PRISON THEATRE: LETTING THE LIGHT IN TO DISCIPLINARY RELATIONSHIPS

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Abstract:

Using a case study of recent applied theatre work within a secure setting in Auckland, New Zealand, we will consider the ways in which applied theatre can function as a multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary form — multi-disciplinary in that it embraces the various arts disciplines in its makings; inter-disciplinary in that it works with and within other disciplinary sites and, in doing so, is informed by and adapts to those site's discourses and practices; trans-disciplinary in the ways applied theatre practice and research blur traditional disciplinary boundaries to create new approaches and outcomes. Trans-disciplinary work 'leads to the evolution of disciplines, hybridisation and outcomes that are greater than the sum of the parts' (Petts *et al*., 2008:597). The intention of this paper, therefore, is to present and to untangle some of the tensions and possibilities that reside within prison theatre's complex and many-layered disciplinary relationships.

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Keywords: *APPLIED THEATRE; PRISON THEATRE;* ROMEO AND JULIET.

Applied Theatre

Applied theatre is generally, if hesitantly, accepted as an umbrella term that embraces a wide range of theatre practice including theatre in education, theatre for development, youth theatre, theatre of disability, museum theatre, reminiscence theatre and prison theatre. These practices share an intentionality to provoke or shape social change (Ackroyd, 2000). Applied theatre is said to have grown out of 'the soil of progressive, radical people's movements in various places around the world' (Prentki and Preston, 2009:13). In many cases, the left-leaning politics of these antecedent movements has shaped both the aesthetic and pedagogic intents of applied theatre practice. Prendergast and Saxton (2009) trace applied theatre's aesthetics, and its relationship to mainstream theatre performance to the Marxist playwright Brechts' lehrstucke theatre and beyond into the experimental work of Kirby (1965) and Grotowski (1968). Central to this has been the development of new sets of relationships between actors and the audience. Much applied theatre continues to derive its aesthetic from forms of theatre and performance that challenge or subvert dominant political and social hegemonies. Applied theatre's participatory theatre making can be seen as part of a wider theatre movement that enables, as Gatti has argued, 'the disinherited classes to create a theatre that reflected their concerns, not through performances *for* them but *with* them' (cited in Prendergast and Saxton, 2009:10). Applied Theatre's roots in the left-wing political, radical and alternative theatre practices of the 20th century (Balfour, 2009; Neelands, 2007; Nicholson, 2005) means that much applied theatre still contains a strong allegiance to notions of social justice, albeit framed in early 21st century language that increasingly avoids terms like 'class' and 'struggle'.

The early rhetoric and academic discourse of applied theatre was redolent with hero narratives that posited applied theatre as a magical tool which can apply itself across and within a wide range of disciplines to generate significant and longstanding social change (O'Connor, 2006). However, the operation and limitations of applied theatre as a causal agent for change has been increasingly problematised and questioned (Nicholson, 2005, O'Connor 2006, Thompson 2006) These critiques have been accompanied by a growing appreciation of the tensions that exist between the political, pedagogic and aesthetic imperatives of applied theatre. Ethical questions relating to the webs of power inherent in any theatre encounter that intends to create social change have troubled the field for a number of years (Cahill 2010, Thompson 2006).

Other recent critiques of applied theatre have centered on its shift away from its Marxist or left-leaning political origins and scope, towards discourse/ethos of social inclusion. Such critiques suggest that the supposed ideological neutrality or ambiguity of many contemporary applied theatre practices leaves them open to the manipulation of outside agendas. Jenny Hughes (2005) and Sheila Preston (2011), for example, remind us that the agendas of creativity and participation, now so implicated in applied theatre intentionality, can easily be captured by multinational business interests wanting to target young adults.

Prison Theatre

Theatre that operates inside prisons is at one level the classic example of applied theatre as an interdisciplinary agent operating to achieve social change. Theatre is applied within a context that clearly contains its own discourse, methods, constraints and ideological positioning. It is also important to recognise that prisons themselves are interdisciplinary sites. They include the attributes of punishment, correction, social work, youth work, rehabilitation and restorative justice. This brief study of prison theatre will explore some of the tensions, contradictions and possibilities inherent in this interdisciplinary context.

Prison theatre has had a relatively long history. Michael Balfour (2004:1) suggests, 'it is probable that soon after the first prison was built, the first unrecorded moment of prison theatre/art occurred'. Prison theatre, like applied theatre, is an umbrella term describing a range of practices with different intentions. It is often constructed as an instrumental tool to serve a range of functions deemed important by correctional jurisdictions. Hughes (2005:3) suggests these functions fit within three broad categories:

1. Prevention — arts practice with young people up to 21 years who are at risk of future offending or escalation of existing offending.
2. Custodial and community sentencing — arts as interventions in sentencing, both in prison and community contexts.
3. Resettlement — arts as an intervention made to assist reintegration into society.

Prison theatre takes place in sites that have a wide range of state sanctioned functions with varying degrees of prison-like qualities. What they have in common is the detainment and confinement of people in an environment which is guarded and segregated from society. These sites are populated overwhelmingly by the poor, the disenfranchised and the troubled and, in Western nations by people of colour (O'Connor, 2007a). Access into these sites is tightly controlled and movement within them is highly regulated. Conformity and compliance are valued and rewarded. People are closely watched and monitored at all times; the panoptic structure and effects of prison life are found across all the sites. The sites operate from a base of ultimate state control over a person's body and in all cases involve the impediment of movement and the curtailing of citizenship rights. Foucault and Sheridan (1991) understood that such a deprivation of liberty is the main form of punishment inherent in all these sites. They also considered that these various sites are more than just places where liberty is deprived, they are places in which discipline can instill useful social qualities into the convicts, mental health patients or young offenders. At different times these sites have been used to punish and/or to re-educate the politically disobedient. Their effectiveness in rehabilitating citizens to re-enter society, however, has been questioned for decades. The stigma and the personal and emotional impact of having been detained in these places, even for a short time, are lifelong. Prisons are built with function and cost-efficiency in mind — they are rarely places of architectural beauty. They are also sites that are largely devoid of formal artistic expression of any kind.

Applied theatre companies are employed to work in prison sites with a range of intentions that shape the form of theatre produced. For example, some theatre in prisons simply positions itself as an opportunity to explore the human condition through presenting plays from the classic canon. Sir Ian McKellen, who was in the The Royal Shakespeare Company's production of King Lear at Broadmoor Secure Psychiatric Hospital, reminds

us of the central importance of this work in 'reassuring us that acting is close to the heart of human experience' (Cox, 1992:ix). More often, theatre within the confines of the prison operates as an instrumental process. This might include role-play in skills building sessions for both inmates and staff or visiting theatre companies providing entertainment wrapped around social messaging (Hughes, 2005; Hughes and Ruding, 2009). At other times, inmates informally devise theatre themselves as leisure activity or as a form of self-expression or self-affirmation. Drama therapy as part of the rehabilitative processes is also used in varying ways. Furthermore, James Thompson's account of one example of theatre in American prisons is one of the most frightening accounts of how theatre can be used as a punishment tool (Thompson, 2004).

The Theatre in Prisons and Probation Centre (TiPP), run through the University of Manchester, hosts the most comprehensive and long-standing research-based programme on theatre prison in the world. The 2005 report by Jenny Hughes from the TiPP centre — *Doing the Arts Justice: A Review of Research Literature, Practice and Theory* — was based on a study of over 400 arts-based interventions in prisons throughout the UK. It found that international research around the arts in criminal justice contexts showed very clearly that:

> . . . the arts have the capacity and potential to offer a range of innovative, theory-informed and practical approaches that can enhance and extend provision of educational, developmental and therapeutic programmes across the criminal justice sector. They show that the arts are associated with positive criminal justice outcomes and can play an important part in changing individual, institutional and social circumstances which sponsor criminal behaviour. (Hughes, 2005:9)

In a later article, however, Hughes and Ruding (2009:223) warn against an 'absolute faith in learned methodologies and the inherent goodness of theatre when applied in complex contexts'. Balfour (2004:3) suggests that the contradictory forces that shape prison theatre create a theatre of 'eternal contradiction within itself . . . A living, breathing noisy, chaotic, confusing and compelling paradox'. Based on the case study discussed below, we suggest that the interdisciplinary of applied theatre in prisons both produces this chaotic and paradoxical domain and offers possibilities for navigating what James Thompson (2006) describes as 'murky terrain".

Case Study: The *Romeo and Juliet* Project

In New Zealand theatre in prisons has not taken place on a continuing or long-term basis. There are a number of arts projects and initiatives taking place within New Zealand prisons, spanning the visual arts to journalism (http://www.artsaccess.org.nz/index.php/prison-arts-sec/). In relation to the youth justice system, Wellington based theatre company Te Rakau O Wai Tapu offer their own intensive, residential 'theatre for change' programme which operates separately from the Corrections Department or the Department of Child, Youth and Family (www.terakau.co.nz). In this context the invitation to Applied Theatre Consultants Ltd (ATCO) to develop a theatre intervention in a large Youth Justice Facility was a significant development of prison theatre in New Zealand.

The Youth Justice Residence in which this programme took place is one of seven residences operated by The Department of Child, Youth and Family. The residences are secure environments for young people who are deemed by the state as not able to be placed within the community. These young people tend to be between 14 and 17 years of

age and are subject to an order of the Youth Court. They are placed in the residence for a range of reasons. Some are there 'for their own safety'; others are on remand for serious criminal activity. The commissioned programme took place in a 46 bed residence, with six beds specifically designated as 'criminal justice beds' for young offenders who have been sentenced to imprisonment. The residence provides both individual and group programmes for the young residents. Programmes at the residence focus on individual change and growth and include specialist education services, clinical services, cultural programmes and physical activities. The programmes are targeted based on individual needs. The residence is not a 'prison' but operates under the aegis of the government department with responsibility for the care and protection of young people. However, young people are constrained by locked doors, high wired-fences and staff with the power to remove and detain young people in locked bedrooms. They are for all intents and purposes imprisoned. By virtue of these features it is reasonable to describe this case as a form of prison theatre.

Project Initiation

The project discussed was created out of a research visit Peter undertook in February of 2010. Peter has worked in a range of secure environments over many years. In the 1980s he worked in a regional remand and assessment centre in London and developed a theatre residency with Riverside Studios. His PhD studies were conducted partly in forensic psychiatric hospitals and he has run many workshops in secure psychiatric settings (O'Connor, 2007b). He has also conducted national tours of Youth Justice and Care and Protection units with *Everyday Theatre*, an ATCO's programme on family violence and child abuse (O'Connor, 2009). The research visit mentioned above took place as a follow up to the *Everyday Theatre* programme.

The meeting with young people across the residence was planned to discuss with them what they would be interested in seeing in a play about families. This was part of the research in the redevelopment of the pretext for *Everyday Theatre*. The first group spoken to said that they wanted to see a play about love. As one young person said, 'about love too, not sex. About love that lasts'. As the group developed ideas, they settled on a story that involved two young people who fell in love from different gangs and weren't allowed to be in love. The group warmed to someone's suggestion that maybe the girl kills herself because of this and then the boy dies because the girl has killed herself. By the time they suggested the story had a drug element. Peter was already half way to the apothecary. When the young people were told a play like this had already been written and over 400 years ago and it was called *Romeo and Juliet* they were incredulous. Their suggestion that they would like to perform the play themselves lead to the project that was to culminate in a performance nine months later.

When asked if they were involved in the making of this play what arts discipline they might be interested in being involved in, dance was the most popular art form, followed by music, visual arts and drama. There was an overwhelming endorsement for an arts programme by the young people. At that time there were no or very limited arts programmes delivered in any of the Youth Justice residences in New Zealand. Based on the outcomes of this meeting, Peter approached the National Manager of Child, Youth and Family residences with a proposal for a multidisciplinary arts project. After a number of further meetings a contract was agreed and signed. The project funding came from a newly established programme on parenting. ATCO were told they could do *Romeo and Juliet* if they could justify the programme as a skills programme on parenting.

These initial negotiations highlight the challenges of negotiating an interdisciplinary relationship. There was an agreement about the potential of an arts project — if the pilot was successful they indicated it would be rolled-out to the other residences across the country. The ideas of the young people and of ATCO, however, needed to be adapted to fit within the particular agenda framework set by the funding stream.

Romeo and Juliet is a story of how two young people attempt to negotiate their adolescence and love for each other against a backdrop of parenting. Arthur Brooke begins the narrative poem *Romeus and Juliet*, which was Shakespeare's source for the play, with a preface in which he tells us that his story has two morals. The first is not to get married without parental consent, and the second not to trust catholic priests. Fathering especially causes enormous difficulties for the star-crossed lovers. This is indicated by Harold Goddard's comment:

> The fathers are the stars and the stars are the fathers in the sense that the fathers stand for the accumulated experience of the past, for tradition for authority and hence for the most potent forces that mould and so impart destiny to a child's Life (1951:119).

ATCO decided that, rather than focusing on discreet 'parenting skills', the project would provide an opportunity for young people to consider the nature of parenthood. They would work inside the text of *Romeo and Juliet* to explore parenting, fatherhood and love — in particular 'love that endures'.

Project Structure

A six week programme was designed. For five weeks the young people engaged in the arts as separate disciplines (dance, drama, music and theatre) to explore the notions of parenting and love. There was a two-hour workshop in each discipline each week. The young people chose to participate in one or more of the art forms. Highly qualified and experienced artists were employed to work on the project alongside the ATCO applied theatre workers. The young people were heavily supervised by staff from their units. They were chaperoned to and from the workshop spaces and the unit staff stayed throughout the workshops. Some joined in, some stayed back and observed or talked amongst themselves. In the sixth week of the programme, young people and staff from across the residence worked together with the artists for up to 8 hours each day. This time a small group of unit staff were selected by the residence's Programmes Manager to support the programme. They all had an interest in the project and in some cases were arts practitioners themselves. The work from the different art forms came together in the development of a one-hour performance event on the last day of the residency. The performance included three recorded pieces of original music, an original piece of dance which combined hip hop, contemporary and haka forms, two large pieces of graffiti art and a DVD of the theatre pieces created over the six weeks. The performance event was presented to nearly the full residence community. Young people who were not involved in the performance sat segregated in their separate units divided by a bulk of social workers who stood between them. Seventy-five invited guests watched by the door in case they had to evacuate quickly. It was only the second time in the history of the residence that the whole community had come together. It was a tense and full house. At the end there were tears and laughter. The young performers and artists had risen to and exceeded the expectations of those around them. The performance was, perhaps, a reminder to the adult audience members that young people can be feared for and hoped for, rather than feared and blamed for the wrongs of the world (Giroux, 2003).

Project Research

The research project that sat alongside the work was designed to catch the transient nature of the arts we were making inside the residence. We attempted to craft a research processes in a dynamic and reciprocal relationship with the creative practice. We were determined that the ethics, pedagogies and politics that informed the art making should also inform how that practice was researched. As far as was possible, we wanted to construct a research process that would be an integral part of the project, rather than just being used to provide evidence of effectiveness. In terms of positioning, for us as researchers this meant creating roles that were both inside and outside the practice. Perhaps, our relationship to the work was in some ways like that of the outside eye in the devising process, a participant and observer, who can validate the work but also provide 'critical voice'.

In the methodological design we looked for methods that were part of, could build on or at least reflect the way that the company approached the work with the young people and staff at the residence. Therefore, we were actively engaged in arts making with the young people, we rolled on the floor in dance and drama, we painted and we created lyrics. We also interviewed young people, engaged them in reflective drawing and writing about the project as it progressed and conducted focus group interviews with the staff and the artists.

At the analysis stage, the data was coded and sorted, both deductively in terms of the project objectives but also through pattern analysis, looking inductively for themes, problems, connections and theories emerging from within the data itself. Drawing on Laurel Richardson's (2005) concept of crystallisation in research, the multiple data sources, methods of collection and now processes of analysis have generated a rich and diverse, if inevitably partial, understanding of the project. The richness of the work generated a number of significant tentative findings from the project. In the next part of this article we will share some of the key findings as they relate to disciplinary relationships in prison theatre.

Working within the arts disciplines

We spoke to a focus group of participants midway through the project. What came across was that the project had connected with things that they were interested in — graffiti art, rap music, hip hop and their lives and experiences. They were motivated to attend and described themselves as 'committed' to the project. Much work undertaken in skills training in the youth justice residences seems to be based on deficit models. Professionals from the outside enter the unit to provide something which is missing in the young person's life or character. The *Romeo and Juliet* artists worked assiduously to avoid working from within these constraints. Instead they attempted to create a pedagogic relationship of co-artists with the young people, working together to achieve a high quality arts experience. This led to abandoning, to a large extent, the instrumental (and contractual) requirement to teach skills about parenting and to replacing that with a project which provided an opportunity to create artistic statements about parents. The particular art forms and artists had been chosen because they could quickly engage the young people's interest. This was important in a relatively short project where the participant group was always shifting. Approaching the young people as co-artists created a different pedagogic contract than either a traditional didactic transmission model or a more liberal but essentially constraining enquiry model. The discipline of each art form demanded focus and concentration and a commitment to an ensemble sense of responsibility for others. One result of such an approach was that the young people's motivations to be involved in the programme, to

make their artworks, became more powerful than the extrinsic discipline behaviour modification systems of the residence. This was recognised by some of the staff at the residence some of who were interviewed for the research. One unit staff member expressed that she had seen the young people show a real interest in the activities, a real 'passion':

> . . . the love and passion was there and if we could focus in on that then, man, our kids could succeed. (Unit Staff)

The management staff felt that the project had been successful in engaging and motivating the young people because it had been tailored to their needs and interests:

> It was an opportunity for the young people to express an interest in different areas, to make a choice — the programme was individualised enough to their needs and talents, which meant that there was more 'buy in'. (Programme Manager)

The Unit Manager of the unit where the boys had been involved from the outset reported the project had been effective as an 'affirmation of the boys skills and talents and a chance for these to be developed' (Unit Manager).

At times, the outcomes of the arts disciplines were closely aligned with those of the disciplinary site. Staff at the residence commented on the significant drop off in disciplinary measures used with the young people during the arts period, perhaps because they were being rewarded intrinsically within the arts process. It was suggested that a group of boys who were involved for the full duration of the project had become a positive core within their unit. The Unit Manager observed that their increased motivation and positive attitude continued to impact on the day-to-day atmosphere of the unit after the project ended. Some of the Unit Staff felt that some of the project practitioners had been too tolerant of bad behaviour over the project and that there should have been tougher sanctions in place. The Unit Manager suggested, however, that he had come to believe that the benefits of the project for the young people outweighed any benefit of withdrawing them.

Renegotiating disciplinary relationships

One of the most significant findings of the research was the manner in which the arts processes provided an opportunity for renegotiating relationships between staff and young people within the residence. All penal institutions and especially those that constrain young people behind walls and fences, regardless of intent, dehumanise those whose lives are governed by the turn of the key. The *Romeo and Juliet* project challenged how physical space was managed, and a range of physical and other boundaries. Lifting adults, rolling on floors, moving freely in highly contained spaces, removing furniture, bringing young people together across the residence to work together physically, all these combined to shift the ways in which staff and residents saw each other and the residence. The humanising potential of the arts in a setting which, by its physical and spiritual constructions dehumanises young people and staff, seemed to create a shift in how the young people and staff saw each other. Instead of people locked in a system which provides all the cues for how to relate to each other, when the essence of ourselves is revealed in the arts the keys and the wire, for a moment at least, fall aside as people interact as people.

From the interviews with staff after the programme, it appears that they greeted the opportunity for the humanising of the prison space, of having a way to relate meaningfully and more authentically with the young people. One staff member, for

example, commented that because the young people were so engaged in the graffiti workshops she was able to support and encourage the young people, without having to do things for them. A Unit Manager remembered a moment in which his expectations of one young person had shifted:

> I observed 'W' participating in the drama, working with two female helpers, with quite close physical contact, he was being sensitive and responsible — respectful — something I had not expected of him.

The time constraints of the project limited the opportunity to develop trans-disciplinary processes where the artists and residency staff might have had a more equal role throughout the project. The residence staff's own skills could have been realised and used earlier.

A compelling paradox of risk and safety

O'Connor has written previously (2009) on the nature of protected spaces for arts making and how this relates to both aesthetic risk and risk in revealing personal narrative. In our initial theatre making we played out scenes of how the young people had experienced parenting themselves. They were largely tragic tales of abuse, neglect, drugs and violence. They were told with brutal honesty and surrounded by huge amounts of shared laughter. Joe Winston (2009:39) points out that there are many kinds of laughter — laughter intended to spoil, the laughter that indicates a lack of engagement and inattention, cruel laughter, subversive laughter and the 'seemingly mindless chorus of guffaws that greet the antics of the class clown'. The shared, playful laughter that can be generated through drama, Winston suggests, can transgress the usual codes of the classroom (or secure residence) and help with learning about 'the world as it is' and 'the world as they would like it to be' (*ibid*:42). Theatre makers, the young people and the staff all joined in with the making of these stories. These naturalistic representations of their own childhood were played almost as a form of long extended child-like play. It was redolent of what might be seen as four and five year olds negotiate in and out of role-play. Totally absorbed in the moment of recreation there was no playing to an audience and little need for or use of metaphor or theatrical artifice. By week three of the project the young men were very busily engaging in long extended self directed improvisation. That the applied theatre team and residence staff joined in the play making was centrally important to this development. Not only did it validate the work the young people were doing, it allowed through responsive, targeted and sensitive involvement by the adults opportunities for fostering play outside the drama sessions.

The social play continued back in at least one of the units where four of the young people came from. In small groups the young people were pretending to be parents, to be children, to be teachers, ostensibly rehearsing for the performance, but delighting and being absorbed in the art of pretence. Others were brought into the extended role scenes and, instead of basketball, the exercise yard became the site for these young men pretending and playing together, constructing private and shared dramatic worlds. The Manager of this unit described a positive cultural change in the unit which has lasted beyond the project and even beyond these young men leaving the units.

The residence provided a safety and protection from the outside world for young people and yet a machismo culture seemed to obviate the opportunity for young people to explore issues of concern in a sensitive way. Naturalistic theatre forms dropped away as the young people as the theatre artists struggled to find other

forms to carry the stories the young people wanted to tell. There were moments where the paradoxical coexistence of safety and risk were exemplified in the work. The programme saw young people share personal stories in ways that revealed a gentleness that was otherwise difficult for them to reveal within the residence. There were moments when young men who had been placed in the residence because of their violent offending strived to move and to touch each other gently in the choreographed pieces of dance they were creating. Such moments suggested that the aesthetic risk they were taking was also about risking revelations about themselves. In exploring the possibilities of moments when Romeo's father might have felt good about being a father, the young men we were working with suggested the moment of Romeo's birth. We worked for a long time considering how we might show this moment truthfully. We created a scene of the birth, with Romeo emerging from between the legs of two staff members and the young men, as his father, crying joyfully "My son, My son". After devising a subsequent scene showing the father picking up his son after he took his first steps, the young man commented, 'that's not my dad, but that's the kind of father I'll be with my son' (Staff debrief).

Then the young people worked on this moment with our choreographer. They decided to recreate it through lifting her above their heads and then gently lowering her to the ground across their bodies. It was a difficult movement. Claire, our choreographer questioned the young men's ability and willingness to do this work. One young man responded, 'You will need to trust us and trust the process. We won't drop you'. And they never did. In the final performance as they lifted her way above her heads, the audience drew their collective breath in and as they moved her gracefully across their bodies and placed her on the ground, the audience wept. It was a moment of intense beauty which silenced and stilled the residence and which demonstrated the fragility and gentle strength of the young performers. The audience's tears as Clare reached the ground were humbling, affirming and rewarding for the performers.

Before the project started a group of residence staff were asked what parenting meant to the young people at Korowai Manaaki. One remarked, 'none of them know what good parenting looks like' (Unit Staff). In their art works the young people showed a 'felt and embodied' understanding of parenthood that was, perhaps, made possible though the paradoxically safe and risky art making processes.

Conclusions — and transdiciplinary outcomes

James Thompson (2009) has argued that applied theatre should be valued for its affective, rather than its effective role, that its 'emotional, sensory and aesthetic' site needs to be appreciated as much as its instrumental effects. The most affective moments of the *Romeo and Juliet* project were those created by the young people as artists — theatremakers, choreographers and dancers, musicians and lyric writers and visual artists. The value of beauty, like all qualities in prisons, is often judged or seen as important because of some kind of inherent redemptive power it has over the beholder. In this instance, the beholders were the social workers, unit staff, some family members and representatives from the Department of Child, Youth and Family. This seemed to suggest a shift that, although the project had been funded to change young people, its success might instead be measured by how much it had changed the unit itself. In a place of frequent ugliness, of fences, high walls and locked doors, these moments, inspired by the joyful sense of possibility a father feels at the birth of his son, were powerful moments of beauty, where 'for a time at least, it actually feels as we would like the world to feel' (Winston, 2009:44).

And at one level, whether this creates a change in the futures of any of us who were present at the performance is simply not the important measure of the success of the programme. To attempt to find a causal relationship between this performance and how these young men and/or the audience might parent better seems to miss the point of the work. Young people interviewed spoke about the change the programme made to the daily grind of life in the residence, how it gave purpose and shape to the days and nights. Prison theatre should not be constructed as a rehearsal space for the future. Instead it offers the potential for the creation of "intense experience that creates a network of meaningful activities in the present" (Thompson, 2006:97). This is the rare gift of theatre in a space which either confines young people to wait or prepare for the future but rarely addresses the present.

Another issue that has emerged strongly from the data analysis is around the control of and breaking down of barriers and boundaries. Foucault (1991) describes in detail the techniques of disciplining institutions that regulate and control, amongst other things, space, time, interaction, what can be done where and when and with whom. Kershaw (1998) and Thompson (1998) suggest that theatre in prisons and other disciplining institutions is a space for resistance within which freedom can be forged (Kershaw, 1998:68). This is not just a freedom from oppression, but also the freedom to create currently unimaginable futures. For Kershaw, however, theatre in prisons is always 'incorporated art' as it cannot sufficiently change the structure of the context. Thompson, however, proposes that:

> The cracks are like growing pains, the frictions of the varying interests rubbing up against each other in the prison environment... It does not always exploit a fissure—it sometimes fills a hole, rubs in favour of one interest but causing friction in another. It never does one thing. Simultaneously exploiting a crack for one part of the institution and filling a hole for another. (1998:253)

How widely and deeply those cracks have gone we do not know. We don't know yet what possibilities might emerge for staff and young people at the residence. In all of the post-project interviews with staff it was reported that their perceptions and expectations of the young people had been changed through the project. They spoke of seeing young people do things they hadn't imagined they could do. Working collaboratively to make art had changed their sense of the young people. The young people also saw differently staff members who acted or sang or painted alongside them. These changes arose simply in those very human moments of people living together in a different way. The young people in the drama workshops *perhaps* started to envisage themselves as good parents. The staff, *perhaps*, now saw the young people as motivated, capable, creative, able to collaborate and responsible. They had *perhaps* been instilled with a new sense of hope. This is a long way from the parenting skills programme that was the basis for the funding relationship between the residence and the applied theatre company. Instead of personal change for young people in need of change, small but perceptible shifts could be perceived in the residence itself. Changes not for future lives but in the present lives of those who lived and or worked in the residence.

Boundaries between young people, staff and applied theatre workers became blurred as we worked as artists, as we created moments of beauty which altered the spaces between us. In the manner in which the work also challenged and reconstituted the various disciplinary boundaries, we might begin to construe applied theatre as a "quasi discipline." (Kershaw and Nicholson, 2011).

There is evidence that there has been a small shift, a crack where the light has got in, in how the residence and its staff view their young people and how they think about what they provide for them. In some way, the *Romeo and Juliet* project enabled them to reexamine themselves. In his 1998 article 'Pathologies of Hope in Drama and Theatre', Baz Kershaw asks what drama and theatre can do to 'induce an epidemic [or] at least to increase the carriers of hope?'. Throughout the project, the evidence creates a picture where staff and young people interacted and performed in different ways — unquestioned routines, ways of relating and patterns of behaviour were altered — and it seems that there is a new desire and will to look at whether some of these changes can continue beyond the end of the project. The cracks perhaps have traveled deeper than we even imagined. Since our work last year, there have been further arts based partnerships developed at the residence and a greater openness and willingness not only to engage with the arts but what they invariably bring.

Light is getting in
Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.
(Leonard Cohen, 1992)

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