make meaning as we construct the complex layers of experience into our ongoing life stories (Diamond and Mullen, 1999). Polkinghorne (1988) and others see narrative meaning making as central to human existence. The social and human sciences have shown the potential of narrative methods for healing and transformation. Critical pedagogues (Giroux, 1992) have questioned the infallibility of the meta-narratives that inform the way we experience our lives. Drawing on Bruner's work (1986), Maxine Greene (1995:186) calls for educators to be aware of how narrative constitutes a mode of knowing, a means of making important personal and cultural connections. Greene reminds educators 'of the importance of shaping our own stories and, at the same time, opening ourselves to other stories in all their variety and their different degrees of articulateness'. In recent years narrative inquiry has impacted pedagogy and has been used to powerfully reveal the nature and development of teachers practical professional and lived knowledge (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

Using a basic playbuilding process, we started from outside the theme of girls' stories and worked our way inwards, so that eventually we were immersed in a whole range of stories, ideas and data to use for devising. The first phase of the devising process involved playing and improvising in the 'known world' of the group. We played with images and stereotypes drawn from the landscape of dominant perceptions and culture in order to explore what we know or inherit about ourselves as girls or women in a collective sense. Both groups of girls enjoyed this part of the process immensely and played in the darker imagery that shapes and constructs 'woman'. The next phase involved focusing on the particularities of the girls' personal 'backyards'. Personal narratives were gathered from each of the girls (as well as their mothers in the first case study) in spoken, written and photographic forms, which then became the core subject matter for the devising process. The second case study also used memory boxes to generate stories for enactment. After practically investigating the stories using a range of theatrical techniques, the individual girls then directed their classmates in representing selected vignettes from their own stories. The groups aimed to capture in dramatic form the characteristics of each story as told by its teller. Sometimes a naturalistic self-narration was favoured, while at other times groups looked for abstract ways to present difficult material or they edited and wove together a group of stories to represent a collective story. The plays then became dynamic snapshots of these girls in a particular time and place, as situated individuals and as a group. Both case study groups devised the work with the intention to perform for other girls. They wanted other girls to listen, see, share and reflect upon what the performance offered. For adolescent girls, the visibility of performance in drama is crucial in their sense of agency and ownership of the work.

Meaning making has long been the focus of classroom practice in drama. Process drama structures focus on student engagement in the experience of a story or investigation of some kind, often exploring the way humans struggle through and experience events, stories or issues. The learning exists in the identification of students with the issues, dilemmas or roles in the drama, and the new awareness that is generated from the group experience (O'Neill, 1995; O'Toole, 1992; Burton, 1991). In drama practices that are positioned in the art form of Drama, students learn through making, performing and critically studying the elements of the art form as they relate to self-devised or text-based work or particular forms of drama. Classroom dramas of all kinds use stories and storying as starting points and pre-texts for enactment and performance. The longer I taught adolescent girls, particularly girls from immigrant backgrounds, the list of questions permeating my own practice grew and grew . . . whose stories have been denied or bypassed in classroom dramas or indeed, in secondary education? Whose realm of experience is worthy of dramatic investigation? Where do teachers allow the journeys of drama to travel to? What stories would girls choose to enact if given permission and what do such stories reveal about them as individuals and as a group? What methods would invite them to travel to such borderlands in the first place? How can dramatic processes create new meanings, new knowledge and renewed stories for adolescent girls? And if they can, how do we get there?

Why focus on girls travelling through the dramatic process?

Drama pedagogues are only just starting to critique the sexual politics at work in classroom drama practice (Nicholson, 1995, 1996). Despite their large numbers in secondary classrooms, it seems in my experience that girls are often positioned outside the real

action of the dramatic process in terms of text, role and performance. As an educator of girls, I am concerned about what this translates into in terms of what they learn about *being girls* as they are cast as outsiders in their learning within the art form. This paradoxical situation can send signals to girls that they have permission to 'play' in the drama as long as they accept their culturally defined position as 'maids in service' to the dramatic action.

Cultural norms and discourses infuse our modes of representation in drama irrespective of our own politics as teachers and individuals. Cultural norms, drawn from students' social circles and popular culture, effect the way in which students engage in role in drama, the way dialogue is interpreted and patterned as well as the way students approach play-making and also the way students experience the learning process. Creating drama is in itself an act of cultural production. Classroom dramas dwell in, celebrate and sometimes collide with culture. If teachers are aware of the lands they travel through with their students, we can use the dramatic experience to resist and re-author the texts, identity locations and stories of our lives (Berry, 2001; Grady, 2000).

The positioning of women in performance and theatre has been well critiqued (Tait, 1994; Case, 1988; Austin 1990). Drawing on a background in women's theatre, I became interested in researching the politics of travel for girls in drama education and exploring drama practices that placed them at the centre of the art form. More particularly, I wanted to find ways to invite transformative learning into the drama classroom (Freire and Shor, 1987; Shor, 1992; Giroux, 1992; Doyle, 1993; Weiler, 1988). How can we find ways of working that really value the knowledge, experiences and needs of adolescent girls? My research is ongoing and not yet complete, so these writings are offered as interim reflections from my research travels. As my study and analysis take shape, I can see that this study raises important issues for the field and practice of drama in education. I would not suggest these two small groups somehow represent the category of 'girl'. My research reflects upon what these particular girls did, wrote and said in their particular travels in their backyards through a narrative playbuilding process.

In my view, their voices and experiences are strong enough to stimulate discussion about who has access to the drama experience, whose art is deemed to be valuable and where practice might need to change in response to girls drama needs. Austin's powerful call to action regarding dramatic criticism (1990:1-2) should in my view also be extended to drama educators, to notice the 'absences, the silences and the short-changing of women and girls' in drama in education. The research at the heart of this paper suggests there is an urgent need to find ways to redress the absence of female voices, stories and perspectives in drama classroom practices if we are to aim to be truly inclusive.

Girls need drama

In researching adolescent girls devising drama, I have found that drama as a subject mattered much more than I had previously realised as a classroom teacher. Studying drama at secondary school level can be personally challenging and more demanding than any other area of the curriculum because it requires individuals to stretch their known worlds and travel to new ones. The level of negotiation in this is present in a real sense for girls because the learning in drama asks them to rely on their own personal knowledge systems and resources. Girls are rarely invited to share these in the broader curriculum. Most of the students in my case studies confirmed that drama offered strong and rewarding learning experiences, unlike any other part of the curriculum.

My research data was gathered from the participating students in the form of reflective journals where the girls wrote about their learning experiences, tracing each step in the devising and performance process. In my second case study interviews were the main form of data collection. In the first case study the students also wrote creative pieces that were used in the actual playbuilding process and these became part of the performance text. In order to get a sense of the long-term outcomes of the project, the girls were also surveyed three years after the project occurred. After leaving high school one senior student from the Sydney case study remembers the way Drama gave her a sense of critical agency:

> *I can say without fear of exaggeration that Drama was my saviour in high school. Had it not been for Drama I would probably have been stuck in the safe little world of English and Modern History, bombarded with work but never truly challenged. Drama not only encouraged but forced me to develop and criticise myself and my beliefs. While so much of high school is based on memorising information and the honing of set stock skills, Drama forced me to come to conclusions of my own. Naturally it goes without saying that Drama also provided me with a creative outlet.* (Celina, 2001)
>
> [survey response written three years after the case study was conducted]

Celina's classmate Trisha highlights the sense of personal engagement that was a necessary part of her drama learning. For this student, such a sense of comfort in the escape of drama has been hard to match now that she has left her drama studies behind at school level and now completes a law degree at university:

> *Drama was my escape at high school . . . it was a very unusual subject; very introspective and when everything else is just regurgitating books (or program code!) to improve in drama is a very personal journey. So it was difficult, but personally it's probably where I felt, and still do feel, the most comfortable.* (Trisha, 2001)
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> [survey response written three years after the case study was conducted]

The multiple voices, layers, locations that infuse dramatic processes are in my view the same qualities that attract adolescent girls in their droves to study drama. (In the NSW Board of Studies statistics, School Certificate, Preliminary and Higher School Certificate 1992–2002 girls consistently represent over 70% of the candidature.) Perhaps this also in some way contributes to the absence of boys in secondary drama classrooms. There is a growing interest in drama research into the ways in which masculinities and gender codes impact the way boys engage in the art form (Nicholson 1999, McDonald 2000). As gendered subjects, boys are positioned differently to girls within the learning experience in drama. It could be that the restrictive gender codes boys learn and experience in adolescence seriously limit their capacity to participate fully and freely in secondary drama. This certainly warrants further research, however boys' drama experiences are not the focus of this particular study.

My research with adolescent girls would suggest that the multi-dimensionality of the learning process in Drama offers a challenging landscape for girls to travel through as they develop a sense of identity and gender in complex social times. Dramatic process offers them opportunities to play with possibilities and ambiguities in classroom dramas and school-based performances. Carol Gilligan's research into girls' psychology (1995:201) highlighted the way girls' identity development comes under siege in adolescence where girls experience an acute relational crisis. Her research showed that

girls possess sophisticated relational knowledge in pre-adolescence, where they can deftly manoeuvre and understand the dynamics of complex relationships, however, with the onset of adolescence there comes a crisis, as they move from girlhood to womanhood. The crisis involves a process of silencing, where a girl must either lose her own voice or 'find herself in frank contradiction with people who have greater power than herself' (ibid.:201). For girls, adolescence can be a constant dynamic juggling act as they work to establish and maintain relationships at home and school and position themselves in relation to that struggle. The friendships of adolescent girls operate as complex social webs where intimacy and positionality frame their power struggles and interactions (Hey, 1997). Dramatic processes operate at the centre of these colliding forces in an all-girl classroom where girls play with various selves, real and imagined.

In drama we can stage possible roles, alterations, personas, we can imagine different ways of interacting and create new insights into ways of being or performing oneself in the school-based context or beyond. As Clar Doyle (1993:xv) suggests this is important political work we do in our drama classrooms when we consider the 'intellectual, moral and material power we hold over students'. Gilligan's research may in some way help to explain the large numbers of girls electing to study drama in western societies. In my view, in drama the girls are able to exercise their relational knowledge when manipulating roles and contexts, when understanding subtext and layers of meaning in action. In drama, this type of knowledge is suddenly seen as ***valuable***. Perhaps also girls are attracted to the openness of dramatic learning processes where the opportunity to speak, to question, to be visible and, more importantly, to create new meanings through action gives girls playful opportunities to rehearse ideas and values and envisage new possibilities and social roles. Studying drama at secondary school may in some way help girls to work through this relational crisis so they are empowered to make connections between their drama experiences and their own lives.

The dramatic process can provide a forum for re-discovering voice and arresting that crisis via the safety of 'performance' and in the safety of the collaborative learning context (safety in numbers). In my studies many of the participants found the drama to be a way of speaking plainly and clearly through the performance itself, blurring the boundaries of private selves and enabling selves to come to light in the performative space made for them. Private language and its connected knowing fuses with public expression. Celina recounts this performative tension as she performed our play:

> *[The project] made me realise that my identity as a young woman is dependent on many factors, not just my own will. I remember having to stand and say 'piss' during one of my pieces and my mum asking why it was that the only swear word in the play had to come from my mouth. This was significant because swearing has never been allowed in my house and it was a kind of public display that my sensibilities are different to that of my mum and family. I'm not suggesting that my identity is based on my ability to swear in public, nor that this practice is particularly unique. What I'm saying is that at the time it was confronting for me and made me realise that I am an individual with my own value structure which is no less and no more valid than anyone else…I guess the project opened the door for me to express myself as an independent young woman while at the same time endowing me with the knowledge that I am also a product of a long line of women.*
>
> (Celina, 2001)

The devised work acted as a performative space to frame felt and lived experiences in new ways through the connected and reflective processes of storying and enactment.

The students found comedy an extremely useful representational tool when dealing with the more problematic and potentially troubling parts of the dramas. Many of the humorous parts of the plays the girls created were very dark stylistically, which helped the students to address the way dominant discourses dictate what the category of 'woman' is and how lived realities work within such a restrictive frame. In this way the drama became a dynamic means of unfixing the ways in which cultural codes influence our perceptions and performance of gender. One of the girls from the first case study identified this as the most confronting part of their final play:

> *I think it's beneficial to the audience to see other girls like them in an empowered position on stage . . . it's encouraging to a girl audience to see other girls like themselves performing something that they can relate to . . . it lets girls know they have a voice in theatre and it doesn't have to be conservative or traditionally done . . . [This piece] was confronting because it wasn't all glorified (motherhood, womanhood, feminism, femininity). The piece was honest and frank and often the truth is confronting and is much easier to ignore or look over. Humour is said to encompass the most truthful perspectives on life. I think the most humorous moments of the piece were the most confronting . . . they forced the audience to see how young women see themselves or how mothers see their daughters . . . and allow them to reflect and perhaps understand an alternative way of looking at themselves. I think people do not naturally want to expose themselves to this sort of mental state, because it allows vulnerability and perhaps unpleasant realisation.*
>
> (Emma, 2001)

The moment you place girls or women together to create performance and place them centre stage is dangerous business for both actors and audience. Even in single sex settings, gender-sensitive processes represent unexplored territory in curriculum-based drama. The dramas the girls created in these case studies captured the complexity of their relationships and the vulnerabilities that impact their struggle for identity.

The politics of travel in the drama classroom

The girls who travelled with me through these case studies were aware of how rarely they were invited to be the subjects of the learning. Many of the girls who participated in this research became aware of the importance of 'owning their own words' and of the way this approach helped them move to a more central position in the creative process and how radical a shift this really was for girls:

> *There were aspects of the project that were confronting for me, namely the 'owning' of my own words and ideas. I had never before been given license to offer my own opinion and for it to be treated as valid, and this was a big change for me.*
>
> (Celina, 2001)

This student was speaking well after the project occurred. What is surprising about this revelation is that such a comment comes from a student who could be described as a school leader who frequently gave the impression to others that she was an outspoken, confident individual. Within her school context she had proven herself to be an articulate public speaker, a debater and class representative. But here, at the end of her secondary schooling, she states she had never been given licence to speak ***as herself***, to offer ***her*** stories and to have them valued in terms of her own schooling.

In both case studies there were significant outcomes for many of the participants and, for some, the learning experience was transformative. Drama's capacity to suspend time and distil the essence of experience in action was clearly a powerful experience for both participants and their audiences. The students' reflective writing and comments in interviews during and after both projects confirm that working in this way enabled them to understand that the stories, views and beliefs they shared in the playmaking could be seen as valid by their co-actors and then their audiences. As the devising process unfolded, one 15-year-old participant from the second case study in London spoke about how she felt empowered when her peers selected her views to work with in their early improvisations:

> *I felt quite proud actually, 'cause you know, you hear your own thing and you think 'oh someone thinks my point of view is...is...valid…it's worth it…it's a good thing to go by'* . . . (Charlie, May 2002) [mid process interview]

These students found that the drama provided a safe space to tell and interpret their untold stories. Interpreting them, then collaborating to weave them into a performance, gave the stories credibility and authenticity — they were 'real', not fictional. The realness of the stories used for devising also encouraged these students to listen, to attend and to understand the ways in which others live their lives and what is important to them. This way of working appealed strongly to the interiority and centrality of relationships for adolescent girls. Charlie believed her class benefited greatly from a new sense of trust and other understanding that developed from the project:

> *I think I sort of understand people a little bit more now. Like, you've got to understand things that are important to them, and like, sort of things that no-one else really knows about, but only the group you was in and it makes you feel special, because you're lucky to actually share it with that person and you're lucky that they are actually willing to share it with you. So it makes you feel a sense of trust actually. It's a good thing, its better. . . We've got to know each other better, much better, than we would over the last six, seven, eight months…'*
>
> (Charlie, 2002) [same interview]

The data suggests that these performance projects did contribute to new ways of knowing and being for the girls by giving space for new self and other understandings to emerge and for personalising the learning process. The drama process became a vehicle for strengthening voice and for celebrating the particular and different lives that existed within these groups. Students went from doubting whether their stories were 'worth it' to stage in dramatic form to realising some of the riches we could find in our own 'backyard' if only we had permission to travel there in drama and an effective mode of transport.

The transformative power of staging our stories together

Travelling with girls as they do drama has highlighted for me the continuing need for consciousness raising activities in girls' education, particularly when the lands we usually ask them to travel to in class are often fashioned through the lens of masculinity in terms of texts, characters and themes. There is still a need actively to work against the grain of what Mary Pipher (1996) refers to as the 'girl poisoning' that exists in contemporary

culture and media and, conversely, to work to build 'gender esteem', so that positive models and constructions can be shaped through our classroom practice. This is particularly important in drama learning where the learning occurs through representation and embodiment of stage action. Girls need, more than ever, to see and celebrate different identity constructions in action in their dramas, so that they can critically approach the task of fashioning their own identities in life in relation to dominant discourses. These girls learned a great deal from the process of enacting others' stories:

> *It made me feel that my experiences were simultaneously unique and common to all women. Hearing stories particularly different from my own opened my eyes to alternate ways of living and thinking, which I had not before been really confronted with. As trite as it sounds, the sharing of stories created a strong sense of 'sisterhood' in me, which has not really been challenged since.*
>
> (Celina, 2001)

For girls doing dramas that matter, it is also important for them to be seen as well as heard. They want to be seen to be managing the art form in skilful and innovative ways. The girls I worked with were excited by the prospect of performing, they wanted their voices to be heard and their peers and other teenagers to see them working with such complex subject matter. Being visibly 'clever' and 'intelligent' through the performance was crucial to their belief in the project. They also saw the performances as important opportunities to engage their audiences in dialogue about who they were and the complex issues their stories contained. They wanted their audiences to be engaged with the issues and make meanings from what they saw. Not only was performance important for them as actors but also they saw their stories as important for their all-girl audiences. The performances helped to initiate important dialogue by making their personal experiences and collective resistance visible. The girls in my first case study wanted their final play to be seen as significant to contradict mainstream views of vacuous adolescent girls and their poor art:

> *It is important that girls see issues affecting themselves presented in the public sphere as valid and interesting issues. So often these issues are marginalised and trivialised by mainstream media, which means that many girls feel isolated and not 'normal'. Not only is it important for girls to see these concerns physicalised and vocalised, but it is also important for them to see that girls are capable of creating intelligent and professional work.*
>
> (Celina, 2001)

For the girls who participated in these projects, the qualities of intelligence, credibility, authenticity and professionalism were necessary so their drama work could matter in the public domain of performance. The dramas created by these two groups of girls captured the complexity of their relationships and some of their struggles in shaping their own gendered self-narratives and identities.

Narrative psychologist Donald Polkinghorne (1988:1) refers to the cognitive process of narrative meaning-making as a way of 'organising human experiences into temporally meaningful episodes'. For Polkinghorne, one's sense of personal identity is storied, our self is actually a series of recollected selves where 'identity consists not of simply a narrative self that integrates one's past events into a coherent story. It also includes the construction of a future story that continues the "I" of the person' (ibid.:107). We each

have our own stories to live by, one story we may tell right now is only a fragment of the whole story, it is framed by memory and context and suggests the turns our whole story may take in the future. If we invite our students to use their stories to frame the drama, we invite them to activate that narrative meaning-making process, to organise and stage in story form what is significant for them, as only they see it. There is a significant power shift when we allow our students to become the subjects within the art form as the teacher yields her control of the content of the drama. The collaborative process in drama allows the stories to be retold in new and dynamic ways, thereby allowing a kind of re-vision to take place. In my research the girls played with social selves and fantasy selves as they constructed and negotiated their dramas. The dramatic action became a staged conversation they had with themselves and then with their audiences. This form of drama dynamically recalls lived experiences (van Manen, 1990) and invites meaning-making as the stories are staged in action. In this way the drama helps to shape smaller more immediate stories into students' larger more unified life stories. The performance and reception of those enacted stories continues that dialogue further for each participant — the play from the classroom becomes part of the ongoing storying and meaning-making of girls lives.

Revelations in our own backyards . . .

For me, the drama journeys worth taking are those that explore the familiar and the particularity of our lives. Here we can find whole new landscapes, to use the Aussie vernacular, 'right in our own backyards'. We need to find the places we know as individuals just as exotic as the far off destinations of our programmed drama journeys, so that we begin to see our own backyards as worthy destinations for our own home-grown adventures. If we allow the drama to dwell in our own backyards ***as we experience them*** we can notice and celebrate our differences; what we do, what we like and what we find ourselves in conflict with become part of such important backyard dramas. We can craft a drama that interrogates the games we play in our own backyards and the cultural discourses that inform them. We can begin to see our own backyards as complex but changeable and perhaps, through the drama, feel empowered to challenge traditional social narratives and norms (Nicholson, 1996). Gallagher (2000:82-83) argues for drama as a place for imagining possibilities:

> The point of drama education is not to transmit a particular ideology or to leave unchallenged the things we think we believe, but to see anew, understand ourselves more fully, expand our thinking and understand how that thinking has been shaped by our social positions. It is an opening-up process that must, at all costs, leave open the possibilities of alternative ways to see or hear or live the story . . . It is one means of dismantling seductive, stereotypical images, of resisting the limited and limiting discursive and aesthetic representations of self /other.

Travelling to landscapes that are both familiar to us but unfamiliar to classroom adventure can be transformative for students and teachers. 'Backyard' dramas can help us to see the art in individual lives and find points of connection with others. Possibly, such backyard adventures in drama can give us the vision to see clearly beyond our own fence line — into other backyards, into the past, into other lands or into a different future.

Many adventure stories have an epic journey at their heart. Repositioning girls to a more central place in drama can be a difficult task but the journeys they can make and the borders they travel through and to require real heroism and courage if the adventure is possible. Often girls aren't really ever invited to come on adventures, such journeys are not usually designed for girls, as if educators are only prepared to give them the superficial package tour instead of the real adventure. Today girls have the right to expect more from the learning experience in drama. Women and girls have historically been ghosts in their own lives and histories, conditioned to doubt their own voices, experiences and needs. Historically they have been understudies to the art form of drama. Maxine Greene (1995:191) reminds educators to notice 'the young girls who have hesitated (out of embarrassment, out of lack of confidence) to consult their own ways of knowing'. It is time to find methods in drama that restore knowledge and voice and connect women. I wonder whether it is ethical for educators to continue to deny them their own educational or dramatic adventures. The girls who travelled with me in this research were not going to be satisfied with artificial journeys alone or the journeys of men. Nor were they satisfied with drama journeys where all the agency and courage required is automatically the realm of men and they are restricted to roles as trusty servants. Girls want the 'real McCoy', the real adventure of doing drama that comes from being central to and in the drama. More importantly, they want to use the drama in order to be present in their own lives.

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