Bridging the Cultural Divide:

Intercultural New Play Dramaturgy in Toronto

by

Elise LaCroix

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the role of the dramaturg in intercultural dramaturgy relationships, with a specific focus on dramaturgs practicing, or with experience practicing, in the multicultural city of Toronto. Through analysis of interviews I conducted with six dramaturgs in the summer of 2017, I investigate the dramaturg as space-maker in Toronto's theatre community, drawing on Ric Knowles' extensive analysis of the intercultural performance ecology of the city. I interrogate commonly held assumptions about the invisibility and expertise of the dramaturg, applying Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert's model for interculturalism, as well as Donna Haraway's articulation of situated knowledges, to understand the mutually transformative dynamics and the processes of forging trust in dramaturgy relationships. Further, I examine the various relationships the dramaturg has to their own identity, drawing on previous investigation of the dramaturg working in intercultural contexts by Mayte Gómez, and recent research into Indigenous dramaturgies by Lindsay Lachance, and argue for the importance of self-reflexivity and articulation by the dramaturg to create productive intercultural dramaturgy relationships.

PREFACE

This thesis is an original, unpublished, intellectual product of the author, Elise LaCroix. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Intercultural New Play Development: The Role of the Dramaturge," No. Pro00071735, May 26, 2017.

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DEDICATION

To my parents Lynne and Lionel LaCroix whose belief in learning gave me the drive to pursue my own research, and to my sister Céleste LaCroix whose belief in me gave me the courage.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those I interviewed in Toronto, Marjorie Chan, Mel Hague, Matt McGeachy, Yvette Nolan, Brian Quirt, and Judith Rudakoff, whose generosity and insight has nourished my research, and continues to inspire my passion for the important work of the dramaturg. I would like to further acknowledge Judith Rudakoff for sparking my love of new play development, as well as for her continuous support of my work as a mentor and friend. I would like to thank the faculty of the U of A Department of Drama for their ongoing support throughout my graduate studies, specifically my incredible supervisor Stefano Muneroni for his guidance, as well as his belief in the strength of my voice as an emerging academic. I would also like to thank Selena Couture and Dana Tanner-Kennedy for expanding my understanding of what is possible in research and creative practice. Thank you to my friends and family who listened day and night as I processed my ideas, and finally thank you to Alyssa Bartlett who has been there with me through it all.

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INTRODUCTION

I am writing this thesis as a middle class queer Canadian woman, or more accurately a white settler "in the land that is now called Canada" (Knowles, "Introduction" v). I grew up partly in Vancouver, BC, and partly in the sprawling suburbia west of Toronto. I speak English and the French one learns in Ontario public schools. I did my undergraduate education in the theatre department at Toronto's York University, and it was during my time there that I was introduced to theatre beyond Shakespeare and large scale musicals. In Toronto I found new work by living breathing Canadian artists. I encountered a richness and diversity in theatrical form and content I had never before imagined, and became nothing short of obsessed with the development of new Canadian work. From Toronto, after completing my undergraduate degree, I left to Edmonton to the University of Alberta to begin my graduate studies. I would like to respectfully acknowledge that the U of A where I have spent the past two years researching and writing this thesis is situated on Treaty 6 Territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis peoples. This is the position from which I write.

During my time as an undergraduate student I took a series of courses with Judith Rudakoff, and was introduced to development dramaturgy. Over two years I worked as a dramaturg with fellow student playwrights through the development processes of their plays. Since then I have worked with several emerging playwrights in Toronto outside of school, as well as at the U of A. It is safe to say that dramaturgy is something about which I am incredibly passionate. I seek opportunities to work in this role whenever I can, all the while trying to understand the complexities of the process more deeply. Since I first encountered the role, I have wondered how my own personal voice and

positionality influences my dramaturgy relationships with creators, and have looked to professional dramaturgs wondering how they navigate their own identities, biases, and preferences, in their ongoing practice.

Briefly, a dramaturg, (specifically a development dramaturg), works with a playwright through the development process of a new creative work, asking questions, providing critical feedback, and generally supporting the artist in various ways throughout the creation process. The development dramaturg is a collaborator and a facilitator, but not a creator themselves. The role is similar to an editor working with a novelist, a coach with an athlete, or, as I have discovered recently, a thesis supervisor with a graduate student. In English-Canadian theatre developing and producing new work has been a central focus for many companies for the past few decades, with the ongoing effort across the country to create work that is distinct from the cultural output of our American neighbours. What this has meant in Canada, as Brian Quirt details in his chapter in the *Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, is that "the majority of English-Canadian dramaturgs specialize in collaborating with living playwrights" (Quirt, "Contemporary" 26). Production dramaturgy, a form of research heavy dramaturgy that focuses on working with directors and others on the creative team of already extant work, certainly happens here in Canada, however, it is not an integral part of the established theatre ecology that it is in the United States and many countries in Europe.

Dramaturgy in Canada has come a long way from when it first appeared in the theatre scene in the 1970s and '80s. Twenty three years ago in 1994, an MA thesis was completed at the University of Alberta by Deborah Tihanyi titled "New Play Development in English Canada. 1970-1990: Defining the Dramaturgical Role." Besides

an attempt at definition, the thesis seems to be a defence of the role of the dramaturg in Canadian theatre in response to a history of misunderstanding. Tihanyi talks about the contested position of the dramaturg in Canada, specifically pointing in her introduction to Sky Gilbert's 1988 article against "stupid dramaturgy," which he begins with the statement: "It is redundant to categorize dramaturgs in Canada as stupid or smart, for most are inherently stupid" (Gilbert 8). Today dramaturgs in Canada are no longer fighting in the same way for recognition and respect. There are dramaturgs found at many theatre institutions nation-wide, and Brian Quirt, as he mentions in the above mentioned article in the *Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, is even seeing dramaturgs listed in the programs of high school theatre productions he adjudicates in Ontario (25). Since its founding in 1997, LMDA Canada, the Canadian chapter of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America service organization, has hosted several mini conferences and international conferences on dramaturgy. As well, in 2008 Bruce Barton published the first collection of essays on dramaturgy in English-speaking Canada, *Developing Nation: New Play Creation in English-Speaking Canada*, that included writings from Canadian theatre practitioners from 1987-2007. The attempts at defining the role of the Canadian dramaturg had shifted between 1994 when Tihanyi finished her MA thesis to the time of the 2008 publication of Barton's collection. In the introduction to her contribution to this collection, Yvette Nolan states that "At least we're not still trying to define *what is dramaturgy*" (Nolan 187). Barton notes that while this is "to some degree, accurate," it is not "the result of there being a clear or commonly held definition" of the dramaturg in English-speaking Canada (Barton v). Different dramaturgical practices and forms are constantly being developed, as is evident from the discussion of various culturally

specific dramaturgies in Ric Knowles' recent publication, *Performing the Intercultural City*, and in Lindsay Lachance's doctoral dissertation on Indigenous dramaturgies defended in February 2018. As such, in this thesis I am not going to attempt to forge a definition of the dramaturg's role. The very form of my research as a collection of interviews creates the impossibility of a singular and encapsulating definition, but rather I will investigate the multiple complexities of the role as it is practiced by various artists.

This past summer through June and July 2017 I had the privilege of interviewing six practicing new work dramaturgs in Toronto. I spoke with Judith Rudakoff in her home on June 19th, a Canadian born dramaturg and academic who currently works as a professor teaching playwriting, dramaturgy, and contemporary Canadian theatre in York University's theatre department. I met Yvette Nolan (Algonquin/Irish), playwright, director, and dramaturg, and former Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts (NEPA), in a coffee shop near the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Opera Centre where she was rehearsing *Bearing* for the Luminato Festival, (for which she served as co-director with Plains Cree choreographer and educator Michael Greyeyes). Marjorie Chan, a Canadian born "first generation Chinese playwright," director, librettist, dramaturg, and current Artistic Director of Cahoots Theatre Company (Chan, personal), I interviewed on July 6th in a coffee shop on Queen Street West. On July 17th I sat down with American dramaturg Matt McGeachy in his office at Factory Theatre, where he serves as Company Dramaturg. A week later on July 25th I spoke with Mel Hague, Toronto based dramaturg of Jamaican-Canadian heritage, the Artist Development Coordinator and Company Dramaturg at Obsidian Theatre, Company Dramaturge at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, and Rhubarb Festival Director, in the Obsidian Theatre Company office space. And

finally, on July 27th in the Nightswimming Theatre office in Toronto's Distillery District, I spoke with Canadian Artistic Director, dramaturg, playwright, director, as well as Director of Banff Playwrights' Colony, Brian Quirt.

The questions I asked in these interviews were fuelled by my own deeply rooted curiosity about how theatre professionals navigate and negotiate across cultural difference when in a dramaturgical role. I began to question this when I was making my first attempts at development dramaturgy during my undergraduate degree. I wondered how my own cultural filters, biases, and preferences affected the questions and feedback I was giving playwrights. Sitting across from my good playwright friend Bessie Cheng who was writing the first drafts of her play *Dirt* about two boys in the education system in her home town of Ürümqi, China, I wondered how her process was being affected with me as cultural outsider being her dramaturg? Following my work with Bessie, during the summer before I began graduate studies I worked with Sadie Epstein-Fine co-directing *Eraser* for the 2017 Toronto Fringe Festival. The show heavily explored queer themes, and Epstein-Fine commented one evening on how I, as a straight girl, was collaborating with her on a piece that dealt so directly with the queer experience. I took that moment to reveal to her that in fact, I am not straight. I cannot describe exactly how, but I felt the dynamic between Epstein-Fine and myself shift when I shared that information with her. I wondered later how the collaborative relationship between us would have been different if she had known about this element of my identity from the beginning? If I had been framed as insider to the experience that was being explored through the devising process? During these experiences I was looking at the professional dramaturgs working in Toronto. I was looking at Matt McGeachy wondering how he, as a white straight

cisgendered American man, was negotiating his role as dramaturg working at Factory Theatre with its mandated Canadian and intercultural focus, and at my own dramaturgy teacher and mentor Judith Rudakoff working with the diverse students at York University. How were they negotiating their own cultural biases and perspectives? It is a commonly held belief that being prescriptive in the role of dramaturg, directing the work to fulfill one's own preferences, instead of trying to facilitate the particular voice of the artist, is something to be avoided. Yet when difference is involved, the possibility of imbalanced power dynamics and the risk of being inadvertently prescriptive inevitably follow. If, as it is commonly asserted, the dramaturg is meant to be invisible in the work, what are dramaturgs *doing* to mitigate the influence of their own cultural filters and biases that they bring into the development process when they are cultural outsider?

While there has been much research and academic writing on the topic of interculturalism in theatre and performance, the work focusing specifically on the role of the dramaturg in intercultural new work relationships is comparatively limited. As part of my research I looked at Judith Rudakoff's contributions to this topic, the most substantial of which is her book *Dramaturging Personal Narratives: Who am I and Where is Here?* that details Rudakoff's practice generating and fostering artistic work through exploration of personal narratives using her transcultural tools and methods with youth and community groups across three continents. In *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy* edited by Magda Romanska, one article addresses intercultural dramaturgy specifically, Walter Byongsok Chon's "Intercultural dramaturgy: dramaturg as cultural liaison," which details Chon's involvement as a production dramaturg in Danai Gurira's *Eclipsed* at the Yale Repertory Theatre in 2009. As well, of direct interest to my own research, is an

article published in the collection *'Ethnic,' Multicultural, and Intercultural Theatre* by Mayte Gómez that investigates the role of the dramaturg in the intercultural new works festival Lift Off! in 1993 hosted by Cahoots Theatre Projects, which I will discuss in detail in chapter three. I hope in this thesis to add to this growing field of inquiry with my own investigation into the role of the development dramaturg working with artists across cultural difference in Toronto's theatre community.

Ric Knowles has extensively critically examined the intercultural performance that is being produced in Toronto. He conceptualizes Toronto as a "complex intercultural performance ecology," a theatre landscape in which "new cultural identities are created performatively through cultural interaction and negotiation" (Knowles, "Multicultural" 74). Most recently in the fall of 2017 he published a book that was the result of over a decade of his work on this topic titled: *Performing the Intercultural City*. In the introduction to this book and his other writings Knowles notes that in its promotional material Toronto claims both "to be the world's most multicultural city, and to be the third most active theatre centre in the English-speaking world" (Knowles, "Multicultural" 73). It was in relationship to these claims and Knowles' writings that I chose Toronto as my case study for an interculturally focused investigation of the dramaturgical role.

Each of the six interviews I conducted was around one hour long. I composed a few central questions to ask everyone I spoke with, along with several questions that were specific to the practice of each individual. To everyone I asked how they conceptualize what it is that they do in their role, if they have had the experience of working as a dramaturg as cultural outsider, and how they work to negotiate the influence of their own cultural filters and biases when working in situations across cultural

difference. Beyond the scripted questions, I allowed the conversation to flow at times towards what each person wanted to talk about and share. As part of my interviewing method I scripted the core questions so the wording would remain consistent, and even went as far as wearing the exact same outfit to each interview to ensure that the way I presented myself remained constant. I recorded the audio of the interviews on a digital recorder placed between myself and the person with which I was speaking. After I finished conducting the interviews, I transcribed and edited them for flow and coherence in the written form. I then sent each transcript to those I interviewed, and invited them to cut, add, or change anything at their own discretion. I am only using the final edited and approved version of the interview transcripts in this thesis, and in any further research and writing I do using this material.

What follows draws on my analysis of these interviews. Chapter one examines the space-making role of the dramaturg in the network of Toronto's performance landscape, locating the dramaturg in what Knowles calls Toronto's "intercultural performance ecology" through the lens of the various theoretical and metaphorical frames that Knowles uses in his own analysis of the performance in the city. Chapter two interrogates commonly held assumptions about the role of the dramaturg as both invisible and expert. Across writings on dramaturgy from around the world there is the belief that "good dramaturgy is invisible" (Schirmer in Schirmer et al.). And Michael Chemers in his book *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy* discusses the role of the dramaturg using the word "expert," a conceptualization that is echoed throughout writings by various dramaturgs in *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*. In this chapter I challenge these assumptions, investigating the role of the dramaturg's cultural

knowledge as well as the vulnerable positionality of the dramaturg that can be seen as the foundation for the trust at the core of productive intercultural dramaturgical relationships. In chapter three I continue to interrogate the invisibility of the dramaturg through an examination of the various relationships to, and articulations of, the dramaturg's own identity within development relationships across cultural difference. I argue instead of and contrary to the invisible dramaturgy narrative, for a self-reflexivity on the part of the dramaturg that is clearly articulated to the artist(s) as a method for preventing the assertion of dominant, (western, colonial, English), forms and ways of knowing within the development processes that surround new play creation.

As I mention earlier, this thesis is not an attempt at forging definition. Nor does it attempt to answer *definitively* the question that initiated this research, about what dramaturgs do to negotiate the influence of their own cultural biases and filters on work to which they are cultural outsider. To every question that I posed to those I interviewed, I received six different answers. Each shared personal stories, experiences, and perspectives that have led them to their own unique methods and practices for working across difference. My analysis of what was shared with me is inevitably coloured by my own biases and lenses, cultural and otherwise. What follows is an investigation that attempts not to define, but to understand more deeply, the complexities of the intercultural relationships in which the stories we see on our stages are created and developed.

Chapter 1 - Dramaturg as Space-Maker: Positioning the Dramaturg in Toronto's Intercultural Performance Ecology

There is no shortage of writings that explore Toronto's theatre landscape, nor of publications about intercultural theatre and performance in the land that is now called Canada. Various articles have been published that investigate specifically the intercultural work of particular companies within Toronto, from Guillermo Verdecchia's writing about Cahoots Theatre Projects ("Seven Things About Cahoots Theatre Projects," 2003), to Helene Voster's "Cultivating a Cross-border, Extra-theatrical Assemblage in Resistance to Femicide in the Americas," 2015 that investigates the ROUTES/RUTAS panamericanas international multiarts festival on human rights, produced in partnership between Aluna Theatre and Native Earth Performing Arts (NEPA). As well, specifically relevant to my own work, Mayte Gómez' article '"Coming Together' in Lift Off! '93: Intercultural Theatre in Toronto and Canadian Multiculturalism" examines the role of the dramaturg when working with artists in the 1993 Lift Off! Festival hosted by the interculturally mandated Cahoots Theatre Company in Toronto. Among these, no other scholar has done more work researching the intercultural theatre landscape of Toronto than Ric Knowles. He has written extensively on the topic, and just this past year in the fall of 2017 published his book *Performing the Intercultural City* that details his over ten years of participation in, and investigation of, Toronto's theatre ecology. Knowles describes what has emerged in Toronto over the past two decades as "a vibrant, interdependent ecology of intercultural performance that crosses cultures and disciplines, challenges the hegemony of whiteness on the city's stages, and reflects the cultural differences that are visible and audible on the city's streets and streetcars"

("Multicultural" 74). Across his writings, Knowles points to what makes Toronto a strong case study for investigating intercultural performance, as well as describing the state structures that surround the city's theatre landscape, factors I took into account myself when choosing Toronto as my case study for examining intercultural dramaturgy relationships. Toronto claims to be the most multicultural city, as well as the third most active theatre centre in the English-speaking world (Knowles, "Performing Intercultural Memory" 167). The city is possibly home to the highest number of immigrant cultures of any city, and a significant mixed urban Indigenous population. As well, Toronto is the largest city in Canada, the first country in the world to implement an official federal policy of multiculturalism. The purpose of this policy, introduced in 1971 under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, was to "preserve" the "cultural heritage" of those with diverse backgrounds, and to "advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada" (Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada qtd. in Knowles, "Multiculturalism" 76). This policy has been heavily criticized for the problematic ways in which it frames and attempts to contain the cultural "other" in relationship to the dominant French and English cultural groups. It is also important to note that "the 1971 policy does not mention First Nations peoples, and the 1988 [Canadian Multiculturalism] Act specifically excludes them" (Kamboureli qtd. in Knowles, "Multiculturalism" 77).

This policy with all its problems has had very real implications for those in the arts community in Toronto, and elsewhere in Canada, in terms of access to resources. Through the 1970s and 1980s there existed a binary funding system. Arts funding was provided through the Canada Council for the Arts to those from the dominant (white)

culture, and funding for those from "ethnic" groups was through multicultural grants that focused on supporting the preservation of cultural heritage, as Knowles states, "multiculturalism as performed through arts funding practices kept othered cultures in their static, nostalgic, and dehistoricized ethnic place, allowing dominant cultural expression to flourish" ("Multiculturalism" 78). In the 1990s this binary funding system was dismantled, and access to arts funding was opened up to artists outside of the dominant cultures (though the playing field was, and is still, not level). However, the way that the cuts and changes to funding occurred at the time meant that only already established theatre companies were able to access operating funding through this shift. In Toronto today that means only a few companies, (mostly white), are on operating funding, many of which have their own production venues, while "other" companies rely on one-time project grants, co-productions, and the use of space granted to them by the companies on operating funding (Knowles, "Multiculturalism" 79). It is with this historical account that Knowles begins the story of Toronto in much of his writing on the intercultural performance in the city. The purpose of his deep investigation is to try and understand "how individual gendered, raced, and classed subjectivities and community identities within the contemporary multicultural city are not just reflected or given voice but are *constituted* through performance" (emphasis in original, Knowles, *Performing* 4). In his most recent and most comprehensive publication on this subject, *Performing the Intercultural City*, Knowles argues that, "the city of Toronto functions as *heterotopic* space, with heterotopias understood as *ecologies* in which *reassembling the social* can happen *relationally* and *rhizomatically*" (emphasis in original, Knowles, *Performing* 5). The question in my own research then becomes: How does the dramaturg, who is neither

creator nor performer, function within this intercultural performance ecology? In the following chapter I look at the metaphoric and theoretical frames that Knowles uses to analyze performance in Toronto to argue that in the city the dramaturg functions as space-maker, creating contexts, entryways, and connections into the theatre and performance world for artists outside of the dominant culture, and actively contributing to Toronto's performance landscape as "heterotopic space".

Choosing Toronto as the case study for my own research after encountering Knowles' work, I imagined I would be able to come away from my interviews with some sense of a dramaturgical practice that is specific to Toronto. After all, I chose people who specifically have had lengthy experience, or are currently working in, a dramaturgical capacity in the city. As is often the case, however, the research told me a different story than the one I originally imagined. Asking those I spoke with about their work in intercultural situations led to discussion of work they have done far beyond Toronto's city limits. Marjorie Chan shared stories about her work in Hong Kong, Brian Quirt about his work at the Banff Centre in Alberta and with D.D. Kugler in Vancouver, and Judith Rudakoff about her work across three continents. The only person that talked only about work in Toronto for Torontonian audiences was Hague who discusses her own practice in relationship to the city. When working with an artist across culture, she feels that "the perspective that [she] bring[s] to a process is one of an average Torontonian with a master's degree" (Hague, Personal). Not only do dramaturgs that work in Toronto wear many hats within the theatre community, from playwright to artistic director, they also work extensively outside the city limits in diverse situations. I have found this to be the case looking not just at those I interviewed, but at the practices of other dramaturgs that

work in Toronto as well. Discussing the function of the dramaturg, I will then think about the place of Toronto drawing upon Dwight Conquergood's assertion that "we now think of 'place' as a heavily trafficked intersection, a port of call and exchange, instead of a circumscribed territory" (Conquergood 145). I will focus in this chapter not on the dramaturg within the boundaries of Toronto, but on the dramaturg's interactions and relationships within the network that is Toronto's theatre community.

In coming to his argument about how the intercultural performance ecology of Toronto functions, Knowles draws on and combines a few different theoretical and metaphorical frames. He develops his discussion of the intercultural *ecology* of performance in Toronto in relationship to Baz Kershaw's articulation of performance as a kind of ecological system. By "ecologies of performance" Kershaw means "the complicated and unavoidable interdependencies between every element of a performance event and its environment" (Kershaw 136). Kershaw specifies that "these interdependencies ensure that the smallest change of one element in some way…effects change in all the rest," and that it is difficult to say if "one factor is more important than another for the sustainability and survival of any particular genre or form" (136). Thinking about Toronto's theatre scene as ecology in the way that Kershaw articulates it, dramaturgs are inevitably affecting Toronto's performance ecosystem through their mere presence and interactions with artists. Trying to understand what these effects might be in the larger Toronto theatre landscape, I asked myself what would be missing in Toronto if there were no dramaturgs? Looking at the extensive and intricate work being done by those I interviewed, one of the biggest things that would be affected without dramaturgs is the current (and ever increasing) proliferation of diversity.

McGeachy in our interview talks about how dramaturgy happens in a creation processes whether there is someone with the title of "dramaturg" or not. Going even further than this, Mel Hague states that: "Dramaturgy is utterly unnecessary…. Plays will get written whether [she as a dramaturg] exist[s] here or not" (Hague, Personal). Without artists, Hague continues blatantly, she would not even have a job (Hague, Personal). According to McGeachy dramaturgy happens with or without a dramaturg, and according to Hague, if you take artists out of the theatre then dramaturgs have no function, yet without dramaturgs artists would continue to create. What would happen to the Toronto performance ecology if the six dramaturgs I spoke with actually were removed? Vicki Stroich talks about dramaturgy as a "helper" role, as serving a "support function" that "*offers* great depth and focus to the creative process in the theatre" (emphasis added, 236). This articulation of the dramaturg seems to fit with how those I interviewed understand the role, as someone who exists only to serve, to offer, in a relational function. What this idea of a helper dramaturg misses, I argue, is the *active* space-making element of the dramaturg's work.

When talking about how they conceptualize what it is they do as dramaturgs, while everyone had something different to say, across the board my interview subjects discussed their role relationally to a creator and/or their work. Hague talked about herself as a "mirror" that "reflects back to an artist what they are putting out before it gets to anyone else" (Hague, Personal). Nolan focuses on the work itself, suggesting that the role of the dramaturg is "to truly know the play" ("Snapshot" 187). Quirt in his chapter representing Canadian new play dramaturgy in *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy* talks about his role with the creative work and the artist. His process involves identifying

the core ideas of a project, deepening the communication of these ideas, and then designing a process for each artist (Quirt, "Contemporary" 27). Rudakoff's articulation of her role as a dramaturg is similarly relational, but adds something significant. What she does as a dramaturg is to "conceive and germinate individualized artistic process to facilitate and even *instigate* the transmission of creativity" (emphasis added, Rudakoff, "Four Elements" 143). In this definition Rudakoff indicates that she sees her role as not just in relationship to existing artists and creative work, but as someone who actively creates contexts for people, artists or otherwise, to begin creating. Developing tools that do just this is at the core of Rudakoff's work. She has developed transcultural methods and exercises like The Four Elements[1] that "employ archetypal iconography and universally understood values as a way to initiate artistic exploration" (Rudakoff, "Transcultural" 151). She has brought her tools and methods to student and community groups around the world, from Iqaluit to Cape Town. The strength of Rudakoff's methods for instigating creative output can be appreciated through browsing the Common Plants website[2] that documents the work produced by the participants from across the globe through Rudakoff's Common Plants project, or in her book *Dramaturging Personal Narratives: Who am I and Where is Here?* Through her tools and methodology

[1] The Four Elements is a tool based on the "non-scientific" element guides for Air, Earth, Fire, and Water, that Rudakoff has developed from multiple sources. They serve as a "template for examining characters and understanding their relationship to each other and to the world of the play." For a more detailed description see: Rudakoff, Judith. "The Four Elements: New Models for a Subversive Dramaturgy." *Theatre Topics*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2003, pp. 143-152.

[2] The Common Plants Website can be found at: http://www.yorku.ca/gardens/html/. Accessed March 27, 2018.

she is effectively creating space for people who otherwise may not express their creative voices.

While the others that I spoke with in Toronto may not have defined the work that they do as instigation, within the discussion of their respective practices their work becomes clearly more than relational. For example, McGeachy talks about how part of what makes the work done at Factory intercultural is the creators that the company engages. However, as he puts it, "We [at Factory Theatre] cannot say that we're a diverse theatre company and then sit and wait for people to call us" (Personal). Part of McGeachy's work as Company Dramaturg at Factory Theatre is to actively engage with artists, leading to opportunities for production and development with Factory that might not have occurred otherwise. As well, I would argue that Quirt's definition of his work as a dramaturg as to *create* processes for artists to develop their work also acknowledges his own active role beyond relationality.

Looking at the role of the dramaturg beyond serving existing artists and work becomes even more nuanced considering what Chan and Hague shared with me. Chan talking about building trust with artists points to the importance of making people feel welcome at Cahoots Theatre Company (where she serves as Artistic Director). In practice, this could mean making sure she arranges for an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter to be present if a Deaf artist asks to meet with her. It also means showing the company's strong commitment to an artist through the entire development journey. Unlike at other companies where they may commit to a daylong or half-day workshop, Chan likes to commit to a production. Cahoots works with "many marginalized artists in different communities…" so why, Chan asks, "would [the

company] marginalize them further by saying ‘let’s do your workshop, and then after we’ll see whether we’ll produce you’?” (Chan, Personal). Also discussing her work with marginalized artists, Hague adds the caveat to her statement about the unnecessary nature of the dramaturg that “there is a necessity for someone to help guide and protect these very precious resources [playwrights and creators]. Particularly when working with artists of colour, queer artists, artists that are part of ‘marginalized groups’” (Hague, Personal). Hague works to help artists through what she calls “the burden of the first,” when white institutions take on diverse writers who then feel they must represent their entire culture through their work. She “remind[s] [artists in these situations] that they are not alone…that they are not meant to represent all,…” and “help[s] [these artists] navigate what [representing their own art] means in white spaces, or what that means in brown spaces that are not geared towards their specific experience” (Hague, Personal). Hague and Chan can be seen here to go beyond just working to help develop an artist’s creation to its fullest potential. They are actively creating contexts and situations for those whose access to traditional theatre spaces and processes may be limited. Without them it is safe to assume that some of the artists they work with would not have the resources they need to do their work, and may not have pursued their art. Like the garden within which Rudakoff describes her Common Plants project as living within, “cross-pollination is vital to the survival” of the healthy diversity that makes up the richness in Toronto’s intercultural performance ecology (Rudakoff, *Dramaturging Personal Narratives* 6). Hague and Chan’s dramaturgical work that actively considers the specific and diverse processes and needs of the artists that they work with can be seen as creating accessible

space in the theatre community, and helping to maintain this vital diversity, influencing the kinds of work that makes its way onto Toronto's stages.

Knowles also engages with Gilles Delueze and Félix Guattari's image of the rhizome in his theoretical articulation of Toronto's intercultural performance ecology. "Rhizomes are subterranean stem systems, assemblages rather than vertical structure" (Knowles, *Performing* 7). For Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizome is the "'conjunction', which "grammatically links elements of equal value arranged horizontally rather than hierarchically" (Knowles, *Performing* 7). What is important about this image for Knowles in terms of intercultural performance in Toronto is that rhizomatic systems are decentered "finite networks…in which communication runs from any neighbor to any other, the stems or channels do not pre-exist" (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Knowles, *Performing* 8). One of the six characteristics of the rhizome articulated by Deleuze and Guattari of importance to the role of the dramaturg in Toronto is that "[the rhizome] always has multiple entryways" (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Knowles, *Performing* 8). If we are to think of Toronto's intercultural performance ecology as a rhizomatic structure, I argue that the dramaturg fits into this frame of the greater ecology in two significant ways: as creator of connections (stems or channels), and as creator of multiple entryways.

I first realized the dramaturg's capacity to actively create connections and entryways into the Toronto theatre ecology thinking about my experience as a dramaturgy student in Judith Rudakoff's playwriting and new play dramaturgy classes at York University. One of the assignments for the fourth year playwriting students in Rudakoff's class involves contacting a theatre professional, interviewing them (ideally in person), and then writing and presenting a monodrama inspired by that interview. From

my experience working as a student dramaturg with the playwrights doing this project, the interviews served as rich prompts for creation of new work. Importantly for the playwrights, what this experience also involves is learning how to communicate professionally, as well as an opportunity to meet and talk with someone in the professional theatre world while still in school. These interviews are ripe with the potential to create lasting connections between the playwright and the theatre professional they interview (who are invited to the presentation of the monodramas once they have been written), and down the road could lead to entryways for the students into the professional theatre community after school. Rudakoff has actively structured her curriculum to create connections and opportunities (channels) for her emerging playwriting students that did not exist before. I am aware that this example is not just about the dramaturgical role, as Rudakoff is a teacher to the playwriting students at York University, (though she does work with each of them providing dramaturgical feedback during classes). However, as I have learned through my interviews, the line between the dramaturgical role and others in the theatre, from artistic direction to playwriting itself, is quite thin. Nolan told me in our interview that "it's hard to take off the dramaturgical hat. You can't unknow the things you know" (Personal). I believe it is a safe jump to conclude that even when the dramaturgs I spoke with are not wearing the dramaturgical hat, they are still bringing a dramaturgical lens with them into their work.

An example of a dramaturg creating connections and entryways when in the specific role of dramaturg would be Brian Quirt at Nightswimming when he is working with an artist to design a development plan for their work, and then helping to determine which company to approach for a production, (aka finding the right entryway), of the

work based on the artist's goals.[3] Quirt for example worked with Carmen Aguirre in the decision to approach both Great Canadian Theatre Company in Ottawa, and Aluna Theatre in Toronto, with her play *Blue Box* (Personal). Entryways are also created through the more obvious work that an institutional dramaturg does in running the playwrights' units at their respective companies. Through these programs dramaturgs create entryways for new artists into the theatre community, opportunities for them to develop their craft and connect with other emerging creators. As well, Hague talks about how the role often involves helping find a different dramaturg to connect with an artist after they have completed participation in a playwrights' unit. These examples demonstrate the dramaturg's capacity to be more within the greater theatre ecosystem than someone who just works with artists and their creations. The dramaturg is someone who is actively creating stems and channels in the rhizomatic structure of Toronto's intercultural performance ecology.

The potency of the dramaturg's role as space-maker in relationship to the richness of intercultural work in Toronto perhaps becomes most clear in considering Knowles' discussion of Toronto as "constitut[ing] heterotopic space" (Knowles, *Performing* 10). Knowles draws on Kevin Hetherington who "sees heterotopias as heterogeneous mixtures of old and new, dominant and marginalized, to the point that what is central or dominant and what is marginal is 'not always clear cut'" (Knowles, *Performing* 10). Hetherington concludes that heterotopias are not defined as "sites of resistance, sites of transgression, or as marginal spaces,… but precisely as *spaces of alternate ordering*" (emphasis in original, Heatherington qtd. in Knowles, *Performing* 10). From this articulation of

[3] Nightswimming itself is not a producing company, it exclusively focuses on development.

heterotopic space Knowles suggests that the intercultural performance ecology of Toronto "can usefully be understood to constitute heterotopic space, where new 'ideas and practices' can come into being" (Knowles, *Performing* 10). The dramaturg's relationship to creating a space where "new 'ideas and practices' can come into being," spaces of "alternate ordering," becomes most clear in my interview with Hague about her work as Festival Director of the Rhubarb Festival. On the Buddies in Bad Times Theatre website the Rhubarb Festival is described as "Canada's longest-running new works festival" which "transforms Buddies into a hotbed of experimentation, with artists exploring new possibilities in theatre, dance, music, and performance art" (*Buddies*). What it does not say, and Hague intentionally does not say about the festival in any of its *promotional* material, is that it is a diverse theatre festival. And yet, something Hague says she is proud of is that the festival under her direction is now easily "sixty to seventy percent diverse," which she adds is "a conscious effort on [her] part" (Hague, Personal). Hague does not talk about the festival as diverse in its promotional material specifically because she wants to avoid the assumption in the theatre community that Rhubarb is "just where diverse artists go" (Hague, Personal). She talks about the power and energy "when you get to this saturation point where there are so many diverse voices in a room, then artists don't feel that they're being individually chosen or that they're being tokenized because they're not the only one" (Hague, Personal). Hague's role is also not just about curating the work that will be involved in the festival. "When you bring together that many diverse perspective you have to open yourself up to needing to support many diverse people's practices. It's a lot of work" (Hague, Personal). Hague is not doing what she does in her role as Festival Director passively, she is actively working to create new

processes and ways of working for and with the diverse artists involved in the festival. The space Hague is creating with its "saturation" of diversity, and where many different practices are being supported at once, can be seen as one of "alternate ordering" that through so such diversity being brought together has the potential for "new ideas and practices" to be discovered and to emerge. Hague specifies that this kind of space-making happens in her smaller meetings as well when she works directly with an individual artist as company dramaturg, just on a smaller scale.

Hague's work with the Rhubarb Festival can be seen to relate to Nolan's discussion of the Weesagechak Begins to Dance Festival at NEPA. Nolan says that even though Weesagechak Begins to Dance is dedicated to developing the work of Indigenous writers, the company "first choose[s] *other* dramaturges... *Other* as in not white, not from the dominant culture, those who have a sense of self outside of the dominant culture" (Nolan qtd. in Knowles, "Multicultural" 86). This "other" for Nolan may include "dramaturges who are Aboriginal," but also "who are Asian or queer" etc. (Nolan qtd. in Knowles, "Multicultural" 86). Nolan, like Hague, can be seen here to be making choices towards creating a space of "alternate ordering," where through collaboration across various forms of difference new practices outside the dominant western norm are given opportunity to emerge between the artists that make up the heterotopic space that is Toronto's network of intercultural performance.

In Michel Foucault's article on the topic of heterotopias "Of Other Spaces," along with space Foucault also considers time. He asserts that "it is not possible to disregard the fatal intersection of *time* with space" (emphasis added, Foucault 22). Foucault discusses what he terms "heterochronies" which are inextricably linked to heterotopias. "The

heterotopia begins to function at full capacity," Foucault states, "when men [sic] arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time" (Foucault 26). Part of the active creation of spaces of alternate ordering that I discuss above also must involve a "break" with traditional time. Traditional time within performance creation processes is very limited, and it is product not process focused. Central to working across difference as articulated by Chan and Nolan involves breaking with this tradition, slowing down, and allowing there to be more time to communicate and negotiate. Only in this way can the creation and rehearsal process move beyond the dominant western temporal tradition to become more inclusive and accessible. Discussing her work as director on *Ultrasound* by Adam Pottle that was co-produced by Cahoots Theatre Company and Theatre Passe Muraille in Toronto, 2016, Chan states that quite simply "when you're working in multiple languages, it just takes more time" (Chan, "DATT" 0:40). In the case of *Ultrasound* Chan, who has a limited understanding and fluency in ASL, was directing a creative team that included Deaf and hearing artists, and a play with content specific to the Deaf community. There were ASL interpreters in the room during rehearsals, and key to the process for Chan was having patience to allow for all the translating, because it will be better ultimately if "you can all be on the same page" (Chan, Personal). Intersecting with Chan's consideration of time was a need to consider how people were configured within the rehearsal space as ASL requires line of site.

Nolan also discusses the need to slow down and allow the process to take the time it needs, rather than using the fastest means possible. She has found herself working with groups of artists where she has a developed a short hand, but that short hand is not shared with everyone in the room. Nolan has encountered resentment from those that perceived

this short hand as exclusionary, and has had to *stop* and talk through everything at a tempo and with language that is accessible to everyone involved (Nolan, Personal). What Chan and Nolan's insights reveal is that the role of the dramaturg when considering creating accessible space must also be mindful of creating accessible *temporality*. To do this seems to involve going against industry traditions, and scheduling more time.

Returning to the rhizome, Bruno Latour's actor-network theory has also been connected with the image of the rhizome. Through the lens of actor-network theory John Law describes the social as consisting of "webs of heterogeneous material and social practices that are *performative*, that generate realities" (emphasis in original, qtd. in Knowles, *Performing* 6). Tim Ingold builds on this replacing network with meshwork to invoke a network with "uneven and fluctuating distribution[s] of agency" (qtd. in Knowles, *Performing* 7). Knowles draws on this idea to investigate the "disproportionately large" influence of small theatre companies with intercultural mandates in the Toronto theatre landscape. Dramaturgs themselves, while not creators, seem to have significant and varying forms of agency to create different kinds of entryways, spaces, and connections between and with artists. That agency is exercised when they go beyond working directly with a playwright/creator and their creations to become active connectors and space-makers. Kershaw, as I mention above, states that within an ecology it is difficult to say if "one factor is more important than another for the sustainability and survival of any particular genre or form" (136). I do not imagine that the dramaturg is any more important than the artistic directors creating space at their interculturally mandated companies, the playwrights, the directors, or the various other creative artists that contribute to the interactions and connections that make up Toronto's

intercultural theatre ecology, but that they *are* important to its continuously growing diversity is irrefutable. In his study of Cahoot's 1993 Lift Off! Festival, Gómez found that even with the institutional structures surrounding the festival encouraging intercultural interaction, and supporting the flourishing of diverse cultural stories, it was the dramaturgs who most influenced the success or failure of this objective. Dramaturgs are in a unique position to open up space and create diverse processes of working *directly* with creative artists, empowering or possibly stifling creators and stories that live outside of the dominant western cultural norm.

Discussing Canadian dramaturgy and space making is not an entirely new conversation. In the introduction to the collection he edited, *Developing Nation: New Play Creation in English-Speaking Canada*, Bruce Barton talks about his project "Creative Spaces" that investigates the "material conditions of institutional new play development activity…" with "material conditions" including among other things, the "*contexts* (spaces and places),…that comprise specifically *text-based*, new play development across the primarily English-speaking regions of the country" (Barton vi). Barton cites Guna and Rappahannock theatre artist Monique Mojica and Knowles who state that "Among the things that Native theatre artists must contend with that can 'contain' their work and limit the possible evolution of new forms are the material conditions, economic, organizational, and cultural, that determine which types of work are produced and which are not" (qtd. in Barton vi). There is an understanding here that the material space that a work is being created within affects the process of development, and therefore the created work in significant ways. As Beth Herst states, "The way theatre is made has a determinant effect on the kind of theatre that results," and the

dramaturg and the space they create for an artist are undoubtedly part of "how theatre is made" (Herst qtd. in Barton vi). The "Creative Spaces" project was designed with the purpose of interrogating the ways in which "Canadian developmental dramaturgy can be seen to reflect the complex set of economic, industrial, political, and aesthetic conditions that combine to determine, within flexible but finite parameters, what is 'possible' in Canadian professional theatre" (Barton vi). However, looking at the work that those I interviewed are doing, I would say that the dramaturg in Toronto is doing more than *reflect* the conditions that are defining what is possible. The dramaturg, as an active space-maker that is creating spaces and temporalities of "alternative ordering," is not just reacting to, and being defined by, the "economic, organizational, and cultural" conditions that Mojica and Knowles discuss, but is actively part of redefining what is possible.

In an article he wrote titled "Dramaturgs as Artistic Leaders," Gideon Lester specifically talks about the dramaturg as needing to move past an attitude of just being relational, or as he terms it: in "service roles" (229). This article was on the syllabus for a course in production dramaturgy I took at the U of A, and I admit I was skeptical when I first saw the title. My immediate fear when hearing the role of dramaturg paired with leadership was the potential for a dramaturg with too much power to become prescriptive, to appropriate an artist's process to serve their own creative interests. Lester clearly states: "If dramaturgs continue to believe that they are fit only for *service* roles in literary offices and rehearsal rooms, nothing will change" ("Dramaturgs as artistic leaders" 229). My skepticism about the benefits of dramaturgs in leadership roles began to sway in my interview with Hague. She told me about how in the first meetings for the Rhubarb Festival everyone introduces their gender pronoun as part of going around the circle the

first time. “[She] does it first, and everyone does it. It’s not just something for people who identify as ‘they’ or ‘them’ it’s for everyone” (Hague, Personal). According to Hague, “if you start leading with showing the importance of words, showing the importance of self-identifying, and coming to terms with your own identities, you engender that in the people that you collaborate with” (Hague, Personal). If Hague saw herself as just in a service role like Lester talks about, she would not be taking this important leadership stance around gender pronouns. Hague in taking on leadership in this way is actively creating a space of “alternate ordering” in relationship to current dominant cultural norms surrounding gender and identity, inevitably affecting the way that identities and stories will be performatively constituted in that space.

Another example of the active ways the dramaturg can effect change and push what is possible, directly related to the creation of new work itself, is in Chan’s discussion of accessibility. She talks about how barriers to accessing performances, (like whether or not there is ASL interpretation of a performance), are as good as saying certain people are not invited to a show (Chan, “DATT” 5:35). I asked her what she thought dramaturgs should be doing to make space for more diversity. Her response was about the importance of questioning an artist’s choices that could create barriers for audience access during the development of a work. Considering, for example, that you are making an aesthetic choice for someone in a site-specific show if only part of the work is wheelchair accessible. Once these choices have been acknowledged, ideally early on in the process, there can be a critical conversation between Chan and the artist about what can be done within the work itself to promote accessibility. Chan is demonstrating

here the dramaturg's leadership potential for actively creating the change that Lester refers to within the theatre community towards inclusivity and accessibility.

Similarly to the vitality of "cross-pollination" that Rudakoff asserts, Knowles argues that "interdependence and healthy diversity - are singularly applicable to the performance ecology of a successful intercultural city" (*Performing* 5). Diversity and connection are clearly incredibly important for sustaining the richness and growth of the intercultural performance ecology of Toronto. The dramaturg is an active space-maker within this ecosystem, one who creates access, entryways, and connections for artists, and through their work directly affects the generation of heterotopic space that makes up the theatre and performance community of the city at large. The importance of the dramaturg in relationship to the *intercultural* nature of this ecology is in their ability to create spaces of alternate ordering in which new diverse identities can be constituted. Everyone I spoke with creates a different kind of space, and different kinds of connections, in relationship to their own identities and cultural filters. As such, I believe it is vital that dramaturgs not only continue to consider new forms and ideas to foster space for diversity, but that there is space created for diverse dramaturgs so that the space-makers themselves can introduce new processes, forms, and ways of knowing and creating into the performance ecology.

I will conclude this chapter with one last thought about my research in relationship to Toronto. I do not imagine that only dramaturgs practicing in Toronto are creating spaces of alternate ordering, affecting how "the traditional hegemony of whiteness on the city's stages is actively being challenged" (Knowles, *Performing* 2). I do think, however, that the kinds of conversations I was able to have about intercultural interactions with my interview subjects were in some ways specific to speaking with

people that have worked in Toronto. Discussions are actively occurring within Toronto's theatre community about intercultural and other exchanges across difference, as well as with the audiences that are being invited into performance spaces. Just recently in February 2018 before a matinee performance of Kat Sandler's *Bang Bang*, Factory Theatre held a panel discussion addressing the challenges and complexities of working across cultural differences in theatre creation processes. Going further back, Rudakoff addresses the challenges of working across difference in the first pages of her 2015 book *Dramaturging Personal Narratives: Who am I and Where is Here?* And Quirt is also on record talking about the complexities of choosing what work to dramaturg in relationship to his own various identities in an interview with Beth Blickers published in *Theatre Topics* in 2014. Those practicing dramaturgy in Toronto had been critically thinking about the influence of their cultural identities in relationship to those they work with, and the spaces that they are creating for developing new work, long before I arrived to ask them about it. As such, I do not believe that I could have had the kinds of conversations I had this past summer any place else.

Chapter 2 - Cultural Knowledge and Forging the Dramaturgical Relationship

The questions interrogating the complexities and challenges of the dramaturgy relationship that are at the core of my research began to form during my own early experiences working as development dramaturg during my undergrad at York University. Sitting across from my good playwright friend Bessie Cheng, who at the time was writing the first scenes of her play *Dirt* about the educational experience of two young people in Ürümqi, China, her hometown, I wondered how it could possibly be helpful that I, as cultural outsider, was the one giving her feedback? Some of the questions I asked myself were about what I could have done to help bridge the cultural knowledge gap? More research? How much of what I did and did not understand should I have communicated? Was my not knowing greatly affecting our conversations, and the direction of the work? What was I bringing to the relationship, and Bessie's writing process, if not cultural knowledge and expertise? And importantly, how would these challenges of working across difference be amplified if there were a larger power disparity between us? For example, if I were an institutional dramaturg working with Cheng as an emerging writer?

Three years later I asked Cheng if I could mention her play and our work together in my MA thesis, and she immediately agreed. Cheng added as well that I had "helped [the play] a lot" when we were working together in the early stages of her writing process (Cheng, Personal). It seems then that the relationship and the work we did together were not just about the cultural knowledge I did or did not bring to the process, it was built on something more. In this chapter I will probe more deeply the dramaturg's role in the development process when working as cultural outsider, and how the relationship between dramaturg and artist is forged across difference.

The dramaturgy relationships between artists in Toronto are often intercultural, and are surrounded by socio-political factors that could potentially create an imbalance of power between those involved. The central question in each of my interviews was: "What is it that you as a dramaturg *do* to mitigate and negotiate your own cultural filters and biases when working across cultural difference?" The desire to answer this question influenced my choice of Toronto as a case study, of those I chose to approach for an interview, as well as the research I did to prepare for, and analyze the interviews afterwards. What I have come to realize is that this question is premised in relation to some common assumptions about the role of the dramaturg. The first of these being that the dramaturg is meant to be *invisible* in the work and the process of development. Joseph Danan, writer, dramaturg, and professor at the Institut d'études Théâtrales at the Sorbonne "stresses that, as opposed to the earlier model of the dramaturg imposing a particular viewpoint," the current conception of the dramaturg "is premised on invisibility" (Bredeson 54). Similar views are echoed in a published conversation between German dramaturgs Friedrich Schirmer, Marcus Grube, and Judith Engel in which it is concluded that "good dramaturgy is invisible," as well as in an article titled "What the heck's a dramaturg?" by Web Behrens in the *Chicago Tribune* (Schirmer in Schirmer et al.). This invisibility is meant to prevent the risk of the dramaturg's voice dominating the creative process. I understand not being prescriptive is incredibly important, but working with Cheng during my undergraduate studies I was already questioning whether it is actually possible for the dramturg to be invisible. Every question that I ask as a dramaturg has the potential to reveal possibilities a creator may not have considered, and therefore to shift the direction of the work. A simple example of

this being that I will probably discuss most the elements of Cheng's play that I personally find most interesting or compelling. My questions, which are inevitably influenced by my cultural biases and lenses, may then lead Bessie to think about her play differently, and then to her developing the work in a direction she may not have otherwise.

The second core assumption that influenced the formation of my question is in the conception of the dramaturg as expert. Michael Chemers in his book *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook to Dramaturgy* specifically uses the word "expert" when describing the dramaturg's function. For him, the dramaturg is "an expert in play analysis and theatre history," someone whose role is like that of a navigator on a ship, "a resident expert in plotting a course from A to B…and finding the way again after getting lost" (Chemers 36, 144). Chemers in comparing the dramaturg to a navigator articulates my own initial understanding of the dramaturg as one who can encounter a work, and then *know* what it needs to move forward. Within this framework of understanding, the questions and comments a dramaturg provides are attempts at guiding a work in what the dramaturg sees as the "right" direction. It was based in these assumptions that I imagined the dramaturg working with an artist across cultural difference could only be a negative challenge to overcome. The invisibility of the dramaturg who knows where and how a work should move forward is at risk when there is cultural difference in the relationship, especially if there is also an imbalanced power dynamic. At the root of my question about the dramaturg mitigating their own cultural biases and filters is an attempt to understand how they are working to maintain their invisibility, if it is even possible, when negotiating various differences in cultural knowledge and experiences.

A model that usefully frames what occurs in intercultural exchange in collaborative theatre creation is Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert's proposed model for interculturalism, detailed in their article "Toward a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Praxis." Before describing their own model, Lo and Gilbert examine Patrice Pavis' previously articulated hourglass model of intercultural exchange, which he first introduced in *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture.* In Pavis' model the source culture is situated in the upper bowl of an hourglass. From this upper bowl, if they are "sufficiently fine," "grains of culture" trickle down through various filters and are then reordered to be received by the target culture in the bottom bowl of the hourglass (Pavis 4). Critiquing this model, Lo and Gilbert point out that it "assumes a one-way cultural flow based on a hierarchy of privilege" (42). Even with Pavis' argument that the hourglass can simply be turned upside-down "as soon as the users of a foreign culture ask themselves how they can communicate their own culture to another target culture," Lo and Gilbert highlight that this assumes there is a "level-playing field" between those participating in the exchange (Pavis 4, Lo and Gilbert 42). As the model focuses on how cultural elements are filtered for readability on the stage of the target culture, Lo and Gilbert conclude that Pavis' model is "premised on aesthetics" rather than considering the complexities of the politics of such an exchange (43).

If one conceptualizes the ideal dramaturg as invisible within the process, the one-way flow of Pavis' model makes sense. The dramaturg receives elements of the culture of the creator within the relationship, but there is not a consideration of the cultural knowledges and biases flowing in the other direction from the dramaturg to the creator. Lo and Gilbert's model, which imbricates interculturalism and postcolonialism, allows

for a more nuanced lens through which to understand the exchange that occurs between a playwright and creator working across cultural difference. The importance of creating their abstracted analytical frame for intercultural exchange is "to articulate power relationships in more overt ways and thus foreground *agency* as a critical issue" (emphasis added, Lo and Gilbert 31).

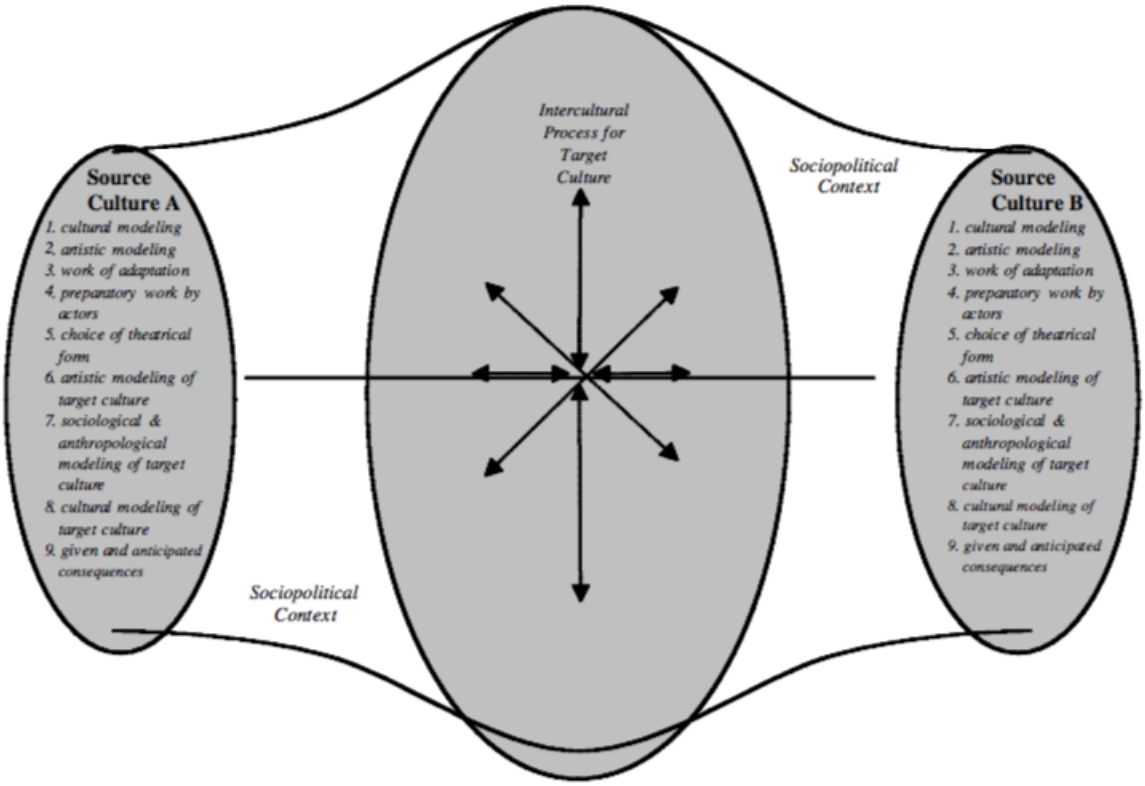

Figure 1: Lo and Gilbert's Proposed Model for Interculturalism

Source: Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert, "Toward a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Praxis." *The Drama Review*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2002, pp. 45.

The model is conceptualized based on the functioning of a toy that Lo and Gilbert both remember playing with as children, a whirligig. This toy is made up of elastic strung

through a plastic disk. Holding the elastic string at both ends and rotating your hands the disc begins to spin, and then the elastic can be pulled and released repeatedly to keep the disc going. The disc will also move back and forth horizontally along the elastic string depending on which side the tension is generated from. In this model both cultures in the intercultural exchange are source cultures, and the target culture exists somewhere within the continuum between them, depending on various factors influencing the interaction. This model frames intercultural exchange as a "two-way flow" that involves "transformation and challenges in the process of exchange" on all sides of the relationship, and "takes into account the possibility of power disparity," based on the consideration of the socio-political context of a given interaction (Lo and Gilbert 44).

Through the lens of this model, the complete invisibility of the dramaturg in an intercultural dramaturgy relationship becomes conceptually impossible. Lo and Gilbert's model is designed to describe an intercultural exchange in the context of collaboration where all those involved are co-creators of the developing work. While this is not exactly how the dramaturg-playwright relationship functions, as the dramaturg is not considered a co-*creator*, many of my interviewees described the role of the dramaturg as a collaborator in the creative process. Also, I argue that inherent in the dramaturgy relationship is an exchange of knowledge and ideas to which both parties are contributing. As such, Lo and Gilbert's model provides a lens through which to see the dramaturgy relationship that considers both sides of the exchange, the dramaturg *and* the playwright, as undergoing transformation. The model also foregrounds the possible influence of a power imbalance that can affect the exchange, and therefore the resulting transformations.

The dramaturgs I had the privilege of speaking with this summer were all actively critically engaging with their perspectives and biases when working with artists across difference. My own assumption that the dramaturg knows what a work needs to move forward led me to believe that I might find someone who imagined it possible for the dramaturg to be objective, but I did not. On the very first day of my interview process Yvette Nolan addressing objectivity blatantly stated: "There's no such thing as objectivity… Ever since feminist scholarship came along we don't have to play that game anymore" (Nolan, Personal). Looking to Donna Haraway's contributions to feminist scholarship about situated knowledges, she addresses the question of objectivity directly. She talks about the limited "views from somewhere" in contrast to the "view from above" which imagines the possibility of transcending location, and of universal knowledge (Haraway 194, 193). In some way or another, everyone I spoke with acknowledged the unique subjective views and knowledges they bring to the process from their positionality. In what follows, I explore the dramaturg within the multidirectional framework of intercultural exchange that Lo and Gilbert's model suggests, and probe the possibility that having limited cultural knowledge on the part of the dramaturg can be potentially advantageous in the development process.

Brain Quirt specifically talks about something he calls "constructive ignorance" that if used with sensitivity can enable Quirt to question an artist in ways that reveal assumptions they have about their own cultural knowledge. Not knowing for Quirt is not purely a challenge to be overcome, it can actually be helpful to the process of development. Quirt makes it clear that what he brings to dramaturgy relationships is not about the cultural knowledge he may or may not have. He no longer does the extensive

contextual and historical research before entering a new dramaturgy relationship that he once did as a less experienced dramaturg. He is clearly not entering the relationship as expert. What's more interesting and valuable for Quirt is finding out what research he needs to do through working with the artist, rather than externally beforehand deciding what he should know. He gives the example of learning about Indian dance in its various forms from Anita Majumdar who he has worked with as dramaturg and director on several occasions. Majumdar is able to teach him what he needs to know about the various forms she brings into the room that he has limited knowledge about. The conversation that Quirt is then able to have with her becomes about *choice*. The questions become: "*Why* this particular hand gesture?" Instead of "*What* is this particular hand gesture?" He sees a conversation about "why" as ultimately the most important. It can lead to a discussion about "what meanings [Majumdar] wants to bring into the room through [the use of a particular hand gesture]" (Quirt, Personal). Quirt can then provide the useful feedback about whether or not, from his perspective as outsider to the cultural meaning, Majumdar's intentions are being communicated in a way that diverse audiences carrying various knowledges will be able to access.

Mel Hague's discussion about navigating her own cultural knowledge in relationship to an artist and their work resonates with Quirt's idea of "constructive ignorance." What she sees herself as bringing to a process, among other things, is the perspective of "an average Torontonian." She can show you "what the average Torontonian might think about a variety of things" (Hague, Personal). Hague talks about how she may ask a creator questions about an element of their work *as if* she does not have any knowledge about it, whether or not she actually does. The example she gives is

of someone using Yoruban mythology in their work. In this case she may ask questions as if she knows nothing about this mythology because the average Torontonian does not have that knowledge (Hague, Personal). As with Quirt's "constructive ignorance," working in this way can help the artist develop work that can be accessed by its eventual diverse Torontonian audiences. In both Quirt and Hague's practices, not knowing is understood as potentially helpful in the development process. It is clear that the dramaturg is transforming the artist and their work as a direct result of how they employ their own cultural knowledge (or lack thereof). Quirt recognizes that in using his position of ignorance constructively he can engage artists critically with their own assumptions, transforming their views about their own cultural knowledges, and how these assumptions are influencing the artistic choices they make. Similarly, Hague sees framing herself as *no*t being the expert as a useful tool in helping an artist clarify the communication of their culturally specific ideas.

The complexity of mutual transformation that occurs within intercultural exchange in dramaturgical relationships becomes evident as well in Judith Rudakoff's discussion of her work. In complete opposition to the conceptualization of dramaturg as expert, Rudakoff sees herself as not necessarily needing to have specific cultural knowledge when working as dramaturg across difference. Much of Rudakoff's work, as I introduce in chapter one, is about developing transcultural dramaturgy methods and exercises to *initiate* creative exploration. The Four Elements, a guide of characteristics of Air, Earth, Fire and Water that Rudakoff has developed, for example "provide a starting point for *individualized* application" (emphasis added, Rudakoff, "The Four Elements" 144). Key to the use of Rudakoff's element guide, and other transcultural methods that

she has developed, "is *personalization* and *adaptation*" (emphasis added, Rudakoff, "The Four Elements" 144). Another one of her methods, *The Ashley Plays*, involves participants collaboratively generating a list of characteristics for a central character "Ashley," that is then used as the inspiration for each individual to create their own work as part of a series of plays (Rudakoff, "Transcultural" 152). Built into this method is the space for personalized adaptation and transformation, cultural and otherwise, of the parameters of the methodology by those that engage with the process. As well, since Rudakoff's work is about "offering sustainable tools and methods, not focusing on what the product is," her own expertise and even her ability to access the content of the work created, is not of central importance. This past summer she presented a paper at the 2017 CATR conference specifically about an *Ashley Cycle* that she initiated, dramaturged, and directed during the summer of 2016 at the University of Cape Town's Hiddingh Campus, with the third year Conservatory Acting program. Some of the works were written in languages Rudakoff did not know, and therefore she had varying degrees of access to each work. When she was asked after her presentation about working with artists creating in languages she does not know, she talked about how in her role as facilitator, her own understanding and access to the cultural knowledge of the creators does not matter. Rudakoff admits that it can be frustrating not to understand a work, but that "ultimately, it doesn't matter. The text is not for [her], it's for the person who's creating it" (Rudakoff, Personal). Rudakoff is present in the work generated as it is in the framework of the tools she has developed that the work is instigated and developed, but these methods are not immutable processes. They are designed to be transformed by those that

receive and use them as tools for instigating personal expression of creative voice, whether Rudakoff has the cultural knowledge to access what is generated or not.

In contradiction to the assumption of the dramaturg as an expert, as someone who has an objective viewpoint, and knows what a work needs to move it forward, those I spoke with agreed with Matt McGeachy's assertion that "it is not [the job of the dramaturg] to know" (McGeachy, Personal). Instead, McGeachy continues, he himself sees the job of the dramaturg as: To "gather the right people and to listen and to and appreciate their expertise" (McGeachy, Personal). He also adds the caveat that it is important to be "constantly vigilant for the things you [as dramaturg] don't know, and the things that you cannot know" (McGeachy, Personal). What McGeachy is acknowledging here is the sensitive and precarious situation that the dramaturg is in when cultural outsider, and the need to be vigilantly self-aware so as to ensure one is not co-opting the development process with dominant cultural ways of knowing and creating. Not having cultural knowledge appears to be a possibly beneficial tool in the development of work. I would like now to deepen this discussion to consider the complex dynamics of the relationship itself between the dramaturg and artist in which the complex conversations about cultural knowledge are negotiated.

Key to Lo and Gilbert's model is the foregrounding "of agency as a critical issue" (Lo and Gilbert 31). How does the dramaturg engage with the potential for a power imbalance, and the danger of co-opting the agency of the artist, in the actual building of a productive dramaturgical relationship when cultural difference is involved? How is space made for conversations to be had about these power dynamics, and the limited cultural knowledge that the dramaturg brings to the development process? Quirt talks about how

"playwrights are often disempowered in creative processes" (Personal). To counteract this, and to ensure that artists have what they need, Quirt sees the necessity of the artist having an active voice in designing the creative process for the development of their own work. This makes sense, but how do dramaturgs engage with their own knowledges in such a way that allows space for the empowerment of the artists they are working with in relationships across difference?

The dramaturg's position in relationships involving cultural difference can be usefully understood through Dwight Conquergood's discussion on ways of knowing in academia versus in performance practice. Conquergood talks about the "dominant way of knowing in the academy" as being "that of empirical observation and critical analysis from a *distanced* perspective" (emphasis added, 146). This way of knowing is different than the knowledge grounded in "active, intimate, hands-on participation and personal connection" (Conquergood 146). Far from having an objective view from a "distanced perspective," the dramaturg is in direct contact with an artist, forging personal connections that lead to decades long dramaturgical relationships, even in the case that there is significant cultural difference between those involved. Guna and Rappahonnock theatre artist Monique Mojica for example has worked for years with white settler dramaturg Ric Knowles. The relationship involves working across various forms of difference, and yet Mojica continuously invites Knowles into her processes, revealing that it must be a productive relationship.

Conquergood draws on Donna Harraway's discussion of situated knowledges that I mention above, exploring the various ways of knowing and being in relationship. What I talk about previously is Haraway's discussion of the difference between "views from

somewhere" versus the authoritative "view from above" that imagines the possibility of "universal knowledge that…transcend[s] location" (Haraway 194, 193, Conquergood 146). Haraway argues "for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where *partiality* and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims" (emphasis added, 195). She talks about the located viewpoint not just as "views from somewhere," but as a "view from a *body*" (emphasis added, 194, 195). Viewing from the location of the *body* instead of from the distanced perspective both Conquergood and Haraway critique, means that "location is about vulnerability" (Haraway 196). I have already demonstrated the dramaturg working across cultural difference to engage productively with their own partial knowledge. In what follows, I discuss the dramaturg's own vulnerability as a key element in forging empowering and productive mutually transformative dramaturgical relationships across difference.

Rudakoff directly addresses the necessity of putting herself as dramaturg in positions of discomfort as part of forging a trusting relationship across difference. She speaks specifically about doing a workshop at the Thembalethu School for the Disabled in Gugulethu Township, South Africa. She was told that there would be about fifteen youth that would attend for a couple of hours, and she was planning on doing some written creation work with them. As the time for the workshop approached, more and more young people continued to arrive, until there were almost fifty people in attendance. Rudakoff had to change her entire plan very quickly to accommodate everyone. Writing was off the table because of the number of people, and variety of special needs present in the room. Before she could begin however, a relationship had to be established. Some of the students had never come in contact with white skin before, so they wanted to touch

her skin. She told me that this was uncomfortable, but that she "had to become comfortable with the discomfort very quickly in order for [them] to be able to pass through that, and move into a space where they had something in common" (Rudakoff, Personal) The commonality that was discovered was an "understanding of relationships between people and to community," and it was from this place of common ground that Rudakoff built the rest of the workshop (Rudakoff, Personal). In her book *Dramaturging Personal Narratives: Who am I and Where is Here?* Rudakoff further discusses how she "never pretends that difference doesn't exist," and has "learned…to accept the discomfort" when working across difference (4). This experience of discomfort "should never get easier, but the uneasiness should become familiar" (Rudakoff, *Dramaturging* 4). In the example of her work at the Thembalethu School for the Disabled it was her body, (her skin), that was the location of her difference for the students that attended the workshop. Through allowing the students to engage directly with her body, instead of ensuring her own comfort by maintaining distance, a stronger trusting relationship was established that grounded the work moving forward.

In his work with professional artists in Toronto, Quirt also discusses putting himself in positions of discomfort, and directly talks about how this makes him vulnerable in the relationship. Responding to a question about what he is still struggling with working in relationships across difference, he told me about a process he had been in recently where a specific cultural practice was being explored. Quirt asked those involved whether there were protocols around engaging with the practice that needed to be considered, because he did not know. He received his answer, but someone in the room also joked that he was being oversensitive. Quirt however, "would rather take being

ribbed about being over sensitive than the opposite which is much worse," and added that "in a situation like that [he is] revealing that [he doesn't] have the knowledge, which makes [him] *vulnerable*" (emphasis added, Quirt, Personal). For Quirt himself to feel comfortable in this particular relationship, he had to allow himself to be in a position of vulnerability.

Mel Hague goes beyond allowing herself to experience discomfort to actively scrutinize her own biases and vulnerabilities as part of positioning herself in dramaturgical relationships. Asking her about how working in situations where she is cultural outsider affects her approach as a dramaturg, she talks about the various cultural lenses that she has, and how she communicates them to those she works with. She also stresses the importance of not being afraid to be called racist, because "we are racist, period," and her need to scrutinize herself when making decisions, like "choosing which diverse voices are the most important…to our stages" (Hague, Personal). There is an assumption among artists (especially emerging artists) that an institutional dramaturg is "an arbiter of what is good and what is bad" (Hague, Personal). The only way for Hague "as an individual within a system with power to combat this is to come at it as individually as possible," and this individual position involves intense self-scrutiny (Hague, Personal). This *active* self-scrutiny is helpful for getting to productive intercultural dialogue when it also "contends with the larger system that [she is] trying to impose on writers with [her] colonial theatre background" (Hague, Personal). Hague's practice of self-scrutiny considers simultaneously the socio-political factors that surround every dramaturgical relationship, along with the biases that are located within Hague herself that she recognizes as having transformative power if they are imposed without

awareness and articulation. The trust that Hague's dramaturgical relationships are built upon involves Hague first teaching those she works with that "they shouldn't trust [her]" opinion by revealing it as located rather than objective. Only once Hague's located, biased, and vulnerable position is established can the relationship of trust built on valuing Hague's personal and situated opinions begin to form, one in which the artist can also trust themselves enough to tell Hague that she is wrong.

The importance of vulnerability in the dramaturgical relationship becomes possibly even more evident in Chan's discussion of her work. She talks about how her own positionality may mean she "[has] issues accessing [certain] point[s] of view" (Chan, Personal). For example, her perspective is shaped by her own relationship to protest in Tiananmen Square. Chan talks about needing to be able to be very clear about her own views when working with an artist, that she "can't remove where [she comes] from, or [her] political place" (Chan, Personal) To be the right person for a project, she has "to feel safe enough to talk about that in the room" (Chan, Personal). Through this statement it is made clear that building a productive relationship for everyone involved requires a safe space for the dramaturg as well as the artist to be able to be vulnerable in their self-location.

When asking those I interviewed about the role of the dramaturg, much of the initial responses were about helping to develop a creative work to its fullest potential. Upon further discussion, it was revealed that the dramaturg's role involves much more than working with an artistic creation. Working across cultural difference in dramaturgical relationships involves contending with the embodied experience of working in direct contact with another person, and all of the experiential implications.

Conquergood turns to Antonio Gramsci's notion of the intellectual's error, which "consists in believing that one can know without understanding and even more without *feeling* and being impassioned" (emphasis in original, Gramsci qtd. in Conquergood 149). Thinking about the dramaturg like the intellectual in this way, as a distant observer, invisible, expert, and objectively unfeeling, ignores a huge part of the relational experience of the work. Conquergood further points to what African-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass advocates for when there is difference, as well as a power imbalance, involved: "Placing oneself quietly, respectfully, humbly, in the space of others" (Conquergood 149). Matt McGeachy's dramaturgical practice reflects something similar to what Douglass calls for. McGeachy is the white, straight, cisgendered male, Company Dramaturg at Factory Theatre. In this position of power, he is constantly working with artists across cultural difference. He talks about needing to have as much "skin in the game" as the other artists involved in the creative process, and that the dramaturgical relationships he is involved in are built on the creator's trust in him to be "conscientious, humble, and honest" (McGeachy, Personal). In this way there can be an honest and productive exchange between him and the artist(s), and they can feel safe to do the emotional work that is involved in creating artistic work.

To bring this discussion to its conclusion, I will return again to Haraway's conversation about situated knowledges. She states that "Only those occupying the positions of the dominators are self-identical, disembodied, unmediated, transcendent, born again" (193). Many of those I spoke with are in positions of power, as dramaturgs working at institutions that artists want to work with, and in their various relationships to the dominant western colonial language and culture that is still privileged across Canada.

As such, there is the risk for them in these positions of power to frame themselves as expert and objective, creating the potential for subverting the agency of the artist attempting to create work that engages their own cultural perspectives, and respects their own processes and ways of knowing. Looking at the work being done by dramaturgs navigating intercultural dramaturgy relationships through the lens of Haraway's discussion of situated knowledges, it is clear that there is more than just the socio-political factors that are considered in Lo and Gilbert's model at play. There is also the located and embodied element of the relationship between those involved in the artistic collaboration. Lo and Gilbert's model allows us to see that the cultural biases and filters of the dramaturg, far from being invisible, are influential factors in the process. To build trusting productive relationships across cultural difference, the dramaturg can work actively to empower the agency of the artist in the way that they position themselves as located and vulnerable, rather than as a distant, all knowing, objective observer.

Chapter 3 - The Dramaturg and the Self: Engaging with Identity

As I discuss in the introduction, one of the first times I began to realize how my own identity influences creative relationships was working with Sadie Epstein-Fine as co-director of *Eraser* for the 2017 Toronto Fringe Festival. I felt the dynamic between us shift when I revealed my queer identity to her. This was more than just about the knowledge I did or did not have, it was about how the perception of my identity shifted how my relationship to the work was understood. If the dramaturg is meant to be invisible, then they are not actively bringing themselves into the development process. As I experienced myself, articulating one's own identity has the potential to shift a creative relationship. Those I interviewed reveal a number of ways in which they actively bring their various intersecting identities into relationships with artists. In this chapter I investigate how bringing oneself into the work as dramaturg may actually be helpful for developing diverse works in dramaturgical relationships across cultural difference.

To do this I first would like to consider the PhD dissertation by Lindsay Lachance who positions herself as Algonquin Anishinaabe with mixed settler Canadian ancestry, that was defended at UBC in February 2018, *The Embodied Politics of Relational Indigenous Dramaturgies*. Lachance expands the definition of dramaturgy beyond development work or the research heavy production dramaturgy that I discuss in my introduction to "include…processes that are to be understood as relational and inclusive of the people, places, ancestors and other beings involved in the work" (ii). She "offers a three-part Relational Indigenous dramaturgical model of land-based, placed-based and community engaged dramaturgies," and she argues "that the Indigenous dramaturgical processes and events that [she has] been involved in celebrate Indigenous resistance

through artistic embodied thought and action" (ii). My encounter with Lachance's work, while unfortunately late in my process, has nevertheless had a significant impact on my consideration of the dramaturg's role in relationship to their own cultural identity. Her work has reminded me of the difficulty in attempting to forge a universal definition of the dramaturg's work, especially a Canadian specific definition with our nation's fraught colonial history, and its assimilationist attempts at creating a (western) unified cultural identity.

Yvette Nolan also features heavily within Lachance's work, so it is with her that I will begin my discussion of identity and the dramaturg working across cultural difference. When I asked Nolan about whether she has ever worked as dramaturg with an artist or piece to which she is cultural outsider, her response was: "Always. I'm always a cultural outsider because there is only one me" (Nolan, Personal). She continued to talk about how even when working in Indigenous theatre she is working cross-culturally, providing the example of working with Michelle Olson at Raven Spirit Dance who is Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, working with Donna Loring across Nation and nationality in Maine who is a Penobscot elder, and the work she was doing at the time of our interview with Marion Newman who is Kwagiulth and Stó:lo on *Bearing* for the 2017 Luminato Festival in Toronto. The cross-cultural negotiation that was occurring during *Bearing* rehearsals was about which direction to move in. Newman's people move counter clockwise, while Nolan's move clockwise. In situations like these according to Nolan "you're always looking for the things that make you similar, but you have to always be aware of what make you *different*" (emphasis added, Nolan, Personal).

Lachance's dissertation's fourth chapter "Feeling, Knowing, Sharing: Lateral Love and Presencing as Place Based Dramaturgy" discusses in depth the kinds of negotiations that Nolan talks about as part of the *Bearing* rehearsal process. Lachance defines place-based dramaturgy as "a relational model in which Indigenous peoples negotiate across different Indigenous practices and traditions to create culturally appropriate ways of working when the group is not necessarily grounded in any one Nation's physical lands" (4). In this way of working it is acknowledged that everyone is bringing their own perspectives, knowledges, identities, and lived experiences into the room, and that all of these must be contended with and respected. Nolan, as co-director of *Bearing*, actively made space for everyone's identities, including her own. She explains that the process involves sitting and talking together until they "figure out what *everyone* can live with" (emphasis added, Nolan qtd. in Knowles, *theatre and interculturalism* 66). This is similar to the moment in dramaturgical investigation Anishinaabe/Askenazi artist scholar Jill Carter discusses "that is concerned with both negotiating different Nations' protocol to create a process that satisfies everyone involved, and presencing personal and community knowledges" (Carter qtd. in Lachance 116). It is this presencing by *everyone* involved, articulated by Lachance as "self recognition in action" of homelands, languages, teachings, creation stories, and other "intangible cultural realities" that "becomes the basis for good, ethical and healthy practices" (Lachance 6).

It appears that this presencing is important to Nolan not just when she is co-creating or directing, but also when she is in the specific position of dramaturg. I asked her what I asked everyone, about patterns or methods she has noticed herself using to negotiate her own cultural sensibilities when working as cultural outsider when in the

role of dramaturg. She talks about how "as an Indigenous artist [she] bring[s] [her] history into the room, and [her] ancestors, and [she] put[s] that on the table" (Nolan, Personal). For her the central dramaturgical question to an artist during the development process is: "This is what I see, is that what you intend?" And she makes it clear that she is giving feedback based on what she sees, that her feedback is a reflection of how the work will be received "by people like [her], whether that's Indigenous, whether that's a woman, whether that's a woman of a certain age" (Nolan, Personal).

How bringing her identity into the relationship affects the process can be seen in Nolan's work as dramaturg with Adam Pottle on *Ultrasound*, and in her work on *Gabriel Dumont's Wild West Show* for the National Arts Centre French Theatre's 2017/18 season. Working with Pottle, Nolan connected to the play because of its themes of telling secrets from inside a community. She saw the argument between the couple in the story about their baby as similar to the argument "in Indigenous country about keeping the bloodline pure," which is dealt with in Falen Johnson's play *Salt Baby* that Nolan has dramaturged and directed several times (Nolan, Personal). Nolan's "easy in" to the process of working with Pottle was about finding the shared experience, the link between what she is carrying with her, and what the artist is bringing with them. Finding this shared experience is important for every process that Nolan works in, but as I mentioned earlier she also emphasizes the importance of being aware of the things that "make you different" (Nolan, Personal). Working on *Gabriel Dumont's Wild West Show* Nolan was one of the head writers, and as such part of her role was also dramaturgical. There were ten writers on this project, two Indigenous writers, two Métis writers, five Francophones, and one Anglophone. What she has seen is that "everybody has been transformed by the

process…even the way [the two ringleaders, white Francophone men] are telling the story has been transformed by working in the room…with the Indigenous and Métis writers and performers" (Nolan, Personal). Through what is being brought into the room through each artist's unique personal identity, not just what is similar between them but what makes them different, the work itself is being affected. You cannot isolate exactly what the effects are, but they are there. Nolan relates these effects to dropping something into water, "all the water is affected no matter how diluted it gets" (Personal).

In Lachance's chapter on place-based dramaturgy her focus is on Indigenous artists presencing their ancestors, histories, lived experiences, languages, etc. when negotiating processes of working between and across different Indigenous Nations. Place-based dramaturgy looks at moments within the development process "as embodied mobilizations of resurgence," and "acknowledges the mobility of embodying …experiences…across different Indigenous Nations, and the power that carrying them forward has to transform personal attitudes in everyday life" (Lachance 116). This dramaturgical practice is based on constant negotiation, recognition, and articulation of what you yourself are bringing into the process, and how that interacts with what everyone else is carrying with them. Nolan believes that this is "good practice in any room, to negotiate *every* time" (emphasis added, Nolan, Personal). Lachance's fifth chapter on "community-engaged dramaturgy" explores the work that she did with the all non-Indigenous students working on Marie Clement's *An Encounter with the Unnatural and Accidental Women* at Simon Fraser University. In looking at this as well as Nolan's discussion of her own work, it is clear that what Nolan and Lachance as dramaturgs bring

with them into the negotiations that occur in creative processes, though serving different purposes, are important in all kinds of intercultural relationships.

In her dissertation, Lachance further discusses the idea of "presencing" as a way "to articulate the notion of Kippmoojikewin" which in Anishinaabemowin means: "the things we carry with us," and is a "reminder that Indigenous peoples carry the knowledge of [their] ancestors, homelands, language and other realities with [them] in [their] bodies, and that they influence the way [Indigenous people] interact with the world" (55). Lachance draws on this concept from Marrie Mumford's article "Kippmoojikewin: The Things We Carry With Us" published in the collection *Performing Indigeneity*. Thinking about identity in relationship to this idea of "the things we carry with us" reminded me of how Hague discusses her own identity in relationship to the history it carries. Part of how she articulates her identity is as "white passing." It took Hague years to come to terms with using this descriptor, as "passing itself is a pretty contentious and historically painful thing" (Hague, Personal). Her family in Jamaica for hundreds of years would "cross the island, start a family, and never see their black family again" once they were "white enough" (Hague, Personal). She also uses the word "queer" to identify her own sexuality. She specifically explored the language around identifying sexuality and the histories that are carried with it when starting the WOW Project. This project "seeks to investigate the Theatrical Representations of Queer Women in Canada, past, present and future" (The WOW Project). In coming to how the project would be described, Hague had to contend with the use of the word "lesbian," and its association with an exclusionary history of trans women by the lesbian community that the word carries with it (Hague, "The Standing O"). In choosing to use the word "queer," she then has had to

navigate various identities that fall outside of just accessing "women who feel same sex attraction" (Hague, Personal). Hague contending with her own identity and the identifying language she is using, and considering the histories that are carried within these, has created a more open and inclusive space in the WOW Project.

Hague also brings her identity consciously and articulately into her relationships with creative artists when working as a dramaturg. One of the core tools that she uses throughout the process is a store of personal stories that she draws on to discuss how she thinks a character may act in a given situation, with the caveat that the stories are from her own life, and therefore filtered through her own personal perspectives. This method Hague has found is the best way to be "honest" about why she feels a certain way. At the very beginning of a relationship as well, Hague openly introduces herself, her education, her gender identity, her sexuality, and her background culturally. She sees this information as "a good baseline to start from" rather than "a gradual discovery" (Hague, Personal). In my own meeting with her, Hague asked me several questions about my work and myself before we began the formal interview. When I first arrived and met her outside the Obsidian Theatre office in Toronto, she suggested we grab a coffee across the street before going inside to begin. What this meant is that unlike with every other interview, the start of our conversation was not about the ethics form that needed to be signed, or the scripted description of my study. Hague asked about my time at York, my interest in dramaturgy, and why I chose to investigate identity. To answer her questions, I told her about sitting in meetings with Bessie Cheng and wondering how my being her dramaturg was affecting the work. I described myself as "a young white female

dramaturg" in the story, Hague told me a bit about herself, and then I switched on the recorder and I asked my first formal question.

Looking back on this, I regret not also telling her the other story I mention in my introduction and at the start of this chapter about revealing my queerness to Sadie Epstein-Fine while co-directing *Eraser* for the 2017 Toronto Fringe, and the shift I felt when I had articulated this element of my identity. In opposition to "psychological essentialism" which sees ("gender") identity as internalized behaviours that are "released" in social situations, sociology "sees social life as *inter*subjective, as the result of negotiation and interaction, and not as the release of something 'inside'" (Stanley 38). Furthermore, in communication studies research about intercultural friendships, it has been found that a "relational identity" or "third culture" is co-created, "a reality or culture that reflects the values, the rules, and the processes of the friendship," to which each member of a relationship contributes (Lee 4). Did not articulating my queer identity in my conversation with Hague make it any less true? No. However through the lens of identity and culture as negotiated and created within social interaction, without voicing it, it was absent from the way my identity was relationally constructed in the meeting. Hague herself has always felt the need to openly articulate her identity as part of her dramaturgy relationships. While at York University, what Hague describes as the "whitest place [she had] ever been in [her] life…[she] felt very alienated from the start" (Hague, Personal). What this meant is that she could not help but to constantly bring up that she felt different from others (Hague, Personal). Articulating how she is different is a very important part of her work at Obsidian Theatre where she works with black identified artists. As someone who passes as white in some situations, she "can share a

brotherhood so to speak with this group of people [the black identified artists at Obsidian], and still must acknowledge that [she is] different within it…. Living in this liminal space has meant that [she] always engage[s] with [her] own identity" (Hague, Personal). For Hague, the various elements of her identity and the lived experiences that she carries with her are present in the relationship through her active articulation of it, and through her use of personal stories as part of her dramaturgical method.

Within this conversation about identity, I want to come back to a discussion of the dramaturg as cultural outsider, and bring back Lo and Gilbert's model of intercultural exchange. Lo and Gilbert's model, as I discuss in detail in chapter two, envisions cultural exchange as a two-way flow in contradiction to previous unidirectional models. Both parties in a cultural exchange, according to their model, are source cultures, and the target culture exists somewhere in between. Both parties involved "undergo transformation," and the exchange is recognized as being affected by various external socio-political factors. This model in which the intercultural exchange exists between those involved can be seen to relate to the sociological conceptualization of identity as relationally constructed, (as opposed to identity existing statically within either of the parties participating in the exchange). What does this mean for the work itself that is being created in the intercultural dramaturgy relationship? The idea of culture and identity existing between people in a relationship reminded me of something Leanne Simpson (Michi Saagiik Nishnaabeg) says about storytelling in "Bubbling Like a Beating Heart." In her article, Simpson discusses Nishnaabeg traditions of oral story telling, ways of knowing, and communicating, and how she engages with these in her own life. She talks about the challenges of writing traditional stories (as opposed to telling them in their

traditional oral form) because of the separation in "time, space, and context" between the writers and readers (113). Simpson further explains that "when a traditional storyteller tells a story, the story is slowly revealed to the listener in the space between the teller and the listener. It is told through the duality of…world view[s] and through different perceptions" of all those in the space (Simpson 114). What Simpson discusses provides a lens through which to understand the story itself, not just the identities of those involved, as being mutually constructed through what is carried into the relationship by *both* the playwright and dramaturg. The dramaturgs I spoke with understand this to be true. Discussing working on *Black Boys* with Saga Collectif, Hague talks about knowing she had an impact on the work. She sat beside the artists as they wrote the monologues, and asked them questions without which what they wrote would have been different. But can she see how her particular cultural biases and filters impacted the work? It seems an almost impossible question to answer.

We can see that articulation of the dramaturg's identity influences the relationship and the work itself, and that the culture created between the members of the intercultural relationship is influenced by everyone involved. In the position of dramaturg, however, the ultimate goal is not to be prescriptive, so why actively bring one's own identity into the relationship at all? Why risk the contention and the contamination that may ensue? The influence of the dramaturg's cultural identity has already been explored by Mayte Gómez in his 1994 article "'Coming Together' In Lift Off! '93: Intercultural Theatre in Toronto and Canadian Multiculturalism." In his article, he explicitly calls for the dramaturg to articulate their own positionality within the process as a means of preventing the domination of western dramaturgical forms in how the work is developed.

The article discusses Gómez' observations of the dramaturgy in the workshops during the Lift Off! Festival hosted by Cahoots Theatre in 1993. Cahoots is currently known in the Toronto theatre landscape for its intercultural work. In 1993 at the time of the festival Gómez studies, the company's mandate stated that: "Cahoots Theatre Projects attempts to pursue work that is intercultural and interdisciplinary, that bridges traditions, cultural and artistic, and challenges them" (Hill qtd. in Gómez 33). Within this mandated frame, dramaturgs for the festival were assigned to work directly with playwrights and in workshops to help develop the work. Their role was defined as "the selfless activity of 'serving' the playwright's vision," or allowing the playwright's cultural milieu to 'flourish' in the text" (Gómez 35). Gómez saw this mandate as creating a "troubled space," one that imagines the dramaturg as being able to "serve" a playwright without the influence of their own preferences and cultural perspectives, and one that did not encourage *interaction* among cultures. Following the multicultural theme of the festival, the dramaturgs, as well as the playwrights and the content of the plays, were culturally diverse, and yet what Gómez saw in every workshop was the dramaturg working in a conventionally western model of play structure and character psychology. Creating a development space like this resulted in all of the plays moving towards a homogeneous western form of drama. What is more, Gómez speaks about the idea of "universality" that permeated the entire festival. The idea that despite cultural difference everyone could access or "understand" all the plays involved, which undoubtedly shaped the development process of the works as well. In Toronto at the time Gómez was doing his research, "to look for the universal characteristics of all cultures [meant] to bring out of

them what they share by virtue of being acculturated into the Anglo-Saxon dominant culture" (Gómez 40).

The dangers of "the universal theme" are articulated by Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins in their introduction to *Post-colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*. According to them the anthropological approach to drama used by such artists as Victor Turner, Eugenio Barba, and Richard Schechner, "enumerates similarities between all cultures without recognizing their highly significant differences" (9). They further discuss post-colonialism stating that "a theory of post-colonialism that fails to recognize this distinction between 'differences' will recreate the spurious hierarchies, misreadings, silencings, and ahistoricisms that are part of the imperial enterprise" (4). The same danger I argue could be a challenge within the practice of dramaturgy without the acknowledgement of differences between those involved in the development of new diverse work. Nolan speaks directly about the dangers of western style dramaturgy in relationship to her own work, and of other Indigenous creators. In an interview about the first play she wrote, *Blade*, Nolan talks about how not knowing the "rules," (i.e. western dramatic conventions), at the time she was writing gave her the freedom to break them (Nolan "Yvette Nolan on her first play"). She has since learned about various conventions, the well-made play, Aristotelian structure, etc., but sees the importance of knowing the "rules" being in that you can then break them. Nolan states that: "The conventions were created by someone else on someone else's culture" (Nolan, Personal). Because of this, only "once [Indigenous people] stopped being beaten with a certain kind of dramaturgy, [were they] able to start telling [their] stories in a way that was integral to the cultures and the stories themselves" (Nolan, Personal). That story telling is different,

Nolan continues, "is true for everyone. Women's story telling is different, African cultures, Asian cultures…no one dramaturgy is going to serve everyone" (Nolan, Personal). For Nolan, as well as Lachance in her discussion of place-based dramaturgy, to counteract this possible acculturation, negotiations in which everyone is able to articulate what they are bringing into the room, is key in *every single* process.

Gómez talks about something similar. He calls for artists at the individual and collective level to engage in a "self-reflexive mode" of work that would allow for an understanding of cultural identities and differences that are being brought into the room by everyone involved. For him it is essential that the dramaturgs do this along with everyone else. During Lift Off! '93, almost every level of the structuring around the festival was geared towards creating a space for culturally specific works to be fostered, and for intercultural interaction to occur between the diverse artists. According to Gómez' analysis it was the dramaturgy that prevented this. Specifically, the dramaturgy that assumed itself to be objective with a universalizing guiding mandate, and therefore led to works being developed solely in more western forms. Gómez talks about how the self-reflexivity he calls for would reveal the ideologies underlying the work the dramaturgs were doing within the process, which if recognized and articulated could be confronted and overcome to allow for more diverse forms to be developed. I would argue that self-reflexivity should go beyond just considering ideology to acknowledge and articulate the dramaturg's intersectional identity that is being brought into relationships with creators, and affecting the process and the work.

In Toronto twenty-five years later, it appears that the currently practicing dramaturgs are heeding Gómez' call. Chan who currently is the Artistic Director at

Cahoots Theatre Company talks about the importance of introducing herself, her identity, and her relationship to the land, at the beginning of workshops in the Crossing Gibraltar program that she facilitates, and inviting the youth involved to do the same. “Localizing herself,” considering the fact that she is “a first generation Chinese playwright, born in Canada, and [who] grew up in the suburbs of Toronto,” can also lead Chan to ask whether she is the right dramaturg for a particular process (Chan, Personal). She told me about a project recently that she had been working on as dramaturg that she eventually left. The play’s creators were two queer people, and they and Chan had discovered within the process that the work was specifically for the queer community. Chan encouraged them to invite some queer women to do a reading of the work, as besides the creators themselves there was no one else on the team who identified as queer. During the reading it was discovered “that the work speaks to the queer community really strongly” (Chan, Personal). Chan said that she felt “privileged to be in that room [while the work was being read] and to be able to say this is who your work is for, this is who it resonates for” (Chan, Personal). Chan herself does not identify as queer, and after the reading she communicated that she should stop the project since there was probably someone who could better serve the work better (Chan, Personal). Through considering her own identity in relationship to that of the creators, Chan actively attempted to create a better environment for the fostering of that particular work. In this case it meant stepping away from the project instead of assuming that by finding what she could relate to within the work, she could serve it as well as anyone else. On the other side of this, Chan also made it clear that she does not automatically work well with every Chinese-Canadian creator that she is paired with as dramaturg. Cultural identity similarities alone are not enough.

There are several other intersecting elements of one's identity that can affect the relationship between the dramaturg and creator, including gender identity, sexuality, language, the form of the piece, (many I spoke with talked about interdisciplinary work as a kind of cross-cultural relationship), race, and socio-economic class.

When one articulates consistently how one's identity and perspectives are different from another person, it opens up the possibility of disagreement and contention. How could that be a good thing for fostering the best space for art to be created? For diverse, and often marginalized, voices to express themselves? Something I wish I had asked in my interviews is about the conflict and contention that arises from the cultural differences between the dramaturg and the creator. I worded my central question to everyone I spoke with as: "How do you work to mitigate the influence of your own cultural biases and filters when you are working as cultural outsider to a work or artist?" I framed the conversations with a question that assumes that any influence from the dramaturg's own cultural identity within the process needs to be avoided at all cost. I went in with the assumption that the dramaturg's role is to create space for the artist's work, space that involves no conflict. Lo and Gilbert's model makes it clear that it is impossible for the dramaturg not to have influence on the exchange. Further, the dramaturgs I spoke with talked about the inevitability of disagreement within the process. Hague for example says that she is "told that [she is] wrong constantly" (Hague, Personal). Drawing on her store of personal stories when discussing why she thinks a character would act in a certain way, she will frame her feedback as X "doesn't make any sense because if that happened to me, I would feel this way because. The 'because' has to come from [her] own positionality, and so [her positionality] comes up constantly"

(Hague, Personal). It is within this context of bringing in her own positionality that Hague is able to be told that she is wrong, and to be in conflict with those she works with. In framing herself as speaking from a position she is no longer an objective "arbiter of what is good and what is bad" (Hague, Personal).

Looking at how Nolan and Lachance talk about how best ethical processes are negotiated also implies that there is disagreement in the relationships. If everyone always agreed, there would be no need for negotiation. It would not take the lengthy time that Nolan says it does to come to "what everyone can live with" (Nolan qtd. in Knowles, *theatre and interculturalism* 66). In the introduction to the article "Unsettling Settler Colonialism," white settler Corey Snelgrove, Punjabi settler Rita Kaur Dhamoon, and Jeff Contassel (Tsalagi) talk about what they have learned through their long-term relationship together. "Good relationships across difference," they state, "take time and care, and a willingness to live in contention" (Snelgrove et al. 3). It turns out that the possibility for conflict that I was so concerned about may in fact be an important part of the intercultural dramaturgy relationship. In Lee's study about intercultural friendship that I discuss earlier, the assumption going in was that the less conflicts experienced by the members of the relationship, the stronger it would be. What was discovered instead is that the strength of the relationship is less dependent on the number of conflicts, than on how well the conflict(s) between members are managed (Lee 17). In Nolan's work it is clear that there is a dedicated process of negotiating the conflicts and disagreements that arise from what each person is bringing with them into the work, and that working through this negotiation is the best way to create a process that respects everyone's differences. I wonder what conflict management might look like in the processes of the

others I spoke with? When Hague is told she is wrong based on the stories she is telling from her own life, how does she respond? Or, when Chan encounters the conflicts she discussed in her own practice when she does not choose to step away from a project?

To bring this chapter to its conclusion, I would like to consider what would happen in the relationship if the dramaturg did leave their identity completely out of the conversation. During Lift Off! '93, the dramaturg focused on what was "universal" in the work, and used a conventionally western approach to the dramaturgy that directly influenced the form of the developing plays. If Hague did not talk about her opinions in relationship to her own positionality, she would run the risk of giving feedback from an assumed objective stance. As soon as the feedback is presented as objective, then it cannot be argued. Or, if Hague did not consider the history that identifying language carried with it, she would have been unaware of the potentially exclusionary language she was using in creating the WOW Project. Further, if Nolan and Lachance did not actively presence their own histories, ancestors, language, relationships to land, and lived experiences, and negotiate a process based on the others they work with doing the same, the processes they work within would not be respectful of all those involved. Argument and conflict is inevitable if you bring difference into the conversation. But without articulating difference, you run the harmful risk of allowing the development process to be dictated by the dominant ways of knowing. Locating oneself as the dramaturg, as unique and different from whom you are working with, allows for the creator to also articulate their differences, their unique needs, perspectives, ways of seeing the world, understanding of artistic forms, etc. In Toronto, western colonialist culture still dominates, and difference in colonialist discourse, denotes "a remove from the normative

European practice" (Gilbert et al. 4). In post-colonial analysis however, difference is a "maker of identity, voice, and hence empowerment" (Gilbert et al. 4). For the artist to have space to be different, to work within a dramaturgy relationship that empowers them to create a process that is most productive for their own creative development, the dramaturg must also articulate their own differences. Contrary to assumptions that the dramaturg should make an attempt at invisibility, articulating one's identity throughout a process is a useful tool for creating productive intercultural development relationships.

CONCLUSION

The dramaturg is clearly an incredibly important role within the intercultural performance landscape of Toronto. They are much more than helper, much less than expert, and certainly not invisible. In looking at Toronto through the lens of the metaphoric and theoretical frames that Knowles uses in his own analysis of the city as an ecology of intercultural performance, the dramaturg can be understood as a space-maker. In this role they can be seen to create entryways and connections within the rhizomatic structure of Toronto's performance network. In their active creation of spaces and temporalities of "alternate ordering," new practices and connections across difference are emerging, further adding to Toronto's performance community as heterotopic space. Through their support of diverse practices and forms, dramaturgs are actively contributing to the vital diversity of the city's performance ecology.

Considering the dramaturgy relationship itself, the dramaturg working interculturally in Toronto functions outside of the assumptions about the role as invisible and expert. The transformations that are occurring on both sides of the dramaturgy relationship can be usefully understood through Lo and Gilbert's multi-directional model of intercultural exchange, which considers various socio-political factors, including the possibility of an imbalanced power dynamic, that surround collaboration across cultural difference. Contrary to assumptions about dramaturgs as experts, the dramaturgs I spoke with often do not have the cultural knowledge of the artists they work with. This not knowing on the part of the dramaturg, if used with sensitivity, can be a useful tool for developing work that is accessible by diverse heterogeneous Torontonian audiences. Looking at building a productive dramaturgical relationship across difference, Donna

Haraway's discussion of situated knowledges allows for a consideration of the experiential side of working directly with another person beyond the socio-political factors that surround an exchange. Situating the dramaturg's perspective in their body, and therefore as located and partial rather than distant and objective, reveals the importance of vulnerability on the part of the dramaturg in building a trusting and honest development relationship.

Further challenging the concept of the dramaturg as invisible, it can be seen that dramaturgs engage with, and articulate, their identities in various ways throughout the dramaturgy relationship. Thinking about the sociological conception of identity as relationally constructed, as well as Leanne Simpson's discussion of traditional story telling in which the story itself is revealed in the space *between* the teller and the listener, the influence of the dramaturg's own identity within the relationship, and on the work itself, becomes evident. Far from creating a prescriptive process, self-reflexivity that is actively brought into the relationship can prevent the inadvertent assertion of dominant western, colonial, dramaturgical forms. As can be seen through considering Lindsay Lachance's discussion of place-based dramaturgy, it is important for everyone, including the dramaturg, to bring into the process what they are carrying with them, so that a respectful and culturally appropriate way of working can be negotiated every time.

At the end of our conversation, Mel Hague shared with me her favourite metaphor for the patriarchy, a pendulum. In the centre it is white, straight, cis, and male. The pendulum swings when anything is done that falls outside of this, "but as it is a pendulum if the hitting stops, it will return to centre" (Hague, Personal). She stresses the importance of more people doing work that hits this pendulum, because the work is exhausting, and

"until we figure out a way to take the pendulum off its hinges we must continue hitting it" (Hague, Personal). The work of the dramaturgs in Toronto that I spoke with can be seen as continuously hitting at this pendulum. The dramaturg, aware of their own potential in their role, can create space for diverse artists and their practices in the Toronto theatre landscape that is still dominated by Western cultural expectations of theatre and performance. The dramaturg aware of their own cultural knowledge, willing to engage their own vulnerability, and to articulate their own identity, can empower artists in productive dramaturgical relationships across cultural difference. The six dramaturgs that I spoke with do all of this and more, actively using their role in the theatre landscape, and their own positionality, to support and collaborate with diverse artistic creation and practices. They are opening doors and paving the way for new artists to enter into the theatre world, and ensuring that these artists are supported throughout the course of their careers.

The strength of this research lies in how it pushes forward understandings of the role of the dramaturg, dismantling assumptions that prevent a consideration of some of the complexities and nuances that are involved in the development relationship across difference. In including the voices of six dramaturgs with different practices and perspectives, the impossibility of creating a fixed definition of the dramaturg becomes even more evident. I hope that this research can serve future inquiry into specifically understanding the role of the dramaturg when working across various forms of difference. Moving forward, the conversation needs to include more than just cultural perspectives and ways of knowing. As it is, those I interviewed and my following analysis included the various identities that intersect with cultural positionality, from

gender identity to sexuality. The importance of a conversation about identity is becoming more and more recognized within the theatre community. What needs to be included next in this conversation, according to Mel Hague, is a discussion of class, which she sees as "the last frontier" (Hague, Personal). Without a conversation about class, Hague continues, you only have part of the story, though she herself is still struggling with how to approach the topic (Hague, Personal).

I hope that this study can be useful to those I interviewed in that it provided an opportunity for self reflection, and for other dramaturgs working in Toronto and elsewhere to learn from the practice of those also navigating relationships across difference. If the range of responses and perspectives from the six people I interviewed is any indication, there is much to be learned from expanding this research to include the dramaturgical practices of others in Toronto I was not able to include in my case study. As well, interviewing just the dramaturgs, (and not also the artists they work with), means that I have only one side of the story. I wonder what could be understood about the negotiations in dramaturgical relationships by including creators in this discussion? Furthermore, Toronto's performance ecology is unique. I wonder what can be revealed about dramaturgical relationships where difference is involved by looking to the work being done in other active theatre centres in Canada, like Edmonton, or Vancouver? And putting these perspectives in dialogue with what I have already found in my research so far? Toronto is an excellent case study for beginning the conversation about intercultural dramaturgy relationships because of the proliferation of diverse practices that can be found in the city. I can only imagine, however, that there is much to be learned from work being done outside of this very particular place. I look forward to continuing this

work by including more voices from broader contexts in the conversation, as well as through continuing to explore my own practice of dramaturgy with creative artists.

To bring this work to its conclusion, I would like to look to Brian Quirt's article "Contemporary new play dramaturgy in Canada," in which he emphasises the importance of "a continued focus on diversity - cultural and creative" (28). He states that "There are more stories by a diverse body of artists drawing on more forms and traditions that we must cultivate by offering them access to the resources of theatre companies and festivals" ("Contemporary" 28). Quirt calls for dramaturgs to "change our institutions from within" to advocate for moving beyond "mainstream theatrical storytelling" (Quirt, "Contemporary" 28). He also stresses the importance of dramaturgs supporting director training and internships since "play development will only ever be as good as the plays and the directors who interpret them" (Quirt, "Contemporary" 29). I would like to push this one step further, and call specifically for dramaturgs and other theatre practitioners to actively make space for supporting new emerging dramaturgs. As was seen throughout my thesis, the cultural knowledge and the identity that dramaturgs bring with them into relationships can impact the kind of space that is created for the artists they work with. As Yvette Nolan states: "No one dramaturgy is going to serve everyone" (Personal). One important part of diversifying dramaturgical forms, is diversifying the people that are working as dramaturgs. Supporting emerging dramaturgs must involve respecting ways of knowing and story telling that fall outside the dominant western tradition, so that alternate forms and practices can flourish. To continue the exhausting work of hitting the pendulum that Hague discusses, we must go beyond focusing on supporting artists in telling diverse stories. We must also support emerging dramaturgs who will create new

kinds of spaces and ways of working, and through this empower the next generation of artists in their creation of new work for our stages.

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