Crystal Diagnosis: Youth Re/Paring a Story of Addiction as Repair

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It is not I who become addicted, it is my body.
—Jean Cocteau in Opium

Over the last few decades, I have been involved in popular theatre work that seeks to highlight the hiddenness and presuppositions of mainstream institutions, notably education, government, business and the media. In my final year of high school, through the popular theatre director Peter Moore, I was introduced to the works of Augusto Boal (1974, 1992) and Peter Brook (1968). The literature of Grotowski (1968), Brecht (2003), Artaud (1970) and Barba (1979, 1986, 1995) soon followed in my readings. These practitioners and writers have been steady guides ever since. All my performative explorations are rooted within the nexus of bodies with/in space.

Aspects of the work of these practitioners and writers from the 1960s and 1970s played a significant role in my dissertation, where performative inquiry and popular theatre melded. That project involved a group of psychiatric survivors teasing apart and playing with taken-for-granted processes of normalization that stitch their identities into the fabric of the mental health industry. The resulting play that we co-created was entitled “Shaken: Not Disturbed...with a twist!” and performed for the community.[1] As with many popular theatre projects, the ending moments of research and performance included a shift toward social action.

What next?
Lingered in our midst.

Some viewed the play AS social action; others were not so convinced. And so began a new engagement:
What can we do to change the system?

What? We can tell others what to do?

Who are we?

We are we!
I am I.
You are You.

The Fear Becomes…

I am You.
And You are Me.
We are we!

We can make change.

We have the ability.

But what do we do?
Change others.[2]

And so arrived new energy and imaginings of something better. The group of psychiatric survivors who had created the original play turned inward for their source of renewed inspiration. How had each of them become ensnared by, and lost control within, various systems: healthcare, social services, police, family? Much discussion and searching—a performance of inquiry, an inquiry through performance—erupted.

Schizophrenia found me…

I just lost it one night. They found me spending all my money in Victoria as I was coming down off a euphoric high…..

High? High? … Hello High! Yeah drugs. So many drugs back in the day.

Me? Yeah, me too. It was just two [alcohol and pot], but I thought I was safe:

Who knew? No one warned me. ME … I am addicted…no it was my body. I am fine. Me…my body. Have to help other bodies…other” mes.”[3] But how?

Gi(ve)ft warning.
Embody Danger.
Diagnose one’s habitude

Re/Pairing One’s Body with One’s Self

And so began tentative footsteps toward a new inquiry. How could a group of psychiatric survivors speak to and engage with youth to let them know the dangers of drugs?

The other side of drug use and abuse can be often labels of

ILLNESS LESS STIGMA ABNORMAL VICTIM

SURVEILLANCE
The group decided that the best way to figure out where youth were, now, with regard to drugs was to talk to a small number of youth and invite them to join the initial cast in order to perform tales of drug taking and dependency. A group of five, all young women, as it turned out, aged 13-15 joined in. For a month, the group of young women used tape recorders to reflect upon their own histories of drugs and then journeyed into their broader lives to invite their friends to tell their stories, episodes and experiences that inscribed their lives with the legacy of drug taking. Narratives come from young men and women from the ages of 11 to 15. From this rawest of insight, the whole group met several times to listen to the tapes and jot down ideas for turning points in a larger, more prototypical, story that could be eventually staged.

As it turned out, much of what was heard was from a female perspective: girls talking about their first hit of crack, their first toke, their first needle, their sneaking drugs at school, and buying drugs at school (and no one at school the wiser). Even the few boys who were included spoke about friendships that involved drugs, talked about their girlfriends or about female friends and their experimenting with drugs. It seemed that drugs had a significant female appeal.

To help the simmering of ideas morph into something slowly recognizable as a plot, the group suggested that we watch movies. What would teenagers typically watch?

REQUIEM FOR A DREAM
BASKETBALL DIARIES
THIRTEEN
TRAINSPOTTING
BLOW

The group talked about the various drugs depicted in the films and how what was seen related to the lives of the students with whom we had spoken. More ideas were jotted down, more conversation ensued, and then we came to the realization that we needed to start working on our feet, with all these ideas in our heads yearning to be translated into action.

Performing Inquiries

Our research methodology, performative inquiry, explores in co-creative ways the interactions and relationships that occur through the interplay of experience, inquiry, and performance (Fels & Meyer, 1999). The “action-interaction” space of performative inquiry is a collaborative place of learning where “interstanding” (Taylor & Saarinen, 1994) emerges. In an act of etymological play, Fels (1998; 2003) pulls apart the word performance into its constituent bits, i.e. per/for/mance to arrive at what is at the heart of performative inquiry: “simultaneously through form and through the destruction of form, we come to
Within this enactive and interactive environment of performative exploration and reflection, deeper questions arise that encourage the participants and researcher to consider the interplay between the inquiry and phenomenon being explored. Performative inquiry focuses upon complex dynamics at an embodied and relational level in order to deconstruct experiences, relationships, and structures that are important to individuals and communities (what matters?). The emergence of new questions through initial inquiry is about the opening of possibilities (what if?). The inquiry occurs in a “framed space” (my term), a performative space and engagement, that is apart from, but connected to, the lives of the individuals involved. In this space, that may be understood as a ritualized container for learning, there may emerge a sense of empowerment and new understandings and exploration of identity (as occurred with the initial group of co-searchers, as well as with the cast of Crystal Diagnosis). The emergent learning, or what Fels (1998) calls moments of recognition, is critical to the inquiry and the relevance and application (so what?) to real life experience (Fels & Meyer, 1997).

Fels and Meyer (1997) indicate that performative inquiry makes the assumption that knowledge is “embodied in creative action and interaction” (p. 76). This exploration is, at a fundamental level, a physical, material, and relational approach to inquiry and learning that understands knowledge as a verb rather than a noun. There is an assumption in performative inquiry that performing will enable interpretation or understanding of the action carried out in the framed space within a given context and environment of inquiry. In a new group that is not always the case, and for some individuals it may be some time before participants are able to feel a sense of freedom to engage without trying to anticipate or respond to the researcher’s expectations. It takes time for participants to “let go” of the expectations of “being told to perform something” and to come to their own “wanting to” and “needing to” engage in inquiry through performative activities and reflection. This evolving sense of performance from acting to action mirrors the shift from being externally guided to becoming internally and relationally motivated to explore performatively. Curiosity and reflection emerges to explore the unfolding complexity of experience.

Ultimately, our inquiry and play Crystal Diagnosis became focused around the issue of young women and schools. A number of stories were walked through, acted through, adjusted and, to some degree, set. Never was a final script constructed; always, we worked within a framework of improvisation. Keeping the story loosely structured allowed for an aliveness to emerge every time the play was presented. The performance was designed to be a series of sharply focused vignettes, an evolution in the life of youth. In rough terms, here, then, is the structure for the story of Crystal Diagnosis:

\[\text{As the audience walks in, a drug party is already in full swing. Bongs, music, smoke. People laughing. People drinking. People throwing up. People singing. Life is good from a teenaged perspective...on the surface anyway.}\]

\[\text{The lights fade to black. When the general lights come up, the entire cast is back on the stage sitting and facing the audience.}\]

\[\text{Initially, the thought was the cast could just play the action through and then ask questions. However, after a few rehearsals it became clear that more information and dialogue had to be included, so the performance shifted to a stop-action process, whereby during the height of each vignette, a joker would yell “Stop!” Turning to the audience, the joker would then engage the audience directly with what had just occurred with the action.}\]

\[\text{What is wrong with this picture? How can this be changed?}\]

\[\text{Has something similar to this happened to you? What is your role in helping?}\]
Performing Re/Pare to Repair…

All the while, the effort of our engagement with the youth in our cast and eventually, our audience (i.e. spectators[4]) was to re-pare, to dig deep and peel away surface layers of experience to understand the complexity of meaning within inter/actions. The cast was comprised of individuals who explained that they experienced feelings of alienation and exclusion because of their social and economic backgrounds, their interests (which often fell outside mainstream teen pre-occupations), and teachers/school personnel who had not been able or interested in reaching these students. As a result, youth included in the cast had been involved with drugs or were at risk for using because of their marginalized social networks and/or a sense of not belonging within their school environment.

Pulling apart the narratives of these youth allowed the cast of “co-searchers” to repair their lives—to construct meaning from their experiences of exclusion after being “pushed out” of school and the resulting consequences. Typically, school literature describes early school leaving as “dropping out”; however, the youth in the project described school as a space where they were “told” they did not belong and, further, in subtle ways, that they should leave school. The shift in construction from students “dropping out” to being “pushed out” refocuses investigation of school leaving from the perception of students’ unwillingness to engage to consideration of the power and relational dynamics of their leaving squarely within their school.

Through the process of about seven months, meeting weekly, the cast slowly came to understand one another, the issues and stories that were raised among themselves and the people they talked to in their own social networks. The narratives were the “paring” down of lives to better understand the meanings behind what drug use, abuse and addiction meant for the youths involved.

This work, given the topic of our inquiry, however, was also an ethical minefield. Some at risk youth were not using, but we were about to “teach” them the most realistic way to “use drugs” for dramatic purposes. Parents were spoken to in order to allay fears and to bring a circle of support together for the youths as they explored the topic of drug use. Throughout the work, it was the youths, themselves, who argued that they could not be seen to be “playing at” drug use; we had to be believable in what was depicted on stage or the younger audiences would dismiss the play and its messages. Participants insisted that drug-taking had to be as close to real as possible, swearing and youth references had to be included and the disrespect for adult authority had to be evident. Without these pieces, young audiences, particularly those who were on the margins of friendship and peer networks within their school, would simply see the piece as irrelevant and not accurate. In short, the play had to be a gritty and a “street” depiction in order to grab the attention of some pretty hardened youths within various rural communities.

A balance had to be struck between alienating those youth who may see the performance as not relevant to them because of a perceived socio-economic distance between themselves and the performers versus engaging those youth who are more “street wise” and marginalized. However, many of the youth spoken to during the inquiry and who were at risk were also from middle classed and upper socio-economic classed backgrounds. Drugs know no social boundary. Teenaged girls’ continued dissatisfaction with body image and increased dieting leads to increasing smoking and taking of drugs to help with weight loss (Jones, Bennett, Olmsted, Lawson & Rodin, 2001). By “universalizing” the story through examining collective stories of girls between the ages of 11 and 14, the play placed the focus on a group not typically thought to be engaged in drugs.

The co-searchers are painting their
interpretations of scenes from the play on six foot canvases. These images were used to surround the audience, closing in the space to make the whole performance more intimate, while reminding spectators of the overall storyline. A blank canvas was hung to leave the ending of the play (hinting that outcomes can be changed) symbolically a question mark for the audience to solve—or repair through dialogue and action.

A former drug dealer was brought in to show the cast how drug deals go down around schools, how drug-taking occurs and to educate the co-searchers about drugs’ attractiveness—and dangers. The youth in the cast said that working with the adults in the cast—a number of whom had wound up in the mental health system because of drugs—provided them with a much deeper insight into drug use that schools simply did not offer. And, as we continued in our inquiry, awareness about the dangers of drug abuse from the information and narratives provided by various sources became a greater deterrent for these participants to stay away from drugs, and pushed the whole group deeper into its commitment to perform the stories of the fictitious group of girls within the play.

A rehearsal of the opening party/drug scene that the audience, as they arrive, witness. There is music, a variety of drug paraphernalia, liquor bottles, bags of “drugs” etc. scattered about the stage. Audience members are invited to take part in the opening drug scene, to illustrate how easy and attractive it can be for youth to become ensnared.

Interstandings Emerging From the Process of Re/pare

As a group and through working together, exploring the dynamics of youth and drug use, abuse and addiction, several things were co-creatively revealed. Because the youths in the play were all young women, a female narrative took centre stage. Typically, drug taking can be seen as appealing from a number of perspectives: the nature of taboo and the transgressive nature that the activity evokes; what goes on falls outside of adult surveillance; there’s a misperception that taking drugs together is a collective experience and, therefore, can be seen as a way to connect and, ultimately belong to a group of peers around a central activity; and because of the music and laughter, there’s a sense of fun and being carefree. For many youth who engage in drugs, the substances can kill a variety of psychical pain that comes from alienation, abuses, bullying, isolation, loneliness and exclusion.

As illustrated in our play, even if a child or teenager belongs to a group, he or she may feel disconnected and turn to drugs in order to solve his or her problems.

One of the teens “Julie” wants to lose weight because her boyfriend is threatening to dump her. She stumbles upon a drug dealer in close proximity to the school property. It’s the connection of desperation and the seductiveness of an easy “fix” that propels the story forward—and uncovers how youth easily get mixed up in drug taking. The drug dealer “gives” a “free” sample of a drug, in this case crystal meth,
to a young woman of 13 desperate to keep her boyfriend. The quick “fix” is the selling point of crystal meth being a strong diet suppressant (diet pills in the 1970s had a weakened formula of “speed” for this purpose). For the unsuspecting girl, the weight reduction starts to work—but so does the beginning of addiction.

The intriguing aspect that emerged through our inquiry and became reflected in our play was how drug use shifts from one vulnerable young woman and implicates an entire girl friendship network at school. Through the “loss leader” of a few small free samples and the high addiction rates of crystal meth, the lone teenager brings “freebies” into the network, becoming a “sales agent” for the faceless “pusher man” within the play.

The director, and author, demonstrates to the cast how to use a small bong during a rehearsal. An ethical dilemma was whether to show how to use drug paraphernalia to youth who were themselves potential high risk users—and how much to show—in an effort to maintain a high level of realism for the actors and audience.

Eventually, all the friends in the network are using and abusing drugs—these substances being readily available on school property. A short movement piece is performed that demonstrates how drugs move about the school without any adult catching on. Further, the girls in the play shift from who they used to hang out with to those with the greatest access to drugs. The teens spiral deeper into crystal meth until one of the group, “Julie” grows violent and paranoid in a tweaking rage that results in her collapsing and needing medical help to stay alive.

From this point of the performance, focus shifts to the role of the medical profession and of drug rehab within the lives of drug users—and the potential re-triggering of drug taking through finding one’s self in the company of former drug using peers. In the play two former drug friends meet in rehab and go to a drug party “for old time’s sake” where one—“Julie” dies from an overdose of taking something tainted.

The play concludes with “Julie’s” funeral where a number of people in her life speak about Julie and what she meant to them while she was alive. Some of the people who embodied the rippling effect of “Julie’s” passing included her teachers and neighbours who shared stories of “Julie” growing up, while others who spoke to the effects of the void of “Julie’s” death were estranged friends (individuals rejected by “Julie” along the way in her downward spiral after she had become fully involved in drugs). All shared stories with the audience to convey the meaning of “Julie’s” life—the scene was a poignant reminder to youth in the audience that their lives matter to a great many people.

The play is a reminder that no matter how negative and depressing, there are always people who one can reach out to for help because who they are matters. As part of the performance and debriefing, community resources for drug rehab, counseling and family services are provided to audience members.
A pivotal moment in the play was when “Julie,” one of the girls in a teen friendship network becomes an unwitting addict and victim of her friend’s introduction of crystal meth among her friends. The result and devastating consequence is that “Julie” goes into the highly violent “tweaking” that marks heavy crystal meth use—and the often equally violent and dangerous detox that follows. A doctor figure lectures directly to the audience to highlight how crystal meth works and destroys the body—and how the slightest trigger can set off an addict, which, in this story occurs. With deadly consequences.

Moments of recognition: Learning that happens through performative inquiry

Performing our play Crystal Diagnosis across Vancouver Island over a period of several months put the cast in front of a diverse array of people. The group presented the play in front of youth at risk, alternate high schools, a prestigious private school, community members and school personnel. Audience reactions were as diverse as the people who attended. The most memorable response was from a senior school official who, unbeknownst to the cast, had come to watch a performance with the idea of having the play allowed into the middle and high schools in the area. During the debriefing that followed our performance, the following interchange occurred:

School Official: I have one question. Why is it necessary to have so much swearing in your play? With this language we can’t have you present this in any public school.

Youth (member of the cast): Steve, I’d like to answer that.

Facilitator: Go ahead.

Youth: (13 year old stands up) Because this is who we are. This is our language. This is our culture. If we want reach youth we have to reach them on their level, not yours. If you’re busy being polite and not “real” with kids, they’re going to ignore it. It’s more about adults trying to appear to do the right thing—but not getting it “real” and “hard” and “tough.” We spent a lot of time not only on language, but on getting all the actions down—I mean so that what we did was what youth can and will relate to. Without that, kids won’t come.

School Official: That’s all well and
School Official: That’s all well and good; however, schools have policies and swearing is not acceptable. So, unless you change the language and what you say, you will not be allowed in schools.

Youth: We’re about saving lives. This play will reach the youth. Your politeness will not. You’re about taking away from youth. By doing that you’re blocking an opportunity to reach someone who may be getting into drugs in your school. That’s on you. There are other ways we can reach youth. What you’re doing will not. And schools are one of the most unsafe places for kids and drugs. That’s on you.

To witness this 13 year old young woman stand up to face down a school authority so publicly illustrated the ownership the cast had with regard to the work these young people were doing. This meant something to the group... deeply.

Reporter: After having gone through the process with Steve and what you all learned, do you think this has a place in schools?

“Julie”: This is what school should be! We get to name and understand our world our way. Steve just facilitated; we took control of asking the questions, getting the stories and making of sense of what we uncovered. Knowledge wasn’t forced; we made it altogether as one group. Everyone helped. We even had community members join in with information we needed—and what we’re doing is always changing as we learn more through performing.

When this exchange occurred, I had thought of how reminiscent this interchange was of Ivan Illich’s (1971) writings about de-schooling society through conviviality or Freire’s (1970) ideas of “learning circles.” A group of individuals came together to research, interstand, construct and articulate their worlds in a way that was rendered most meaningful to them. Schools, as personified by this one individual school official, more typically, impose worldviews and ideas that they think youth should know and how they should be engaged. Much more prescriptive. Much more disempowering.

Throughout the play, there was Sammy “Siren,” a local singer-songwriter performing his life narrative to his own unique music styling. In between scenes, Sammy would play and sing about his story of becoming deeply involved in drugs, the consequences and how this behaviour affected his brain to the point of having to access the mental health community for assistance. His song is a warning narrative put to music. Interestingly, his story mirrors in significant ways the unfolding narrative of the play: haunting
At another performance, a couple of extraordinary audience responses occurred that illustrate the power of connection through theatre. The group had stopped to perform at a small seaside town on Vancouver Island. We had been told that there was significant issue with crystal meth locally. In fact, a crystal meth lab had been operating right beside the venue where we performed until two days prior to our performance. The cast arrived to set everything up and do a quick run-through. Two male youths hung around watching us from a distance.

During the performance, the two boys had arranged to sit on the floor right in front of the stage. From their vantage point, the youths began to heckle the actors during their performance as well as the “joker” (which I played) who facilitated discussion between the audience and the cast as the narrative unfolded. The boys wanted to be the counterpoint to what the cast was portraying—the resistance pushing back against the narrative.

During a break in the action, I talked about the effects of crystal meth with the audience. These two boys interrupted, claiming that crystal meth was harmless, that people were not using it properly.

> You have to use it properly.
> It’s not addictive at all.

> These two young men and I began a conversation – a “play within a play” of sorts.”

> You use those pictures to scare people.
> Only if you don’t know how to use ice.
> No, it’s not. No more than marijuana.
> Ah, come on… it is not.
> Yeah, right! You’re just scaring people.

> It’s a scary substance.
> Using it once is addictive.
> And marijuana is addictive.
> See Sammy over there? He was addicted to alcohol and marijuana.
> We’re trying to save people.

As the play resumed, their heckling continued though not quite as stridently as before, they seemed a little less certain. Then the death scene of “Julie” occurred and the two boys became quiet. During this scene, we asked if anyone wanted to say a few words about “Julie.” One of the boys stood up to say something about a friend of his who had died and how he missed her. Something had shifted in this young man. During “Julie’s funeral,” he and I started to converse together. He decided during our conversation that maybe he should look at going into rehab again. Several members moved closer to the two boys in the audience, just to listen. After the play we spoke to many audience members who had been moved by the play and also by how the actors had included the two boys in the front row.

As with every performance, there were drug counselors on hand. At the community centre where we were performing, the agency who had sponsored us was a drug awareness group.
I heard after a couple of months that the two hecklers had met with drug counselors and were in rehab—they had started their own journeys of repair. I sent a card to both of them telling them that with no judgment I engaged with them in the play. I was proud of their decisions to seek help and wished them well on their journeys of healing.

At that same performance, after the show, while packing up, I ran into a young First Nations woman. She was in tears. She pulled me aside to tell me some of her story. She had been addicted to crystal meth since she was 12. Her story is as similar to what happened in the play. She was at a party and was slipped some crystal meth. The spiral down had been quick. By 15 she was pregnant. She found the strength to get off the drug while pregnant but had been tempted many times after the birth of her little girl to go back on the drug again. She stayed clean for her child. At 17, she’s now been clean for about two years. The play she witnessed reminded her of her struggles—even the rape depicted in the play had reminded her of her pregnancy—and the challenge of isolation and staying clean.

Recently, this young woman had started to consider returning to drugs to kill some of the pain she was feeling. But watching the play had reminded her of why it was important to keep going without drugs. She wanted to tell us to keep going. Kids needed to hear this story and talk to the cast—and with each other, she continued. Youth are struggling more and more with drugs, especially with crystal meth. Her story is a poignant reminder and illustration of how performance can reveal and awaken the difficult truths of narratives that so often remain hidden and unsaid. As we continued on our travels we came across similar stories:

- **My children were approached by a drug dealer at their school. My children are 8 and 10 years old. They're here tonight to watch your play. They need to see this play. What this play does is open the dialogue between parents and their kids. This is what parents need to be bringing their kids to watch this together. And keep talking afterwards.**

- **My buddy and I came to see this play, expecting to laugh at it. You see, we both were heavy users of meth until 6 months ago. What this group did was show very clearly what meth is about. I felt a little triggering going on as they were huffing on bongs and it brought back the great times and then all the tweaking. Shit, that was real. I lost myself in it.**

- **Look, why do the actors have to swear? We get that it’s about teenagers. Do all teenagers swear? The story would be stronger without the cussing. The language distances adults from the action.** (spoken by the grandparent of one of the actors).

- **The RCMP are really interested in this play. We’d love for you to join the drug awareness campaign going on right now.**

And so the reactions continued. Some positive; others less so. Buried within the responses was a collective interest in wanting to “talk to youth.” The issue revolved around what is the best way to do this work so youth are engaged?

**Closing Reflections**
The performative inquiry undertaken within the project of *Crystal Diagnosis* was an interesting one; the youth were the ones in the lead of the content and much of the inquiry. They knew who to approach, what mattered, engaged in the “what if” of the exploration, and were willing to play with connections and meanings to create deeper interstandings among individuals.

As the youth have told others, this experience of shared inquiry and narratives is what school can be. Learning embraces moments of new awareness and of healing through new insights and understanding. As an educator, this process of inquiry and performance may be disorienting for those who believe that teachers must always be in control of the content and delivery of curriculum. Much of the time, particularly as the group developed the performance, I found that I was most effective being a follower—someone who was more “passive” than most teachers are in conventional educational contexts.

The cultural circle of embodied discussion around central issues directly relevant to participating youth is most instructive in this project. In this time of erosion of arts funding within schools, this theatre-based work illustrates that the arts are significant for youth development beyond the content and process explored. For teachers, performative inquiry can be engaging, placing the educator in simultaneous student and teaching roles—just as is the case for the students. This work requires a deep receptivity and vulnerability while playing as a group, regardless of one’s background. This means of engagement is challenging, yet more rewarding than more typical exercises that are relied upon in classrooms.

It’s this commitment to performatively exploring dynamics of equity that I, now, incorporate within my teacher education classroom when co-creatively and collectively investigating social justice, global education and equity in education courses. Students have remarked that these classes are among the most engaging and affirming within their teacher education experience. As an educator, I find that the work has to continue to evolve; as new insights emerge through collective classroom work involving new issues of equity, new questions become posed that future classes are invited to explore. Each year, as one class closes, the group of students writes letters to next year’s class inviting them to keep the search alive.

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[2] Italics are extracts from the play and/or text fragments of conversation during our discussions that fueled our performative inquiry on youth and drugs.

[3] “Have to help other bodies” relates to physical beingness whereas “other mes” relates to others' senses of "me" or others' senses of themselves. The idea is to get at how others experience their sense of self but creating a more intimate, first person notion—me.

[4] See Boal (1995) for his use of the term “spectactors” in which audience members (i.e., spectators) also participate in the playing and (re)playing of scenes on stage.

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**References**


**About the Author**

**Steven Noble**, Ph.D., is an educator and community animateur in Ottawa, Ontario. Steven has been involved in popular theatre since 1974, while working with the cast of Theatre Passe Muraille’s *The Farm Show*. He carried out extensive popular theatre and performative inquiry work on Vancouver Island and in Vancouver before moving east. Steven is interested in exploring his concept of non-visible identities (What an observer reads on the
surface of another’s body as being the core of that person, without recognizing the complexity within that person, i.e., bi-raciality, sexuality, non-visible impairment.) and for performativity to foster interstanding of knowable, empowered identity. He is currently a Replacement Professor within the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa teaching in the areas of Social Justice, Equity and Global Education.

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