More than Words: Performance Ethnography as a Research Method that Values a Sustained Ethnographic Orientation and Imaginative Theatre-making

Jane Bird
The University of Melbourne, Australia

Abstract

Performance ethnography is a form of performed research that creates a theatrical representation of ethnographic inquiry. Walford (2009) proposes that frequently performance ethnographers neglect traditional ethnographic practices such as participant observation and substantial time in the field. This paper draws on research which investigated the practices of a performance ethnographer who adopted a sustained ethnographic orientation throughout the interconnecting phases of fieldwork, analysis, interpretation and representation (Wolcott, 1995). The paper considers how these practices influenced, shaped and enhanced the researcher's theatre making practices. The research revealed that the embodied and tacit knowledge generated through a

performative approach to ethnographic inquiry lends itself to a layered and rich style of theatre making that involves more than a transference of verbatim text into a script. This paper documents the performance ethnographer's commitment to sustained ethnographic processes as she synthesizes detailed and complex insights into an action-based, artistic theatrical representation.

Introduction

Performance ethnography is a form of research-based theatre that creates a theatrical representation of ethnographic inquiry. Within the field of performance-based inquiry research-based theatre (Beck, Belliveau, Lea, & Wager, 2011) and performed research (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010) are umbrella terms that encompass the practice of "researchers from a range of traditions of inquiry and artistic practice (who) have brought the aesthetic and performative into their investigations of the social, cultural and political world" (Sinclair & Belliveau, 2014, pp. 4-5). Performance ethnography can be understood as a research methodology and an ethnographic performance text is the product, that is the performed representation of the ethnography. This paper investigates how the practices of ethnography and theatre making influence and impact on the construction of an ethnographic performance text. Drawing on a project where I constructed an ethnographic performance text for the purpose of a professional learning experience, I examine and illustrate how my ethnographic and theatre making practices across four phases of research impacted on each other and influenced the nature of the ethnographic performance text through my research and artistic decision-making.

The paper responds to Walford's (2009) proposition that frequently performance ethnographers neglect traditional ethnographic practices such as participant observation and substantial time in the field and simply transform interview data directly into a script. By contrast, this paper suggests that working as a performance ethnographer with a commitment to the art form of theatre to represent and communicate complex ideas does not need to lessen the researcher's orientation towards ethnographic practices. This paper also considers the relationship between research rigour, aesthetic qualities of performance and the desire to engage an audience and raises questions about how to balance the ethnographic and the artistic processes involved in constructing performance ethnography (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010; Bird, Donelan, Sinclair, & Wales, 2010; Goldstein, 2001, 2002; Pon, Goldstein, & Schecter, 2003; Sinclair, 2014; Walford, 2009).

Defining Performance Ethnography

> Performance ethnographers believe that the rich array of cultural practices can be best represented, not through the page, but through embodied presentation (Pelias, 2008, p. 189).

Situated within the field of performance-based inquiry is the research methodology of *performance ethnography* that, as its name suggests, acknowledges both its research methods and the representation of research understandings through performance. Performance ethnography evolved as an alternative form of ethnographic representation 'that privileges the body as a site of knowing' (Pelias, 2007, p. 1). Through the embodied qualities of performance, the "actor takes on others, not only cognitively, but also affectively," which according to Pelias "offers a profound way of coming to understand others" in a "vibrant and textured rendering of cultural others" (p. 1).

The collaboration of cultural anthropologist, Victor Turner, and performance theorist, Richard Schechner, explored performance to embody and communicate the everyday qualities of a culture emerging from their fieldwork (Turner & Schechner, 1988). These groundbreaking researchers valued the performative aspects of their fieldwork including the everyday rituals of their participants' lived experiences. Viewing the world as performance directs the ethnographer to explore ways to privilege action and the spoken, the embodied and the symbolic qualities of the ethnographic data (Conquergood, 2003; Turner & Schechner, 1988; Wolcott, 1995b). For Wolcott (1995b), the role of the ethnographer is to "commit to looking at and attempting to make sense of human social behavior in terms of cultural patterning" (p. 83). Conquergood (2003) regards ethnography as an "embodied practice" and values the sensual and visceral experiences of human events (p. 353) and he calls for fieldwork that focuses on everyday physical and emotional actions and interactions because "meaning is in-between the structure" of life (Conquergood, 1986, p. 36). As ethnographers experimented with ways to communicate embodied and physically expressive qualities of their research, "performance ethnography" became a form of ethnographic representation (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003; Rusted, 2012).

Conquergood (1998) argues that ethnographers should privilege the expressive body to communicate the lived experiences of participants and that performance is a powerful 'locus' for ethnographers "who want to privilege action, agency, and transformation" (p. 25). According to Saldaña (2011), the ethnographer who engages with performance as representation determines that this is one of "the most appropriate and effective modalities for communicating observations of culture, social or personal life" (p. 15). For Ackroyd and O'Toole (2010) it is the embodied and dynamic nature of performance that most enables the re-creation of "the full three-dimensional richness of observed phenomena" (p. xviii). Through dramatic action, nuances of speech and visual images, the intellectual, emotional and

embodied experiences of human events can be explored and communicated through performed ethnography. Richardson (2000a) embraces performance ethnography as "another evocative way of shaping an experience without losing the experience … it can reconstruct the 'sense' of an event from multiple 'as lived' perspectives" (p. 934).

Despite the potential benefits of representing ethnographic understandings through performance, a major issue for the methodology of performance ethnography appears to be how the aesthetic and the ethnographic components are intertwined and prioritised in constructing the performance. According to O'Toole and Ackroyd (2010), researchers need to balance research rigour and theatrical crafting when constructing performed research. Pelias (2007) claims that performance ethnographers "write with an eye toward theatrical effectiveness" and, in doing so, gravitate to "moments from the field that display conflict or heightened drama" (p. 3). He asserts that "balancing" the ethnographic priorities and the crafting of good theatre is "tricky work" (p. 3). And that, in order to display a commitment to rigorous research some performance ethnographers "strive only to represent actual conversations from the field" in their theatrical representations (p. 3). However, some researchers believe that including only verbatim text to construct representations of reality has the potential to move performance ethnography away from evocative representations that aim to capture the "sense of an event" (Richardson, 2000a).

Another issue raised in the literature is that some research projects described as 'performance ethnography' have limited reference to traditional ethnographic practices such as participant observation, ethnographic data analysis and substantial time in the field. Walford (2009) declares performance ethnographies that construct a script directly from interview data and omit "the all-important analysis stage that must occur prior to any ethnographic representation" (p. 279) should not appropriate the word 'ethnography' in defining their work. He also argues that a performance ethnographer constructing a script focusing on raw data that has not been systematically analysed is synonymous with a writer presenting "a selection of interview transcripts and ask[ing] the readers to make sense of them" (p. 279). Leaving aside Walford's concerns about who should legitimately use the term performance ethnography (or not), his call for researchers to embrace traditional ethnographic practice could provide a useful provocation for researchers approaching the methodology of performance ethnography in the future. Would the ethnographic practices outlined by Walford restrict or support a performance ethnographer who aimed to construct an evocative and rich performance-based representation? Would an ethnographic orientation be compatible with the artistic practices of theatre to "enable possibilities for expression of research that may not otherwise exist" (Lea & Belliveau, 2016, p. 9)? This paper investigates the methodology of performance ethnography from the perspective of a researcher who chooses to use both an ethnographic orientation and theatre as an evocative and powerful form of representation.

Research Context

This paper draws extensively on my experiences of constructing an ethnographic performance for the purpose of a professional learning experience within an Australian executive tertiary leadership program titled LH Martin[1] *Women in Research Leadership*. As a performance ethnographer and professional learning educator within the Women in Research Leadership program, I constructed an ethnographic performance focused on issues around women in research leadership that could prompt reflection and discussion. Concurrently I investigated my practice as a performance ethnographer in order to further understand this methodology that links formal research with theatre making. I maintained a reflective journal beginning with the ethnographic fieldwork and culminating in the presentation of the ethnographic performance at the professional learning *Women in Research Leadership* program.

The week-long residential professional learning program LH Martin *Women in Research Leadership* catered for university based female academics from across Australia and New Zealand who aspired to strengthen their leadership potential. To ensure the relevance of the ethnographic performance for this particular purpose and audience, ethnographic fieldwork was conducted investigating the lived experiences of women working in university research leadership. Eight female research leaders who worked across a range of disciplines within Australian research centres and university faculties were recruited, and I shadowed each of these women by following them closely during their working day over a period of six months. I gathered data through observations, informal discussions, extended interviews and on-line documents relating to each participant and her research projects. I combined the eight data sets to develop my understandings of how tertiary research leadership structures functioned, what specific issues for women working in research existed (or not) within these environments and how strategic decision-making occurred. Each academic allowed me access into multiple aspects of her working life and collectively they reported that their openness was driven by the knowledge that this research itself could be of use to other female academics.

For the *Women in Research Leadership* course itself, I designed a three-hour professional learning workshop which included the ethnographic performance and a range of activities to provide opportunities for the workshop attendees to collectively and individually respond to and investigate the ideas/themes within the performance. The twenty senior female academics participants responded that the workshop was a highly engaging, authentic and effective learning experience where they developed deeper insights into the experiences of women

[1] The LH Martin Institute aims "to train the next generation of leaders of Australia's higher education and vocational education in the strategic management of their institutions" (2010, "Welcome to the LH Martin Institute" para. 4).

working in research leadership. Their identification and emotional engagement with the characters and situations within the play provided key evidence for the reported effectiveness of the ethnographic performance. This explicitly educational form of research-based theatre *interactive ethnographic performance* was also examined for its educative potential (Bird & Donelan, Forthcoming).

Investigating Performance Ethnography

As a theatre maker, director, performer, educator and arts-based researcher, reflexivity is part of my practice as I seek to understand the capacity of theatre to communicate complex meanings for both performers and their audiences. Within schools and tertiary settings, my role as drama and theatre educator places students at the center of the artistic and collaborative performance making processes. Across various research-based theatre contexts, embodied and artistic theatre making practices influence my data analysis (Bird, 2011) as well as the aesthetic decisions in crafting a staged performance. My collaboration with theatre makers, drama educators and arts-based researchers on the research-based theater project *Alice Hoy is not a Building* revealed that the crafting of artistic, multimodal and stylized theatrical scenes enhanced the audience's engagement with the qualitative research understandings (Bird et al., 2010). As theatre practitioner and drama educator, I came to performance ethnography with the expectation that my embodied, performative orientation would dominate my approach to the methodology. Instead I shifted my lens to the assertion that the interconnecting phases of ethnographic fieldwork, analysis and interpretation (Conquergood, 2003; Van Maanen, 1995; Walford, 2009; Wolcott, 1995b) support and inform one another.

Fundamental ethnographic practices are often overlooked in the discussion of performance ethnography and therefore the impact of these practices on the construction of a performance text is unclear. Subsequently, in this paper I focus on the details of my practice, detailing firstly my attention to traditional approaches to fieldwork and analysis, as well as the interpretive and performative approaches to performance making. I have divided these illustrative accounts into four phases or sub-headings: fieldwork, analysis, foundations for scriptwriting and theatrical representation. In the following section, I systematically explore my practice across each phase and consider how ethnographic and theatre making practices impact on each other and how the performance ethnographer might balance the 'ethical responsibilities of the researcher to the data and the artistic responsibilities of the playwright to the art form' (Lea & Belliveau, 2016, p. 7). A visual illustration displays how ethnographic understanding filters through each of these phases of research (see Figure 1).
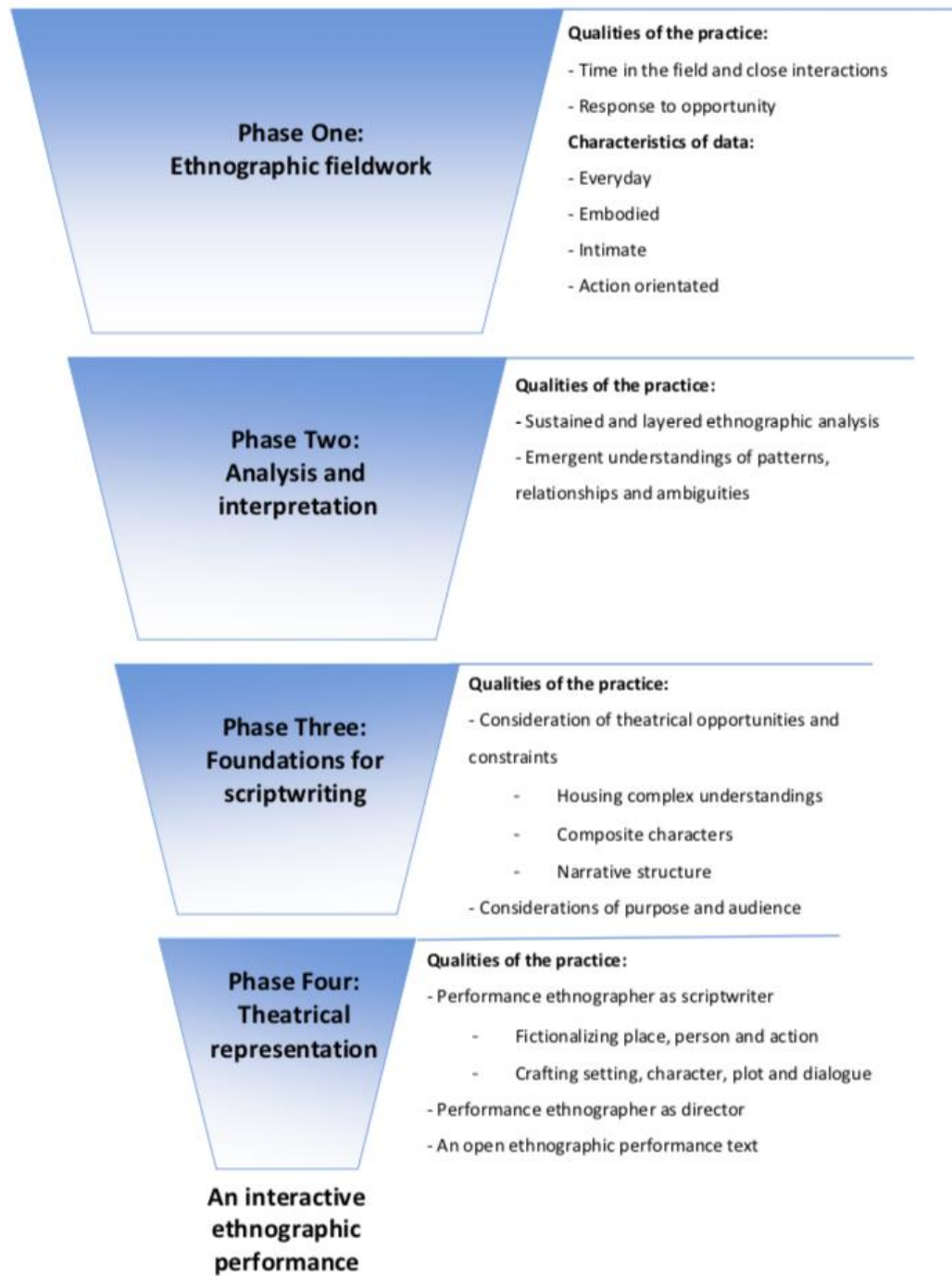
Phase One:
Ethnographic fieldwork

Qualities of the practice:
- Time in the field and close interactions
- Response to opportunity

Characteristics of data:
- Everyday
- Embodied
- Intimate
- Action orientated

Phase Two:
Analysis and
interpretation

Qualities of the practice:
- Sustained and layered ethnographic analysis
- Emergent understandings of patterns,
relationships and ambiguities

Phase Three:
Foundations for
scriptwriting

Qualities of the practice:
- Consideration of theatrical opportunities and
constraints
    - Housing complex understandings
    - Composite characters
    - Narrative structure
- Considerations of purpose and audience

Phase Four:
Theatrical
representation

Qualities of the practice:
- Performance ethnographer as scriptwriter
    - Fictionalizing place, person and action
    - Crafting setting, character, plot and dialogue
- Performance ethnographer as director
- An open ethnographic performance text

An interactive
ethnographic
performance

Figure 1. The practice of a performance ethnographer

Phase One: Ethnographic Fieldwork

During my fieldwork I followed and observed each participant to 'better understand the beliefs, motivations, and behaviours' (Tedlock, 2000, p. 456) underpinning her work within a university research team. Through spending sustained time with each of the eight female academics in their respective workplaces, I looked for any opportunity to interact with and observe each participant in her everyday work context. I was driven by two central questions "from which all ethnographic inquiry springs: What is going on here? What does it mean?" (Conquergood, 1992, p. 87). I joined a participant as she walked to her next meeting, as she bought her lunch, as she attended to a problem in the laboratory. Not knowing what was going to be important, I took note of all that I could. An open attitude resulted in being invited to unplanned events such as a morning tea to share a birthday cake with colleagues and an urgent research meeting in a lab. This ethnographic approach to 'seeing' the world of each woman no matter how mundane, unimportant or unexpected the experience might seem, resulted in everyday, embodied, intimate and action-orientated data. It emerged in my research that attention to these particular qualities of data were pivotal to my practice as a performance ethnographer, so I briefly examine each below.

Everyday Data

Capturing the everyday behaviours of the women working in research were generally as ordinary as how a 'person's laundry gets washed, dried and put away?' (Wolcott, 1995a, p. 79). Each woman's daily work habits, like attending to emails, eating lunch at her desk and taking work home, revealed individual priorities regarding work practices. These daily considerations exposed the intersection between the participants' personal and professional lives and demonstrated how each participant experienced and enacted leadership in their particular context. Similarly, I found that the participants' reflective accounts of everyday behaviour and activities during interviews and informal conversations added meaning to the actions I observed during the fieldwork and more deeply informed my understanding of the participants' motivations and goals underlying actions.

The participants' reflections on everyday activities such as what they planned and what they actually achieved across a day offered insights into their leadership styles. Each time I met with a participant I asked her to describe her work practices of 'yesterday' or 'last week' and interestingly these accounts sometimes contrasted with previous descriptions of her 'typical day' or my participant observations. In an initial interview one woman mentioned that she reserved Fridays for her research writing but each week when I asked about the previous Friday, she listed an array of other tasks. This discrepancy occurred across the many months I shadowed her, and it seemed despite her success and highly organised work life in reality she wrote her journal articles on the weekends. Inquiring into the women's every day and regular

habits revealed the participants' values, goals, disappointments, achievements and aspirations within their university research environments.

Embodied Data

As a theatre maker and educator who values embodied and artistic processes, I aligned with with the belief that "ethnography is an embodied practice" (Conquergood, 2003, p. 353). My fieldnotes included the mood, the smell and the sounds of the workplace: crammed into a corner; perched on a chair; walking down corridors; taken to busy research labs wearing lab coats and protective eyeglasses. I also experienced how each participant treated me: I was placed behind one participant at meetings; others introduced me to their colleagues; some offered me cups of tea and cake; more than one invited me to join a research discussion; many apologised for being late; one ignored me at a function and another invited me to lunch.

These embodied experiences were captured through observation notes and reflective journals but not all these embodied qualities were recorded in words. Some were also embedded in my body memory and provided both a mental image and a visceral experience that later surfaced as I analysed and interpreted my understanding of women working in research leadership.

Intimate Data

As I shadowed each of the women through their working days across a number of months, a sense of trust and rapport developed. Through our one-on-one time in the field, I found openings and opportunities for personal reflections enabling a "growing trust" and enhancing the communication between myself and each woman (Ely, 1991, p. 61) to the extent that each woman was prepared to reflect on her work experiences with a degree of honesty and "self-disclosure" (Conquergood, 2003, p. 357). Intimate data afforded me an insight into the complexities of research leadership within a highly competitive and hierarchical environment. For example, the participants' reflections on decision-making, collaborations and negotiations about sensitive issues around funding and staff revealed their attitudes, approaches and values about leadership in research.

Individual work achievements and successes were undersold by a number of the women in their personal reflections; they responded that they were just 'lucky' to have the opportunity and that other women, given the same opportunity, would have achieved similar success. Personal reflections on family-work-life balance revealed the individual complexities of each woman's life. It was at these times underlying values, sacrifices and disappointments emerged. Personal reflections provided depth and texture to the data as it enhanced my understanding of the culture of working in research leadership and the individual personalities, values and contradictions of the women.

Action Orientated Data

While I observed the participants enacting their daily business in their offices and research spaces, I noted more than the words that were spoken. As I listened to the women in meetings or watched them as they sent an urgent email, I attempted to capture the non-verbal elements of their interactions as 'so much cultural knowledge is embodied in gesture, action, and evanescent event(s)' (Conquergood, 1992, p. 85). Non-verbal expressions—gestures, facial expressions and body language during interactions—provided insights into the qualities of participants' relationships, personalities and management of their social world. Some of my field notes were dominated by records of actions: writing funding applications, negotiating for new staff and more space and making an autocratic decision instead of finding a point of collaboration. I also recorded the smaller actions such as greeting colleagues, handshakes, opening doors, making cups of tea and formal silences. The juggling of multiple tasks was frequently noted: answering the door to yet another inquiry, eating a packed lunch at the computer, talking to a PhD student whist walking between meetings and fixing an office door handle because no one else would do it.

Most participants, in their positions as senior researchers, organised their work schedules through communicating with a personal assistant; these interactions and workplace actions provided insights. For example, one participant leaned gently over her PA's shoulder as they discussed schedules, displaying a familiar and comfortable relationship; another rose tersely from the meeting table, went over to her PA's office and spoke curtly across the desk, making her PA cry. Such action-related data, when analysed, revealed themes of juggling workloads, collaboration, working within a hierarchical institution and managing staff.

The participants' research work was often complex and, in my position as an outsider, I sometimes found it difficult to comprehend. As I sat in the corner of a meeting room or accompanied a woman to a research conference, I was often observing situations where I did not understand the specialised research topic being discussed. In one research meeting the academic discussion was so specific and alien to me that I began to draw the room layout. I noted the way the senior male researcher moved in his swivel chair tracking a path between his computer, the meeting table and the white board whilst the other two researchers sat at a small table. Physically he owned the space and, as it turned out, he also dominated the decisions in that meeting. Afterwards, the participant that I had been shadowing in this meeting revealed to me the underlying professional tensions she experienced with the senior male researcher and how she persisted within this relationship to negotiate and conduct successful research. I found action-orientated data as valuable as the verbal data as it enriched my understanding of the participants' roles, attitudes and relationships in their social world.

Phase Two: Analysis and Interpretation

The interconnecting phases of fieldwork and analysis blended and informed one another (Wolcott, 1995b) through activities such as my reflective field notes, records of my embodied experiences and preparing questions for final interviews. After I left the field, I spent three months systematically categorising, ordering and recording my data, reflecting my evolving understandings of the fieldwork. I repeatedly reviewed the raw data and made notations of emergent themes and subsequently constructed extensive and detailed thematic charts. Within these charts I listed selected accounts of field experiences including the participants' words and actions that supported the emergent themes. The thematic charts highlighted my developing understanding of the workplace culture in general and the extracts of data provided the particular.

The attention to repeated careful readings of interview transcripts and fieldwork accounts helped refine and extend my emergent analysis and interpretation. To capture these understandings, I developed visual interpretations highlighting the key patterns, interconnectedness and contradictions of the emergent themes and issues. One such visual, *Keeping the Research Wheels Turning,* was a cyclic image highlighting the relentless requirements of a productive and successful research profile and team; the importance of maintaining a track record was influenced by productive research partnerships which shaped the successful applications for research funding. The pressure to constantly maintain multiple components of working in research was a common facet of each of the participant's experience of working in research leadership.

Time was an important aspect of conducting my ethnographic analysis. I was able to devote enough time to engage in a sustained ethnographic analysis. This in turn enabled me to develop a layered and complex understanding of the participants' lived experiences recorded through charts and diagrams and thematic notes. The meticulous process of linking multiple and diverse data excerpts to the key themes within the charts and visuals generated an understanding of the general qualities of the culture of women working in research leadership as well as the particular (Wolcott, 1995a). In addition, this extended and focused period of analysis enhanced my *embodied* understanding of the lived experiences of the participants as I recalled specific moments from the fieldwork that supported or contradicted a particular theme. I was able to both record and carry these embodied understandings into the subsequent phases of interpreting and representing the participants' lived experiences. Across these next two phases, I distilled, infused and interpreted my research understandings into narratives, which then formed the foundations for constructing the ethnographic performance text.

Phase Three: Foundations for Scriptwriting

The process of interpreting and synthesising my emergent, thematic research understandings were supported by theatre making practices. The process of constructing composite characters and a narrative structure required me to make theatrical decisions as a form of ethnographic interpretation. These interpretive choices were made to best represent my understandings of participants' lived experiences, whilst utilising my performance-making skills to create 'good theatre'. Furthermore, the constraints of the intended audience and the specific training purpose for the final performance provided productive boundaries that defined and focused the dramatic structures. The ethnographic and theatre-making practices employed to develop the foundations for my scriptwriting were complementary and dialogic; these are examined in further detail in the following section.

Composite Characters and Narrative Structure
I aimed to "capture the essence or spirit" emerging from the research rather than solely recreating experiences verbatim or restricting the dialogue to purely verbatim text (Mackenzie & Belliveau, 2011, p. 10). I mapped out key plot ideas and overall character descriptions to both house these essential research qualities that had emerged from the previous phase of analysis, and to provide an insight into and to best represent the participants' lived experiences. The multiple theme charts informed the performance ideas as I brainstormed potential dramatic action and character development across large pieces of paper. At this point I also referred to a 'performance ideas' notebook I had maintained during the fieldwork and analysis phases.

During the fieldwork I purposely put aside my aim to construct a theatrical representation, however once I began to analyse the ethnographic data, performance ideas began to form in my mind. In order to keep these ideas 'in the background' until I had completed the data analysis, I created a notebook as a medium for holding artistic impressions of my emergent understandings. A number of scene ideas and character types recorded in this notebook were in fact relevant for my performance making, when they were refined, added to and shaped according to my research understandings.

I drew on the thematic charts, visual interpretations, performance ideas notebook and selected data excerpts to create a framework for the performance. The visual interpretation *Keeping the Research Wheels Turning* identified the many research leadership pressures that the participants experienced, and, for the script, it defined the underlying pressures of work for the characters (see Figure 2). The cyclical issues of working in research such as the pressure to *produce highly ranked research output*, *form positive relationships, acquire funding, maintain an excellent track record, collaborate with other universities, other faculties* and

industry were interpreted directly into the crafting of the script as it offered possible motivations and objectives for the characters.
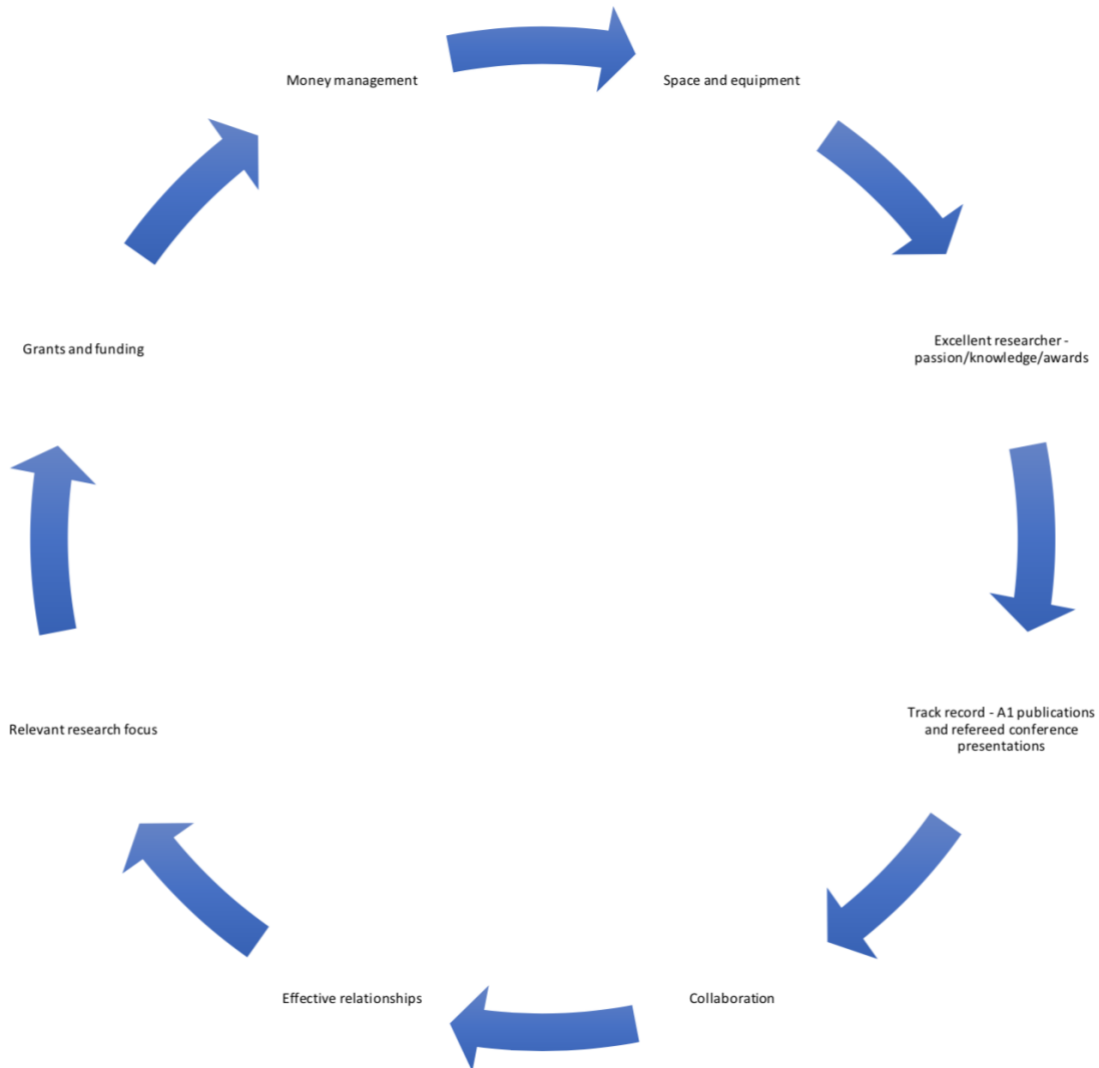

Figure 2. Keeping the research wheels turning

The relationships, connections and contradictions between themes such as *hierarchy, power, mentoring* and *collaboration* were explored and refined through developing four composite characters. This process clarified the nature of the characters' relationships and status: two senior researchers, a mid-career researcher, and a research assistant. The mid-career researcher was described as 'a rising star,' the post-doctoral staff member was regarded as an

excellent researcher who needed to refine his writing skills to reach his potential within academia and a senior male researcher was considered an expert and genius in his field. The selected data listed within the analytic charts was used to substantiate and illustrate a particular theme and at the same time provided detail for each character. For example, one of the senior researchers is profiled in the following way:

> Stella: *I was the first female professor in my Faculty, I always teach – mostly one first year undergraduate subject (or a summer school class if I can't fit it in during the year), I know who is the last to leave my labs each day* (Researcher's notes for character development).

As I incorporated general and particular qualities of the participants' lived experiences (Wolcott, 1995a) through the themes and excerpts of data, I also created fictional situations to house this research-based narrative. I invented meetings for high stakes research projects where some researchers could gain research traction and others fail to advance their profiles; hallway meetings where staffing appointments, spaces and academic writing were negotiated; and office-based scenes where characters manage emails and PhD students and field endless requests. During this process I had faith as a theatre maker that the everyday qualities of the scenes would be interesting to the audience and the intimate qualities of the data would help personalise the characters. The evolving narrative structure and the refinement of the composite characters occurred simultaneously. The delicate process of crafting these foundations for scriptwriting which would drive the dramatic action required sufficient time to cross check the composite characters and the narrative structure to ensure the multiple interconnecting themes as well as the nuances, the contradictions and the ambiguities of the participants' lived experiences were included.

Purpose and Audience
The intended purpose of the ethnographic performance was to create an engaging and stimulating professional learning experience exploring key issues impacting on the role of women working in research leadership for the attendees at the LH Martin *Women in Research Leadership* course. The focus of the ethnographic fieldwork was directly linked to the focus of the leadership course and subsequently the composite characters and the narrative structure were relevant to the purpose and audience of this professional learning experience. Goldstein and Wickett (2009) construct educational ethnographic scripts to resonate with their intended pre-service audience, specifically including teacher candidates as 'major characters' (p. 1554) and narratives set in educational institutions. Similarly, I constructed the composite characters to be relevant to my audience, in this case aspiring female research leaders. This aligned with my ethnographic aim to communicate a textured and multilayered representation of the participants' lived experiences (Goldstein, Gray, Salisbury, & Snell, 2014; Mienczakowski,

1995; Saldaña, 2005). The dramatic structure of a series of short scenes based on everyday actions and behaviours of characters involved in university research leadership was mapped out in preparation for my ethnographic and artistic scriptwriting.

Phase Four: Theatrical Representation

Rather than starting my ethnographic scriptwriting with the participants' words, I began by constructing fictional settings into which the composite characters entered allowing the action to play out in my mind. I created an 'empty space' typical of a stage for the characters to inhabit and this provided a theatrical metaphor and constraint for my script development (Mackenzie & Belliveau, 2011, p. 7). Working within the narrative structure and composite characters constructed in phase three, I scripted each scene through envisioning the characters within these constraints. My act of constructing the script was less about attempting to replicate reality and more about crafting my research understandings to be represented in an artistic, heightened and essentially fictionalised form. This process of scriptwriting aligned with and supported my ethnographic practice that was "interpretative, subjective, value-laden" (Goldstein, 2008, p. 3).

Like traditional dramatic scripts, I aimed for my ethnographic scriptwriting to evoke dramatic action involving 'people (performers/spectators) doing things (action) at a particular moment (time) in a particular place (space)' (Gray, 2014, p. 10). The multilayered, embodied and detailed understandings of my ethnographic inquiry equipped me to imagine the 'action', 'time' and 'space' of the ethnographic performance text. Through this process I was able to infuse each scene with particular qualities of the lived experiences of women working in research leadership.

From my ongoing role as the ethnographer, I drew on a combination of my memories from the field and my understandings of the analysed data to craft the fictional scenes. I imagined the composite characters interacting with one another in the setting, exploring actions, attitudes and sub-text that would convey and represent the complexities of the research findings. I experimented with characters speaking selected verbatim text, but it did not dominate the artistic process; the fictional action-driven scenes required me to move beyond shaping and ordering verbatim text. Intimate knowledge of the research themes, the data and the fieldwork allowed my construction of the script to become an authentic artistic representation.

I used verbatim text as well as invented dialogue to capture the essence of a scene. Excerpts of data enhanced the particular nuances of character interactions and the structuring of the invented dialogue combined to form an "expression of a reality" (Richardson, 2000b, p. 253) of women working in research leadership. In one such invented scene, a mentor encourages a mid-career researcher to co-author a book chapter:

LIBBY:	I just wanted to say that your presentation was compelling.
HAMISH:	Thank you.
LIBBY:	I look forward to reading it.
HAMISH:	The paper is being expanded into a chapter in a book I am coediting. Actually, there's something I have been thinking about for a while–I have space for one more chapter and I thought we could bring in your post-doc work on kinetic analysis. You and I, we could co-author a chapter–what do you think?
LIBBY:	That would be, it would be an honour.
HAMISH:	I have allowed for a thirty pager – the publishers have been breathing down my neck to confirm or scrap it – so what do you think?
LIBBY:	How can I say no.

In this extract of the script the hierarchical relationship is evident between the senior male researcher Hamish and the mid-career female researcher Libby through her praise and use of the word *honour*. The theme of *saying yes* is highlighted through Libby's line 'How could I say no' suggesting she is both flattered and keen to please a senior and admired researcher. This incident was influenced by a participant interview and some verbatim text was included. This imagined scene was crafted to embed the subtexts of ambition, hierarchy, pressure to say yes and the need to continually produce research output. The shaping of dialogue was intended to reveal subtexts that resonated with the central themes and the particular qualities of the culture and lived experiences of the participants.

The writing of a dramatic script into what Richardson (2000b) calls "evocative representations" requires theatrical crafting in order to see "through and beyond social scientific naturalisms" (p. 931). The use of theatrical form enabled me, the researcher, to synthesise meaning, "attending to feelings, ambiguities, temporal sequences, blurred experiences, and so on" (Richardson, 2000b, p. 931). I found that the creative act of ethnographic scriptwriting manipulates theatre elements such as character, plot, setting, action and dialogue in order to craft evocative writing. Such scripting is a blueprint for the creation of a performance text that "touches us where we live, in our bodies" (Richardson, 2000b, p. 931).

I drew on my embodied, emotional and cognitive understandings of the research as well as my intuitive, visceral and visual understanding of constructing dramatic action. This process of scriptwriting was so much more than structuring findings or ordering the participants' spoken words. It enabled the research to exist in the sub-text, the unspoken motivations of the characters and dramatic action that revealed behavioural patterns and contradictions. In the

following excerpt, the characters' spoken words were crafted to drive action and reveal layers of meaning within the scene, including qualities of the characters:

HAMISH:	Eric thinks that the state government will back this one if we want to push it and set up the Institute—jobs and low emissions will be hot topics for the pollies for a long time.
STELLA:	(*not looking up*) Excellent.
PAUL:	(*appearing in the doorway of Hamish's office*) Excuse me Professor Logan.
HAMISH:	Paul? Have we got something on?
PAUL:	I need to see you - it's about the emissions benches.
HAMISH:	(*checking his calendar*) I'm completely booked, it'll have to be between meetings – say 10.00. We'll talk as we walk.
PAUL:	See you then. (*exit*)
STELLA:	(*pleased with what she has been reading*) Your adjustments to Section E read well. We've become grant-writing machines Hamish.

In this scene, it was the motives and objectives of each character that drove the action. Hamish's responses and reactions to his research collaborator Stella and his research assistant Paul reveal themes of juggling, status, hierarchy and the importance of a good track record. The details about the research project that peppered this dialogue were of little importance to the subtext and action of the scene but contributed to its authenticity. The crafting of the dialogue generated action, attitude and interactions between the characters in the world of the play.

Understanding the kinaesthetic nature of the live body in a particular space allowed me, the playwright, to explore human experience through embodied dramatic action rather than through a reading of words that described or stated action. I found that situating the action of the plot in meeting rooms, offices, labs and a conference foyer all resonated with my embodied experiences of the fieldwork. In writing Scene 1, I transformed my memories of multiple meeting rooms into one space and imagined the setting. I then crafted dialogue for each character as they entered this room to review a fictional ARC application. Despite placing all the action into places that resonated with my fieldwork experiences, the settings were not literal replications of specific events I had observed. I constructed dialogue to "carry action and suggest character" whilst containing "elements of theme" (Mackenzie & Belliveau, 2011, p. 9).

I crafted the script to include particular theatrical conventions to serve the communication of particular research themes and expression of complex ideas. I incorporated theatrical conventions, such as monologues and telephone calls, into the script as dramatic points for building tension and character development. Through each of the three monologues, the female characters' inner thoughts were revealed which developed the characters within the world of the play, as well as adding to the dramatic tension and connecting directly to the audience of women researchers. This theatrical device also allowed the underlying motivations and deeper feelings of the characters to be exposed as well as the tensions inherent in the tertiary workplace that I had come to understand during the fieldwork:

LIBBY: *(direct to audience)*
              …I've got no choice but to appeal. I have a record that runs rings
              around the others. This place can be so archaic—too often the rationale
              is: 'it's his turn, or it's his time.' This is going to be an EO appeal,
              damn it. I don't want to be promoted because I am a female; I want to
              be promoted because I am good. *(exit)*

Even though Libby's monologue was constructed using verbatim text from one participant's story, essentially it was crafted within the scene to capture the anxiety and frustration expressed by a number of the research participants about working in a hierarchical institutional system mostly dominated by men.

The monologues were intended to reveal the thoughts and feelings of the two central female characters and to act as a point of contrast to the preceding scenes. The deliberate positioning of the monologues within the structure of the script was designed to enhance the subtext. A scene that focuses on status, hierarchy and power imbalance within the working environment ends with a monologue where the audience is invited to witness the character voice her inner thoughts, aspirations, disappointments and values. I sensed that the monologues, in particular, had the potential to provide a personal connection with audience members and would encourage their empathetic responses to the dilemmas for each character and the challenges of the research workplace.

I also incorporated phone calls within and at the end of some scenes allowing other characters, such as a Dean, research stakeholders and a family member, to be implied without having the action played out on stage. Through the theatrical device of a one-way phone call the multiple pressures that each character had to manage both within and outside the university research environment were communicated. I had witnessed many phone calls during my time shadowing each woman in the field, so this theatrical device captured the particular qualities

of the fieldwork as well as "the essence or spirit of the findings" (Mackenzie & Belliveau, 2011, p. 10).

I set the final scene of the ethnographic script at an academic conference to highlight personal and professional aspects of the characters through the dramatic action; where personal aspirations, the difficulties of a work-life balance, the consequences of emotional attachment to a research plan and the private impact of professional power play were all revealed. During the fieldwork I had shadowed one woman to a conference and my researcher observations and embodied experience inspired the setting of this final scene. However, this scene was also crafted to reach a climax of tension and dilemma for the audience of senior female researchers at the 'Women in Research Leadership' professional learning course. Shaping the ethnographic performance text to reach a climax but without a neat conclusion allowed the complexities of the issues facing the world of women working in research to be exposed but not solved. The ethnographic performance script, through both its ethnographic stance and theatrical form provided space and opportunity for its intended audience to "construct and complete possible meanings" (Donelan, Bird, Wales, & Sinclair, 2007, p. 498). As one audience member responded, 'What I'm taking away from the play is being aware of below the surface experience – not just the words.'

Conclusion

> …performance ethnography takes us into the moment, into the fibers of daily life, allowing us to see people in their performative contexts. This is the ultimate power of performance ethnography (Warren, 2006, p. 317).

Performance ethnography as a research methodology has the capacity to construct ethnographic performance texts that effectively evoke detailed, action-based and intimate understandings of participants' lived experiences. As a researcher in the dual roles of ethnographer and theatre maker, I found my understanding of the research participants' lived experiences evolved across each phase of the project and was infused, synthesized and represented in deep and multilayered insights. My sustained engagement across a range of ethnographic and artistic processes supported my research-informed understandings, from my time shadowing the female researchers in the field through to directing the actors for the final presentation; in this way the ethnographic and theatre-making practices intertwined and complemented each other.

Conquergood (2003) proposes that "performed experiences" are "a method of critical inquiry, a mode of understanding" that privileges the intellectual, emotional and embodied lived experiences of the research participants (p. 366). As a performance ethnographer aiming to capture the participants' lived experiences for the purpose of a professional learning

experience, my ongoing ethnographic orientation supported scriptwriting that effectively communicated my deep ethnographic understandings. Both the essence and the particular qualities of the research were crafted and shaped through artistic processes to represent my research understandings that an audience found to be theatrically engaging, relevant and evocative. The ethnographic performance text represented multilayered understandings of the participants' lived experiences through dramatic action, subtexts and spoken word, communicating to the audience the complexities of lived experience as "intersubjective and embodied, not individual and fixed, but social and processual" (Tedlock, 2000, p. 471).

Performance ethnography has the capacity to represent the complexity of human experiences and interactions through performance texts that involve more than a transference of verbatim text into a script; they can also represent and communicate the sensual, visceral and non-verbal nature of social behavior.

Many researchers and theorists in the fields of research-based theatre and performed research point to the tensions between research and artistic priorities (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010; Goldstein, 2008; Goldstein et al., 2014; Robinson, 2010; Saldaña, 2011). Performance ethnography as a methodology has the capacity to reduce this tension as the ethnographic and the artistic practices can complement and inform each other. I found that embracing "traditional research procedures" (Walford, 2009, p. 274) including sustained ethnographic fieldwork, analysis, and interpretation supported and enriched my artistic decisions when constructing an ethnographic performance. The characteristics of the data that were gathered through this ethnographic orientation enhanced my artistic and creative practice of scriptwriting. It was the quality of the everyday, embodied, intimate and action-orientated data that enhanced and enriched the construction of composite characters and the narrative structure, and subsequently the ethnographic script so it revealed "the fibers of daily life" of the research participants (Warren, 2006, p. 317).

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About the Author

Dr. Jane Bird is a drama education lecturer at The University of Melbourne specialising in artistic, embodied and collaborative qualities of teaching and learning in and through drama and theatre. Jane has developed multiple pieces of research-based theatre and written about the construction processes and aesthetic nature of performance ethnography.