

Organisational Theatre and Polyphony

The Use of Theatre as an Artist-Led Intervention in Organisational Change

by

Linda Julianna Matula

A thesis presented to Macquarie University

in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Macquarie Graduate School of Management

October 2013

This page is intentionally left blank.

Statement of Originality

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of PhD, in the Macquarie Graduate School of Management, Macquarie University. This thesis represents the original work and contribution of the author, except as acknowledged by general and specific references.

I hereby certify that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Linda Julianna Matula

25th October 2013

This page is intentionally left blank.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my partner Wolfram for his support, humour and continuous love even when things got rough. Without his patience, this thesis would not have been possible and I am forever grateful to him.

I am deeply indebted to my principal supervisor Richard Badham not only for his invaluable and endless guidance and support, but also for believing in me and convincing me that I had the ability to do this in the first place. I owe gratitude also to my associate supervisor Stefan Meisiek, whose research on organisational theatre inspired this work and whose advice and insightful comments enriched this thesis in so many ways.

Very special thanks go to Andrew, Pauline and the other members of Platanus who were willing to participate in this study during a time that was crucial to their development as a team and as an organisation. Their contributions brought life to this work and I am eternally grateful that I was allowed to be the ‘fly on the wall’ and to be a part of their amazing journey. Furthermore, I would like to thank the members of the Theatre Company for their enthusiasm, engagement, intellectual curiosity and willingness to be part of this study and to share their experiences with me.

I also owe a great debt of gratitude to my colleagues, Richard Carter, Nick Nissley and Temi Darief; I truly enjoyed working with them and thank them for sharing their insights.

I would also like to express my gratitude to MGSM and Macquarie University, whose generous scholarship and funding made this dissertation process possible.

My friends have contributed to the completion of this thesis in more ways than they can imagine. I thank them for their understanding and loyalty throughout this thesis and my life. Special thanks go to my dear friends Antje and Lizzie, whose friendship, encouragement and awesomeness kept me sane.

I am endlessly grateful to Lizzie and Tricia whose editing skills made this thesis what it is now.

The last paragraph goes to my family: László, Judit, Roland, József and Heide. I thank them for their continued love and belief in me. I also thank them for their endless support even though I decided to move to the other side of the world to pursue my dreams. Without them, I would not be where I am now. Das hier ist deshalb für Euch.

This page is intentionally left blank.

Abstract

Despite a growing body of research on organisational theatre as artist-led intervention in organisational change, the character and impact of the method remains disputed. To extend the prevailing discussions, this thesis presents a longitudinal and in-depth study of an organisational theatre event and the associated change process. I employ the concept of polyphony to explore the multiple and diverse influences upon organisational theatre and the contentious nature of its outcomes. The thesis makes an empirical contribution to this field through its documentation of the complex, multi-faceted, ambiguous and fluid social and political dynamics of organisational theatre from before project inception to after its completion. Further, it makes a theoretical contribution to organisational studies of artist-led interventions in organisational change through its application and interrogation of the concept of polyphony. Understanding organisations as inherently polyphonic serves as a guide for extending and updating radical Boalian, ambiguity and paradox based perspectives on the study of organisational theatre and its consequences.

This page is intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

<i>Statement of Originality</i>	3
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	5
<i>Abstract</i>	7
<i>Table of Contents</i>	9
<i>List of Figures</i>	15
<i>List of Tables</i>	17
Chapter One	19
<i>Introduction</i>	19
1.1 Artistic Interventions in Organisations.....	19
1.2 The Emergence of a Research Problem	20
1.3 Organisational Theatre and its Polyphonic Interpretation	21
1.4 The Case Study	23
1.5 Thesis Structure	25
Chapter Two	29
<i>Literature Review</i>	29
2.1 Introduction	29
2.2 Polyphony.....	31
2.2.1 The Origins of Polyphony.....	32
2.2.2 Polyphony in Organisation Studies.....	34
2.2.3 Responses and Critiques.....	36
2.2.4 Polyphony as a Framework.....	37
2.3 Organisational Theatre or A Performance within a Performance.....	38
2.4 Organisational Forum Theatre.....	42
2.5 Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed	43
2.5.1 Boalian Forum Theatre.....	46
2.5.2 Ideological Influences and Reception of Boalian Theatre	47

2.6 Responses to Critiques of the Use of Forum Theatre by Management.....	49
2.6.1 Liberating or Oppressive?.....	50
2.7 Limitations of Existing Organisational Theatre Research.....	53
2.7.1 Limited Stage Focus.....	54
2.7.2 Limited Content Focus	57
2.7.3 Limited Process Focus	58
2.8 Summary and Conclusion.....	59
Chapter Three.....	63
<i>Methodological Framework, Research Design and Case Study Description.....</i>	<i>63</i>
3.1 Introduction.....	63
3.2 Pilot Study.....	64
3.3 Research Approach.....	65
3.3.1 A Longitudinal Single-Case Study	67
3.3.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory Approach	68
3.4 Research Site.....	70
3.4.1 Platanus.....	72
<i>Historical Setting.....</i>	<i>72</i>
<i>Vision and Mission.....</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Platanus's Organisational Situation in 2011.....</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>The Senior Executive Team.....</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Leadership Development at Platanus.....</i>	<i>79</i>
3.5 Data Collection	81
3.5.1 Ethical Considerations	82
3.5.2 Observation.....	83
3.5.3 Interviews	86
3.5.4 Document Analysis.....	89

3.6 Data Analysis.....	90
3.6.1 Initial Coding, Memos and Discussions.....	92
3.6.2 Event History Database and Context Charts.....	94
3.6.3 Focused Coding and Memos	96
3.6.4 Theoretical Sampling.....	98
3.6.5 Writing Drafts	98
3.7 Chapter Summary.....	100
Chapter Four.....	101
<i>Who Controls the Looking Glass? Organisational Theatre and Synoptic Power.....</i>	<i>101</i>
4.1 Introduction	101
4.2 Synoptic Power in Organisational Theatre.....	102
4.3 Boalian Forum Theatre in Organisations	103
4.4 Case Study: Making Appointments at a Financial Services Organisation	104
4.5 Discussion: Organisational Theatre and Identity Dynamics	109
4.5.1 The Play is the Thing	109
4.5.2 Playful is the Thing.....	110
4.5.3 Organisational Theatre's Conditions for Synoptic Power.....	113
<i>Type of organisational theatre.....</i>	<i>113</i>
<i>Audience composition.....</i>	<i>115</i>
<i>Managerial expectations</i>	<i>116</i>
4.6 Conclusion.....	117
Chapter Five	121
<i>The Theatre Takes Shape: The Negotiation Bazaar.....</i>	<i>121</i>
5.1 Introduction: Organisational Theatre as Planned Change Intervention.....	122
5.2 Towards an Explanation of Organisational Theatre and its Character.....	124
5.3 Organisational Theatre and Polyphony	125

5.4 Exploring Purposes: Surface, Depth and Polyphony.....	129
5.5 Case Study and Method	131
5.5.1 Research Site	131
5.5.2 Data Collection.....	132
5.5.3 Data Analysis	133
5.6 Findings	135
5.6.1 Background Context.....	135
5.6.2 Direct Negotiations of the Formal Purpose by the ‘HR’ Professionals	136
5.6.3 The Negotiated Formal Purpose as Polyphonic Outcome	141
5.6.4 The ‘Deep’ Play of Culture	143
<i>A Leadership Team Wrestling with Change Management Antinomies.....</i>	<i>143</i>
<i>The Situated Action of the Theatre Facilitator.....</i>	<i>145</i>
5.7 Discussion.....	147
5.8 Conclusion	151
Chapter Six	153
<i>Organisational Theatre as Process: Polyphony, Paradox & Public Discourse.....</i>	<i>153</i>
6.1 Introduction.....	154
6.2 Setting the Stage: Organisational Theatre at Platanus.....	156
6.3 The Stage is Set: Game On	157
6.4 Paul’s Intention to Communicate Paradox.....	160
6.5 Success or Failure?.....	162
6.6 The Challenges of Communicating Paradox	164
6.7 The Phronetic (or Socratic) Question	166
6.8 Main Themes	167
6.8.1 Taking Time Out.....	167
6.8.2 Contested Intentionality.....	169

6.8.3 Complex Irony and Weighted Paradox.....	171
6.8.4 Nature and Levels of Paradox	173
6.8.5 Type of Response to Paradox.....	177
<i>A Paradox or Not?</i>	177
<i>Weighted Meanings and Irony's Edge</i>	178
6.9 A Dangerously Rewarding Game	178
6.10 Conclusion.....	180
Chapter Seven	185
<i>Translating, Deconstructing and Harmonising: Organisational Theatre and Organisational Polyphony</i>	185
7.1 Organisational Theatre and Polyphony	186
7.2 Organisational Theatre: Existing Research and its Limitations	189
<i>Missing Stages Focus</i>	190
<i>Missing Content Focus</i>	190
<i>Avoiding Polarisation</i>	191
7.3 Methods	192
7.3.1 Research Site.....	192
7.3.2 Data Collection	194
7.3.3 Data Analysis	196
7.4 Findings.....	197
7.4.1 Translation	198
<i>The Smoking Nurse</i>	198
<i>The Arrogant Prick</i>	200
<i>Doctors on Top</i>	201
7.4.2 Deconstruction.....	203
7.4.3 Reconciling Voices	206
7.5 Discussion.....	207

<i>Organisational Theatre Contributions</i>	208
<i>Polyphony Contributions</i>	210
7.6 Conclusion	211
Chapter Eight	215
<i>Conclusion</i>	215
8.1 Contributions.....	215
<i>Empirical Contribution</i>	215
<i>Theoretical Contribution</i>	216
8.2 Limitations of Study and Avenues for Future Research.....	219
8.3 Concluding remarks.....	221
<i>Appendices</i>	223
Appendix A: List of Publications	224
Appendix B: Organisation Chart Platanus's Senior Executive Team.....	226
Appendix C: Case Study Overview and Timeline	227
Appendix D: Data Collection Summary	228
Appendix E: Ethics Approval	230
Appendix F: Pre-event Interview Questions.....	232
Appendix G: Post-event Interview Questions Set 1	234
Appendix H: Post-event Interview Questions Set 2	235
Appendix I: Event History Database	237
Appendix J: Stakeholders' Background Stories (Pre-event Phases).....	251
<i>References</i>	<i>Error! Bookmark not defined.</i>

List of Figures

FIGURE 1: TYPOLOGY OF FORUM THEATRE IN ORGANISATIONS.	52
FIGURE 2: ACTIVITIES OF THE PRODUCTION PROCESS OF ORGANISATIONAL THEATRE...	55
FIGURE 3: DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS	91
FIGURE 4: CONTEXT CHART RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVED STAKEHOLDERS EARLY CASE STUDY STAGES.....	95
FIGURE 5: FRAMEWORK FOR CRITICALLY ANALYSING THEATRE-BASED TRAINING (NISSLEY ET AL. 2004)	124

This page is intentionally left blank.

List of Tables

TABLE 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.....	87
TABLE 2: INITIAL CODING STRUCTURE EXCERPT	93
TABLE 3: EXAMPLE OF EARLY MEMO-WRITING	94
TABLE 4: EXAMPLE OF LATER MEMO WRITING	96
TABLE 5: FOCUSED CODING EXCERPT.....	97
TABLE 6: EXAMPLE OF THEORETICAL SAMPLING	99

This page is intentionally left blank.

Chapter One

Introduction

“Any society that hopes to be imperishable must carve out for itself a piece of space and a period of time in which it can look honestly at itself. This honesty is not that of the scientist, who exchanges the honesty of his ego for the objective of his gaze. It is, rather, akin to the supreme honesty of the creative artist, who, in his presentations on the stage, in the book, on canvas, in marble, in music or in towers and houses, reserves to himself the privilege to see straight what all cultures build crooked.”

Victor Turner (1984: 40) in
Liminality and Performance Genres

1.1 Artistic Interventions in Organisations

Over the past few decades, it has become a veritable cliché to observe that the world has experienced numerous social and economic upheavals, leading to the need for a new orientation of the ways in which organisations address and handle change and transformation. In responding to this situation, organisational development theorists and practitioners have focused even greater attention onto the ‘invisible’ and ‘repressed’ beliefs, values and voices that, if neglected, stifle the capacity of organisations to respond creatively and innovatively to turbulent environments (Margulies & Raia, 1972; Marshak & Grant, 2008). It has become necessary to look for new and innovative ways of changing the routine and habitual patterns of ‘doing business’ that hinder the capacity for expressing diversity and restrict the potential for creativity and innovation. The use of artistic interventions to facilitate change in this way has increased as part of this movement (for example: Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Berthoin-Antal, 2009, 2013; Biehl-Missal, 2011b; Darsø, 2004; Economist, 2011; Schiuma, 2011; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009).

It has been long recognised that art has the potential to change consciousness (Marcuse, 1978) and, in its deliberate use in organisations, can be used to “stimulate us to see more, hear more and experience more” (Schein, 2001: 81). The arts can encourage individuals’ reflection on and increase their awareness of organisational issues (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Biehl-Missal, 2011b; Schein, 2001; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009) and can inspire organisational

members to expand their technical and behavioural repertoire as well as illuminate choices and possibilities (Schein, 2001). For these reasons, various art-based processes have been used in organisations to stimulate deeper experiences of learning (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Biehl-Missal, 2011b; Darsø, 2004; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009).

In recent years, the use of such artistic interventions in organisations has been the subject of increased research and discussion (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Berthoin-Antal, 2009, 2013; Biehl-Missal, 2011b; Darsø, 2004; Economist, 2011; Schiuma, 2011; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). This thesis has been written as a contribution to this body of research, with a particular focus on the use of organisational theatre as an organisational intervention technique.

1.2 The Emergence of a Research Problem

I first ‘encountered’ literature on organisational theatre during a research project that I conducted just over four years ago. I had previously graduated in Cross-Cultural Management in Germany and, before I moved to Australia in 2008, had not yet come across organisational theatre. While I was fascinated by theatre as an art form, I began my research in the field with a rather general and somewhat naïve curiosity about the ways in which theatre could contribute to organisational change. The supervisor of my research project and the Principal Supervisor of this thesis, Richard Badham, had a keen interest in the exploration of Iain Mangham’s lifework and its relevance for understanding the nature and role of organisational theatre and he introduced Mangham’s work to me. As introductory literature, Richard provided me with Mangham’s research, some of it was written with Timothy Clark. Clark and Mangham’s ‘tempered’, if not downright critical, treatment of organisational theatre left me with an, initially, rather sceptical perspective on the character and potential of theatrical interventions in organisational change programs.

The literature review I then conducted provided me with a broader perspective on the field, which was further deepened when I began my PhD research on organisational theatre in 2010. With the involvement of Stefan Meisiek as my Associate Supervisor in this thesis, I became even more closely exposed to the ‘other side’ of the ‘Mangham/Clark’ thesis: a counter-voice arguing for the potential of theatrical methods as intervention in organisational development and change. Following ‘the rabbit down the rabbit hole’, to borrow from Lewis Carroll (2000/1872), I became intrigued by the debates on the

character and potential impact of such interventions. This focus, together with the case study that it gave rise to, forms the central subject matter of this thesis.

1.3 Organisational Theatre and its Polyphonic Interpretation

As one form of art-based intervention, organisational theatre has attracted the interest of theorists and practitioners, stimulating an extensive debate on its theoretical underpinnings and the character and impact of its methods when applied in organisations (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Gibb, 2004; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley, Taylor, & Houden, 2004; Schreyögg, 1999; Taylor, 2008). In particular, the links drawn between managerial organisational theatre and the radical Boalian *forum theatre* techniques, which organisational theatre researchers and practitioners began to see over the past decades, have stimulated heated discussions amongst organisational scholars (Beckwith, 2003; Boje & Larsen, 2006; Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Coopey, 1998; Ferris, 2002; Gibb, 2004; Jagiello, 2007; Krüger, Blitz-Lindeque, Pickworth, Munro, & Lotriet, 2005; Meisiek, 2004; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Monks, Barker, & Mhanchacháin, 2001; Nissley et al., 2004). Many of the current debates in organisational theatre research circles around the nature, aims and effects of using Boalian *forum theatre* techniques in working organisations and whether or not these are able to realise Boal's original purpose of recognising diverse and repressed voices.

Augusto Boal developed *forum theatre* in a context and environment that was very far from its current use in organisational theatre in the West. Boal created forum theatre as one branch of his *Theatre of the Oppressed* - a 'theatre' which aimed to provide a platform for dialogue and an open space for surfacing, discussing and addressing repressed and, often silenced, fundamental social and political problems in Latin America (Boal, 1979/2000, 1995b). Boal sought, through theatre, to encourage greater consciousness, critical thinking, spontaneity and confidence amongst people repressed by authoritarian regimes. The 'catharsis' that *Theatre of the Oppressed* aspires to create is one that draws on action in theatre as a basis for stimulating action in real life. Through an active participation in the theatrical process, *Theatre of the Oppressed* aspires to give voice to those who do not have one, to stimulate self-consciousness and willingness to participate in democratic change and to overcome oppression and social injustice (Boal, 1979/2000).

Supporters of organisational theatre argue that Boal's forum theatre methods can be utilised to 'unfreeze' and engage participants in the organisational context. To them the

*looking glass*¹ like character of organisational theatre, which captures the shifting and unpredictable reflections that the method provides for the viewer during the event, can inspire polyphonic and antenarrativist conversations (Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyögg & Hopfl, 2004). Opponents, on the other hand, regard such interventions as, by and large, a travesty of Boal's original ideals - at best, mere entertainment and, at worst, yet another form of managerial control that channels and oppresses employees' thoughts in a way that distracts them from 'real issues' (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Nissley et al., 2004).

Drawing on and seeking to contribute to 'ambiguity' and 'fragmentation' perspectives on organisational culture (Martin, 2001; Meyerson, 1991; Meyerson & Martin, 1987), this thesis contends that the nature and impact of organisational theatre is ambiguous and multifaceted, influenced in its design and implementation by multivocal actions-in-context. Perspectives that view organisational theatre as controlled by either management or employees and as either managerial or liberating in its outcomes, are too simple and one-dimensional as a basis for either explanation or evaluation. Where this analysis involves an attempt to 'read' the nature and outcomes of organisational theatre from one-dimensional structural characteristics or normative frameworks, it is unable to capture and explore the implications of the multifaceted and fluid power dynamics within which organisational theatre takes place and which constitute its 'meaning'.

A number of previous studies focus on the degree to which organisational theatre fosters or constrains diversity and multivocality and refer to 'pluri-vocality' (Clark & Mangham, 2004b: 846, 847), 'multivocality' (Nissley et al., 2004: 833) and 'polyphony' (Meisiek & Barry, 2007: 5, 19). However, these studies only very briefly and schematically explore what this means as an explanatory or normative framework in the context of organisational theatre.

Within organisation studies more broadly, several theorists have, however, discussed the concept of polyphony as a metaphor or textual strategy for writing research narratives and for understanding organisational realities as sets of socially constructed verbal or textual systems (for example: Boje, 1995; Carter, Clegg, Hogan, & Kornberger, 2003; Clegg, Kornberger, Carter, & Rhodes, 2006a; Czarniawska, 1999b; Hazen, 1993; Hazen, 2011;

¹ Meisiek and Barry (2007) have introduced the concept of the '*looking glass*' as a metaphor to describe the emerging, shifting and unpredictable character and impact of organisational theatre interventions.

Kornberger, Clegg, & Carter, 2006; Letiche, 2010; Rhodes, 2001). One of the main objectives of this thesis is to use this more extensive and systematic outline of polyphony to help guide the study of organisational theatre, using polyphony as a metaphor to help capture not only the multivocal character of organisations and the diverse points of views that emerge during the process of organisational becoming (Andersen, 2003; Boje, 2002; Gergen & Whitney, 1996; Wertsch, 1991) but also the ways in which the orchestration of these voices may be characterised in normative terms as being more or less ‘harmonious’ and ‘expressive’ in their nature and outcomes.

In doing so, the thesis employs polyphony to explore the ‘explanatory’ and ‘normative’ dimensions in the micro rituals (Collins, 2004; Goffman, 1959) involved in the shaping of organisational theatre interventions. In this way, polyphony is used as an open, explanatory and evaluative framework to help illuminate the many ways in which agency and interpretation in context affect the evaluation of the character and potential of organisational theatre interventions.

1.4 The Case Study

In summary, the aim of this thesis is to understand how the inherently uncertain, multivocal and fluid character of organisational life influences and constitutes forum theatre as an organisational ‘phenomenon’. Drawing on a longitudinal case study of the design and implementation of organisational theatre at Platanus², the thesis describes and illustrates how the character and effects of organisational theatre cannot be straightjacketed into being either managerial or employee oriented (for example: Nissley et al., 2004). While acknowledging the extremely valuable contribution of previous studies, which had adopted and sought to elaborate such frameworks, this thesis attempts to build on and go beyond them by providing a more complex processual understanding of organisational theatre characteristics, processes and outcomes.

It has been frequently observed that current empirical studies of organisational theatre have been restricted by the absence of a longitudinal investigation of all stages of an

² The term ‘Platanus’ was used to find a fictional name for the case study site – the establishment of a world-class holistic, patient-centred cancer care facility – that captured its idealistic medical nature. Platanus was the name of the tree under which Hippocrates taught his pupils the art of medicine.

organisational theatre intervention, from pre-commissioning to follow-up (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Schreyögg, 2001). This thesis provides a case study, which captures all phases of the organisational theatre event in a longitudinal, processual and constructivist single-case investigation set in its situational and action context.

In undertaking and analysing this case, the thesis focuses in particular on:

- (i) the conditions *leading up to* and influencing the design of organisational theatre intervention studied;
- (ii) the processual dynamics *within* the performance that, combined with the way the theatre had been created, shaped its *situational character* and influenced its immediate impact; and
- (iii) the circumstances *following* the event that, combined with pre-event circumstances and the processual dynamics within the performance, affected its outcomes.

The organisational theatre intervention being studied took place as part of a leadership development program conducted at Platanus, a not-for-profit, public and benevolent cancer care organisation. The organisational theatre event was set up to support the organisation's executive team in bringing about a planned 'normative change' initiative to establish the patient-centred cancer care facility. Within this new facility, members of the organisation are expected to be fully engaged with the patient-centred vision and mission and to support the formal commitment to diversity and inclusiveness in health care and the creation of a multivocal culture and organisation.

The literature on 'normative' organisational change programs has revealed, however, that in seeking to impose such ideologies, many programs often end up repressing alternative voices in a way that undermines their ability to 'win the hearts and minds' of the spectrum of organisational members and harms their credibility and potential for success as a participatory social enterprise (Badham, Claydon, & Down, 2012a; Badham et al., 2003; Badham & Garrety, 2003).

Rather than creating consensus and unity around a single purpose, such 'normative' change programs often create ambivalence and ambiguity, as organisational members are both attracted to and repelled by the vision and are uncertain about the desirability and depth of the heralded transformation (Badham & McLoughlin, 2006; McLoughlin, Badham, & Palmer, 2005).

The use of organisational theatre at Platanus provided a valuable case study for exploring not only the multivocal character of the organisation but also the influence this multivocality has on the intervention. A particular focus of the thesis is on the manner in which organisational theatre and its impacts are:

- (a) shaped by a multiplicity of perspectives and interests, and
- (b) influential in creating a greater degree of expression and harmonisation of these voices.

The main contribution of the thesis lies, therefore, in three areas:

- (i) the provision of the first in-depth longitudinal case study of organisational theatre, capturing all phases of the organisational theatre process from its pre-commissioning to follow-up stages;
- (ii) its exploration of the multi-layered, ambiguous and fluid dynamics of organisational theatre, building theoretically and empirically on previous attempts to characterise and explore types of organisational theatre interventions in terms of the structural dimensions of management or employee control; and
- (iii) extending the theoretical analysis of organisational theatre by applying a more systematic and formalised notion of polyphony to the exploration and interpretation of the design, implementation and outcomes of organisational theatre events.

1.5 Thesis Structure

Following this introduction, Chapter Two of this thesis is a review of the research literature on organisational theatre as a change intervention. That chapter illuminates the key views within literature that support the exploratory research questions presented in the thesis and provides the context for defining its contribution to current research on organisational theatre. Further, the chapter details the links between the literature on organisational theatre and that of polyphony, setting up the analytical framework for this thesis.

Chapter Three offers a detailed overview of the research methodology employed to explore empirically the nature and impact of organisational theatre. In doing so, the

chapter reviews the methodological framework, case study and research methods, which form the basis of this thesis. It places the methodological framework in a social constructionist perspective and argues for the value of a constructivist grounded theory approach embedded in a longitudinal single-case study research.

Chapter Four presents a pilot study, which I conducted in the initial stages of my PhD research to obtain an early contextual understanding and sensitivity and enable me to then establish an effective research design and to develop my main case study. In the pilot study I reviewed the various perspectives on organisational theatre to get a better understanding of power dynamics and *looking glass* effects (Meisiek & Barry, 2007) in the creation of synoptic power (Clegg & Baumeler, 2010; Mathiesen, 1997). In doing so, the pilot study looked at the identity dynamics around an illustrative example of organisational theatre and led me to develop an understanding that exploring synoptic power provides an additional insight into the study of organisational theatre and its *looking glass* effects. While conducting the pilot study helped me to prototype methodology necessary for an in-depth analysis of the character and potential of organisational theatre interventions and revealed to me the limitations of viewing the shifting and complex character of organisational theatre events as an exercise in panoptic power, it was restricted by the limited data access of the pilot study. The thesis chapter presenting the pilot study was published as a co-authored chapter of a book.³

Chapters Five, Six and Seven document the main empirical findings and preliminary theoretical interpretations of the present case study investigation. They are presented as ‘stand alone’ academic papers in a ‘thesis-by-publication’ format. This has the advantage that each provides a self-contained treatment of the case study in a format suitable for journal publication. The disadvantage for the reader is that there is a degree of inevitable repetition of the theoretical underpinnings and methodological approach in each paper. These chapters do, however, facilitate a review of the quality of the potential near-term journal contributions made possible by the thesis-work. Initial drafts of these chapters were piloted as conference papers.³

Chapter Five details the conditions leading up to and influencing the organisational theatre intervention studied. The chapter explores the social and political interactions and

³ A list of the publications that were written during the course of the thesis and details about the individual contribution percentages is attached in Appendix A.

negotiations shaping the structure and conditions of the theatre event. It focuses in particular on the alignments and clashes between the different 'human resource' voices in defining the 'surface' formal purpose for the intervention and the embeddedness of such interactions and negotiations in 'deeper' cultural and social conditions. The chapter provides an empirical illustration of the shaping of an organisational theatre event and the ways in which it is influenced by a polyphonic multi-vocality and takes the form of selective and partial forms of harmonious expression in establishing meaningful cooperation. The chapter reveals the limitations of existing two-dimensional approaches to the meaning and purpose of organisational theatre and illustrates the manner in which polyphony can play out in organisations.

Chapter Six illuminates the processual dynamics within the performance that, combined with the way the theatre had been created, influenced its situational character and immediate impact. A particular focus is on an ironic *'Doctors on Top'* skit, improvised within the organisational theatre event. The paper explores how the creation and interpretation of this skit gave voice to the paradoxical tensions the executive team faced and the controversial expression of the views of the 'traditional physician' encountering the new 'patient-centred' rhetoric. The chapter highlights the situational complexities and challenges of 'working through' and, in particular, communicating paradox. It uses this as an illustration of the complicated processual dynamics and dangers involved in establishing a polyphonic discourse that surfaces and seeks to reconcile voices that are often repressed in normative cultural change programs. The chapter concludes that communicating paradox can be a dangerously rewarding game, a 'contact sport', as the communicator risks being perceived as liberal, open and communicative by some, while being judged and dismissed or condemned for committing 'sacrilege' by others.

Chapter Seven explores the circumstances following the organisational theatre event that, combined with pre-event circumstances and the processual dynamics within the performance, affected stakeholders' interpretations of its outcomes. A key element of this chapter is an exploration of the evolving understandings of the impact of organisational theatre and its potential as a translator or deconstruction giving expression to multiple voices and succeeding in 'harmonising' their expression. The paper suggests that while organisational theatre is able to provide multivocal and diverse debates and interpretations and allows for processes of translation, deconstruction and 'harmonisation' to occur, the

individual outcomes and effects of organisational theatre largely depend on participants' perceived power status within the organisation.

The conceptual and empirical findings are summarised in the concluding chapter, Chapter Nine, which further outlines the limitations of the study as well as avenues for future research on organisational theatre.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

*"I love this little world inside the thick walls of this playhouse ...
outside is the big world and sometimes the little world succeeds for a
moment in reflecting the big world so we can understand it better."*

Ingmar Bergman (in Shargel, 2007: 162) from
Fanny and Alexander

2.1 Introduction

This chapter details the body of literature relating to organisational theatre as a change intervention. In doing so, it will examine the main perspectives within the literature that have assisted in developing a set of tentative research questions and provided the context for extending current research. Further, the chapter seeks to illuminate the links between the literature on organisational theatre and that of polyphony to build an analytical framework for this study.

Social and economical changes over the last few decades have created a climate of uncertainty and constant change. As a response, organisations have sought new and innovative ways to encourage organisational development and facilitate necessary change. During this period organisations have witnessed the increasing use of artistic interventions to help support individual and organisational learning and change (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Berthoin-Antal, 2009, 2013; Biehl-Missal, 2011b; Darsø, 2004; Economist, 2011; Schiuma, 2011; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). Moving beyond using the arts for branding and communication purposes, organisations today also bring in artists to enhance organisational communication, employees' motivation and leadership skills and to help develop cultures of creativity and innovation. In support of such goals, the arts can change consciousness (Marcuse, 1978) and enhance participants' awareness of organisational issues and motivate reflection on these issues (Schein, 2001). For these reasons a multitude of art-

based methods are now applied in organisations to stimulate and enable richer learning experiences (Biehl-Missal, 2011b; Darsø, 2004; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009).

Barry and Meisiek (2010b) identify three workarts movements: art collection, artist-led intervention and artistic experimentation. As one particularly popular artist-led form, organisational theatre has sparked the interest of theorists and practitioners, prompting a debate on its theoretical underpinnings and on methodological considerations around its implementation. Over the past decade such interests have led to a significant body of organisational theatre research. The interest in the field has to date resulted in numerous articles in academic journals including *Organization Studies*, the *Journal of Management*, the *Journal of Management Inquiry*, the *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, special issues in *Organization Studies* (2004) and the *Journal of Organizational Change Management* (2001) and, for example, studies undertaken at *Creative Clash*, a research programme that has been funded with support from the European Commission.

Within this literature organisational theatre is generally understood as commissioned, custom-made performances staged by professional actors for a specific audience in an organisation that is facing a critical issue or problem that is dramatised in the performance. Problem situations can be diverse and include issues such as lack of motivation, resistance to change or communication challenges. While surfacing hidden, often alienating and confronting conflicts and challenging repressed or subconscious ideas, organisational theatre highlights and represents spectators' experiences and embodies them in a way that allows the audience to observe their own situation from the 'outside' (Meisiek, 2002a; Schreyögg, 1999, 2001; Taylor, 2008).

The literature search included research in academic journal articles and books, conference proceedings, PhD studies and reports written by practitioners. Practitioner publications were interesting and important as part of an assessment of the existing approaches, projects and fields but proved less reliable than other sources as the accounts were mainly based on anecdotal notes that remained largely impressionistic and were not sufficiently supported by critical evaluation and theoretical analysis.

The following chapter will canvas the literature and current debates related to organisational theatre studies. Prior to this review, however, this chapter introduces and overviews the literature on polyphony as a framework for helping to clarify and deepen the analysis of organisational theatre processes. The subsequent review of organisational

theatre research illuminates both the theoretical and methodological character of the method. In doing so, it highlights the links between the core elements of organisational theatre and its developed application in what is commonly termed *forum theatre*. The origins of forum theatre are analysed and explored as a theatrical technique designed to stimulate and encourage radical and democratic change in society. The transfer of this method to the organisational realm has caused heated debates and ongoing controversy on its theoretical underpinnings and methodological applications. While critics view the method as entertainment or as a form of managerial control, supporters argue for its potential to unfreeze and engage participants and to stimulate multivocal and antenarrativist conversations. Insofar as this debate is characterised in terms of whether organisational theatre is either managerial or employee oriented, this thesis argues the debate is limited and restricted in scope and ignores the insights of ‘ambiguity’ and ‘fragmentation’ perspectives. The latter emphasise the multifaceted, evolving, multivocal and ambiguous character of organisational life and culture – and hence organisational theatre - and argue that organisational members will always possess multiple and diverse meanings. In order to help capture this diversity and explore the political implications of organisational polysemy and multivocality, this chapter introduces and employs the literature on polyphony to help clarify and extend debates on the character and effects of organisational theatre.

2.2 Polyphony

Much of today’s disputes in organisational theatre research address the nature, aims and outcomes of the use of Boalian forum theatre techniques in working organisations and whether or not these are able to realise Boal’s original purpose of making recognition of diverse and repressed voices. Clark & Mangham (2004b) and Nissley et al. (2004), for example, view Boalian forum theatre as a potential enabler for multivocal discussions but argue that organisational theatre fails to realise such a purpose. In contrast, Meisiek and Barry (2007) perceive organisational theatre as an inherently shared and dialogical process, where multiple voices can find expression and where ownership, structure and content are collective (Meisiek & Barry, 2007).

In exploring the degree to which organisational theatre fosters or constrains diversity and multivocality, Clark & Mangham (2004b: 846, 847) refer to ‘pluri-vocality’ and Nissley et al. (2004: 833) to ‘multivocality’. Both, however, only very briefly explore the nature and

characteristics of this multitude of voices and stay open to how this could be managed. Meisiek and Barry (2007: 5, 19) directly refer to ‘polyphony’ but only address ‘descriptive’, multivocal elements of the polyphony concept. They remain unclear about polyphony’s ‘normative’ element: the realisation of ‘expressive’ and ‘harmonious’ modes of ‘handling’ this multivocality.

The issues that concern the ‘identification’ and ‘handling’ of such multivocality are, however, addressed in greater detail in the literature on polyphony in broader organisation studies. Within this literature, several theorists have discussed the concept of polyphony as a metaphor or textual strategy for writing research narratives and for understanding organisational realities as sets of socially constructed verbal or textual systems (for example: Boje, 1995; Carter et al., 2003; Clegg et al., 2006a; Czarniawska, 1999b; Hazen, 1993; Hazen, 2011; Kornberger et al., 2006; Letiche, 2010; Rhodes, 2001). The debate over the ability of the concept of polyphony to help capture and inform the consideration and handling of plural and diverse voices is what I will be canvassing in the discussion below.

2.2.1 The Origins of Polyphony

Organisational studies research often refers to Bakhtin’s work on dialogue and Dostoyevsky’s polyphonic novels as the origin or main inspiration for polyphony as a metaphor to describe organisational discourse and dialogue (Belova, King, & Sliwa, 2008; Hazen, 1993, 2011; Kornberger et al., 2006). The concept of polyphony, however, is originally derived from the field of musicology and is based on the tradition of polyphonic choirs and songs. In music, polyphony is created through multiple and independent melodic voices, text and rhythm. The choir or orchestra, however, does not consist of independent songs but is organised by the orientation of all members to one ‘lead voice’. The ‘lead voice’ in turn responds to the others’ interpretations and all musicians work cooperatively towards a polyphonic process (Andersen, 2003). It has been argued, however, that polyphony is more than just the development of monophonic singing but rather constitutes an essential part of the evolution of human language, speech and cognition (Jordania, 1989, 2006).

During the early 1900s, polyphony moved from music into the art of visual representation, primarily painting. While polyphonic music aimed for a diversity and multiplicity of voices, the visual arts searched for ways that could additionally break out from the linear

progression of time. Paul Klee, for example, suggested that polyphonic music could only to some extent eliminate the “banality of simple motion strikes”, which blur the boundary between yesterday and tomorrow (Klee & Klee, 1968: 374). He further argued that “polyphonic painting [is] superior to music in that, [t]here, the time element becomes a spatial element. The notion of simultaneity stands out even more richly” (Klee & Klee, 1968: 374).

Based on the musical concept of polyphony, Mikhail Bakhtin introduced the idea to literary and linguistic studies in his analysis of Dostoevsky’s work⁴. Bakhtin characterises Dostoevsky’s work as a composition of independent and equal voices, which are narrated in a way that allows the development of various views and characters, as well as allowing diverse interpretations free from the ideological position of the author (Bakhtin, 1978). To Bakhtin, Dostoevsky’s novels were structured polyphonically and involved a “multiplicity of independent and emergent voices and consciousness ... each with equal rights and its own world [which] combine, but do not merge, into the unity of an event” (Bakhtin, 1984/1965: 208).

Following this characterisation of Dostoevsky’s work, Bakhtin transferred these concepts into polyphonic linguistics to describe the multiplicity of statements and discourses represented by a single utterance (Andersen, 2003). As with the idea of a polyphonic orchestra or choir, the sender of the utterance, the ‘lead voice’, performs the double role of creating the voice while simultaneously constituting a part of the polyphonic creation. However, Bakhtin sees the difference to Saussure’s *parole* in that dialogue is always ‘coloured’ by the political restrictions individual speakers hold (Bakhtin, 1986; DeCock & Jeanes, 2006). Not all senders are free in their speech, so language needs to be understood as a game with a certain hierarchy between voices (Thomson, 1990). There are no neutral words or statements. They are “multiaccentual rather than frozen in meaning” (DeCock & Jeanes, 2006: 24) and need to be interpreted by considering their sender, their history and their setting. Individuals are interacting with each other through utterances and, through this, exchange their disparities in beliefs, values and viewpoints (Hazen, 2011). For Bakhtin, polyphony involves a ‘heteroglossia’ of diverse social groups and voices and is the ideal

⁴ Although Otto Ludwig had already discussed the idea of polyphonic novels in mid the 19th century, his work on the phenomena remained largely unrecognised (Wellek, R. 1980. Bakhtin's View of Dostoevsky: "Polyphony" and "Carnavalesque". *Dostoevsky Studies*, 1: 31-39.)

enabler for linguistic and scholarly movement, challenging any official language from dominating society and causing intellectual stagnation (Bakhtin, 1984/1965).

2.2.2 Polyphony in Organisation Studies

Bakhtin's notion of polyphony has been transferred to organisation studies as a metaphor for describing the social and linguistic character of organisational reality and textual strategies for writing of research narratives (Clegg et al., 2006a; Czarniawska, 1999b; DeCock & Jeanes, 2006; Hazen, 1993, 2011; Kornberger et al., 2006; Letiche, 2010).

Polyphonic narratives are seen as a valuable alternative to positivist discourse, which produced monological portrayals of phenomena, silenced the *Other* and disabled multivoiced and interactive knowledge creation (Hazen, 1993, 2011). Researchers aspired to create polyphonic narratives, which allow for various realities, approaches and perspectives to enable interaction and exchange and explore how their author, research subjects and readers relate to each other while communally creating meaning (Belova et al., 2008; Letiche, 2010; Spivak, 1999). The particular focus of this thesis is, however, not on producing or evaluating polyphonic narratives but on the use of polyphony as a metaphor to describe the multivocal character of organisations and the diverse points of views that emerge during the process of organisational becoming (Andersen, 2003; Boje, 2002; Gergen & Whitney, 1996; Wertsch, 1991) and the ways in which the orchestration of these voices are characterised as being more or less 'harmonious' and 'expressive'.

Within this view, polyphony is understood in two ways. Firstly, it is used as a 'description' of the multivocality inherent in organisations, in which concurrent and simultaneous dialogues coexist (Hazen, 1993). Secondly, polyphony is characterised in 'normative' terms, illuminating how organisations may be understood and analysed as 'expressive' and 'harmonious' in the way they handle and address this multivocality (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Clegg, Kornberger, & Rhodes, 2005; Kornberger et al., 2006). Both components view organisations as socially constructed linguistic systems and regard them as "multivoiced, intertextual, openended, upside down, [and] seemingly chaotic" entities (Hazen, 1993: 20).

'Descriptive' views of polyphony, for instance, assume that organisations are inherently multivocal and create their interpretations of reality through discursive practices (Foucault, 1972) and, in so doing, make sense of their experience (Carter et al., 2003; Clegg et al.,

2006a; Weick, 1995). This concept of polyphony as a metaphor for organisations caters to, or is at least compatible with, the post-structuralist assumption that organisations are multifaceted webs of sense-making, which are inherently pluralistic and cannot be exclusively dominated by one totalising voice. Within this view, interactions within, between and amongst groups and individuals in organisations are not linear and consistent but are characterised by discursive practices and power dynamics that are less authoritative but also liquid and diverse in their character (Clegg, 1989; Hazen, 1993).

Within this perspective, polyphonic organisations are defined by “harmony, dissonance, clash, counterpoint, silence, complex rhythms” (Hazen, 1993: 22), complex sets of discourses which (mostly) end in dissonance views on organisational reality (Clegg et al., 2006a; Kornberger et al., 2006; Weick, 1995). The expression and space for ‘voice’ is key in polyphony and refers not only to the literal meaning of the term, that of having a voice, but also to the metaphorical expression of one’s personality or worldview (Belova et al., 2008; Hazen, 1993). This, however, does not mean that meaningful dialogue necessarily takes place but rather suggests that organisations are segregated through diverse languages and logics and that organisational members can engage in dialogue with each other.

The ‘normative’ views of polyphony go beyond the mundane acceptance that multiple voices and viewpoints exist and argue for an acknowledgment and celebration of the inherent diversity, power dynamics and ongoing discourses that characterises the search for meaning by individuals and groups (Clegg et al., 2006a; Kornberger et al., 2006). In light of this, it is argued organisations should embrace diverse dialogues, seeking to recognise, support and stimulate difference and possibilities (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Clegg et al., 2005; Hazen, 1993). Referring to Freire’s (1970/1993/2009) argument that for learning to occur, it needs to be realised through dialogue, mutual exchange and the constant questioning of established categories, Hazen (1993, 2011) finds that allowing and considering many dialogues at the same time caters for the polyphonic character of organisations and lays the foundation for organisational learning and change. Within this view, inclusive learning and change enhances the understanding of the complexity of organisations, involves dialogues between individuals and groups and recognises and establishes an organisational reality without having to eliminate the differences that augment the richness of thought within an organisation (Hazen, 1993, 2011). In this way, organisational learning and organisational becoming are interrelated and form part of a process that lays the foundations for an expressive organisational existence (Clegg et al.,

2005; Hazen, 1993, 2011). Kornberger et al. (2006) comment, however, that the richness and diversity that polyphony recognises and supports also carries the risk of unstable foundations. If people cannot find agreement on an issue, disintegration and, to borrow from them, cacophony can follow. In contrast to cacophony, the 'normative' dimension of polyphony seeks to capture and support 'harmonious' and 'expressive' ways of 'managing' and 'addressing' organisational multivocality (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Clegg et al., 2005; Kornberger et al., 2006).

2.2.3 Responses and Critiques

The deployment of polyphony in organisation studies stimulated discussions about the applicability and realisation of polyphony as a metaphor for organisations. Critics question, for instance, the idea of polyphony itself, its potential to benefit organisational change, its manageability, as well as the vagueness of its interpretations and definitions in organisation studies (Clegg et al., 2006a; Czarniawska, 1999b; DeCock & Jeanes, 2006; Letiche, 2010; Parker, 2002).

Sullivan and McCarthy (2008), for example, perceive Hazen's (and others') view of polyphony as paradoxical, as vacillating between modern and postmodern assumptions. They argue that, while this view claims that polyphony assumes no privilege of one single authorial voice, it draws a clear picture of what the organisation should do, which is to celebrate democracy, diversity and openness (Sullivan & McCarthy, 2008).

One particular line of critique, focuses on polyphony's oxymoronic character, stemming from the notion that organisations are intrinsically polyphonic and that power plays are, while being present, dispersed amongst individuals and groups, rather than held in one socially created power structure (Carter et al., 2003; Clegg et al., 2006a; Hazen, 1993; Kornberger et al., 2006). Parker (2006), criticising the underlying concept of polyphony, questions why organisations should have a need to listen to oppressed voices in the first place if polyphony inherently shapes organisational reality and queries how silenced voices can exist if polyphony really is present.

This argument stems from the vagueness of some descriptions of polyphony. Hazen (1993: 21), for example, associates polyphony with the greater involvement of the excluded and silenced, thus leading to "sources of change, since they are different from the discourses of

power” but she leaves open how this change might be achieved or managed. The critique, however, fails to differentiate between the ‘descriptive’ and ‘normative’ dimensions of the concept of polyphony. While ‘descriptive’ dimensions of polyphony do point to the simultaneous existence of multivocal, diverse and conflicting discourses, its ‘normative’ dimensions direct our attention towards the extent to which this multivocality facilitates a process of ‘expression’ and ‘harmonisation’ by creating an effective and meaningful dialogue.

The challenge of ‘achieving’ and ‘managing’ such a ‘harmonisation’ lies in the ambiguity of sensibly deconstructing and translating diverse and multivocal organisational discourses of and between individuals (Kornberger et al., 2006). While referring to Lyotard’s *différend* (1988), Kornberger et al. (2006) illuminate the complexities of situations of conflict between parties that are impossible to resolve without repressing one of the involved parties, as no one *grand* rule can be applied to all parties. Viewing management as discursive practice, they perceive translating and deconstructing between language games divided by the *différend* as key in unsettling order and, through this, stimulating change. The process of ‘managing’ polyphony has to deconstruct realities, to translate differing voices and, in doing so, to construct bridges between diverse voices without generating a unified and suppressive language. Considering various realities, values and interpretations, the ‘translator’ has to ‘walk the tightrope’ of being the ‘author’ of a text that celebrates diversity and polyphony, whilst allowing multivocal discourse and interaction. The challenge of ‘walking this tightrope’ led Czarniawska (1999b) and Letiche (2010) to question whether polyphony is an adequate metaphor to describe organisational discourse as, in order to fulfil polyphonic criteria, multiple voices have to be deconstructed or translated by one author or ‘harmonised’ by one organisation, which is the opposite of polyphony.

2.2.4 Polyphony as a Framework

Despite the theoretical interest in the concept, polyphony has never attained more than a metaphorical status in organisation studies (Boje, 1995; Kornberger et al., 2006; Letiche, 2010). The complex issues and ‘descriptive’ and ‘normative’ meanings of polyphony have remained ambiguous and empirically underexplored. I argue in this chapter that the concept of polyphony can be valuably employed to support both a descriptive investigation of multivocality and a normative analysis and exploration of the ‘harmonious

expression’ of this multivocality in organisational theatre processes, without presupposing or prioritising the character of the voices under consideration or the desirability of specific types of harmony and expression.

While recognising the complexity of analysing the interactions between voice, power and domination, which can occur in explicit, coercive ways but also through unconscious means (Lukes, 2005), the thesis will employ the concept to explore both ‘descriptive’ and ‘normative’ dimensions of polyphony in the micro rituals (Collins, 2004; Goffman, 1959) involved in the negotiation and development of an organisational theatre process. In this way, the thesis will use the concept of polyphony as an open, explanatory and evaluative framework to help illuminate the multiple ways in which agency and interpretation in context affect the character, potential and evaluation of organisational theatre interventions.

The following pages outline the character and origin of existing debates over the nature and value of organisational theatre and the potential contribution of the polyphony to these debates.

2.3 Organisational Theatre or A Performance within a Performance

Interest in the use of theatre as a technology to address organisational issues has emerged over the last decade and has been growing continually since that time. Over the past decade, theatre has moved from being solely a ‘dramaturgical’ metaphor to analyse social and organisational life, to include its use as a resource and technology employed by organisations (Biehl-Missal, 2010; Clark, 2008; Meisiek, 2004, 2007; Taylor & Hansen, 2005). As Meisiek (2007: 174) explains,

“organisation[al] theatre (...) offers a perspective on organisations and theatre that play with the notions of Burke and Goffman. Countering theatre with theatre, it is the conscious use of theatrical techniques in organisations.”

The dramaturgical metaphor, motivated by Burke’s dramatism (1969) and Goffman’s work on dramaturgy (1959), has been used as a framework for organisational and social analysis for many years. While Burke’s dramatism views life and society *as if* it was theatre (Burke, 1969), Goffman argues for an alternative, metaphorical perspective in which life and society can be analysed as *being like* theatre (Goffman, 1959). The majority of organisational literature has, however, drawn on Goffman’s dramaturgy (Clark, 2008) and, although Burke’s work has been influential, it has been widely underused (Kahneman, 2003;

Mangham & Overington, 1983). Clark (2008: 401), for instance, observes that the preference in organisation studies to draw on Goffman's dramaturgical framework has failed to explore sufficiently the insight "that life is not like theatre, but that it is theatre".

Over the past years, however, there has been an increase in management activities and literature exploring organisations as art rather than science, indicating a 'performative turn' in organisation studies as well as organisations themselves (Clark, 2008; Mangham, 1990, 2001; Mangham & Overington, 1987; Pine & Gilmour, 1999). This has sparked a significant amount of curiosity in the ways in which organisations can learn from the arts (Biehl-Missal, 2010; Meisiek & Hatch, 2008; Nissley et al., 2004; Taylor & Hansen, 2005). This movement initially led organisations and researchers to focus on how to use performative techniques to create positive experiences and images for customers (for example: Bell, 1987) but has, over the past years, led organisations to an exploration and deployment of theatre as a method to influence, engage and manage members of organisations at all levels (Clark, 2008; Nissley et al., 2004; Schreyögg & Hopfl, 2004).

The application of theatrical techniques in organisations has taken many forms. The method has, for example, been used as a 'resource' where readings and performances of mainly Shakespearian plays, are selected to inspire employees into alternative ways of thinking and new perspectives of the organisation (for example: Augustine & Adelman, 1999; Corrigan, 2000; Mangham, 2001; Oliver, 2001; Whitney & Packer, 2000). Further, performative techniques have been utilised in so called corporate theatre initiatives such as spectacular events at annual meetings but they are also utilised in staff cabarets, role playing at Christmas parties (Rosen, 1988) and the use of corporate comedians (Westwood, 2004). While all approaches share the underlying idea that theatre can be employed to encourage and stimulate employees' willingness to change attitudes and behaviours and so deserve attention, this thesis is particularly interested in the use of theatre performances as an intervention to support organisational learning, development and change: the use commonly referred to as organisational theatre (Larsen, 2006a; Meisiek, 2002a; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyögg & Hopfl, 2004).

Schreyögg (2001) defined this form of organisational theatre as commissioned tailor-made and professionally staged plays, which are performed for a defined organisation or subgroup within an organisation dealing with a problem situation which hinders an aspirational organisational development. The piece reflects the organisation's problem situation and challenges the audience to reflect critically on underlying conflict, behaviours

and habits. The method aims to create a platform for dialogue and to confront the audience with an alternative perspective on their familiar problems. The replication of reality, its supporters argue, stimulates critical reflection through second-order-observation and, through this, the potential to foster a willingness to change behaviours and routines (Berthoin-Antal, 2013; Boje & Larsen, 2007; Darsø & al, 2006; Larsen, 2006a; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyögg, 2001; Schreyögg & Hopfl, 2004).

Schreyögg (1999: 5) explains that “organisational theatre aims at getting the audience deeply involved and confronting it with hidden conflicts, subconscious behavioural patterns or painful truth”. Referring to Luhman (1997), he contends that organisational theatre, if correctly executed, has the potential to stimulate a “splitting experience” by presenting reality in two parts: the “normal and common reality” and, at the same time, the reality as it is presented in the performance (Schreyögg, 2001: 12). The audience’s realisation of the mismatch between the two realities, so Schreyögg claims (2001: 12), will create discomfort, from which the audience will aspire to distance itself. This in turn increases their willingness to change their “habituated patterns of behaviour”.

Meisiek (2004) ties in Schreyögg’s (1999, 2001) argument but highlights the importance of a consideration of the emergent character of organisational theatre which unfolds during the event and over post-event stages. Referring to the notion of catharsis, he addresses the vagueness and obscurity of the term but argues that, when catharsis occurs through organisational theatre, it is potentially sparked by an emotional revelation that was stimulated during the performance and in reflection of it. Clark (2008) links such effects directly to the nature of organisational theatre and change inducing “liminal space” in which “theatre offers a particularly productive space for inducing some degree of nervous tension within those who attend that makes them more susceptible to change” (Clark, 2008: 402). Referring to Turner (1984), Clark elaborates that organisational theatre may be seen as a state of ‘betwixt and between’ which creates a liminality by allowing organisational members to “to see straight what has been built crooked” (Clark, 2008: 406). In such situations, people potentially perceive their identities and statuses as “temporarily undefined, beyond the normative social structure. This weakens them, since they have no rights over others. But it also liberates them from structural obligations” (Turner, 1982: 27). While Schreyögg (2001), Meisiek (2004) and Clark (2008) detail the potential effects of organisational theatre, they remain vague about exactly what such interventions involve.

Over the last years Schreyögg's definition of organisational theatre has been further extended (Larsen, 2005; Meisiek, 2002b; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Taylor, 2008). Meisiek and Barry (2007), for instance, draw on Schreyögg's (1999, 2001) general understanding of organisational theatre but add structural elements such as that organisational members should, ideally, be actively involved in a dialogical process of script writing and in the performance of the play. Their argument relates to a recent development in organisational theatre practice, the influence of so-called forum theatre methods, which were developed by Augusto Boal (Boal, 1979/2000).

Taylor and Hansen (2005) for example, argue for the examination of the *workarts* from an aesthetics perspective (see also: Biehl-Missal, 2011a; Lindstead & Höpfl, 2000; Strati, 1999). This perspective views the effect of arts-based interventions, such as organisational theatre, to reside in the aesthetic, to them the "sensually experienced" (Biehl-Missal, 2011a: 627) – an encounter where people's perceptions are created through multiple factors in a co-present situation where no one-to-one relationship between signified and signifier exists (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Biehl-Missal, 2011a; Schiuma, 2011; Taylor 2008; Taylor & Hansen, 2005). Contrary to intellectual forms, which represent conceptualised experience and rational or logical knowledge (Heron, 1992), artistic forms embody immediate sensual and tacit knowledge (Baumgarten, 1750/1936; Langer, 1942; Taylor, 2008). Organisational theatre is more than a cognitive message as it is performed and experienced in a co-present encounter – a point that theatre studies literature systematically highlights (Fischer-Lichte, 2005) and that are reflected in Boal's attempts to physically activate the audience his theatre methods (Boal, 1979/2000) (further elaborated in Chapter 2.5). These more recent explorations take the understanding of organisational theatre a step further, yet they also remain rather general about what this exactly implies.

If we link the idea of Boalian forum theatre to Schreyögg (2001), Meisiek (2004) and Clark's (2008) explorations, the 'discomfort' and 'willingness to change their habituated patterns of behaviour' can be seen as being created by demonstrating the gap between an 'official doctrine' and 'habituated forms of behaviour' grounded in this doctrine, as well as presenting the 'subordinate' or 'repressed' voices of those disadvantaged by this doctrine and habits. The change could therefore be achieved by showing the possibility of expressing repressed voices, being able to challenge 'formal doctrine' and 'established habits' and to create alternative and more desirable realities and patterns of behaviour (as further outlined below).

Forum theatre is now used as a common interventional form of organisational theatre and will, due to its importance, potential and controversial nature, be the central focus of this thesis.

2.4 Organisational Forum Theatre

Over the past decade authors of organisational studies have begun to see a link between organisational theatre and forum theatre techniques, which Brazilian playwright, educator and politician, Augusto Boal, developed as one branch of his *Theatre of the Oppressed* techniques. These researchers have looked at the use of Boalian methods as an interventional or didactic tool for organisational change in profit, not-for-profit, public and private organisations (Beckwith, 2003; Boje & Larsen, 2006; Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Coopey, 1998; Ferris, 2002; Gibb, 2004; Jagiello, 2007; Krüger et al., 2005; Meisiek, 2004; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Monks et al., 2001; Nissley et al., 2004).

It has been argued that Boalian forum theatre offers a particularly suitable instrument to playfully analyse organisational problems and issues given its dialogical character. The method, so its supporters argue, allows participants to express and critically reflect on covert desires and intentions by enacting these on stage and by engaging in an open, multivocal dialogue (Boje & Larsen, 2007; Hume, 1992; Meisiek, 2004; Ruping, 1993). In doing so, they argue, forum theatre can potentially encourage alternative ways of thinking, increase self-awareness, improve skills and in these ways offer a valuable intervention in working organisations facing change.

Meisiek and Barry (2007), for example, relate current organisational theatre practice directly to Boalian forum theatre and argue that the technique has the potential to stimulate change-related, multivocal dialogue and critical reflection on behaviours and organisational issues amongst individuals. Ferris (2002), Beirne and Knight (2007) continue this argument in viewing forum theatre as an appropriate tool for management education, organisational learning and the improvement of relationships and teamwork. Forum theatre is seen as having the potential to stimulate spontaneity, consciousness and willingness for change (Boje & Larsen, 2007), to encourage alternative ways of thinking and to develop skills to approach organisational problem solving in new ways (Beckwith, 2003). It is further argued that the techniques have the potential to stimulate self-efficacy, personal development and greater awareness of organisational and behavioural issues amongst participants and, as a

result, assist in the guidance and realisation of planned change (Carter, Badham, & Matula, 2011; Coopey, 1998; Monks et al., 2001).

2.5 Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed

The promise of Boalian forum theatre based on the methods outlined by Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* lies in its potential for initiating dialogue-encouraging, radicalising and change-provoking thought and action. These methods included: forum, image, newspaper, legislative theatre, invisible theatre and rainbow of desire techniques (Boal, 1979/2000).

Through these means, Boal aspired to engage participants in the theatrical process by inviting them to go beyond delegating power to scriptwriters and actors and to think and act for themselves. As Jackson put it in his translator's introduction for Boal's *Game for Actors and Non-Actors*,

“Theatre of the Oppressed is about acting rather than talking, questioning rather than giving answers, analysing rather than accepting.” (Boal, 1992: xxiv)

Boalian *Theatre of the Oppressed* aims to provide a platform for dialogue and an open space for surfacing, discussing and addressing repressed and, often silenced, social problems (Boal, 1995b). In doing so, it seeks to encourage greater consciousness, critical thinking, spontaneity and confidence (Beirne & Knight, 2007; Ferris, 2002; Meisiek & Barry, 2007). The ‘catharsis’ desired by Boal is one that draws on action in theatre as a basis for stimulating action in real life.

Boal founded the *Theatre of the Oppressed* techniques to create artistically innovative and politically radical theatre “for and about the oppressed” in order to assist in promoting both knowledge for change and to encourage democratic forms of interaction (Babbage, 2004: 21). Most of the techniques were developed in and for the political, social and economic circumstances during 20th century Brazil. They were created, in particular, when Boal and his colleagues were banned from official and conventional theatre due to their work against the political oppression during of the Brazilian military Junta (Boal, 1979/2000, 2001). As Boal described the context at the time:

“At the end of a show, actors prepare themselves for the applause. We prepared ourselves nervously for invasion.” (Boal, 2001: 268)

To Boal, traditional theatre is almost always in the hands of the elite ruling class, mirroring their ideas and visions of their world in a monological way, both victimising and passivizing the audience. To stop oppression and stimulate social change, Boal argued that theatre must leave room for critical discussion and dialogue (Boal, 1979/2000). Through the interventional character of his *Theatre of the Oppressed* techniques, Boal aspired to disrupt the code of non-interference and “coercive indoctrination” in traditional theatre (Boal, 1979/2000: 119). He distanced himself from theatre as a ‘presented product’ by opening the performance to the audience as a ‘negotiable process’. In doing so, forum theatre focused on the plight of, and sought to stimulate action for, the oppressed. Instead of presenting oppressive images of the world for observation, Boalian techniques sought to offer paths to abolish these images and substitute them with alternatives. Instead of creating silence and equilibrium, Boal aimed to create disequilibrium, in a forum without boundaries and without differences between actors and spectators. As he explains,

“In the beginning the theatre was the dithyrambic song: free people singing in the open air. The carnival. The feast. Later, the ruling classes took possession of the theatre and built their dividing walls. Firstly, they divided the people, separating actors from spectators: people who act and people who watch – the party is over! Secondly, among the actors, they separated the protagonists from the mass. The coercive indoctrination began! ... Now the oppressed people are liberated themselves and, once more, are making the theatre their own. The walls must be torn down. First, the spectator starts acting again Secondly, it is necessary to eliminate the private property of the characters by the individual actors.” (Boal, 1979/2000: 119)

In Boalian theatre, no one owns a role or a character and everyone is invited to intervene in the performance to reach another outcome. Rather than presenting fictitious action as replacing real action, *Theatre of the Oppressed* presents alternative ways for the audience to practise action to bring about the changes they aspire to (Boal, 1995a). Through the direct interaction of the audience, *Theatre of the Oppressed* aspires to give voice to those who normally do not have one, to stimulate self-consciousness and willingness to participate in democratic change and to overcome oppression and social injustice (Boal, 1979/2000). As Boal argued,

“The poetics of the oppressed is essentially the poetics of liberation: the spectator no longer delegates power to the characters either to think or to act in his place. The spectator frees himself; he thinks and acts for himself! Theatre is action! Perhaps the theatre is no revolutionary in itself; but have no doubts, it is a rehearsal of revolution.” (Boal, 1979/2000: 195)

To Boal, connecting the portrayed fiction with the audience's reality enables the creation of an *aesthetic space*, in which individuals are allowed to intervene or step back from a fictitious reality in order to raise consciousness and to start a dialogue (Boal, 1995b). The *aesthetic space*, incorporating all of the *Theatre of the Oppressed* techniques, is characterised by three specific but overlapping elements: plasticity, dichotomy and tele-microscopy (Boal, 1995b).

The first element, plasticity, involves drawing on memory and imagination by enabling the exploration of physical possibilities and liberating both memory and imagination in re-enactments and re-constructions of the past and the proposed future. As is possible in dreams, so Boal argues, theatre can and should create a space where old can play young, women can play men and tomorrow can be today. Plasticity makes it possible for individuals to project into and onto the subjective dimension of the *aesthetic space*, creating 'worlds' that do not, or do not yet, exist in reality (Boal, 1995b).

The second element, dichotomy is the simultaneous presence of fiction and reality in the *aesthetic space*. This property allows participants to enter the fictitious performance through entering the stage and changing the fiction. Temporarily, the fiction on stage exists but alongside the reality of being part of a theatrical performance (Boal, 1995b).

The third element, tele-microscopy, allows the participants to focus on certain aspects, zoom reality and fiction in and out and to observe themselves as acting in fiction and in reality at the same time (Boal, 1995b).

To Boal, the unity of the three properties of the *aesthetic space* can stimulate the willingness for change through allowing self-consciousness and stimulating critical reflection and conceiving and acting out possible, alternative future.

During his political exile from Brazil, Boal translated his *Theatre of the Oppressed* methods for use in Europe where he had encountered a very different form of oppression. While his previous work in South America was political and was based on the existence of more or less over-coercive repression experienced by repressed groups, he found the oppression in Europe to be more individual and covert (Babbage, 2004; Boal, 1995b). The physical dominance and oppression of the 'cops in the streets' of South America were replaced by internal and covertly acting 'cops in the head' in Europe (Boal, 1995b). While he previously focused on democratising people in society, Boal's aim now was to democratise an individual's participation in their therapy and to stimulate their willingness for personal and social change. He adapted his *Theatre of the Oppressed* techniques to this context and

acknowledged his new direction as therapeutic. As a result, Boal developed the so-called *Rainbow of Desire* techniques, which seek to encourage participants to contribute to a shared analytical process using words which also create images that display their concerns (Boal, 1995b). Boal's work in Europe was associated with Moreno's *Psychodrama*, which also analysed people's issues and concerns by dramatic action but a direct influence was never substantiated (Babbage, 2004).

2.5.1 Boalian Forum Theatre

As one particularly popular branch of the *Theatre of the Oppressed* techniques, forum theatre has sparked the interest of practitioners and organisational theatre researchers (Larsen, 2006b; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). It has been argued that forum theatre enables participants to engage playfully with organisational problems and to reflect critically on issues through open and multivocal dialogue (Boje & Larsen, 2007; Hume, 1992; Meisiek, 2004; Ruping, 1993).

In Boalian forum theatre (1979, 1995, 2000) actors perform a problem situation of oppression, which is then replayed with spontaneous interventions by the audience. The audience is in turn invited to intervene and address the problem scenario by replacing or directing the actors. To Boal, an active involvement of all stakeholders in the theatre process is key: everyone must be allowed to observe, act and intervene, all must be *spect-actors* (Boal, 1979/2000, 2006).

A significant element of forum theatre is the role of the Joker, the *difficultator*, who functions as a facilitator between the presented characters and participants. His task is to highlight the complexities of a given situation and to critically comment on the dialogue during the performance. The Joker must constantly intervene by offering alternative views and questions and maintain the attention and active involvement of all by reminding the *spect-actors* that, if they do not alter the play and therefore the world, no one else will do it for them (Boal, 1995a).

In forum theatre actors present an original scene. This must mirror at least one political or social inequality, which is preferably identified through a consultative process with the audience. The performance of the issue has to encourage the *spect-actors* to discuss communally the issue and to identify solutions and new ways to confront the oppression.

When the original scene is replayed, the actors keep to their vision of the world and maintain their attitude until a *spect-actor* interrupts and alters the character's behaviour. As long as no one intervenes and changes the performance, it will result in the same end. This, according to Boal (1995a), reflects the idea that society will not change until someone intervenes, which, in his view, radicalises the audience through experiencing that change can be achieved if wanted but only through action.

Boal (1995a) argues, however, that no *spect-actor* can be forced to intervene, as the preparation for action is already action. As soon as a *spect-actor* decides to alter the development of the play, the actors have to stop their performance and the scene will be re-played with the intervening audience member as protagonist. The substituted actor remains at the side of the scene, to coach and support the *spect-actor* and to correct him if his performance of a role appears to be going awry. The actors who are not replaced remain in character and continue to respond in an oppressive manner, exemplifying the complexities of disengaging from oppression for the intervening *spect-actor* and the audience. The challenge for the spect-actors is to enhance the scene and rewrite the script while considering the specific characteristics of each role and the limits of the situation. If the *spect-actor* gives in, an actor will take over his character again and the performance goes on to the original ending as long as no other *spect-actor* intervenes. If, however, a spect-actor is able to break the oppression played out in the scene, the actors will have to give in but can move on to new characters and show alternative ways of oppression, and so the performance goes on.

Through this active and dialogical process, Boal (1995a) explains, participants learn about the arsenal of oppressors and means of oppression and potential paths and strategies for removing oppression, thereby preparing them for real-life situations, as they act out in the theatre what could occur in reality.

2.5.2 Ideological Influences and Reception of Boalian Theatre

Boal was influenced by Stanislavski's focus on illuminating the complexity of an actor's inner life, as well as elements of Shakespearean theatre with its thought-provoking nature and its use of socially critical characters (Babbage, 2004). Boal's primary technical inspiration, however, appears to be Brecht's *Epic Theatre*, which Boal refers to regularly in his explorations (Boal, 1979/2000). Boal shared with Brecht the aim of encouraging a

willingness to participate in the process of change and was inspired by Brecht's anti-illusionist and critical production methods (Boal, 1979/2000, 1992).

Both Boal and Brecht believed that individuals who are equipped with adequate tools and voice could actively contribute to and participate in change. To support the process, they argued, the focus of the theatre must be the presentation and discussion of issues and solutions to conflicts created by the audience, rather than a cathartic performance by the actors working on the emotions of a passive audience (Boal, 1979/2000; Brecht, 1964). Through this process, individuals would be assisted to increase their self-awareness, to become conscious of possibilities in society, to deal critically with the choices available and to create 'qualitatively new' situations (Boal, 1979/2000; Brecht, 1964). While both Boal and Brecht seek to encourage a dialogue between the audience and the actors and for the breaking down of the *fourth wall*, Boal approached this differently from Brecht.

In contrast to Aristotle's theatre, in which spectators identify with the characters of the play, Brecht's theatre argued for a 'distancing' or 'alienation' of the audience from the performance, causing the so called *Verfremdungseffekt* (Esslin, 1983). Brecht asserts that by illuminating the artifice of the theatre with, for example, actors stepping out of their role and questioning their character's argument, the spectator no longer identifies with the character through emotional catharsis but communicates with the play through cognitive analysis (Brecht, 1964).

Influenced by Freire's belief in a dialogical and non-paternalistic dialogue between teacher and student (Freire, 1970/1993/2009), Boal (1979/2000) criticises Brechtian methods for ignoring the physical involvement of the spectators and seeks to take Brechtian 'distancing' one step further. Boal seeks to stimulate change by encouraging the audience to participate in an active, direct and two-sided dialogue and interaction (Boal, 1979/2000). In so doing, he links his work with Freire's method of transition. According to this method, student and teacher learn together and, in the case of Boalian theatre, the audience moves from being an object to becoming subject, a shift from spectator to *spect-actor*. Boal created the role of the *spect-actor* in order to help to give voice and self-consciousness to those who have been marginalised and, in doing so, radicalising their thoughts and actions, inspiring their interest in their broader culture and society and enhancing the ability, confidence and will to actively contribute in democratic change (Boal, 1979/2000).

Over the last few decades, Boal has become one of the most influential radical theatre practitioners and his methods have been employed in a variety of settings (Babbage, 2004; Cohen-Cruz & Schutzman, 2006; Jackson, 2007; Milling & Ley, 2001; Nicholson, 2005). Boal's methodology and, in particular the application of his techniques, has not remained uncontested. Critics argue that Boalian methods lack clarity and involve, sometimes, contentious statements and descriptions as in, for example, Boal's definition of oppression or the role of the Joker and his supposedly neutral yet also provocative character (Booton & Dwyer, 2006). The application and globalisation of Boalian method to first world problems – first invented to free the socially oppressed – has been criticised on several grounds and the transferability of a revolutionary and collective approach to individual needs has been questioned (Booton & Dwyer, 2006; Davis & O'Sullivan, 2000; Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994). In doing so, voices doubt the originality of Boal's ideas, as well as their theoretical underpinning, viewing parts of Boalian methodology as Brechtian, as rooted in American Theatre and contradicting Marxist assumptions (Davis & O'Sullivan, 2000; George, 1995).

While it has been argued that any critical approach to using Boalian techniques should accept that they are not grounded in a coherent, established and systematic theoretical foundation (Dwyer, 2004), supporters argue that this does not undermine its present value or prevent its further development.

2.6 Responses to Critiques of the Use of Forum Theatre by Management

Not unsurprisingly, the use of Boalian forum theatre in business organisations has been considered controversial (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Coopey, 1998; Ferris, 2002; Gibb, 2004; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). Some regard the method as having a dramatic radical potential enabling multivocality and celebrating diversity (Beckwith, 2003; Coopey, 1998), others condemn it for its insidious manipulative and repressing character (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Nissley et al., 2004), while a third group argues that its character and effects depend on the context and dynamics of an inherently emergent and unpredictable process (Beyes & Steyaert, 2006b; Biehl-Missal, 2011a; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyögg & Häpfl, 2004; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009).

2.6.1 Liberating or Oppressive?

Supporters of organisational forum theatre point to the method's ability to 'unfreeze' and engage participants through its liquid and *looking glass*-like character (Meisiek, 2004; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyögg & Hopfl, 2004). To them, forum theatre has the potential to enable critical self-reflection and to stimulate awareness, discussion and change (Beckwith, 2003; Coopey, 1998; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyögg, 2001) and, in its 'ideal' form, to improve relationships and power imbalances that can disrupt teamwork (Ferris, 2002; Monks et al., 2001).

Critics, on the contrary, regard the use of forum theatre in organisations as another form of managerial control (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Nissley et al., 2004) that undermines Boal's radical and liberating agenda, channelling and oppressing employees' thoughts in a way that distracts them from 'real issues' and as providing, at best, entertaining initiatives that allow a brief time for a carnival before reconfirming existing power relations (Clark & Mangham, 2004b).

Clark and Mangham (2004b), for instance, sparked a spirited debate about whether organisational theatre really can use Boalian forum theatre techniques and to what extent this has been realised. Witnessing a specific organisational forum theatre event, they conclude that, even though the play followed a broad Boalian outline in a number of key aspects, it was more a variation and a mixture of the original idea and a truncated version of Boalian forum theatre and therefore constitutes more of a "Theatre of the Oppressor" than the oppressed (Clark & Mangham, 2004b). Their key critique centres on the missing active dialogue – the involvement of the audience during the process of scripting and performing. That, to them, is a fundamental part of the interaction in Boalian forum theatre. Referring to Boal (1979/2000) and Coopey (1998), Clark and Mangham (2004b: 847) argue that forum theatre, in its ideal form, aspires to stimulate participants' development of a new understanding of issues "through episodes of mutual self-disclosure which serve as a vehicle for learning and building up trust, so that pluri-vocal rather than univocal understanding emerges". In contrast, they argue that in the forum theatre they observed, the definition of the problem was foisted upon the audience and that the actors cautiously narrowed the solutions instead of following Boal's call for 'disequilibrium' (Clark & Mangham, 2004b). Clark and Mangham also outline the impact of power and status, which influence the performance and its success. Following Perinbanayagam's (1991) argument that people are given a voice according to their status in an organisation and

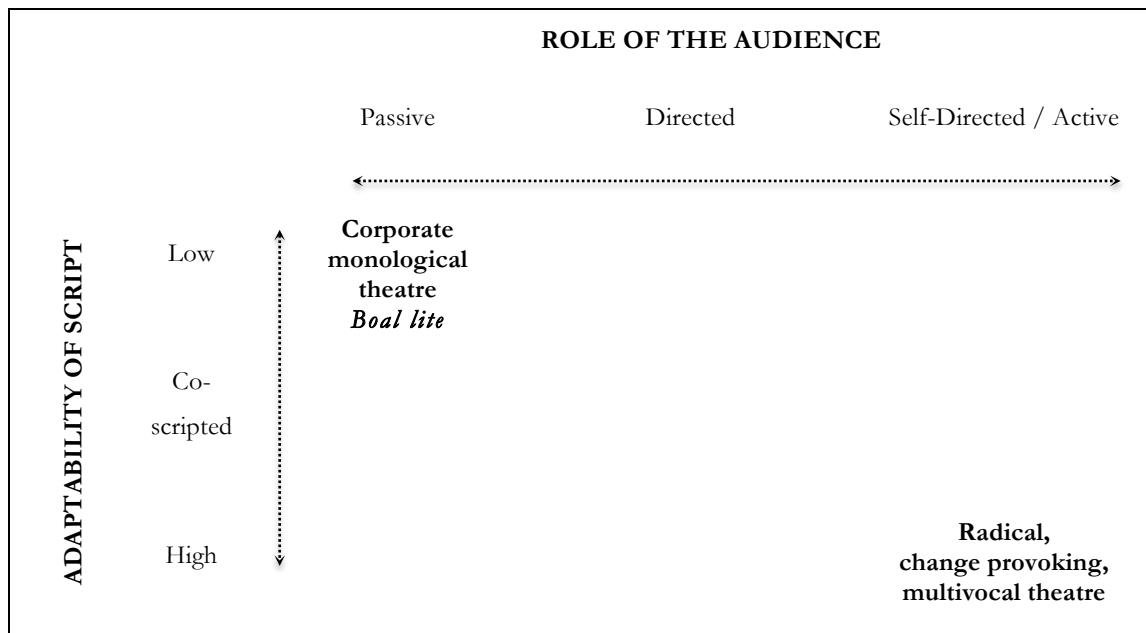
therefore could not talk without constraints and limitations – they argue that a key factor limiting the success of forum theatre was the existence of members of different status being involved. As a result, they see the play as a breach of the rules of Boalian forum theatre, question the application of Boalian methods in organisational theatre and describe the piece of forum theatre as “*Boal lite*” (Clark & Mangham, 2004b).

Nissley et al. (2004: 830) argue that “managers within the contracting organisations have acted as a ‘ruling class’ and have sought to take hold (that is, colonize) organisational theatre and use it as a tool for domination”. They offer an intellectual framework that they believe provides the basis for critical analysis of the politics of performance and the distribution of ‘voice’ in the phenomenon of theatre-based training and interventions in working organisations and enabling distinctions to be drawn between more Boal ‘lite’ and ‘heavy’ versions of forum theatre. Their framework focuses on the structure of organisational theatre interventions and the degree to which management or ‘workers’ control the *role* and the *script* (Nissley et al., 2004).

Their first focus is on the *control of the role* and concerns whether the role is played by a professional performer, an actor from the theatre company or by an organisational actor, which means a member from within the organisation in focus. They argue that when professional actors, who have been engaged by management, perform a play, the control of the event lies in the hands of the management and is therefore oppressing the ‘workers’. On the contrary, if the ‘workers’ are in control of the role, the performance is more ‘worker’-controlled and liberating (Nissley et al., 2004). Their second focus on the *control of the script* concentrates on whether the script is written by a professional writer who is a member of the theatre company or by an organisational actor from the organisation in focus. Their assumption is that the theatre company, when commissioned by management, will prepare a script that addresses the problems and reflects the assumptions and interests of management (Nissley et al., 2004).

Figure 1 presents these variables in a two-axes framework, a framework based on Nissley et al.’s (2004) framework, but which is also inspired by Schreyögg (2001) and Meisiek’s (2002a) explorations of organisational theatre, Clark and Mangham’s (2004b) critique on the potential of organisational forum theatre and Clark’s typology of organisational theatre (2008).

Figure 1: Typology of Forum Theatre in Organisations.



Based on Schreyögg (2001); Meisiek (2002); Nissley et al. (2004); Clark and Mangham (2004b); Clark (2008)

The interplay of these variables, however, and the power and politics involved at each stage of the play, cannot be classified this easily. Meisiek and Barry (2007), for example, argue that the power and politics involved at each stage of the intervention cannot be categorised that simply and must be grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the fluid, multi-staged nature of the phenomenon (Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyögg & Hopfl, 2004). Their argument interest and focus, was, however, mainly on the unpredictable nature of the performance itself, the character of which may be influenced by participants and facilitators through the course of the organisational theatre event in ways that were not planned or predicted by management or any actors prior to the event itself (Meisiek & Barry, 2007).

Drawing on Lewis Carrol's *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, Meisiek and Barry (2007) employ the metaphor of the *looking glass* to help capture the shifting and unpredictable reflections that organisational theatre provides for the viewer during the event. In their study of an organisational theatre production, they focused on the nature of such events as 'analogically mediated inquiry', arguing that artistic interpretations and interventions are particularly subject to multiple culturally mediated interpretations as they draw on and

embody “analogies [which] create shifting reflections that lead to unpredictably emergent changes in the way employees perceive their organisation” (Meisiek & Barry, 2007: 1806).

In addition, they argue, the unpredictable dynamics of organisational theatre events are not only due to their character as an analogically mediated ‘mirror’ but also its interaction with the event’s use of ‘windows’ and ‘passages’ – combining images of attractive and unattractive realities (‘mirrors’) with revelations of hidden and overlooked conditions or opportunities (‘windows’), and shifting understandings and actions by those participating in the performance (‘passages’). Drawing on this analysis, they argue that despite management’s attempt to control and portray the dynamics of organisational theatre as “tightly storied dialectics”, they are unable to control an inevitable degree of “polyphonic ante-narrativist conversation” (Meisiek & Barry, 2007: 1822). As a result, they argue, forum theatre is a vehicle (or at least a potential vehicle) for an increased moral and political co-existence of different and multiple voices. Through this, they contend, organisational forum theatre has the potential to create space for critical reflection on the organisation and discussion of organisational undiscussables stimulating alternative thinking that can potentially lead to changes in organisations’ theories in use (Argyris & Schön, 1974 in Meisiek & Barry, 2007).

In line with this, it has been argued that organisational theatre, as an arts-based intervention, resides in the aesthetic and is, contrary to cognitive forms, a performed *and* an experienced text (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Biehl-Missal, 2011a; Schiuma, 2011; Taylor 2008; Taylor & Hansen, 2005). Therefore organisational theatre can never be a one-to-one relationship between the signified and the signifier or disregarded through logical analysis as its ‘felt meaning’ (Courtney, 1995) implies an inherent subjectivity to the ways in which people produce meaning of organisational theatre (Taylor, 2008).

2.7 Limitations of Existing Organisational Theatre Research

The studies of Nissley et al.’ (2004), Schreyögg (2001), Meisiek (2002a), Clark and Mangham’s (2004b), and Clark (2008) have provided us with useful insights on the character and potential of organisational theatre. Yet they base their arguments on only structural aspects of the organisational theatre process and tend to overlook, or only marginally explore, the insight that organisational theatre interventions may, in varying degrees, have both types of effects - that of a managerially controlled tool or as an enabler

for stimulating dialogue and change - influenced by the specific context and multifaceted and fluid power dynamics within which they take place.

Meisiek and Barry (2007) provide an important counter-point, but their analysis also remains restricted by their rather broad focus on several performances and loose and general presentation of the issues and voices that are and can be expressed. While their discussion considers the influence of diversity and multivocality on interpretations of organisational theatre, their analysis of polyphony itself remains largely general and vague.

Those arguing for the consideration of the 'aesthetic experience' and the subjective interpretation and individual impact of organisational theatre consider the unpredictability and polyphonic character of the art form. However, their argument remains largely theoretical (Biehl-Missal, 2011a; Taylor, 2008; Taylor & Hansen, 2005). While aesthetics studies have recognized that social encounters comprise multifaceted aesthetic experiences (e.g. Böhme, 1993; Gumbrecht, 2004) they have mostly neglected to study organisational forum theatre interventions. The empirical investigation of the 'felt' experience of participants in organisational forum theatre is inherently complex and has so far only marginally been explored (Berthoin-Antal, 2013; Biehl-Missal, 2011a; Taylor, 2008).

In the following, I will detail and argue for the value of going beyond the *limited stage focus*, *limited content focus* and *limited process focus* of such studies.

2.7.1 Limited Stage Focus

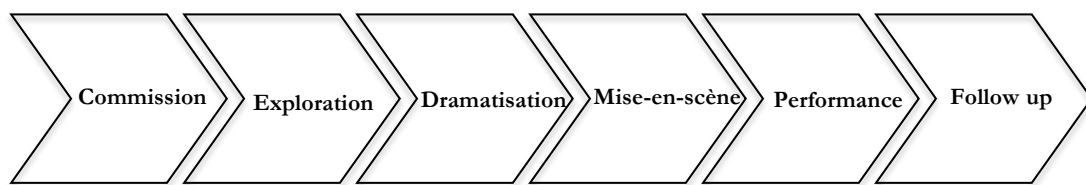
Most organisational theatre research studies focus only on one stage of the organisational theatre process, the performance itself, and fail to examine the multifaceted nature and effect of the full panoply of stages of the process of organisational theatre and its role in wider HR initiatives (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Schreyögg, 2001).

Clark and Mangham (2004b), for instance, based their analysis on one case study only and did not evaluate any stages other than the actual intervention. Nissley et al. (2004) analysed different organisational theatre productions but also focused their analysis of these on performance stages only. Taking it one step further, Meisiek and Barry (2007) considered some of the pre-event stages, the performance, as well as the post-performance stages of one theatre piece. However, they did not capture pre-commissioning phases of the

organisational theatre process or the broader change program, whose importance I will detail below.

Over ten years ago, Schreyögg (2001: 6) provided us with a linear “view on an idealtypical production process” (Figure 2) of organisational theatre, advocating the importance of exploring all stages of an organisational theatre intervention in-depth.

Figure 2: Activities of the Production Process of Organisational Theatre



(Schreyögg, 2001)

As indicated in Figure 2, an organisational theatre process involves, in Schreyögg’s (2001) view, six phases:

- **Commission:** The organisation enquires about the availability of theatre companies, broadly informs the company about the organisational issue to be addressed, the theatre company declines or agrees and, if the latter, both parties negotiate a contract;
- **Exploration:** The theatre company explores the ‘problem in question’ and underlying issues through methods such as ‘participant observations, interviews, critical incident or document analyses’ (Schreyögg, 2001: 7);
- **Dramatisation:** The script is written, either by the theatre company or together with members of the organisation, with the content of the script reflecting the issues uncovered during exploration phases;
- **Mise-en-Scène:** This phase includes casting and rehearsals that are coordinated by the theatre company in collaboration with the organisation in focus;

- **Performance:** Here Schreyögg refers to broader organisational theatre performances only, explaining that this phase involves a performance that is realised by professional actors. In forum theatre methods, however, professional actors begin the performance but are, in later stages, replaced by organisational members; and
- **Follow up:** The organisation in focus provides follow up processes that aim to further work and reflect on the ‘problem in focus’ (Schreyögg, 2001: 7).

Schreyögg’s framework provides a model that helps us to better understand the organisational theatre process and to consider stages beyond the performance itself. It, however, does not take into account the influence of the wider change initiative in which the theatrical event is embedded, nor the pre-commissioning stages, which lead up to a decision to stage an organisational theatre intervention in the first place. Both the broader program and the pre-commissioning stage may influence the structure and content orientation of the organisational theatre event and, therefore, require additional attention.

Further, the extent to which a linear, one-way model can really capture the process of an organisational theatre event remains questionable. Schreyögg’s model seems to reflect traditional process views, which characterise routes of managing, planning and change as following a linear sequence of phases from initiation to maturity. In this sense, it presumes the same sequence and development of all organisational theatre processes, neglecting that such projects may, depending on their circumstances, develop differently, while phases may be interchanged or skipped, etc.

In contrast, within contemporary organisational studies, processual analysis has led to change being viewed as a fluid and emergent process of becoming and action as both a sense-making activity and a complex and situated practice that does not mechanically progress but is constituted by the interactions of the stakeholders involved (Badham, Mead, & Antocopolou, 2012b; Burnes, 2011; McLoughlin et al., 2005). Moreover, to the degree that organisational theatre events involve diverse interests and multiple voices in a negotiated longitudinal process, it is likely that, in classical ‘garbage can’ fashion (March & Olsen, 1983), the attention, interests and perceptions of stakeholders may vary considerably at different stages and in the context of different circumstances. This thesis therefore argues that a more complete analysis demands a more longitudinal, processual

and constructivist focus on the dynamics of organisational theatre at all stages from pre-commissioning to follow-up, while setting this analysis in its situational and action context.

2.7.2 Limited Content Focus

In focusing on structural indicators of control over the role and the script, Nissley et al. (2004: 828), while referring to Barker (1993), question whether the ownership of the role or the script really gives control of the event to the 'worker' or whether they may be influenced by elements of 'concertive control', restricting the 'workers' liberty to raise their real concerns. They further acknowledge that, where management commissions the organisational theatre consultants to write the script, the script may be influenced by interviews with 'workers' during the script-writing phases, as well as the script-writers own sympathies, and may not merely represent management's interest.

In addition, it may be further argued that even when professional and commissioned actors act out the character roles in a theatre event, their performances may or may not reflect or represent the interests and interpretations of management or employees. Finally, the audience itself may also be more or less critical and sceptical towards what organisational theatre supporters describe as the method's desired content and outcomes, in a manner that is relatively independent of whether audience members are more or less actively involved in the performance or the writing of the script (Barker, 1993 in Nissley et al., 2004; Coopey, 1998).

For these reasons, an analysis of the multifaceted influences upon the characters and outcomes of organisational theatre events cannot be explained or evaluated simply in terms of a two-dimensional and merely structural framework. Further consideration needs to be given to the content of the script and the action, the multiplicity of local structural and broader contextual factors that influence the dynamics of action and the complex nature of the multiple and plural voices involved in (or excluded from) influencing the course of events.

2.7.3 Limited Process Focus

As observed by Meisiek and Barry (2007: 1805), one of the reasons commonly given for the use of organisational forum theatre is its “purported ability to reflect organisational life in familiar, peopled ways”, which can act as a springboard for organisational members to examine and reflect critically on their organisational and individual images (Meisiek & Hatch, 2008). From such a viewpoint, the method is characterised as a neutral mirror to help managers and employees see more clearly how they behave and use the insights gained to help them achieve their objectives. From the constructionist perspective adopted in this thesis, there can, however, be no such neutral reflective medium. Yet, all mirrors are cultural artefacts that give a particular slant to the image that they reflect or, rather, project - this occurs in the following two main ways.

Firstly, as a ‘cultural creation’, a mirror is an ‘embedded set of meanings’. As Gabriel (2005: 167) observes of the glass medium in general, while it does “allow light to pass through it, even as it reflects”, it also “distorts or refracts”. In a variation on the McLuhanesque cliché that the medium is the message, all forms of reflection, as with every cultural medium, provide their own slant on reality (Gabriel, 2005). In Goffman’s terms, what is culturally ‘given off’ is more than the simple reflection that it may appear or may be made to appear to ‘give’ (McLuhan, 1967/2001). We all have sufficient experience of distortions imposed by mirrors of varying kinds to grasp intuitively this feature of the metaphor. In the case of organisational theatre, while the play may be officially or deliberately scripted to reflect conditions in the organisation, the actors involved, the written script and the mise-en-scène all affect how these conditions will be represented. This is also no mere local artifice, for such filtering of reality is influenced, enabled and constrained by broader structures of symbolic signification and powerful controls over allowable means of communication.

Secondly, as a ‘cultural object’, the mirror and its reflections have a meaning that is mediated by the interpretations of the onlooking subject. Again, our common understanding of how people use mirrors to look for the image that they want, like Snow White’s Queen, reveals that people often see what they want to see. Those who use mirrors select which mirrors to use, what they see in these mirrors and how they view what they see. In common parlance, the view that the ‘camera never lies’ suggests that it constrains interpretation more than the direct use of mirrors. While cameras have their own influence and photos are also selectively interpreted, the very phrase points to the substantial interpretive flexibility that mirrors allow. This, again, makes the metaphor a

suitable one. In the case of organisational theatre, the interpretation of the play can be heavily influenced by the facilitator (or Joker) who, as artist, commissioned consultant and discursive-political actor, has the ability to impact or control the development and nature of the event and therefore its interpretations (Barry, 1994; Beirne & Knight, 2007; Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Schutzman, 2006). Of additional interest is the context in which the event is performed, the perspectives, power and influence of the participating audience, the informal commentaries on the formal ritual made before, during and after the performance, as well as the specific and peculiar dynamics of the inevitably situated local performance. The process is also influenced by the deliberate actions taken by those commissioning or delivering the performance or those subject to it, to influence the interpretation, outcome and follow-up on the events and interpretations as they occur.

In summary, the combination of such conditions mean that it will be difficult to 'read off' a simple purpose (e.g. 'managerial' or 'worker') from a one-dimensional set of structural conditions or assume that the contending purposes of different groups will be realised-in-context. It is arguable that the complexity of such issues are better captured by 'ambiguity' and 'fragmentation', rather than structural-differentiation, perspectives, that recognise and emphasise the multivocal, ambiguous, multifaceted, developing facets of organisational culture and life (Martin, 2001; Meyerson, 1991; Meyerson & Martin, 1987).

2.8 Summary and Conclusion

This literature review provided an overview of existing theories on the character and potential of organisational theatre interventions. The use of forum theatre methods in working organisations has caused heated and enduring debates on its underlying methodology and the applicability of these methods in working organisations. Much of this dispute centres around the nature, aims and outcomes of the use of Boalian forum theatre techniques in working organisations and whether or not Boalian forum theatre techniques are able to realise their once intended purpose to give recognition to diverse and repressed voices. While critics of organisational forum theatre have argued that it is of an inherently manipulative, even brainwashing and oppressing nature, supporters view the method as an useful tool to 'unfreeze' and engage participants in a multivocal, dialogical process and, through this, unearth organisational undiscussables and to stimulate individual and collective change.

Notwithstanding extensive debates and discussions on manipulating, liberating or change provoking criteria in assessing the character and potential of organisational theatre, current analysis remains largely theoretical, inconclusive and undetermined by empirical data (Berthoin-Antal, 2013; Clark, 2008) – particularly concerning the longitudinal stages of planning, implementing and following up on an intervention. To allow a deeper understanding of the potential of organisational theatre to give recognition to organisational voices and to promote organisational learning, development and change, this thesis has conducted an empirical study of the multivocal character of an organisational theatre process throughout all phases of the project.

In line with fragmentationist perspectives on organisations the case study will seek to illustrate that an organisational theatre process is affected by organisations' inherently uncertain, multivocal and fluid characters and that the character or effects of organisational theatre cannot be straightjacketed into being either managerial or employee oriented. This thesis therefore aims to go beyond existing one- or two-dimensional models explaining or evaluating organisational theatre, in order to incorporate a more complex and processual understanding of the influencing factors and political outcomes. In doing so, the thesis explores

- (i) the conditions *leading up to* and influencing the organisational theatre intervention studied,
- (ii) the processual dynamics *within* the performance that, combined with the way the theatre had been created, influenced its instant impact, and
- (iii) the circumstances *following* the event that, combined with pre event circumstances and the processual dynamics within the performance, affected its outcomes.

In guiding this investigation and to help move beyond the constraints of one-dimensional structural theories and evaluative schemas, the thesis will use polyphony as an open, explanatory and evaluative framework. In doing so, the thesis will focus on the manner and degree to which the organisational theatre event and its impacts can be, and were, seen as

- (a) shaped by a multiplicity of perspectives and interests and,
- (b) influential in creating a greater degree of expression and harmonisation of these voices.

Through a longitudinal empirical exploration of the nature and impact of organisational theatre, the thesis seeks to extend existing research in the field by contributing a detailed and in-depth study of organisational theatre's polyphonic character.

This page is intentionally left blank.

Methodological Framework, Research Design and Case Study Description

3.1 Introduction

This research empirically explores the nature and impact of organisational theatre. In doing so, it investigates the conditions leading to, the processual dynamics within and the circumstances following an organisational theatre event. A particular focus is on the manner and degree to which the organisational theatre process, development and interpretations were shaped and constructed by a diversity of perspectives and interests and how the intervention was influential in generating a greater degree of expression and harmonising a multiplicity of voices.

The first section of this chapter outlines the pilot study that was conducted at the beginning of the PhD study to gain a deeper understanding and awareness of the research phenomena and methodological choices. The second section presents the social constructionist perspective adopted in this thesis. More specifically, it will discuss the value of a social constructionist perspective in organisational theatre research and its link to the constructivist grounded theory approach embedded in a longitudinal, single-case study which is adopted in this thesis. It will further illuminate the ways in which such approaches and methods enable researchers to study the meaning of actions, situations and the process by which individuals construct the world through social interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999; Shotter, 1993). The second section portrays the case selection process and the research site, a newly established cancer clinic deploying a patient-centred, integrated treatment approach. This section provides a description of the organisation in focus within its situational and historical background. The third section details the data collection methods used, which include observation, interviews and document analysis. Both data collection and analysis were conducted using a constructivist

grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011). The last section will illuminate the data analysis process, exploring stages of coding, memo writing, theoretical sampling and draft writing.

3.2 Pilot Study

After I conducted an initial literature review of existing organisational theatre research, I decided to undertake a pilot study to develop a preliminary understanding in context, which would enable me to establish an effective research design and method.

From a contextual perspective, the purpose of the pilot study was to review existing perspectives on organisational theatre and to look at how concepts of power (for example: Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Nissley et al., 2004) and *looking glass* perspectives (Meisiek & Barry, 2007) played out in an organisational context. In doing so, the pilot study explored the concept of synoptic power (Mathiesen, 1997), which seemed (at the time of conducting the pilot study) a useful means to find out more about the nature and potential of organisational theatre.

From a methodological perspective, the aim of the pilot study was to provide me with a better understanding of the methods and was necessary for an in-depth analysis of the character and potential of organisational theatre interventions. The case and its analysis were tentative and exploratory in nature, with the data base being restricted to an interview with an organisational theatre consultant, a number of field notes that the consultant took while studying the organisation in his PhD study and a video recording of the organisational theatre performance.

The findings of this pilot indicated that an exploration of synoptic power allowed a new perspective on the *looking glass effect* and organisational theatre analysis, as analogous shifting reflections of organisational theatre make it nearly useless from a panoptic power perspective. These findings were, however, limited by the illustrative nature and limited data access of the pilot study. It remained, for example, unclear what conversations and issues emerged after the event and how these affected power relations in the organisation. Further, it stayed ambiguous how the organisational theatre was influenced by actions before the intervention, for example, who took part in designing its content and how was this in turn affected by stakeholders.

These findings led me back to earlier calls for a comprehensive study looking at all stages of an organisational theatre process (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Schreyögg, 2001), documenting the organisational theatre process from its pre-commissioning to its follow-up phases.

Further, while the example helped me to explore how some of the organisational identity dynamics around organisational theatre performances may be examined, I felt that the concept of synoptic power might not be adequate to capture the processual dynamics inherent in an organisational theatre production.

The pilot study resulted in a co-authored published book chapter⁵ which enabled me to not only practise writing up my findings but to reflect on and reconsider my early research ideas around power and *looking glass* concepts, to refine my research approach towards a more processual and constructivist perspective and to tailor my methods to this approach better. The resulting research method used in developing this thesis will be examined in the following pages.

3.3 Research Approach

This thesis conducts a study of the nature and impact of organisational theatre as an intervention in organisational change. It focuses on the impact of stakeholders' actions and stakeholders' interpretations in the different stages of the process of an organisational theatre event. The thesis is grounded in the assumption that the nature and outcomes of organisational theatre are influenced and constructed by individuals' actions-in-context undertaken at different stages of its development. The character of the research field, as well as the open nature of the research questions of this thesis, lend themselves to an interpretive epistemology.

The research seeks to illuminate stakeholders' actions and interpretations of the process of organisational theatre rather than offering a positivist evaluation of its effectiveness. The research approach adopted in this thesis is that of social constructionism, which supports a more in-depth understanding of how social organisation and human emotion are connected in the production of meaning. Social constructionism takes the position that

⁵ Publication details and information about the individual contribution percentages are attached in Appendix A.

knowledge and therefore reality is dependent on human actions being constructed within and from interactions amongst individuals and their world and it is then advanced and conveyed within a fundamentally social context (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999; Shotter, 1993).

My own beliefs accord with the philosophy of social constructionism but also, and more importantly, the social constructivist perspective suited to the nature of the research phenomenon in focus. The thesis argues that the process of organisational theatre is informed by stakeholders' interactions that shape and construct, in a communal process, the development of the enterprise. The character and impact of an organisational theatre event will be largely dependent on these manifold and multivocal interactions and interpretations that communally create sense and meaning. This research seeks to illuminate the manner in which stakeholders construct their social realities. In doing so, the thesis focuses on the ways in which knowledge is constructed and exchanged by individuals in interaction (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999).

While social constructionism has been interpreted in various ways, this thesis adopts the epistemological and ontological assumption that knowledge and meaning are constructed in specific situations and settings, therefore are not pre-defined by some priori truth, 'waiting' to be discovered (Czarniawska, 2001; Gergen, 1985). The focus of constructionist inquiry is therefore on processes and, in particular, on the social interactions, practices and languages that together constitute social action. The social constructionist belief is that individuals construct reality between each other through interactions in a mutual meaning building process (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This leads this thesis to an interpretive epistemology, which argues for the relevance of all human action and also highlights the importance of a recognition of multiple realities inherent in socially constructed interactions and an underlying relational ontology (Hosking & Bouwen, 2000). This assumes that "all social realities are interdependent or co-dependent constructions existing and known only in relation" (Hosking & Bouwen, 2000: 129).

In line with such arguments, the thesis recognises the researcher's role in the sensemaking process and the resulting need for self-awareness and reflexivity (Hosking & Bouwen, 2000: 127). The process of the development of an organisational theatre event is a collaborative, relational and negotiated enterprise, in which stakeholders communally construct situations and meaning (Hosking & Bouwen, 2000). Similarly, the researcher influences the meaning-making process during data collection and analysis through, for

instance, the research problems they address, the participants they choose or meet, the restrictions they encounter and the power relations inherently existent in researcher-researched relations – as well as the impact that the interactions between participants and the researcher and the research process itself have on participants' actions and interpretations (Hatch, 1996; Hosking & Bouwen, 2000). Rather than believing the researcher to be removed from the research, this thesis therefore acknowledges that the researcher inevitably constitutes an active part in the meaning-making process. This requires the researcher to consider and investigate their own meaning-making process and links between knowledge and power and the ways in which these influence the shaping of the knowledge claims the researcher is making (Burr, 1995; Charmaz, 2000; Czarniawska, 2001; Hatch, 1996). The researcher's observations always reflect a partial and limited truth as they are intrinsically influenced by both the researcher's lens, as well as the ways in which research participants present their 'stories' and 'performances' to the researcher. As observed in the *storytelling organisation* (Boje, 1991a, b, 1995), a researcher's observations reflect only fractional, situational and socially bound pictures of their own inevitably partial and selective stakeholders' culture, behaviours and interactions. Within such a constructivist process some voices will be heard, while others will be silenced (Hardy, 2001). The thesis therefore acknowledges that the data collection and analysis were part of a mutually influenced, fluid and changing process and that the construction of data and interpretations were both shaped by the dynamic character of organisations and research.

In line with the social constructionist idea that any process inevitably involves multiple realities and that there are multiply interpretations of those realities, this thesis does not intend to offer the one and only reality, nor are stakeholders' actions evaluated as accurate or inaccurate, right or wrong. Instead, the thesis illuminates stakeholders' interpretations of the organisational theatre process and their constructions of the meaning, which are inherently and always in interaction with existing and emerging social realities.

3.3.1 A Longitudinal Single-Case Study

A close analysis of social interaction is essential for studying and comprehending the process of actions, situations and the ways in which stakeholders construct reality through their interactions (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999), so this thesis uses a longitudinal single-case study approach. This thesis focuses on one research site to enable an in-depth exploration

of the process of how stakeholders negotiate, plan and realise an organisational theatre event. This supports the creation of a richer understanding and description of the social setting, its characteristics and meaning (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991).

The thesis acknowledges the advantages of multiple case studies as they provide the means to apply a theory amongst different cases and to observe and identify patterns and excluding coincidental links and relations (Eisenhardt, 1989). However, multiple case study research tends to neglect the rich background of the individual case (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). While they can offer partial insights and highlight relevant 'surface' issues, multiple case studies often miss implicit, tacit and less evident characteristics of the research phenomena (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). The single-case approach adopted in this thesis enabled me to study a deeper political (Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006b; Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998; Lukes, 2005; Zanko, Badham, Couchman, & Schubert, 2008) and processual (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) understanding of the inherently ambiguous (Martin & Meyerson, 1988) cultural pragmatics (Alexander, 2004) involved in the emergence of an organisational theatre event. Further, the longitudinal approach addresses the need, voiced by a number of organisational theatre theorists, for a comprehensive study looking at all stages of an organisational theatre process, (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Schreyögg, 2001), documenting the organisational theatre process from its pre-commissioning to its follow-up phases.

Of particular importance for the longitudinal single-case study approach is the social constructionist perspective that individuals (and the social researcher) consider, particularly in problematic situations, the perception of others in making sense of their world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). By closely observing how stakeholders develop and negotiate the process of facilitating an organisational theatre event, the in-depth approach supports the development of a deeper understanding of stakeholders' experiences by presenting the complexities of an organisational theatre process as it was 'lived' in the particular setting of the research site (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

3.3.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory Approach

To further support the analysis of the ways in which stakeholders negotiate and construct the process and development of an organisational theatre intervention, and in line with social constructionist perspectives on the mutual creation of meanings by those researched

and researchers, the thesis adopts a contemporary, constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011).

Grounded theory approaches encourage developing a theory that is derived from data and has been gathered in a systematic process of collection and analysis (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Glaser and Strauss (1967; 1965), who founded grounded theory, defined components of the method to rest on its continuous and simultaneous interplay between analysis and collection. This process, so they argue, generates a substantive theory from the data through processes of crosschecking, comparing and verifying similarities and differences in the emerging findings. Grounded theorists construct analytic codes and categories from the emerging data and not from preconceived and deductive hypotheses. Supported by memo writing and theoretical sampling the method aspires to advance theory development during the phases of data collection and analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; 1965). While grounded theory approaches may utilise diverse methods of data collection, the research process also involves verification of that data through ‘category saturation’. This requires remaining in the research field until no new evidence to support the theory development emerges.

Since founding ‘classic’ grounded theory together in 1967, Glaser and Strauss developed divergent interpretations of the approach. The differences are grounded in their divergent perspectives on the process of grounded theory and its epistemological underpinnings. Glaser (1978; 1992) remained consistent with his earlier understanding of grounded theory, arguing that grounded theory is a method of discovery, enabling a more creative, open and emergent approach to collecting and interpreting data. Strauss, together with Juliet M. Corbin (2007; 1990), focused more on verification and prescribed a much more ‘mechanical’ approach to the process of grounded theory. This led Glaser (1992) to criticise Strauss and Corbin’s methods for forcing data collection and analysis into predetermined interpretations which would deviate from the fundamental premise of grounded theory approaches (Charmaz, 2006). It has been argued that these differing interpretations were brought about by divergences in their epistemological perspectives, with Glaser arguing that grounded theory comprises only the inductive phase of analysis and Strauss and Corbin applying a ‘hypo-deductivism’ to their approach (Goulding, 2009). Despite Glaser’s criticism of Strauss and Corbin’s interpretations of and approaches to grounded theory research, the prevailing text of reference in organisational studies research is now Strauss and Corbin’s (2007; 1990). Both approaches have, however, been

acknowledged for their thoroughness and effectiveness in organisational research but have also been recognised as having sometimes positivistic assumptions that involve viewing research inquiry as detached from its social conditions and seeing the researcher as a neutral observer (Bryant, 2002, 2003; Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005).

Over the past decade, researchers have developed grounded theory away from the positivism of earlier perspectives (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), considering the specific social setting of the researcher, together with his/her role within a research site (Bryant, 2003; Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011; Clarke, 2005; Clarke, 2003). Such 'constructivist' grounded theory builds on grounded theorist bottom-up foundations, seeing theory derived from the data it represents and adopting methodological strategies of grounded theory as they were developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), such as simultaneous data collection and analysis, coding, comparative methods, memo writing and theoretical sampling.

Constructivist grounded theorists, however, view research data as socially and situational constructed, rather than as independent 'fact' passively waiting to be discovered and collected by the researcher (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011; Clarke, 2005). Constructivist grounded theory therefore adopts a reflexive perspective on the research process and its outcomes by considering not merely which, but also how, theories are developed in their contexts as situated in time, setting, relationships and culture (Bryant, 2002; Charmaz, 2000; Charmaz, 2006). Because they view 'facts' and values as intertwined, constructivist grounded theorists seek to become aware of their own priori assumptions and interpretations, as well as those of the research participants, to ascertain how these assumptions affected the data and research. A constructivist grounded theory approach, therefore, fits the methodological but also the theoretical perspective adopted in this thesis. The following pages will canvas the case study of this thesis and offer a detailed exploration of the methods applied in realising the grounded theory approach adopted in this thesis.

3.4 Research Site

Following the call for complete longitudinal studies that would evaluate all stages of an organisational theatre process from its pre-commissioning to its follow-up phases (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Schreyögg, 2001), my research interest was to find a research site

that would allow me to follow the development of an organisational theatre process from before the decision to conduct theatre as a change intervention had been made. This necessitated finding an organisation that was, firstly, facing organisational change, secondly, planning to conduct change interventions with their staff and, thirdly, not having yet made a decision to use theatre as a method. Furthermore, and crucial from an ethical perspective, the organisation had to agree to participate in a longitudinal study, which involved non-participant observation, interviews and documentary analysis during a time that was sensitive and vital for the organisation's establishment and development.

At the time of company sampling, my supervisor and a former PhD colleague were negotiating possible action-research collaborations (with the possibility of employing organisational theatre but without this as a focus or a remit) with Platanus, a cancer clinic that was planning to involve academic input in their change program. Knowing my interest in a longitudinal research site for a study of organisational theatre, my supervisor and colleague invited me to attend early negotiations with Platanus's HR Managers. After two meetings, the HR Managers agreed to a proposal that my role would be to document the process of their collaboration in a study and to provide interim feedback to inform the development of the program.

Platanus met my research site criteria as it was in the midst of change and planning to conduct development sessions for its staff. No decision had been made on the specific focus, format and methods of the intended change program, which enabled me to study early negotiations of the process and potentially the development of an organisational theatre event. From a researcher's perspective, the decision to commit to a site which would possibly not conduct an organisational theatre event and therefore not lead to the desired research output was, at best, venturous and, at worst, foolhardy. A backup 'worst-case' decision was made to refocus the thesis on the analysis of the process leading up to a decision not to use theatrical methods when this was later presented by the Academics, in the event that Platanus decided not to use theatrical methods in their change program. Much to my relief, this rather unsatisfactory refocusing of the thesis was not necessary and I was able to research the emergence and development of the organisational theatre enterprise from pre-contemplation stages to its follow-up phases – an identified empirical gap in the social studies of organisational theatre (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Meisiek & Barry, n.d.; Schreyögg, 2001).

3.4.1 Platanus

Platanus was founded in 2008 as a not-for-profit, public and benevolent organisation in a major cosmopolitan city of an OECD country. When opening as an operational entity in November 2013, it will be the country's largest cancer treatment and research facility providing integrated, world-class patient-centred cancer care. The organisation aspires to offer the latest research and technology, advanced medical treatment and complementary therapies, as well as emotional support for patients and their families, within a holistic patient-centric model of care. Platanus plans to combine all facets of clinical care: surgery, medical and radiation oncology, research, integrative medicine and support services for patients, their families and carers all under one roof to ensure better outcomes for people living with cancer. The clinic will treat both public and private patients and reinvest its income to innovate and improve its services. The organisation received \$160 million in funding from the country's Federal Government; in addition to the State Government providing the leasehold over the land on which Platanus's site was erected. All cancer services currently provided by the local public hospital's cancer clinic (PCC) will progressively transition during 2013 into Platanus, which will then become the provider of cancer services to the public hospital and the Local Health District (LHD).

Historical Setting

In the mid 1990s, medical professionals from PCC and members from the wider community (some of whom now serve on the Board at Platanus) enquired into the Federal Government's interest to support the establishment of an integrative cancer care facility at the local hospital. The idea of establishing an integrated cancer centre was based on the experience gained by PCC's key medical professionals during their time as visiting doctors in other OECD countries. The medical professionals were impressed by integrated models and felt inspired to improve the existing system in their home country.

In 2005, the group conducted a feasibility study to analyse and report on global integrated cancer centres and best practice models. One year later, two leading cancer specialists from the group presented the results of the study to the LHD proposing an integrated cancer facility. In 2006, one of these two leading specialists was diagnosed with cancer. He transformed his personal hardship into a national opportunity, using his experience as a

doctor and patient to lobby for an improvement of cancer care. His efforts were documented by a TV reality show and published in his biography.

In May 2007, the Federal Government pledged to support a joint venture between the PCC and Platanus with a \$10 million grant. One month later, the State Government committed \$1 million to the formulation of a business case for an integrated cancer centre at the local hospital. During the lead up to an election in 2007, both major political parties committed to support the construction of the facility with a \$50 million contribution and enabled the realisation of an integrated cancer care facility involving clinical care, research and education.

The Government's motivation to support Platanus was in part based on the recognition of the significant challenges that the country was facing in its healthcare system. Similar to other OECD countries these included:

- a growing and aging population;
- the increasing cost of healthcare due to complex and expensive treatment;
- the rising volume of chronic disease patients relative to acute care patients;
- greater focus on quality and safety;
- the necessity of an explicit goal to address health inequities; and
- an impetus to lower healthcare costs by focusing on prevention of chronic diseases (Anonymous, 2011a).

The rise in costs associated with each of these factors was, and is, driving a range of initiatives to make the country's healthcare system more sustainable, such as:

- improving efficiencies and productivity by leveraging investment in ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and better means of handling patient care and referral;
- improving payment incentives to providers that foster more competition, make greater use of outsourcing, create a greater choice for patients and establish opportunities for innovation in growing their bottom line;
- decreasing the duration of hospital stay and increasing the number of outpatients relative to inpatients and improving patient care coordination; and

- engaging citizens and consumers in reform of healthcare delivery (Anonymous, 2011b).

As a consequence, the Government decided to move in a new direction that would enable the system to be more efficient and productive. The micro economic reform policy favoured public/private collaborations in public hospitals, an increase in focus on preventative medicine and sustainable health education and more patient-centred care models - criteria that were all met by Platanus's plans.

In 2008, the two specialists presented the business case to the LHD, emphasising the importance of an integrated and multi-disciplinary cancer centre with patient treatment, research and education all located in one building. However, they were unable to reach an agreement with the LHD to proceed. As a consequence, the two specialists together with their team decided to create a private and benevolent, not-for-profit organisation independent from the LHD. After the decision was made, the business case was signed off and the name Platanus confirmed and, by the end of the year, the State Government announced their commitment to support the project.

In 2009, the cancer specialist, who was diagnosed with cancer two years earlier, passed away and was made an *Officer of the Order* posthumously by the Federal Government. In April 2009, the Federal Government announced an additional \$100 million in funding to build Platanus and preliminary works at the building site began in October 2009.

The first rounds of schematic design user groups and clinical leadership council meetings, initiated to draft and realise Platanus's model of care, were conducted in 2009 and 2010. Later in 2010 the planning approval for the building was received and in mid 2011 the LHD and Platanus signed an Affiliation Agreement.

In 2011, a local university signed an Affiliation Agreement with Platanus, excavation works on the building site were completed and first supporter surveys were distributed to further the development of Platanus's care model. At the same time, preliminary discussions about the integration of the academic consultants into Platanus's change program began and their role was subsequently defined as supporting Platanus's Senior Executive Team to facilitate the organisational change.

Platanus commenced communications with LHD's Executives and employee representatives of the PCC in early 2012. In 2012, patient advisory groups were established and Platanus's models of care were signed off by the LHD. Later that year

communications with future staff, then still employed at the PCC, were conducted and Platanus's vision and employment principles were presented to them. In late 2012, the Integrative Medicine Steering Committee held their first meeting and design workshop. Throughout 2012, Platanus initiated negotiations with unions and several significant fundraising events were held on site.

In 2013, Platanus finalised negotiations of its Employment Agreement with the LHD and focused on the clinical care model that built the foundation for the organisation's development. By mid 2013, an Allied Health Model and Integrative Medicine Business Plan were finalised. Later that year the construction site was completed and Platanus's administrative staff moved into the new building. Platanus will commence its services in November 2013.

Vision and Mission

When completed, Platanus envisions itself as an organisation committed to transforming cancer treatment by providing an environment thriving on discovery, research and uncompromising care. The organisation defined its mission as improving the quality of life for cancer patients, carers and their families by advancing the understanding, diagnosis, treatment, care, cure and prevention of cancer. The Senior Executive Team defined Platanus's core values as discovery, collaboration, respect, empowerment and nurture. The organisation's strategic goals are to:

- Grow evidenced based research programs and clinical trials that inspire hope and improve outcomes for cancer patients;
- Realise a financially viable and sustainable organisation and prioritise investment to maximise the facility's research, technology and workforce;
- Deliver excellence in health information management, enhancing the service, quality, treatment, support, research and education of patient centred care;
- Establish a reputation of excellence in integrated cancer care through regional partnerships, strategic relationships and community education; and

- Build a high performing culture, supporting and developing the people who work, volunteer and contribute to advancing Platanus's vision.' (Excerpt taken from Platanus's Strategic Model, December 2012)

The underlying idea is to provide integrated, patient-centred and holistic cancer care and to create a care model that enables multidisciplinary teams to work within flat hierarchies, where doctors, nurses and patients have a voice and where medical staff can provide excellence in care, research and education. Platanus aspires to integrate employees in the design and decision-making process of the organisation with the patient being the central focus of the system. The organisation's model of care for patients seeks to integrate traditional clinical care, research and education with evidence-based complementary therapies and other psychosocial and support services to provide a patient-centred, holistic approach to patients, their families and carers. Platanus is also pursuing plans to incorporate programs for volunteers and partners with community support services to ensure they provide a sanctuary of efficient, effective and affective care for cancer patients.

Platanus's Organisational Situation in 2011

When I began my research at Platanus in March 2011, the organisation employed thirty staff members managed by twelve members of the Senior Executive Team (see Appendix B: Organisation Chart Platanus's Executive Team). The remainder of the staff members primarily worked in the ICT, finance or marketing and fundraising Departments. When I finished my data collection in September 2012, communications with future staff, then still employed at the PCC, were conducted and Platanus's vision and employment principles presented to them. By the time this thesis was finalised in October 2013, the number of employees at Platanus increased tenfold to around 250 individuals, with the majority being former employees at the PCC who were offered positions and who had agreed to join Platanus. Platanus has offered staff currently employed at the PCC transfers into the new facility to become part of the Platanus organisation and the new culture.

The transition for PCC employees was not straightforward. The local hospital and the public health network employed those working for PCC and the LHD governed their employment conditions. To join Platanus, PCC employees had to end their contracts with the LHD and sign a new employment contract with Platanus. Existing entitlements for annual leave, sick pay, long service leave, parental leave, etc., would be either paid out by

the LHD or the obligations transferred to Platanus. A key condition for PCC employees agreeing to work at Platanus was that they would initially be employed under the same terms and conditions as they were subject to when working for the PCC. However, before the end of 2014, employees will be given the opportunity to vote for a change in their employee conditions to Platanus's enterprise agreement with more flexibility, greater productivity and higher rates of pay.

Further, PCC employees were under no obligation to end their employment with the public hospital and move to Platanus. Depending on their specific circumstances, they had the option of being re-employed at the public hospital or another facility within the LHD. Those choosing to join Platanus were required to indicate their commitment to embracing Platanus's vision and values and to commit to the new culture, which would include performance management, accountability and measures on the delivery of patient centred care.⁶

The Senior Executive Team

The transition of the employees was and is, at the time of writing, being managed by the Senior Executive Team, which consists of twelve individuals with multi-disciplinary backgrounds with career experience in the public as well as the private sector. Their key responsibilities are the organisation and management of Platanus, clinical operations, information technology, finance, human resources, fundraising, patient experience, marketing and communications and facility management (see Appendix B: Organisation Chart Platanus's Senior Executive Team).

During the time of the study, a key focus of the Executives was to

- negotiate the Service Level Agreement with the LHD,
- begin the communication process with PCC employees,
- finalise the organisational design and models of care,
- monitor the building construction,

⁶ This was to provide an important context for the organisational theatre event.

- design and implement an integrated IT system including a new electronic medical records system,
- initiate fundraising strategies and events,
- build their own personal capabilities through a transformational leadership program, and
- develop a strategy for managing change and the implementation of the vision.

To support the Senior Executive Team in managing the change, Platanus's HR Managers decided to build a leadership development program together with two Academic Consultants from a nearby university. An earlier attempt to address leadership issues at Platanus with a management consultancy was perceived as somewhat unsuccessful and left the Executives feeling sceptical towards change interventions. One of the two Academic Consultants knew Platanus's CEO from their MBA studies and through this connection the first contact between the Academics' university and Platanus was made.

In March 2011, a series of informal discussions between the HR Managers and the Academic Consultants began. These conversations eventually led to a general agreement to enter into a collaborative action-research project. The primary focus of the project was to explore the impact of a leadership development program on the capability of the leadership team to manage the transition process from the old to a new model of cancer care. My role was to accompany the leadership program to study the process leading up to (or, if no theatre was used, not leading up to) an organisational theatre event and its potential development.

In June 2011, a day-long workshop was held between the two HR Managers, the two Academic Consultants and Platanus's Communications and Marketing Manager. The aim of the workshop was to further focus the leadership development program by mapping out the change journey of Platanus. This included a 'gap analysis' of Platanus's present and aspired state and its underlying principles, a 'force field analysis' of driving and restraining forces and a provisional 'route map' of the organisation's progress through phases of 'unfreezing', 'moving' and 'refreezing'. During this session, a wide variety of forces – structural, technological, political and cultural – were identified as barriers to the final introduction of a patient-centred organisation, supported by a technologically sophisticated electronic medical records system and an organisational transformation from a traditional

hierarchical bureaucracy to an open, empowered, team-based approach to cancer care. The team also identified the primary importance in the early stages of addressing the ability of the Platanus leadership team to manage the external political factors hindering the ability of Platanus to initially attract PCC employees and have them work under new employment conditions. Following this meeting, an agreement between the HR Managers and the Academic Consultants was made to initially base the leadership program on *The Seven Metaphors of Leadership Transformation* themes⁷, which were developed by one of the Academic Consultants and one of his doctoral students (Fuda & Badham, 2011).

Leadership Development at Platanus

Between September 2011 and September 2012, the Executive Team attended seven leadership development workshops led by the Academics and external facilitators as part of their organisational change program.

During the first workshop in September 2011, an external facilitator de-briefed the results from the most recent Life Styles Inventory™ (LSI) undertaken by each Executive Team members to develop greater awareness of perceived leadership strengths and weaknesses. The second half of the workshop introduced the transformational leadership framework and built awareness of the challenges the team would face during the upcoming change journey.

In November 2011, the second workshop introduced the first two of the seven metaphors: *Fire* (burning personal ambition) and *Snowball* (mutual accountability) which were both linked to the differences between managing and leading change programs and in terms of the complex relationship with the LHD.

In December 2011, the third leadership workshop was held. This time the HR Managers invited two members of the Executive Team, the CEO and the Director of Medicine to co-facilitate the workshop with the two Academic Consultants. The content of the session was somewhat loosely set to focus on the 'big change issues' that would impact on current

⁷ The Seven Metaphors of Leadership Transformation are *Fire* (Personal burning ambition), *Snowball* (Mutual accountability), *Mask* (Revealing one's authentic self), *Movie* (Adjusting one's performance in real-time), *Coach* (Seeking honest feedback and support), *Master Chef* (Applying art to the science of leadership) and *Russian Dolls* (Interconnectedness).

employees at the PCC, in order to raise awareness amongst the Executive Team on how employees would perceive the change so as to address employee concerns. The workshop sparked discussions on the change management implications of the organisation's transition. These discussions led the Executives to a realisation that they were constrained from having these conversations due to restrictions of the LHD and also somewhat ill prepared for having informal conversations with current employees of PCC, whom they encountered on a daily basis around the Platanus and the PCC premises. The negotiations around how to address these issues led the Academic Consultants to recommend the use of organisational theatre as a means of practising how such conversations could be realised - a recommendation that was met with approval from the Executive Team.

In February 2012, the organisational theatre event was realised in a forum theatre format as the fourth workshop in the program. It aspired to focus on communication strategies with potential employees at the PCC.

The fifth leadership workshop was held in April 2012 and introduced the third metaphor (*Masks*). The purpose of the workshop was to assist the Executive Team to understand the importance of presenting authentically to PCC employees in informal and formal settings and to reflect proactively on its own behaviours.

In June 2012, the sixth leadership workshop used creative art techniques to address the fourth and fifth metaphors (*Movie* and *Coach*). The session was aimed at supporting the Executive Team to 'adjust their masks' in real time, to increase their capacity for self-awareness and to receive and provide constructive feedback from and to their colleagues at Platanus.

The seventh workshop in September 2012 was the last event I attended in my role as a PhD student. The session was designed to find common ground on what Platanus's operating model would look like on the opening day. This had been a source of tension and debate amongst the members of the Executive Team and the workshop was aimed at increasing the Executives' ability to learn to live with the strategic ambiguity paradox. In doing so, the workshop sought to bring differences and commonalities of Executives' interpretations of their vision and mission into open discussion.

After I had left the research site, the still ongoing leadership program integrated a new leadership assessment and development tool ("LMAP"), a 'Rehearse for Reality' session with the Theatre Company that facilitated the organisational theatre event, role reversal

and perspective shifting exercises and discussion forums focusing on surfacing and illuminating the Executives' competing commitments which were hindering them from realising the aspired changes.

3.5 Data Collection

The data collection began in March 2011 when the first meetings were held between Platanus's HR Managers and the Academic Consultants to negotiate the content and orientation of the leadership development program at Platanus. In September 2012, I exited the field six months after the organisational theatre event was held in February 2012 (see Appendix C: Case Study Overview and Timeline).

The underlying epistemological and ontological viewpoints of this thesis led me to conduct an intrinsic, qualitative and longitudinal approach to data collection. The data is therefore derived from a variety of methods of collection. Each method offered a certain perspective on the research phenomena and enabled me to act - to borrow from Denzin and Lincoln - as an "interpretive bricoleur" and to gather and bring together the diverse findings to provide a richer understanding of the research problem under investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 5; Silverman, 2007).

To capture the ongoing negotiation, interpretation and development of the organisational theatre event throughout all phases of its process, I collected data by observing participants in meetings between the involved parties (Platanus, the Academic Consultants and the Theatre Company). I took notes of my observations and analysed documents, such as emails, minutes and my notes throughout the case study. To further deepen my understanding of the dynamics of the process, I conducted three sets of formal, open-ended and semi-structured interviews with the three sets of parties involved during pre- and post-intervention stages. Appendix D outlines the data collection elements of this research project. Following a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011), my data collection (and analysis) was characterised by constantly visiting data and reflecting on emerging themes and I therefore had to adapt the particular focus of my methods according to the emergent nature of the data throughout my case study, which I will canvas in the following pages.

3.5.1 Ethical Considerations

Before starting the data collection, I liaised with the ethics committee to consider ethical problems that might arise when conducting studies in the field so as to best avoid these (Silverman, 2010). Part of this involved a formal ethics approval (see Appendix E: Ethics Approval). My ethics application addressed the assessment of possible merits and risks to the research participants. In doing so, it considered how to best manage the process of obtaining informed consent as well as the protection of research participants, their anonymity and the confidentiality of the data. To conduct my case study I initially requested and received ethics approval to:

- observe research participants during the process of the organisational theatre event,
- conduct pre- and post-intervention interviews with research participants, and
- observe the forum theatre intervention.

Due to the development of the project, I sought an amendment of my ethics application, which included

- an amendment of Research Plan and Method: Video and audio recording of the forum theatre intervention⁸, and
- an amendment of proposed completion date from 25 January to 30 June 2012⁹.

At the beginning of the research process, I enquired about Platanus's and the Theatre Company's willingness to participate in the case study and obtained their permission to contact employees to ask for their willingness to participate. After being granted access, I sought the direct permission of participants by discussing the consents I was seeking with them and talking them through the consent forms. These forms advised participants about the broad orientation and character of the research and highlighted that their participation in the case study was entirely voluntary. Further, the documents explained how video and audio recording would be handled, stored and used. Participants were informed that the recorded data would be transcribed afterwards and only used for analysis of the case.

⁸ Eventually Platanus's HR Managers decided to refrain from video-recording the forum theatre event, as they felt that this might potentially threaten the success of the event and intimidate participants. The event was therefore solely audio-recorded and observed.

⁹ I initially planned to conduct the case study for one year but, due to the development of the process, I decided to extend this period to eighteen months.

Further, it guaranteed that all names in the data were number-coded during the data collection, that the data was anonymously recoded after the interventions and that neither name nor original number could be linked back to the data. For the purpose of publishing or presenting, pseudonyms would be used for all names (of the host/client company, the theatre company, as well as from all other participants) and that no information would be published that may reveal the identity of the participants.

Although the risk of the research has been classified as insignificant, all participants were informed that Professor Francis Buttle, Doctoral Program Supervisor at MGSM, would be available to address any difficulties participants might experience during the research study. I provided the participants with his contact details and highlighted his independence at the beginning of the case study.

3.5.2 Observation

As a key tool of my investigation, I used overt non-participant observation as one key research method (Dawson, 1997). In doing so, I observed meetings of and between Platanus's HR Managers, the Executive Team, the Academic Consultants and the Theatre Company during the course of the case study. I audio-recorded the meetings, took notes during meetings and wrote memos immediately after these meetings. I also conducted informal interviews with the Academic Consultants seeking their thoughts on some of the incidents that occurred. During later stages of the case study, I transcribed parts of the meetings to further clarify emerging issues and themes. I also observed workshops that were part of the leadership initiative (one pre-event, the intervention itself and three following workshops). I took notes and audio-recorded the sessions and transcribed audio recordings of three of the five workshops. I was not granted access to the first and second leadership workshops but conducted informal follow-up interviews with the two Academic Consultants and the HR Managers to capture their interpretations of the sessions. To further deepen my understanding of the actors involved, their cultural norms, customs and behaviours, I collected data from informal conversations and personal accounts throughout the case study, which I captured in diary-type notes.

Through my observations, I was hoping to gain a better understanding of the processes involved in an organisational theatre enterprise and to observe how stakeholders made sense of the development of the intervention and how this interpretation was linked to

their 'lifeworld'. Given the constructivist grounded theory approach of this thesis, my initial observations were guided by rather elementary and open questions such as: What are the basic social processes involved in negotiating the content of a change program and, in particular, an organisational theatre event? (Based on: Charmaz, 2006).

During later stages of the research process, I began to refine my questions by linking them to existing debates in the literature and, more importantly, to my observations during the initial stages. I then began to focus on issues that would address questions such as

- Who participates in these negotiations?
- How do stakeholders interpret the process? What is important to them? How is that important to others?
- How are stakeholders' interactions characterised?
- Who exerts control over the process and decisions that are made?

During the data collection, I followed the data and themes that emerged from the collection and interim analysis. As a result, the questions guiding my observations became increasingly defined and specific. In later stages I focused my observations on questions such as

- How do stakeholders interpret the purpose and the outcome of the organisational theatre?
- What do stakeholders remember from the organisational theatre event and why do they remember specific incidents?

While conducting my observations, I aspired to observe and obtain the stakeholders' viewpoints and the social processes involved in the development of an organisational theatre event throughout pre-event, event and post-event stages. The process, however, raised issues of representation as I am, as a researcher, PhD student, woman, etc., inevitably adopting a certain lens (Banister, Burnham, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994; DiDomenico & Phillips, 2010). Therefore, the thesis acknowledges that my observations were, intentionally and unintentionally, guided by my particular viewpoint and influenced by what and when to observe, document or analyse.

During my observations it was essential to build trust with research participants to enable access to a research site in which I was external during a time that was crucial for the

organisation's establishment. While I was granted access on many occasions, there were some events to which I was either denied access or was unable to attend due to other commitments, adding to the partial character of the 'picture' I was able to gain. I was, as mentioned above, not granted access to the first two leadership workshops, as the HR Managers preferred the Executives to 'ease into' the new program and felt that my attendance could potentially distract the Executives from the content of the sessions.

Additionally, what research participants presented to me was influenced by their perceptions of what stories or performances should be shared in certain situations with me and which other stakeholders should be present. For example, research participants were aware of the focus of my PhD research on organisational theatre, which may have focused their responses accordingly. Further, in most group settings such as workshops or meetings, at least one HR Manager was present and therefore potentially influencing the willingness of research participants to, for instance, criticise the overall leadership program, which had been initiated by the HR Managers.

I found it at times challenging to handle situations in which research participants asked me to share my opinions and thoughts on particular issues. I was aware that I was 'part of the process' and that I could never really be a 'neutral' fly on the wall, yet I struggled with walking the tightrope of being polite and constructive while seeking to minimise the impact of my presence to avoid unnecessary colouring of the data.

My observations therefore reflected a partial and limited truth as they were influenced by two primary phenomena. Firstly, my lens or lenses, through which I looked at the data were inevitably coloured by, for instance, my knowledge of existing organisational theatre research and the method's debated potential. Secondly, the ways in which research participants presented 'stories' and 'performances' to me were influenced by participant-researcher and participant-participant relations and situational conditions. As outlined earlier in connection with concepts of the *storytelling organisation* (Boje, 1991a, b, 1995), my observations reflected a fractional, situational and socially bound picture of stakeholders' organisational culture, behaviours, and interactions. Each performance or story I observed was part of a fluid and changing process, constructing data and interpretations that were shaped by the dynamic character of the diverse understandings existing in organisations and research.

3.5.3 Interviews

To further support the depths of the data collection, I conducted three sets of formal, open-ended and semi-structured interviews with the research participants (see Table 1: Interview Schedule).

One week prior to the organisational theatre event, I interviewed the HR Managers, the Academic Consultants, two members of the Theatre Company and three members of the Senior Executive Team in pre-intervention interviews of about half an hour. These interviews aimed to identify interviewees' general motivations to join the organisation and/or support the change process, their understanding of their roles in this process and their interpretation of the purpose of the upcoming organisational theatre event (see Appendix F: Pre-event Interview Questions).

Two weeks after the theatre event, I interviewed these parties and all remaining Executives. In this first set of post-event interviews of about half an hour each, I sought to ascertain more about how the stakeholders generally interpreted the outcome of the intervention and which issues they identified during the organisational theatre event (see Appendix G: Post-event Interview Questions Set 1).

The second set of post-event interviews was conducted with the two HR Managers, ten Executives and one of the Academic Consultants four months after the intervention. When revisiting the interviewees, I followed up on what interviewees had described as outcomes and identified issues in the first set of interviews to test and supplement my findings (see Appendix H: Post-Event Interview Questions Set 2). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

By conducting these interviews at different stages of the process, I was hoping to explore personal insights and participants' perceptions, views and interpretations of the world to gain a deeper understanding of how these informed their actions over time (Charmaz, 1991; Czarniawska, 1999a).

Prior to each set of interviews, I developed questions that were prompted by interim findings that had emerged during my observations. During pre-event stages, for example, it seemed that among the stakeholders', interpretations of what the formal purpose of the organisational theatre event would look like diverged. Based on these findings from observing meetings and analysing emails, I drafted post-event interview questions that

would allow me to further deepen my understanding of the data and to confirm or refute earlier observations.

I drafted the questions using a language I felt was appropriate for my audience and that was free of academic jargon. I started the interviews in a rather open manner by explaining the anticipated amount of time involved in the interview, checking whether participants were still willing to participate in the case study and reiterating that all data would be held in confidence (all involved stakeholders agreed to participate in interviews).

Table 1: Interview Schedule

Phase	Interview Type	Aim (Defined by themes from data analysis)	Collected from	Numbers	Time (hrs.)
Pre-event (one week pre-event)	Formal, open-ended and semi-structured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General motivation to join the organisation and/or support the change process Understanding of individual's roles in the process Interpretation of the purpose of the upcoming organisational theatre event 	HR Managers	2	1
			Academics	2	1
			Executives	3	1.5
			Theatre Company	2	1
Post-event Set 1 (two weeks post-event)	Formal, open-ended and semi-structured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders' interpretations of the outcome of the intervention Identified issues identified during the organisational theatre event 	HR Managers	2	1
			Academic	2	1
			Executives	10	5
			Theatre Company	2	1
Post-event Set 2 (four months post-event)	Formal, open-ended and semi-structured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up on what interviewees had identified as outcomes and issues Follow-up to test and supplement findings 	HR Managers	2	1
			Academic	1	0.5
			Executives	10	5

While the interview questions were initially ordered, interviewees covered some questions while responding to others, so I adapted the schedule accordingly. During interviews, I aspired to prompt interviewees' stories and narratives of events by asking questions such as: What do you think are the main things that happened in the organisational theatre? (see Excerpt from Post-event Interview Question Set 1).

The interview questions were developed as open ended questions rather than closed questions and I sought to retain flexibility and to allow room for findings that I may not have anticipated prior to the interviews (Charmaz, 2006; Kvale, 1996). I had one 'challenging' interviewee who, despite his willingness to participate, was uncommunicative and rather brief in his answers. However, the majority of participants seemed confident in sharing their thoughts and interpretations and there appeared to be only marginal concerns around communicating with me. Sometimes participants also talked about confidential matters and/or information of more political nature. Immediately after the interviews, I took further notes of my observations and transcribed all interviews within two days to be able to link my notes and reflections on the interviews.

I was initially interested in the method of either filming the interviews or having an additional researcher attending the interviews to observe the interaction and to deepen its interpretation (Silverman, 1993). Eventually, I refrained from this idea as I felt that both options would be too intrusive and might possibly hinder the interaction. I therefore decided to audio-record the interviews only and to take marginal notes of my observations, for example, interviewees' gestures during the interviews.

As explored in previous chapters, I was aware that my presence and situational interaction with the interviewees influenced the content and ways in which interviewees 'performed' or 'narrated' their stories (Boje, 1991b; Czarniawska, 1999a). I therefore treated the data that derived from an interview as a nuance, a story and an observation of an interaction between me and the interviewee in question (Silverman, 1993) and not as a source of objective information and facts.

3.5.4 Document Analysis

To further deepen my understanding of the development of the process and its social setting, I collected numerous emails and documents that were exchanged between the different stakeholders throughout the process. The documents were provided to me on request but I was also given unsolicited material by the organisation's HR Managers, Executives, the Academic Consultants and the Theatre Company. The documents offered additional and valuable sources of data and comprised, along with my observations and interviews, an additional form of data source for analysis and interpretation. The documents included a variety of written and visual material, which enabled me to shed more light on the research phenomena. The material provided information such as historical, economic or social dimensions of the organisation in focus that substantiated but also went beyond the data I gathered through my observations and interviews.

The document collection process was rather open and unstructured, as I collected all material that was provided to me. However, I evaluated the documents in accordance with strategies for handling documents and texts in organisation studies (Charmaz, 2006; Merriam, 1992) by asking questions such as

- Who presented me with the material? On what occasion?
- Who produced the material? What were the producer's sources of information?
- What is the purpose of the text?
- Is the material produced for a defined audience? And, if yes, who?
- What is the historical setting of the document?
- Do other documents exist that additionally deepen the understanding of the events and development of the process? If so, can I gain access to these documents?

I analysed the documents in terms of historical and demographic information to provide further background to the case study. Through collecting and evaluating the material, I was able to construct relationship charts and to better understand hierarchical structures among the case study participants (for instance organisation charts as in Appendix B: Organisation Chart Platanus's Senior Executive Team).

Looking for confirmatory or contradictory information, I compared the findings from my observations and interviews with the content of the documents. In so doing, I sought to

illuminate new understandings or elicit further questions to pursue. Because the documents I received had been generated through routine activities within the organisations and were unrelated to my case study, they provided more 'authentic' accounts that illuminated diverse facets of the case study and provided additional clues that I found useful in framing further research steps such as interview questions or observation foci (Merriam, 1992; Olson, 2010).

3.6 Data Analysis

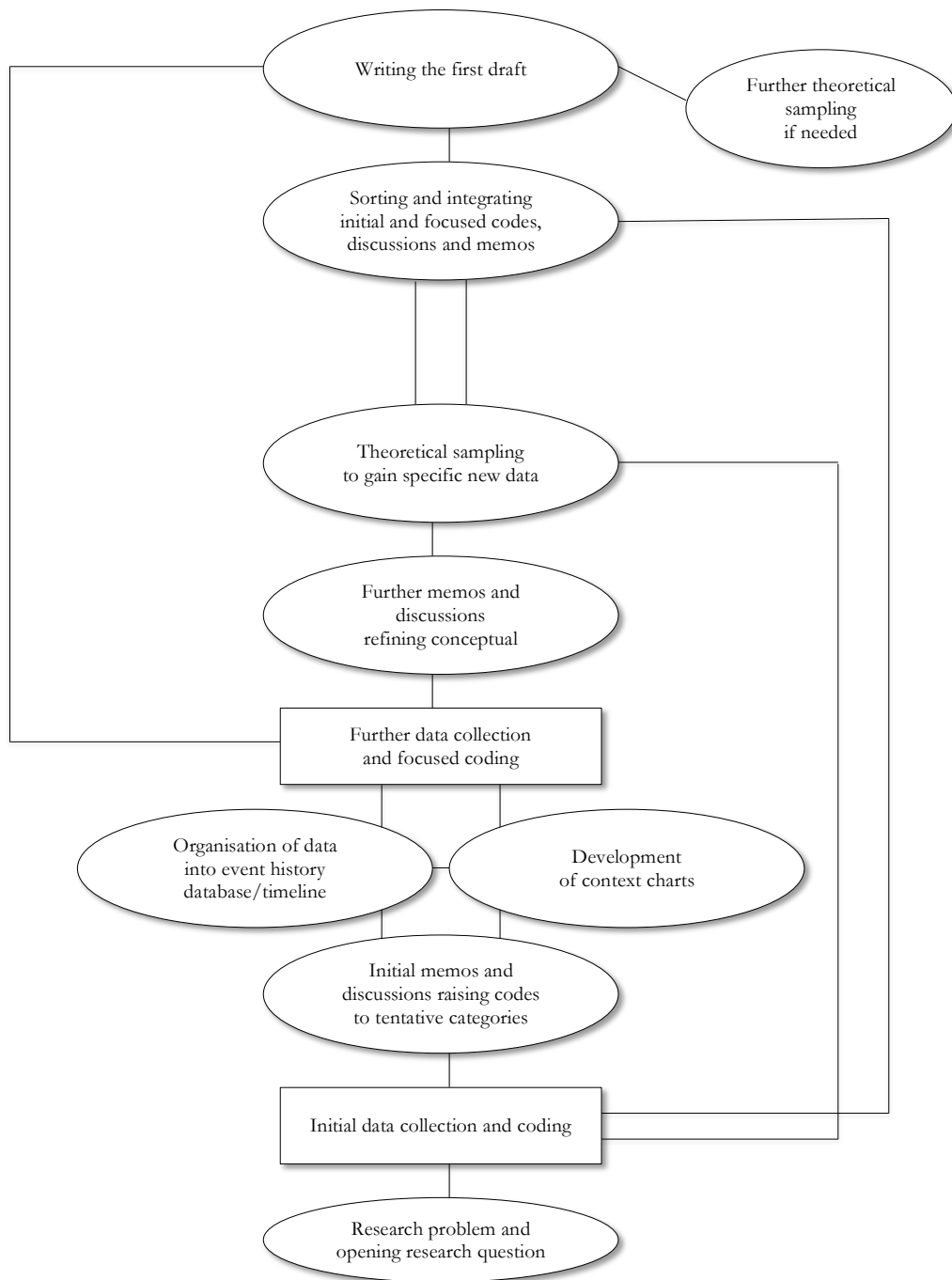
The data collection and analysis was conducted using a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011; Clarke, 2005). I engaged in data collection and analysis concurrently in an iterative process, using comparative methods (see Figure 3: Data Analysis Process). I frequently visited and revisited the data and codes, reflected on categories as they emerged and compared the data, codes and categories with each other and amongst themselves. The process enabled me to refocus and redefine concepts and constructs according to their developing context (Charmaz, 2006).

My research process broadly adopted the course of grounded theory analysis as defined by Charmaz (2000; 2006) and initially began with sensitising concepts and rather broad research perspectives - for example, ideas about degrees of stakeholder participation in broader change programs or current debates on the character and potential of organisational theatre to include diverse voices.

Once I began collecting data, I adopted initial and focused coding, wrote memos about my observations, conducted theoretical sampling and wrote paper drafts of interim findings. I refrained from axial coding, as I felt that a pre-set coding structure would not sufficiently consider the ambiguities inherent in organisational realities. I therefore decided to adhere to simple and flexible guidelines and to follow the leads that I identified in the data (Charmaz, 2006) (for examples see Table 2).

I added elements, such as an event history database, timelines and context charts to my analysis to further deepen my understanding of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Poole & Van de Ven, 1990) (see Appendix I and Figure 4). Further, I discussed with my supervisors, which codes and concepts would better reflect my findings. The following pages will detail the data analysis process adopted in this thesis.

Figure 3: Data Analysis Process



Adapted from Charmaz (2000; 2006), also based on Miles and Huberman (1994), Poole & Ven (1990), Rapley (2011)

3.6.1 Initial Coding, Memos and Discussions

During the first phase of data analysis the data was, during its collection, initially coded with marginal remarks to link the data to the development of emergent issues and theories. Through this initial coding, I sought to define events and developments in the data and to start analysing what these events and development implied (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Initial codes were focused on themes that emerged from early conversations around the content and structure of the leadership development program at the organisation (see Table 3: Initial Coding Structure Excerpt).

I coded, due to the nature and extensive volume of the data, incidents such as meetings, emails or in situ conversations and refrained from line-by-line coding. In doing so, I compared incidents with other incidents, looked for subtle patterns and processes, revisited previous incidents and compared them to my conceptualisations of events coded earlier. The problematic issue for Platanus of existing doctor-nurse relationship where ‘doctors are on top of the pyramid’, for instance, emerged in one of the earlier meetings and was raised by the HR Director in the first instance. I then compared this meeting to other meetings, emails and conversations and looked for incidents where the issue was confirmed or refuted. The process of constantly comparing my data enabled me to follow its traces and to generate first ideas and concepts, which then informed the following focused coding and analysis (Charmaz, 2006).

The process was supported by following up on and gathering new data to further explore and fill codes (Glaser, 1978), which enabled me to question initial findings that emerged from the data and to start to conceptualise my ideas (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994). During initial coding, I used ‘in vivo’ codes (Charmaz, 2006), reflecting participants’ special terms and jargon that served my analysis as markers of participants’ speech and meanings.

I deepened the process of early and open coding by writing memos (see Table 3: Example of Early Memo-Writing) of initial codes and conceptualisations and discussing these with my supervisors to review my first ideas about codes and their links.

Table 2: Initial Coding Structure Excerpt

Initial, Open Coding	Initial Concepts	Overarching Theme
Seeing the ‘brave new world’	Defining a vision	Elements to be covered by Leadership Development Program
Agreeing on Platanus’s values		
Defining Platanus’s purpose		
Empowering patients and staff		
Building stories of aspired culture		
Involving diverse voices		
Treating patients, not tumours		
Defining patient-centeredness		
Stimulating engagement	Challenges for and within the group	
Dealing with power and politics of current public system (‘the beast’)		
Handling relationship with externals		
Realising private as profit		
Addressing power issues within medical teams and current system		
Changing ‘doctors are on top of the pyramid’ assumptions		
Adhering to time constraints		
Selling the vision		
Changing ‘20 years of indoctrination’		
Managing diverse teams		
Keeping momentum		

Table 3: Example of Early Memo-Writing

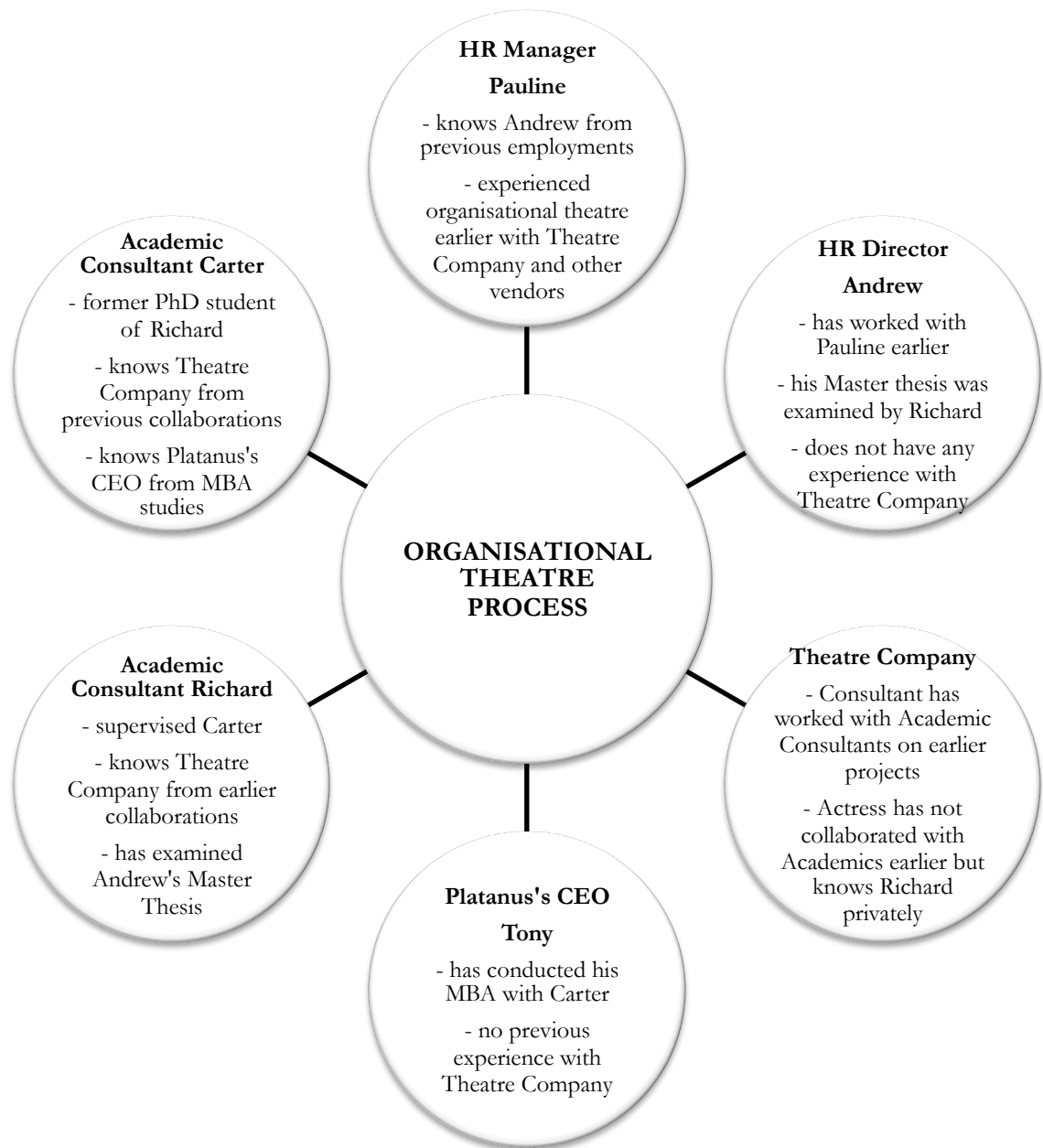
<p style="text-align: center;">Changing ‘20 years of indoctrination’</p> <p>Changing twenty years of indoctrinations reflects the challenges identified by some participants that they perceive in relation to the mindset that exists amongst medical staff employed in the currently existing public cancer clinic. Having lived through ‘20 years of indoctrination’ means to be ‘soaked in’ by the public health system and its realities. The particular challenge for Platanus’s Executives is to change these existing cultural norms and understandings and to bring these closer to Platanus’s values. While some participants described changing people’s indoctrinated mindset as an impossible mission, others argue that the established mindsets contradict Platanus’s vision and need to be changed. Both groups, however, struggled with how to ‘handle’ and ‘manage’ the cultural change and how to ‘convince’ those with established mindsets of the value of Platanus’s vision and mission.</p>

3.6.2 Event History Database and Context Charts

In the second phase of analysis, I organised the collected data into a timeline-like ‘event history database’ (Poole & Van de Ven, 1990). This involved chronologically ordering the collected data (meetings, emails, workshops, etc.), which allowed each process phase to be broadly mapped out and to identify events in which certain incidents occurred. The listed events were not necessarily historic milestones per se and included sometimes seemingly mundane incidents, such as email exchanges to define timing and location of a workshop. However, I included all collected data to illustrate the web of actions, events and choices throughout the case study (see Appendix I).

To additionally support the understanding of the specific context of the stakeholders’ behaviour and reasoning and the complexities involved in their daily processes, I drafted context charts (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of, for instance, Platanus’s internal and external relationships or the relationships between those stakeholders involved in the negotiation of the organisational theatre process (see Figure 4: Context Chart Relationships Involved Stakeholders Early Case Study Stages).

Figure 4: Context Chart Relationships Involved Stakeholders Early Case Study Stages



3.6.3 Focused Coding and Memos

In the second phase of coding, I used more selective and conceptual codes than in my initial incident coding to synthesise and explain larger sections of the collected data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). I used codes and concepts that were used most frequently during earlier coding (such as ‘challenges for and within the group’, ‘doctors are on top of the pyramid’) but also added new codes that were closer to the emergent character of the data (such as ‘interpreting purpose of organisational theatre event’, ‘identifying issues of the intervention’) and followed these threads to enable a deeper understanding of the process (see Table 5: Focused Coding Excerpt). Similar to earlier stages, I narrowed the data further by drafting memos (see Table 4: Example of Later Memo-Writing) and developing categories, which I then discussed with my supervisors. Afterwards I revisited the data again to refine codes and concepts.

Table 4: Example of Later Memo Writing

‘Doctors on top of the pyramid’
<p>During the organisational theatre, Paul, Director of Radiation Oncology, scripted out what became described as the <i>Doctors on Top</i> skit. Controversial in nature and in its impact, the scene presented Paul’s take on the manner in which communication should be achieved. The skit took place between one of Platanus’s Executives in a role acted out and scripted by Paul and an actor playing the surgeon, John. In this skit Paul convinces John to join Platanus, as doctors would remain on top despite the patient-centred vision of the organisation. Paul’s intentions – and hence the interpretation and effect of the message – were viewed differently and evaluated differently with some participants viewing Paul’s statement as an ironic comment and others perceiving it as a threat to Platanus’s vision and mission. Post-event interviews showed that some Executives perceived the status and importance of doctors as unchangeable, while others felt, that the doctors’ status needed to be changed in order to meet Platanus’s vision and mission.</p> <p>The issue of ‘doctors on top’ was not part of the ‘formal’ purpose of the organisational theatre event but had been raised during pre-event meetings. In these earlier conversations the HR Managers and some of the Executives have described the challenge of changing the established mindsets of the existing cancer clinic in which doctors are perceived by others and view themselves as ‘being at the top of the pyramid’.</p>

Table 5: Focused Coding Excerpt

Focused Coding	Excerpts
<p>Interpreting potential of forum theatre</p> <p>Defining outcomes of forum theatre method</p>	<p>Excerpt 1: Academic Consultant, Carter: Pre-event interview (Reference 090)</p> <p>“The biggest thing about forum theatre for me is the chance for people to see their world from multiple perspectives and have some form of cathartic experience that then motivates them to want to try new and different things and recognise what they may be doing now, isn’t necessarily (...) the best thing for the other people they are interacting with. But they need to see it themselves; you can’t tell them that. So it’s a revealing experience for people. (...) And that’s the sort of the cathartic sense. So, yeah. And it’s not being prescriptive, it’s actually opening up the conversation. It is amazing, energetic, not everyone is going to buy in but I think it opens up so many possibilities.”</p>
<p>Identifying outcomes of the organisational theatre event</p> <p>Analysing potential of organisational theatre methods</p>	<p>Excerpt 2: Medical Director, Fred, Post-event interview (Reference 119)</p> <p>“The issues really were things surrounding the way we speak about the project, who we speak to, what someone else’s view of us is. And I think using that methodology was really good in bringing that to the surface. Like I said, they are not things that we don’t know about (...). But it’s easier to forget about them day by day and this brings them up to the surface. (...) And I think it’s a really powerful way of making myself but also everybody else aware of things that we have in our heads but we often don’t have enough time to think about, talk about and comment on”.</p>

3.6.4 Theoretical Sampling

To further deepen and increase the precision of the categories and my understanding of individuals' behaviours and arguments in specific situations, I used theoretical sampling to test and supplement my categories (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). In doing so, I revisited the research site and collected further relevant data that I sought through interviews and conversations with research participants. I used theoretical sampling somewhat unintentionally and admittedly in an unstructured way during earlier stages but was, due to my deeper understanding of the data and research methods, more capable of refining the sampling process during later stages of the case study.

After the first set of post-event interviews, for instance, I deliberately sought participants who had had a particular response or interpretation of the event that had impacted on my analysis but needed further clarification (see Table 6: Example of Theoretical Sampling). During the second set of post-event interviews, I asked these participants more targeted questions and to elaborate on the specific matter (Morse, 2007). The additional data helped me to further develop emerging concepts and theories and to elaborate and refine categories.

3.6.5 Writing Drafts

Throughout this project, I wrote drafts of my findings to theorise and strengthen my analysis of how actions, meaning and social structures were constructed (Charmaz, 2006). While some of these drafts remained in unpublished memo format, I also developed drafts into publishable papers and presentations (see Appendix A: List of Publications).

The process involved developing convincing arguments about the character and potential of organisational theatre grounded in the case data, linking them to literature and conceptualising these findings into drafts. Each draft showcased the current development of the project and was further developed throughout the course of my PhD study. As part of this, I drafted manuscripts, submitted and presented these at conferences and sought feedback on my ideas and concepts by discussing my initial findings with other researchers. After receiving feedback on my ideas, I returned to the research site and existing data, concepts and theories, attempting to address gaps or possible new paths and directions. Following these revisitations, I drafted further memos and papers, which gave me the

opportunity to develop new findings with each revision. The process was, throughout my PhD study, constantly repeated, which enabled me to bring together the pieces of my drafts, to develop a convincing argument that is consistent with my grounded theory approach, to constantly analyse and reconsider developed categories and theories and to assess how they shape the underlying argument of the final thesis.

Table 6: Example of Theoretical Sampling

Statement First Interview	Theoretical Sampling	Follow-up Answer
<p><i>Anne: Post-event interview Set 1 (Ref. 107)</i></p> <p>But I did find it, you know on reflection where we were all happy to laugh at him but in fact, it's kind of sad almost if that's the stereotypical surgeon, that there might be a fair bit of public relationship work that we should be doing.</p>	<p><i>Interview question for post-event interview Set 2 with Anne (Ref. 126) to explore possible link to 'doctors on top' concept</i></p> <p>You said in former discussions that you found the willingness to laugh about stereotypes, such as the surgeon in the play, almost sad. Could you expand on why?</p>	<p><i>Anne, Post-event interview Set 2 (Ref. 126)</i></p> <p>I guess it is probably my own view about stereotypes that exist. Because you see a repetition of behaviour in a group and yet, for every stereotype, there is the individual and I think sometimes it's hard for that individual to be outside of that if you develop a stereotype ... and yet as humans we like to put everyone together in a group as it makes it easier. I am much more interested in the individual rather than putting them as part of the group. (...) That notion of lump everyone into a group and there is a normal curve and someone sits under the curve and that kind of thing, which to me seemed that it lacked the individuality and nuance. As a person I always kind of struggled with that.</p>

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the methodological framework, case description and research methods underlying this thesis. In line with social constructionist perspectives, the chapter is grounded in the assumption that the nature and outcomes of organisational theatre are influenced and constructed by individuals' actions-in-context as undertaken at different stages of its development. The thesis therefore seeks to illuminate stakeholders' actions and interpretations of the process of organisational theatre rather than offering a positivist evaluation of its effectiveness.

The basis for the methodological framework adopted in this thesis is, therefore, grounded in social constructionist perspectives, which view meaning production as developing out of some pre-defined truth, as well as through the interaction of individuals in specific situations and settings. In line with this assumption, the chapter has argued for the value of a constructivist grounded theory approach embedded in a longitudinal single-case study. It has been contended that such research methods and approaches enable a close interaction with, and engagement in, the daily lives of research participants, which are key in studying and comprehending the meaning of actions, situations and the process by which stakeholders construct the situation through their interactions.

The findings of the research will be illuminated in the next three chapters. After presenting the findings of the pilot study in Chapter Four, the fifth chapter explores the role of the different stakeholder interests and perspectives in shaping the conditions of the organisational theatre event. Chapter Six presents the processual dynamics within the organisational theatre workshop and in particular the circumstances and actions surrounding a skit that was used to communicate the contradictions and paradoxes in the organisation's patient-centred enterprise. The seventh chapter presents details of participants' post-event evaluations and raises issues of evolving understandings and interpretations on the impact of the organisational theatre event.

Who Controls the Looking Glass? Organisational Theatre and Synoptic Power

4.1 Introduction

Critics regard organisational theatre as yet another means in the arsenal of managers to get things their way (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Nissley et al., 2004). Some suggested that it functions as a peripheral means for persuasion. By playing along, employee audiences convince themselves of what managers want them to believe. Other critics believe it to work as an anaesthetic brought on stage to make employees reflect about what ‘really’ matters instead of, for example, imminent layoffs, reorganisations, mergers or new control systems (Clark & Mangham, 2004a). Yet others see organisational theatre’s roots in entertainment - carnivalesque maybe - that upends the power structure for a few hours, just to reaffirm it for the rest of the year (Rosen, 1988). Managers control the script and the roles, they define the messages and the context and they expect organisational theatre to deliver on their intentions in a direct way, leading to foreseeable results.

This view is not uncontested. Scholars focusing on the properties of theatrical techniques and theatre reception doubt that organisational theatre can deliver foreseeable results (Meisiek, 2004; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyögg & Hopfl, 2004). Instead, they suggest that performances can lead to a *looking glass effect* in which messages and message makers lose their hold, where interpretative mirrors, windows and passages open and where there is space for examining the wider context of any issue placed on stage. Employees can play with the performance to revisit their workplace experiences, diversely interpret it and compare it to their workplace understandings (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b). The analogical quality of the theatre performance informs the antenarrative (Boje, 2001) of an organisation in informal conversations after the play. The organisational theatre soaks into the existing discourse in metaphorical ways, enriching it instead of replacing or redirecting it. The multitude of possible interpretations and associations around an organisational

theatre performance keeps it from becoming a singular analogy, like, for example, total quality management and makes it a compound analogy for shifting perspectives over time.

According to this view on organisational theatre, managers might observe changes around the issues that motivated them to contract an organisational theatre company but these changes are mere symptoms of employees 'seeing more and seeing differently' in their organisation (Barry, 1994; Barry & Meisiek, 2010b). Not only the behaviour around a narrow issue changes but also the landscape of interpretations is altered in unforeseeable ways. Organisational theatre inspires wider reflections about who the employees are, what is important to them, how they experience management and why they do their work in certain ways (Meisiek & Hatch, 2008). These unintended consequences of organisational theatre might, however, be necessary for organisational theatre to lead to anything interesting for managers and employees at all. If organisational theatre takes up an issue too directly and narrowly, employees are quick to act in their habitual ways of resistance to managerial influence. And if organisational theatre opens for a wide perspective, defining clear goals becomes difficult, since it defies the theatrical process. The result of this is that organisational theatre has to irritate managers and employees to function as an intervention (Schreyögg & Hopfl, 2004).

4.2 Synoptic Power in Organisational Theatre

Are power and looking glass really two mutually excluding perspectives on organisational theatre? This paper argues that this is not necessarily the case. To discuss the former in the light of the latter, this paper will explore the metaphor of power as potentially synoptic (Mathiesen, 1997) and not just panoptic (Foucault, 1977). In Clegg and Baumeler's (2010: 1727) words: "In panoptical power, it is apparent that the few watch the many. In synoptic power, the paper hypothesizes that the many will be watching the few watching them, and constantly adjust their self accordingly". Following this hypothesis, the study suggest looking at organisational theatre as a plaything and fulcrum in the identity dynamics of organisations (Meisiek & Hatch, 2008) and to explore its character as an indirect means for synoptic power.

Clegg and Baumeler (2010) see synoptic power as characteristic for a condition they call 'liquid modernity'. Here power and control are tightly interwoven with the continuous identity construction and emotions of employees who, as self-managing knowledge

workers, enjoy much more fluid work conditions and interpretational freedom around routines than their bureaucratic and industrial-age counterparts. Contemporary employees in liquid modernity are “expected to be autonomous, informed, spontaneous, creative and able to adapt to different work tasks. Additionally, they will be expected to have a talent for communication and be capable of relating to others” (Clegg & Baumeler, 2010: 1724). Also, these employees are likely to be continuously involved in a changing portfolio of projects and to migrate rather freely between organisations vying for their talent. They have a low tolerance for bureaucratic hurdles and for direct managerial control. Organisations that thrive on employing such employees are more likely to show peripheral, inspirational and suggestive attempts at control, linked to synoptic power. Organisational culture and identity, in the ‘ideal type’, do not inspire discomfort among managers as uncontrollable or obstructive key features of the organisation but are seen as something stimulating movement and bringing change to the organisation. This follows the insight that, while panoptic power may motivate employees to hang on to old habits, synoptically playing at identity dynamics opens up (and perhaps closes off?) spaces for the imaginative mirroring of desirable and appropriate selves (Mathiesen, 1997) and it encourages developing new habits around shifted identities.

But if people are busy continuously reconstructing their identity as they float through project work and temporary employments, what can managers do to give a sense of appropriate selves? How do they make themselves and significant others viewable? And how does their watching of the many become visible to them?

4.3 Boalian Forum Theatre in Organisations

To begin answering these questions, the paper will concentrate on Boal-inspired organisational theatre performances and review them in the light of synoptic power. Boal-inspired organisational theatre performances were found in Scandinavia, Germany, Australia, the US and France, making it one of the most widely used techniques in organisational theatre. Its emphasis is on active audience participation, giving part of the control over roles to the employees. The idea to let audiences to closely examine existing workplace behaviours makes it further relevant to the discussion in this chapter.

The Brazilian playwright, educator and politician, Augusto Boal, originally developed *Theatre of the Oppressed*, a participative form of theatre as a means of promoting knowledge

for change and democratic forms of interaction (Boal, 1979/2000). When Boal, escaping the military junta in Brazil, entered a period of exile in Western Europe, he did not find the same kinds of oppression he had experienced in Brazil. Examining the political and organisational landscape of Western Europe, Boal reconceived his theatre of the oppressed to work with internalised oppression (Boal, 1995b). The origin of Boal's techniques lay in an ideology of liberation from oppression through raising awareness and creating a readiness to act differently. In this way it positioned itself against brute panoptic power. Boal understands power and control in a direct, zero-sum, one-dimensional form and his personal goal is to liberate people from explicit authoritarian oppression. It remains somewhat of a mystery why his method has become so popular with organisational theatre companies around the world, given that the purpose of many organisational theatre interventions is so far from Boal's original radical intentions. Boal's popularity in organisational theatre might, however, become more understandable if one shifts his/her focus from the degree to which it embodies Boal's traditional radical purpose and onto the way it may be used to contribute to synoptic power.

The remainder of this chapter will first present an illustrative case study of a Boal-inspired organisational theatre performance in a financial services organisation (Carter et al., 2011) and offer some suggestive insights on what a more 'synoptic' view of organisational theatre might look like.

The case study, and analysis used in this chapter, is tentative and exploratory in nature, with the data base being restricted to an interview with an organisational theatre consultant, a number of field notes that the consultant took while studying the organisation and a video recording of the organisational theatre performance. The example does, however, help to explore how some of the organisational identity dynamics around organisational theatre performances may be examined in conditions of liquid modernity and with a specific interest in fluid, lightweight, synoptic power. The paper closes with a summary and a short discussion of directions for future research.

4.4 Case Study: Making Appointments at a Financial Services Organisation

The Theatre Company, who conducted the organisational theatre event, are a Sydney-based learning and development consultancy that specialises in dramatic education and training methods. They offer Boal-inspired organisational theatre interventions with

professional actors, executive coaching, as well as conferences, leadership forums and seminar events. According to its own words, the Company's approach is based on two principles: 1) building visions through acknowledging current realities and 2) raising awareness through critical reflection on purpose, habit and choice. With this, most of its work circles around issues of leadership and communication.

The particular organisational theatre piece of interest was staged for sixty managers, supervisors and customer service officers of a retail division of a major Australian bank in 2007. The reason for ordering an organisational theatre performance from the Theatre Company was because the implementation of a customer relationship management system had led to unsatisfactory results. Under the new system, branch employees were to identify suitable customers for an informative financial 'profiling' appointment. In practical terms, the bank employees were supposed to invite customers during over-the-counter transactions or on the phone to make an appointment for the profiling. While there were some positive developments in terms of the appointments made, the overall number of appointments remained far below expectations. Even a 10% bonus scheme for meeting the appointment targets and training sessions on how to identify and invite suitable customers for a profiling failed to improve the number of appointments made. To the HR managers the case was clear: the existing culture around service interactions and the professional identity of employees as service agents and not sales people made it difficult for them to bring the invitation to a profiling appointment into their interactions with customers. While there was an overarching agreement between the HR managers and the area managers that the goal of the organisational theatre performance was to improve the customer service of the organisation, the intentions varied in detail. The HR managers wanted the organisational theatre to make employees feel and become more engaged, whereas the area managers demanded plainly that the organisational theatre should bring up the number of profiling appointments to the target level.

The Theatre Company developed the organisational theatre piece from scratch. After interviews with managers and staff in the field, which took three days, a member of the Theatre Company sketched a number of scenes that he presented to the HR and area managers. The managers commented on the script, mostly in terms of making it more credible to the intended audience. They suggested some changes in language and behaviour to bring it closer to corporate speak and demeanour but otherwise left it to the Theatre Company to decide on how to bring it all together. The Theatre Company did not have to

explain how each scene might link to a specific outcome, as they had been required to do for some other industry clients.

The relative freedom on how to stage the organisational theatre becomes apparent through an episode from the dress rehearsals. The actors suggested that some scenes could be changed in order to accommodate a 'visioning exercise' that would let audience members reflect on what they had noticed. Without asking the managers, the Theatre Company decided to change the organisational theatre piece accordingly and nobody complained later about these changes.

A reason for the unusual soft attitude from the managers might be that they understood how the organisational theatre might 'work' effectively as a cultural intervention (the Head of HR had a PhD in Social Psychology) or it might be explained by the fact that the company was in good financial health and the whole profiling appointments scheme was about making things better rather than to save the ship from sinking. Another element might be that the HR department of this organisation was known in its industry to be open to experiments and a frontrunner in trying out new and unusual means. Yet another might have been the joint funding of the project by the University as well as the company.

To ensure the organisational theatre did not disrupt the normal working day of the bank employees and to enable all employees of several branches to see it at the same time, the Theatre Company pushed for a Saturday. The place of the performance was a branch, with the stage situated opposite the actual counters. To have a work-related event on a Saturday was highly unusual and at first the HR managers thought that nobody would want to show up. To improve numbers, they booked it as a normal salaried workday. It turned out that the idea of having the organisational theatre on a Saturday was popular and attendance was very high.

On the day of the performance two identical performances with thirty people in each audience took place; one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The first part of each of the two organisational theatre performances presented the audience with four scenes that showed an average day in the working life of three employees in a fictitious branch. Tony was the branch manager and supervisor of Sandra and David. The scenes dealt with issues pertaining to starting conversations with customers around profiling appointments. Special attention was given to moments of hesitation, confusion or doubt that would keep the employees from initiating the profiling conversations or from carrying them through. The

actors presented the scenes in a row and the theatre consultant provided a connecting narrative.

After the four scenes, the audience was divided into small groups and the theatre consultant asked them to focus on one character per group and to identify problematic issues in the behaviour of the character. Then the groups were asked to share their observations with the entire audience and to describe the characters' motivations, actions, points-of-view and intentions. The descriptions were thrown open for discussion in the plenary and the whole audience was asked to give advice to the characters about how they could act differently and what the motives for the actions might be. These recommendations were then used to replay a scene. This produced a number of changes to the original scene, in which the actors improvised how their stage characters would further react to the alternative path of action. Time and again during the replay the audience could give advice on changing gestures, tone of voice, lines and reactions. At the end of this, which was also the end of the organisational theatre day, everybody came together in the plenary again and was asked to talk in pairs about what they had learned and how they might use it.

The presence of a *looking glass effect* becomes obvious when comparing the interactive parts of the morning and the afternoon sessions. During the morning session the audience identified the problems around appointment making as time constraints, long lines, busy customers, personally difficult customers, customers not receiving help when asking for it and the easy way out through avoiding the appointment issue when customers do not ask for it. Almost all of the identified problems pertained to the relationship between bank employee and customer. Accordingly, the ensuing discussions centred on the behaviour of Sandra and David, the two clerks working at the counter. The manager, Tony, did not receive much attention. The audience proposed solutions for Sandra and David like: "ask questions, offer assistance, listen, have an open body language and keep eye contact". When the customer interaction scene was replayed with Sandra and the actor was heeding the audience's suggestions, the results were found to be better. Audience members commented that Sandra seemed to be interested in the customer now. In a last question to David, an audience member asked: "Why do you wear this tie?" It seemed to be a comment on corporate dress, since David wore the same tie that all clerks have to wear when they are at the counter. It can also be taken as: What is your identity as a service agent of this bank?

Overall, and in spite of some good-humoured laughter at times, this morning session remained somewhat awkward. The audience focused on appointment making and it suggested that better communication and a sincere interest in the customer could build a bridge between appointment making and the collective identity of bank clerks as service agents. Appointment making can be a service element and not just a sales gig was the outcome.

The afternoon session ran completely differently. When the actor who played Tony asked for the problems that the audience had identified during the scenes, there was silence. Then an audience member said: “Do not take it the wrong way . . . but you are a prick of a manager.” The audience burst into laughter. From here on a lively discussion developed focusing on the relationship between managers and the clerks at the counter. Identified problems were a lack of support for new ways of approaching things, no encouragement, lack of motivation and the moodiness of managers, which ruins the motivation for creating a pleasant service experience. Especially one audience member again and again challenged the manager, much to the amusement of the remainder of the audience. Things only got friendlier when they talked about Sandra and David. The audience seemed to identify with these stage characters. Finally, and contrary to the morning session, the audience suggested creating a completely new scene in which David would face up to his manager. David heeded the audience’s suggestion on holding eye contact with the manager and “acting less like a kid” and the new scene received a lot of applause.

The shifting *reflections*, *passages* and *windows* (Meisiek & Barry, 2007) that are inevitably brought about through organisational theatre’s offering of a dramatic, metaphoric and analogical ‘*looking glass*’, brought multiple and emergent issues into play. For the morning audience the appointment making was the focus and they only lightly strayed into the wider meaning of being a clerk at the bank. For the afternoon audience it was only the starting point to get to other, presently more interesting work issues around management. The shifting reflections of work issues across audiences and over time are indicative of what has been described as a potentially disturbing *looking glass effect* (Meisiek & Barry, 2007). Usually the effect further unfolds in the informal conversations (after the performances) at water coolers, coffee tables and in meetings. What is interesting in the bank example is that the identity of the employees was not only reviewed through customer interactions but also through the way management was acting.

The positive energy at the end of the organisational theatre intervention, and the fact that the profiling appointments went up right afterwards, pleased HR and the area managers. The organisational theatre was subsequently deemed a success and the financial services organisation initiated talks with the Theatre Company for further organisational theatre performances.

4.5 Discussion: Organisational Theatre and Identity Dynamics

4.5.1 The Play is the Thing

To figure as a means for synoptic power, organisational theatre would have to affect the identity dynamics of an organisation, stimulating and channelling the many watching the significant few watching them. If the kind of Boal-inspired organisational theatre detailed above is taken at face value, something like this seems to be the case. In a theatre the many (meaning the audience) are looking at the few (the actors on stage). However, when Mathiesen (1997) wrote about synoptic power, he had in mind that the many looking at the few involved a focus on actual figures of authority, facilitated by contemporary advances in technology. Clegg and Baumeler's (2010) uptake of the concept in liquid modernity builds on this assumption. In organisational theatre, however, the actual few are replaced by a fictional few, with uncertain and imagined links to figures of authority and their views. Also, in Boal-inspired performances, pure looking is enriched with the possibility to play with the scenes and characters, to identify problems and to suggest alternative courses of action. Organisational theatre holds a culturally informed, three dimensional mirror image to the organisation, which then through a *looking glass effect* leads employees to see more and to see themselves differently. Organisational theatre is a playful detour to and a way to experiment with the identity expectations that significant others might hold. The fictional nature of a theatrical performance provides a different playing field for the synoptic power game - one where managers and customers are present as some of the stage characters but absent in reality at the same time.

Seeing and being seen also happens at several interlaced levels: the fictional, theatrical and contextual levels. At the fictional level the employees (as stage characters) watch the manager (as one stage character) watch them (as another stage actor). It is a story of how managers might act, how employees might feel about it and how customers come into the

picture. At the theatrical level, the employee audience watches the stage action, which is an enacted image of the organisation that has its origin in the organisational theatre company's way of working and managerial intentions. Tearing down of the fourth wall in the theatre through active audience participation means that the performance is looking back at the audience asking: what would you like us to do differently? At the same time that the first two levels of looking happen, the entire organisational theatre setup (including the paid Saturday, the staging in a branch and the whole idea of bringing an organisational theatre company in) is an expression of not only managers looking at them but employees imagining of what they are looking at and for. In this interlaced way, the audience is presented with, and can express, a number of desirable and desired identities and be involved in formally and informally playing with them. It is not surprising, therefore, that the 'same' scripted performance creates varying reactions and developing paths in different contexts (Barry & Meisiek, 2010a).

4.5.2 Playful is the Thing

Gioia, Schultz and Corley (2000) note that organisational identities are not stable but are in flux. The construction and reconstruction of organisational identity has two sides: on the one side there is the image of what the organisation is like in the other's eyes and on the other side is the internal dialogue among organisational members, employees and managers, about who they are. Identity is thus shaped through a continuous dynamic between mirror images and perceptions of organisational culture (Hatch & Schultz, 2002). Because the collective identity is dynamic and includes employees, managers and all other stakeholders, formal organisational incentives and managerial prescriptions for behaviour are only one set amongst multiple sets of influences. Under conditions of liquid modernity, with its fluid project work, changing workplace allegiances, dynamic flux of identities and multiple and arguably more sophisticated managerial identity interventions, the collective identity becomes a patchwork, where employees look at external images as much as at managerial images of desired identity. Organisational theatre, with its combination of the theatrical external image and the management intentions behind and within in, might well speak to this condition.

Meisiek and Hatch (2008) suggest that, to mindfully work with identity dynamics, managers may accommodate play alongside work. A playful orientation would encourage employees

to mirror their identity as others might see it and simultaneously to reflect back upon their organisational culture. Since genuine play has a difficult stance in organisations, arts-related objects and performances like organisational theatre can at least temporarily open spaces for play. The translation of everyday work hassles and opportunities into the enacted language of theatre together with the audience's attention directed towards the expressively staged images of their organisation gives organisational theatre an open immediacy, different from the sometimes-ambiguous image cues that must be filtered out of the day-to-day interactions with stakeholders. The *as-if* reality of theatre opens for play with metaphors, ideas about others, self-perceptions and the cultural expressions of the organisation.

This paper argues that the organisational theatre performance in the Australian bank represents such a place for play alongside work and hence a mirroring opportunity (with a *looking glass effect*) for employees' identities. As mentioned, it took place on a Saturday in one of the bank's branches and it dealt directly with work issues. The stage action was culturally grounded in the organisation, since organisational theatre actors and consultants visited the premises before the script-writing, interviewed a number of employees, noted the aesthetics of the workplace, the colours, noises, architecture, language, smiles and frowns and imagined the work processes that seem to tie it all together. This was then woven into a story around the management-defined purpose of the organisational theatre and the theatrical techniques that came into play. The interlaced levels of looking in organisational theatre then bring the external image and desired identities into view.

In the bank the employees saw themselves as service agents of a financial institution so asking customers to make profiling appointments was regarded as the job of salespeople. It can be assumed that their identity as service agents kept them from adopting the new customer relationship management system and made them avoid touching upon the profiling appointment issue in conversations with customers, unless the customers themselves asked for something in that direction. The identity of service agents would also explain why the 10% bonus scheme and the training sessions failed to deliver substantial changes. Such managerial measures rest on a belief in monetary incentives and prescription of behaviour and reproduce panoptical ideas of power and control. There was no attention to the underlying identity of employees and therefore the measures were met with resistance.

At the interlacing of the fictional and the theatrical levels, the organisational theatre intervention invoked images in which the organisational members saw themselves. At the same time, the theatrical nature of the images de-familiarised employees with their habitual self-perceptions. The strange-making *mirror image* of the organisation stimulated reflections on the organisational identity in the light of the events on stage. Questions of desirable and desired identities emerged. The questions about corporate dress, their mindful attitude toward customers and even the pranks played at the manager's expense bear witness to a search for desirable and desired identities. Even if still in their aisles, the audience members became co-players at this moment, starting to shape the images through varied interpretations.

In a similar way, the theatrical and the contextual levels are interlaced. Since it was a Boal-inspired organisational theatre performance, it didn't stop at witnessing a staged performance. Boal believed that only asking the audience to become active in reshaping the performance through their ideas would lead to change. Consultants and actors facilitated the expressions of cultural self-understandings and ideas for change but they were also likely to have attempted keeping it somehow loosely tied to the purposes of the play as management had defined them. The audience, who certainly became mindful of the attempt of the actors to keep discussions going along certain tracks, then could find out what expectations were underlying the theatrical performance and what intentions managers might have with it. The announcement at the beginning of the performances that The Theatre Company organisational theatre serves to build self-efficacy and motivation would certainly be seen as some kind of stage setting, rather than the ultimate goal of the organisational theatre. Especially the challenge to the manager on stage in the afternoon session indicates that the audience was well aware of the contextual setting of the organisational theatre.

The further expression of work issues on stage, audience-directed and improvised with the actors, let organisational members ask and answer their own questions about who they are, how they are working in their organisation and what they stand for. For example, the bank tellers might notice more of how they talk and interact with customers through applying their customary understandings of work life to the staged image of their organisation. And they might see differently, when they identify the stage performance as an analogy, which lets them revisit their daily workplace experiences, as well as asking analogically what management might want from them (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b). This is facilitated through

looking at how the stage characters look at each other and seeing it as a symbol for how the actual management is looking at the employees.

The organisational theatre had organisational members revisit current interpretations of organisational identity and reconstruct their identity. Most notable is that this reconstruction of identity is not stimulated through fear and stress about being badly seen. Rather it is by play and exploration: it is all theatre in the final analysis. The bank clerks in this example seem to have reconstructed their identity to include the possibility to suggest appointment dates to suitable customers, without that they would become salespeople in their self-perception. The organisational theatre becomes a means in a synoptic power game.

4.5.3 Organisational Theatre's Conditions for Synoptic Power

The identity dynamics around organisational theatre give some support for Clegg and Baumeler's (2010) hypothesis that synoptic power leads to changes in habits and interpretations in the organisation. Where organisations work with 'liquid' human resources, organisational theatre can become popular with managers and employees in spite of the unforeseeable effects. The paper has shown some unusual synoptic elements in Boal-inspired organisational theatre and ways in which play may be influential in helping identity shifts. What is missing so far is an understanding of how the synoptic elements and the identity shifts are linked in detail. Also, it is unlikely that every organisational theatre performance leads to generative shifts in identity and to produce the desired results as described in this bank example. What are, then, the conditions for organisational theatre's *looking glass effect* to open for synoptic power? Taking the bank example, the paper can speculatively identify the type of organisational theatre, audience composition and managerial expectations as important conditions. The paper, however, considers that only profound empirical work can give certainty on any of this and that the case study only gives some leads.

Type of organisational theatre

It is not without irony that the techniques that Boal developed to empower the poor of developing nations to become aware of oppression and to liberate themselves are now

used to help privileged and fluid knowledge workers of developed nations to find perspectives, shift identities and to develop behavioural possibilities around, and towards, the goals defined by those who are managing the organisations. While it might work, as well as give bread and butter to many organisational theatre consultancies, it is an inversion of purpose from the point of view of the original techniques. Consequently, Boal has rejected collaborating with organisational theatre companies when he was invited to participate in an organisational theatre event (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Larsen, 2006a) .

But why is Boalian theatre so especially suitable for synoptic power? Revisiting the origins of Boal's approach helps to give a tentative answer. Firstly, Boalian techniques are developed to work with power and control, to help audiences become aware and to encourage them to develop new behavioural possibilities. Secondly, Boal developed his active-audience techniques in deliberate contrast to more classical theatre forms, which he describes as working in the service of the oppressors. And, thirdly, he assumes that oppressed people can shift their identities from serfs to equals through revisiting their situations and playing with it in the theatrical space. It is this stimulation of identity dynamics around seeing, beholding stakeholder images and watching significant others watching you, that potentially allows Boal-inspired organisational theatre to create works for synoptic power.

This means that organisational theatre does not work directly as a means for synoptic power but through mirroring it. This is the role of the *looking glass effect*. Instead of providing a closer look at authority figures like new media technologies, organisational theatre mirrors the synoptic process and this mirror image is not a smooth image. It breaks, shifts and de-familiarises at various interlaced levels. Boal (1979/2000), and Brecht (1964) before him, assume that mirroring panoptic control through theatrics creates insight and resistance. Mirroring synoptic control, however, leads to a very different result: it invites play and imagination. For example, a theatrical mirror image of the bonus scheme and the training sessions in this bank example would likely make the panoptic elements of these measures visible and discussible. Mirroring the way that managers look at employees around the issue of appointment making, in contrast, leads to playful speculations and ideas about desired identities.

Audience composition

Clegg and Baumeler (2010) suggest that synoptic power is a phenomenon more prevalent in the management of privileged and flexible knowledge workers of developed countries. The issue is one of management and power in relation to employees who are able to move from project to project, workplace to workplace and even country to country, looking always for the best path to their personal development. Scientist, designers, engineers and financial analysts are but a few examples. And while they flow through different organisations, they look for identity cues to reinterpret and reshape their professional identities accordingly.

Although it can be argued that the employees at the Australian bank belong to that category of employees, there were, with managers, supervisors and customer service officers attending, people from several low hierarchical levels present. They were well educated, part of a global industry and relying on emotion work in daily interactions with clients. This organisational theatre audience is likely to be receptive to synoptic power, rather than to attempts to lock them into a panopticon. Therefore it is possible that the organisational theatre had the described effects, because the audience was just right for such an organisational theatre intervention. Being the people they are, they are more likely to grasp the different levels at which the many look at the few looking at them that are suggested in an organisational theatre performance, play with the expressions and taking analogical cues for their identity dynamics away from it.

This means in turn that many audiences in other organisations are unlikely to shift identities and develop new habits through taking part in an organisational theatre performance. Those working in organisations that could be better described as classic bureaucracies, with narrow job descriptions, tight supervision, monetary incentives such as piece rate and rigid structures, are less prone to come to interesting insights around their workplace and their identity through an organisational theatre performance. They might be looking for the managerial message on how to change in the organisational theatre, wary that there must be something like this in it and they might contest the message they identify as yet another direct attempt to control their work processes and behaviour. Like the critics at the beginning of the chapter, the employees are likely to identify organisational theatre as a means for panoptic power.

But things might not always be so black and white. Panoptic and synoptic power can co-exist in the same organisation. And under certain conditions, synoptic viewing can lead to calls for more panoptic surveillance (Mathiesen, 1997). Also, the anaesthetic or carnivalesque effects of organisational theatre (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Rosen, 1988) might be explained with interplays of synoptic viewing and panoptic power. While the bank example does not give clues on this, the interplay of different forms of power around organisational theatre would reward attention.

Managerial expectations

What is known from the bank example is that the organisational theatre was developed around slightly divergent managerial expectations. While the area manager was very firmly focused on increasing the number of profiling appointments, the HR manager wanted to see engagement and positive energy around the issue. The former is a very narrow, functional and measurable outcome, while the latter is an experiential outcome. In the end both managers were satisfied with the results of the organisational theatre intervention. The HR manager liked the energy around the performances and interpreted it as signs of employees taking the issues to heart. The area manager saw the number of appointments rise compared to those branches that did not attend the organisational theatre performance (Carter et al., 2011).

From a critical perspective, the narrow goal of the area manager could be interpreted as too simple and too obvious to do any good. From a synoptic perspective, however, the paper might argue that the simplicity and obviousness is exactly what makes it work. Because the goal is so banal and the organisational theatre brought many other issues to the fore, it left a lot of space to examine the wider context of what it means to work in the organisation as a bank clerk. It opens for play during the interactive part of the organisational theatre performances. It provides an incentive to look further afield and to see how things at work are interconnected. In this way, it turns from a hard goal into nothing more than an orientation post. This became especially visible in the afternoon session of the organisational theatre. The actors, scenes and interactive phases enriched the simple goal and point beyond it, where employees might identify and try desirable and expected identities.

This was facilitated through the relative freedom that the organisational theatre company had in the performance. Had the area manager insisted on each scene to deliver a certain message and to be accountable for a certain effect, then the organisational theatre would have most likely led to a plain mirroring of panoptic power or to no interesting mirror image at all. But with the granted freedom the simple goal of raising the number of appointments translated for the employees into the management-desired identity of being a sales person and a service agent. The goal became a strange attractor for the performances, since the actors, the consultants and the audience knew it and it could feed into the different levels of viewing in the organisational theatre. To get anywhere interesting, the audience had to deliberately upset and upend this goal. The detours that the organisational theatre performance took in the morning and afternoon sessions are not a nuisance - they are a chance for new sense. Employees reconsidered not only the narrowly defined goal ("make more appointments") but also the expectations on identity as they became understandable from the context. The perceived desired identity, found unacceptable, and the present identity, found insufficient, gave rise to a variant that included talking with clients about possible profiling, without it being a salespeople's job.

This was supported through HR management being fairly open to what was happening at the organisational theatre since the bank was in no financial trouble and jobs were not at stake. This point of view might have changed soon after the performances, when the bank announced a merger with a rival institution. If the organisational theatre had been staged during the merger, employees might have seen it as a waste of money during tough times or might have taken it as a platform to voice discontent and fears of cuts and job losses.

4.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to review existing perspectives on organisational theatre and to see how power and *looking glass* perspectives intertwine in the exploration of synoptic power. To do this, the paper looked at the identity dynamics around an illustrative example of organisational theatre which led to a recognition that exploring synoptic power shows the *looking glass effect* and organisational theatre in a new light. The analogous, shifting reflections of organisational theatre that make it almost useless from a panoptic power perspective seem to be just right for highly qualified knowledge workers of today to revisit their identities.

From these early reflections, it seems possible that the peripheral persuasion, anaesthetic and entertainment effects of organisational theatre that scholars have observed are symptoms of a process that runs deeper and that involves the continuous reconstruction of identity around work issues, corporate culture and perceived images. In liquid modernity, this is more likely to at least include the working of synoptic power, in particular where knowledge workers use projected images to develop new habits and interpretations around organisational issues and their mode of engagement is at least partially open and involving. Where these conditions are not met, one can imagine that organisational theatre is truly just a weak and unreliable means in the managerial toolbox to achieve their goals or an opportunity for the audience to poke fun at managerial intentions through making messages, for and message makers to lose their hold and to use stage characters as ready-at-hand illustrative metaphors for organisational life.

Organisational theatre's mirroring of synoptic processes may well be influenced by the distance that employees have to the organisational theatre performance. Meisiek (2004) suggests that for organisational theatre to work, it has to allow the audience to find an aesthetic distance to the performance. If audience members are under-distanced, they take the performance too seriously and miss the opportunities to interpret it in a wider fashion. If audience members are over-distanced, they are usually not becoming engaged and are unlikely to see anything interesting in the content of the performance at all. While it is likely that in each and every audience there are a few under-distanced and over-distanced members, it depends on the audience as a whole to find a generative aesthetic distance. When this distance is found, it is more likely that audience members see the organisational theatre performance as a chance to play, to explore and to challenge interpretations of the collective identity and organisational culture. It might also be only at this point that the organisational theatre works as a means for synoptic power.

There are limitations to the observations that were made in this chapter. The study only presented an illustrative example - so many questions remain open. What happened after the organisational theatre intervention, for example, in the conversations of employees? What identity change has taken place, if any? How will it influence the culture of the financial services organisation? And how does it fit into a broader consideration of liquid modernity and synoptic power? It will be up to more ambitious empirical studies to answer these questions. The studies will need to have a closer look at the organisations, the collective identities, the smaller details of what happens in active audience performances

and the interpretative landscape in the organisations after the organisational theatre intervention. One would expect ideas and opinions about power and politics in the organisations to soak through the organisational theatre, to come in double meanings or in jokes and remarks.

There are very few rigorous empirical studies of the effects of organisational theatre in organisations and the evidence gathered so far remains weak. At the same time, the paper suggests that there is a benefit in studying organisational theatre interventions, not only for the narrow field of the workarts (Barry & Meisiek, 2010a; 2010b), but also to inform wider discussions on power and control in organisation studies. This might be even more informative, as methods like organisational theatre become a preferred means for influence in organisations characterised by liquid work conditions, such as temporary group work, high mobility, global collaborations and shifting identities. So far, the paper likes to conclude that organisational theatre is a potentially generative irritation to organisations.

This page is intentionally left blank.

Chapter Five

The Theatre Takes Shape: The Negotiation Bazaar

“If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favour freedom and yet depreciate agitation . . . want crops without ploughing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning.

They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters . . .

Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

Frederick Douglass (1857/1985: 204) in

The significance of emancipation in the West Indies

The nature and impact of organisational theatre is affected by the social and political interactions and negotiations that shape its structure and conditions prior to the actual event. This paper provides the first in-depth longitudinal study of the dynamics and consequences of these pre-event processes and explores the polyphonic nature of organisational theatre, as it presented in the lead up to the actual performance. The paper contributes to studies of organisational theatre through questioning prior interpretations of the meaning and purpose of organisational theatre as being either a ‘theatre of the oppressor’ or a ‘theatre of the oppressed’, adopting instead a polyphonic approach which appreciates the multi-faceted nature and impacts of an organisational theatre event.

5.1 Introduction: Organisational Theatre as Planned Change Intervention

As one form of artist-led intervention, organisational theatre has attracted the interest of theorists and practitioners, stimulating a debate on its theoretical underpinnings and methodological considerations around its implementation (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Gibb, 2004; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004; Schreyögg, 1999; Taylor, 2008). Disagreement continues to exist over the potential of theatre as an intervention in organisational change. The argument particularly relates to the specific methods used in forum theatre, a theatrical technique originally developed by the Brazilian playwright, educator and political activist, Augusto Boal, and which is now widely applied in organisational theatre practice (Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004).

Boal sought to create innovative and politically radical theatre which would encourage critical discourse, give marginalised groups a voice and provide an incentive for democratic change (Boal, 1979/2000). Forum theatre is a particular technique of Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*, encouraging all stakeholders, actors and spectators to act, intervene in and influence the play. The method has been transferred into working organisations and is now used as an interventional or didactic tool in different sectors such as in profit, non-for-profit, financial, education or health organisations.

The application of forum theatre in Western business organisations – a theatre method originally invented to help free politically oppressed citizens in Latin America - has, somewhat unsurprisingly, led to heated debate in organisational studies literature (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). Opponents of the application of forum theatre in working organisations regard such interventions as, at best, mere entertainment and, at worst, as another form of managerial control that channels and oppresses employees' thoughts in a way that distracts them from 'real issues' (Clark & Mangham, 2004a). Supporters of organisational theatre admit that organisational theatre is unable to fulfil the full ideological and normative foundation that Boal attributes to liberating and political theatre, yet they contend that organisational theatre can be more than just an entertaining or oppressing intervention (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Coopey, 1998; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). They argue for the method's capacity to 'unfreeze' and engage participants and to inspire polyphonic and antenarrativist conversations in its liquid and complex mirror-like character (Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyögg & Hopfl, 2004; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). According to these supporters,

organisational theatre, largely due to the emergent and unpredictable character inherent within the performance itself, has the potential to recognise and empower diverse and co-existing voices and to create space for critical reflection (Meisiek and Barry, 2007). This reflection can, it is argued, lead to the surfacing and examination of organisational undiscussables (Meisiek & Barry, 2007), can stimulate alternative ways of thinking and, potentially, lead to changes in the organisation's theories in use (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

Interpretations that characterise organisational theatre as either a managerial tool or as an employee-oriented, change provoking method, tend to focus on only the delivery of organisational theatre as a 'one off' event. These studies provide only very little analysis of how the character and outcomes are shaped throughout the different stages of an organisational theatre process, from its pre-commissioning to its follow-up phases (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Berthoin-Antal, 2013; Schreyögg, 2001). As a result, they tend to overlook or only marginally explore the situational and temporal dynamics within which the organisational theatre event takes place. This involves how these events are shaped by the multifaceted and fluid power dynamics at play and appreciates that multiple conditions contribute to any reconfiguration of patterns of empowerment and control and that an organisational theatre event is but one of these.

This paper attempts to address these issues in an in-depth processual analysis of an organisational theatre event. This event was undertaken as part of a leadership development program at Platanus, a newly established patient-centred cancer care facility¹⁰.

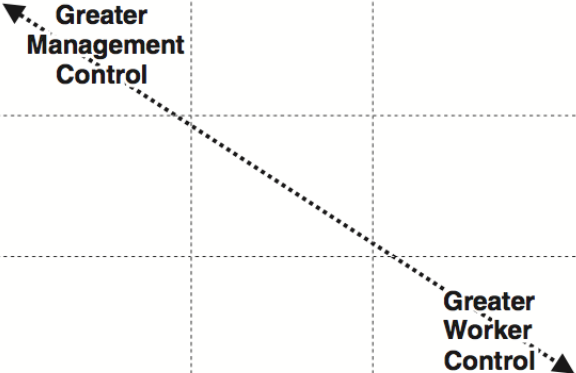
The paper explores the factors shaping the structure of the forum theatre event and describes the dynamics and events leading up to the final performance. These took place between 8 December 2011 and 9 February 2012 - from the initial decision to adopt organisational theatre as a method of change intervention to its delivery (see Appendix I: Event History Database Ref. 64-99). The particular focus of the paper is on the construction, negotiation and finalisation of a 'surface' formal purpose of the organisational theatre event and its interaction with 'deeper' cultural factors and social conditions.

¹⁰ The term 'Platanus' was used to find a fictional name for the case study site – the establishment of a world-class holistic, patient-centred cancer care facility – that captured its idealistic medical nature. Platanus was the name of the tree under which Hippocrates taught his pupils the art of medicine.

5.2 Towards an Explanation of Organisational Theatre and its Character

In an attempt to go beyond simple one-dimensional views of organisational theatre as a managerial ‘theatre of the oppressor’ or a liberating ‘poetics of the oppressed’, Nissley et al. (2004) developed a two-dimensional structural framework for classifying different types of organisational theatre events in terms of the degree to which they conform to Boal’s model of forum theatre. They do so by focusing on management’s or ‘workers’ control of the *role* and the *script* (Nissley et al., 2004). Nissley et al. (2004) argue that when managers or professional actors, engaged and paid for by management, perform a play or write a script, the control of the event lies in the hands of management and advances the interests and views of management as compared to the ‘workers’. On the contrary, if the organisational members are in control of the role or the script, the performance is more ‘worker’-controlled and, consequently, in alignment with their views and interests. An outline of their model, including ‘mid-way’ points where there is more co-control of role and script, is provided in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Framework for Critically Analysing Theatre-Based Training (Nissley et al. 2004)

Control of Role Control of Script			
	Passive Audience	Directed Performer	Self-Directed/ Active Performer
Other-Scripted	 <p>Greater Management Control</p>		
Co-Scripted			
Self-Improvised			Greater Worker Control

Despite the framework’s simplicity and appeal, this two-dimensional model fails to capture other possible influences on the theatre event (such as the effects of the facilitator, in Boal’s terms, the ‘Joker’ or ‘difficultator’) or explore any other basis for defining views or interests.

In their explorations, Nissley et al. (2004) themselves admit that these structural conditions are unable to fully capture the nature and dynamics of organisational theatre and its effects. In their attempt to equate ‘control’ over the role and script with who acts out the role and who writes the script, they question

“ . . . whether some elements of ‘concertive control’ (Barker, 1993) limit workers’ freedom to express their real interests in performance. At the other end of the spectrum, we might wonder to what degree a professional playwright who is hired to write a piece of organizational theatre really represents management’s interests in the play, and to what degree the play comes out of interviews with workers and thus represents the workers’ interests.” (Nissley et al., 2004: 828)

After having acknowledged the complexities of structural views of control, the influence of actors in interpreting scripts and audiences in interpreting performances, Nissley et al. (2004: 832) observe that

“ . . . no one has complete control over the professional theatre performance — it is, by definition, a collaboration (. . .) For organizational theatre interventions and training, this means that we must recognize that the performance’s meaning is jointly constructed and will reflect a variety of interests.”

Previous research has also highlighted the importance of the role of the Joker or ‘difficultator’ as s/he has, as a mediator, commissioned consultant, artist and discursive-political actor, the potential to strongly affect and control the dynamics of the event and hence the character and interpretation of the play (Barry, 1994; Beirne & Knight, 2007; Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Schutzman, 2006). Finally, Nissley et al. (2004) question their exclusive focus on ‘management’ versus ‘worker’ views and interests, recognising the multivocal characteristics of organisations. They acknowledge that while managers’ and employees’ interests may differ in some aspects, they can overlap in others. They also recognise that there are valuable elements in “a sort of postmodern organizational theatre (. . .) restoring a poly-historical and multivocal perspective” (Nissley et al., 2004: 833).

5.3 Organisational Theatre and Polyphony

In order to draw on, yet extend Nissley et al.’s (2004) framework, this paper seeks to introduce such a ‘poly-historical’ and ‘multivocal’ perspective. Several studies have recognised and accepted that organisational theatre may be more or less effective in stimulating multivocal and simultaneous discussions of common concerns (for example: Boje, Rosile, Durant, & Luhman, 2004; Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Coopey, 1998; Meisiek

& Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). Meisiek and Barry (2007), for example, make reference to such ideas in observing the potential of organisational theatre to stimulate polyphonic discourse. In contrast to ‘univocal’ views of dialogue expressed in work on organisational learning by theorists such as Peter Senge (1990), they argue for the consideration of organisational theatre as a collective and dialogical process, where diverse voices are expressed and where ownership of structure and content are shared (Meisiek & Barry, 2007). Yet, while their argument recognises the unpredictable emergence of diversity and multivocality during a theatre performance, they provide little analysis of such attributes in the establishment of performance conditions. Further, it remains unclear how such diverse and contradictory voices were brought together in a more or less polyphonic fashion (Meisiek & Barry, 2007).

In their work on *post-dramatic* theatre, Beyes and Steyaert (2006a: 104) argue in greater detail for a polyphonic theatre form and content allowing “a carnival, a playful questioning of current states through which the energies of a more vibrant social diversity can re-echo.” But similarly to Meisiek and Barry (2007), Beyes and Steyaert (2006a) provide little analysis of how, and to what degree, such a ‘carnival’ takes place in the social processes leading up to the organisational theatre event and which may structure, at least in part, the conditions for the subsequent performance.

Outside organisational theatre studies, the general literature on polyphony in organisations provides a more extensive guide for understanding the expression and management of diversity and voice (Clegg et al., 2006a; Hazen, 1993, 2011; Kornberger et al., 2006). In this literature, polyphony is used as a metaphor to help capture the multivocal character of organisations, the inherently diverse points of views that emerge during the process of organisational becoming (Boje, 2002; Gergen & Whitney, 1996; Hazen, 1993, 2011) and the degree to which multiple voices find ‘harmonious’ expression (Kornberger et al., 2006).

As a ‘description’ of the multivocality in organisations, polyphony points to and explores the existence of simultaneous and concurrent dialogues (for example: Hazen, 1993, 2011). It assumes that organisations are inherently multivocal and they construct their understanding of reality through pluralistic discourse (Foucault, 1972) and, in doing so, make sense of their experience (Clegg et al., 2005; Weick, 1995). This aspect of polyphony is compatible with post-structuralist views of organisations as complex webs of sense-making activities, which are not exclusively dominated by one totalising voice. Within such perspectives, activities within and between groups and individuals in organisations are not

linear and logical but are shaped by discursive practices and power dynamics that are less authoritative and more fluid and pluralistic in their character (Clegg et al., 2006a; Clegg, 1989; Hazen, 1993; Kornberger et al., 2006; Rhodes, 2001).

One particular critique of polyphony focuses on its apparent assumption that organisations are inherently polyphonic and that power is, although being at play, distributed between individuals and groups, rather than being held in one socially created power structure (Clegg et al., 2006a; Kornberger et al., 2006; Rhodes, 2001). Parker (2006), for example, raises the question of why organisations have a need to consciously make space for oppressed voices if polyphony persistently shapes organisational reality. Further, Parker (2006) questions whether the interpretation of polyphony by Clegg et al. (2006a) actually assumes a degree of univocality that they do not admit to. In line with this argument, Parker (2006: 40) asserts that

“ . . . the condition of possibility of their argument is precisely a hegemonic version of management that somehow stops all the other possibilities of management from being heard very clearly - a loud and boorish version of management that drowns out all the other small voices.”

What Parker (2006) emphasises and Clegg et al. (2006a) imply is that there is a tension between voices which are more ‘univocal’ and more ‘polyvocal’ within organisations, particularly at the level of formal management rhetoric and rituals. While neither multivocality nor the diverse conditions that give rise to multivocality can be totally eliminated, the recognition and expression of such multivocality may be highly variable. In making this point, Parker (2006) begins to move the discussion into the second dimension of polyphony.

At a ‘normative’ level, polyphony provides a lens for exploring how organisations may be viewed as more or less ‘expressive’ and ‘harmonious’ in the ways they handle and address multivocality (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Clegg et al., 2005; Kornberger et al., 2006). This requires going beyond empirical descriptions of multivocality and to normative considerations of how these voices are, may be or should be brought together - in a generative, inclusive process of deconstruction and translation rather than an artificial and stifling imposition of uniformity or unilateral univocality. The concept of polyphony directly raises consideration of such idealised processes of ‘harmonisation’ as a basis for establishing an effective, meaningful and expressive dialogue.

The challenge of ‘managing’ polyphony in pursuit of such a normative ideal is grounded in the complexities of carefully managing the deconstruction and translation of organisational

discourses of and between all stakeholders (Kornberger et al., 2006). The process of ‘managing’ polyphony involves deconstructing realities and building bridges (translating) between different voices, without creating a unified and repressive ‘totalising’ language. In so doing, the translator has to walk the tightrope of being the ‘author’ of a text that celebrates diversity and polyphony, allowing multivocal interaction and exchange without imposing an artificial and monovocal unity.

The challenge of walking this tightrope has led Czarniawska (Czarniawska, 1999b: 110) to point to the “interesting paradox of organizational practice” facing anyone adopting what Berger and Luckman (1995) term a ‘perspectivist’ position between ‘relativism and fundamentalism’. This addresses the complexity of recognising and acknowledging diversity, yet remaining committed to bringing these multiple voices together in the haggling and noise of the ‘Bazaar’ rather than relapsing into a monolingual disciplining or a self-destructive ‘Tower of Babel’ (Czarniawska, 1999b; Kornberger et al., 2006).

Critics have questioned the underlying idea of polyphony itself, its potential to benefit organisational change, its manageability, as well as the inconclusiveness of its interpretation and definition in organisation studies (Czarniawska, 1999b; Letiche, 2010; Parker, 2002). However, much of this debate stems from confusion over the descriptive and normative components of polyphony. This focus distracts from the central value of the concept in supporting both a descriptive analysis of multivocality and grappling with normative considerations of what constitutes the harmonious expression of this multivocality, without any prioritisation of the voices involved or preference for particular forms of harmony and expression.

Despite this general theoretical interest in the concept of polyphony and discussions around it, polyphony has not gone far beyond its initial metaphorical status (Boje, 1995; Kornberger et al., 2006; Letiche, 2010). Empirical studies are scarce and the descriptive and normative meanings of polyphony have yet to receive systematic empirical exploration. One of the purposes of this chapter is, therefore, to contribute to the discussion by considering the concept of polyphony in connection with this empirical study around how the content and purpose of an organisational theatre event is shaped. In doing so, the paper explores the degree to which polyphony in organisations can be exactly defined (and whether it should be), how it plays out in an organisational context, the manner and forms in which it captures or contributes to the diverse literature on change and organisational theatre, how polyphony can be managed and, indeed, whether that management is

desirable at all. A particular empirical focus of the chapter is on exploring both ‘descriptive’ and ‘normative’ dimensions of polyphony in the investigation of organisational settings and the micro rituals (Collins, 2004; Goffman, 1959) involved in stakeholders’ negotiations of the ‘deep’ purpose’ and conditions of an organisational theatre event.

5.4 Exploring Purposes: Surface, Depth and Polyphony

Classical functionalist and symbolic views of organisational culture share two sets of assumptions: firstly, that culture is a set of shared beliefs, values and assumptions; and, secondly, that cultural analysis reveals the ‘deep’ meanings (whether these are actual, tacit, unconscious, informal, private or hidden) that underlie ‘surface’ formal, public or artefactual appearances (Schultz, 1994). Boal (1979/2000) and Nissley et al. (2004) share the view that, underneath the ‘surface’ rhetorics and rituals of social life, are clear cultural values and assumptions that allow the culturally sensitive analyst to decode speech, actions and events as embodying or reflecting underlying and clearly definable cultural purposes. For ‘radical’ critics of organisational theatre (for example: Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Nissley et al., 2004), these constitute binary management or ‘worker’, oppressor or oppressed interests and viewpoints. Within these perspectives, the functions of ‘surface’ culture are informed by their role as either the servant of the dominant power group or its opponent and so function to either oppress or liberate the subordinate group. In contrast ‘ambiguity’ and ‘fragmentation’ perspectives view cultural meanings as far more diverse, uncertain and fragmented (Martin, 2001; Meyerson, 1991; Meyerson & Martin, 1987).

‘Ambiguity’ and ‘fragmentation’ perspectives align with polyphonic approaches to organisations and organisational theatre in that they recognise, and indeed celebrate, diversity, plurality and multivocality. Within these schools of thought, the ‘meaning’ of speech, actions and events is not informed by the fact that they reflect one or another univocal purpose but by the ways in which they embody and reflect the underlying multivocality. However, polyphonic approaches also explore the nature and significance of not only the ‘Tower of Babel’ and its recognition, but also the abilities and value of attempts to deconstruct and translate a multiplicity of voices to bring about more ‘harmonious’ and expressive forms of collaborative understanding, decision making and action.

The value of such 'normative' polyphonic enterprises does not lie in their success or failure to express a one-dimensional normatively privileged univocal purpose (giving recognition to the 'real', clearly identifiable and shared 'deep' meaning of culture). Instead, their value lies in their ability to stimulate collaboration, in recognition of not only the impossibility, but also the undesirability of imposing univocal interpretations and initiatives. In this sense, polyphonic perspectives recognise what Schultz (1994) emphasised - that fragmentation perspectives are dependent upon, in reaction to and intertwined with the perspectives and issues that define and concern more traditional functionalist and symbolic perspectives on culture. How, though, does this look like in organisational life and how, for the immediate purposes of this paper, does a polyphonic interpretation of the events leading up to an organisational theatre event play out?

As outlined earlier, during the data collection and analysis phases of this study, it became clear that the two-dimensional straightjacket imposed by Nissley et al. (2004) was insufficient to allow a full appreciation of the multiple voices involved in the process and the manner in which these voices were 'as one'. This paper, therefore, looks at the nature of an organisational theatre process through a polyphonic perspective. The paper follows Schultz's (1994) characterisation of the nature of functionalist and symbolic perspectives and the 'twist' that is given to these by more fragmentationist approaches (Martin, 2001; Meyerson, 1991; Meyerson & Martin, 1987). It does so by focusing in the first instance on the 'surface' formal purpose of the organisational theatre event, the voices involved in negotiating that formal purpose and the manner in which the formal purpose was deconstructed and translated into an agreed and applied 'purpose' for the event that was generally accepted.

It continues, however, to explore the deeper meaning of this 'purpose' and the factors affecting it and explores the ways in which these factors were intertwined with and influenced the structure of the organisational theatre event. In addition to examining the multiple voices and influences upon this process, the paper also explores the manner in which these voices can be seen as 'coming together' in a more or less harmonious process of expressing a polyphonic resolution (rather than imposing an authoritarian univocality in the face of ambiguity and diversity).

The assumption guiding this study is *not* that there are clear indicators of whether or not something called polyphony has been achieved, as that would betray the spirit of the perspective. It is, rather, to explore the form polyphony may take, the manner in which it

may be responded to and how the outcomes of this response may be understood. It is to this empirical illustration of polyphony that I now turn.

5.5 Case Study and Method

This paper draws on the data from a longitudinal and processual single-case study. The approach was selected as basis for conducting an in-depth exploration of how stakeholders negotiate, plan and construct the conditions and purpose of an organisational theatre event over time. The in-depth study enabled me to capture the political (Clegg et al., 2006b; Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998; Lukes, 2005; Zanko et al., 2008), processual (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) and inherently ambiguous (Martin & Meyerson, 1988) cultural pragmatics (Alexander, 2004) involved in the emergence of an organisational theatre event.

A focus on the twelve month process of developing an organisational theatre event is part of a broader eighteen month case study seeking to explore what had been identified as a major gap in empirical studies of organisational theatre: a comprehensive longitudinal study focusing on all stages of an organisational theatre process, from its pre-commissioning to its follow-up phases (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Schreyögg, 2001) (see Appendix C: Case Study Overview and Timeline). The particular focus of this paper is, however, only on findings during negotiation stages leading up to the organisational theatre event (see Appendix I: Event History Database Ref. 064-099).¹¹

5.5.1 Research Site

The case takes the form of a qualitative longitudinal study at a newly established patient-centred cancer care facility in a major cosmopolitan city in an OECD country. The clinic, Platanus¹², will open at the end of 2013 and, once opened, will be the country's main cancer treatment and research facility delivering integrated patient-centred cancer care. The cancer services of the local health district are currently provided by an existing, public

¹¹ The following two thesis chapters will address the subsequent stages of the organisational theatre process (the enactment of the event, and its follow-up process).

¹² The term 'Platanus' was used to find a fictional name for the case study site – the establishment of a world-class holistic, patient-centred cancer care facility – that captured its idealistic medical nature. Platanus was the name of the tree under which Hippocrates taught his pupils the art of medicine.

hospital-based cancer clinic and it is envisaged that its services will gradually transition into Platanus. Staff members at the existing cancer clinic were offered a transfer into the new organisation under new employment contracts to work in an environment that will offer a different, patient-centred and commercially oriented not-for-profit structure and culture. The transition for those employees who choose to work for Platanus was to be managed by a multi-disciplinary Executive Team.

In March 2011, Platanus's CEO and HR Managers decided to initiate a formal educational leadership development program to support the Executive Team conducting the organisational change. The program involved the appointment of two Academic Consultants to develop an action-research based leadership development program together with Platanus's HR Managers. After one year this program led to the realisation of an organisational forum theatre event.

5.5.2 Data Collection

The data collection during pre-event stages involved non-participant observation (Dawson, 1997) of more than twenty meetings (approximately 40 hours) of and between the organisation, its HR Managers, the Executives, the Academic Consultants and the Theatre Company. I audio-recorded the meetings, took notes of my observations and drafted memos directly after the meetings. During later stages of the analysis, I transcribed approximately twelve hours of the meetings to further clarify emerging issues and themes. Further, I observed the third Leadership Workshop (4 hours) immediately prior to the organisational theatre event, took notes of my observations and wrote memos and diary entries immediately after the workshop. I was not granted access to the first two Leadership workshops, however, I sought information about these workshops through informal follow-up interviews with the two Academic Consultants and the HR Managers.

To extend my understanding of the development of the enterprise and its social setting, I kept diary-like notes of my observations and first findings and combined these with a collection and analysis of numerous emails and documents exchanged between the different stakeholders throughout the process. The documents were provided to me on request but Platanus's HR Managers, the Executives, the Academic Consultants and the Theatre Company also provided unsolicited documents.

To explore participants' perceptions, views and interpretations of the 'formal' purpose of, and the process leading up, to the organisational theatre event, I conducted one set of formal open-ended, semi-structured interviews of about half an hour each with the HR Managers, the Academic Consultants, the Theatre Consultant/Facilitator, the Actress and three members of the Executive Team (9 interviews, 4.5 hours). The interviews were aimed at identifying interviewees' general motivations to join the organisation and/or support the change process, their understanding of their roles in that process and their interpretation of the purpose of the upcoming organisational theatre event (see F: Pre-event Interview Questions). All formal interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed (9 interviews, 4.5 hours).

5.5.3 Data Analysis

Following a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011) the data was, during its collection, initially coded with marginal remarks. I coded incidents such as meetings, emails or in situ conversations and refrained from line-by-line coding due to the nature and volume of the data. This process involved comparing incidents with other incidents, searching for patterns, revisiting coding made of earlier incidents and comparing them with my conceptualisations of events. I supported this process by writing memos and developing categories for information, which I then discussed with my supervisors to develop my ideas (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

This first phase was a period of speculative generation of ideas influenced by an initial and general process of categorising data (for example participants' references to 'vision', 'insiders'/'outsiders' etc.) as well as collecting and noting data guided by the sensitising concepts created as a result of a preceding literature review. These sensitising concepts were strongly influenced by Nissley et al.'s (2004) attention to control over role and script through a management-employee lens. Further, I focused on the role of the facilitator ('difficultator'), as well as the influence of the agential purpose (and fluid power dynamics) of management, the theatre company and the employees in shaping the content of the script and the roles to be enacted. Attention remained, however, on the degree to which the theatre event was 'radical' (management or employee oriented), with a particular focus

on Boalian ideals and Nissley and Taylor's (2004) 'translation' and operationalisation of these ideals.

In the second phase of analysis, I organised the collected data into a timeline-like 'event history database' (Poole & Van de Ven, 1990), which involved chronologically organising the collected data (meetings, emails, workshops, etc.) to broadly map out the web of actions, events and choices throughout the study. To develop my understanding of the specific context of the stakeholders' behaviour and reasoning, I created context charts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During this stage I decided to focus on the issues arising and dynamics in play during the pre-event, event and post-event phases of the organisational theatre process. At the same time, the complexity and diversity of the voices involved in and the issues emerging during these stages became more apparent. For example, issues of competing HR voices as well as the tensions and the paradoxical nature of change management strategies, began to emerge more strongly. On the one hand, the loose categorisation of data allowed a relatively open collection and exploration of these matters. On the other hand, a sensitising focus on 'oppression' and 'liberation' continued as a guiding theme. However, in noting the presence of concepts such as 'undiscussables', 'dominant' and 'marginalised' viewpoints etc., it became apparent that the Boalian 'management versus worker' framework was incapable of capturing the complexity of the multiplicity of voices or guiding the evaluation of the outcomes of such a situation. During this period I began to explore and develop the concepts of, for example, 'undiscussables', using theoretical sampling to test and supplement the categories by revisiting interviewees and participants in the study (Charmaz, 2006).

In the third phase of analysis, the concept of polyphony was explored as a framework for building a 'post-Boalian' perspective on the fluid social and political dynamics of organisational theatre to enable a fuller exploration of its character and impact. The polyphony framework interacted with the pre-event, event and post-event timeline and the general categorisation of data within these stages. This allowed reflection and insight on the role of different HR perspectives in the shaping of the 'formal' purpose during these pre-event stages, as well as the complex cultural and social conditions affecting the source, interpretation and impact of this 'formal' purpose on the actual theatre event.

5.6 Findings

In revisiting the data, I found that the stakeholders negotiated the conditions leading up to the organisational theatre event in diverse ways. This process was characterised by various interpretations of the formal ‘purpose’ and the exertion of a number of influences on this ‘purpose’, its interpretation and its selective use. While points of disagreement surfaced during the negotiations of the formal ‘purpose’, there were also attempts at a number of levels to encourage the harmonious expression of the manifold perspectives or voices.

To present these findings this chapter is structured into four sections. The first section provides the *Background Context*. The second section explores the *Direct Negotiations of the Formal Purpose by the ‘HR’ Professionals*. This leads to the third section, an exploration of *The Negotiated Formal Purpose as Polyphonic Outcome*. The chapter concludes with a section illuminating the ways in which *The Deep Play of Culture* additionally influenced the conditions shaping the organisational theatre event.

5.6.1 Background Context

A key defining moment in the decision to create an organisational theatre event was the third leadership development workshop at Platanus (Ref. 069). In this workshop the decision was made to have an organisational theatre event that allowed the Senior Executive Team to experiment in having productive and persuasive informal conversations with prospective staff. The decision followed a frustrated outburst from the Communications and Marketing Manager, Julia, who complained about the ‘very vanilla’ messages that the future employees were getting. In response to casual observations about raising issues in clinical meetings, she burst out and argued that

“ . . . they will only get vanilla again and be frustrated as they do not want to send people home over holidays without knowing what will happen.” (Julia in Third Leadership Workshop, December 2011. Ref. 069)

The issues and frustrations that the Executives experienced as a result of the Local Health District’s decision to restrict the Executives’ communication with potential staff were first raised by Platanus’s CEO, Tony, in an earlier meeting between him and the Academic Consultants (April 2011, Ref. 009). In this meeting Tony explained that there were legal

restrictions around the Executives from communicating anything about future employment to the prospective staff.

In the third leadership workshop (Ref. 069), the two Academic Consultants suggested that the Executives consider holding an organisational theatre event to assist the Executives to address their concern around how to communicate Platanus's 'message' to prospective staff in informal situations.

While one of the Academics, Richard, emphasised the value of the theatre in experimenting with 'thick-thin' cultural forms, the other Academic, Carter, stressed the usefulness of theatre in practising communication. The Executive Team immediately began to joke about who would play whom and about how Hollywood stars would be integrated into their leadership development program. General agreement amongst the Executives was obtained by the HR Manager, Pauline, when she sought confirmation that they were 'okay' with a theatre event (Third Leadership Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 069).

In subsequent one-on-one interviews with some of the Executives, it seemed that they had only a general idea about organisational theatre and what they had agreed to. Fred guessed that theatre workshop was going to be about

“ . . . some role-playing about some scenarios of - you know, dealing with situations. Either with the team or as individuals or as one-on-one, with our colleagues looking on.” (Pre-event Interview with Fred, February 2012, Ref. 093)

Or, as June explained,

“ . . . my understanding is that it's an alternate way to demonstrate interactions with people and allowing us to sort of learn by observing difficult situations. And maybe then unpicking that and working through scenarios and us being able to - then discuss those and think about how we would react in those situations or - how we felt about how the interactions went.” (Pre-event Interview with June, February 2012, Ref. 092)

5.6.2 Direct Negotiations of the Formal Purpose by the 'HR' Professionals

In a series of workshops, meetings, phone calls and emails, the stakeholders discussed their initial intentions and negotiated specific aims. One week prior to the event, the HR Managers and the Academic Consultants agreed to use the following question as an overarching theme for the theatre event:

How as leaders do we respond to informal questions about Platanus's vision, values and our personal ambitions to engage them in our journey?

Reaching this 'formal' purpose had been a somewhat lengthy and complex process. Immediately after the third workshop, Pauline, the HR Manager, had met with Richard and Carter to discuss further steps. Based on the Executives' discussions, they - at least formally - agreed that issues around informal communication with potential staff should be the focus of the next workshop and that organisational theatre would be a valuable method to allow the Executives to practise leading these conversations. A day later, Pauline briefed the HR Director, Andrew, who was absent from the third workshop, and he agreed to the need to address communication problems with staff and to use theatre as a method to do so. In a later interview he explained how he perceived the current challenges at Platanus:

"I think we are trying to create something that does not exist currently. And I think articulating that vision and influencing those that are critical to our success is the challenge." (Pre-event Interview with Andrew, January 2012, Ref. 075)

After these discussions, the Theatre Company was contacted and asked about their ability and willingness to be contracted to support the leadership development program and, in particular, Platanus's challenge in communicating with potential staff. The Theatre Company indicated its interest and an initial, rather broad agreement was made to address the issues the Executives were facing in a half-day organisational theatre session (Ref. 067). In an interview the Theatre Consultant/Facilitator, Tom, recounted the main challenges of Platanus as explained to him by Andrew, the HR Director, and the Academic, Carter:

"... they [Platanus] have a really strong vision that they want to achieve and the success of that vision will be largely dependent on a whole network of conversations. (. . .) and over time it's the accumulated affect of these conversations that will either have a whole bunch of people saying, 'this is possible' - or less so, like 'Ohhh, I don't really see it'. To build something out of nothing requires conversation that does inspire and generates and motivates action." (Pre-event Interview with Tom, February 2012, Ref. 098)

All 'HR voices' – Platanus's HR Managers, the Academic Consultants and the Theatre Company - seemed to be, at least formally, committed to the importance and relevance of addressing communication with potential staff in the upcoming organisational theatre workshop. Their individual interpretations of how this should be realised, however, differed, which I will now outline.

After a contract had been signed between the Theatre Company and Platanus, the Theatre Consultant, Tom, invited the HR Managers and the Academic Consultant, Richard, to develop a ‘formal purpose question’, which would serve as the overarching theme of the organisational theatre session. In this purpose-development meeting (January 2012, Ref. 079), the HR Managers and Richard each developed individual questions. Their initial formulations were all focused on communication with staff but were different in their specific aims and approaches.

The HR Director, Andrew, for example, focused on how to communicate and sell a message that would motivate potential employees to join Platanus but added the element of a need for authenticity in doing so. He formulated this aim in a purpose question that asked:

“How can we as leaders articulate our reason for being, why others would want to be part of our journey and how do we personalise that request?” (Andrew in Purpose Development Meeting, January 2012, Ref. 079)

The HR Manager, Pauline, extended the focus to addressing employee needs and phrased the question as:

“How do we as leaders persuade a diverse range of people to take a leap of faith by either supporting or joining Platanus as partners or employees by getting them to reflect on their ‘What’s in it for me?’ ” (Pauline in Purpose Development Meeting, January 2012, Ref. 079)

The Academic Consultant, Richard, added a further variable to previous discussions, involving the consideration and recognition of the diverse voices of both ‘agents’ and ‘targets’ in change when communicating Platanus’s message to staff, wording the question as:

“How do I recognise, energise and motivate others and myself in challenging and confronting situations?” (Richard in Purpose Development Meeting, January 2012, Ref. 079)

Andrew, Pauline and Richard agreed to work on ways in which the Executives’ communication with staff could be realised in a way would support staff transferring to Platanus and would demonstrate a commitment to a patient-centred care in the new facility. However, they differed in their specific aims and approaches. This deviation led to heated discussions, particularly between Andrew and Richard, and no agreement on how the final ‘formal purpose question’ should be phrased was reached.

Despite several meetings and email exchanges an agreement could not be reached on how to frame the question and the dissonance between Andrew and Richard persisted. Andrew argued for narrowing the focus of the purpose to supporting the Executives in being authentic while getting their message across (Pre-event Interview with Andrew, January 2012, Ref. 075). Richard, on the other hand, insisted that the question should stimulate consideration of broader themes around the complexity and paradox of managing diversity and change and encourage a recognition of the ‘other’ (inside and outside oneself) in challenging and confronting situations (E-mail from Richard to Andrew and Pauline, January 2012, Ref. 077).

In an interview Andrew explained that he saw the value in Richard’s argument but stated,

“There are a lot of things that we could do, and maybe should do. And *this* is my view (*laughs*). But in the end we need to prioritise.” (Pre-event Interview with Andrew, January 2012, Ref. 075)

To Richard, Andrew’s approach contradicted crucial elements in Platanus’s vision. Richard admitted that, as an academic, he was inclined to pursue ‘ideals’ at the cost of ‘practical’ outputs and he appreciated the greater experience and pragmatism of Andrew. However, at the same time, he argued,

“ . . . it is his role as an HR person to impose one view and one monologue and get it plugged in and get things done. So that traditional way - if you just get people to agree to what the management monologue is and persuade and enrol them, than that’s not diversity and polyvocality. So their roles, in a way are separate from them as individuals. It’s them more standing for a particular kind of institutional reality and sub-culture that I think may dominate the event. And if a certain word, just a phrase, part of the setting, part of the objectives begins to channel people’s thoughts and minds in that direction – that is what I am fearful of.” (Interview with Richard, February 2012, Ref. 088)

One week prior to the event, a decision on the formal purpose became imperative and the HR Managers and the Academic Consultants agreed to finalise the purpose question in a phone conference (February, 2012, Ref. 089). In this phone conversation Andrew and Richard’s competing perspectives were now supplemented by a third competing perspective from Pauline, who argued that the purpose question should include a consideration of employees’ needs. The argument reached its peak when Carter interrupted and suggested considering all three ideas in the design of the question. Eventually, elements of all three aspects were integrated and it was determined to pursue the following question as the formal purpose question of the session:

How as leaders do we respond to informal questions about Platanus's vision, values and our personal ambitions to engage them in our journey?

The Theatre Consultant Tom was aware of this statement of formal purpose but yet developed a more individual interpretation when asked to summarise the purpose for the upcoming event. He viewed the purpose as

“ . . . to help the Executives to develop confidence and capability to have conversations, which make a difference, are generative and leave people with a sense of possibilities rather than cynicism.” (Pre-event Interview with Tom, February 2012, Ref. 098)

This re-interpretation reflected Tom's professional interest and the Theatre Company's *purpose, habit, choice* approach (Informal conversations with Theatre Company and Organisational Theatre Proposal Document, December 2012, Ref. 096).

Despite his re-interpretation, Tom communicated the official purpose to the Actress, Lizzie, in a rehearsal one day prior to the theatre event. When I asked Lizzie to explain the purpose of the theatre event at Platanus after the rehearsal, she confirmed a focus on issues around communication. She, however, added

“ . . . the purpose is to reflect back [on] the behaviour that is pertinent to Platanus (. . .) to give the people an opportunity to identify or not to identify with behaviour. To feel the difference in their own behaviour, so they can then reflect on who they are and how they behave with an idea to changing or on improving communication. (. . .) My hope is that Platanus can feel empowered and knowledgeable and reaffirm their own position and have a sense of unification as a team.” (Pre-event Interview with Lizzie, February 2012, Ref. 097)

Lizzie's particular focus seemed to stress her identity as an actress and her general interest in empowering people (Pre-event Interview with Lizzie, February 2012, Ref. 097). Her additional interpretations around issues of empowerment and the unification of the Executive Team did, however, strongly resonate with issues Pauline had identified earlier in her role as HR Manager (Pre-event Interview with Pauline, January 2012, 074).

The rehearsal at the Theatre Company and the interviews with Tom and Lizzie were the last data elements I collected before the organisational theatre event was eventually realised in February 2012.

In its focus on informal responses to questions in order to engage potential employees, the formal purpose statement represented a compromise between the desire to communicate the official Platanus patient-centred vision and mission and to listen to, adapt to and speak in the language of prospective employees who had been socialised to the ways of a publicly

funded medically focused institution. For Andrew this may have represented less of the direct and forceful 'authentic' message that he desired. For Richard the addition of 'engagement' to the question was insufficient to capture what he saw as imperative - the surfacing, recognition and adaption to the 'hidden transcripts' or 'repressed voices' representative of the old way. Yet Richard was satisfied that the question, at least opened up the space for questioning and challenging attempts to channel the workforce into any form for univocal communication. This 'compromise' statement represented the outcome of negotiations between representatives of the three HR groups, each with their own interests and perspectives.

5.6.3 The Negotiated Formal Purpose as Polyphonic Outcome

From the outline of interactions and the interests and perspectives of the participating groups (see Appendix J: Stakeholders' Background Stories), it was clear that the formal purpose arrived at by the Executives was a form of shifting contested and problematic 'negotiated order' (Strauss, 1978) or 'boundary object' (Star & Griesemer, 1989), influenced by the character of the relevant social groups or 'social worlds' involved in the interaction (Garrety & Badham, 2000). As an entity affected by and embodying this multivocality, the formal purpose could not simply be channelled into a 'management/worker' straightjacket. All the participants expressed an interest in and commitment to the caring nature of Platanus's enterprise but varied in the degree of commitment to incorporating deviant voices. The interest of some stakeholders in seeking to make a space for deviant voices was particularly emphasised by Pauline's interest in addressing prospective employees' 'what's in it for them' and in Richard's focus on incorporating the voices marginal to the new, potentially univocal commitment to a patient-centred vision. Some stakeholders, particularly Pauline and Richard, were also excited simply by the 'radical' and innovative nature of what was being attempted.

In other areas, a complex set of crosscutting issues was also involved. For example, while voicing commitment to driving good communication but being less enthusiastic about organisational theatre as a means to do so, Andrew was also committed to freeing up idealistic health employees from the constraints of a restrictive and under-funded public health hierarchy. Both Andrew and Lizzie expressed commitment to the development of the Executives as an effective team. Carter aspired to processes of learning and questioning

assumptions and Richard had a commitment to the recognition of complexity and paradox. Tom sought to stimulate more generative discussion and, like Lizzie, to encourage the Executives' confidence and skill in holding productive conversations.

While many of these issues can be read into the formal purpose, it is probably more accurate to say that a number of issues were not addressed in any real sense. A more clearly contested issue was the conflict between

- (i) a more 'managerial' focus on the effectiveness of the Executives' communication of the vision, shown by a focus on their communication capabilities and ability to talk authentically about their commitments, accompanied by assumptions about the superiority of the new 'empowered' work structure, and
- (ii) a looser focus on generative conversations, the recognition of paradox and the desire to allow expression of marginal voices, accompanied by an interest in addressing the more individualistic interests of the workforce and the Executives (the latter in ensuring the true engagement).

When it came to various decision points, with on-going dispute between Andrew and Richard, Pauline and Carter played a mediating 'bricoleuring' role. Pauline reinforced the need to 'engage' potential employees who may hold different values and interests and Carter suggested that all three views be incorporated. In an interview, Carter noted, "when Richard coined the term 'engagement', Andrew moved a bit closer to his perspective" (Pre-event Interview with Carter, February 2012, Ref. 090). The question was from Richard's point of view still too focused on an 'engaging' others in 'our journey' – to the exclusion of learning from others, adapting to others and learning about and forging a co-created 'journey' (Pre-event Interview with Richard, February 2012, Ref. 088). It seemed that from Andrew's point of view, the question did not focus enough on the effective communication of a pre-determined and clear inspirational message. Despite this disagreement Carter noted that the tensions were on a 'professional' not 'personal' level, and with the help of the Pauline and Carter, Andrew and Richard reached a compromise, ultimately forging an inclusive message considering all three perspectives (Pre-event Interview with Carter, February 2012, Ref. 090). Also, both Andrew and Richard expressed an understanding of each other's perspective with Andrew laughingly recognising Richard's 'point' and Richard respecting Andrew's 'pragmatism' (Pre-event Interviews with Andrew and Richard, February 2012, Ref. 075, 088). Whether this partial addressing of multiple

issues and compromise on other issues can be seen as the achievement of a more 'harmonious' and expressive diversity or as a more or less subtle manipulation, channelling and selective attention to particular managerial interests will be taken up again in the conclusion.

5.6.4 The 'Deep' Play of Culture

Within symbolic and functional perspectives, there is an embedded tendency to view such 'surface' discussions as reflecting a real meaning or 'purpose' embedded deeper in the culture. For Nissley et al. (2004), for example, the issue is the degree to which discussions reflect or promote a purpose that is more at the 'managerial' or 'employee' end of spectrum and how this underlying purpose becomes integrated in the organisational theatre event. This paper, however, adopts a more polyphonic view in exploring two phenomena. Firstly, there is the manner in which these 'HR' discussions reflect how the Executive Team had expressed and wrestled with ambiguous and contested change management cultural antinomies or 'fault-lines' in the previous leadership workshop (Third Leadership Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 064). Secondly, there are the ways in which the 'formal purpose' was selectively interpreted, utilised and enacted by the Facilitator of the event in a space enabled and structured by situational conditions.

A Leadership Team Wrestling with Change Management Antinomies

In the third leadership workshop (in which the decision was made to use organisational theatre, Ref. 064), the HR Managers and Academic Consultants deliberately allowed the discussion to be more open than in previous workshops, with a focus on "current issues affecting the Executives" (Agenda Third Leadership Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 062). During this workshop a strong concern emerged with the 'vanilla messages' that some Executives felt had been communicated to prospective employees about what the transition to Platanus would mean for them. In their discussions around this issue, the Executives were grappling with what has been termed the 'Top-Down versus Participative Management' paradox in organisational change (Dunphy, 2000). As Dunphy observes,

“There are two imperatives in the modern organization. On the one hand, the rate of change demands that those who operate closest to the action (. . .) be empowered to make decisions to allow quick and effective organisational responses (. . .) On the other hand, the rate of change also demands swift and decisive leadership action (. . .) Some of these major shifts effectively disempower people by eliminating or closing down the operations to which they are committed, and significantly altering their responsibilities without their consent.” (Dunphy, 2000: 126/7)

The workshop revealed that the Executives were grappling with this paradox or with what has been referred to as a dissonance-inducing ‘cultural antimony’ (Barley & Kunda, 1992) and as the ambiguity and tension surrounding a ‘cultural fault line’ (Erikson, 1976). In the third workshop, the HR officer, Pauline, observed that the Executives were “trying to empower people to make their own decisions but at the same time to sort of channel them”. The Director of Medicine, Fred, expressed, “We have to empower people who trust us. We don’t want a bunch of passive jellyfish - we do want some drive.” Yet, as the Director of Clinical Operations, Anne, argued, “Platanus is one brand. We are not a Westfield with many brands under its roof.” In line with this the CEO, Tony, confirmed, “We want Platanus to bring everybody together. We want them to continue being passionate about breast cancer, to fundraise etc. [However] we made it clear to Head, Neck and Breast, that they are going to be part of Platanus.” (Pauline, Fred, Anne and Tony in Third Leadership Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 064).

In raising such issues, the Executives recognised different voices and interests in the change process and in large part pre-empted the HR tensions between Andrew and Richard over ‘communication’ versus ‘engagement’. In addressing such issues, the Executives recognised the existence of ‘zero-sum’ conflicts and also sought to find common ground and polyphonic mechanisms for enabling the ‘harmonious’ expression of diverse views within an overall consensus. This became apparent in the discussion emerging in the workshop. As Fred explained, “It is like a job, they have not signed up for . . .” and Pauline finishing the sentence “. . . with a lot of uncertainties”. June, the Chief Information Officer, emphasised that “our patient-centred focus shifted the light away from our staff focus,” and Tony highlighted that “the framing should maybe not be that this is another change management plan – people might not like the word change because it implies that people have done something wrong”. Fred agreed, stressing that they (Platanus) should “avoid a situation where people are saying ‘there are these bastards called Platanus on the other side of the road who force us to do this or that’.”

Tony argued, that “we need to address the delicacy of how to get the message around what are we trying to do here and why. How do you convey a very simple message without criticising the way they are doing things now?” Julia, the Communications and Marketing Manager, raised “the importance of a focus on their shared ethos as health professionals, that is around questions like, ‘Why did you start working here in first place? What are the things that would make our work and patients’ life better?’” Fred contended that the Executive Team should communicate, that “our vision is that we are going to create the support so that people can do their job”. Tony reinforced this view, arguing, that “we want people to say that this is great, we finally get things done here.” (Fred, Pauline, June, Tony and Julia in Third Leadership Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 064).

Taking into account the expression of these views does not involve a reduction of ‘surface’ HR discussions and debates to serving real or deeper interests (managerial, employee or otherwise). It is rather an exploration of how stakeholders express underlying tensions and conflicts, the relative fluidity and ambiguity of the sets of values and beliefs involved and how stakeholders wrestle with trying to make sense of these issues and contradictions in order to enable cooperative action to occur.

The Situated Action of the Theatre Facilitator

The Theatre Consultant and Facilitator, Tom, was left with a degree of space to craft out a script, determine the roles to be played in the forum theatre event, to interpret the purpose and intervene in an ad hoc manner during the workshop. This was allowed by the rather loose agreement on what the realisation of the event would involve (such as the number of actors, the content of the script, the time dedicated to certain scenes).

Further, Tom had initially planned to write the script for the organisational theatre event after the formal purpose question had been confirmed by the HR voices. Their discussions and continuing disagreement on the exact content of the purpose, however, led to a delay and Tom was forced to begin writing the script based on interviews he had held with some of the Executives and one of Platanus’s employees, plus discussions with the HR Managers and the Academic Consultants in earlier meetings.

Tom held the script-informing interview sessions with Andrew, the HR Director; Tony, the CEO; Anne, the Director of Clinical Operations; Julia, Communications and Marketing Manager and Sabine, a Platanus employee, who worked closely with prospective employees

from the existing public cancer clinic on developing work design models. The HR Manager, Pauline, selected the interviewees and explained that she “hoped to offer a diversity in perspectives” (Pre-event Interview with Pauline, January 2012, Ref. 074). Tom, the Theatre Consultant, held the interviews and asked participants to describe how scenes of informal communication with prospective staff could play out. While the participants explained what such scenes might look like, they also addressed issues that went beyond informal communication with staff and that were of a more political nature. These issues were around, for example, the problematic relationship between public and private health, doctor-nurse relations, women’s voices in health and the general cynicism of employees of the current public clinic towards Platanus (Script-development Interviews, January 2012, Ref. 084). After the interviews, Tom was (somewhat unconsciously) given the freedom to filter which issues would be addressed in the final script, which, with a ‘cynical nurse’ and an ‘arrogant surgeon’, reflected particularly the issues raised in the interviews with Julia, Anne and Sabine.

As mentioned above, neither the Executives, the HR Managers nor the Academics determined the structure of the event a priori. Tom alone decided on the balance between professional actors acting out formal scripts allowing for questioning periods with these actors in character, allowing the *‘spect-actors’* to offer suggestions for alternative conversations and the acting out by participants of alternative conversation.

In structuring the ‘space’ left available for him, Tom seemed to be influenced by the *purpose-habit-choice* philosophy of his Theatre Company, its specific interpretation of Boalian injunctions and his own particular focus on generative conversations (Pre-event Interview with Tom, February 2012, Ref. 098). During the event, for example, Tom relatively quickly introduced the ‘15 word purpose statement’ (the formal purpose question), noting that he had initially restricted the HR and Academic discussants to ten words but that he was “going to forgive that” (Tom in Organisational Theatre Event, Ref. 099).

Tom ran the workshop in a ‘classical’ forum theatre manner in which the scripted scenes presented a ‘public transcript’ (Platanus’s official ‘patient-centred’ view voiced by many in the Executive Team and expressed in official publications and messages), which was contrasted with a ‘hidden transcript’ (the traditional public sector employee reservations, lack of buy-in and commitment to the established public health model of medical dominance) (Scott, 1985). In this way the script presented the overlaps, conflicts and

tensions between these perspectives - a public airing in a 'seriously playful' learning environment (Statler, Heracleous, & Jacobs, 2011b).

During the event, Tom introduced and encouraged conversations that addressed both 'engagement' and 'communication', aligning with the Executives' expression of the tensions they were facing in facilitating the change, as well as the final 'compromise' formal purpose statement. In his role as a consultant and facilitator the rather loose structural setting of the event left a great degree of scope for Tom to select participants for drama scenes, to offer his own commentary on suggestions, and to suggest areas for 'constructive' dialogue.

5.7 Discussion

It is significant that, in their classic statements on the nature of culture, Geertz (1973: 5) refers to 'webs of significance' and Cassirer to 'symbolic nets' (Cassirer, 1972: 25). At Platanus the formal purpose statement for the organisational theatre event was a negotiated and ambiguous compromise between 'communication' and 'engagement', overlaid with the additional, sometimes implicit and at other times explicit, issues as mentioned above.

Moreover, the *formation and structure* of this formal purpose statement could not be simply read from the interests and perspective of those directly involved in the purpose defining process. It reflected and expressed ambiguities and cultural tensions recognised by the Executives in the previous workshop as part of the paradoxical nature of managing change in complex and turbulent organisational environments.

The *impact* of this formal purpose statement was also mediated by its selective interpretation and treatment by Tom, the Theatre Consultant/Facilitator. While disagreements over the formal purpose statement were ultimately worked out, Tom had already written the scripts (Ref. 085 and 089). In the organisational theatre event itself, Tom did not really take up (and was arguably somewhat dismissive of) the formal statement as the HR participants had developed it.

The selection of the Facilitator (Tom) and his perspective, interests and scope for manoeuvre was (and is) an important dimension of the political and social dynamics leading up to and, in part, structuring the organisational theatre event. The way in which

the script was written, was clearly influenced by the views of those interviewed and Tom's own view of how scripts may support 'generative conversations', as well as the general discussions that had already occurred with the HR Managers and Academic Consultants about the purpose of the event. In addition, there was a degree of emergence and improvisation in the creative scriptwriting process. Tom emphasised during the event that, in the case of a 'warm-up' scene he drafted, it would have been "realistically enough to focus on two scenes (. . .) and focus on conversations with a member of the executive team and some respective employees. But this scene - I did not invite this scene, but it would not refuse to die – and I [he] wrote it" (Tom in Organisational Theatre Event, Ref. 099). There is no reason why one should assume that the scripts directly 'reflect' the views and interests of even the facilitator or script-writer himself, as it is now a clichéd observation in literary circles to note that the texts 'may say more' (or 'less') than the message the writer intended to convey.

As I have, however, argued, the concept of polyphony directs our attention beyond the mere 'haggling' and 'noise' of the multivocal 'Tower of Babel' involved in such selective constructions and negotiations. It also includes how, in the inevitable 'Bazaar', a more or less harmonious expression of these voices is (or is not) achieved as part of the crafting of cooperative ventures.

The formal purpose statement directly reflected a professional 'working compromise' between Andrew and Richard - a compromise between positions that embodied and reflected the kind of change paradoxes that the Executives had recognised and were grappling with.

As noted by Carter, however, this 'compromise' was a creative act, which involved interventions by himself and Pauline to try to bring the 'two sides' together. Further, it required Andrew and Richard to address the issue 'professionally' with 'no personal tension' and to give recognition to where the 'other' was coming from. It may be argued that this was reflected through Andrew's 'joking' reference and his focus on 'priorities' rather than absolutes, and Richard's recognition Andrew's pragmatic maturity in his HR professional role.

However, the formal purpose statement did not detail or presume the kind of 'non zero-sum' resolutions suggested by the Executives in the prior workshop (for example a focus on the creation of a structure that would remove barriers to and support them in their

work, the ideals that led them to work in the health sector, or the overlap of interests between patients and employees). This was left open as all stakeholders, at least overtly, agreed on an organisational theatre workshop that would be about experimenting in creating ‘constructive’ conversations between Platanus’s Executives and prospective new employees.

In the preparations for and the lead up to the organisational theatre event, the Facilitator was committed to ‘generative conversations’ and to counterpoising and opening up for discussion of ‘public’ and ‘hidden’ transcripts. The issues that the Facilitator had identified in his conversations with the HR professionals, the selected interviewees, as well as his general background knowledge of and prejudices about the health sector, strongly influenced the organisational theatre scripts, as well as his judgements about the enactment, questioning and re-enactment of both these formal scripts and the alternative scripts improvised during the forum theatre event.

Some of the HR Managers and the Academic Consultants attributed the degree of the Facilitator’s influence to the lack of ‘tight’ control over how he was to run the organisational theatre event. This was a state of affairs that could, in part, be explained by the time pressures on everyone involved, the presence of an established working relationship between the Theatre Company and the Academic Consultants, the trust that the HR Managers had in the Academic Consultants, as well as a positive experience that one of the HR Managers, Pauline, had previously had with the Theatre Company. On the other hand, it is arguable that whether the relevant facilitator takes it up or not, facilitators of organisational forum theatre events are *always* influential, or potentially influential, in shaping the contours of the event as well as the detailed situational dynamics during the actual performance.

The Facilitator’s influence in determining what counts as the harmonious expression of diverse points of view in (the Facilitator’s terms) ‘generative conversations’ goes beyond the writing of the script and the determining of the enacted roles. Given the acknowledged role of the Boalian facilitator - as a ‘Joker’ or ‘difficultator’ – the degree to which the facilitator plays such a role and the manner in which he or she makes suggestions and challenges ideas, is an important factor shaping the character and effects of a (organisational) forum theatre event. In the pre-event phases, the selection, mindset, programming and ‘disciplining’ of the facilitator is crucial to the process.

In the case of the Theatre Company, the commitment to the *purpose, habit, choice* philosophy and the facilitation of generative conversations to explore options and increase confidence, arguably played a crucial role in ensuring that the kind of constructive compromise represented in the formal purpose statement was drawn out in the organisational theatre event. The issues that emerged, however, were clearly (and are always) a selective view of what constitutes a harmonious expression of multivocality. Rather than simply reflecting a 'managerial' or 'worker' view or a consensual 'win-win' resolution, any such activity represents a partial and contestable 'resolution'.

At Platanus, there was a clear overlap of perception and interest between the active 'communication' and 'engagement' compromise of the HR personnel in crafting the formal purpose, the Executives' ideas about the means of addressing the 'top down-participatory empowerment' change management paradox they found themselves in and the manner in which the Theatre Company Facilitator scripted, enacted and played an independent role in commenting on and guiding 'generative conversations' between Platanus's Executives and prospective employees. In each case there was a recognition of multivocality and a commitment to constructive accommodation. Yet, at the same time, the issues of interest, the expressed voices and the interpretations of these voices were ambiguous and contestable, even if not actually contested.

Following the example of what Max Weber once termed a 'thought experiment', in deepening our understanding of what happened by exploring the counter-factual 'what might have been' (Weber, 1905/1949: 171), some issues were not included or addressed. Issues of, for example, male/female relations and masculine domination in the Executive Team and the broader Health Sector had been raised but were not part of the public discussion and debate. Tensions and disagreements over the balance between initially realising a 'radical' patient-centred vision and providing a relatively risk-free operational medical centre were latent and were to become even more prominent after the organisational theatre event. Real conflicts of perception and interest between patients and staff and how these were to be handled in the new patient-centred regime were not presented or discussed, although these surfaced in an arguably dramatic form in the actual theatre event.

The tensions between 'managed care' and traditional 'medical dominance', as alternative models of health care were not surfaced. Inherent tensions between the social mission of 'not-for-profits' and the financial objectives of commercially oriented agencies, something

that emerged in unscripted moments in the organisational theatre event, were not formally addressed. How to view and handle the judgments of alternative voices that felt Platanus was ‘forcing’ them to change their employment conditions and behaviours was raised but not resolved. These (and other) issues were either not addressed or left ambiguous in this empirically documented polyphonic process.

However, the purpose of this paper was not to use the existence of such ‘channeling’ as a basis for undermining the importance or the validity of a polyphonic enterprise. Instead, the focus of this paper has been to show how, at ‘surface’ and ‘deeper’ levels, in explicit discussions and negotiations between active agents and in the cultural background to such conversations, a polyphonic multi-vocality and selective and partial forms of harmonious expression and cooperation shape and influence organisational theatre initiatives.

5.8 Conclusion

In providing an empirical illustration of the pre-event phases shaping organisational theatre as ‘polyphony-in-action’, the paper has sought to further understanding of the social construction and impact of organisational theatre as well as the manner in which polyphony can play out in organisations. The first purpose of the paper was to reveal the limited and partial nature of structural ‘two-dimensional’ approaches to the meaning and purpose of organisational theatre and the limits these impose on the analysis of events leading up to and shaping organisational theatre events. The second focus of the paper was to use and illustrate polyphony-in-action and to contribute to discussion on what Flyvbjerg (1998) has presented as the most viable approach to strengthening civil society, both inside and outside organisations. As he contended,

“ . . . forms of public life that are practical, committed and ready for conflict provide a superior paradigm of civic citizen virtue than do forms of public life that are discursive, detached and consensus-dependent.” (Flyvbjerg, 1998: 229/30)

This page is intentionally left blank.

Organisational Theatre as Process: Polyphony, Paradox & Public Discourse

“The word “irony” does not now mean only what it meant in earlier centuries, it does not mean in one country all it may mean in another, nor in the street what it may mean in the study, nor to one scholar what it may mean to another.”

D.C. Muecke in
Irony and the Ironic (1982: 7)

The interest in the use of theatre as an artist-led intervention in organisational change has increased over the past decades, yet debate still continues over whether it questions or reinforces established forms of domination and control. This paper contributes to this debate by examining the manner and degree to which organisational theatre surfaces and addresses competing and dissenting voices in a normative cultural change program. Drawing on a longitudinal, qualitative case study, the paper illuminates the processual dynamics within the organisational theatre performance that, combined with the way the theatre had been created, influenced its situational character and immediate impact. A particular focus is on an ironic *‘Doctors on Top’* skit improvised within the organisational theatre event. The paper documents how the creation and interpretation of this skit gave voice to the paradoxical tensions facing the executive team in its transformational initiative, in particular the tensions between ‘patient-centred’ managed care and professional ‘medical dominance’ and the voices of physicians and managers representing these contradictory viewpoints. In so doing, this paper furthers our understanding of the manner and processes by which organisational theatre stimulates polyphonic expression, revealing the ways in which the communication of paradoxical tensions is an ambiguous, complex and perilous social interaction affected by multiple levels of meaning and interpretation.

6.1 Introduction

Since the 1870s, managerial discourse has been characterised by alternating surges of rational and normative rhetoric of organisational redesign (Barley & Kunda, 1992). Following the publication of Ouchi's *Theory Z* (1981), Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* (1982) and Deal and Kennedy's *Corporate Cultures* (Deal & Kennedy, 2000), a recent 'cultural turn' has taken place in both managerial ideologies and organisational studies. This has involved a number of waves of planned normative 'cultural change' programs designed to establish committed and engaged communities with a purpose - a "purpose (...) to make common men do uncommon things" (Drucker, 2007: 144).

The literature on these cultural change programs has, however, revealed that in seeking to impose such ideologies, many programs often end up repressing counter voices. In doing so, they undermine their ability to 'win the hearts and minds' of the diversity of organisational members and harm their credibility and success as a participatory social enterprise (Badham et al., 2012a; Badham et al., 2003; Badham & Garrety, 2003). Rather than creating consensus and unity around a single purpose, such 'normative' change programs often create ambivalence, as organisational members are both attracted to and repelled by the proposed change given that it did not organically arise from amongst them but rather was imposed or even encouraged (Badham & McLoughlin, 2006; McLoughlin et al., 2005).

This paper focuses on a contemporary example of just such an initiative: Platanus, a newly established and innovative not-for-profit, patient-centred cancer care facility, which aspires to create a world-class integrated and holistic patient-centred cancer care organisation.¹³¹⁴

¹³ The term 'Platanus' was used to find a fictional name for the case study site – the establishment of a world-class holistic, patient-centred cancer care facility – that captured its idealistic medical nature. Platanus was the name of the tree under which Hippocrates taught his pupils the art of medicine.

¹⁴ Platanus will be an organisation that thrives on discovery and where the watchwords are innovation, leading edge, state-of-the-art clinical care and excellence. It will be a centre of excellence for early detection, better treatment and integrated cancer care with the best diagnostics, therapeutic applications and scientific research, all working in a virtuous circle, one reinforcing the other. People affected by cancer, patients and carers will be our central focus. Platanus is about the nurturing care and empowerment of patients, their families and clinicians. It is about personal wellbeing and collaborative respect – this will ultimately lead to uncompromising care. (Excerpt taken from Platanus's vision and mission statement).

In 2009 Platanus entered a new stage in its leadership development program in collaboration with two Academic Consultants of a nearby university. The Academics were committed to assisting Platanus to realise its mission by engaging in an action-research based collaboration. As part of this program, an organisational theatre event was planned and implemented. The event was intended to help address issues around informal communications between the Executive Team and prospective employees, who were offered a transition from the existing public health clinic to join Platanus.

The immediate focus and purpose of this paper is to provide a detailed account of the actual use and processual dynamics of the organisational theatre event at Platanus. In so doing, it explores the potential of organisational theatre to allow different voices to be heard and to address competing and dissenting voices within a normative cultural change program. However, in attending to this task, the paper introduces and explores three broader issues.

Firstly, the paper explores the nature of organisational theatre as a polyphonic enterprise and the manner in which it reflects but also facilitates the harmonious expression of multivocality (Clegg et al., 2006a; Hazen, 1993, 2011; Kornberger et al., 2006). Secondly, it concentrates on illuminating the complex, fluid and emergent nature of the organisational theatre process and its immediate impacts as it unfolds in situ, rather than documenting the conditions leading up to the organisational theatre event or its final outcomes. Thirdly, the paper adopts a 'paradox lens' in the exploration of polyphony by focusing on the manner in which the organisational theatre event surfaced and communicated contradictory tensions between competing objectives, perspectives or 'voices'.

The focus on communications around paradox is complementary to a focus on polyphony involving considering a multiplicity of competing voices in contemporary organisations (multivocality), and the need to 'manage' or 'harmonise' the existence of plural, competing and contradictory voices (Clegg et al., 2006a; Hazen, 1993, 2011; Kornberger et al., 2006).

In pursuing these objectives, the attention of the paper will be on one particular incident within the organisational theatre event: the '*Doctors on Top*' skit scripted and enacted by the Director of Radiation Oncology of Platanus's Executive Team during the organisational theatre event.

6.2 Setting the Stage: Organisational Theatre at Platanus

Early in March 2010, the two Academic Consultants and I met with Platanus's HR Managers to discuss a possible collaborative project. Platanus's Executive Team was struggling with facilitating the change and was seeking external assistance. In turn the Academics and myself were interested in a research site for a longitudinal case study of organisational theatre. After three meetings the Academics and Platanus's HR Managers agreed that the Academics would help to facilitate the leadership program and that Platanus would allow the PhD research to be undertaken – even though there was no up-front commitment to the use of organisational theatre.

After eighteen months at Platanus, the Academics had run seven leadership development sessions for the Executive Team. During this time, I collected data from non-participant observation from meetings of and between the parties involved and from leadership workshops. To further deepen my understanding of involved actors and their understanding of cultural norms, customs and behaviours, I conducted three sets of formal, open-ended and semi-structured interviews with all stakeholders (the HR Managers, the Academic Consultants, the Executives and the members of the Theatre Company) to seek their opinions about the progress of Platanus, the Executive Team, the development program and, in the course of time, the organisational theatre event. I also gathered data from casual conversations with stakeholders and collected documents that were distributed during meetings and workshops and analysed numerous emails that were sent between the parties.

While the leadership program was an evolving program, its character was guided by the research of one of the Academics on metaphors of leadership transformation. The program further aimed to consider the evolving challenges and concerns of the Executive Team, as well as the Academics' commitment to draw on and stimulate diversity and to encourage the expression of voice.

Twelve months after the first meeting between Platanus's HR Managers and the Academics, an organisational theatre event was held for the Executive Team to facilitate how they might explore the best way to communicate Platanus's vision and values to prospective employees. The event was organised as a 'forum theatre'-like exercise (Boal, 1979/2000, 1995a), involving the audience watching and commenting on professional actors enacting scripted fictional workplace conversations and workplace interactions.

Within this form of tailored organisational forum theatre event, the scripts were based on participants' perceptions of the organisation and their experiences within the organisation, created after interviews with managers and employees (Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). When conducted in accordance with Boal's original idea, the script is designed to set up a dramatic tension between the expression of powerful dominant formal ideologies and the ideas and experiences of those confronted by these ideologies whose 'backstage' views and voices are commonly repressed or not articulated in public forums (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Nissley et al., 2004). Also, in accord with Boalian ideas, the performance went beyond the enactment of this pre-given script, involving the audience becoming participants in the drama as active '*spect-actors*' – commenting upon, rewriting and even personally re-enacting the scripts (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). While new to most members of the Executive Team, this type of intervention has become increasingly popular in leadership and change initiatives (Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004).

In accordance with these aims of forum theatre, the Theatre Company running the event was sympathetic towards the bringing out the suppressed voices within organisations. They scripted the main exchanges between the Executive Team and a fictional 'traditional public service' nurse and surgeon to reflect the conflicts and tensions between these different voices. They also provided the space for not only commentary and the proffering of suggestions but also the acting out, in collaboration with the professional actors, of more inclusive and constructive dialogues. In response to an invitation to script and act out such a scene, Paul, Director of Radiation Oncology, delivered what has now become described as the '*Doctors on Top*' skit. Controversial in nature and dramatic in its impact, it presented an ironic take on the manner in which communication should be achieved.

6.3 The Stage is Set: Game On

The decision to have an organisational theatre event had been made in one of the leadership workshop two months earlier. In that earlier workshop, Julia, the Communications and Marketing Manager, had pushed for and stimulated a discussion of how best to communicate Platanus's vision to employees of the currently existing public hospital who were about to be offered a job at Platanus. She was critical of the "very vanilla messages" that she saw as constituting their existing script (Julia in 3rd Leadership

Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 064). Influenced strongly by the commitment of the Academics and the HR Manager, Pauline, to the use of organisational theatre in Platanus's leadership development program, the decision was made to hold an organisational theatre event to explore and experiment with how to effectively communicate the vision. Over the next few weeks this had morphed into a decision to explore how Platanus's Executive Team members might effectively communicate in informal discussions with future employees.

The organisational theatre event was held in February 2012, in a large oak panelled meeting room in the nearby university. The group of 17 (the ten leaders, two HR Managers, three academics and two theatre consultants) gathered in the morning for a 4-hour session. After sandwiches and coffee the group settled down, seemingly still somewhat nervous. Tom, the Theatre Consultant and Facilitator of the workshop, seemed to be used to this and emphasised in his warm up speech:

“Our style is quite interactive and I know that word strikes fear into the hearts of some people – don't worry. The attention will be here and you can remain in the comfort of your chairs, that's okay – for now” (*audience laughs*). (Tom in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099)

He then introduced the sentence defining the purpose of the session:

“How as leaders do we respond to informal questions about Platanus's vision, values and our personal ambitions to engage them [future employees] in our journey?” (Tom in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099)

Tom had set up a butcher's paper stand with his diagram representing the philosophy of his theatre company using three circles: Purpose – Habit - Choice. He then explained later in the workshop:

“Outcomes - I am really hoping that you will walk away today with some clarity about the conversation and the environment, the issues and the opportunities. I am also intending that there will be some recognition today of habits and some exploration and new choices. We all have patterns in every area in life - same as we communicate. I am imagining habits, your sort of default mode, you know the way you just automatically communicate. I am imagining you have developed that habit because it works - it's about recognising some of the habits and getting a wider range of choices so that you can be more powerful when you are having conversations with people.” (Tom in Forum Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099).

In his introduction, Tom explained and reassured, revealing an openness and humility designed to relieve anxiety and encourage participation. He continued by outlining the three scenes that he and his colleagues had scripted – an opening discussion with a

construction worker on the site of the new building, a discussion with a nurse trying to bum a cigarette on her 'fag break' outside the cancer care facility and a surgeon being 'talked at' by a Platanus's Executive Team member trying to communicate the patient-centred vision. Each of the scenes was riven with miscommunication, mistrust and conflict, with little evidence of the Platanus's team 'getting through' to the employees.

After the delivery of first scripted ineffective conversation between the smoking nurse and the Platanus member, the CEO, Tony, was put on the spot and asked to improvise a better conversation. He was perceived as charming and personable, establishing rapport, recognising concerns and gently communicating his message. With much clapping, there seemed to be a general agreement that he had performed well. There was an element of dissent, however. As will be discussed below, Paul, Director of Radiation Oncology, picked up on the disrespect in the room towards the nurse, particularly her smoking and her cynicism.

What then followed was a scripted interchange between an Executive, played by the Actress, Lizzie, and the Surgeon John, a sceptical, witty and arrogant 'fellow', played by the actor Tom. Soon after the delivery of that scripted interchange, an unscripted verbal interchange occurred with the Surgeon John (Tom who stayed in character during this interchange) and Platanus's CEO, Tony. The conversation soon became heated as Tony became visibly agitated and said accusingly, "You are a bit of an arrogant prick, aren't you?" (Tony in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099). After continued acrimony, the Surgeon John (Tom, still in character) dramatically stormed out of the room, only to return a couple of minutes later shouting into the corridor to an invisible colleague, "I know he is the CEO - I don't care - if he talks to me like [that] - then I am going to - . . ." (Tom and Tony in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099). On his return, the discussion between Tony and the Surgeon John (Tom) continued and became even more heated and contested to the visible discomfort of people in the room.

The participants were then asked to script out a more constructive conversation. After a couple of minutes Paul volunteered and enacted the *'Doctors on Top'* skit. Tom, as facilitator, set the stage. 'Action', he called and then, playing the part of the Surgeon John, walked around the room (Tom and Paul in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099):

Surgeon John: Paul!

Paul: John, how are you?

Surgeon John: Always well, just in varying degrees.

Paul: Stop, stop, stop (*John walks very fast, Paul makes him stay*). We missed you at the research meeting.

Surgeon John: Oh, too busy - How was it?

Paul: Look, it was good (*sounds questioning*). But we missed you and I really mean that (*serious and seemingly empathetic tone with emphasis*). We missed you because, if this place is going to run at all, it needs to work for you (*emphasis on 'needs to work for you'*).

Surgeon John: I thought you were talking about patients more. I mean ...

Paul: Let's face it, John (*drops his voice*). Doctors are on top (*Paul pointing up into the sky, audience bursts out in laughter*)

Surgeon John: You are right! Let's have a game of golf some time! (*laughter still continuing at lower level*). Are you free on Thursdays?

Paul: I will come at three and catch up with you.

Surgeon: You know what! I'll tell you: I will see you then (*laughter continues, applause*).

6.4 Paul's Intention to Communicate Paradox

As illustrated in his post-intervention interview, Paul recognised and wished to draw attention to some of the paradoxical dimensions of Platanus's patient-centred vision that the Executive Team was planning to communicate to future employees. As he stated in his first reflective interview:

"I think the main potential area of disagreement is around efficient use of doctors' time in the sense that, while everyone would agree that in an ideal world a patient would be able to choose when they came to see the doctor or when they came in for treatment, in a practical world the doctors have to attend to more than one patient - there will be occasions when the patient has to come in when it suits the doctor and when it's an efficient use of the doctor's time. That will create times when it is not convenient for the patient and therefore could be regarded as not being patient-centric. That being said, if you take a high level view of patient centeredness, it involves a high quality of services around and for the patient. And, if the services are running efficiently, the patients are getting best value. This issue might put doctors with patients in conflict on one level but on the other it doesn't really. It is kind of a necessary thing to do." (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Fred, June 2012, Ref. 133)

Paul also made clear that he wished to make a particular point in regard to this tension between the patient-centred and doctors' perspectives, interests and voices – which were in conflict on one level but not on another. In the previous leadership workshop, for example, the 'higher level' view had been reinforced by June, the Chief Information Officer, and Anne, the Director of Clinical Operations, who re-affirmed the 'both/and' consequences of realising the vision. As Anne expressed it,

“We need to be highlighting that people at Platanus will be enabled to do things better than they can do it now, which is what they aspire to and our role is to support them to do their job. When patients are happy, staff are happy; when staff are happy, patients are.” (Anne in 3rd Leadership Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 064)

What Paul wished to emphasise, however, was the danger that the Executive Team, in its preoccupation with this 'high level' view, was failing to take adequately into account the perspective, value and power of the doctors, particularly as to how new arrangements would affect security, conditions and work processes.

Three months earlier, Paul had emphasised the validity of the perspective of many medical staff in response to an enthused speech by the Director of Medicine, Fred, about the value of the patient-centred vision:

“There are some people for whom it is just a cost. Who are just being forced.” (Paul in 2nd Leadership Workshop, November 2011, Ref. 058)

In the forum theatre event itself, Paul argued strongly for respecting the value of medical staff with their traditional habits and commitments. After following the skit about the somewhat cynical and smoking nurse, the CEO, Tony, commented, “Someone like that we seriously wouldn't want to give the job to” (Tony in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099). Paul's response to Tony's reaction was as follows:

“The conversation there - bothers me a lot. Because here is a lady who cares for dying people, she suffers and she needs a break - I completely reject the notion that we don't want people like that. We want more, I think, if they are good in doing their job, which is caring for sick people. And you know whom we should blame? It was us - with a bullshit story about, you know telling the advantages of the new facility, there was no credibility and some dangerous seeding.” (Paul in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099)

Paul was equally explicit in the follow-up interviews about his respect for the power of the doctors. As he explained,

“I think when you are planning things like Platanus, you have to recognise that the doctors are important, really important. They essentially hold critical knowledge about patient care that others do not hold. Without that information you cannot do business. It is mission-critical stuff. Not only that, everybody else in the system looks for leadership and look to follow people that they regard as leaders. The truth is that the medical doctors represent the really important if not the key leadership group in healthcare.” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Paul, March 2012, Ref. 116)

From a liberal-pragmatic standpoint, Paul gave voice to a belief that the ‘high level’ vision of patient-centeredness could not, and should not, be achieved without recognition of the conflicts between doctors and patients, as well as those between traditional medical staff and their habits and those of the patient-centred ideal.

Paul was explicit about how these views underlay the skit. When asked whether his script illustrated the tensions within the vision, he responded,

“I think it did. It may not have been quite as explicit as I just was. It think it suggested that, rather than actually saying it.” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Paul, June 2012, Ref. 133)

In addition, Paul emphasised that

“I guess part of my strategy was to break the tension within the room and to terminate what was becoming a bit ridiculous. Partly it was honest. Many a true word is spoken in jest. I appreciate that it’s not politically correct to say things that demonstrate that the medical world is hierarchical.” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Paul, March 2012, Ref. 116)

Paul was not only suggesting a tension between ‘high-level’ and ‘low-level’ dimensions of patient-centeredness but, also for him, the ridiculous nature of ignoring or under-representing the power and perspective of the doctors in this mix. In this form, the skit was explicitly developed to counter what Paul described as

“ . . . the somewhat humorous but also awkward interaction between the CEO and the surgeon, which is probably a good illustration of how not to take someone on (*laughs*).” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Paul, June 2012, Ref. 133)

6.5 Success or Failure?

Immediately following the skit, there was a thunderous outburst of laughter. Paul appeared to have ‘hit a nerve’. When asked why she was laughing, the Director of Clinical Operations, Anne, simply exclaimed, “It is just so true” (Anne in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099). Tom, the Actor, continuing to play the character of Surgeon John and speaking from the point of view of his ‘character’, commented,

“I am talking emotionally, from a character point of view: fabulous. I mean I didn’t think, I mean I get the irony of it as well. You know - And it’s refreshing because I do partly believe it’s true but it’s sort of unhooks me a bit from just saying ‘no’. So let’s just be emotional. I liked it, it was fun, it was a bit naughty, a bit witty you know - But you know, it worked for me.” (Tom in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099)

The skit worked for Pauline, the HR Manager, as well. For Pauline, the skit was recognised as a parody, a delightfully subversive presentation of a view that was being ignored or under-represented in the previous ‘arrogant surgeon’ interchange and possibly amongst the Executive Team and in Platanus’s vision and rhetoric more generally. When asked about her view of the skit, she replied,

“ . . . (*laughs*) I think that was a double meaning. I think he was stating the actual, which is his perception of doctors in the hierarchy or in the system of a hospital - I think - he was satirising but also reinforcing.” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Pauline, June 2012, Ref. 136)

She continued,

“ . . . this is actually the big change issue. Yes, we are saying we will make it easy for the clinicians but we are actually patient centred (*laughs*). And so, again, it is highlighting whether or not even leaders in our Executive Team are coming to grips with what it means by saying patient centred.” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Pauline, June 2012, Ref. 136)

This positive appreciation of the skit was shared by one of the Academic Consultants, Richard, who commented in an interview that

“ . . . the issue that got raised with the doctors being on top was, how far is too far to go? How far can you go to accommodate the voices without losing the essential unity. One thing is you have to pull together some common ground but you also have to allow some diversity. The personal issue is that of how do you personally deal with confronting situations and the other is how do you accommodate different voices. You are continually juggling. It is that juggling act.” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Richard, March 2012, Ref. 114)

For Pauline, the skit raised key issues and provided opportunities to act, as she confided, after discussing the ‘double meaning’:

“ . . . trying to unpick that and maybe push that.” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Pauline, June 2012, Ref. 136)

However, she also observed,

“ . . . when I saw the impact it had on a number of my peers, they were quite depressed about this. I think it just reinforced ‘Oh well, it is just going to be more of the same. If our most progressive doctors still feel this way - I think they saw that and thought, ‘Well, that’s it. It is hard for me to

change that. It will be the same old and I must accept that.’ ” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Pauline, June 2012, Ref. 136)

Tony, the CEO, immediately ‘called’ the political incorrectness:

“I mean, Paul, we got the outcome that was desired which is the thing. But I guess the joke, ‘Let’s face it, doctors are at the top’ [sic] - I guess I am just challenging what is maybe not correct to do.”

Equally critical comments were expressed in a number of subsequent interviews with the participants. As Julia, the Communications and Marketing Manager, commented,

“I was a bit gutted when I saw Paul when he did the whole . . . when he actually did the role-play and said, ‘Mate, we know we are at the top’ - and I felt that that is his attitude and basically that he gives us lip-service and does what he wants - basically he said, ‘We know that we are the most important element in all of this.’ ” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Julia, February 2012, Ref. 105)

As June, the Chief Information Officer stated, somewhat more mildly,

“ . . . most of us just thought, ‘Oh, typical’ (*laughs*).” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with June, March 2012, Ref. 111)

A final view, less directly supportive and/or critical, was more sympathetic but frustrated by the ambiguity and apparent vacillation. As Julia explained in her second interview:

“Paul’s sitting on the fence - he rocks and rolls with the side he feels the pressure from - he just, he is really struggling with how to stand up and pick a side. You know, and be who he is and make his stand and stick to it - [Yet] this is somebody that we want to lead for us. He needs to decide who he wants to be.” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Julia, June 2012, Ref. 127)

6.6 The Challenges of Communicating Paradox

Charles Handy once remarked, “Living with paradox is like riding a seesaw. If you know how the process works, and if the person at the other end also knows, then the ride can be exhilarating. If, however, your opposite number does not understand, or wilfully upsets the pattern, you can receive a very uncomfortable and unexpected shock” (cited in Luscher & Lewis, 2008: 238).

Living with and working through paradox requires an acceptance of contradictory voices, competing roles and unresolvable contradictions. The fact that success on one desired dimension is accompanied by failure on another is often confronting and always challenging (Jay, 2013). As Poole and van de Ven (1989: 566) comment, participants might “feel a strain toward cognitive consistency” in this process. Established patterns of

psychological denial and organisational defensive routines can foster tactics of compromise, avoidance, defiance or manipulation in preference to strategies of working through acknowledged paradox (Jay, 2013). Smith and Lewis (2011) characterise such tendencies and pressures in terms of a 'vicious cycle' of avoidance and denial driven by the desire for cognitive and behavioural consistency, the effects of emotional anxiety and organisational inertia.

Luscher and Lewis (2008: 233-234) observed that even following a positive account of Lego's "understanding of inconsistencies, conflict and ambiguity as natural working conditions (. . .) [with] positive potential for tensions to trigger both/and approaches and ongoing adjustment", this "acceptance also seemed precarious. Despite consensus that organising paradoxes were inherent in change, a few managers still harboured desires for resolution. Their parting comments exposed lingering hope that executives would eventually make mandates simple, clear and unequivocal." When placed in the context of the rhetorics and rituals of rationality dominating public discourse in modern organisations, this 'lingering hope' is appropriately understood as a culturally embedded 'vocabulary of motive'. While the culture of modernity creates conditions of ambiguity, plurality and ambivalence, it also embodies and reinforces a desire and yearning to resolve and end such a condition through the discovery of 'one best way' of thought, feeling and action (Bauman, 1993; Levine, 1988; Scott, 1993). It embodies an expectation of and quest for 'one best means' (Ellul, 1967) or 'one best way' (Kanigal, 2005) of thought and action.

Within modern organisations, this religion of rationality is embedded in cyclical 'rhetorics of administration' (March & Olsen, 1983), recurring one-dimensional 'rhetorics of control' (Barley & Kunda, 1992) and ritual 'rationalised myths' (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). As Burns (1961) argues, there is common recognition that the rhetoric of unity, consensus and rationality continues to dominate the 'public front stage' of organisational life. In this sense, we are all complicit collaborators rather than guiltless witnesses of an *Elephant in the Room* (Zerubavel, 2007), involved in a complex symbiotic cultural pattern of tacit and explicit co-denial, reflecting and reflected in what we consciously or unconsciously attend to, how we mind our own business, how we button our lips and hold our tongues. This ethos also takes the form of what Berger (1963) describes as a 'conscience from within', as well as a 'law from without', a 'lingering hope' that, like the spirit summoned by Goethe's Faust, 'will not go'. As Kegan (1998) illustrates in *In Over Our Heads*, the assumption that there is a 'one best way' and the search for that best way is deeply embedded in not only

the formal cultural environment, public discourse and performance controls but also displayed by many contemporary managers in their management behaviours. A recognition of the need to 'hold open', 'live with' and 'work through' paradox is a fundamental challenge to this view and, to the degree that we are creatures of our culture, for all of us.

6.7 The Phronetic (or Socratic) Question

Within this environment, how is paradox communicated and received by those inviting others to act while 'holding open', 'living with', 'working through' and 'navigating' paradox? How are such communications enacted and narrated, embodied and perceived by their authors and interpreted and reconstituted by their audiences? What 'works' and what does not? What 'resonates' and what does not? How are denial, resistance and defensive routines addressed? And how do the participants handle the social interactions involved?

In a study of management team meetings, Hatch (1997) and Hatch and Erlich (1993) used the employment of ironic humour as a 'divining rod' for investigating how the contradictory understanding of organisations is constructed. This paper extends this research by focusing on rhetorical irony as a divining rod for exploring the social processes of representing diverse and conflicting voices and communicating paradox. Empirically, this paper has the advantage of having observed and investigated the use of an ironic skit for this purpose at Platanus - a skit that was as controversial as it was rich and impactful. Theoretically, not only is there a ample and perceptive literature on the ritual nature of humour and irony and the social interactions involved in their use but this literature also directly addresses the challenges involved in communicating complex messages that question or subvert one-dimensional established or authoritative beliefs.

What follows is an account of four main themes that emerged from a reflective interrogation of the use of rhetorical irony in the *'Doctors on Top'* skit. The data used for this exercise was collected during the project meetings, from leadership workshops, from three rounds of interviews and from informal 'chats' conducted over an 18-month case study. The literature on humour and irony was drawn from within organisational studies (for example: Badham et al., 2012b; Hatch, 1997; Hatch & Ehrlich, 1993; Johansson & Woodilla, 2005; Oswick, Keenoy, & Grant, 2002; Sewell & Barker, 2006; Westwood, 2004; Westwood & Johnston, 2012) as well as from without (for example: Berger, 1997; Burke, 1984a, b; Douglas, 1986; Gusfield, 2000; Holcomb, 2001; Hutcheon, 1994).

6.8 Main Themes

6.8.1 Taking Time Out

Communicating paradox ‘forces’ one to recognise what Stark (2009) and Jay (2013) have described as a ‘sense of dissonance’. As a process of effective communication, it needs to build on and foster what could be termed a ‘resonance of dissonance’ (c.f. Oswick et al., 2002). As such, communicating paradox is a ritualised form of behaviour with all the taken-for-granted understandings and ground rules that rituals possess. Yet, it is a particular type of ritual, an ‘anti-rite’ (Douglas, 1986) in that it surfaces what would commonly be regarded as a ‘subversive dissonance’. This involves an invitation to enter into a ‘finite province of meaning’, in which dissonance can be raised and discussed, i.e. to ‘take time out’ from the stresses and strains of acting and making decisions in the organisation’s ‘prominent reality’ and reflect on the embedded dissonances they have to wrestle with (Berger, 1997). As Paul commented in a later workshop, following a playful acting out of the perspectives running counter to their prejudices:

“It was a relief, actually. To be released from trying to get one’s point across and see the world from the other person’s point of view.” (Paul in 7th Leadership Workshop, September 2012, Ref. 139)

A successful ‘anti-rite’ is able to invite participants into that world. In this process there are cues, markers and indicators that communicate this invitation, which, if successful, allow creative play but which, if unsuccessful, risk condemnation and even retribution. In the case of the *Doctors on Top* skit, the performance took place within the institutionally acknowledged framework of a ‘seriously playful’ organisational theatre event, a framework that legitimated (at least formally) creative and experimental actions.

Paul indicated, through his smiling and jokey manner when delivering the ‘punch line’, that this should be taken as a ‘jest’. Even with such indicators and permissions, however, some members of the Executive Team were shocked, the CEO commenting on the “correctness” of its message and Paul himself later observing that it was not “politically correct” to raise the current reality of medical hierarchy (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Paul, March 2012, Ref. 116 and Tony in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099).

The success of communications of this form does not depend solely on the skill, artifice and manner of the communicator. It also involves an awareness of the audience’s receptiveness, as well as an appreciation of the appropriateness of the communication.

Therefore, the success of an ‘anti-rite’ requires the effective use of markers and a general sense of agreement on the appropriateness in context of taking time out to reflect on conflicting assumptions and prejudices. It depends on ‘awareness contexts’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1964), ‘appropriateness conditions’ (Kenan, 1971) and either formally ritualised ‘institutional licentiousness’ (Gusfield, 2000) or attitudes ranging from sympathy to delight towards an invitation to enter into a ‘pianissimo’ (Berger, 1997) accompaniment to the stresses and strains of everyday life - a comic ‘finite province of meaning’.

Organisational theatre could be characterised as what has been identified as ‘institutionalised serious play’ (Statler, Heracleous, & Jacobs, 2011a), marked by a ‘paradox of intentionality’: the commitment to realising serious ends through playful means. In this sense, a playful *Doctors on Top* skit can be seen as a valid, useful and authorised experiment in effective communication, in recognition of the paradoxical tensions inherent in the Platanus vision and the communication process. On the other hand, there is an ‘edge’ to the playfulness that is not so ‘playful’, with suggestions of a serious intention that is out of alignment with the formal purpose of the organisational theatre event. In this sense, the skit can be seen as a temporary ‘stepping out’ of the acceptable practices of an institutionalised and seriously playful organisational theatre event, involving the acting out of a subversive commentary on the process.

As indicated by the loud laughter in the room, the skit was generally recognised as an ‘anti-rite’. It would appear that all of the Executive Team members were ‘aware’ that the skit was (a) an explicitly voiced challenge to Platanus’s patient-centred vision and (b) on the surface also presented as a parody (taking into account the context of the event, the previous interactions and Paul’s tone and body language). However, some members of the Executive Team did not regard this as appropriate, as they read the skit in large part as reflecting Paul’s own hierarchical views. For them, the skit was not ‘really’ a parody of the hierarchical *doctors on top* view but, rather, a parody of their own (the Executives’) views, from the perspective of someone committed to the medical hierarchy. As Beech et al. (2004: 1330) noted of all seriously playful approaches to paradox, “questions can be raised about how acceptable it is for some actors to be indulging in experimentation and play when others are earnest in their actions. This is particularly the case where one group of actors is subject to the experiment by others who have greater power.”

Interestingly, members of the audience who ‘got’ the irony enjoyed the skit and recognised the strength of Paul’s commitment to the medical hierarchy. As Richard commented, Paul

appeared at times to be “sitting back and judging what is going on with some fairly medical blinkers on” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Richard, March 2012, Ref. 114). Pauline commented, “. . . what he was satirising but also reinforcing is the fact that in his own mind the doctors - it’s that power relationship I guess” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Pauline, June 2012, Ref. 136). However, while she took the skit as an opportunity to “. . . unpick that [power relationship] and maybe push that” she perceived that others merely got “depressed”. She briefly reflected that maybe this was a “personality thing” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Pauline, June 2012, Ref. 136).

6.8.2 Contested Intentionality

As the user of rhetorical irony communicates multiple voices and perspectives and the contradictions between them, the audience will inevitably attribute intentions to the author in an attempt to discern and stabilise ‘the meaning’ of what is being said (Hutcheon, 1994). Such attributions depend, again, not merely on the actual aims and personality of the author but also on his or her credibility, character and intentions as perceived by the audience. In the case of rhetorical irony, the implicit nature of the message requires such attributions to be made in order to make sense of the communication. In Paul’s case, did he or did he not really believe that doctors are on top? And if he did, what exactly did he mean by that? Is it an empirical datum or a moral imperative? As we saw above, depending on the position, perspective and personality of various members of the audience, Paul’s intentions – and hence the interpretation and effect of the message – were differently viewed and evaluated.

As Pauline noted, Paul was one of the most “enthusiastic” supporters of the organisational theatre event and she felt he interpreted its purpose and value as being about “honest and authentic communication with prospective employees and about seeking and not missing or avoiding opportunities to have those conversations” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Pauline, June 2012, Ref. 136). As he had observed in the earlier workshop and illustrated in his later presentation to oncology staff, Paul believed that for many of the prospective employees Platanus’s vision was ‘fluff’. He had concerns about issues of job security and working conditions and the change appeared largely as a cost. What Paul believed he was creating was a script designed to illustrate, honestly and authentically, what he described in his first reflective interview as “strategies that we need to use to communicate with those

different people [and that these strategies] will vary depending on who they are and where they are” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Paul, March 2012, Ref. 116).

As the *‘Doctors on Top’* skit indicated, how such issues are resolved will depend on an interpretation of the authors’ actions and meanings in context, set against the background of indicators of his or her general character and credibility. Paul was a male professional doctor, with a history of behaviour inside the existing and traditional ‘parent’ hospital and the new Platanus. His intentions were now being assessed by female as well as male colleagues, from business backgrounds as well as health sector backgrounds. As Julia remarked, in reflecting on the skit:

“They get the power in the system and they continue to have the power in the system. And when you listen to just the language that is used - ‘Prof this and Prof that. What do you think Prof?’ They actually use that word. He has a god stamp on his head - this perceived authority - that’s just really around status. And a system that is completely geared in keeping these people happy at whatever cost. - And this walking on water stuff is something that ‘blah’ just makes me feel (*grins*) uncomfortable (*laughs*).”

In addition, both Pauline and Julia drew on knowledge of events after the skit to interpret Paul’s intentions. As Julia explained, when reflecting on Paul’s later presentation to his medical staff:

“... he stood up and his intro was ‘I am here today with my Radiation/Oncology hat on’ and I was like ... so basically ‘I am one of you and they have to prove to us that this is a good thing’ ... we had three slides where we just literally quickly went through what our high level vision was, what our company was about and what our value set was. And in the second session Paul said, ‘I don’t want to cover that. They just want to know the facts.’ - he just was so reluctant to go there and so in fear of his people’s anger.” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Julia, June 2012, Ref. 127)

As Pauline reflected,

“In the face of a crowd whose, Paul believed, ‘minds aren’t open, they are angry and they will just see - [Platanus’s vision of and commitment to patient-centeredness] as being fluff. (...) [employment conditions are] what they really want to talk about. And so let’s just get to it.’” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Pauline, June 2012, Ref. 136)

For Julia, for the most part, this reluctance reflected Paul’s primary identity as a male doctor committed to retaining the medical hierarchy – although, as we saw above, even Julia noted a degree of internal conflict and ambivalence. For Pauline, however, his identity was even more multi-faceted and fluid. As she observed, in reflecting on Paul facing the ‘crowd’:

“I realised that on a theoretical level he has understood what we are going to do. The actual practice of doing it himself, he found that very difficult.” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Pauline, June 2012, Ref. 136)

It is arguably the case that it is just such assumptions which shape a participant’s understanding of the intentions underlying the use of irony and hence the different interpretation and reactions to its ‘meaning’ - in this case between Pauline and Julia.

For Paul, however, this reluctance may be viewed in yet another different light. As he observed in his first reflective interview, for “planning and operational issues” Platanus’s communication with staff had been “very effective”. What he perceived as “less effective”, however, was communication around “sensitive areas of employment terms and conditions and workflow and process” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Paul, March 2012, Ref, 116). In this area, doctors were “less engaged than Platanus’s staff would have liked them to be” and “it is late in the day and the pressure is really on” for a variety of contextual reasons (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Paul, March 2012, Ref, 116). In this context, he reflected, it seemed to him that there had

“ . . . not [been] many opportunities for communication and relationship building (...) Platanus’s staff doesn’t have the depth of relationship with the medical staff that you ideally would have.” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Paul, March 2012, Ref, 116)

Based on such information, Paul’s reluctance to spend time on espousing Platanus’s vision to his medical staff and his performance in the skit, could be interpreted as reflection of his preference for an alternative form and focus of conversation, rather than simply a reinforcement of the medical hierarchy.

6.8.3 Complex Irony and Weighted Paradox

At the heart of what Boje (2001) has characterised as the ‘antenarrative soup’ of storytelling organisations is the imposition of coherent storylines on an inherently equivocal and polysemic cultural reality. What ‘counts’, therefore, as the paradox that is being communicated is far from simple exegesis. Paradoxes are confusing and understandable, predictable and surprising (Cameron, 1986). And social paradoxes are often ‘looser’ than logical paradoxes, where the incompatible terms or opposing positions are relatively vague, involving tensions and oppositions rather than logical contradictions (Poole & Ven, 1989).

While recognising the limitations of specialist ‘diatribes’ between advocates of one horn of a dilemma or another, Poole and van de Ven (1989) are wary of the ‘sloppy thinking’ that comes from loose discussion and analysis of tensions between opposing positions. What the *Doctors on Top* case illustrates, however, is that ‘sloppiness’ may be a feature of the terrain. What is being communicated are multiple meanings, variously interpreted by different actors.

A simple view of the irony exhibited in the *Doctors on Top* skit would examine such contexts and intentions in order to uncover simply a contrast between a surface ‘false’ explicit statement (e.g. “Let’s face it. Doctors are on top.”) and a deeper ‘true’ implicit meaning (either “You think doctors are on top but this is only one view” or “You think doctors are on top but this is a faulty view” or “I agree with you, doctors are on top but we are under threat here, which means they might not be” or “I am laughingly voicing *Doctors on Top*’ to protect me from criticism but I really believe it.” and so on.).

A complex view, however, recognises the importance of delineating multiple meanings and exploring ‘meaning’ as something that emerges from the condensation and relationship between multiple meanings. What we find with the *Doctors on Top* skit is a variety of partially overlapping and partially competing meanings. ‘The’ meaning of an ironic statement is, in an important sense, a combination of these multiple meanings (Hutcheon, 1994) and something that constitutes rather than simply reflects the environment in which it is employed (Holcomb, 2001). This view is probably best captured in comments by the HR Manager, Pauline, in her nuanced observation that “. . . we are saying we will make it easy for the clinicians but we are actually patient-centred”. She adds, “Paul was satirising but also reinforcing hierarchical medical attitudes and I am trying to unpick that and maybe push that” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Pauline, June 2012, Ref. 136).

But any attempt to advantage any position, even one as sophisticated and nuanced as Pauline’s, is, again, one imposed viewpoint. Complex irony is not only created by the multiple meanings embodied in the rhetorical statements but also the multiple meanings attributed by the audiences, even the most one-dimensional. In the case of the *Doctors on Top* skit, this complexity takes the form of multiple layers of possible resonant paradoxes, plus multiple suggested methods of addressing paradox and the question even of whether what is being communicated is paradox at all.

6.8.4 Nature and Levels of Paradox

In his use of complex irony, Paul is involved in communicating paradox through creating and enacting what Douglas (1968) characterises as an anti-rite. The skit involves enacting the ritualised presumption, communication and celebration of what could be termed the resonance of dissonance. As Douglas (1968) argues, the degree of energy that the anti-rite generates derives from the extent to which the anti-rite captures and reflects embedded cultural dissonance, structural ambivalence or 'jokes in the structure'. Some of the effects of such an anti-rite derive from the skilful wording and timing and its directness and brevity, yet the number and intensity of layered meanings of the skit contribute crucially to its effect. What, arguably, contributed to the resonance of the *Doctors on Top* skit was the multiple local and generic dissonances that the skit captured.

At the one level, the *Doctors on Top* skit surfaced and in a sense 'celebrated' a recognition of the embedded conflicts and tensions between the traditional outlook of the public hospital doctors on the one hand and the vision and values of Platanus and its Executive Team on the other. However, rather than imposing one view, the skit acknowledged the embedded conflict between the opposing perspectives. Moreover, it did so in a way that appeared on the surface to favour the interests and viewpoints of the doctors, at the expense of Platanus's vision of patient-centred care. This was an attitude at odds with the expressed purpose of the session and the commitments of the Executive Team, and so created tension.

Most immediately, as noted above, the skit followed the acrimonious exchange between Tony, Platanus's CEO, and the character of the Surgeon John. This surfaced the tension between the different perspectives and, through a playful presentation of a contrasting view to that of Tony, allowed a degree of recognition of and relief from a 'prominent reality' of uncomfortable dissonance. It also surfaced an implicit tension within the Executive Team itself, with the doctors perceiving others to be unrealistic about and insufficiently appreciative of the status quo, while others perceived the doctors to be overly conservative and hierarchical. More generally, however, it also gave voice to the tensions explicitly identified by the Executive Team in the workshop prior to the organisational theatre event, between 'empowering' and not 'criticising' or demeaning existing medical staff, their behaviours and opinions, yet at the same time 'channelling' them into an acceptance of the Platanus patient-centred vision. As revealed in the leadership workshop immediately prior to the organisational theatre event, this was overlaid by a desire to both

recognise continued ‘specialist’ identities, yet also encourage a commitment to Platanus. By proffering an exaggerated adaptation of the perceptions and interests of the doctors, the skit challenged the ‘unrealistic’ complacency of Platanus’s Executives and views about the acceptability of the vision they were offering. Further, it challenged the ease with which doctors could be incorporated into its vision by playfully observing the conflicting and dissonant agendas and demands.

At an even more general level, the skit reflected a double-tension between conflicting institutional logics experienced by health sector employees: firstly, the tensions between the professional ethics and institutional dominance of doctors and the rhetorics and governance structures of new forms of public and market based managed care (Scott, 2004) and, secondly, the ongoing tensions between the ‘medical model’ of ‘cure’ and the ‘psychosocial model’ of ‘care’ as competing ideologies of health management (Meyerson, 1991). This double tension is extended and reinforced by two additional cultural and institutional phenomena: the long established ambivalence within the professional medical ethos and situation between demands (Battilana, Lee, Walker, & Dorsey, 2012) for technical expertise and medical ‘cure’ on the one hand and personal support and psychosocial ‘care’ on the other. Further, the combination in recent years of a rhetoric of ‘managed care’ with a patient-centred ideology of care is a contrast to traditional medical models of both professional dominance and private/public ‘cure’ based strategies. As a commercially oriented not-for-profit organisation working within the public sector, the tension between Platanus’s patient-centred social mission and its attendance to commercial realities and medical/public sector hierarchy and obligations, adds an additional dimension to this ambivalence or dissonance (Battilana et al., 2012; Jay, 2013).

The devil of such logics, as the saying goes, lies in the details - as symbolic entities, organisations exist as a set of repertoires forming a complex “bricolage” (Campbell, 1997: 22) that are inevitably filtered and translated by community level actors (Waldorff & Greenwood, 2011). In the process of filtering and translating, the manner in which such logics and tensions are addressed is determined by what either resonates or not with the community level actors. Paul’s display of an informal and humorous professional collegiality draws on and expresses a culturally embedded style of handling contradiction and ambivalence in the medical sphere. What is frequently mistakenly equated with doctors’ ‘cynicism’ is often a ‘pragmatic idealism’ in the face of tensions between professional ideals and institutional and often antithetical institutional and situational

demands (Becker, Geer, Hughes, & Strauss, 1961; Coser, 1959; Goffman, 1972). In relations between doctors and patients, Merton (Merton, 1976) documents the particular style of ‘detached concern’ that medical professionals display in the face of contradictory attitudes and demands.¹⁵

This embodied style of action and behaviour and its contrast with the formal style of the official rhetoric and rituals of ‘managed care’ represents an additional layer of possible resonant dissonance. As Paul prefaced in his remark to Surgeon John, “Let’s face it. Doctors are on top.” (Paul in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099).

At an even more general level, there are the two additional areas of comic resonance identified by Douglas (1968) and Berger (1997). Firstly, there is the advocacy of a subversive collegial ‘communitas’ against the imposition of one-dimensional formal ideologies. This is given added resonance, as we shall see below, by the dominance within modern organisations of an uncritical ‘one best way’ managerial rationality that is commonly recognised by more critical pragmatic views of the pluralistic nature and limitations of claims to rational knowledge and authority. Secondly, there is a general recognition of the frequent limitations and foolhardiness of all utopian aspirations and formalised ideologies, a sense of fallibility and folly regularly recognised as part of the human hubris.

In addition to the *Doctors on Top* incident, the case study revealed additional paradoxes, for example, in the leadership workshop prior to the organisational theatre event where the Executives’ were involved in other communications as part of the transformational change project. In these discussions, the paradoxes of belonging, learning, organisation and performance were all intertwined in reflections about how to encourage the engagement of the hospital staff working in the current public clinic with the Platanus journey. As Fred,

¹⁵ As Merton (1976) elaborates, doctors frequently adopt such a manner as they grapple with conflicting demands to respond to patients’ requests and act in their best interests, to exhibit a caring involvement yet not to do so at the expense of capably fulfilling their technical tasks and to garner the respect due to professionals with a duty of care, while managing the criticism directed towards the salaries and social status that they earn from this work. In response to such conflicting demands and as a means of handling the ambivalence it generates, the use of humour and irony has long been recognised as a central component of medical life, a key feature of the sector’s embedded habits and institutionally sanctioned expectations of appropriate role distance (Goffman, 1972). As described in some detail in studies of behaviour in hospital operating theatres, for example, joking and banter is commonly used to relieve tension, build confidence and foster collaboration (Goffman, 1972; Coser, 1959).

Director of Medicine, remarked in the meeting, “We have to empower people, who trust us. We don’t want a bunch of passive jellyfish, we do want some drive.” Yet, as the HR Manager, Pauline, argued, the Executive Team was “trying to empower people to make their own decisions but at the same time to sort of channel them” (Fred and Pauline in 3rd Leadership Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 064).

The team recognised the importance of the different functional groups retaining their traditional specialised identities, yet was committed to inclusivity within Platanus’s vision. As the CEO, Tony, said, “We want Platanus to bring everybody together. We want them to continue being passionate about breast cancer, to fundraise, etc. . . . [However,] we made it clear to Head, Neck and Breast that they are going to be part of Platanus.” As Anne, Director of Clinical Operations, expressed it, “Platanus is one brand. We are not a Westfield with many brands under its roof” (Tony and Anne in 3rd Leadership Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 064).

Julia, the Communications and Marketing Manager, emphasised how she was promoting the commitment to Platanus’s vision by drawing on their shared ethos as health professionals, questioning the future employees about “Why did you start working here in first place? What are the things that would make our work and our patients’ life better?” (Julia in 3rd Leadership Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 064). This focus on a shared concern with the patients and away from narrow staff issues was, as detailed above, reinforced by the Chief Information Officer, June, and Anne, Director of Clinical Operations. However, as the team also recognised, the initiative promoting the realisation of such ideals was still one that was being imposed. As Fred claimed, “It is like a job they have not signed up for . . . ” and Pauline finished his sentence “ . . . with a lot of uncertainties” (Fred and Pauline in 3rd Leadership Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 064). They noted the considerable concern that surrounded work conditions, such the transfer of benefits such as sick leave, annual leave, tenure, rewards and allowances. Fred also re-affirmed the sceptical, autonomous and opportunistic nature of the established culture - “you do things until someone tells you to stop and, due to the chaotic nature of this organisation, it took [a] very long [time] until people were told to stop.” The CEO, Tony, agreed that the culture was, as he observed, “almost clan based . . . you form a clan: you bang it together.” Moving them out of this culture was a challenge, as coercion was not desirable or a long-term option. As Fred recognised, “ . . . they should be part of Platanus and they should not be thinking ‘there are these bastards called Platanus on the other side

of the road who force us to do this or that' ". The CEO, Tony, even emphasised the negative imagery around 'change' and the need to avoid it: "The framing should maybe not be that this is another change management plan, people might not like the word change because it implies that people have done something wrong," he said (Fred and Tony in 3rd Leadership Workshop, December 2011, Ref. 064).

6.8.5 Type of Response to Paradox

Further, it was also not clear whether Paul was communicating the importance of accepting the status quo or seeking to highlight an issue for discussion (Poole & Ven, 1989). In reflecting on his view of a 'high road' approach to patient-centeredness, Paul may have been indicating that the skit should be taken as a suggestion to explore such an area. However, by emphasising the existence of a 'low road' perspective, he could be seen as suggesting that an acceptance was required of what could be viewed as more of a 'spaghetti highway' - conflicting perspectives rather than a synergy.

In reflecting on the sensitive nature of issues of job security and working conditions and the embedded power of the doctors, Paul might also be seen as having advocated a spatial segregation stance of "rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's", that is giving doctors control over work processes and conditions, while the patient-centred vision was applied to other areas.

Alternatively, as his reluctance to discuss the 'fluff' indicated, he may have been preferring a temporal segregation of addressing the conditions of the doctors and, only later, taking up the issues of patient-centeredness.

A Paradox or Not?

Whether or not the skit was communicating a message of paradox or simply affirming a one-dimensional commitment to the doctors' perspective was also subject to dispute. In our initial outline of Paul's 'intention', the *'Doctors on Top'* skit was presented as a deliberate attempt to communicate paradox. As we subsequently saw, however, different participants 'read' different intentions, ultimately meaning for them that no irony was involved at all

and there was no communication of paradox - merely an assertion of a zero-sum win-lose medical viewpoint.

Weighted Meanings and Irony's Edge

Such ambiguities are more than a source of creative and/or worrisome uncertainty. Irony always has a critical edge. Inherent in the use of irony is a suspicion and an actuality that someone and something is being ridiculed, as rhetorical irony is weighted towards an unsaid meaning or set of meanings. As Aristotle and others observed, there is a tendency for irony to evoke angry reactions from those who feel they are being duped, put down or got at.

In the case of the *'Doctors on Top'* skit, Paul's rhetoric was recognised by nearly everyone as weighted towards a recognition of and adaptation to the power and perspective of the doctors. But this weighting has to be seen in context. And here the recognition of the complex nature of irony provides important insights. Paul may not be simply privileging the doctors' interests and point of view. Instead he may be, in the context of what he perceived to be unrealistic, dishonest and inauthentic communication, seeking to provoke a recognition of the lack of balance, obscuring of contradictions and the dysfunctional consequences of failing to openly discuss tensions, trade-offs and competing ideals and demands. In the context of what Kenneth Burke (1984a, b) described as the 'tragic' implications of all perspectives - the tendency to divide the world into saints and sinners - the *'Doctors on Top'* skit *may* be seen as a defence of a cosmopolitan pluralism disguised as a hierarchical power-play¹⁶. Given irony's implicit nature and critical edge, such diversity of interpretation and associated evaluations are an inevitable result of the 'double evaluative coding' of irony (Hutcheon, 1994).

6.9 A Dangerously Rewarding Game

The communication of paradoxes is far from a neutral exercise. Organisations and their environments are a 'contested terrain', characterised not only by multiple competing 'discursive communities' but by relationships of power, authority and control. The

¹⁶ 'May' was italicised quite deliberately, as not only is this only one interpretation but it is quite possible that Paul consciously or unconsciously intended - and the skit could be taken quite validly to imply - contrary meanings.

surfacing of such issues, in the form of rhetorical irony or any other method of giving recognition to situational ironies, reveals ‘elephants in the room’. These are consciously and strategically or unconsciously and implicitly enwrapped in codes of silence by those with a vested interest in them being unquestioned or taken-for-granted or at least remaining undiscussed in public forums.

Rhetorical irony’s edge is that it surfaces such issues - even if only suggestively. And while it provides a degree of cover and protection as an invitation to ‘play’, its critical component has the potential to worry, anger and even enrage those who feel that the authority of their ‘sacred’ world-views and interests are being questioned. The degree of heated controversy, varied interpretation and conflicting evaluations raised by Paul’s short (47 second) skit are an indication of the risk that the ironic communicator takes. Given the ‘double evaluative code’ that is applied to the use of irony, however, this danger may be outweighed by the rewards that flow from the stimulation of collaborative identification and sheer delight and the building of a common challenge to silent and divisive interests.

Whatever the outcome of an ironic method of communication, the principle is a more general one: organisational politics and, within it, communicating paradox is a ‘contact sport’ (Buchanan & Badham, 2008). It will always involve a controversial process of determining and communicating whether tensions are to be seen as paradoxes, what kinds of paradoxes are involved, how such paradox is handled and by whom and in line with whose perspectives and interests. Once we are shorn of reductive binaries, the complex process of addressing these issues involves a constant construction and reconstruction of our lives with the result that they are inherently paradoxical (Holcomb, 2001).

When the HR Director, Andrew, recounted to Paul after the forum theatre event that “I know where you are coming from” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Andrew, June 2012, Ref. 103), he acknowledged what was arguably a greater degree of recognition in the team following the skit of the inherent doctor/patient tensions in their vision, as well as how it is communicated.

After the *‘Doctors on Top’* skit, the Executive Team has also embarked on a number of activities highlighting the paradoxical tensions in the competing logics and commitments that they are confronting. Again, arguably, there was greater recognition in the team that this dilemma is one example of the paradoxes they have to work through but are unable to finally resolve. The ‘voice of the doctors’ was put more clearly and forcefully into the room

and the Executive Team's discussions and debates. At the same time, Paul's skit did not shift how the Executive Team expected him to present to medical staff - he was criticised for and was arguably uncomfortable and embarrassed by his performance in the public presentation. Moreover, while there was an increasing respect for the complexity and relevance of Paul's perspective by some, there are indications of continuing if not growing tensions with others. There is little indication of increasing interpersonal tolerance and complex communication and understanding between him and others in the team. Whether or not the *'Doctors on Top'* skit furthered or harmed his credibility and/or hindered or enhanced the ability of the team to collaboratively work through paradox remains uncertain. The preparation and dissemination of this paper may even have an effect on this outcome.

6.10 Conclusion

In a series of in depth action-research studies, Beech et al. (2004), Luscher and Lewis (2008) and Jay (2013) have provided further insight into the complexities and challenges involved for organisational leaders and with which executive teams learn to live whilst working through and navigating diversity and paradox. In an attempt to throw further light on the dynamics of this activity, they have variously explored its 'seriously playful' character as a way of experimenting with options, the ongoing 'sparring' involved in iterative and contentious processes of creating workable certainties and the creative navigation required to avoid 'getting stuck' in the face of competing definitions of success and failure.

The intention of this paper has been to use the *'Doctors on Top'* skit to help delve further into the dramatic depths of what has been described as the 'buzzing, booming and confusion' of such processes (Poole & Ven, 1989 referring to William James). As Beech et al. (2004) aptly observed, a recognition of the need to live with paradox is an invitation to act in the knowledge that there can be no simple cognitive resolution of the contradictions that are being wrestled with. What is involved also, however, is an invitation for others to act in recognition of this situation. What the *'Doctors on Top'* skit helped to illustrate is some of the uncertainties, complexities and risks involved in this communication process.

In returning to the theme of the influence and effect of forum theatre as a polyphonic enterprise, what the *'Doctors on Top'* skit illustrated was the ability of such interventions to

allow the surfacing and expression of countervailing and contrary voices. As Paul remarked later in an informal conversation:

“Some people have just been forced into this change. They are not just disengaged but resentful and angry, because it was imposed and they were just told. In the Executive Team everybody knows the issues but I felt powerless and they weren’t addressed.” (Paul in Conversation, September 2012, Ref. 140)

What the skit effectively represented was Paul’s voicing of issues that, as he notes, he otherwise felt powerless to have the team address. In this sense, the forum theatre intervention had clearly enabled the surfacing of repressed - even if powerful - voices in public discussion and decision making within Platanus. But the ways in which this representation of multivocality helped - or did not help - to create a polyphonic ‘harmonious expression’ of voice is another matter.

As we have seen, Paul’s method of communicating paradoxical tensions between competing objectives and perspectives through the use of irony is a complex and contested phenomenon, and one that Hutcheon (1994) has aptly described as an ‘edgy’ affair. At one level, the case study indicated the existence of multiple levels of meaning and interpretation, explicit but also implicit, concerning the nature of the contradictory and conflicting goals, perspectives and groups being ‘ironicised’. At another level, there were varied interpretations of Paul’s motives, particularly over the degree to which he was simply representing one prejudiced and powerful voice behind an ironic cover, rather than using irony to surface repressed voices in recognition of the need to work through legitimate differences and tensions in an open and inclusive manner.

In part, such ambiguities and tensions are inherent in ironic forms of communication. However, at the same time these might justifiably be seen as areas of uncertainty and disagreement inherent in *all* attempts to create a ‘harmonious expression’ of diverse voices and multiple perspectives. At one level, the laughter that closely followed the punch line suggested that there was a large degree of initial acceptance and recognition of the issues and tensions being identified, allowing an effective (‘effervescent’) communal ‘anti-rite’ to occur. At another level, however, this was followed by diverse and changing reflections on meaning, motive and appropriateness in subsequent interviews. While the message may have hit home and opened up future discussion at the level of informal interaction and discussion within the group, there was no real evidence that the skit had effectively

changed mid-term practices or longer term considerations of the medical practitioner's 'voice'.

Another set of issues raised by the polysemic nature of the skit and its message is the nature of the 'voices' that it felt it was necessary to include, represent and express. At the most immediate level, there is the question of the appropriate and desirable level of voice given to powerful established interests, such as the medical profession, in comparison with other voices. However, which 'voices' are raised as being legitimate and of interest is not as clear or pre-determined as a crude view of multivocal expression might suggest.

While it is important to raise such issues, their presence does not a priori de-legitimize the pursuit of polyphony or the value of using forum theatre to pursue such ends. What it means, however, is that it is only to be expected that a polyphonic ideal of 'harmonious expression' of voice will be subject to ongoing controversy and debate as part of its communal objective. As Flyvbjerg (1998: 230) elaborates in his consideration of Habermas and Foucault as 'thinkers for a civil society' "forms of public life that are practical, committed and ready for conflict provide a superior paradigm of civic citizen virtue than do forms of public life that are discursive, detached and consensus dependent."

What the *Doctors on Top* skit reveals is that the process of surfacing and communicating dissident, diverse, contradictory and paradoxical voices – and seeking to give them expression – is just such a combative and conflict ridden enterprise, riven with uncertainty and controversy. Insofar as this is recognised and accepted, the value of forum theatre derives not from its fulfilment of a harmonious polyphonic utopia but rather its 'practical, committed and ready for conflict' commitment to genuine participation in public organisational discourse. What this case study has, hopefully, revealed are some of the processual, uncertain and emergent micro-dynamics involved in this activity. In this sense, what the generation and enactment of Paul's ironic *Doctors on Top* skit provides is not so much a representation of an idealised communicative speech act but an insight into and reminder of the nature of public debate as a complex situated 'contact sport' (Buchanan & Badham, 2008).

But again to our focus on paradox: the *Doctors on Top* skit has been used as a vehicle for also helping to explore the complicated nature of communicating paradox with the intention of helping to enrich public discourse in organisations, particularly around working through paradoxical tensions between different goals, perspectives and voices and

how this is handled. The criteria on which the communicator of paradox is judged, the factors influencing their success and the issues that are involved are neither simple nor mundane. They cannot be reduced to issues of 'effectiveness' or 'sustainability' without demeaning what has been identified as the multiple 'orders of worth' (Boltanski, Thevenot, & Porter, 2006) that play themselves out in an organisational equivalent of what Weber once described as modern society's 'polytheism of warring Gods'.

What the analysis of the *Doctors on Top* skit may have helped to reveal or reinforce is that the communication of paradox - at least through the use of irony - is an uncertain, complex and risky social interaction. It is a performative happening in which permission is requested to take 'time out' from the stresses and strains of a prominent reality but which also may or may not be recognised as such or seen as appropriate. It is a world in which the meanings, intentions and credibility of the person or persons communicating paradox are inevitably interrogated and judged and multiple dissonant meanings are condensed, interpreted and evaluated in complex, tacit and prejudiced ways – including the very nature of the paradoxes being confronted, as well as how they are dealt with. It is, as observed, also a dangerously rewarding game: one in which the promise of acting as liberal, open and communicative 'virtuosos of pluralism' (Berger & Luckmann, 1995) and building 'amiable communities' (Booth, 1975) in a diverse world is dogged by the threat of being judged and dismissed or condemned for sacrilege. As James March (1986: 32) once remarked of leadership, it is "a careful dance along a narrow beam, and there is the possibility of much grace in it." But, as with the polyphonic enterprise as such, there is also 'fallout', if not an actual 'fall'.

This page is intentionally left blank.

Translating, Deconstructing and Harmonising: Organisational Theatre and Organisational Polyphony

*“Wherever the relevance of speech is at stake, matters become political by definition,
for speech is what makes man a political being.”*

Hannah Arendt in
The Human Condition (1958/1998: 3)

Research in organisational theatre as a means of fostering organisational change has increased over the past years. Many of the current disputes in the field of organisational theatre research are around the use of Boalian forum theatre techniques in working organisations and whether or not these techniques are able to realise Boal’s original purpose of recognising diverse and repressed voices within the organisations. While studies to date focused on the degree to which organisational theatre fosters or constrains diversity and multivocality and have begun to consider polyphony, they have only very briefly and schematically explored what this means as an explanatory or normative framework for analysing the nature and outcomes of organisational theatre interventions. To address this research gap, this paper uses the concept of polyphony as an open, explanatory and evaluative framework to help illuminate the character and impact of organisational theatre interventions. In doing so, the paper adopts a ‘both/and’ approach, viewing organisational theatre as potentially both a managerial tool as well as an employee-oriented and change provoking method – therefore contradicting existing studies, which viewed organisational theatre interventions as representing either managerial or employee voices. The qualitative, longitudinal, single-case study has combined interview, observation and document analysis methods to track the process of an organisational theatre event, from its early development to its follow up phases, at a newly established and innovative cancer clinic. The analysis

suggests that while organisational theatre is able to facilitate multivocal and diverse debates and interpretations of situations and allows for processes of translation and deconstruction to occur, the outcomes and effects of organisational theatre for individuals are impacted by their perceived power status within the organisation.

7.1 Organisational Theatre and Polyphony

Organisational theatre has moved from being a marketing-related artefact (Bell, 1987) to incorporate a range of interactive interventions where artists support employees to ‘see more and see differently’ (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b). This development has led to an increasing research interest in the use of theatre to facilitate organisational change (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Biehl-Missal, 2011b; Darsø, 2004; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). While organisational theatre can take different forms, the particular focus of this paper is on active-audience organisational theatre, so-called forum theatre, because it represents a prevalent organisational theatre practice (Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004).

Augusto Boal (1979/2000, 1995b), a Brazilian theatre director, politician and writer, created forum theatre to surface diverse and repressed voices and to encourage multivocal expression and active engagement. A central aspect of the method includes involving the audience directly in the performance by encouraging spectators to intervene spontaneously during the performance and to change the script to their own liking (Boal, 1995a). Boal sought to liberate audiences through their active participation in the performance, which in turn would, he thought, stimulate a willingness to change the real world. Boal wanted to give voice to the people who did not have one, stimulate self-consciousness and promote active involvement in society (Boal, 1979/2000, 1995a). He sought to create politically radical and artistically innovative theatre for the oppressed masses, which supported dialogical learning and fostered political change (Boal, 1979/2000).

The application of forum theatre in organisational settings has sparked an ongoing debate around whether or not this technique is able to realise its original purpose of recognising diverse and repressed voices (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). Critics question whether organisational theatre can have the same effect (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Nissley et al., 2004), some viewing the method as nothing more than managerial and entertaining initiatives that allow a brief time for a carnival before

reconfirming existing power relations. They regard organisational theatre and its outcomes as nothing more than 'Boal lite' (Clark & Mangham, 2004b). Supporters of organisational theatre acknowledge that organisational theatre cannot fulfil Boal's Marxist ideology (Meisiek & Barry, 2007) but argue for the method's potential to stimulate polyphonic discourse through its collective and dialogical process, where development and outcome are emergent and unpredictable (Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Schreyögg, 2001).

While discussions on organisational theatre consider and use terminology around diversity, multivocality and polyphony, their exploration of these terms remains general (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). Meisiek and Barry (2007), for example, refer to 'descriptive' elements of polyphony, which describe organisational dialogue as occurring in multivocal ways (Hazen, 1993). Yet their analysis of polyphony itself remains largely general and vague.

Polyphony is discussed more comprehensively in broader organisation studies where polyphony is used as a metaphor to describe the multivocal and pluralistic character of organisational discourse, where concurrent and simultaneous dialogues occur and diverse points of view emerge during the process of organisational becoming (Boje, 2002; Clegg et al., 2006a; Hazen, 1993, 2011; Kornberger et al., 2006). Further, polyphony is seen as a normative instrument, whereby organisations, and the way in which they are studied, ought to be expressive in a way that supports a 'harmonious' handling or management of multivocality (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Clegg et al., 2005; Hazen, 1993; Kornberger et al., 2006). Both descriptive and normative interpretations of polyphony suggest that organisations are fundamentally multivocal bodies that create reality and make sense of their experience through discourse (Clegg et al., 2005; Foucault, 1972; Weick, 1995).

The use of polyphony as a metaphor in organisation studies has, however, not been uncontested. Critics question the underlying idea of polyphony itself, its ability to foster organisational change, its manageability, as well as the lack of clarity around its interpretation and definition in organisation studies (Clegg et al., 2006a; Czarniawska, 1999b; DeCock & Jeanes, 2006; Letiche, 2010; Parker, 2002). The inherent paradox of polyphony lies in its recognition of simultaneous, equal and multivocal discourse and

expressiveness while, at the same time, the need to encourage some sort of management or 'harmonisation' of voices to avoid cacophony and stagnation.¹⁷

Kornberger et al. (2006) address this critique in their discussion on the value of polyphonic organisations. Referring to Weick (1979), they argue that organisations have to accept and work through multivocal processes and disorder to initiate new direction and change (Kornberger et al., 2006). Viewing management as a discursive practice, they perceive translating and deconstructing between language games divided by the *différend* (engl "the other", Lyotard, 1988) as key in unsettling order and, through this, fostering change. However, they also recognise the tension and challenges that come with any attempt to manage or harmonise conflicting voices without silencing one or the other (Kornberger et al., 2006). Kornberger et al. (2006) argue that, in order to manage or harmonise organisational polyphony, a deconstruction of existing organisational narratives needs to take place. They view deconstruction as an interventional process that, through presenting the stories that guide organisational sensemaking, allows for an identification of internal paradoxes and for an acknowledgment of the underrepresentation of certain voices in organisations. Deconstruction enables the status quo to be questioned in a way that highlights the habituated forms of behaviour of those with voice to construct space for those without (Kornberger et al., 2006).

To them, the "driving force" behind change is, however, not deconstruction but translation which seeks to build bridges between different voices without producing a unified or oppressive language (Kornberger et al., 2006: 18, 19). The process of translation is concerned with the differences between voices and the mediation between these different voices and their individual logics. Through presenting the *différend* - the 'gap' between differing languages - translation enables a realisation and an acknowledgement of the other and sometimes divergent voice, which endorses a different reality through its own rationale. Rather than aspiring for a unification of different voices, translation aspires to 'deal' with them in a constructive way (Kornberger et al., 2006).

Bearing in mind diverse values, interpretations and realities, the translator has to balance being the 'author' of a text that encourages diversity and polyphony, while allowing multivocal discourse and interaction. This balancing act led Czarniawska (1999b) and

¹⁷ While Kornberger et al. (2006) referred to the term 'management', I prefer the term 'harmonisation' as I felt it was closer related to the semantic field of polyphony.

Letiche (2010) to doubt whether polyphony is an adequate metaphor to describe organisational discourse as its aim to manage or harmonise multiple voices by one author is the opposite of polyphony.

Despite the vast interest in the topic, polyphony never acquired more than a mainly metaphorical status (Boje, 1995; Kornberger et al., 2006; Letiche, 2010) - the complex issues and descriptive and normative meanings of polyphony still remain ambiguous and empirically underexplored. While Kornberger et al. (2006) offer an in-depth exploration of how to manage polyphony, their discussion on how processes of deconstruction, translation and thus harmonisation of multiple and differing voices can be realised remains largely theoretical. As they themselves admit, more empirical research is required to enable a better understanding of such processes (Kornberger et al., 2006).

To further the discussion, this paper employs the concept of polyphony to support an analysis of the character and impact of organisational theatre processes. It presents the findings of a longitudinal single-case study, which followed an organisational theatre process from its early development until follow-up stages (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Matula, 2012; Schreyögg, 2001). Particularly, this paper looks at the phases following the organisational theatre performance to illuminate the ways in which the character of the intervention was perceived as a deconstruction or translation.

7.2 Organisational Theatre: Existing Research and its Limitations

Research on organisational theatre has produced neat descriptions of the character and potential of organisational theatre interventions. However, few studies consider the multivocal nature of organisations or how such multivocality is managed in the context of an organisational theatre event. Furthermore, the dominant research interests and the ideas that organisational theatre is either a managerially controlled tool or has the potential to stimulate dialogue and change limits research endeavours. The either/or perspectives tend to overlook that organisational theatre interventions may have both types of effects at the same time, influenced by the specific context and the multifaceted and fluid power dynamics within which they take place. To account for multivocal processes, organisational theatre researchers would need to carry out in-depth explorations of the different stages and content-related elements involved in an organisational theatre production. Further, the consideration of the possibility of a 'both/and' presence of managerial control and frame-

breaking dialogue would open up new directions in organisational theatre and polyphony studies.

Missing Stages Focus

Most studies focus on only a few stages of the organisational theatre process (for example: Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004) and, therefore, fail to satisfy the identified need for full studies of an organisational theatre process from pre-commissioning to follow-up stages in order to examine the multifaceted nature and effects of these interventions (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Matula, 2012; Schreyögg, 2001). Meisiek and Barry (2007), for example, undertook the only published longitudinal case study of the outcomes of an organisational theatre process throughout almost all phases, from commissioning to follow-up stages. However, while their discussion considers the influence of diversity and multivocality on interpretations of organisational theatre, their analysis of polyphony itself remains largely general and vague and only marginally explores 'descriptive' elements of the concept. I contend that an evaluation of the process of 'harmonising' organisational polyphony in the context of an organisational theatre intervention requires a consideration of all phases of an organisational theatre production.

Missing Content Focus

Nissley et al. (2004) developed a framework to evaluate the potential of organisational theatre within Boal's methodology by examining the degree to which management or 'workers' control the *roles* and the *scripts*. They argue that, when management or hired professional actors write the script or perform a play, the event is divergent from Boalian methods and its outcome and is management controlled. If, however, the control of the role and the script lies in the hands of organisational members, the performance is more 'worker' controlled, closer to Boalian ideals and its outcome therefore more employee oriented.

Nissley et al. (2004: 828) themselves acknowledge that a focus on merely structural conditions is insufficient to fully capture the nature and dynamics of organisational theatre and its character and impact. Referring to Barker (1993), they question whether employees who own the role or the script really have power over the event or whether this may be

also be affected by elements of “concertive control”, which restricts the employees’ freedom to bring their true interests to the surface for discussion. They further argue that even if management commissions the organisational theatre company, its consultants may or may not be influenced by interviews or conversations with employees during, for instance, the script-writing phase. The script may, therefore, not solely be based on management’s concerns.

Similarly, the audience itself may question or doubt what organisational theatre advocates define as the method’s content and anticipated outcomes, such as the establishment of a ‘safe’ and ‘open’ learning space, which celebrates diversity and discourse that is free from the limitations of concertive control (Barker, 1993 in Nissley et al., 2004; Coopey, 1998). For all these reasons, it appears that an analysis of the translating or deconstructing characteristics of organisational theatre events needs to consider the content of the organisational theatre and the different ways in which the intervention is influenced by agency and interpretation in situ.

Avoiding Polarisation

Many organisational theatre studies define the character and potential of theatrical interventions as being either managerial *or* employee oriented (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). These interpretations assume that organisational theatre can have one definitive and clear outcome, contradicting insights of ‘ambiguity’ or ‘fragmentation’ perspectives (Martin, 2001; Meyerson, 1991; Meyerson & Martin, 1987). These, in line with ‘descriptive’ elements of polyphony, recognise organisational life and culture as complex, multidimensional, multivocal, ambiguous and emergent and argue that organisational actors will, as part of a symbolic culture, always produce diverse and multiple interpretations (Martin, 2001; Meyerson, 1991; Meyerson & Martin, 1987).

To further explore how organisational theatre can be both a managerial tool and an employee-oriented method for change, this paper uses the concept of polyphony to explore the micro rituals (Collins, 2004; Goffman, 1959) involved in the interpretations of the character and effects of an organisational theatre event. The particular focus is on the ways in which the organisational theatre event has been perceived as a ‘harmonising’ translation and deconstruction.

7.3 Methods

In the present longitudinal case study, I followed the recommendation to study all stages of an organisational theatre intervention (from its pre-commissioning to its follow-up phases) (Matula, Badham, & Meisiek, 2011; Schreyögg, 2001). The case study followed a leadership development program in an innovative health care project over eighteen months, from its early establishment (one year before the theatre event) until after the organisational theatre event (six months after the theatre event) (see Appendix C: Case Study Overview and Timeline). While building on findings of a broader PhD study regarding the setting and background of the organisation and involved stakeholders, this paper focuses on the character of the stakeholders' interpretations of the outcome of the organisational theatre event during the post event stages only (see Appendix I: Event History Database, Ref. 100-140).

The longitudinal research approach enabled an in-depth understanding of the political (Clegg et al., 2006b; Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998; Lukes, 2005; Zanko et al., 2008), processual (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) and inherently ambiguous (Martin & Meyerson, 1988) cultural pragmatics (Alexander, 2004) involved in the emergence of an organisational theatre event. In line with social constructionist assumptions, this paper takes the position that knowledge and reality is dependent on human actions being constructed within and from interactions amongst individuals and their 'lifeworld' and advanced and conveyed within a fundamentally social context (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999; Shotter, 1993). Therefore, this case study focuses on one research site to create a richer understanding and description of the stakeholders' interpretations of the outcomes of the organisational theatre intervention at this site (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991).

7.3.1 Research Site

The case study was conducted at Platanus¹⁸, a cancer clinic in a major cosmopolitan city of an OECD country. Once opened as an operational entity in November 2013, the clinic will run as a not-for-profit benevolent organisation and will be the country's main cancer

¹⁸ The term 'Platanus' was used to find a fictional name for the case study site – the establishment of a world-class holistic, patient-centred cancer care facility – that captured its idealistic medical nature. Platanus was the name of the tree under which Hippocrates taught his pupils the art of medicine.

treatment and research facility. Platanus will provide patient-centred, integrated and holistic cancer care. Cancer services which are currently provided to the district by an existing public clinic will gradually transition into Platanus and those employees working at the existing clinic will be offered to transfer into the new organisation. Platanus's Senior Executive Team, consisting of twelve members with multi-disciplinary backgrounds, is managing the change process. The Team's official hierarchical structure is divided into three levels: a CEO, eight Executives directly reporting to the CEO and another three Executives reporting to three of the eight Executives (see Appendix B: Organisation Chart Platanus's Senior Executive Team). To support the team with the change management process, Platanus's HR Managers commissioned two Academic Consultants to guide them in developing an action-research based leadership development program. This process was accompanied by a study conducted by me. As part of the program, the Executive Team was invited to participate in a one-day organisational forum theatre event, which was held in February 2012.

The organisational theatre workshop was the fourth session of Platanus's still ongoing leadership development program. Over the course of earlier workshops and discussions, the Executives had raised the challenges associated with them talking to potential staff (currently employed at the existing clinic) due to the restrictions of the Local Health District. During the third workshop, however, the Executives realised that they were not only restricted from having those conversations but also that they were rather poorly prepared to constructively do so. The discussions in this workshop led the Academic Consultants to recommend the use of organisational forum theatre to address these issues, an idea which was accepted and agreed upon with the HR Managers the following day.

The Academic Consultants made the first contact with the Theatre Company, which they had known from previous collaborations, and a contract was drafted between the Theatre Company and Platanus. After a series of meetings, discussions, phone calls and email exchanges between Platanus's HR Managers and the Academic Consultants, an agreement was made to use the following question as an overarching theme and the formal purpose of the organisational theatre event:

How as Executives do we respond to informal questions about Platanus's vision, values and our personal ambitions to engage them in our journey?

On the day of the event, all Executives, the HR Managers and the Academic Consultants attended the half-day theatre workshop, which was facilitated by two members of the organisational theatre company at an external location in the vicinity of Platanus's headquarters.

The play consisted of three scenes, which were each presented by two professional actors of the Theatre Company, one of whom also held the role of the facilitator of the workshop. The scenes presented three different scenarios, which dealt with informal conversations between two imaginary characters, a Platanus Executive and an external staff member. In a way similar to Boalian forum theatre, the piece was structured into scenes that were presented by the two actors and discussed and (partly) replayed in active audience sessions. The first scene, which served as a warm-up exercise, was followed by a brief open discussion round. Scenes Two and Three were also communally analysed in open discussions but additionally explored in character interviews, re-scripting sessions and replaying of the scenes. During these character interviews, participants were able to quiz the two actors, both remaining in character, about their thoughts and reasoning for their behaviour during the scenes. Following Scene Two, the participants were invited to envisage how the situation could be improved and one participant, who was invited to take on the character of the Executive, then replayed the scene once more. Following the character interviews after the third scene, all Executives were invited again to come up with an improved scenario out of which three suggestions were played out.

The workshop ended with a wrap-up round where participants were asked to share their personal takeaways with the group. The contributions were related to the overarching theme of the session and focused on issues around communication with staff, such as the importance of an awareness of general communication skills, to remain authentic while bringing a message across, recognising and considering other voices in dialogue and the need for good timing and planning in conversations.

7.3.2 Data Collection

To further support the analysis of the ways in which stakeholders interpret and construct the character and impact of an organisational theatre intervention and in line with social constructionist perspectives on the mutual creation of meanings by researched and researchers, the data collection and analysis process used a contemporary, constructivist

grounded theory approach (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011). The method builds on grounded theorist foundations (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), which views that theory derives from the data and adopts methodological strategies of traditional grounded theory such as simultaneous data collection and analysis, coding, comparative methods, memo writing and theoretical sampling. Constructivist grounded theory, in line with social constructionist perspectives, however, recognises that data is socially and situationally constructed (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011; Clarke, 2005), rather than passively waiting to be discovered and collected by the researcher (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The approach further acknowledges researchers' involvement in data collection and analysis in a simultaneous, iterative and comparative process and encourages an analysis of actions and processes as they occur in situ over time (Charmaz, 2006).

The data collection during post-event stages involved non-participant observation (Dawson, 1997) of two follow-up meetings between Platanus's HR Managers, the Academic Consultants and the Theatre Company (2 meetings, 4 hours) and then three leadership workshops following the organisational theatre event (3 workshops, 12 hours). I audio-recorded the meetings and workshops, took notes of my observations and wrote diary-type notes after each of these events. The audio-recordings of the workshops were additionally transcribed during later stages of the study (3 workshops, 12 hours). To deepen my understanding of the actors involved and their understanding of cultural norms, customs and behaviours, I gathered data from casual conversations with the stakeholders, which I also captured in diary type notes. Through these observations, I was hoping to advance my understanding of the constructions involved in an organisational theatre process and to observe how the stakeholders made sense of that development and how this sense-making process was a product of or was linked to their 'lifeworld'.

To explore participants' perceptions, views and interpretations of the outcomes of the organisational theatre event and to further strengthen the research, I conducted two sets of formal, open-ended and semi-structured interviews of about twenty minutes each. The first set of interviews was conducted with the HR Managers, the Academic Consultants, two members of the Theatre Company and the Executive Team two weeks after the event (16 interviews, 8 hours) (see Appendix G: Post-event Interview Questions Set 1). The second set was taken with the HR Managers, one Academic Consultant and the Executive Team four months after the event (13 interviews, 6.5 hours) (see Appendix H: Post-event

Interview Questions Set 2). In the first round of interviews, I sought to find out more about how the stakeholders generally interpreted the outcome of the intervention and which issues they identified during the organisational theatre event. When revisiting the interviewees, I followed up on what interviewees had described as outcomes and as identified issues in the first set to test and supplement the findings. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed (29 interviews, 10 hours).

To further deepen my understanding of the development of the process, I gathered documents, which were distributed during meetings and workshops and analysed numerous emails that were sent between the parties. These documents were provided to me on request but unsolicited documents were also provided by the organisation's HR Managers, the Executives, the Academic Consultants and the Theatre Company. I analysed the documents to gain further historical and demographic information to provide a better background to the case.

7.3.3 Data Analysis

Following a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011), I engaged in data collection and analysis concurrently in an iterative process employing comparative methods throughout the research process. This allowed me to refocus and redefine theoretical concepts and constructs and follow their development in context (Charmaz, 2006).

The research process followed a grounded theory approach as defined by Charmaz (2000; 2006) and began with sensitising concepts and fairly broad research perspectives. I then analysed the data through initial coding - a process which I supported by writing memos and discussing interim case summaries with my supervisors to evaluate and question initial ideas and codes and their relations and to conceptualise my ideas (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Due to the nature and volume of the data, I decided to focus on coding incidents such as meetings, emails or in situ conversations rather than line-by-line coding. In doing so, I compared incidents with other incidents, searched for processes and patterns, revisited earlier incidents and compared them to my conceptualisations of events coded earlier.

I then mapped out the web of actions, events and choices throughout the study by organising the data in a timeline-like event history database (Poole & Van de Ven, 1990) (see Appendix I: Event History Database). This involved chronologically organising the collected data (meetings, emails, workshops, etc.), which allowed each process phase to be broadly mapped out and to identify events in which certain incidents occurred. To further support this process, I developed context charts of, for example, the stakeholders' relationships (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In a second phase of coding and to further focus my data and ideas, I utilised more focused and conceptual codes than in my initial coding to synthesise and explain larger sections of the collected data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). As in earlier research stages, I focused the data further by writing memos and developing categories, which I then discussed with my supervisors.

To deepen and define the resulting thematic categorisations and to test and complement categories, I used theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). This involved revisiting interviewees and participants in the case study to collect further data, which assisted me to further identify and develop emerging concepts and theories and to elaborate and refine categories.

7.4 Findings

The analysis of the data showed that the stakeholders of the organisational theatre event interpreted the character and impact of the intervention in diverse ways. Some stakeholders perceived the organisational theatre event as a translation, which created a playful and safe environment in which they were able to discuss and debate their own ideas and understandings with other, sometimes contradicting, voices. Other stakeholders focused their interpretations of the event on their colleagues' reactions to the organisational theatre event, which they perceived as a deconstruction of existing narratives within the organisation. This recognition led them to question the Team's unity of the vision and mission, as well as their own hierarchical status and voice within the group and the wider organisation.

A third group, the organisers of the intervention seemed to have come to a consensus in their interpretations of the impact of the event. They focused their interpretations on more common and technical aspects such as the general value of organisational theatre as a

method and its effectiveness to address communication issues, which they considered had been harmoniously realised. This 'shared' satisfaction with the organisational theatre event was mirrored by further engagements of the Theatre Company to conduct another leadership workshop at Platanus, this time using role-play, and to facilitate a second forum theatre session for Platanus's Executives and administrative employees.

To present these findings, this chapter is structured into three sections. The first section, *Translation*, describes the moments during the organisational theatre event that were perceived as enabling debate and discussion between different voices. The second section presents the stakeholders' interpretations of their colleagues' reactions within the event, which led them to perceive the workshop as a *Deconstruction*. The third section, *Reconciling Voices*, illuminates the seemingly harmonious interpretations of the perceived value of organisational theatre as a method and its effectiveness in improving the Executives' communication skills.

The differences between those viewing the organisational theatre as a translation and those focusing on their colleagues' behaviour during the event became particularly apparent through references the Executives made about three incidents within the organisational theatre event. The scenes around the incidents constituted the largest part of the workshop and will be used to illustrate the divergent interpretations of the character and the impact of the organisational theatre event.

7.4.1 Translation

The Smoking Nurse

The second scene of the theatre play presented a fictional character of one of Platanus's Executives, Dan (played by the Facilitator Tom), crossing paths with a nurse, Jo (played by the Actress Lizzie) employed at the existing cancer clinic, who is having a cigarette break. The scene described Dan's somewhat desperate and unsuccessful attempts to convince the rather cynical and sceptical nurse Jo of the benefits of transferring her employment to Platanus.

After the enactment of the scene, the Executives were invited to share their ideas with the group. These discussions led to a diversity of interpretations about the nurse's behaviour and attitude and the Executives began to debate whether these were tolerable for

Platanus's enterprise. The CEO, Tony, for example, described the nurse's behaviour as "sloppy" and "laissez faire" and contended that "someone like that we seriously would not want to give the job [to]" (Tony in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099). Other Executives, on the contrary, disagreed with Tony's argument. The Director of Radiation Oncology, Paul argued,

"... and the conversation there, 'sloppy' and 'laissez faire', bothers me a lot. Because here is a lady who cares for dying people, she suffers and she needs a break. I completely reject the notion that we don't want people like that. We want more, I think, if they are good in doing their job, which is caring for sick people." (Paul in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099)

June, the Chief Information Officer, whose professional background was also in the Health sector, supported Paul's arguments and commented,

"She is concerned about herself, about her future, her home and shelter. And we are talking about the future and the vision and there is a mismatch there." (June in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099)

The discussions went on for a while before the Theatre Consultant, Tom, invited the Executives to imagine how the scenario could be improved. Tom then encouraged Tony, the CEO, to replay the scene with the nurse. Immediately after the replay, Tony's attempts were, at least formally, seen as being "able to make a real connection with the nurse" (Fred in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099) in an "authentic" way (Andrew and Carter in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099) and Tony's performance was applauded as a success.

After the event, some Executives focused their interpretation of the scene primarily on Tony's replay, which they perceived as having highlighted his skilfulness in authentically communicating Platanus's message while being considerate of the nurse's needs - therefore dealing with both interpretations of the original scene in a competent and constructive way (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Roland, Christian and Simone, February 2012, Ref. 100, 104, 112, February 2012). The CEO's explanation of the scene was similar. He also only referred to his replay only and felt he had highlighted

"... the importance of having an agenda for a better outcome or having a plan but being authentic at the same time (. . .) I wanted to show empathy towards the nurse's needs and not just trying to sell a message." (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Tony, March 2012, Ref. 113)

To this group, the scene had been a good exercise in practising communication with potential staff. For example, as Fred, Director of Medicine, summarised,

“ . . .the issues really were things surrounding the way we speak about the project, who we speak to, what someone else’s view of us is. And I think using that methodology was really good in bringing that to the surface. (. . .) I think it’s a really powerful way of making myself but also everybody else aware of things that we have in our heads, but we often don’t have enough time to think about, talk about and comment on.” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Fred, March 2012, Ref. 119)

The Arrogant Prick

The third scene of the play took place in the hallways of the currently existing cancer clinic, where the fictional character of an Executive, Sam (played by the Actress Lizzie), runs into Surgeon John (played by the Facilitator Tom), who is also employed at the existing cancer clinic. Sam tries to convince John to take part in Platanus’s focus group meetings, which are held to jointly design the employment models of the new facility. But, again, all attempts are met with resistance, cynicism and scepticism towards Platanus’s enterprise.

After the audience was presented with the scene, the Facilitator, Tom, invited the Executives to discuss what they had observed and to interview the characters presented. During these conversations, a somewhat heated debate between Platanus’s CEO, Tony, and the character of the Surgeon John emerged, which lasted several minutes and dominated this follow-up. Their discussion reached its peak when Tony accused the character of the Surgeon John of “being an arrogant prick” and the actor, still in character, left the room.

After the actor, still playing the Surgeon John, had returned to the room, the conversations between Tony and him continued. Soon the dialogue developed into a heated discussion again and was ultimately interrupted when the Actor, who had played the surgeon, stepped out of his role (Tony and Tom in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099).

Tony’s reactions during his discussions with the character of the surgeon remained largely uncommented upon during formal discussions of the organisational theatre event, as the Facilitator invited the audience to rescript the scene with the surgeon immediately after he had ended the discussions with the CEO.

After the event, some Executives commented on Tony’s behaviour as being “a bit off track” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Fred, February 2012, Ref. 119), however, they felt that this could have been “related to either the frustration Tony was experiencing in his dealings with the local health network and the existing hospital” (Post-event Interview Set

1 with Roland, February 2012, Ref. 104) or to the power of the theatre. Paul, for instance, argued,

“I wouldn't even be critical of that. I reckon that that says that the method is so effective, so easy and intuitive that Tony perhaps even unwittingly went off and down that track.” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Paul, February 2012, Ref. 116)

Tony himself admitted in later discussions that he “may have gone too far” in his interaction with the surgeon but that he felt that it was a “safe environment” in which people were allowed to “mess it up without consequences” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Tony, June 2012, Ref. 137). It seemed that, to Tony and to some of the other, mainly male, Executives, the scene and the responses it triggered allowed for underlying agreement or differences to surface which would not have an impact on the organisational reality. When being asked why the organisational theatre worked for him, Fred concluded,

“I think it works because it allows us, the people watching, who are the people who this is for - it allows us to actually step outside our normal roles and watch it like it's theatre. I mean it's like being in a theatre, watching down on something happening.” (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Fred, March 2012, Ref. 119)

Doctors on Top

The second scene with the cynical surgeon, however, caused further debate. After Tom, the Facilitator, ended the heated discussions between Tony and the character of the surgeon, he invited all Executives to rewrite the scene in groups. They were asked to improve the situation and to convince the surgeon to have further discussions about the future clinic. Following the Facilitator's invitation to play some of the participants' suggestions, Paul, Director of Radiation Oncology, volunteered. In this replay, Paul convinced the character of the surgeon to have further discussions about Platanus by arguing, “Let's face it, John, doctors are on top!” By saying that, Paul managed to grab the surgeon's attention and to convince him to have a round of golf and to discuss his possible future at Platanus.

The skit was only briefly discussed during the event but the immediate interpretations of the appropriateness of Paul's replay differed amongst the Executives. Tony, the CEO, for example, viewed Paul's replay as an unsuitable approach that would only pander to the doctor's ego. On the contrary, Anne, Director of Clinical Operations, viewed the skit as a realistic interpretation of the reality in Health. And Tom, the Actor, argued that he, from

his role as the surgeon, found Paul's rescript as a humorous and persuasive approach to convince the surgeon of further discussions (Tony, Anne, and Tom in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099).

In interviews following the organisational theatre event, some, again mainly male Executives, interpreted the replay as a "humoristic" or "realistic" approach and argued that Paul's skit was a playful and "tongue and cheek" way to show that doctors would, despite Platanus's patient-centred and empowering vision, remain at the top of the organisational hierarchy (Post-event Interview Set 1 and 2, June 2012, with Roland, Paul, Fred, Ref. 104, 116, 138). Fred, Director of Medicine, for example, explained when recalling the scene:

" . . . clinicians communicate much better with other clinicians. You can get to the heart of the matter much quicker because you both feel that you are speaking the same language - because you feel that you are equals (. . .) [In the scene] Paul meant that we all know that that's how hospitals run. He is right by the way - He is absolutely right." (Post-event Set 2 with Fred, June 2012, Ref. 138)

Paul later explained that he realised the sensitivity of making such a statement but argued,

"I appreciate that it's not politically correct to say things that demonstrate that the medical world is hierarchical. But I think, when you are planning things like Platanus, you have to recognise that the doctors are really important. They hold critical knowledge about patient care that others do not hold. Without that information you cannot do business. It is mission-critical stuff. Not only that, everybody else in the system looks for leadership and looks to follow people that they regard as leaders. The truth is that the medical doctors represent really important if not the key leadership group in healthcare." (Post-event Interview Set 1 with Paul, February 2012, Ref. 116)

In line with the descriptions of translation, it appeared that to Paul and others the debates which emerged in and through the organisational theatre did not necessarily have to unify the different voices but to attempt to deal with them in a constructive way – which was to them to accept that doctors are and will be 'on top'.

Some of the Executives, who perceived the organisational theatre event as a platform to discuss, debate and exchange ideas, felt motivated by the workshop to apply those strategies they had learnt or were reminded of (Post-event Interviews set 1 with Tony, Fred, Christian, Andrew, February and March 2012, Ref. 108, 112, 113, 119). For example, some Executives reported that they developed communication maps and supporting models. While the motivation seemed high during the first set of interviews, the group's engagement in realising its ideas contracted over time. Deadlines had to be met, other issues emerged and, when I interviewed the group four months later, none of its plans had

been realised (Post-event Interviews Set 2 with Tony, Fred, Christian, Andrew, June 2012, Ref. 125, 130, 137, 138).

7.4.2 Deconstruction

During post-event stages it became apparent that other Executives, mainly women, interpreted more than just the event and its effectiveness in enabling dialogue and discussion but also, and to them more importantly, they focused on the reactions and behaviours of some of their colleagues during the workshop.

When recalling Scene Two (*The Smoking Nurse*), for example, this group did not focus on CEO Tony's skilfulness in 'merging' the different interpretations of the scene, his replay or the ways in which the incident allowed them to practise communication with potential staff. Instead, the comment Tony had made about the 'smoking nurse' during the discussions following the scene was, to them, more significant. The statement of "someone like that we seriously would not want to give the job to" surprised and disappointed the group. June, for example, explained,

"I think Tony's reaction of 'Well we wouldn't like people like that working at Platanus', whereas in fact - that's what I was enlightened by - I guess for me that was disappointing, because that is 80% of the people that work within the Health System and the people that I have worked with over many, many years." (Post-event Interview Set 1 with June, March 2012, Ref. 111)

The Executives in this group felt that the scene did not just showcase the CEO's misjudgement of the nurse but also, and more importantly, it surfaced divergent interpretations of Platanus's vision and mission amongst the Executive Team. In a conversation during the workshop with Pauline, the HR Manager, June, who is the Chief Information Officer, raised a key issue:

"These comments about the [smoking] nurse really worry me. I am wondering how we will be able to *sell* a unified message, while being so different in our interpretations of the organisational culture we aim for" (June in Organisational Theatre Event, February 2012, Ref. 099).

To this group, the event brought into question some realities that were taken for granted. They viewed the 'others' as "not [being] able to understand how people in Health tick" and "out of touch with reality" with the currently existing cancer clinic, whose employees "will play an integral part in Platanus's enterprise" (Post-event Interviews Set 1 with Sonja, Julia, Anne, Simone, February 2012, Ref. 100, 102, 105, 107). Julia, Communication and

Marketing Manager, explained that “the most enlightening part for me [was] that people are not connected with the organisation that they are meant to be transforming” (Post-event Interviews Set 1 with Julia, February 2012, Ref. 105).

These views became further apparent when this group of Executives reflected on CEO Tony’s behaviour towards the surgeon, whom Tony had called “an arrogant prick”. Tony’s behaviour during the incident surprised them (again) and was perceived as “aggressive”, “disrespectful” and “inappropriate” (Post event interview set 1 and 2 with Sonja, Julia, June, Simone, February and June 2012, Ref. 102, 105, 127, 131, 135). Sonja, the Fundraising Manager, expressed this opinion:

“I guess what I remember most about the forum theatre workshop is Tony’s reaction to the surgeon and the aggression (. . .) I guess it stood out because of the negative emotion. It was probably a side of Tony that I hadn’t seen before.” (Post-event Interview set 2 with Sonja, June 2012, Ref. 135)

Julia added,

“I was astounded that he would let it escalate to a point where he called the guy a prick (*laughs*).” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Julia, June 2012, Ref. 127)

While none of the members of this group called Tony on it during the performance, June explained afterwards that she felt the urge to speak to Tony about her dissatisfaction with his behaviour and interpretations (Post-event Interview Set 1 with June, March 2012, Ref. 111). While June did not further explore how Tony responded to her critique, Julia also felt motivated to address what she and the other members of this group viewed as “inappropriate” and “inacceptable” behaviour but addressed her disagreement more openly (Post-event Interview Set 1 and 2 with Sonja, Julia, June, Simone, February and June 2012, Ref. 102, 105, 127, 131, 135). In doing so, she repeatedly referred to and joked about Tony’s ‘prick’ statement when general issues around inappropriate behaviour occurred during post-event workshops. Her comments were welcomed with laughter by the other Executives but remained, at least openly, undiscussed. When I asked Julia if Tony reacted to her comments, she explained,

“I don’t think he liked it when I said it in the workshop but I wanted to make a point - we all noticed it and it is a behaviour that kind of continues. He has given us licence to call him on stuff and - he goes through ways of listening to some but not others depending on what they are telling him - you know. He doesn’t like it when you are telling him the bad stuff. I am not afraid to tell him though.” (Post-event Interview Set 2 with Julia, June 2012)

While the group of Executives perceived Tony's behaviour as 'inappropriate' they were even more surprised about Paul's scripted surgeon statement. Some of the Executives, again mainly women, perceived Paul's 'Doctors are on top' comment as having unmasked Paul's and others' real stance towards Platanus's patient-centred vision and the idea to work in flat hierarchies where all doctors, nurses and administrative staff, have an equal voice. For example, Julia commented,

"My heart sunk when he said, 'Don't worry about that mate, you know, we just want to get you on board'. It felt like he said 'None of that is important, we know what is important, we will just do what we need to do'. They get the power in the system and they continue to have the power in the system. It's just really around status and a system that is completely geared in keeping these people happy at whatever cost. (...) And this walking on water stuff is something that, 'blah', just makes me feel - (*grins*) - uncomfortable (*laughs*)."

(Post-event Interview Set 2 with Julia, June 2012, Ref. 126)

To this group of Executives the replay of the scene showed that the main obstacle to the realisation of Platanus's vision and mission did not lie in communication issues with staff but in overcoming the dominance of mostly male doctors within the medical system. As June argued,

"We have to acknowledge that these systems, pyramids of power and influence have been in place forever. And the whole nurse and doctor relationship is not going away just because Platanus is put in place. (...) We talk about the quality of having new conversations but we actually need to have the plans underneath those broad statements about how you are actually going to make things work."

(Post-event Interview Set 2 with June, June 2012, Ref. 134)

It seemed that Paul's comment provoked a curiosity about alternative versions of how Platanus might be if more doctors were women. Julia, for instance, questioned this situation:

"I am interested to observe how women in the system that are doctors and professors play that out. Do they play it out to a degree that the blokes play it out? I haven't really witnessed that myself. So I just wonder."

(Post event interview set 2 with Julia, June 2012, Ref, 126)

The focus of this group of Executives was neither on the theatre's ability to generate a forum for discussion and debate nor on improving its communication characteristics. Instead the theatre had unearthed a behaviour that was foreign to the group and contradicted their own, taken-for-granted realities. June concluded,

"What were the main things that happened? . . . I think it opened up a dialogue in terms of where the power is within the group."

(Post event interview set 2 with June, June 2012)

7.4.3 Reconciling Voices

The seemingly harmonious agreement over the general value of organisational theatre as a method and its effectiveness in enhancing the Executives' communication skills in informal conversations with potential staff became observable in conversations with those who planned the organisational theatre event, that is the HR Managers, the Academics and the Theatre Company.

This group showed its satisfaction with the 'impact' of the theatre by highlighting the capacity of the intervention to enable diverse discussion and debates amongst participants to enliven their recognition of the 'other' and the ways in which the theatre helped to improve Executives' communication skills. The group seemed to generalise some of its explorations by intentionally, or unintentionally, communicating that the organisational theatre had the same 'impact' on all participants.

In a de-brief meeting between Platanus's HR Managers, the Academic Consultants and the Theatre Consultant, all three parties, at least openly, communicated their satisfaction with the development of the workshop. Andrew, the HR Director, explained that to him the workshop was a "realistic reflection of Platanus's organisational realities" which "had stimulated progress amongst the Executives to develop and improve their skills to have informal conversations with potential employees" (Andrew in de-brief meeting, March 2012). Pauline, the HR Manager, was in accord with Andrew's sentiments, saying that she was also "delighted with the way the event had been facilitated and with the Executives' participation in, contribution to and reflection on the intervention" (Pauline in De-Brief Meeting, March 2012). Tom, the Theatre Consultant, was excited that the workshop went beyond addressing issues around informal conversations and its ability to translate between the differing voices because "the event succeeded in stimulating the Executives' realisation of diversity and conflict within the team" (Tom in De-brief Meeting, March 2012). In line with this, Richard, one of the Academic Consultants, added later in an interview "I was excited by the level of depth of the recognition of diversity and the issues around it and also the fact that it came from different directions" (Post event interview set 1 with Richard, February 2012).

Andrew, the HR Director, who had initially been sceptical about the value of organisational theatre methods, focused his explanations on the actors' ability to capture Platanus's voices and to stimulate the Executives' attention and engagement. He argued,

“I originally thought that it might be a little bit of a risk, that we may have lost people who are a bit more cynical. I was surprised they [the actors] were able to get it so clear and to capture the characters the way they did. (...) And I thought the engagement of the Executive Team was great.” (Post event interview set 1 with Andrew, February 2012)

Carter, the other Academic Consultant, drew links between the positive outcomes of the event to organisational theatre’s ability to question the status quo and to show participants the ‘other’. He felt that,

“... [the theatre] gave people the chance to see things that they just wouldn’t have thought about before if it hadn’t been performed in front of them. It was a chance to get away from the sort of stereotype and a chance to see things that other people saw. [Things] that they initially might not have seen but that, once other people raised them, really rang through for them. They had seen them themselves and could see the other side of the coin.” (Post event interview set 1 with Carter, February 2012)

Lizzie, the Actress, described the event as an emotional, almost cathartic, experience and explained,

“When the Executive Team arrived, they all seemed to have had their 'standard' heads screwed on. They were then taken on a journey that let them feel things rather than just to think. (...) They first seemed very scared and also sort of not wanting to be there. Throughout the intervention they got more and more interested in pioneering through the issues. They gave and showed a lot of themselves in an emotional sense. It was a radical change of their emotional state.” (Post event interview set 1 with Lizzie, February 2012)

The interpretations of the HR Managers, the Academic Consultants and the members of the Theatre Company focused on the reasons why they perceived the organisational theatre event to be an effective intervention. However, in doing so, they seemed to generalise the ways in which the Executives experienced the theatrical event. While the Executives also all agreed on the general value of organisational theatre as a method and its effectiveness to enhance the Executives’ communication skills in informal conversations with potential staff, their interpretations of the ways in which the event enabled an ‘harmonisation’ of diverse voices were variable and contested.

7.5 Discussion

Summarising the findings of this paper, it can be argued that the organisational theatre event created diverse and multivocal reactions and interpretations that unfolded over time. The findings indicate that organisational theatre can bring undiscussables to the surface

and change the ways in which individuals perceive their status within an organisation. This is, however, largely dependent on the power status of the theatre's participants. In doing so, the organisational theatre seems to have had a more substantial effect on female participants. Some stakeholders, particularly men, perceived the organisational theatre event as a translation and a playful and safe environment within which they were able to discuss and debate their own ideas and understanding. Another group, mainly women, viewed the event as a deconstruction, forming their interpretations of the event around their colleagues' reactions to the performance. This led them to doubt the Team's alignment with the organisation's vision and mission and to question their own hierarchical status and voice within the organisation. The organisers of the event, on the contrary, were as one in their interpretations of the event. They concluded that the organisational theatre event was a 'success' as it enabled the participants to debate and discuss diverse ideas about communication with potential staff and, through this, to improve their skills to do so.

Organisational Theatre Contributions

The focus of this paper on pre-, during and post-event stages has enabled an identification of the effects that the organisational theatre had on a polyphonic organisation over time. In particular the findings from the different post-event stages uncovered the multivocal ways in which the stakeholders interpreted the organisational theatre as a translation or deconstruction. A focus on pre-event stages was, however, also required as it provided the background for the case and an understanding of the ways in which issues and debates during and after the event were different from earlier discussions. The analysis of the event itself allowed an acknowledgement of the incidents and debates during the event that participants used as a point of reference for their interpretations of the workshop. As previous authors had suggested would be the case, a consideration of the full panoply of organisational theatre phases was fruitful in terms of gaining a deeper understanding of an organisational theatre process (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Schreyögg, 2001).

Considering not only structural but also the content-related aspects of the organisational theatre process, helped me to see the diversity of the stakeholder interpretations of the workshop. These differed between those perceiving the intervention as a translation, those viewing their colleagues' contributions to the event as a deconstruction and again others viewing the intervention as to have had the same 'impact' on all participants. While Nissley

et al.'s (2004) framework provided valuable insights into the division of the structural aspects of *control of the role* and *control of the script*, this paper showed that, in order to provide an analysis of the multivocal, translating or deconstructing characteristics of organisational theatre events, further attention needs to be given to content-related aspects of the process.

Finally, keeping the 'both/and' perspective highlighted the possibility that organisational theatre events can be a managerial tool *and* employee-oriented method for change at the same time. In doing so, the findings indicated that organisational theatre can work as a managerial instrument, leading to translation processes, which are regarded as meaningful and generative by those holding power. At the same time, however, it was exactly that engagement previously in the translation process, that created the deconstruction for other members and hence unforeseeable changes in the Executive Team.

While the theatre had a mirroring effect on its participants - therefore confirming Meisiek and Barry's (2007) descriptions of the *looking glass* - the findings showed that there remained a managerial aspect that influenced these 'reflections' through the process of translation. In this way, the paper does justice to Clark and Mangham (2004b) who consider the managerial 'reflections' of the *looking glass* that organisational theatre provides. However, some of the participants 'went through' the *looking glass*, causing a process of deconstruction and enabling these participants to see that everything was, to borrow from Lewis Carroll, "quite different on beyond" (Carroll, 2000/1872: 131). This leads to a finding that diverges from Clark and Mangham's (2004b) interpretations who view organisational theatre as 'toothless' with regard to social change. These findings also address Nissley et al.'s (2004: 828) concern regarding whether those who own the role or the script really have power over the event or whether this may be also affected by elements of "concertive control" as the 'ownership' of role and script did not influence or hinder a deconstruction for those feeling less powerful within the organisation.

Based on the findings of this paper, it appears that organisational theatre cannot wholly embody Boal's Marxist assumptions (Boal, 1979/2000), as it always also reflects managerial aspects. However, theatre's inherently powerful character enables the method to provide more than just 'entertainment' through its deconstructive character and, through this, has the potential to stimulate change.

Polyphony Contributions

The use of the concept of polyphony was able to provide a helpful explorative framework to analyse the organisational theatre event. Using the lens of the 'descriptive' elements of polyphony (Hazen, 1993, 2011) allowed a broader focus on the diverse, simultaneous and multivocal ways in which the stakeholders interpreted the character and impact of the organisational theatre event. Further, considering Kornberger et al.'s (2006) suggestions on how such multivocality can be 'managed' or 'harmonised', allowed for an extension of the existing organisational theatre research which has so far only addressed 'descriptive' elements of polyphony (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004).

Kornberger et al. (2006) provided an in-depth theoretical exploration of the ways in which processes of translation and deconstruction between diverse voices divided by the *différend* can support processes of unsettling order and, through this, foster change. The empirical data of this paper allowed for a deeper exploration and specification of how such processes play out in organisational theatre events. The findings showed that some organisational members viewed the organisational theatre as a translation or deconstruction.

The other group, arguing for the 'unifying' character of the workshop, were those who organised the event – the HR Managers, the Academics and the Theatre Company. To them the event provided a space that allowed for multivocality to occur and supported the participants in recognising other voices and to improve their communication with potential staff. Given the responsibility they were carrying, it was somewhat expected that this group would not, at least not openly, admit any flaws of the event.

However, those participating in the event viewed its character and impact in diverse ways. One group, mainly men, viewed the organisational theatre event as a translation and perceived the workshop as a form of mediation or space in which they were able to openly debate the play with 'other' voices. To them, the play enabled them to see differences between their own and the others' realities and worldviews. While the group accepted that organisational theatre would not 'solve' the differences within the group, they felt the process had allowed for these differences to be expressed and that they were dealt with in constructive ways - therefore supporting Kornberger et al.'s (2006) characterisation of translation processes. Other participants, mainly women, viewed the event, or rather their

colleagues' reactions to the play, as a deconstruction. They felt the event unmasked what was 'really' going on, which led this group to question their own voice and status within the organisation – again confirming Kornberger et al.'s (2006) descriptions. Yet, it is exactly the difference in interpretations of what the event constituted to these two groups that contradicts Kornberger et al.'s (2006) explorations. They suggest that both deconstruction and translation are needed to successfully 'manage' polyphony. The data, however, indicates that the organisational theatre had different effects on its participants, letting some perceive it as a translation and others as a deconstruction. Further, the "driving force" seemed, at least in this case, not to be the process of translation but that of deconstruction. Those viewing the event as a translation felt hardly affected by the event – it was all just theatre after all. The other group, viewing the event as deconstruction, began to change their perception of their voice and status as well as the ways in which they addressed their dissatisfaction. The theatre seemed to have allowed for both processes to emerge simultaneously but independently. Yet, while not all participants viewed the process as translation or deconstruction, change occurred – at least for those having less voice in the organisation. This responds to Czarniawska's (1999b) and Letiche's (2010) doubts about whether polyphony is an adequate metaphor for organisational discourse as the polyphonic assumption that multiple voices need to be 'managed' or 'harmonised' by one author is in fact counter to polyphony. The interpretations of the event occurred in simultaneous, multivocal ways. The theatre, despite being organised by management, involved other 'authors' which allowed for diverse interpretations to occur and which created openings for those with and without a voice.

It may therefore be speculated that organisations which encounter metaphorical or analogically mediated inquiries, such as organisational theatre, will produce multivocal and diverse interpretations of such interventions and move through simultaneous processes of translation and deconstruction and possibly 'harmonisation' – the individual 'paths', however, seem to depend on the power status of the receiver.

7.6 Conclusion

This paper has sought to further the understanding of the potential of organisational theatre as an intervention in organisational development and change programs. The paper employed the concept of polyphony to support an analysis of the character and impact of

organisational theatre processes. The findings of this paper rest on a longitudinal single-case study, which followed an organisational theatre process from its early development until follow-up stages at an innovative health care project over eighteen months. The analysis suggests that, while organisational theatre is able to provide multivocal and diverse debates and interpretations, the outcomes and effects of organisational theatre for individual participants largely depend on their perceived power status within the organisation.

Those holding more power in the organisation perceived the organisational theatre event as a translation, which created a playful and safe environment that allowed them to discuss and debate their ideas and share understandings with others. On the other side, those holding less power focused on some of their colleagues' reactions to the organisational theatre, rather than on the organisational theatre event itself. This group, which consisted of mainly women, perceived the event as a deconstruction of existing narratives in the organisation and saw it as having unmasked their colleagues' real attitudes and behaviours. This recognition led them to question the unity of the vision and mission, as well as their own status and voice within the group and the wider organisation. Meanwhile, the organisers of the event focused their interpretations on more common and technical aspects, such as the general value of organisational theatre as a method and its effectiveness to address communication issues, which they viewed had been 'harmoniously' realised.

The focus of this paper was on the manner and degree to which the organisational theatre and its outcomes were shaped by multivocal interests and viewpoints and on organisational theatre's influence in creating a greater degree of expression and translation of 'harmonising' of these diverse voices. While gender issues emerged throughout the process, I did not focus the data collection on gender studies only. To gain deeper insight into the ways in which gender is 'done' in an organisational setting and how this affects and is affected by organisational theatre interventions, future studies would require a deeper focus on daily routines and interactions between the sexes and further interviews focusing on these dynamics specifically.

While the paper was able to provide a longitudinal and in-depth analysis of some of the perceptions and interpretations of one organisational theatre event, it only focused on the dynamics of one very small and specific group within the chosen organisation. Future studies may therefore involve a greater number and variety of organisational members to

enable a broader analysis. Additionally, the investigation was limited to formal settings such as interviews, official meetings and workshops to illuminate participants' interpretations and outcomes of the organisational theatre. It would therefore be valuable to capture the stakeholders' opinions and actions in informal settings to further deepen the understanding and analysis of the phenomena.

This page is intentionally left blank.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

8.1 Contributions

This thesis sought to extend the understanding of how the inherently uncertain, multivocal and fluid character of organisational life influences and constitutes forum theatre as an artist-led intervention in organisational change. The thesis focused in particular on the conditions leading up to, the dynamics within and the circumstances following the organisational theatre performance. Of particular interest was the manner in which polyphony could be used as an open, explanatory and evaluative framework to help illuminate the character and impact of organisational theatre interventions.

Empirical Contribution

Through capturing all phases of the organisational theatre process from its pre-commissioning to its follow-up phases, the thesis provided the first in-depth analysis of the phenomena. The findings from the pre-event stages allowed for an appreciation of the multivocal and diverse voices that influenced the conditions leading up to the performance and assisted in gaining a better understanding of the dynamics within the organisation in focus. The observation of the organisational theatre event itself enabled a close examination of the development of incidents within the performance and the ways in which the participants influenced these. Additionally, witnessing the event allowed me to develop shared points of reference which were useful in later interviews with participants around their interpretations of the workshop during post-event stages. The findings from the different stages uncovered the multivocal ways in which the stakeholders negotiated and interpreted the organisational theatre and its process. The longitudinal approach and, within that, the consideration of the full panoply of an organisational theatre process enabled a deeper examination of the multifaceted dynamics that influenced the development, character and impact of the event. This confirmed earlier suggestions that

studies of all phases of all organisational theatre processes would be desirable (Berthoin-Antal, 2009; Schreyögg, 2001).

The thesis additionally contributed to existing research on polyphony by providing an empirical exploration of some of the different and disputed themes that have emerged in organisational studies of polyphony. In doing so, it allowed for a consideration of the extent to which polyphony's descriptive elements (addressing the multivocal character of organisations) and its normative elements (the ways in which organisations allow for an 'expression' or harmonisation' of this multivocality) can be used to describe organisational theatre processes.

Theoretical Contribution

The thesis builds on and extends existing critical studies of organisational theatre. Previous studies have provided valuable insights on the nature, aims and outcomes of the use of Boalian forum theatre techniques in working organisations and whether or not these are able to realise Boal's original purpose of recognising diverse and repressed voices. However, many have focused on structural aspects of the method such that their definition is limited to considering whether either management or employees control the character and outcome of organisational theatre (Nissley et al., 2004).

To extend these debates, this thesis argued for a consideration of agency, interaction and content as well as structural variables in characterising and exploring the outcomes of organisational theatre. Considering such dimensions enabled the thesis to draw out the possibility that organisational theatre processes can, although being structurally controlled by management, reflect, express and create complex forms of multivocality. During pre-event stages, for instance, HR personnel defined the surface 'formal' purpose of the organisational theatre event and the intervention was commissioned and funded by management. However, in varied and different forms, 'audience' opinions of both Executives present at the event and employees outside were given voice. Although the formal script was written by the Consultant/Facilitator, and initially enacted by professional actors, a series of emergent and unpredictable sub-events ensured that multiple viewpoints were expressed in varied ways during the performance, confirming earlier research on the *looking glass* effect of organisational theatre (Meisiek & Barry, 2007).

The value of a consideration of structure, content and agency within the organisational theatre process became particularly apparent during post-event stages, when the diversity of stakeholder interpretations became more apparent. The stakeholders had, despite managerially 'controls' developed individual interpretations of the 'outcomes' of the organisational theatre event from varying perspectives as medical practitioners and employees. These interpretations led to changes in the perceptions of those participants holding less power in the team.

Existing studies have also tended to view organisational theatre as being controlled by either management or employees and as either managerial or liberating in its outcomes. Drawing on and seeking to contribute to 'ambiguity' and 'fragmentation' perspectives on organisational culture (Martin, 2001; Meyerson, 1991; Meyerson & Martin, 1987), the thesis has sought to extend these debates and transcend such a binary perspective by adopting a 'both/and' approach. The findings of the pre-event stages, for example, showed that multiple interpretations of the character and content of the upcoming organisational theatre event emerged, catering not only to managerial concerns with improving individual and group communication but also, at the same time, encouraging a recognition of employee needs and perspectives.

The organisational theatre event was set up within the new 'patient-centred' rhetoric. It also allowed, however, for controversial expressions, such as the views of the 'traditional physician', to emerge. The analysis of the post-event stages indicated that organisational theatre could work as a managerial instrument, with translation processes that were regarded as meaningful and generative by those holding more power. Concurrently, however, it was precisely the engagement of individuals in the translation process that also created a potential for deconstruction on the part of those holding less power in the organisation. Maintaining an open 'both/and' approach, therefore, showed that organisational theatre could function as a managerial tool *and* an employee-oriented method for change at the same time.

Finally, the thesis showed the value of the use of polyphony as an explorative framework to analyse organisational theatre events. Employing the lens of the 'descriptive' elements of polyphony (for example: Hazen, 1993, 2011) allowed for a consideration of the concurrent and multivocal ways in which the stakeholders negotiated, developed and interpreted the organisational theatre event. In this respect, the thesis confirms the findings of earlier studies on organisational theatre that employed the descriptive elements of polyphony

(Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). To extend the application of the concept of polyphony in organisational theatre research, the thesis also considered 'normative' elements of polyphony by studying how multivocality is 'managed' or 'harmonised' (for example: Kornberger et al., 2006). Building on existing theoretical explorations of polyphony (for example: Boje, 2002; Clegg et al., 2006a; Hazen, 1993, 2011; Kornberger et al., 2006), the thesis addressed both 'descriptive' and 'normative' elements of the concept.

The focus of each thesis chapter, however, differed in its specific exploration of the concept. The analysis of pre-event stages showed that the stakeholders negotiated the conditions leading up to the organisational theatre event in multivocal and diverse ways. This was characterised by a number of interpretations of the formal 'purpose' and a complex range of influences on this 'purpose', its interpretation and its selective utilisation. In addition, stakeholders' interpretations went beyond this 'surface' purpose, and these interpretations in turn influenced the process. While points of conflict and disagreement emerged during these negotiations around purpose, there were also attempts at a number of levels to facilitate the harmonious expression of the multiple perspectives or voices.

The analysis of the processual dynamics within the theatre performance itself focused on the ways in which organisational theatre events can allow the surfacing and expression of countervailing and contrary voices. Of particular interest were the ways in which the use of irony was able to represent diverse and conflicting voices in the communication of paradox. The findings showed that the theatre intervention had enabled the surfacing of multiple and diverse voices, allowing repressed - even if powerful - voices to be heard through the utilisation of rhetorical irony within the event. However, the employment of irony to achieve some sort of 'harmonisation' proved to be an uncertain, complex and risky social interaction, affected by multiple levels of meaning and interpretation. While some participants viewed the ironic enactment as liberal, open and communicative, (Berger & Luckmann, 1995), others perceived it as a threat to their personal ideals and their the formally and informally defines ideals of the organisation.

The analysis of the post-event stages built on Kornberger et al.'s (2006) explorations of 'managing' polyphony and focused on the ways in which the intervention was perceived as a deconstruction or translation. The findings showed that the event created diverse and multivocal reactions and interpretations that unfolded over time and in this way mirrored Kornberger et al.'s (2006) descriptions of how processes of deconstruction or translation

could play out in organisations. However, while Kornberger et al. (2006) suggested that deconstruction and translation are clear activities involved in any successful ‘management’ of polyphony, the forms that these activities took and the ways in which they were, or were not, perceived as ‘harmonious’ and ‘expressive’ by Platanus’s Executives were variable and contested.

In summary, the empirical data of this thesis allowed for a deeper exploration of polyphony by examining how multivocality is expressed in organisational theatre processes and the ways in which a ‘harmonisation’ of multivocality may emerge.

8.2 Limitations of Study and Avenues for Future Research

Gaining an in-depth understanding of the entire organisational theatre process from its pre-commissioning to its follow-up process required a focus on one longitudinal case study. As a result, the sample of this study was confined to the organisational theatre process at one organisation and, within that, one specific group (the Executives).

Several factors will have influenced and supported the emergence and development of this organisational theatre process. One of the predominant factors was likely the collaboration between the HR Managers and the Academic Consultants. The HR Managers’ interest in and willingness to trial ‘alternative’ approaches to change, paired with the Academics’ interest in supporting an inclusion of voices within normative change programs, inevitably affected the dynamics within and development of the organisational theatre process. It would therefore be interesting to observe the realisation of theatrical events with less ‘liberal’ partners.

Further, the members of the Executive Team were, at least theoretically, on a similar hierarchical level. Therefore, the ‘audience’ of the organisational theatre event was somewhat homogenous, which may have facilitated a smoother development of the program. Although employee voices, such as those of doctors and nurses, were ‘presented’ by the characters in the play, prospective employees of the organisation were not present at the event. Observations of organisational theatre processes, which include a broader range of organisational members from diverse hierarchical levels, may allow the development of richer understandings of polyphony and organisational theatre.

On a further methodological note, future studies may draw on cases from industries beyond the health sector to illuminate how organisational theatre processes develop and how multivocality and polyphony can play out in diverse environments.

While the three primary chapters of this thesis focused on exploring the understanding of the different phases of an organisational theatre process, each chapter surfaced further questions related to the research outcome that would benefit from further consideration.

Chapter Five focused on the conditions *leading up to* and influencing the design of the organisational theatre intervention studied. The in-depth approach allowed a number of the multivocal, emerging, shifting and ambiguous characteristics of the social and political actions negotiations and the conditions in the lead up to the staging of the organisational theatre event to be unearthed and identified. However, the investigation remained strongly linked to formal settings and evaluations, with very little systematic coverage of opinions, issues and actions expressed and undertaken in informal settings. From a methodological perspective, future studies could find it helpful to adopt ethnographic research methods to enable a deeper exploration of informal settings and their impact on organisational theatre processes. From a theoretical perspective, studies may, for example, explore role theory and the interrelations between ‘acting imaginatively’ and ‘acting organisationally’ in conditions of change. This path could reveal insights about the cognitive and behavioural interactions of the different voices individuals project in different settings and spaces.

Chapter Six analysed the processual dynamics *within* the performance that, combined with the way the theatre had been created, shaped its *situational character* and influenced its immediate impact. The findings revealed the ways in which the communication of paradoxical tensions in polyphonic organisations is an ambiguous, complex and perilous social interaction affected by multiple levels of meaning and interpretation. The study was, however, limited to the exploration of one specific incident only – the ‘*Doctors on Top*’ scene. Future studies may aim to identify and compare incidents within the theatrical performance in which irony, and /or other strategies, were used to address paradoxical tensions in organisations.

Further, research on the ways in which divergent perspectives are addressed in organisational theatre events and how addressing this paradox is perceived by other stakeholders, may find Bauman’s (2001) concept of ‘strangers’ useful to extend the theoretical exploration of the phenomena.

Chapter Seven illuminated the circumstances *following* the event that, combined with pre-event circumstances and the processual dynamics within the performance, affected its outcomes. The findings of the chapter led to the assumption that gender plays a crucial role in stakeholders' interpretations of organisational theatre processes and/or in the understanding of what leading cultural change implies. To advance the understanding of the ways in which gender is 'done' in organisational settings and how this affects and is affected by organisational theatre interventions, future studies would require a deeper focus on daily routines and interactions between the sexes and could draw on the extensive research in fields of gender studies. These studies could, for example, focus on the ways in which feminine or masculine leadership impacts organisational processes and, in relation to the specific case study at hand, the ways in which gender is relevant within the health sector (for example: Ashcraft, 2004; Billing & Alvesson, 2000; Fairhurst, 1993).

8.3 Concluding remarks

This thesis sought to further the understanding of the character and potential of organisational theatre as an artist-led intervention in organisational development and change programs. The thesis employed the concept of polyphony to support the analysis of the character and impact of an organisational theatre processes. The findings of the thesis rest on a longitudinal single-case study over eighteen months, which followed an organisational theatre process in an innovative health care project from its early development until follow-up stages. The study has shown that a consideration of structural and content-related elements of organisational theatre processes in a way that is not reductive in terms of a binary characterisation of organisational theatre as either management controlled or employee driven allowed for a recognition of the complex, multi-faceted, ambiguous and fluid social and political dynamics at play. The thesis contributed to organisational studies of artist-led interventions in organisational change through its application and examination of the concept of polyphony and provided an empirical example of the ways in which polyphony can emerge in organisations encountering artistic interventions.

The study has shown that organisational theatre can be a valuable method to facilitate change in habitual patterns of 'doing business' that hinder any organisation's capacity for expressing diversity and restrict the potential for creativity and innovation. Organisational

theatre is, however, inherently emergent and unpredictable and can surface and give room for voices that may contradict the formal organisational vision. However, it is exactly the attention onto these ‘invisible’ and ‘repressed’ beliefs, values and voices that, if neglected, restrains an organisation’s ability to react creatively and innovatively to turbulent environments. By surfacing such voices, organisational theatre has the potential, particularly in its more developed variants, to play a valuable role in planned organisational change. In line with this, I would like to conclude this thesis with a quote from Karl Weick who argued that:

“the inability of people in organizations to tolerate equivocal processing may well be one of the most important reasons why they have trouble. It is the unwillingness to disrupt order, ironically, that makes it impossible for the organization to create order.” (Weick, 1979: 189)

Appendices

Appendix A: List of Publications

Chapter Four

‘Who Controls the Looking Glass? Organisational Theatre and Synoptic Power’

Meisiek, S., Matula, L., Badham, R. 2011 ‘Who Controls the Looking Glass? Organisational Theatre and Synoptic Power’ in *Organisation und Komplexität: Unternehmenssteuerung zwischen Ordnung und Chaos [Organisations and Complexity: Organisational Navigation between Order and Chaos]*, ed Eberl, P., Geiger, D., Koch, J. Berlin, Erich Schmidt (45/50/5%)*

Meisiek, S., Matula, L., Badham, R. 2011 ‘Who Controls the Looking Glass? Organisational Theatre and Synoptic Power’, *29th Standing Conference on Organisational Symbolism SCOS – “Recovery”*, Istanbul, Turkey, 14-17 July, 2011 (45/50/5%)*

Chapter Five

‘The Theatre Takes Shape: The Negotiation Bazaar’

Matula L., Badham, R., Meisiek, S. 2013 ‘Organisational Theatre as Polyphonic Enterprise: Ambiguity and Process in a Health Care Transformation’, *73rd Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management 2013 – “Capitalism in Question”*, Lake Buena Vista, Orlando, United States, 9-13 August 2013 (80/10/10%)*

Matula, L. 2012 ‘The shape of things to come: Cultural pragmatics and social performance in the design of organisational theatre’, *28th European Group for Organisational Studies Colloquium EGOS 2012 – “Design!?”*, Helsinki, Finland, 5-7 July, 2012 (100%)*

Chapter Six

‘Organisational Theatre as Process: Polyphony, Paradox and Public Discourse’

Badham, R., Matula, L. 2013 ‘The Deep Play of Communicating Paradox’, *29th European Group for Organisational Studies Colloquium EGOS 2013 – “Bridging Continents, Cultures and Worldviews”*, Montreal, Canada, 4-6 July, 2013 (50/50%)*

Matula, L., Badham, R., Meisiek, S. 2013 ‘Encouraging Diversity and Polyphony? A Longitudinal Case Study of an Organisational Theatre Intervention’, *Asia-Pacific Researchers in Organisation Studies Conference APROS 15 2013 – “Re-covering Organisations”*, Tokyo, Japan, 14-17 February, 2013 (70/25/5%)*

Matula, L. 2011 ‘The radicalising potential of organisational theatre in change management’, *29th Standing Conference on Organisational Symbolism SCOS – “Recovery”*, Istanbul, Turkey, 14-17 July, 2011 (100%)*

Chapter Seven

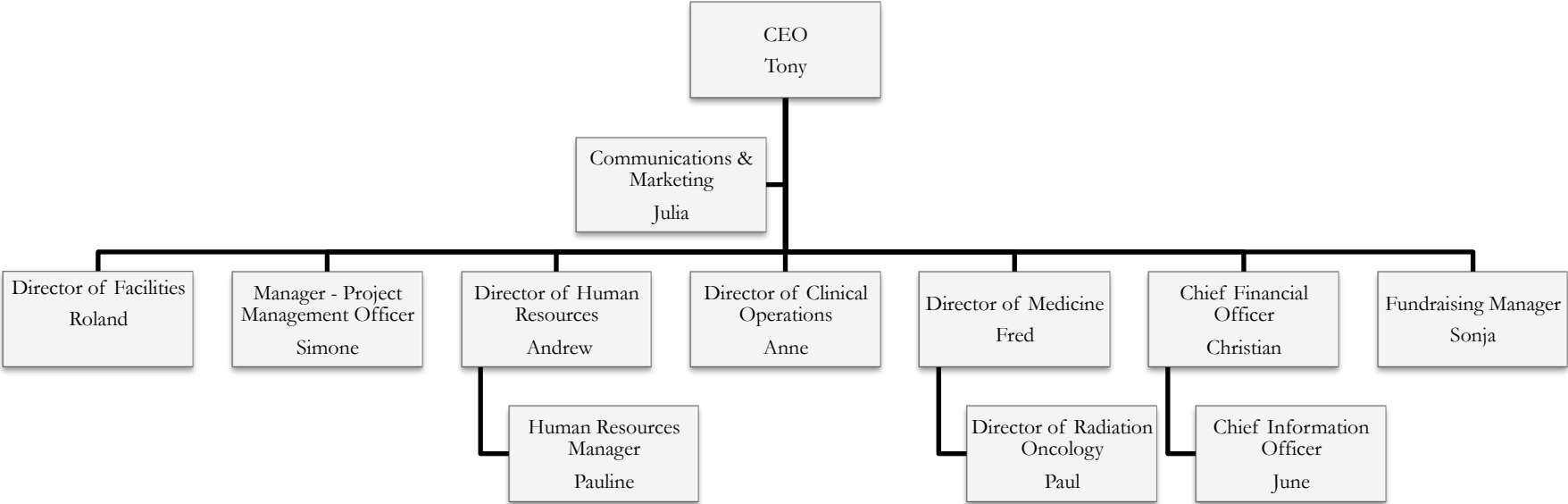
‘Translating, Deconstructing and Harmonising: Organisational Theatre and Organisational Polyphony’

Matula, L., Meisiek, S., Badham, R. 2013 ‘Whose change is it? Searching for the Outcome(s) in Organisational Theatre’, *29th European Group for Organisational Studies Colloquium EGOS 2013 – “Bridging Continents, Cultures and Worldviews”*, Montreal, Canada, 4-6 July, 2013 (80/15/5%)*

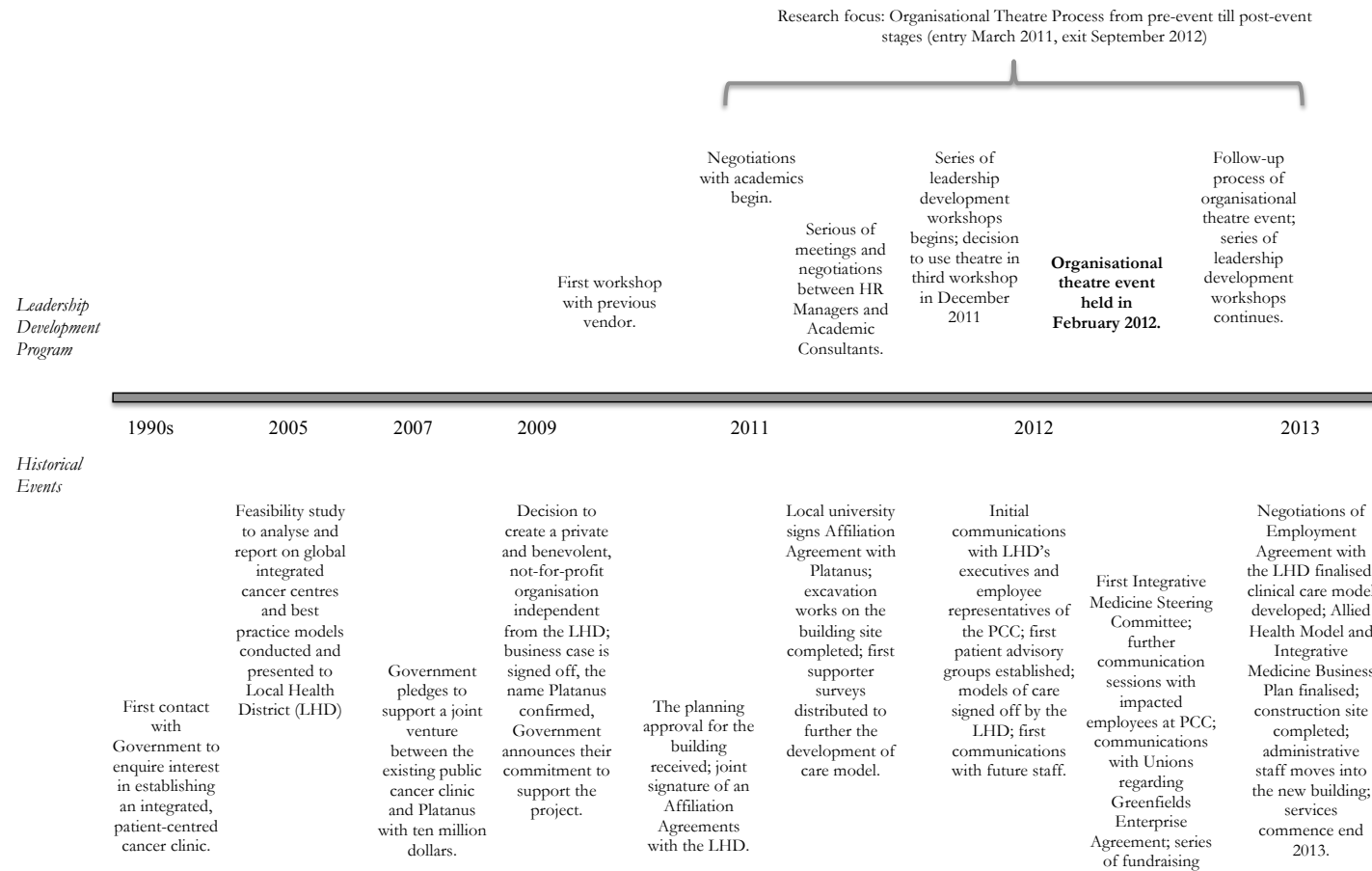
Matula, L., Badham, R., Meisiek, S. 2011 ‘Becoming polyphonic: A theoretical framework and research methodology for exploring the political dynamics of organisational theatre’, *27th European Group for Organisational Studies Colloquium EGOS 2011 – “Reassembling Organisations”*, Gothenburg, Sweden, 6-9 July, 2011 (75/20/5%)*

***Individual contribution distribution according to order of appearance**

Appendix B: Organisation Chart Platanus's Senior Executive Team



Appendix C: Case Study Overview and Timeline



Appendix D: Data Collection Summary

Phase	Event Type	Data Form	Collected from*	Numbers	Time (hrs.)
Pre-event	Meetings	Observation, notes, memos, audio-recordings and research diary entries	HR Managers, Executives, Academics and Theatre Company (transcribed)	20	40
				(6)	(12)
	Leadership workshops	Observation, notes, memo and research diary entries	HR Managers, Executives and Academics	1	4
	Participant interviews	Notes, audio-recording	HR Managers Executives Academics Theatre Company (transcribed)	2	1
				3	1.5
				4	2
				2	1
				(9)	(4.5)
	Documents	Misc documents, emails		47	n/a
Event	Forum theatre event	Observation, notes, audio recording, memo and research diary entry	HR Managers, Executives, Academics and Theatre Company (transcribed)	1 (1)	4 (4)
Post-event	Meetings	Observation, notes, memos, audio-recordings and research diary entries	HR Managers, Academics and Theatre Company	2	4

	Leadership workshop	Observation, notes, memo and research diary entry	HR, Executives and Academics (transcribed)	3 (3)	12 (12)
	Participant interviews (two sets)	Notes and audio-recording	HR Executives Academics Theatre Company (transcribed)	4 20 3 2 (29)	2 10 1.5 1 (14.5)
	Documents	Documents, emails		22	n/a

Appendix E of this thesis has been removed as it may contain sensitive/confidential content

Appendix F: Pre-event Interview Questions

Interview questions for the members of the Executive Team:

- **What grabs you about the Platanus project?**
- **How do you interpret your responsibilities at Platanus to make this happen?**
Are there any areas where you would like to do more or less?
- **What do you see as the main challenges in realising your responsibilities?**
- **What is your understanding of what organisational theatre involves?**
Where did you get that understanding? What gave you that idea?
- **What is the organisational theatre being used for in Platanus?**
Where did you get that understanding? What gave you that idea?
- **What are your hopes and fears around the organisational theatre?**

Interview questions for the Academic Consultants:

- **What excites you about the project at Platanus?**
Is it different from other projects that you have done in the past? How?
- **What is your vision as an action researcher/consultant at Platanus?**
- **How do you interpret your responsibilities in the project to make this happen?**
What could potentially hold you back to realise your vision?
- **How would you describe the purpose of the organisational theatre at Platanus?**
Where did you get that understanding? What gave you that idea?
- **How do you interpret your responsibilities in the project to make this happen?**

Interview questions for the members of the Theatre Company:

- **Who contacted you to work as a consultant in the organisational theatre at Platanus?**

Was that the time when you first heard about Platanus?

- **What excites you about the project at Platanus?**

Is it different from other projects? How?

- **How would you describe the purpose of the organisational theatre at Platanus?**

Where did you get that understanding? What gave you that idea?

- **How do you interpret your responsibilities in the project to make this happen?**

- **What are your hopes and fears around the delivery at Platanus?**

- **What is your vision as an organisational theatre consultant?**

Appendix G: Post-event Interview Questions Set 1

Interview questions for members of the Executive Team and the HR Managers:

- If you were to capture the workshop in a word or an image, what would it be?
- What do you think are the main things that happened in the organisational theatre?
- What were the key issues?
- What did you find most interesting?
- What do you think was achieved?
- Did you find anything surprising?
- Is there anything you would have liked to be addressed that was not?
- Did the workshop reveal about what views unite/divide the Executive Team?
- Are you going to do anything differently after having attended the workshop (role and responsibilities)? Have you done anything differently already?

Interview questions for the members of the Theatre Company and the Academic Consultants:

- If you were to capture the workshop in a word or an image, what would it be?
- What do you think are the main things that happened in the organisational theatre?
- What were the key issues?
- What did you find most interesting?
- What do you think was achieved?
- Did you find anything surprising?
- Is there anything you would have liked to be addressed that was not?
- Did the workshop reveal about what views unite/divide the Executive Team?

Additional question only for members of the Theatre Company:

If you were to do another organisational theatre at Platanus, would you do anything differently?

Appendix H: Post-event Interview Questions Set 2

Interview questions for all members of the Executive Team:

- **What do you remember best about the forum theatre workshop?**
Why?
- **Have you seen any difference in the conversations of other people since the intervention?**

Has anyone behaved differently?

Has anyone's attitude changed?

Has anyone spoken differently?
- **Did the facilitator, Tom, leave any impression on you?**

How did you like his ideas?

How did you like the way he conducted the workshop?

How did he influence the workshop?

Individualised questions for members of the Executive Team:

- **How to you interpret Paul's statement about '*doctors being on top*'?**
- **What did you think of the scene that Christian, Simone and you created for the conversations with the surgeon?**
- **You mentioned that you were surprised by others involvement in the play and that you were more self-conscious or reserved than others. What worked for you and what did not work for you?**
- **You said that you would like to do similar work/forum theatre within the executive group. Do you still think this would be valuable?**
- **Can you remember who in your team had the idea of lifting a shirt to handle the problematic conversation with John, the surgeon?**

Do you think that this is mainly a joke or says something important about how doctors think and how women and others seek to influence them?
- **What do you believe are the areas of agreement and disagreement between patient-centred care and the perspective and interests of doctors?**

Is there a difference in the manner and style of communication used by Platanus personnel and doctors?

Do you personally feel any pressures as a result of your commitment to both Platanus and your medical colleagues?

- **You said in former discussions that you found the willingness to laugh about stereotypes, such as the surgeon in the play, almost sad. Could you expand on why?**
- **You told me about your plan to start communicating with certain people at the public hospital and that you have termed this process ‘disciplined or structured informality’. How is that plan unfolding?**
- **You mentioned that you called Tony on his ‘arrogant prick’ comment to the surgeon character.**

How did/does Tony react to being called on this?

Do you know if any other person talked to him about this as well?

- **You talked about ‘the elephant in the room’ being the need to talk about the difference between the vision and a realistic operating model. Is this ‘elephant’ still there?**
- **Do you see there to be a major conflict between Platanus commitment to patient-centred cancer care and the traditional medical model?**

Is this conflict there in the team?

Is it there between Platanus and the public hospital?

Was the OT intervention valuable in raising this?

In what ways was it effective or ineffective?

- **What did you think about how the scenes with the surgeon John played out?**

What issues were raised in the interaction with Tony?

Do you think the role-play had any long-term effects on people?

- **What issues were raised in Paul’s ‘doctors on the top’ scene with the surgeon?**

Do you think the role-play had any long-term effects on people?

- **Can you think of any situation where people recall the forum theatre workshop, where they referred to the characters or the issues?**

Do they use it as a source of metaphor or allegory?

- **You talked about a plan to create a conversation map with Andrew and Fred.**

Did it happen?

If applicable: Why not?

Would it be valuable?

Will you have time?

Appendix I: Event History Database

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
001	Pre-event	Meeting	Exploration: First attended meeting with Platanus's HR and Academic Consultants regarding involvement of PhD student	16/03/11	n/a
002	Pre-event	Meeting	Exploration: Meeting Platanus's HR Managers and Academic Consultants, exploration change program	23/03/11	n/a
003	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Platanus magazine autumn update	1/04/11	HR Director Andrew
004	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Model of 'Care Straw Man' developed by Platanus	1/04/11	CEO Tony
005	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Platanus Behaviours	1/04/11	HR Director Andrew
006	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Platanus's Strategic House (vision, mission, values and strategic goals)	1/04/11	HR Director Andrew
007	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Platanus's timeline	1/04/11	HR Manager Pauline
008	Pre-event	Meeting	Exploration: Meeting HR Managers & Academic Consultants, exploration change program	6/04/11	n/a
009	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Platanus 'Straw Man' video	6/04/11	CEO Tony
010	Pre-event	Document	Misc: Platanus merchandise	1/05/11	HR Manager Pauline

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
011	Pre-event	Meeting	Exploration: Meeting HR Managers and Academic Consultants, negotiating a focus of change program	18/05/11	n/a
012	Pre-event	Meeting	Exploration: Meeting HR Managers, Academic Consultants, Executives Anne and Julia, info about care model and care coordinator	25/05/11	n/a
013	Pre-event	Meeting	Exploration: Day-long meeting at university with HR Managers, Academic Consultants, Executive Julia, negotiating a focus of program	3/06/11	n/a
014	Pre-event	Document	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Analysis of 'mapping exercise' by Academic Consultant Richard	15/06/11	Academic Consultant Richard
015	Pre-event	Meeting	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Day-long meeting between Academic Consultants, HR Managers	15/07/11	n/a
016	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Email from Pauline to me about use of organisational theatre in leadership programs	15/07/11	n/a
017	Pre-event	Meeting	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Academic Consultants' notes on workshop design	27/07/11	Academic Consultant Richard
018	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Platanus magazine	1/08/11	HR Manager Pauline
019	Pre-event	Meeting	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Meeting HR Managers, Academic Consultants with external consultant	10/08/11	n/a

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
020	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Email exchange (between HR Managers, Academic and external consultants) regarding readings for upcoming workshop	11/08/11	n/a
021	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Email exchange (between HR Managers, Academic and external consultants) 7 metaphors of change	11/08/11	n/a
022	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Email exchange (Academic Consultant Richard to HR Managers and external consultant) regarding readings	13/08/11	n/a
023	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Email exchange (Academic Consultant to HR Managers) four key questions for workshop	13/08/11	n/a
024	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Email exchange (Andrew to Pauline and Richard) regarding workshop content, final approval	16/08/11	n/a
025	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Email exchange (Richard to HR Managers and external consultants) - thoughts and plan	17/08/11	n/a
026	Pre-event	Meeting	Workshop 1, Design Phase: Meeting HR Director, Academic Consultants /external consultant on phone	24/08/11	n/a
027	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Presentation, program info of previous leadership program	24/08/11	HR Director Andrew
028	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 1, Design Phase: HR Director Andrew sends agenda, objectives, pre-readings to Executive Team	30/08/11	n/a

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
029	Pre-event	Document	Workshop 1: Agenda	30/08/11	HR Director Andrew
030	Pre-event	Workshop	Workshop 1, Delivery: LSI and Fire Metaphor	1/09/11	n/a
031	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 1, Follow-up - Email exchange between HR Director, CEO, Academic Consultants	6/09/11	n/a
032	Pre-event	Conversation	Workshop 1, Follow-up: Reflections on workshop between HR Director and Academic Consultant – in situ conversation with Richard	7/09/11	n/a
033	Pre-event	Meeting	Workshop 1, Follow-up: Internal meeting between Academic Consultants, review of 1st workshop	14/09/11	n/a
034	Pre-event	Informal Interview	Workshop 1, Follow-up: Interview with Academic Consultant Richard on his impression of first workshop	14/09/11	n/a
035	Pre-event	Meeting	Workshop 1, Follow-up: Meeting with CEO, HR Director and Academic Consultants, Reflections and further steps	14/09/11	n/a
036	Pre-event	Informal Interview	Workshop 1, Follow-up: Interview with Carter about his reflections on first workshop	15/09/11	n/a
037	Pre-event	Conversation	Misc.: Information by Academic Consultant regarding bureaucratic hurdles to attain University funding for action-research project	16/09/11	n/a
038	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Platanus's timeline update, overview Board of Directors, Strategic House update	17/09/11	Communications and Marketing Manager Julia

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
039	Pre-event	Phone call	Misc.: Academic Consultant Richard with Andrew, HR Director regarding future steps in leadership program	19/09/11	n/a
040	Pre-event	Meeting	Workshop 2, Design Phase: Meeting with Academic Consultant Richard, HR Manager and Director	21/09/11	n/a
041	Pre-event	Document	Workshop 1, Follow-up: Summary of outcomes from the first leadership workshop'	21/09/11	HR Director Andrew
042	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 2, Design Phase: Pauline regarding development of second workshop, 'Sense of Sound' choir	22/09/11	n/a
043	Pre-event	Email	Misc.: Academic Consultant Richard contacts further academic consultants about potential involvement in the project	23/09/11	n/a
044	Pre-event	Email	Misc.: By Academic Consultant Richard regarding bureaucratic hurdles to attain university funding for action-research project	26/09/11	n/a
045	Pre-event	Meeting	Workshop 2, Design Phase: HR Director and Academic Consultant Richard	30/09/11	n/a
046	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Platanus winter update	16/10/11	Communications and Marketing Manager Julia
047	Pre-event	Meeting	Misc.: Academic Consultant Richard meets external academic consultant to discuss possible collaboration	20/10/11	n/a

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
048	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 2, Design phase: Email between Academic Consultant Richard, HR Director and Managers regarding further development of program	28/10/11	n/a
049	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: List of Board members	28/10/11	HR Manager Pauline
050	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 2 Design Phase: Academic Consultant Richard sends feedback about meeting with external academic and introduces idea of state of the art leadership program	28/10/11	n/a
051	Pre-event	Email	Misc.: Academic Consultant Richard sends proposal draft for action research program to other Academic Consultant Carter	28/10/11	n/a
052	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Academic Consultant Richard 's proposal for state of the art leadership development program	4/11/11	Academic Consultant Richard
053	Pre-event	Phone call	Misc.: HR Director Andrew calls Academic Consultant Richard, refusal of proposal	5/11/11	n/a
054	Pre-event	Phone call	Workshop 2, Design Phase: Academic Consultant Richard /HR Director Andrew planning next workshop	7/11/11	n/a
055	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 2, Design Phase: I send email about possible attendance at workshop 2	18/11/11	n/a
056	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 2, Design Phase: HR Manager Pauline confirms that I cannot attend workshop 2	21/11/11	n/a
057	Pre-event	Interview	Workshop 1, Follow-Up Interview with Academic Consultant Richard	22/11/11	n/a

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
058	Pre-event	Workshop	Workshop 2 Delivery: Fire and Snowball Metaphors	24/11/11	n/a
059	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 2, Follow-up: Academic Richard to HR Managers- reflections on workshop	28/11/11	n/a
060	Pre-event	Informal Interview	Workshop 2, Follow-Up: Interview with Carter - reflections on workshop	2/12/11	n/a
061	Pre-event	Meeting	Workshop 3, Design Phase: Negotiating focus of workshop	3/12/11	n/a
062	Pre-event	Document	Workshop 3: Agenda 3rd workshop	6/12/11	HR Manager Pauline
063	Pre-event	Conversation	Misc.: Xmas party at Platanus, Academic Consultants invited, Academic Consultant Richard and Carter converse afterwards	7/12/11	n/a
064	Pre-event	Workshop	Workshop 3 Delivery: Leaders as co-facilitators, decision to use organisational theatre is suggested (and made)	8/12/11	n/a
065	Pre-event	Email	Misc.: Academic Consultant Richard emails further academics about potential involvement in the program	9/12/11	n/a
066	Pre-event	Meeting	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Meeting Academic Consultant Carter and Theatre Consultant Tom, intro to focus of planned event	13/12/11	n/a
067	Pre-event	Phone call	Workshop 4, Design Phase: First contact Theatre Company and Platanus: HR Director Andrew, Consultant Tom and Carter about focus of upcoming workshop	13/12/11	n/a

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
068	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Theatre Consultant Tom sends proposal to Platanus HR Managers	15/12/11	n/a
069	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: HR Managers first reaction to proposal 'Andrew gulped'	15/12/11	n/a
070	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Exploration: Academic Consultant Richard - further explorations of focus	15/12/11	n/a
071	Pre-event	Email	Misc.: Email Academic consultants - my attempts to stay 'neutral' and not to influence the theatre	16/12/11	n/a
072	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Platanus aggress to organisational theatre proposal	20/12/11	n/a
073	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Pauline confirms date and time of event	21/12/11	n/a
074	Pre-event	Interview	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Pre-intervention interview with HR Manager Pauline	10/01/12	n/a
075	Pre-event	Interview	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Pre-intervention interview with HR Director Andrew	12/01/12	n/a
076	Pre-event	Email	Misc.: Academic Consultant Richard contacts further external academics about organisational involvement in project	12/01/12	n/a
077	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Academic Consultant Richard pushes for more radical organisational theatre	19/01/12	n/a

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
078	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Theatre Consultant Tom sends reminder for meeting	19/01/12	n/a
079	Pre-event	Meeting	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Theatre Consultant Tom meets HR Managers and Academic Consultant to deepen discussion on purpose	23/01/12	n/a
080	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: HR Manager Pauline approaches selected leaders for pre-intervention interviews	25/01/12	n/a
081	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Academic Consultant Richard introduces academic paper as additional inspiration for upcoming workshop	25/01/12	n/a
082	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Pauline confirms workshop location	27/01/12	n/a
083	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Between HR Manager Pauline, Academic Consultants regarding pre-event interviews	27/01/12	n/a
084	Pre-event	Interview	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Theatre Consultant Tom's participant interviews with Leaders for script development	30/01/12	n/a
085	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Theatre Consultant Tom starts script writing before 15 word question is finalised by Academic Consultants and HR Managers	30/01/12	n/a
086	Pre-event	Document	Misc.: Carter hands over 'transformational leadership development program' document	1/02/12	Academic Consultant Carter

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
087	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Academic Consultant Richard sends email to HR Managers and other Academic Consultant - purpose development	1/02/12	n/a
088	Pre-event	Interview	Pre-intervention interview with Academic Consultant Richard	2/02/12	n/a
089	Pre-event	Phone call	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Phone con between HR Managers and Academic Consultants to agree on formal purpose question	2/02/12	n/a
090	Pre-event	Interview	Pre-intervention interview with Carter	2/02/12	n/a
091	Pre-event	Email	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Pauline sends Theatre Consultant Tom purpose question (designed by HR Managers, Academic Consultants)	2/02/12	n/a
092	Pre-event	Interview	Pre-intervention interview with Chief Information Officer June	3/02/12	n/a
093	Pre-event	Interview	Pre-intervention interview with Director of Medicine Fred	3/02/12	n/a
094	Pre-event	Interview	Pre-intervention interview with Fundraising Manager Sonja	6/02/12	n/a
095	Pre-event	Rehearsal	Workshop 4, Design Phase: Theatre Company's rehearsals and briefing folder for organisational theatre delivery	7/02/12	n/a
096	Pre-event	Document	Misc - Document Briefing folder from Theatre Company about theatre event at Platanus	7/02/12	Theatre Consultant Tom
097	Pre-event	Interview	Pre-intervention interview with Actress Lizzie	7/02/12	n/a
098	Pre-event	Interview	Pre-intervention interview with Theatre Consultant Tom	8/02/12	n/a

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
099	Event	Workshop	Workshop 4 - Delivery - organisational theatre event	9/02/12	n/a
100	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Project Management Officer Simone	21/02/12	n/a
101	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Actress Lizzie	21/02/12	n/a
102	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Fundraising Manager Sonja	21/02/12	n/a
103	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with HR Manager Pauline	21/02/12	n/a
104	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Director of Facilities Roland	21/02/12	n/a
105	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Communications and Marketing Manager Julia	22/02/12	n/a
106	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Theatre Consultant Tom	22/02/12	n/a
107	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Director of Clinical Operations Anne	22/02/12	n/a
108	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with HR Director Andrew	23/02/12	n/a
109	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Academic Consultant Carter	23/02/12	n/a
110	Post-event	Meeting	Workshop 4, Follow-up: With Academic Consultants, HR Managers, reflections on organisational theatre	23/02/12	n/a

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
111	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Chief Information Officer June	1/03/12	n/a
112	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with CFO Christian	1/03/12	n/a
113	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with CEO Tony	1/03/12	n/a
114	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Academic Consultant Richard	1/03/12	n/a
115	Post-event	Email	Misc.: HR Director informs about further difficulties with Local Health network	2/03/12	n/a
116	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Director of Radiation Oncology Paul	3/03/12	n/a
117	Post-event	Email	Misc.: Academic Consultant suggests the use of external academic consultant to support change program	7/03/12	n/a
118	Post-event	Meeting	Workshop 4, Follow-up: Meeting between HR Managers, Theatre Consultant Tom, Academic Consultants to discuss reflections on theatre event and future steps	8/03/12	n/a
119	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 1 with Director of Medicine Fred	9/03/12	n/a
120	Post-event	Meeting	Workshop 5,- Design Phase: Meeting Academic Consultants with HR Managers	9/03/12	n/a
121	Post-event	Document	Workshop 5: Agenda	4/04/12	HR Manager Pauline

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
122	Post-event	Workshop	Workshop 5, Delivery: Masks metaphor	5/04/12	n/a
123	Post-event	Document	Working at Platanus - presentation	1/05/12	Communications and Marketing Manager Julia
124	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with Director of Facilities Roland	12/06/12	n/a
125	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with CFO Christian	12/06/12	n/a
126	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with Director of Clinical Operations Anne	13/06/12	n/a
127	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with Communications and Marketing Manager Julia	13/06/12	n/a
128	Post-event	Document	Workshop 6, Document: Agenda	14/06/12	HR Manager Pauline
129	Post-event	Workshop	Workshop 6, Delivery: Coach and movies metaphor	15/06/12	n/a
130	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with HR Director Andrew	19/06/12	n/a
131	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with Project Management Officer Simone	20/06/12	n/a
132	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with Academic Consultant Carter	21/06/12	n/a

Ref.	Phase	Data Form	Description	Date	Handed over by
133	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with Director of Radiation Oncology Paul	21/06/12	n/a
134	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with Chief Information Officer June	21/06/12	n/a
135	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with Fundraising Manager Sonja	21/06/12	n/a
136	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with HR Manager Pauline	21/06/12	n/a
137	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with CEO Tony	26/06/12	n/a
138	Post-event	Interview	Post-intervention interview Set 2 with Director of Medicine Fred	26/06/12	n/a
139	Post-event	Document	Workshop 7, Agenda	20/09/12	HR Manager Pauline
140	Post-event	Workshop	Workshop 7, Delivery: Dreams and vision	21/09/12	HR Manager Pauline

Appendix J: Stakeholders' Background Stories (Pre-event Phases)

The HR Managers

The HR Director, Andrew, and the HR Manager, Pauline, were appointed by Platanus's CEO to design a leadership development program that would support Platanus's Executive Team in facilitating the cultural change. Due to the failure of an earlier leadership initiative that was developed with a different vendor and by the HR's predecessors, Pauline and Andrew felt obliged to deliver a program that would not only "enhance the Executives' skills in facilitating a successful and timely change" but also "create a safe learning environment", where the Executives felt encouraged to participate in "critical reflection on their own and the organisation's development" (Pre-event interviews with Pauline and Andrew, January 2012, Ref. 074, 075). Creating a new program, the HR Managers were further interested in creating rapport and legislation for their role at Platanus (Pre-event interviews with Pauline, January 2012, Ref. 074).

Pauline had a background in private profit and non-for-profit organisations and viewed her role as a HR Manager at Platanus as "to set the culture and decide behaviours for the organisation and then looking at the wider HR Strategies" and "to support the Executives through the change program" to "unify as a group" (Pre-event interview with Pauline, January 2012, Ref, 074). Pauline described her main motivation to work for Platanus as

" . . . working in an environment where you are setting up something new was probably the thing that attracted me the most (. . .) and that sense of being able to empower the individuals who are working in the front line of the organisation to make a decision, that's probably the thing that really excites me."

Pauline envisioned a more democratic organisational culture than in traditional public health clinics and envisioned an organisational structure that would "allow flat hierarchies and stimulate personal commitment". She described her interpretation of Platanus's vision as

" . . . my vision (. . .) is (. . .) that they [the employees] really sign up to helping us design what that facility [Platanus] is going to look like and actually participate really strongly in the process of building it." (Pre-event Interview with Pauline, January 2012, Ref. 074)

In order to support this change, the goals of the leadership program were to Pauline,

“... two things: one, it’s actually so that the leaders understand what their leadership capability is as opposed to their management. And one of the key leadership capabilities is actually the change leadership. (. . .) So they actually have to take the whole journey. And [secondly] getting the people that are across the road on board and completely integrated in the process of making it happen.” (Pre-event Interview with Pauline, January 2012, Ref. 074)

The HR Director, Andrew, previously held roles in the manufacturing sector and viewed his responsibilities similar to Pauline as to support broader HR Strategies and the Executives in the cultural change process. To him the focus was in general terms, “creating a culture that would enable employees to deliver excellence and innovation” and to “enhance the Senior Management Team’s skills in leading a successful and timely change” (Meeting between Platanus’s HR Managers and the Academic Consultants, June 2011, Ref. 013).

Andrew’s motivation to join Platanus was twofold: personally, he felt committed to the organisation because he had lost a family member to cancer. On a professional level, Andrew outlined his viewpoint:

“I think its purpose. I mean the fact that we are building something that the Executive Team and the community at large see as something that is - worthwhile. I think the opportunity to help patients, to ensure that we build a facility that builds on the great and excellent work that happens technically in [the existing clinic] and other hospitals but [also] actually taking the opportunity to make that patient-centred and providing an opportunity to bring more resources and more capability into it and to be an example of a new way of providing health care and patient care. I think that is pretty exciting.” (Pre-event Interview with Andrew, January 2012, Ref. 075)

Andrew described as one particularly interesting aspect to him of Platanus’s vision,

“... I think the opportunity to bring that vision to life for employees - because I think many employees that work in the system today do so very selflessly and, in doing so, they forgo lots of other things that you get in the private system because they feel very strongly about what they do. And I feel they are quite often frustrated about their inability and by being held back by the current system. I think to put in place a culture and an opportunity for them to realise those dreams (. . .) one of our values is empowerment and innovation. And I think those two things are something that are something pretty special today.” (Pre-event Interview with Andrew, January 2012, Ref. 075)

To Andrew, the goals of the leadership program were

“... to lift the capability both individually and collectively of the Executive Team to both enable the team to have a successful project and to function successfully as an organisational team upon opening the doors in 2013.” (Pre-event Interview with Andrew, January 2012, Ref. 075)

The Academic Consultants

The two Academic Consultants, Richard and Carter, were appointed by Platanus's HR Managers to jointly develop a leadership development program in an action-research based collaboration. Both Academics were experienced in conducting change programs and were generally interested in engaging in an endeavour "that could make a difference" and that would potentially involve theatrical interventions in their change initiatives (Informal Interviews with Richard and Carter, September 2011, Ref. 034, 036).

Richard works as a Professor in Management and Change and holds a triple-role of being consultant, action-researcher and my supervisor. Richard's research interests are in studies of power and politics in organisations with a focus on irony, narrative, drama and performance. He described his particular motivation to contribute to Platanus's leadership program as

" . . . the first thing that leapt to mind was patient-centred. So the idea that they are doing something radical and innovative and interesting. I think the second thing that interests me is because it's caring (. . .) you know a lot of our stuff is just - it's companies banking money or consulting. The idea, that we now actually got something really exciting and dynamic in a caring area. (. . .) and then also it was a potential venue for organisational theatre. And once we found that both Andrew and Pauline were both interesting and lively and they had that vision of voice, of diversity and sustainability and things. (. . .) it looked like it would be a good site for your PhD to have a more radical theatre intervention. So, that's what excited me." (Pre-event Interview with Richard, February 2012, Ref. 088)

Richard described his role as an action-researcher and consultant at Platanus as being,

" . . . a lobbyist for diversity and voice and an irritant to the tendency that would come up with one monologue. They [Platanus] are going to start talking about cultural change and a strong family and getting enthused and the vision. So the last thing they want is for somebody to say, 'Actually get beneath the surface, there are other issues'. With change, everybody wants the change to be going well. So avoidance is a lot easier than addressing the issues (. . .). At the same time as doing that, I am trying to carve open a role for me that is actually appreciated and liked and effective rather than me being a pain in the butt and possibly even thrown out." (Pre-event Interview with Richard, February 2012, Ref. 088)

To Richard, the goal of the leadership initiatives was to raise awareness that the change program would not only support structural aspects of the planned change but also allow a more inclusive, radical discourse than that traditionally provided by 'strong culture' programs. He argued,

“I want them to have a mindset that realises everything is in tension, everything is paradoxical, everything is contradictory and that they have got to craft out something in this change process - and to be quite reflective about what they are doing because they are otherwise going to stuff it up.”
(Pre-event Interview with Richard, February 2012, Ref. 088)

Carter had recently finalised his PhD thesis in Management with a focus on self-efficacy and organisational theatre and drew on experience in the private industry and academia. He knew Platanus’s CEO from his MBA studies and facilitated the first contact between the university and Platanus. His motivation to join the project was twofold: on a professional level, Carter wanted to gain further experience in facilitating change programs. On a personal level, he was excited to participate in and contribute to a project that envisions patient-centred cancer care (Informal Interviews with Carter, September 2011, Ref. 036). He explained,

“I have come from a background that was always challenging assumptions and always being more focused on how do you make it better for people you are interacting with. Having an opportunity to bring that kind of experience and ethos from a perspective into something that can be quite functionally driven and which doesn’t always bring people into the loop - changing that can be more rewarding for everybody. And it really excites me; to have the opportunity to be part of that.”
(Pre-Event Interview with Carter, February 2012, Ref. 090)

Carter’s interest was particularly in learning aspects of the program. As he explained,

“ . . . to me learning is really the heart of organisations and people. (. . .) To see what we can do to help push the envelope around, how learning can be delivered and how opportunities for learning can be opened up in the broadest way possible, both technically and electronically, through daily work practices, so (. . .) an embedded part of how people work is what excites me.” (Pre-Event Interview with Carter, February 2012, Ref. 090)

To Carter, the goal of the leadership program was

“ . . . about developing better models to how we as managers need to lead our team and lead the organisation. (. . .) it’s moving beyond what a managerial focus is to one that really embodies to what leadership can be.” (Pre-Event Interview with Carter, February 2012, Ref. 090)

The Theatre Facilitator and the Actress

The Theatre Company had already collaborated with the two Academic Consultants in previous projects. The Company specialised in dramatic education and training methods and its philosophy was and is based on their Leitmotiv to “Inspire positive change” (Theatre Company webpage). The company applies a *purpose-habit-choice* methodology,

which explores the existing habits that may or may not allow individuals to achieve a purpose and which aims to surface and explore choices that people have to change their habits and to reach their purpose (Pre-event Interview with Tom, February 2012, Ref. 098).

Tom, a professional actor and organisational theatre facilitator, was appointed by the Theatre Company to plan, design, and facilitate the organisational theatre event at Platanus. He described his purpose as an actor as

“ . . . to illuminate and to shed light on things. Because when things are illuminated, there is [sic] a whole lot more choices.” (Pre-event Interview with Tom, February 2012, Ref, 098)

To Tom, the purpose of theatre was,

“ . . . to bring people together, not to lecture them, but to hold up a mirror that has them recognise their current reality- the situations and attitudes that they may not have seen clearly because they have been in the thick of it.” (Pre-event Interview with Tom, February 2012, Ref, 098)

Tom described his motivation to contribute to Platanus’s organisational theatre event as driven by his personal interest in health and wellbeing and the integrated, patient-centred approach Platanus envisions (Pre-event Interview with Tom, February 2012, Ref. 098). He observed,

“ . . . a lot of things we do, is working on the commercial side of things, like forum theatre to help people cross sell for example. (. .) There is a profit motive around that and that’s fine, because the way we approach that, there is almost always recognition of the human side as well. But with Platanus, the focus is primarily on the vision of the health of the patient and it feels good to be working in that space.” (Pre-event Interview with Tom, February 2012, Ref, 098)

The Actress, Lizzie, participated marginally in pre-event phases and was, during these stages, only involved in the briefing for the organisational theatre event, which was facilitated by Tom. In a pre-event interview Lizzie explained that what excites her most about supporting Platanus in their leadership program

“ . . . is [that Platanus is] actually empowering the people, the patient. It is giving them the feeling of being a real individual who can be themselves within a big institution. I think when people are hospitalised they are often disempowered. They are those who don’t have knowledge or strength for making decisions (. .) that’s what excites me the most about Platanus (. .) that it will bring a sense of a quality for somebody who would ordinarily be disempowered and have no say [and] no control over their own destiny.” (Pre-event Interview with Lizzie, February 2012, Ref. 097)

To Lizzie, the organisational theatre event was facilitated,

“ . . . to reflect back the behaviour that is pertinent to Platanus (. . .) to give the people who are in that organisation a sense of - an opportunity to identify with behaviour or to not identify. To feel the difference in their own behaviour, so they can then reflect on who they are and how they behave with an idea to changing or on improving communication. (. . .) my hope is that Platanus’s Executives can feel empowered and knowledgeable and reaffirm their own position and have a sense of unification as a team.” (Pre-event Interview with Lizzie, February 2012, Ref. 097)

The Executives

Consisting of twelve individuals (ten Executives and the two HR Managers) with multi-disciplinary backgrounds and career experience, the Executives Team involved members with background in the public as well as the private, profit and non-for-profit sector. Their key responsibilities are the management of the organisation, the management of clinical operations, information technology, finance, human resources, fund raising, patient experience, marketing and communications as well as facility management.

Although a formal agreement on Platanus’s vision and mission had been made, observations in meetings and workshops showed that debates on the applicability and realisation of these shaped their daily discourse. The discussions occurred around the challenges of creating a care model that enables multidisciplinary teams to work within flat hierarchies, where doctors, nurses and patients have a voice and where medical staff are supported in reaching standards of excellence in care, research and education. This debate inevitably involved both explicit and implicit arguments around power distribution, hierarchy and the challenges of convincing traditional medical staff of the value of joining the organisation. What seemed to unite the Executives in general, however, was a strong personal commitment to improve cancer care, which they raised in informal discussions and repeatedly during workshops. However, this personal commitment varied in detail: some members wanted to extend their career in Health and continue to improve the existing system over time. Others had experienced cancer cases in their closest social networks and wished to ‘give back’ and again others wanted, in general terms, to participate in a project that would ‘make a difference’ and that was meaningful to the wider community (Pre-event interviews with Andrew, Pauline, Fred, June and Sonja, January and February 2012, Ref. 074, 075, 092, 093, 094 and Informal Conversations with Executives).

References

2001. Special Issue: Dramaturgy and Organizing. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 4(3).
2004. Special Issue: Theatre and Organization. *Organization Studies*, 25(5).
- Alexander, J. C. 2004. Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance Between Ritual and Strategy. *Sociological Theory*, 22(4): 527-572.
- Andersen, N. Å. 2003. Polyphonic organisations. In T. Bakken (Ed.), *Autopietic organization theory: drawing on Niklas Luhmann's social systems perspective*: 151-299. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.
- Anonymous. 2011a. Selected facts and statistics on Australia's Healthcare sector. Engaging and empowering citizens and patients is the key to better health outcomes. Melbourne: Business Council of Australia.
- Anonymous. 2011b. Using microeconomic reform to deliver patient-centred health care. Engaging and empowering citizens and patients is the key to better health outcomes. Melbourne: Business Council Australia.
- Arendt, H. 1958/1998. *The Human Condition (2nd Ed.)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Argyris, C., & Schön, D. 1974. *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Brass.
- Ashcraft, K. 2004. Gender, Discourse and Organization: Framing a Shifting Relationship. In D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Oswick, & L. Putnam (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse*. London: SAGE.
- Augustine, N., & Adelman, K. 1999. *Shakespeare in Charge: The Bard's Guide to Leading and Succeeding on the Business Stage*. New York: Miramax Books.
- Babbage, F. 2004. *Augusto Boal*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Badham, R., Claydon, R., & Down, S. 2012a. The ambivalence paradox in cultural change. In B. B. David M. Boje, John Hassard (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Organizational Change*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Badham, R., Dawson, P., Garrety, K., Griffiths, A., Morrigan, V., & Zanko, M. 2003. Designer Deviance: Enterprise and Deviance in Organisational Change. *Organization* 10(4): 651-673.
- Badham, R., & Garrety, K. 2003. Living the blender of change: The carnival of control in a culture of culture. *Tamara*, 2(4): 22-38.
- Badham, R., & McLoughlin, I. 2006. Ambiguity and Ambivalence: Irony and Cultural change in Late Modern Organizations. *International Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Change Management*, 5(4): 133-143.
- Badham, R., Mead, A., & Antocopolou, E. 2012b. Performing Change: a dramaturgical approach to the practice of managing change. In B. B. David M. Boje, John Hassard (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Organizational Change*. Oxon: Routledge.

- Bakhtin, M. 1978. The problem of the text. *Sovjet Studies in Literature. A Journal of Translations.* , XIV(1): 3-33.
- Bakhtin, M. 1984/1965. *Rabelais and his world*: Indiana University Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M. 1986. *Speech genres and other late essays* (V. W. McGee, Trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Banister, P., Burnham, E., Parker, I., Taylor, M., & Tindall, C. 1994. *Qualitative Methods in Psychology: A Research Guide*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Barker, J. R. 1993. Tightening the iron cage: Concertive control of self-managing teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38/3: 408-437.
- Barley, S. R., & Kunda, G. 1992. Design and devotion: Surges of rational and normative ideologies of control in managerial discourse. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 37(3): 363-399.
- Barry, D. 1994. Making the invisible visible: Using analogically-based methods to surface unconscious processes in organizations. *Organization Development Journal*, 12(4): 37-48.
- Barry, D., & Meisiek, S. 2010a. The art of leadership and its fine art shadow. *Leadership*, 6(3): 331-349.
- Barry, D., & Meisiek, S. 2010b. Seeing More and Seeing Differently: Sensemaking, Mindfulness, and the Workarts. *Organization Studies*, 31(12): 1-26.
- Battilana, J., Lee, M., Walker, J., & Dorsey, C. 2012. In Search of the Hybrid Ideal. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Summer: 1-12.
- Bauman, Z. 1993. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bauman, Z. 2001. *The Bauman Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Baumgarten, A. G. 1750/1936. *Aesthetica*. Bari, Italy: Theatre Communications Group.
- Becker, H., Geer, B., Hughes, C., & Strauss, A. 1961. *Boys in White* Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- .
- Beckwith, A. 2003. Improving business performance - the potential of arts in training. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 35(5): 3.
- Beech, N., H.Burns, Caestecker, L. d., MacIntosh, R., & MacLean, D. 2004. Paradox as invitation to act in problematic change situations. *Human Relations*, 57: 1313-1332.
- Beirne, M., & Knight, S. 2007. From Community Theatre to Critical Management Studies. *Management Learning*, 38(5): 591-611.
- Bell, J. 1987. Industrials: American Business Theatre. *The Drama Review*, 31(4): 36-57.
- Belova, O., King, I., & Sliwa, M. 2008. Introduction: Polyphony and Organization Studies: Mikhail Bakhtin and Beyond. *Organization Studies*, 29: 493-500.

- Berger, P. 1997. *Redeeming Laughter. The Comic Dimension of Human Experience*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. 1995. *Pluralism and the Crisis of Meaning. The Orientation of the Modern Man*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers.
- Berger, P. L. 1963. *Invitation to Sociology*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Berthoin-Antal, A. 2009. Transforming Organisations with the Arts. Research Framework for Evaluating the Effects of Artistic Interventions in Organizations - Research Report. Gothenburg: TILLT Europe.
- Berthoin-Antal, A. 2013. Arts-based Interventions an Organizational Development, *Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management* Orlando, Florida: Academy of Management.
- Beyes, T., & Steyaert, C. 2006a. Justifying Theatre in Organisational Analysis: A Carnavalesque Alternative. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 9(2): 101-109.
- Beyes, T., & Steyaert, C. 2006b. Justifying Theatre in Organisational Analysis: A Carnavalesque Alternative? *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 9(2): 101-109.
- Biehl-Missal, B. 2010. Hero takes a fall: A lesson from theatre for leadership. *Leadership*, 6(3): 279-294.
- Biehl-Missal, B. 2011a. Business is Show Business: Management Presentations as Performance. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(3): 619-645.
- Biehl-Missal, B. 2011b. *Wirtschaftsästhetik. Wie Unternehmen die Kunst als Inspiration und Werkzeug benutzen [Business aesthetics: How organisations use art as inspiration and tool]*. Wiebaden Gabler.
- Billing, Y., & Alvesson, M. 2000. Questioning the Notion of Feminine Leadership: A Critical Perspective of Gender Labelling of Leadership. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 7(3): 144-157.
- Boal, A. 1979/2000. *Theatre of the Oppressed* (C. A. McBride, M.-O. L. McBride, & E. Fryer, Trans.) (2nd ed.). London: Pluto Press.
- Boal, A. 1992. *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (A. Jackson, Trans.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Boal, A. 1995a. Forum Theatre. In P. B. Zarrilli (Ed.), *Acting (Re)Considered*. London: Routledge.
- Boal, A. 1995b. *The Rainbow of Desire - The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy* (A. Jackson, Trans.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Boal, A. 2001. *Hamlet and the Baker's Son: My Life in Theatre and the Politics* (A. Jackson, & C. Blaker, Trans.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Boal, A. 2006. *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed* (A. Jackson, Trans.). London and New York: Routledge.

- Böhme, G. 1993. Atmosphere as the fundamental concept of a new aesthetics. *Thesis eleven*, 36: 113-126.
- Boje, D. 2001. *Narrative methods for organizational and communication research*. London: Sage.
- Boje, D. 2002. *Flight of the Ahimsa antenarrative in time of World War*. Paper presented at the conference on organizational discourse: From micro-utterances to macro-inferences, Keynote presentation, University of London: Kings College.
- Boje, D., & Larsen, H. 2006. Ethics in Organizational Theatre, *Thin Book on Organisational Theatre*: 33-44. Copenhagen: Learning Lab Denmark.
- Boje, D., & Larsen, H. 2007. Ethics in Organizational Theatre - two perspectives, *Thin Book - Organisational Theatre*: 33-44. Copenhagen: Learning Lab Denmark.
- Boje, D. M. 1991a. Consulting and Change in the Storytelling Organisation. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 4(3): 7-37.
- Boje, D. M. 1991b. The Storytelling Organization: A Study of Story Performance in an Office-Supply Firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36: 106-126.
- Boje, D. M. 1995. Stories of the Storytelling Organization: A Postmodern Analysis of Disney as "Tamara Land". *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(4): 997-1035.
- Boje, D. M., Rosile, G. A., Durant, R. A., & Luhman, J. T. 2004. Enron Spectacles: A Critical Dramaturgical Analysis. *Organization Studies*, 25: 751-774.
- Boltanski, L., Thevenot, L., & Porter, L. 2006. *On Justification. Economies of Worth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Booth, W. 1975. *A Rhetoric of Irony*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Booton, J., & Dwyer, P. 2006. Legal Theatre - A theatre-based approach to Community Legal Education: 125. Sydney: University of Sydney.
- Brecht, B. 1964. *Brecht on Theatre*. New York: Hill & Wang.
- Bryant, A. 2002. Re-grounding grounded theory. *Journal of Information Technology Theory and Application*, 4(1): 25-42.
- Bryant, A. 2003. A constructivist response to Glaser: FQS: Forum for Qualitative Social Research.
- Buchanan, D. A., & Badham, R. J. 2008. *Power, Politics, and Organizational Change. Winning the Turf Game*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Burke, K. 1969. *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burke, K. 1984a. *Attitudes toward History ,Third Edition*. Irvine: University of California Press.
- Burke, K. 1984b. *Performance and Change, Third Edition*. Irvine: University of California Press.
- Burnes, B. 2011. Understanding the emergent approach to change. In D. M. Boje, B. Burnes, & J. Hassard (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Organizational Change*. London: Routledge.

- Burns, T. 1961. Micropolitics: mechanisms of institutional change. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 55: 257-281.
- Burr, V. 1995. *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Cameron, K. 1986. Effectiveness as Paradox: Consensus and Conflict in Conceptions of Organizational Effectiveness. *Organization Design*, 32(5): 539-553.
- Campbell, J. 1997. Mechanisms of Evolutionary Change in Economic Governance: Interaction, Interpretation, and Bricolage. In L. Magnusson, & J. Ottosson (Eds.), *Evolutionary Economics and Path Dependence* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Carroll, L. 2000/1872. *Alice in wonderland and through the looking glass*. New York: Signet Classics.
- Carter, C., Clegg, S., Hogan, J., & Kornberger, M. 2003. The polyphonic spree: The case of the Liverpool Dockers. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 34(4): 290-304.
- Carter, R., Badham, R., & Matula, L. 2011. Empowerment or Control: A Longitudinal Experimental Field Study of the Effects of Organization Theatre, *EGOS, Sub-theme/workshop 36: Creative Selves: Organizing Work in Knowledge Capitalism*. Gothenburg.
- Cassirer, E. 1972. *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Charmaz, K. 1991. Translating graduate qualitative methods into undergraduate teaching: Intensive interviewing as a case example. *Teaching Sociology*, 19: 384-395.
- Charmaz, K. 2000. Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd Ed.)*: 509-536. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Charmaz, K. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis* London: Sage.
- Charmaz, K., & Bryant, A. 2011. Grounded Theory and Credibility. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research. Issues of Theory, Method and Practice*, Vol. 3rd Edition. London: Sage.
- Clark, T. 2008. Performing the Organization: Organization Theatre and Imaginative Life as Physical Presence In D. Barry, & H. Hansen (Eds.), *New Approaches in Management and Organization Studies*. London: Sage.
- Clark, T., & Mangham, I. 2004a. From Dramaturgy to Theatre as Technology: The Case of Corporate Theatre. *Journal of Management*, 41:1: 37-51.
- Clark, T., & Mangham, I. 2004b. Stripping the Undercoat: A Review and Reflections on a Piece of Organization Theatre. *Organization Studies*, 2004; 25; 841: 11.
- Clarke, A. 2005. *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory after the Postmodern Turn*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Clarke, A. E. 2003. Situational Analysis: Grounded theory mapping after the postmodern turn. *Symbolic Interaction*, 26: 553-576.

- Clegg, S., & Baumeler, C. 2010. From Iron Cages to Liquid Modernity in Organizational Analysis. *Organization Studies*, 31: 1713-1733.
- Clegg, S., Kornberger, M., Carter, C., & Rhodes, C. 2006a. For Management? . *Management Learning*, 31(1): 7-17.
- Clegg, S. R. 1989. *Frameworks of Power*. London: Sage.
- Clegg, S. R., Courpasson, D., & Phillips, N. 2006b. *Power and organizations*. London: Sage.
- Clegg, S. R., Kornberger, M., & Rhodes, C. 2005. Learning/Becoming/Organizing. *Organization*, 12: 147-167.
- Cohen-Cruz, J., & Schutzman, M. (Eds.). 2006. *A Boal Companion. Dialogues on theatre and cultural politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Collins, R. 2004. *Interaction ritual chains*. New York: Princeton University Press.
- Coopey, J. 1998. Learning to Trust and Trusting to Learn: A Role for Radical Theatre. *Management Learning*, 29(3): 365-382.
- Corrigan, P. 2000. *Shakespeare on Management: Leadership Lessons for Today's Managers*. London: Kogan Page.
- Coser, R. 1959. "Some Social Functions of Laughter. A Study of Humor in a Hospital Setting. *Human Relations*, 12: 171-182.
- Courtney, R. 1995. *Drama and feeling: An aesthetic theory*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Czarniawska, B. 1999a. Interviews, Narratives and Organizations, Vol. 8. Gothenburg: GRI, School of Economics and Commercial Law.
- Czarniawska, B. 1999b. *Writing Management. Organization Theory as a Literary Genre*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Czarniawska, B. 2001. Is it possible to be a constructionist consultant? On the complex relation between the logic of theory, the logic of practice and the logic of representation. *Management Learning*, 32(2): 253-266.
- Darsø, L. 2004. *Artful creation: Learning tales for arts in business*. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.
- Darsø, L., & al, e. 2006. Planting seeds or throwing bombs. *Tamara Journal*, 5(5.3): 7.
- Davis, D., & O'Sullivan, C. 2000. Boal and the Shifting Sands: the Un-Political Master Swimmer. *New Theatre Quartely*, 16(3): 288-297.
- Dawson, P. 1997. In at the deep end: conducting processual research on organisational change. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 13(4): 389-405.
- Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. 2000. *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*. New York: Basic Books.
- DeCock, C., & Jeanes, E. 2006. Questioning consensus, cultivating conflict. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 15(1): 18-30.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. S. 2003. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. London Sage.

- DiDomenico, M. L., & Phillips, N. 2010. Participant Observation. In A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*. London: Sage.
- Douglas, M. 1968. The Social Control of Cognition: Some Factors in Joke Perception. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 3(3): 361-376.
- Douglas, M. 1986. *How Institutions Think*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Douglass, F. 1857/1985. The significance of emancipation in the West Indies. In J. W. Blassingame (Ed.), *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series 1: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Drucker, P. F. 2007. *The Practice of Management*. New York: A Buttersworth-Heinemann Title.
- Dunphy, D. 2000. Embracing Paradox: Top Down versus Participative Management of Organizational Change. In M. Beer, & N. Nohria (Eds.), *Breaking the Code of Change*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Dwyer, P. 2004. Augusto Boal and the Woman in Lima: a Poetic Encounter. *New Theatre Quarterly*, 20: 9.
- Dyer, W. G., & Wilkins, A. L. 1991. Better Stories, Not Better Constructs, to Generate Better Theory: A Rejoinder to Eisenhardt. *Academy of Management Review*, 16(3): 613-619.
- Economist. 2011. The art of management. Business has much to learn from the arts., *The Economist*, Vol. February 19th, 2011.
- Eisenhardt, K. 1989. Building Theories from Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4): 532-550.
- Ellul, J. 1967. *The Technological Society*. New York: Vintage.
- Erikson, K. 1976. *Everything in its Path*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Esslin, M. 1983. *Brecht: A Choice of Evils*. London: Methuin.
- Fairhurst, G. 1993. The leader-member exchange patterns of women leaders in industry: A discourse analysis. *Communication Monographs*, 60: 321-351.
- Ferris, W. P. 2002. Theatre Tools for Team Building. *Harvard Business Review*, 80(12): 24-25.
- Fischer-Lichte, E. 2005. *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual. Exploring Forms of Political Theatre*. London: Routledge.
- Flyvbjerg, B. 1998. *Rationality and Power*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. 1972. *The order of discourse*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and Punish*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Freire, P. 1970/1993/2009. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). New York: Continuum.
- Fuda, P., & Badham, R. 2011. Fire, Snowball, Mask, Movie: How Leaders Spark And Sustain Change. *Harvard Business Review*, November 2011: 145-148.

- Gabriel, Y. 2005. Glass Cages and Glass Palaces: Images of Organization in Image-Conscious Times. *Organization* 12(1): 9-27.
- Garrety, K., & Badham, R. 2000. The Politics of Socio-technical Intervention: An Interactionist View. *Technology Analysis and Strategic Management*, 12(1): 103-118.
- Geertz, C. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- George, D. S. 1995. Theatre of the Oppressed and Teatro de Arena: In and Out of Context. *Latin American Theatre Review*, 28(2): 16.
- Gergen, K., & Whitney, D. 1996. Technologies of representation in the global corporation: Power and polyphony. In D. Boje, R. Gephart, & T. Thatchenkery (Eds.), *Postmodern management and organization theory*: 331-357. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Gergen, K. J. 1985. The social constructivist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist*, 40(266-275).
- Gergen, K. J. 1999. *An Invitation to Social Construction*. London: Sage.
- Gibb, S. 2004. Arts-based training in management development: the use of improvisational theatre. *Journal of Management Development*, 23(8): 741-750.
- Gioia, D. A., Schultz, M., & Corley, K. G. 2000. Organizational Identity, Image, and Adaptive Instability *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1): 63-81.
- Glaser, B. 1978. *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. Mill Valley: CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. 1992. *Emergence vs. Forcing: Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. 1964. Awareness contexts and social interaction. *American Sociological Review*, 29: 669-679.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Goffman, E. 1959. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. London: Penguin.
- Goffman, E. 1972. *Encounters. Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Goulding, C. 2009. Grounded Theory Perspectives in Organizational Research. In D. A. Buchanan, & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*: 381-394. London: Sage.
- Gumbrecht, H. U. 2004. *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*. Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press.
- Gusfield, J. 2000. *Performing Action: Artistry in Human Behaviour and Social Research*. New Brunswick: Transaction.
- Hardy, C. 2001. Researching organisational discourse. *International Studies of Management and Organsiation*, 31(3): 25-47.
- Hardy, C., & Leiba-O'Sullivan, S. 1998. The Power Behind Empowerment: Implications for Research and Practice. *Human Relations*, 51(4): 451-483.

- Hatch, M. J. 1996. The Role of the Researcher: An Analysis of Narrative Position in Organization Theory. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 5: 359-374.
- Hatch, M. J. 1997. Irony and the social construction of contradiction in the humor of a management team. *Organization Science*, 8: 275-288.
- Hatch, M. J., & Ehrlich, S. B. 1993. Spontaneous humor as an indicator of paradox and ambiguity in organizations. *Organization Studies*, 14: 505-526.
- Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. 2002. The dynamics of organizational identity. *Human Relations*, 55(8): 989-1018.
- Hazen, A. M. 1993. Towards a polyphonic organization. *Journal of Organizational Change*, 6(5): 15-26.
- Hazen, A. M. 2011. Reflections on polyphonic organization. In D. Boje, B. Burnes, & J. Hassard (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Organizational Change*: 466-476. New York: Routledge.
- Heron, J. 1992. *Feeling and personhood: Psychology in another key*. London: Sage.
- Holcomb, C. 2001. *The Rhetorical Discourse on Jest in Early Modern England*: University of South Carolina Press.
- Hosking, D. M., & Bouwen, R. 2000. Organizational Learning: Relational-Constructionist Approaches: An Overview. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 9(129-132).
- Hume, V. 1992. Le théâtre d'entreprise, origines et objectifs. *Actualité de la Formation Permanente*: 53-60.
- Hutcheon, L. 1994. *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony*. London: Routledge.
- Jackson, T. 2007. *Theatre, Education, and the Making of Meanings*. Manchester: University Press.
- Jagiello, J. 2007. Creating an Organisational Theatre of Creative Learning, *Creativity or Conformity? Building Cultures of Creativity in Higher Education*: 1-8. Cardiff: University of Wales Institute, Cardiff and the Higher Education Academy.
- Jay, J. 2013. Navigating Paradox as a Mechanism of Change and Innovation in Hybrid Organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1): 137-159.
- Johansson, U., & Woodilla, J. 2005. *Irony and Organizations. Epistemological Claims and Supporting Field Studies*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.
- Jordania, J. 1989. *Georgian traditional polyphony in international context of polyphonic cultures: The problems of origins of polyphony*. Tbilisi: Tbilisi State University Press.
- Jordania, J. 2006. *Who asked the first question?* Tbilisi Tbilisi State University Press.
- Kahneman, D. 2003. A Perspective on Judgment and Choice: Mapping Bounded Rationality. *American Psychologist*, 58(9): 697-720.

- Kanigal, R. 2005. *The One Best Way: Frederick Winslow Taylor and the Enigma of Efficiency*. Boston: MIT Press.
- Kegan, R. 1998. *In Over Our Heads. The Mental Demands of Modern Life*. Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Kenan, E. 1971. Two types of presupposition in natural language. In C. Filmore, & D. T. Langendoen (Eds.), *Studies in Linguistic Semantics*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Klee, P., & Klee, F. 1968. *The Diaries of Paul Klee: 1898-1918*: University of California Press.
- Kornberger, M., Clegg, S. R., & Carter, C. 2006. Rethinking the polyphonic organization: Managing a discursive practise. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 22: 3-30.
- Krüger, C., Blitz-Lindeque, J. J., Pickworth, G. E., Munro, A. J., & Lotriet, M. 2005. Communication skills for medical/dental students at the University of Pretoria: Lessons learnt from a two-year study using a forum theatre method. *SA Fam Practi* 47(6): 60-65.
- Kvale, S. 1996. *Interviews. An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. . London: Sage.
- Langer, S. K. 1942. *Philosophical sketches*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Larsen, H. 2005. *Spontaneity and Power: Theatre Improvisation as Processes of Change in Organizations*. University of Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire.
- Larsen, H. 2006a. Improvisational theatre as a contribution to organisational change: 33: Dacapo Theatre.
- Larsen, H. 2006b. Risk and 'acting' in the unknown. In P. Shaw, & R. Stacey (Eds.), *Experiencing Risk, Spontaneity and Improvisation in Organizational Change. Working live*. New York: Routledge.
- Letiche, H. 2010. Polyphony and its Other. *Organization Studies*, 31(3): 261-277.
- Levine, D. 1988. *The Flight from Ambiguity. Essays in Social and Cultural Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Linstead, S., & Höpfl, H. (Eds.). 2000. *The Aesthetics of Organization*. London: Sage.
- Luhman, N. 1997. *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.
- Lukes, S. 2005. *Power. A Radical View* (2nd ed.). New York Palgrave.
- Luscher, L., & Lewis, M. 2008. Organizational Change and Managerial Sensemaking: Working Through Paradox. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51(2): 221-240.
- Lyotard, J.-F. 1988. *The differend: Phrase in dispute*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Mangham, I. 1990. Managing as a Performing Art. *British Journal of Management*, 1(2): 105-115.

- Mangham, I. 2001. Afterword: Looking for Henry. *Journal of Organisational Change Management*, 14(3): 295-304.
- Mangham, I., & Overington, M. 1983. Dramatism and the Theatrical Metaphor. In G. Morgan (Ed.), *Beyond Method*. London: Sage.
- Mangham, I. L., & Overington, M. A. 1987. *Organizations as Theatre: A Social Psychology of Dramatic Appearances*. Chichester: Wiley.
- March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. 1983. Organizing Political Life: What Administrative Reorganization Tells Us about Government. *American Political Science Review*, 77(2): 281-296.
- Marcuse, H. 1978. *The Aesthetic Dimension. Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*. Boston Beacon Press.
- Marguillies, N., & Raia, A. P. 1972. *Organisational Development: Values, process, and Technology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Marshak, R. J., & Grant, D. 2008. Organisational Discourse and new Organisation Development Practices. *British Journal of Management*, 19: 7-19.
- Martin, J. 2001. *Organizational Culture*. London Sage.
- Martin, J., & Meyerson, D. 1988. Organizational cultures and the denial, channelling, and acknowledgment of ambiguity. In L. Pondy, R. Boland, & H. Thomas (Eds.), *Managing Ambiguity and Change*: 93-125. New York: Wiley.
- Mathiesen, T. 1997. The Viewer Society: Michel Foucault's 'Panopticon' Revisited. *Theoretical Criminology*, 1: 215-233.
- Matula, L., Badham, R., & Meisiek, S. 2011. Becoming polyphonic: Towards a theoretical framework and research methodology for exploring the political dynamics of organizational theatre, *EGOS, Sub-theme/workshop 14: Art, Design, and Organization*. Gothenburg.
- Matula, L. J. 2012. The shape of things to come: In search of a purpose for organizational theatre, *EGOS*. Helsinki: European Group for Organizational Studies.
- McLoughlin, I. P., Badham, R. J., & Palmer, G. 2005. Cultures of ambiguity: design, emergence and ambivalence in the introduction of normative control. *Work Employment Society*, 19: 67-89.
- McLuhan, M. 1967/2001. *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*. Jerome Agel: Quentin Fiore.
- Meisiek, S. 2002a. Situation Drama in Change Management: Types and Effects of a New Managerial Tool. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 4(3): 48-55.
- Meisiek, S. 2002b. Situation drama in change management: Typey and effects of a new managerial tool. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 4: 48-55.
- Meisiek, S. 2004. Which Catharsis Do They Mean? Aristotle, Moreno, Boal and Organizational Theatre. *Organization Studies*, 25(5): 21.
- Meisiek, S. 2007. Dissonances, Awareness and Aesthetization: Theatre in a Home Care Organisation. In P. G. d. Monthoux, C. Gustafsson, & S.-E. Sjöstrand (Eds.),

- Aesthetic Leadership: Managing Fields of Flow in Art and Business*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Meisiek, S., & Barry, D. 2007. Through the Looking Glass of Organizational Theatre: Analogically Mediated Inquiry in Organizations. *Organization Studies*, 24: 1805-1827.
- Meisiek, S., & Barry, D. n.d. Who controls the looking glass? : 1-29.
- Meisiek, S., & Hatch, M. J. 2008. This is Work, This is Play: Artful Interventions and Identity Dynamics. In D. Barry, & H. Hansen (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of new approaches in management and organization*: 412-422. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Merriam, S. B. 1992. *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. . San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merton, R. 1976. *Sociological Ambivalence and other Essays*. New York: Free Press.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. 1977. Institutionalized organization: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2): 340-363.
- Meyerson, D. 1991. Acknowledging and Uncovering Ambiguities in Organizational Cultures. In P. Frost, L. Moore, C. Lundberg, M. Louis, & J. Martin (Eds.), *Reframing Organizational Culture*: 254-270. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Meyerson, D., & Martin, J. 1987. Culture Change: An Integration of Three Different Views. *Journal of Management Studies*, 24: 623-647.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, M. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.
- Milling, J., & Ley, G. 2001. *Modern Theories of Performance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Monks, K., Barker, P., & Mhanchacháin, A. N. 2001. Drama as an opportunity for learning and development. *Journal of Management Development*, 20(5): 414-423.
- Morse, J. M. 2007. Sampling in Grounded Theory. In A. Bryant, & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory*. London: Sage.
- Muecke, D. C. 1982. *Irony and the Ironic*. London: Methuen.
- Nicholson, H. 2005. *Applied Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nissley, N., Taylor, S., & Houden, L. 2004. The Politics of Performance in Organizational Theatre-Based Training and Interventions. *Organization Studies*, 25: 817-840.
- Oliver, R. 2001. *Inspirational Leadership: Henry V and the Muse of Fire*. London: Industrial Society.
- Olson, M. 2010. Document Analysis. In A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*. London: Sage.
- Oswick, C., Keenoy, T., & Grant, D. 2002. Metaphor and Analogical Reasoning in Organization Theory: Beyond Orthodoxy. *Academy of Management Review*, 27(2): 294-303.

- Ouchi, W. A. 1981. *Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge*. London: Avon Books.
- Parker, M. 2002. *Against management: Organisation in the age of managerialism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Parker, M. 2006. Stockholm syndrom. *Management Learning*, 37(1): 39-41.
- Perinbanayagam, R. S. 1991. *Discursive acts*. New York: Aldine.
- Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H. 1982. *In Search of Excellence. Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. 1999. *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre and every Business a Stage*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Poole, M., & Ven, A. V. d. 1989. Using Paradox to Build Management and Organization Theories. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(4): 562-578.
- Poole, M. S., & Van de Ven, A. H. 1990. Methods for studying innovation development in the Minnesota Innovation Research Program. *Organization Science*, 1(3): 313-335.
- Rapley, T. 2011. Some Pragmatics of Data Analysis. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research. Issues of Theory, Method and Practice (3rd Ed.)*: 273-289. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Rhodes, C. 2001. *Writing organizations, (Re)presentation and Control in Narratives at Work*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Rosen, M. 1988. You asked for it: Christmas at the Bosses' expense. *Journal of Management Studies*, 25(5): 463-480.
- Ruping, B. 1993. *Gebraucht das Theater*. Münster: LIT Verlag.
- Schein, E. H. 2001. The Role of Art and the Artist. *Reflections*, 2(4): 81-83.
- Schiuma, G. 2011. *The value of arts for business*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schreyögg, G. 1999. *Unternehmenstheater. Formen, Erfahrungen, erfolgreicher Einsatz*. Wiesbaden: Gabler.
- Schreyögg, G. 2001. Organizational Theatre and organizational change. In G. K. u. G. S. Rudi Bresser (Ed.): 17. Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin.
- Schreyögg, G., & Häpfl, H. 2004. Theatre and Organization: Editorial Introduction. *Organization Studies*, 25: 691-706.
- Schreyögg, G., & Hopfl, H. 2004. Theatre and Organization: Editorial Introduction. *Organization Studies*, 25: 691-704.
- Schultz, M. 1994. *On Studying Organizational Culture: Diagnosis and Understanding (de Gruyter Series In Nonlinear Analysis and Applications)*. Boston: de Gruyter.
- Schutzman, M. 2006. Jok(er)ing - A Joker runs wild. In J. Cohen-Cruz, & M. Schutzman (Eds.), *A Boal Companion. Dialogues on theatre and cultural politics*. London: Routledge.

- Schutzman, M., & Cohen-Cruz, J. (Eds.). 1994. *Playing Boal. Theatre, Therapy, Activism*. London Roudledge.
- Scott, C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Scott, J. 1993. *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, J. 2004. Competing Logics in Health Care: Professional, State, and Managerial. In F. Dobbin (Ed.), *Sociology of the Economy*: 267-287. Russel: Sage.
- Senge, P. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday/Currency.
- Sergiovanni, T. J., & Corbally, J. E. (Eds.). 1986. *Leadership and Organizational Culture: New Perspectives on Administrative Theory and Practice*. Illinois: Illini Books.
- Sewell, G., & Barker, J. 2006. Using Irony to Make Sense of Organizational Surveillance. *Academy of Management Review*, 31(4): 934-961.
- Shargel, R. (Ed.). 2007. *Ingmar Bergman Interviews*. Mississippi: University Press.
- Shotter, J. 1993. *Conversational Realities*. London: Sage.
- Silverman, D. 1993. *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London: Sage.
- Silverman, D. 2007. *A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about qualitative research*. London Sage.
- Silverman, D. 2010. *Doing Qualitative Research (3rd Ed.)*. London: Sage.
- Smith, W. K., & Lewis, M. W. 2011. Toward a Theory of Paradox: A Dynamic equilibrium Model of Organizing. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(2): 381-403.
- Spivak, G. C. 1999. *A critique of postcolonial reason*. Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press.
- Star, S. L., & Griesemer, J. R. 1989. Institutional Ecology. 'Translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. *Social Studies of Science*, 19: 387-420.
- Stark, D. 2009. *The sense of dissonance: Accounts of worth in economic life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Statler, M., Heracleous, L., & Jacobs, C. 2011a. Serious Play as the Practice of Paradox. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 47(2): 236-256.
- Statler, M., Heracleous, L., & Jacobs, C. D. 2011b. Serious Play as Practice of Paradox. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 47: 236-256.
- Strati, A. 1999. *Organization and Aesthetics*. London: Sage.
- Strauss, A. 1978. A Social World Perspective. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, & R. Suddaby (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*: 119-128. London: Sage.

- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. 2007. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. London Sage.
- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. 1990. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Strauss, B. G., & Glaser, A. L. 1965. *Awareness of dying*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Sullivan, P., & McCarthy, J. 2008. Managing the Polyphonic Sounds of Organizational Truths. *Organization Studies*, 29: 525-541.
- Taylor, S. 2008. Theatrical Performance as Unfreezing: Ties That Bind at the Academy of Management. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 17(4): 398-406.
- Taylor, S., & Hansen, H. 2005. Finding Form: Looking at the Field of Organisational Aesthetics. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(6): 1211-1123.
- Taylor, S., & Ladkin, D. 2009. Understanding Arts-Based Methods in Managerial Development. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 8(1): 55-59.
- Thomson, C. 1990. *Mikhail Bakhtin and the Epistemology of discourse*. Critical Studies. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Tsoukas, H., & Chia, R. 2002. On Organizational Becoming: Rethinking Organizational Change. *Organization Science*, 13(5): 567-582.
- Turner, V. 1984. Liminality and performance genres. In J. MacAloon (Ed.), *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Performance*. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- Waldorff, S., & Greenwood, R. 2011. Dynamics of Community Translation: Danish Health-Care Centres. In C. Marguis, M. Lounsbury, & R. Greenwood (Eds.), *Communities and Organizations, Research in the Sociology of Organizations, Vol. 33* Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Weber, M. (Ed.). 1905/1949. *Objective Possibility and Adequate Causation in Historical Explanation*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Weick, K. E. 1979. *The social psychology of organizing. 2nd ed.* New York: Random House.
- Weick, K. E. 1995. *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Wellek, R. 1980. Bakhtin's View of Dostoevsky: "Polyphony" and "Carnavalesque". *Dostoevsky Studies*, 1: 31-39.
- Wertsch, J. V. 1991. *Voices of the mind*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Westwood, R. 2004. Comic Relief: Subversion and Catharsis in Organizational Comedic Theatre. *Organization Studies*, 25 (5): 775-796.
- Westwood, R. I., & Johnston, A. 2012. Reclaiming Authentic Selves: Control, Resistive Humour and Identity Work in the Office. *Organization*, 19(6): 787-808.
- Whitney, J., & Packer, T. 2000. *Power Plays: Shakespeare's Lessons in Leadership and Management*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

- Zanko, M., Badham, R., Couchman, P., & Schubert, M. 2008. Innovation and HRM: Absences and politics. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19(4): 562-581.
- Zerubavel, E. 2007. *The Elephant in the Room. Silence and Denial in Everyday Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.