

Guide? Me

A Self-revelatory Research Inquiry into Becoming a Drama Therapist

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A Research Paper

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ABSTRACT

Guide ? Me
A self-revelatory research inquiry into becoming a drama therapist

David-Jan Jurasek

The intention of this research paper is to communicate to the reader how the exploration of the role of the guide through the processes of qualitative research (heuristic and arts-based) and drama therapy (symbolic representation, story-making, role method, and self-revelatory performance) has affected the personal transformation and professional development of myself, a young male drama therapist. I will be describing the search and discovery of various findings about the guide role, especially in relation to the role of the drama therapist. I will also outline how a synthesis of the various drama therapeutic research methodologies contributed to my process of learning and growth. And finally, I will share with you, the reader, the various insights and gains I have received from this intensive journey into the heart of myself. This work is presented to inspire you (colleagues, artists, seekers, finders, guides and clients alike) to search and become your own guides as well as to understand more intimately this process through the eyes of a researcher and drama therapist.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to all of the guides in my life; the ones who foster my unlimited potential as well as those who cannot help to want to block it. I thank you for presenting me with adversity and opportunity equally.

I thank specifically my research guides: Suzy Lister for showing me a reasonable and compassionate way to inquire, and encouraging me to believe in my self; Stephen Snow, for showing me always another way to see beyond, around, and into a question; and Yehudit Silverman, for encouraging me to leap into unknowns but to always have in mind a way back.

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PROLOGUE

“A Dialogue”

A Voice asked: How do I find my Guide? For whom I'm longing as a flower
 uprooted, floating in the current of a vast river, and longing to
 feel itself firmly planted...

A Voice expected to hear silence, but
An Other Voice responded:

 How do you?
A voice: You're not answering my question?
Another voice: Aren't I?
A voice: I guess... Yes. I guess you are, smart one.
 But why don't you care?

Another voice: How do you know that I don't?
A voice: I guess... I don't know.
 I guess I have to trust.

Another voice: Do you have to?
A voice: No. I don't. I decide. Right?
 Wait a minute! Why am I asking you?
 Who are you?

Another voice: Who am I to you?
A voice: Who ever I decide, I guess. A friend, a teacher, a source of
 solace...
 But, wait. I have no way to make you be what I want so, why
 try?

(silence)

 You feel like the unknown.
 You could be...
 One who betrays me!
 Or, maybe, God, himself.
 Are you still there?

The other voice: What do you think?
A voice: I'm not sure. I guess so. I hear you!
 Where did you come from?

Another voice: Where did you find me?
A voice: Oh!?
 Well...

(upon reflection)

 Well. I sense you in my body, in my skin, in my organs. I
 smell you in the wind. I hear you in the whisper of trees. I
 feel you in my heart, my longing and my pain directing me to
 you. I think of you in my head, the memories and insights I
 have discovered, and the teachings I have heard which still
 echo inside me. And there I see you in my friends and lovers
 and in the eyes of a dog and the words of a mentor, and... and
 I guess I... see you, in my soul.

INTRODUCTION

The Context

This work is born out of the context of a personal and professional crisis. In the spring of 2004, as I was completing my second-year practicum in training as a drama therapist, I experienced the onset of a period best described as a burn out. Depressing, dissociating, panicking and re-experiencing traumatic memories was my daily fare for two months. Despite receiving consistent external praise and validation for my work and having a diverse community of friends in my life, I felt unable to shake off anguishing doubts about my professional competency in the role of a therapist and confusion and fear about my personal history. My usual introspective and independent nature turned to isolation, shame, and distrust. I was completely fragmented within and lost without. Deep within me were the seeds of a childhood dream to be an explorer, many developed and dormant artistic sensibilities, a keen desire to help others, as well as a religious upbringing and a broad spiritual belief system. So, as my drama therapy training was put on hold, I searched for some direction and a sense of meaning in my fractured life.

Over the course of the following year, my creativity, capacity to care for others, the support of friends and family, and a determination to clarify the truth about my life history, led me on a heuristic research inquiry to discover the presence of the *Guide* role in my life. In so doing, I hoped to overcome the obstacles to my becoming a drama therapist--a creative and therapeutic *guide* for others--as well as, to make enough sense out of my life story in order to feel confident to guide myself from here on.

The Question

The central question of this research paper is: how does exploring the role of the *Guide*, through a heuristic and self-revelatory performance process, affect the personal and professional development of myself, as an emerging drama therapist?

The term “role of the *Guide*” is linked to the role of the drama therapist (Johnson 1982), and as a significant function in Landy’s (2000) Role Method; to be described later on. In the creative synthesis of this research (see Appendix B), the *Guide* role is also explored in its multiple forms: as the spirit of dialogue between conflicting parties, as helper roles such as parents and mentors, as the transformative dramatic healing space, as a Higher Power, as a function of the storyteller, and as a force of wisdom and guidance within each of us.

The Relevance

I hope to elucidate, de-stigmatize, de-mystify, and make sense of some of the fears, doubts, and losses that are part of the challenging and rewarding calling of becoming and being a drama therapist. This research document is an invitation to other drama therapists to discuss, assess, explore, and strengthen their understanding of the *Guide* role as a vital and central role in the development of their own professional identity as therapists. I also hope that a thorough description and analysis of my process and the innovative fusion of methodologies employed (dramatic,

therapeutic, and research-wise) will be useful to other therapists in engaging successfully in similar and so far less-documented processes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Guide Role in Drama Therapy

According to some of the key pioneers of drama therapy (Landy, 1982; Johnson, 1992), the identity construct and performance of the role of the drama therapist can be well described in terms of the representative role of the *Guide*. Johnson (1992) has clearly pointed out that the drama therapist needs to be able to play multiple roles such a witness, director, and side-coach, serving various functions as an observing, directive and helpful presence, according to the needs of the client in the moment. The role of the *Guide* encompasses all of those aspects identified above. Being a drama therapist *Guide* also includes a more direct and personal involvement of the drama therapist in the world of the client. The *Guide* is at once fully in their body and in their own imagery, while in the play with the client, and also they are functioning as a presence outside of their immediate playing, by witnessing, noticing, and consciously intervening.

The function and challenge of the drama therapist acting in such an involved guide role has been identified by both Landy (1982) and Johnson (1992) as an ability to maintain a balance between being immersed in the subjective experience of the client, their own selves, and to remain observing as an external frame of reference, simultaneously.

In summary of drama therapy literature, to be able to embody the drama therapist as a *Guide* role, involves several factors: 1) an adequate level of awareness and trust in one's self (Johnson, 1992); 2) a fluency moving through with the various drama therapeutic methods (Landy, 1982); 3) the ability to maintain *aesthetic distance* (Emunah 1993), that is being immersed in active feeling and reflection simultaneously (Landy 1982); 4) the ability to play many diverse roles (Blatner, 1991; Landy, 1993); and 5) the willingness and capacity to empathize with different positions than from one's own (Moreno, 1946; Emunah, 1983).

Further insights about the role of the guide in drama therapy, as well as feedback on my own performance of the role also came from discussions with peers, in reviewing of the audience response questionnaires (see Findings section), and in discussions with my research advisor and my performance director.

In documenting my personal and professional development coming from this research process into the guide role, I will be focusing on how the various methodologies were intentionally used in: developing my ability to embody the guide role for myself and the audience of a self-revelatory performance/research presentation; increasing my awareness of and conscious manipulation towards maintaining a state of aesthetic distance; developing greater self-awareness and trust in myself; and, finally, in gaining a deeper understanding and mastery of the drama therapeutic processes to be used in my practice of drama therapy.

METHODOLOGIES

Throughout this research and healing process, I was aware of choosing appropriate (personal, academic, and artistic) methodologies. The criteria I went by was whether these methodologies came from my own interest and intuition; matched my level of experience and skill training; would be therapeutic, clear, and safe to use on my own; useful in sustaining this inquiry; and in an aesthetic form which would match well the ultimate function of presenting the findings. This led me to utilize qualitative research methodologies (heuristic and arts-based), because I needed to explore my own personal relationship to being a *Guide* and because I was fluent in arts-based media as a form of integrated learning and communication. I also used various drama therapeutic methodologies (self-revelatory performance, role method, symbolic representation, story-making and storytelling) because to learn to be a drama therapist and *Guide*, I felt I needed to use and master the methodologies of this vocation. Also, I was reasonably comfortable and versed in using symbols, stories and roles to explore the self, and in utilizing performance as a way of revealing personal and universal truths. The result of this research journey has been to formulate my own unique synthesis of all of the methodologies above. My hope is that the reader sees how unique and individual the heuristic process is and how it has the capacity, depending on the researcher and topic of research, to integrate several methodologies and related media.

Heuristic Research

[L]earning that proceeds heuristically has a path of its own. It is self-directed, self-motivated, and open to spontaneous shift. It defies the shackles of convention and tradition... It pushes beyond the known, the expected, or merely possible. Without the restraining leash of formal hypotheses, and free from external methodological structures that limit awareness or channel it, the one who searches heuristically may draw upon the perceptual powers afforded by... direct experience.
(Douglas and Moutsakas, 1985, p.44)

Focusing

In such a process, there are many hazards or rather detours along the way. It is very easy to go in many directions, especially when the question is not yet sharp and clear to the researcher. Immersed in some particular experience that seems too chaotic, one can pull back fast and suddenly lose grounding from their own lived experience; leaping onto abstract tangents. Or, one can stay around this area that is dark and unknown, perhaps raw even, and refuse to leave it, transfixed by a wound, or spellbound by a haunting nagging question that refuses to be articulated.

In this process, I have encountered many times when this occurred. A primary tool and maxim--born from the struggles and triumphs of experienced heuristic researchers—which allows one to maintain this rigorous self-inquiry and stay focused is to always return one's point of concentration back onto the research question. For the process of the inquiry to be progressive and sustained and the research outcome to be revitalizing, “we have to learn to be so accurate with our questions that the answer

is as clear and simple as possible” (Field, 1979, p.18), otherwise our labour and discoveries will become lost into “vagueness and indeterminateness” (Moutsakas 1990, p. 41).

Focusing in such a manner was incredibly useful to this inquiry. During initial exploratory writing, when I felt like I was fragmenting my attention into multiple memories and perspectives, or not perceiving any concrete direction and forward impetus, bringing my focus back to the *Guide* role and its immediate presence in my life, gave me a solid direction and a clear point of concentration which I needed to be able to search onward. It also provided alternate yet parallel and relevant routes to pursue, such as: looking at my ambivalent relationship to being a guide; the guide role’s function, voice, and origins in the social world around me; the guide in the drama therapist role; and as an intuitive resource within myself.

Mapping

Heuristic research methodology (Moutsakas 1990) provides a solid and reliable frame for understanding the stages of development of such a deeply intuitive and subjective process. Referencing one’s process to previous heuristic processes and the essential observed stages of heuristic research (which are: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis) provided me, as a solo researcher, a handy map with the guidelines and signposts I so needed for successfully completing the arduous journey. Having the general steps of this process outlined before me, gave me hope and foresight as to what to prepare for ahead; understanding and patience with myself for remaining in the various stages as much as

was needed; and it helped me gain a sense of the overall picture, when I was immersed in a stage of the process that seemed almost all consuming.

Deepening Inquiry through Self-Dialogue

Researching deeply into the nature of a phenomenon, like getting to know intimately another person, demands a process of honest exchange, back and forth, a give and take. When studying a phenomenon that is within one's self, one "may enter into a dialogue with the phenomenon, allowing the phenomenon to speak directly to one's own experience, to be questioned by it" (Moutsakas, 1990, p.16). As my focus was on the phenomenological presence of the guide in my life, I decided to speak directly to this role, by posing it my ongoing questions.

Amidst my inquiry, I would wake up late at night, in sweat and panic, asking the burning question: am I able to be the *Guide*, for myself and for others? Posing this question proved enlightening and unnerving, as it always stirred up more questions. Asking frantically, "When? How?" Waiting solemnly for a reply, wishing for a definitive authoritative and specific answer like: "On Tuesday, at 2:56PM. When you apply correctly the such and such technique on so and so." The answers I did receive proved to be far from literal or generalizable. The guide I was dialoguing with would answer me with clarifying yet leading questions, instead, such as: What do you mean by *able*? When would *you* decide? How could you do so *now*?" Our dialogue proved to expand my meanings, deepen my questions, and lead me onwards. It did not tyrannize my inner world with stale definitions and rehashed quotes, (even though this might have momentarily eased my anxiety). Such a rich and challenging encounter

deepened my inquiry because all dialogue demands an opening of the mind to new meanings, through a continual process of accommodation and assimilation, and leads one eventually to a state of embracing the ever-flowing process of discovery.

Arts-Based Research

Integrating Research and Art

Arts-based research is an “integrated inquiry involv[ing] thorough and systematic study while the artistic component offers ways of communicating information and methods of investigation” (McNiff 1998, p 51). The chosen creative methodology springs from the unique interplay between the person’s talents and needs, the nature of the research question and the field of inquiry. Integrating many drama therapeutic methodologies under the umbrella of arts-based research, made me aware of how this professional development and personal healing process is also a valid form of research and of how the self-revelatory performance is a form of creative explication and public presentation of the research data. This awareness helped me in valuing my creative insights and seeing them as research data. I would see the roles, images, and stories evoked during the study and treat them as my data findings and, then, set about to sorting, clarifying, and essentializing them as needed. The arts-based research frame and methodology also opened me up to the value and possibility of how I could elicit appropriate and useful feedback from peers, and, finally, in guiding me through what was needed for creatively synthesizing the research findings into a clearly communicated performance.

Value of Peer and Group Dialogue

According to McNiff (1998) and Moutsakas (1990), peer dialogue is a way of formulating, exchanging, and synthesizing discoveries which can greatly expand, deepen, and enhance one's own personal research exploration. The feedback loop in dialogue is a way for internal personal discoveries to be tested against the outer realities and inner realities of others: an essential process in checking the viability of new and uncommon ideas. Also, being able to articulate the new observations to others helps to give form to the emergent new ideas and to situate them in the framework of other's experiences (such as the past research done). On another level, being heard and having one's discoveries questioned and reflected, helps the researcher in distinguishing between rational and emotional aspects of their inquiry, which keeps the inquiry on track and the inquirer level headed. The feedback generated from dialogue can also provide lone researchers the necessary encouragement and stimulation to keep inquiring.

In addition, dialogue done in groups, or using group research methods as an adjunct to the self-inquiry can also be very useful. Group arts-based research has been observed by McNiff (1998) to be more essentialised and clearly synthesized. It is speculated, by the author, that perhaps this is so because one needs to work together and find the common denominators within a group. Also this might be because the inherent group dialogue in group research offers new ideas and challenges to individual's perceptions and beliefs about an inquiry. Group dialogue spurs the individual to both articulate and question their discoveries; challenging their assumptions and beliefs and opening themselves to new possibilities. Meanwhile, the

collective task corrals the group towards the need to essentialize, bring together, and be able to present their core discoveries to others.

For this research project, I co-created a group dialogue, to present and explore intermediary development of my research with an Introduction to Drama Therapy class and, as well, in reflection of the final creative synthesis performance (see responses in the Findings section). This process was very useful to me in the various ways described above as well as being personally affirming.

Symbolic Representation

Working with the Unknown

Inquiring into the nature of the *Guide* role, which serves an expanding and transcending function, demanded that I also open up to eye-opening experiences in my own personal life. Yet, delving into my past, shedding light on areas of pain and shame in my life, and knowing that I was to share this with my community of peers and friends, evoked great fear and resistance at times. Choices were multifold. Working in literal representative form--by writing out actual conversations with family members and painting a naturalistic picture—allowed me to gain some insight and awareness regarding my behaviors, yet, this direct form of discovery also evoked a great deal of shame when I considered performing also directly these aspects of my life to the world. I responded by pulling back and dissociating from the work or, from a re-traumatizing impulse, to obsessively replay certain areas of my traumatic

experience, like an endless loop. At times, I also shifted rapidly in trying to re-write my story and to change it, incessantly.

Focusing my energy on how these unresolved painful experiences related to the *Guide* role, I decided to stay still and notice what it was that was most important, that is what was most essential, to resolve within myself and share with the world at the time. I then intuitively searched for ways to imagine the themes and the emotions I was getting close to, in such a way that would be safe and sustaining to explore and to share with others. That is when I re-discovered the power of metaphor and symbol.

Our mind and body stores our various emotional states and memories of the past, in clusters of symbolic meaning, such as dreams, symbolic fragments and aesthetic associations, (Levine, 1997) rather than in literalistic, linear and rational ways, as the conscious mind tends towards. Metaphor and symbolic language tends to bridge the unconscious unnamed world to our waking consciousness (Jung, 1964). Drama therapeutic practice (Jones, 1996) has shown that playing with a symbol allows access to often painful sub/unconscious material that our conscious mind can work with in order to shape it into some meaningful and congruent story of one's life.

Many theorists and clinical drama therapists (Rubin, 1996; Jones, 1996; Johnson, 1991; McAdams, 1990; Gersie, 1993; Lahad 2003) have also observed the magic of symbolic representation to be able to help one to encounter and sustain the exploration of something deep and powerful within, which might otherwise overwhelm the person. "Through the containment and metaphoric nature of symbolic representation, the dissociated, silenced, overwhelmed/overwhelming memories,

feelings-sensations of the inner story become available to be worked with” (Whitman, 1996, p88).

I explored multiple symbols in this research and the performance (such as: the rapids, the rose and thorn bush, the rocks) which allowed me to revisit difficult themes (such as: fear of emotional overwhelm, guilt about leaving a client, and feeling like a victim as a child) in a safe and gradually unfolding way. Maintaining a constant yet evolving relationship with the symbols, during a three month process, allowed me to make parallels to actual events in my past, only when I was ready, psychologically, to make such associations and/or willing to share them socially.

Opening up the Self to Other Possibilities

Another aspect of symbolic representation is that the symbol of focus is both universal and timeless, and yet, also open and available for new interpretation and discovery (Stevens, 1999). Each time one approaches the same symbol, one is able to discover something new. Imagine a river. What associations do you have? Now, ask your neighbour for theirs and, then, ask yourself, a day later. The meanings of this symbol can both change and multiply when re-visited.

As a symbol can represent and hold great meaning for the one who initially evokes and identifies with it, it can also allow other meanings from the world to enter into and add to this person’s understanding of it (Combs & Freedman, 1990; Jones, 1996). It is both a container for the self and an open receptor to the world; at the same time. When the audience is able to relate to the symbols I have evoked and shared, they are able to respond on any level they wish. When they respond to me about the

symbol and share with me their insights (as in the audience questionnaire and post-performance feedback) I am able to receive their feedback through the intermediate projection of the symbol, on the level which I am willing and able to. Because the symbol has such deep associations within me, and yet, is understood by me as neither being an exclusive nor definitive representation of who I am, I am able to take in and integrate more deeply the associations of others. This simultaneous association with the symbol and distance from other's associations with it, protects me from the erroneous perception that it is *I* who is being evaluated or judged as a person and so eliminates my need to defend *my* self-expression/self. With this dual form of association and distance from the symbol (Jones, 1996), I have the freedom to accept or reject various feedback and to truly discriminate and choose how I wish to take it into my evolving and conscious construction of my self.

A powerful example of how a symbol can be consciously used, in such a dynamic de-construction and re-construction of the self, occurred for me when I evoked and then explored a symbol of a wounded boy in a rose and thorn bush. The boy symbol originally represented for me a client with whom I had worked and the thorns were the painful traumas we had both revisited together. From this simple image, came several questions, such as: How does a guide help a young boy, who hates him, mistakenly blames him for hurting him deeply and even wants to hurt him back? How does a therapist help a client who is reacting violently against them? How does this therapist resolve their own misplaced and painful guilt, even though they intellectually know that their client's behavior is ultimately coming from blocking the pain of their own unresolved past trauma? When I asked myself these questions

intellectually and expected literal answers, due to the contextual and complex nature of the questions, I believe, my feelings of guilt and the problems themselves remained unresolved.

Approaching my unresolved feelings and questions through metaphor and symbol, I was able to become aware of the complex array of conflicting emotions within me preventing me from moving through the problem. I realized that I blamed myself for his hurt feelings because his behaviour sometimes evoked rage in me and I believed that having such an emotional response as rage meant that I was also an aggressor and a bad person. I wished to reject his expression of his pain as a way to avoid my own guilt. I also believed that I had the power to save him from what obviously happened in the past. I believed that I could take his pain on and resolve it for him. Exploring the symbolic representation of these beliefs with a director and an audience, and hearing their responses (such as; “feeling burned by his fire, you had the right to choose to leave”; “no one has to hurt themselves on the thorns”; “just staying with him by the bush is what it means to be compassionate.”) opened me up to alternative ways of seeing the symbols and understanding their metaphorical relationships. Consequently, a deeper analysis of my own past actions (terminating with this client, burying my rage, and plunging into depression afterwards), an acceptance of my emotions (shame, fear, anger and my own hurt), and a deeper understanding of what it means to be a drama therapist (as one who is not responsible for their client’s projected painful emotions but responsible to help the client to become aware of, manage, and process such pain) evolved from this sustained symbolic interaction.

The Role Method

A Way of Exploring the Guide Role

Robert Landy's (1993) Role Method—a process which I knew from my drama therapy experience and training—provided a tangible and systematic way of developing further within myself the often elusive and expansive role of the *Guide*. By invoking, naming, playing out, embodying, and reflecting on the *Guide* role, this helped me to concretize the role and sustain my focus on it.

Invoking the *Guide* role allowed me to develop a direct relationship with the role. Writing to, calling forth, and intending to dialogue with the *Guide* was an affirming and informative experience.

Naming the *Guide* in its multiple forms allowed me to investigate the role through these various forms that were either tangible or already represented. These forms allowed me then to explore the *Guide* role in literature (ie: the Wounded Healer, God, Jesus, Spirit, Inner Guide, the trickster), in actual occupations (therapist, teacher, nature guides) and to dialogue with others about their own experiences of the *Guide*, as represented in their own lives. I also began to define my own personal conception of the *Guide*, as a questioning, spiritually supportive, and challenging function.

Embodiment and playing through the role brought me into the shoes of the *Guide*, giving me a direct experience of how it felt to be living and acting through this role. As the *Guide*, I felt myself to be as an inquirer, a trusting influence, a container, a source of love and compassion. These embodied experiences also allowed me to surface and become aware of my discomforts and hesitations in playing the role.

Reflecting on the *Guide* role gave me perspective to assess my relationship to the role and to decide how I wished to further incorporate it into my life. In reflecting, I realized how full and human the *Guide* role is; how objective and observant, yet also, deeply caring and understanding of human pains and deceptions. I realized how the function of the *Guide* was present in most aspects of my life already, and how, as a therapist, gaining greater access to and maintaining awareness of this role helps me to remain in professional and effective contact with my clients.

A Way of Conflict Resolution

Inherent in Landy's (2000) Role Method is also the understanding of how the *Guide* role emerges from an interaction between a duality of Role and Counter-role. This understanding guided me in embracing opposing beliefs and contrasting emotions within myself and outlined for me a process by which to move such conflicts towards insight and resolution.

Within any person there are psychodynamic conflicts (Moreno, 1946; Blatner, 1991), or role and counter-role dynamics (Landy 2000) – such as victim and bully, parent and child, etc.--which create inner tension and general suffering that is begging for resolution. In this research process, I became aware of some of the current and pressing tensions presenting themselves throughout my inquiry process and my current personal life, when I evoked and started working through two opposing roles. On the one hand, I carried within me the role of the orphan/seeker--a curious, youthful, open and naïve young man, who is very malleable to others' ideas and wanting to please. This role is terrified of being abandoned and yet always wandering

alone and lost; an orphan, searching for a direction, a teacher and a home. On the other hand, I also had within me the opposing role of the conservative martyr. This was represented by an old man who is set in his ways, authoritarian, know-it-all, solitary and self-righteous. This role watches over his crumbling house with constant suspicion of strangers and a deep sense of burden.

Now picture the two roles existing within me. You can imagine how either role's view alone can get me in trouble in my daily functioning and how the two roles being polarized might collide and emerge in any person as self-doubt, anguish over making decisions, and general self-flagellation. Fortunately, in adapting the role-counter-role process of the Role Method to this creative research, I was able to alleviate much of the tensions above.

By taking on the position of both roles to deepen my understanding of both their positions and needs equally, I was learning to hold the tension between them and to function as an intermediary *Guide* role. Mediating the conflict and allowing the roles to dialogue with one another, I was bridging the divide between seemingly opposite and divergent views. As a result, I began to experience a relief of my inner tension, a greater resolution of the conflict between these aspects and to feel myself moving towards a more creative and unified sense of myself. This further affected me in degree of personal insight and behavioural change. I now perceive myself as having a greater sense of wholeness, as well as, a definite choice over how I am expressing such diverse parts of myself.

Ultimately the *Guide* role, which emerged from within me, gave me the capacity to transcend the confines of the opposing roles and act beyond their polar

qualities of naïve or suspicious, bossy or submissive, dependent or solitary. This allowed me to move into being a person who can be open, discriminant, authoritative, and interdependent.

Story-making

Stories have been used since the beginning of time for making meaning out of our lives (Keen & Valley-Fox, 1973; White & Epston, 1990). Since a story demands from us to place our experiences in a linear and causal chain of events, it is our inherent way of “meaning making, the shaping or ordering of past events” (Chase, 2005, p.656). When encountering divergent dreams, symbols, beliefs, and emotions during this inquiry, I was able to bring them into an existing framework of my life and therefore make meaning out of them by weaving them through the process of making stories. Creating meaning, or making sense, out of what initially appeared as senseless and chaotic helped me therapeutically to contain and master my life experiences.

Rubin (1996) and Ciona (2001), among other storytellers/researchers/drama therapists, have further described and elaborated on how stories can contain the difficult experiences of life and give them a context to be relived safely on stage. Knowing that there is a narrative through-line, various steps to go through, and that each step could lead me to a greater resolution of some of the difficult themes and moods I might encounter, helped me to know that I would not get stuck in any particular place. This allowed me to go through the process with some assurance.

Stories are also a way to reveal the nature of a role (Landy, 2000). By placing a role in context to its history, environment, and relationship to other roles, it's essence,

function, and course of development become realized. For me, developing a story about how various characters imagine and search for their guides, allowed me to momentarily situate, explore, and clarify the role of the *Guide*; a role which is often elusive, expansive, and ever-changing.

Stories are so ancient and fundamental to our way of being (Campbell & Moyers, 1988). They function as the simplest and most effective ways of communicating our themes, concerns, and discoveries to each other (MacAdams, 1993). According to Rubin (1996) and Keen & Fox (1973), stories can provide the common language for both the audience and the performer to understand and intimately follow along with each other. In my case, the dramatised narrative provided the audience with a very accessible way to assimilate the research findings (as the audience feedback in the Findings section confirm) and to understand the most essential and meaningful elements I wished to share about my sometimes, seemingly complicated and chaotic life.

In summary, stories are a clear way to structure explorative research (make sense of the messy parts of our lives), a way of containing and framing intense experiences so that they may be re-experienced and processed safely, a way to reveal the nature of a character/role, and a powerful and universal way to communicate one's research and self to others.

Self-revelatory Performance:

A self-revelatory performance (Emunah 1994) involves a drama therapeutic exploration of a person's or persons' immediate life issues culminating in a self-revealing theatre performance before their community.

As a Process of Personal Transformation

One intention of self-revelatory performances is to surface individual pain and to heal it in a collective space.

The chief sting of pain comes from a feeling that it is buried. Theatre performs one of its most valuable functions when it pulls the inward agonies to the surface where they can be seen for what they really are. Where the causes can be examined, where the hurts can be compared, where they can related to contrary conditions of hope and health and be thereby clarified.

(Selden, 1969, p.100).

A self-revelatory performance allows the client-performer the possibility of being seen and heard in the places inside them which are most isolated and shamed, and to completely transform this pain into healthier core beliefs and ways of being.

Through a deep exploration and rehearsal process, maintained within a supportive therapeutic frame, the client's pain is first revealed and expressed as something to work through. My immediate life issue, upon starting this research process, was facing the strong desire of fulfilling my life's vocation of guiding others in the role of therapist while also feeling anxiety and dread about doing so.

Through therapeutic and creative exploration, intense painful emotions surface to be processed, various causes and associations are explored, and the beliefs--which are troublesome and defeating to the client--are exposed and put into question. In

exploring-- through improvisation, rehearsals, and scene-writing--my desire of becoming a therapist, I discovered various emotional obstacles. I had deep resentment and hurt feelings about being threatened, neglected, and beaten by my father and used for personal gratification by my mother. These past experiences resulted in my internalization of persistent beliefs that I was still a victim deep down and that I was responsible for the pain and unmet needs of others. A lengthy exploratory rehearsal process--which included reviewing scenes from my life, constructing symbolic representations and challenging my beliefs--helped me to become aware of these emotions, to gradually release them, and make new meanings out of my experiences.

As the self-revelatory process develops towards performance, the presenting issue(s) are more clearly formulated and honed, by aesthetic decisions, into a work of performance art. This helps the client to step back and find appropriate distance, as well as, preparing them to share their concerns through artistic representation with the rest of the world. In crafting my issues into dramatic scenes, with progressive narrative movement and symbolic power, I was aware that the issues began to be felt as outside of myself, encased in the performance, in the words, the movements and the ideas that were, at the same time, being refined.

As the client-performer rehearses to perform their struggle of transformation, their pain is revisited in an effort to be mastered. I could touch on my angry and hurt feelings without being as immersed and overwhelmed, as before. Each time I felt and expressed these emotions, I felt greater control and growing insight into their position. I could start to see the vital personal lessons and wisdom coming from having lived through such difficult events. In sharing my pain with witnesses, the universal

significance and relevance of my experience became apparent. As well, through the externalizing, crafting, and performing of my former pain, I learned to look at the situations which evoked my painful feelings from different angles. And so, I discovered many new perspectives to consider, which invited me beyond the old perceptions that I was responsible for the other people's behaviour, or that I was still a victim of life circumstance.

This process is illustrated in my interaction with the creative synthesis performance. In one scene, the Old Man beating the Young Man, just after his prized possession--his ancestral home--burns down unexpectedly (See Appendix B, p. 55). This scene represented for me the pain of being beaten as a child and not reconciling with such harsh punishment. In my childhood, I had felt myself being repeatedly threatened, attacked and betrayed. Eventually, I felt powerless to defend myself. The residue of these emotions, not being fully processed, was a feeling a long held resentment towards my father. Yet, in exploring this scene, refining it, and performing it before an audience, I began to see how the Young Man's misunderstanding of the gravity of the Old Man's pain and loss was insulting to the Old Man. As well, I saw how the Old Man's reluctance to truly guide the Young Man came from his own intense fears of leaving his perceived comfort zone (which was being alone watching over his broken down childhood home) and his incapacity to know how, from his own experience, to nurture and guide another person. From making such realizations, through the metaphoric use of the drama, therapeutic process, I began to understand the sense of loss and impotence which motivated my father to express his rage at me, as a

small and vulnerable child, and I felt relief from blaming him or myself for what happened so long ago.

As the client's pain is transformed, a self-revelatory performance also provides a chance for new insights and ways of being and behaving to be witnessed, validated, and recognized before an audience of the client's community (Johnson, 1980; Emunah & Johnson, 1983). Consequently, through a powerful and honest performance, that is witnessed, the client is perceived and treated by their community as a creative human being, capable of effecting deep and lasting transformation and change in their own lives (Emunah, 1994). I definitely felt, in more ways than one, that I was transforming the victim/martyr role within me. I was discovering my ability to guide others with firmness and strength, while being vulnerable and human at the same time.

As Professional Role Training

Many students at Concordia University of Montreal, Canada (Ciona, 2001; Colangelo, 2002; May, 2002) and the California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco (Hall, 1996; Loyd, 1998; Rubin, 1996; Whitman, 1996) have used the self-revelatory performance frame within their training process as emerging drama therapists. For many of these drama therapists in training, who have gone through the self-revelatory process (including Ciona, 2001; Colangelo, 2002; May, 2000; Rubin, 1996), the role of the drama therapist and *Guide* was naturally evoked in them as they moved through their process. Along with May (2000), I am proposing that the self-revelatory performance/research inquiry can also be used directly to explore the drama therapist intern's relationship to the emerging role of the drama therapist in their

personal and professional life. As well, a self-revelatory performance can provide a more focused experience of practicing and fulfilling this new professional role before an audience of peers and colleagues, for validation and critical feedback.

The audience of colleagues and mentors can play a vital role in this form of professional development. Feedback from peer witnesses and my director (also a colleague), about my performance of the *Guide* role, offered me alternative ways in which I could play the role. For example: during one rehearsal, it was suggested that I play the Storyteller with more mystery and magic. Another time, I was invited to bring in the quality of playfulness and to have more fun as the *Guide*. Embodying the *Guide* role and receiving immediate and direct feedback from those who were also playing this role in their own lives was a true “rehearsal for life” (Moreno, 1946). This experience gave me a felt sense of how my playing the role is perceived by others and expanded the freedom of variations I have within this role.

Audience feedback received during and after the performance also provided me with invaluable responses to clarify any dissonance between my own perceptions, regarding playing the *Guide*/drama therapist role, and the perceptions of my diverse professional colleagues. For example, during my second performance, I experienced a strong desire to impress the audience and to be liked; which I interpreted as inappropriate for a therapist/*Guide*. I also felt a pang of self-consciousness and fear of being judged negatively for being seen in this longing I was experiencing. Feelings of shame and perceptions of about being a vain performer and too ego-centric to be a *Guide*, arose in my mind and body. Yet, with courage and audience support, I continued performing, expressing my story and guiding the audience, while

maintaining awareness of these intense reactions. Throughout, the audience stayed very engaged in the performance. Their response afterwards was quite a reality check for me. They validated that I was successful in earning and maintaining their trust as their *Guide* and that I performed this role well. My own emergent negative emotions and beliefs about myself in the role did not correspond to this image of how I was being seen. Consequently, I realized that the desire to be liked and accepted by others was a valid need, which neither has to impede my performance as a *Guide* (by acting on the impulse to please or impress) nor does the need have to be shamed and denied within me. This experience has led me to reframe my perceptions and my conceptualization of the *Guide*/drama therapist: as a role which puts the needs of the group above his/her own, yet maintains compassionately his/her own emergent desires as well.

In addition, the audiences' presence during my performance and their verbal and written responses afterwards validated the strengths I have already developed (strong poetic sensibility, understanding of drama medium, authority, flexibility and care as a therapist/guide) and brought attention to what I would need to further develop in order to function professionally in the drama therapist role (trust in the core value of one's presence; compassion; and acceptance of the limits of our ability to effect change in some of our clients' lives).

Ultimately, my involvement in this self-revelatory performance was the truest test of whether I was capable and ready to function professionally in the role of the drama therapist. In revealing myself intimately to my community, I fostered my ability to be honest and transparent with others. It offered me a chance to master some of the

painful elements of my own life and to model to others how this can be done. In simultaneously guiding myself and the audience throughout a two-hour performance process, I was able to learn and to demonstrate how to maintain a proper aesthetic distance within myself and how to do so for the audience. I was also able to refine my skills in various drama therapeutic methodologies and develop my confidence in applying them. For this completely transformative opportunity, I am very grateful.

Some Risks & Challenges

The risks inherent in this work—when digging deep within and planning to expose one's self—can easily result in a periods of fragmentation, self-indulgence (stuckness), and either emotional rawness or extreme detachment. Such defense responses can be expected, outlined and addressed through--the ritual of theatre, the support network (Snow in Lewis & Johnson, 2000), and in balancing therapeutic, audience, aesthetic concerns.

To develop a successful self-revelatory performance, one that is simultaneously of deep personal relevance and universal quality, both spontaneous and well communicated dramatically (Emunah, 1994), this methodology suggests: 1) working with a experienced director as an external guide and container; 2) considering your audience's aesthetic needs--such as, needing to know what will happen, to be surprised, and emotionally moved--(Selden, 1969); 3) trusting and developing the inherent aesthetic structures of the theatrical frame (Landy, 1993) to give form to the research inquiry and contain any strong emotions; and 4) respecting the suggestion

“that support groups must be in place before and after the performance” (Snow in Lewis & Johnson, 2000, p. 230).

Once all of these pre-requisites are met, the challenge of achieving success (for the client, performer, researcher, and audience) in this eclectic work lies in being aware of and striking a balance between a) personal and universal significance, and b) emotional expression and reflective commentary. Monitoring such concerns and intervening, therapeutically and aesthetically, was of vital concern to me during my process. I remember vividly how, when my focus became unbalanced or I touched a nerve which triggered in me a response to a certain traumatic event, my director helped me to restore balance--in myself and in the work--by drawing my focus on these concerns. Therapeutically, one can be guided by asking questions such as: how I am feeling about the event and about exploring and performing it? What aspect do I need to and am ready to communicate about this issue to the audience now? And, possibly, what else does this image/scene remind me of in my life? Aesthetically, one needs to consider: what is most essential and necessary to the integrity of this piece of art, to be articulated at this point in the performance? And, how can the use of story, role, voice, embodiment, props, lighting, and music communicate these points best?

Ultimately, I discovered that a successful self-revelatory performance leads the audience to a state of personal satisfaction and illumination, as well as a sense of communion with the performer/client, who in turn experiences a deeper internalization of such a powerful experience.

The Role of Storyteller as Guide

The Storyteller role in a self-revelatory performance/research outcome can serve many important and guide-like functions.

Actually performing in a self-revelatory performance, being alone on a stage before an audience and sharing one's own experiences, can be a nerve racking and emotionally evocative time, to say the least. Maintaining a healthy sense of aesthetic distance during a performance entails going through a catharsis, "a re-experiencing of emotions without being overwhelmed by them" (Landy, 1993, p148), which allows for the performer to feel safe and in control of their presentation. This emotional security allows for new insights to emerge from present moments of discovery. One aspect of the Storyteller role is to serve as a *Guide* who helps navigate this aesthetic distance for the performer, as they are balancing between immersing themselves in the intense emotions, which are arising, and being able to maintain a reflective observing state. For example, during the performance, there was a moment which involved my direct expression of a feeling of terror, which was expressed in metaphor as facing the possibility of being smashed against a rock and dying in the rapids. In rehearsals, I felt a tremendous resistance to accessing and expressing such true feelings of terror, as well as, lacking a deeper understanding of the present context for those feelings or where they had originated from in my actual life. Acting in the role of the Storyteller, during the performance, allowed me to observe the action and process simultaneously. The Storyteller role gave me the option to narrate the action as it was happening from an observing stance. The role also functioned to voice safely the associations I was experiencing—initially evoked from the symbolic representation--to actual trauma

laden memories of being beaten by my father, as a child, and of being attacked, as a young man, by a group of Skinheads. The process of stepping out of the once emotionally overwhelming immediacy of embodying the scene, drawing links and analogies, while moving the story ahead, helped me to have the distance to make sense out of previously senseless and disordered past experiences. In speaking the once unspeakable, slowing the action down, narrating it step by step, I began to acquire a sense of mastery over being able to observe and experience more completely my helplessness, shame, and rage and so to gain relief from and mastery over the traumatic elements of these specific past events.

The Storyteller acts also as an intermediary, a multi-level guide between the world on stage (which is a projection of the writer, director, and actor's inner worlds) and the world of the audience (individual and collective). As an intermediary between the performance space and the audience, the Storyteller role functions in this way as a sort of vibe watcher or mood manager, making adjustments so that there is: "the appropriate emotional distance that enable(s) the audience to receive personal material... and feel safe enough to relax and be carried along" (Rubin, 1996, p36). The storyteller is coaxing and enchanting the audience—through repetition, pacing, and a genuine presence--into a suggestive, open, and relaxed state, so that they may identify with the world on stage. As yet unresolved problems and emotions are stirred up, the storyteller uses the dramatic elements of surprise and humour to release built up tensions. To bridge this divide between the audience and the world on stage (actor, characters and story), the Storyteller is able to step out of the immediacy of action and to address the audience, building a rapport, a vital connection.

The Storyteller, as a form of the *Guide*, also function as a communicator, clearly explicating the research to the audience in a language that is engaging, focused, and moving. The Storyteller ensures such clarity by emphasizing, simplifying, and clarifying the story action. The Storyteller can also spontaneously and directly respond to the audience's feedback (tension, boredom, confusion) during a performance by surfacing and commentating on it, engaging in a dialogue with the audience, and/or filling in the gaps of understanding.

Embodying the Storyteller role before a live audience of my professional community helped me to integrate the role of *Guide* more fully.

FINDINGS

Audience Responses

The Audience Context

The audience was comprised of various colleagues, mentors, and friends within the mental health providers community; the majority were drama therapists. There were approximately sixty audience members in total from the two performances, which were held on June 7th and June 13th, 2005. As the performer and *Guide*, I received feedback verbally and engaged in a dialogue after each performance (see DVD copy attached). I also requested the audience to fill out qualitative questionnaires (see Appendix C) after the shows. I received back fifty full responses.

A Synthesis of the Audience Responses

Generally, the responses to the open ended questions below were qualitatively very diverse. I offer a synthesis of the responses under identified categories. As well, I offer my own brief analysis/response, not to be mistaken for a definitive interpretation, but to give you, the reader, an impression of how stimulating and valuable the audience was to this research and to myself personally. A further integration of the audience responses and my own process occurs in the following section (entitled “Integration”).

Asking the audience to rate the research outcome/performance regarding the degree to which it was “clear”, “emotionally moving”, and “satisfying”, the vast majority scored “very well” and “well” on all aspects; with two separate scores for “somewhat”. This and their qualitative elaborations (ie: “expressive, acted well... powerful metaphors... Great use of aesthetics: lights, humour, acting”) indicates to me that the performances were successful on the communicative, emotional and aesthetic levels.

A few individual responses spoke to wanting the show to go on longer (because it was so engaging!), for the narrative to bring further resolution, for there to be more action and less narration, and for some of the symbols to be linked more to my personal life. These honest suggestions I value and shall consider if I ever develop and expand the piece further. They are telling me that the audience is always ready and willing to witness more and this encourages me to take further risks on the journey of the continuous unfolding of my self.

A creative arrangement of the written audience identified themes are arranged
in verse, below:

**“Looking for light, searching for... some inner guidance... a mentor,
a teacher...**

Mother and son

Father?!

Who is the guide?

I am definitely the guide!

It’s about the Real self, realized...

The soul searching...

Finding our own answers

Amidst the personas... multi-faceted beings we are...

Striving for better life

There is a necessity of risk !

A fear of the unknown...

Blind abandonment/surrender to fear

Self-doubt

Self-doubt

Loss.... abandonment

Rage and sadness

Struggle

Trauma

Repetition and reparation

Confronting fear

Necessity of discerning the purpose of fear and chaos

And moving beyond

Transformation!

In forward movement

Overcoming adversity

Adventure into unknown,

Embracing the journey,

Patience & perseverance

Understanding

Forgiveness & reconciliation”

Asking the audience, “Was this performance research in any way relevant to you? Many responded, “Yes! Most definitely! Umhmm. Very much!” In hearing verbal responses being voluntarily offered, from almost every audience member, and reading through written comments such as “You touch on themes all of us can relate to,” and “The mythic quality of stories presented was universal” leads me to suppose that the performances were in some way relevant to most of the audience members.

Regarding the audience member’s questions and insights, an arranged selection of responses follows below:

Regarding this drama therapeutic research process:

“The use of metaphor and story as a tool for confronting and working through” “deep issues.”

**“The transformative role of performance
The Power of theatre to heal”**

[Performance as...]

“Research.”

“Step 5 in 12 steps”

“As healing process”

“Initiation rite to becoming a therapist.”

“Using this process in working with adolescents”

[Interesting questions]

“How does one work through fear?”

“In Self-revelatory theatre—to what extent can metaphorical and naturalistic scenes be balanced as interventions.”

Regarding the role of the *Guide*:

“God

**Omnipresent Communal
Integral
Internal
Mentor
Therapist**

**As a watchman, looking for windows of opportunity with a client
Is always there guiding us whether we know it or not
Can be in many forms, easy to forget
Arising in the ‘space between’
(see Landy & Jung)”**

Regarding the process of becoming a *Guide* (in any sense, yet especially as a therapist, teacher, leader):

((((((Trepidation))))))

Leap of faith

**As therapists we need to:
Be able to guide clients safely, responsibility
...Constantly practice listening...
Be processing our own emotions through drama,
Learning to let go
&
[Get in touch with our limits]**

Being a therapist...

requires not less than everything,...

the maintenance of that space... between... which is sacred.

**Our
presence,
omnipotence,
& heart.**

It takes it all my friend.

So,

I accept my role as humble learner

And that we continually challenge our own image of what a guide should be.

*** Oh, yeah, and humour, anything can be laughed with...**

Integration:

The following are discoveries made from an integration of my direct experiences

with the feedback collected in response to this heuristic solo-inquiry.

A Current Understanding of the Guide Role

The function of the *Guide* is to: guide, witness, question, encourage, support, challenge, empower, affirm, recognize, transcend, play with, and nurture one towards growth, insight and healing. The *Guide* can manifest itself on many levels: outside and beyond ourselves (ie: God, higher power, dead relative, angel); in other people we have contact with (ie: a client, a drama therapist, friend, parent, sibling, peer); and within ourselves (ie: inner knowing, intuition, observer role). Through this research process, I specifically experienced the *Guide* role emerging and acting through my own playing of various related roles (ie: writer, researcher, storyteller, performer, and ritual facilitator). I perceived it as a quality that was present in my teachers, mentors, peers, friends, and within my director, and also my therapist. I also experienced the *Guide* within myself (as my deepest intuition, an observing ego, a spirit of inquiry); as the transcendent function, that is outside of myself and others (as God, a collective intelligence/awareness, the healing function); and, lastly, I was aware of the *Guide* as an awareness of the presence between all of us (as the ritual space, the present moment, experiencing the awareness of the connection between everything and everyone).

Assessment of the Research:

Meeting of Goals

The primary goal of arts-based research, according to McNiff (1998), is not to prove, validate or create reliable data, but to create possible credible hypothesis based on personal experience. The question, then, is whether the outcome of this research process and its documented process has proven itself to be useful to other drama therapists who are wishing to develop themselves professionally and/or personally through exploration of the role of *Guide*, engagement in the self-revelatory process, and/or the heuristic/arts-based research frames? I hope the inclusion and integration of the very positive audience responses has clearly verified the communicability, validity, and relevance of this research to my peers. I also ask myself, as a heuristic researcher searching for validity in this work: Did this project unearth new insights and propose viable hypothesis in response to the research question?

Professional Development

Returning to the goal of developing myself professional, I ask myself now: how did this research affect change and development of myself as a drama therapist?

This process gave me a chance to practice and refine playing the *Guide*/therapist role, in rehearsals and performances, before a community of peers, who gave critical and useful feedback that helped me to develop my playing of this role. Frequent audience responses, such as “you embodied the guide well”, “Honest and brave... the way in which you faced your own internal trauma”, “I felt taken

through a process” and “very included in journey”, proved to me that my therapist colleagues recognized and validated my performing of this role, professionally.

The intense immersion into drama therapeutic methodology provided me with extensive experiential training in the forms and processes I will be practicing with clients in the future. Consequently, I saw my level of skill and confidence rise in applying all of these methods.

Most importantly, this process developed my own confidence in my ability to be a drama therapist, to recognize and maintain aesthetic distance, to be comfortable playing multiple roles alternately and simultaneously, and to have a greater capacity for empathy with clients, even under difficult interpersonal conditions.

Personal Development

As a personally therapeutic self-revelatory journey: Did this work affect any sort of personal changes? If so, how?

Detailed descriptions abound, interspersed in the methodology section, so I will only briefly summarize. Through exploring more deeply my own life experiences and transforming some of the painful traumas I have been carrying, I have come to be able to forgive myself and free myself of much debilitating resistance to fear, guilt, loss, and resentment. This has given me a sense of emotional freedom and increased sense of power to choose and to love in my life. A better understanding of myself has also deepened my empathy of the parallel life concerns (such as: living through child abuse, fear of being in authority and taking responsibility, and redemption from guilt) of others. I feel less alone and closer to others. I now have a deep and abiding sense of

connection to my inner *Guide* and a sense of personal integrity even as there are still many aspects of who I am to be discovered and developed. I feel a sense of accomplishment and pride in the work that I have forged. I feel more confidence in going out and working as a drama therapist, which feels validating and affirming.

Limitations

The greatest limitation was time. If more time was taken (in terms of months, or years) and spent, this inquiry could go further in deepening my understanding of and confidence in the *Guide* role. Yet this is an endless adventure and there are definitely limits to how long one can indulge in working on a master's research project. So, onward to clinical practice I go!

Regarding a self-revelatory performance, created within the context of heuristic research, I inform the reader to be aware that there are some challenges that come with overlapping the goals and contexts of academic research, professional development, theatrical presentation, and personal therapy. Having a few years experience in therapy and personal processing helped, but newly discovered material came up and so I was called to go deeper inside and to demonstrate a greater capacity to guide my own healing process. Having two years of professional development as a drama therapist (theory and internship) was one thing, yet demonstrating my skills of guiding myself and doing so before a live audience of peers, was a step up in honing my skills as a therapist/*Guide*, accepting more direct feedback from my peers, and demanded performing at a higher level of functioning, as a therapist and a client. I was also challenged to learn, master, and integrate my understanding and application of

heuristic and arts-based research methodology (up until then, only superficial) and of theatrical aesthetics I was weak in, such as lighting and voice. This kind of research experience is a dive into the unknown areas of one's self. So, one should expect to feel disoriented or green, at least for a while. The more I had experience with certain methodologies afforded me greater freedom and security to face those unknowns.

A secondary challenge, worth mentioning, was juggling the terminology of the various methodological frames as you communicate what your intentions and goals are to others, who may be only used to the terminology of their own particular field. Working on different levels at once (on aesthetics of the performance, personal processing, theoretical conceptualizing) can strengthen and affect greater integration for the person, yet also can be a maddening experience of wearing too many hats at once; depending on your experience and ability. Hopefully, this paper has shown that there are more links and overlaps between these forms, which only strengthen and deepen the efficacy of this kind of process as a whole. For instance, to be aware of and to address one's personal barriers (self-indulgence, fragmentation, lack of focus, triggering of past trauma) can positively affect the course and quality of research and parallels the clearing of obstacles towards creating a successful self-revelatory performance.

Relevance to Field

This process has already demonstrated (see the Methodologies section, particularly in "Self-revelatory Performance: As Professional Development") that there is great personal and professional value to this multi-layered form of research. In

summary, any creative arts therapist, engaging themselves in a self-inquiry research process and especially in an expressive therapeutic form like the self-revelatory performance, can use this process to develop a greater awareness of their personal issues, a greater capacity for maintaining aesthetic distance, greater confidence and mastery with the methods they are learning to apply. Also, the audience feedback and my own personal experiences confirm that such work can be useful in expanding and deepening the understanding of the drama therapist role, both collectively for the audience of peers and individually for the drama therapy student/performer/researcher.

A Further Recommendation

The experience of a drama therapist engaging in a self-inquiry performance can be an invaluable experience for them in developing and deepening their personal insight into a particular issue, as Ciona (2001) and Colangelo (2002) have done and which has reportedly served them in their work with clients with similar issues. It has also been proposed and employed by drama therapists May (2000) and Rubin (1996) as a tool for the training of drama therapists. Besides learning the art and practice of the profession via the usual training means (intellectually through theory, by vicarious observation, by doing brief experiential work in class, and by being supervised in their internships with clients) the young drama therapist can develop greater mastery over the role of the drama therapist by taking charge of their own research process, structuring and disciplining themselves through it, and in acting as their own *Guide* (drama therapist and researcher) through the inquiry process and its live presentation. Employing the methods of drama therapy on themselves successfully, drama therapy

students could also gain a greater degree of confidence with such methods and a deeper personal experience of the process: helping them to develop a sensitivity to how the processes they have used with themselves might affect their clients. In summary, the experience of the self-inquiry performance could engender a greater degree of professional efficacy, confidence in and understanding of drama therapy processes, understanding of certain issues, and empathy towards clients. Therefore, using this approach as a part of a training process is to be highly recommended for all drama therapists, especially those encountering role confusion and/or self-doubt and confidence issues, which I did, as emerging drama therapists.

SUMMARY

A period of professional burn out and personal soul searching prompted this solo self-inquiry into finding and becoming my own *Guide* and rebuilding the confidence I needed to be able to guide my clients as a drama therapist. A creative synthesis of this research journey was expressed through two self-revelatory performances, the first of which is documented in DVD format and attached. How this journey, using a combination of research and healing methodologies, helped to accomplish my professional development and personal change is the focus of this written component.

The heuristic research frame gave me the academic validation and precedence I wanted to be able to leap into such a personally rigorous and involving process. It provided me with a map of the expected stages of development, which helped me to chart and validate my progress, and helped me to define a central question, which

helped me to stay centered and focused. In applying a method of heuristic self-dialogue, a deeper understanding of the *Guide* role and my direct relationship to it emerged.

Arts-based research provided a holistic container to integrate the performance and the projective fine arts (images, stories, symbols) with the rigors and framing of formal qualitative research. Group and peer dialogue was useful to the lone researcher in helping him to formulate and sharpen his own insights, offer new discoveries to expand his own personal understanding, and in engage in a collective process of synthesizing discoveries. At times, this form of dialogue provided me with sustaining encouragement needed to keep searching alone in new places.

Symbolic representation and the use of metaphor allowed easy and safe access to often painful sub/unconscious material that my conscious mind could explore and shape into something acceptable and meaningful. The power of symbols to contain multiple meanings and to allow for an indirect, yet deep, exchange between the client/performer and the audience/witness offered me new possibilities of seeing my struggles and my self.

The Role Method provided a systematic process by which to explore a role more thoroughly and deeply. By invoking, naming, playing out, embodying, and reflecting on the *Guide* role, I was able to understand it from multiple angles. Thus, I developed a fuller understanding of the *Guide* role: from conceptualizing it, having a direct inner experience of it, noticing my own feelings about the role, from exploring social context and perception, and from my full performance of its functions. The Role

Method also gave me a way to discover the function of the *Guide*, through the intentional process of resolving some of my own inner role conflicts.

Story-making is both an ancient tradition and a core aspect of drama therapy practice; useful as a way of making sense of divergent themes and emergent material. Stories are also recognized as a universal vehicle of communicating one's personal themes and so structuring my performance in narrative threads proved to be a very clear and effective way of explicating the creative synthesis of this research outcome.

Self-revelatory performance allows the client-performer the possibility of being seen and heard in the places inside them which are most isolated and shamed, and to completely transform this pain into healthier core beliefs and ways of being. It is also a way of training drama therapists; encouraging the development and practice of their professional role before a community of their colleagues and peers.

Many benefits came from the playing of the Storyteller role. Such a role allowed myself as the researcher to maintain aesthetic distance in revealing and performing my own personal stories, to sustain the transitional theatrical frame, and to positively influence the effect of the experience on the audience. Furthermore, the practice of playing the role of Storyteller provided me with a witnessed, validated, and direct experience of being a *Guide*.

Lastly, the audience participation was incredibly powerful in witnessing, recognizing and validating the performance, the research, and the author in his various roles. I have been able to face my fears, embrace my pain, and grow into the role of the *Guide* and drama therapist thanks to this multi-level process and the challenging

and supportive stance of my friends and community. I conclude by quoting a gift from one such *Guide*:

You reinforced the notion that we are always seeking, confronting and learning who we are, to be able to be better guides. That our pain, our stories, our lives and vulnerabilities only make us more compassionate and understanding human beings. We cannot take our clients to dark places, to their edge, if we ourselves have not gone there as well.

– Anonymous audience member.

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APPENDIX A

Performance Program (Page 1)

WELCOME to...

A smashing piece of imaginative theatre.

A master's in drama therapy research outcome.

**An immediate self-revelatory journey into
David-Jan's heart.**

" The guide is here

Amongst us

And between us

Right now. In this space..."

***** NOTE *****

Following the performance, I request your company for:

- Group reflections
- Audience questions & feedback
- A brief questionnaire

**THANKYOUTHANKYOUTHANKYOUTHANKYOU
IN ADVANCE FOR BEING YOU
WITH ME TONIGHT**

APPENDIX A

Performance Program (page 2)

CREDITS

David-Jan Jurasek	Researcher, Performer, Writer, Seeker & Guide
Stephen Snow	Thesis Advisor, Guide
Alison Aylward	Guide, Director, Producer, Inspirator, Clarifier & Sanity Keeper
John Goodey	Stage Supervisor
Nisha Sajnani	Videographer
Nisha Sajnani	Rehearsing Buddies
Serge Carriere	
Solomon Krueger	
Zvi Nissan	

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All my colleagues, for your inspiration and encouragement.

All my professors, for opening my eyes, showing me the limits I needed to work within and for kindly kicking my ass in gear!

To all my guides, within and without, thank you.

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Steve Pitre's video emporium

APPENDIX B

Performance Script

- *** KEY: * Stage directions are given in brackets
* Narrator voice is presented in italics.
* The voice of various roles is written in simple font with a initial letter prior to line to identify the role (ie, Old Man is OM: ...)
* Otherwise, in simple font, it is the role of author/actor David-Jan who is speaking.

? GUIDE me

(Stage lights up)

(MUSIC: "Don't Give Up" by Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush)

(House Lights go up)

PROLOGUE

(Long pause. Till the waiting is unbearable.)

(DAVID-JAN is sitting in audience)

I'm too nervous to go up!

(turns to audience)

You know, you and you and you have been my guides for the last few years... And I appreciate you.

And I know that right now its... My turn to be the guide, for myself and tonight for you.

But, look! It's so God damned empty up there...

(Stands up. Steps up)

Nobody but me...

(turns to face audience)

but there's you I guess! So I am not alone.

(walks along crowd)

Unless... I'm talking to you and... You're not gonna walk out on me, right? Or totally laugh at me and say, "Get off the stage, jerk ass sek!"

That's what they called me in high school...

(works up courage, moving towards stage center)

But I guess I never got up in front of them and showed them who I am. Sooo!

(steps further in stage)

Alright! Here I am!

(takes space on stage)

I am claiming this space!

I have arrived! Alright!

(turns to face audience)

Oh, God. I'm still freakin' out, a little, just a little and so I need to ask for some help.

But please stay in your seats. I need to find this on my own. Besides, your being here. That is my gift. That is more than enough.

(self-conscious)

So. Just ignore me for a minute.

(Hands clasped for prayer, clearing throat, kneeling)

Dear guide! My confidant, my friend, my teacher, my side coach, my best buddy... my god. I need you right now. Please come quick.

(opens eyes)

Are you there?

I can't see you or hear you or feel you or smell you.

But, I know you are around. You must be.

Well, you're probably helping out someone less fortunate with some bonafide disease and not as whinny as I!

So.

I guess I'm gonna have to do this all by myself.

Alright.

Alright.

Alright!

(notices audience)

So.

Where do I start?

My life.

So many memories.

So many directions to go in,

so many questions to ask,

so many feelings unresolved...

I guess you want to see a story. A neat and tidy tale to tie it all together, with a red bow on top on a silver platter.
Right.

Well.
I do have a story to share with you,
though it won't be neat and tidy...
I have come here tonight to make sense out of it,
with you.

So. Come. Follow me into the unknown.
All you need to do is sit back and
Trust me.
To be true in this moment.
To be true in this moment.

(LIGHT DOWN – CROSS FADE)

ACT I

Narrator (*in italics*): *Once upon a time... There was a river, like no river you have ever known and like every river you have ever known.*

On one side of the river was a lush overgrown jungle, in which there staggered about a young wanderer named Jan, who was exhausted and totally lost, but always hopeful and looking for a sign.

(he leans to cup some of the water and drink from it.)

J: Oh... It is so good. This water of life. This nectar of mother nature... The infinite...

(looking up to see the other side)

What is that?

*On the other side of the river were what looked like plains, plains so golden and inviting to the
In the center of the field, sat...*

J: A temple.

Not really a temple. It was a heritage kind of home, four floors high and made of pure oak, but delapidated and worn down. Crumbling, in fact. It used to be filled with the wealth and art of many generations but now, it was empty.

Just below the front steps, sat an ancient old man, the last remaining steward to this "temple". He leaned against some straw, minding a small fire which he tended with one eye, in order to keep it from getting out of hand, while watching his home with the other.

And at his feet was a rickety old boat lapping against the river bank, tied to a stick. It was in the words of the old man...

OM: an ole stinker!

Now the young man across the river was, as you could guess, both near-sighted and entranced, by what he perceived as a golden palace and especially by this old man:

J: A master. The calm and peace with which he sits. His smile is so serene. And the simple life he lives.

Oh, my! My visions were true. This is it!

Yes. This is my Master!

(kneeling)

(cupping hands)

Sir!! I am just a humble man.

But, I'd like to come and meet you! Maybe, I could serve you!

Just send me the sign...

and I shall follow!

*Now the river being wide and the old man being sort of deaf, he had no idea what was said,
and so he waved the young man off.*

Now, the young man did not know how to swim... No one ever taught him... But that could not damper his enthusiasm.

J: Aha! Yes.

(pointing)

I'll be right there!

(Approaching into the river, getting up to his neck)

(STAGE LEFT)

OM: What's that he's doin'? Whas he doin'?

Uh... He's just washin'. Let him be.

(looks down)

I got straw to burn and tatters to bake.

(looks up)

What's he hollerin'?

God be damned!

Go back before ya...! No the other way.

(reminded of boat)

I know what you're thinking. But,

I ain't risking my neck out on that God damned river...! Not again!

And I ain't leavin', I 'ain't leavin' her!

The young man was up to his nose by now.

(doggie paddle)

J: Oh God!

I must have faith and take risks to earn his respect.

(spits out water)

Not to worry! Master! I am coming to you!

(reaching forward)

Your brightness is my beacon...

Well the old man watched:

OM: Stop that! Stop drownin'!

For crying out loud!

(trying to pretend that it's not happening, looking away,
but disturbed)

Can't you do that somewhere else?!

And so he put his dentures aside, so as to not lose them in the river, as he had many times before. And then...

(pulling up pants)

...he got into the boat.

And he rowed out in the other direction.

OM: Hold on!

I have to row up stream so the current brings me down to you.

(points to head)

(boat turns down stream, slow-row)

Here I come.

(stops rowing)

Stay calm. Stay calm!

It took a while.

Meanwhile, the young man was still flapping about.

(sticks head up, looks about)
J: Where'd he go? Oh no. Master!
(LAMENTS)
I'm ... All by myself. That's what I am. All by my...
(PANICKS)
Oh nooo! So this is the end...!
(SURRENDERS, lets go, limp)
Lord please take me in this river of life!
(suddenly sees OM)
Oh, Master!!!

Now there was a long silent look from the old man that seemed to last a hundred years.

OM: Get up.
The water ain't even up to your neck!
(shaking head)
You know what you are?!
Either a fool,
or some kinda.....
idiot.
(sighs, smiles, and gestures him in)
Alright, get in.

And the young man clambered into the boat:

J: Sir! I had no doubt that you would come for me... At last we meet... my master, my guru and guide!
(bowing to him, then looking up. OM turns around. Leaning out to see. Wiping eyes)

Master? Isn't that your palace glowing over there?
Wow, is it ever glowing radiantly in the sun!

The old man looked to his abode, absolutely frozen and agasp. The house was ablaze.

The straw left unattended had caught fire and in moments spread on...

OM: Glowing? Glowing. Yes.
Why? Why? Why did I leave her? Why?
(looking at the young man)
You... You... You wanna see something glow? Come closer, closer.

The old man grabbed the paddle and started beating the young man all over, covering ever inch of his body.

OM: I'll make you glow! Radiate!

(Cowering below OM' feet)

J: Ow! master!? I... ow... What have I done? Please. Stop.
Stop it!

*There was nothing of the former mansion left, just a coal black stump as the wind
wipped the greyish smoke up into a massive tornado.*

Even the young man could see the smoke and read the sign now... He had an idea.

(Paddling frantically)

J: We can go back and rebuild if we work together, master! We can do it.

*He paddled with his hands like a madman,
but the boat was taken by the strong current
farther and farther down stream...
it was too late*

OM: It's over... I say...

J: It is not over... Master! Do you believe? DO you believe that life, like this
river, keeps going? You must...

OM: Are you really blind?! It's finished. Gone.

J: Not gone, master. Not really. You carry it with you where-ever you go... the
stories and the history and the...

OM: I got nothing left but this here lousy broken down boat and a glowing
moron here beside me.
Now. Get outta my face.

J: I understand, master.

(moving to edge of boat, making himself small)

Is this better? Don't worry, I won't interrupt. I'll be alright by myself over
here.

(whistling "All by myself...")

(singing... stops abruptly)

What? You mean in the water? I can't. Huh. I can't swim and it's getting dark
and it's cold in there... I just can't. No. Stop!

Halt!

(to self)

If you were my true master... Why would you want to drive me away?
Do you mean to teach me a lesson? To be more independent?

Or,... are you testing my faith?
Yeah.

OM: Let me spell it out for you! I am not your master or guru or whatever else
you imagined me to be!

My name is Willie.

And I have lost... everything I am.

Those are my last words.

(covering his face)

(looking to him and in himself)

J: I have no where to go. Where would I go?

I have been nearly everywhere, looking,
perhaps like an idiot, like you say,
for some solace, some direction.

Now, my feet are so worn through that I feel only bone.

And my heart is as a cracked bowl.

And my soul...

I guess I know how terrible it can be to bear life's pains, especially alone.

So...

I am staying here with you,

whether you like it or not. Whether you talk again or give me any guidance. I
don't care!

I am staying here.

My name is Jan.

There was silence on the boat and on the river. Not even a breath.

*(collapsed as old man, breathing in and sighing, slowly raising
himself)*

OM: Alright. (to himself)

Alright. (off Jan)

Alright. (to space ahead)

(LIGHTS FADE DOWN AND UP)

ACT II

*Once upon a time, there was a river,
unlike any river you have ever known
and like every river you have ever known.*

And on this river was a row boat for two, being tugged upstream by a merchant ship.

Inside the tiny vessel was a boy and his mother.

The mother, Hellen had been worried, about her boy since his father's death. She worried about his frequent imaginings. And so, she was taking him to see a doctor, a specialist far up stream.

Now, the boy, Billy, knew none of this. He believed that he was on an adventure and a secret mission.

BILLY: Mom? Did you know that this river has dead people in it? There's supposed to be like hundreds of bodies... I wonder if any of them were murdered.

The mother was never sure if he was making such things up or if he'd heard it somewhere. In fact, she didn't want to know, herself having had nightmanres... which had left her frightened and confused...

HELLEN: Uh, no, Billy... It's time to have our snack...

In this snack she had put "special vitamins" or drugs that are supposed to "suppress early psychotic episodes."

Meanwhile, Billy looked about and cast his imaginary fishing line into the water, hoping for a dead body.

(Laughing uncomfortably)

H: Billy. Stop being ridiculous. It's day time and I don't see anything, see... If you want to go fishing, Billy.

Billy?

Well, we can ask your uncle to teach you... he's a fine fisherman who has caught many fish.

(frustrated)

Are you listening?

(Intent, bringing up something big)

B: Mom! I think I got something. It feels big. Oh. This could be it.

Mom?

It's too heavy.

Help, mom.

Please.

(Struggling with the line and losing it. Miffed)

Mom! I lost him!

H: Now, that's enough of your... pretending.

Billy.

Honey.

There is nothing down there. You know that, right?

(handing him a sandwich, insisting)

Now lets eat our sandwiches already.

(Taking the sandwich, sniffing...)

B: I smell something funny.

I bet this was poisoned. By a witch.

Oh, no.

Her smell.

It's choking me.

(mocks choking and dying at her feet, kicks feet up)

H: Billy Gimly, get up! You are not choking and you are not dead!

Stop it!

There is no witch.

I don't know what are you talking about!

If your father were alive he would be in a fury if he saw you upsetting your mother like this.

(He gets up, rolling eyes, concerned)

B: I'm just playing, mom.

(smiles innocently)

I don't really think you're a witch.

I just wish I could get off this boat and and...

(looks to see if she is listening)

Mom?

(she is stern, handing him a sandwich)

Okay. Fine. I'll eat it.

(he picks her sandwich and opens the bread, considering)

Ugh.

(looks at her, considering)

But, I'm not hungry, Mom.

(takes it)

Ok. Ok.

(Pretends to chew, showing her)

(Discards the rest in water, pretends it was good)

(Bored)

Billy started rocking the boat, then. And his mom shot him the dirtiest look you have ever seen from a mother. So... he stopped.

But then, a passing freighter made the waves around them grow more and more intense and violent. The boat really started to heave and jump and Hellen became so afraid, she began popping the tranquilizers intended for her son.

H: Ok. Ok. Calm down, Hellen. Calm down, Hellen.
Billy! Come closer. Give me your hand.

(He pulls her hand away)

B: Nooo.

This is it, mom. This is the place. Isn't it? With the rapids. You won't tell me.
You won't tell me, but I know.
This is where dad disappeared.

(concerned for her)

Mom. Don't worry. I'm gonna tie this rope to my waist.

(ties it)

*Hellen looked away for an instant.
In a flash, Billy was gone.*

*Diving, madly unafraid
further and further down,
into the murky darkness,
Billy could see something moving.
He could see
his father, reaching up for him
as if trying to tell him something...*

B: Dad!? Dad!!!

Meanwhile, Hellen, a terrible swimmer, stood paralyzed above.

H: Billy! Billy! Come back! I love you, Billy! Please come back!

*But, there was no sign of her son.
So, she mustered all her courage and jumped in after him.*

*Being so far down, Billy couldn't hear her.
Almost no air left in his lungs.*

He swam on.

*Almost able to touch his father's weathered face and big strong hands, reaching out
for him.*

Almost.

*And then,
as he got closer,
so close now,
his father's cheekbones began to dissolve into the rockbed,
his hair became the algae at the bottom of the river
and his eyes the flowers of the sea.
And all of it swayed with the current around him.*

Billy dug his hands in the dirt and the rocks and algae, as if he could make his father out of it...

*But it just swept through his fingers.
He cried, he cried at the bottom of the river.*

And then he felt a strength, an invincible silent courage inside his body.

*Suddenly, he heard the voice of his mother, calling his name.
Looking up he could make out a figure desperately thrashing about.
Water began to fill his lungs and his vision became cloudy. But Billy summoned all of his strength, now. He pushed off the bottom and with a blind will, he swam with all his might back up to the surface.*

He grabbed for his mother.

And they both held onto each other, for dear life.

And Billy said something he hadn't said in a long time:

Mom. I love you, mom.
I love you.
I love you.

(LIGHTS FADE DOWN AND UP)

ACT III

*Once upon a time, there was a river... like every river you have ever known
and like no river you have ever known...*

*And in it was a boat, a small boat, which needed repairs, but was sturdy none the less.
In this boat was a young man, named David-Jan,
who was wishing more than anything to become a river guide for others.
But he was wracked by fear and doubt in himself.*

*There he was... facing the increasingly untamed rapids of the river before him.
(Kneeling in boat, looking RS)*

D-J: Ok.

Team. We're going to hold back for a moment.

Looking ahead, his vision was clouded by the water spraying into his eyes.

Yet, he could hear the laughter and excitement of his friends and colleagues ahead.

Guys! It's a hell of a current today.
So, I hafta go in to test the water, first.
Don't worry.
I'm going to come back for you. I promise.
(Turning his boat into the rapids)
Here... I... go!

As the mist lifted he saw the rushing water over boulders going down down down...

*Suddenly he remembered when:
When the current felt too strong.
When his boat had flipped over.
When he had nearly drowned.*

(he turned the rudder and stuck his oars in, pushing off and rowing backstage)

Whoah! Whoah! I can't. I can't. It's too much for me...

*Back here it was safe and quiet.
Drifting in slow moving pools,
everyone gracefully practiced their strokes, while he coached them.*

(moving attentively, slowly, gracefully, proudly guiding)

Good. Nice and easy. Not too deep. That's it.

Hearing shouts of excitement from down the river and seeing the faces of the people and guides whom he knew, rushing by him, David-Jan felt pangs of envy and defeat.

*Now some of the people he was guiding were growing impatient.
He felt embarrassed to admit it but had to be honest.*

Listen, guys, I can't do it.
I'm not ready to take you there. I'm sorry.

So, a younger but more experienced guide lead some of them forward, while David-Jan took the rest and went back.

Back.

Back.

Later in the day, he returned, on his own, to the same spot, where the rapids were rushing down below him.

I'm terrified.
Well. What's the worst thing that could happen?
I could smash my head and die!
What's worse than that?

My body could float around naked, while my entrails are chewed on by rabid
beavers and my eyes pocked out by gulls.

Worse still?

They could laugh at me. Say, “that Jerk ass sek really can’t handle a little
water. What’s he doing guiding anyone else.”

The worst thing?

I could give up.

(prepares)

Here... I... go...

(going down)

Whoooooah!!!!

(hitting the water)

(bouncing up)

(being tossed about)

(using the paddle to center)

(finding control)

(turning corners, cautiously)

(navigating, and looking alive. Excitement, pride!)

I’m doing it.

I am doing it.

Oh, yeah!

Suddenly he a saw an enormous sharp rock rise up ahead of him.

(seeing it before audience)

*He turned his boat completely, narrowly missing a direct collision, yet his stern
swerved and slammed against the razor-like edge.*

The loud cracking sound shocked him.

He covered his head with his arms.

As the boat was battered about,

David-Jan felt the blows and punches he had taken in his life.

He remembered when

he was threatened and beaten by his father,

more times than he could count.

Pounded by another rock, now, he shook himself out of it.

He braced himself and paddled hard.

*But, one after another, there were massive boulders and jagged rocks, jutting up out
of the wild rapids.*

Pounded again,

he saw another flash,

another time when...

Another a time when...

All the times seemed to come up at once, all the punches and slaps, and threats he had taken.

All the world was attacking him.

Why is this happening to me?! What have I done?

Life is just cruel and hard.

And then you die! Die!

I don't wanna die!!!

Nooo! NO!! I don't wanna not die!

He was blind-sided:

hit on the side of the head.

Out cold.

Remembering when:

He was eighteen, a young man, cornered and attacked by Skinheads.

He was...

Frozen.

While a ringed fist hammered his head.

(walks towards)

Curled up and trembling.

(approaches)

Alone on the pavement.

Numbed.

(to audience)

He never told anyone.

Now... he was... Enraged. En-raged...

(fighting all around him!)

Get the fuck off me!!

Get away from me!

I'll kill you!

I could kill you!

(they are gone)

I could!

I could!!

He awoke to the river around him.

The boat beneath his feet.

I could.
Yes!
I could.
What?
Breathe.
Good.
Now. Look around.
I see the rocks there.
But, the water is forcing me straight towards them.
I can't escape!

What can I do?!

I could... follow the current.
But, it's crazy. I'll be smashed!

Not if I go with the current.

(to audience:)

*Leaning into his fear,
he aligned his boat straight towards an oncoming rock.
He dove his paddle in, moving faster, and faster.
Then, as the water split and curved around the boulder, he leaned his boat along with
the current, coming around the rock and to safety.*

Oh God!!
(Surprise. Rejoices)
I'm alive!
(notices and adjusts)
Go with the current!
Go with the current.

*Splashing through the rapids,
riding the current and
brushing against the rocks,
suddenly the journey became faster and easier.
And for the first time, he felt safe and calm amidst the rushing waters.*

*Gradually, the rapids evened out.
A gentle current carried him onwards,
and he lay his paddle down.*
I can't believe it. I did it. I did it. I so did it.
All alone, by myself, on this river.
Man! I can do anything! I can.
(patting boat in pride)

(long sigh)

*A stone skipped on the water before him.
Curious, he looked around.
Another rock chipped against his boat.
Then he saw a boy on the shore far off, who looked familiar.*

Johnny?
(excitement)
Johnny!
(waving)
Hey!!

*It was a boy he had coached the summer before.
A boy he cared for very deeply.
A boy who had a great fire in his heart.*

*One day, David-Jan got too close to this fire.
So he chose to say good bye.*

A rock whizzed past his head.
(turned and paddling towards the boy)
Hey! What are you doing?
It's me, David-Jan!

Johnny continued to hurl stones, yelling angrily.

DJ: Why are you doing this?
Wait! Stop!
Can we talk about it?!!!
I want to help...
(STONE HITS HIM!!)
God damned!

A sharp stone knocked him right in between the eyes.
(looks down, sees blood)
Fuck!!!
Johnny! You haven't changed!!!
(looks up at him and wipes his hand)
I don't need this.
(rows away)
I don't need this.

*And so, David-Jan rowed away.
But then a sharp pain pierced his chest.
He turned back briefly to see the boy,
curled up on the shore, yet still hurling his stones into the water.*

(CONSIDERING, TURNING and FACING)

Johnny!! I want to talk to you!!
If you put the rocks down!!! I'll come closer!!!
Otherwise! I'm gonna stay right here!

Johnny threw his last handful of stones towards the boat, yet missing him.

*Then, the boy stood up, staring silently at
David-Jan, who approached him with caution.*

They could see eye to eye.

J: What are you doin' here?
Get lost!
This is my place.
(picks up rock and fakes throwing)

Yeah. You're scared!
I could really hurt you from here.

Why the fuck don't you just go back where you came from?
Like you did before!
Fuck you!

Johnny turned away and disappeared into the forest behind him.

David-Jan got out of his boat and came after him, calling his name.

Johnny?!
Johnny, Where are you?!

Johnny?

*Then, he heard a whimper and he saw Johnny, curled up inside a tangled bush of rose
and thorns.*

(turning and seeing him lying below)

The boy noticing David-Jan watching him, began to thrash himself violently about.

(crouching down outside)
DJ: No! Stop. Johnny. Please stop!
Why are you doing this?

J: Look what you've done to me!
Go away!

You're hurting me!
You don't care about me!
If you cared about me,
you'd come and get me.

David-Jan approached, trying to get through, but he cut himself on the thorns.

DJ: Johnny.
You don't have to hurt yourself.
I won't go in there.
But, I am going to stay right here beside you.
I'm going to stay right here with you.

(LIGHTS FADE DOWN AND UP)

EPILOGUE

TO AUDIENCE:

	(crouched)
Here I am. And here you are. And this is all we have.	
	(up and animating)
This moment. This space. This thought. This feeling... Arising and passing. Can you feel it?	
	(centering)
I can. I do.	
	(standing center)
The guide is here. Right now. In this space. Inside me and around me...	
	(to audience)
In front of me.	(walks into audience and sits with them)
In front of you, too. Amongst us.	
	(steps out onto stage again)
And between us.	

In this space.
Together.

THANK YOU.

APPENDIX C

Audience Response Questionnaire

“? GUIDE... me”

Questionnaire

Thank you for sharing your reflections!

1) What themes (if any) could you identify in this presented work ?

2) As an audience member, how would you rate this performance? Was it...?
(please circle)

CLEAR well	not at all	somewhat	well	very
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Please elaborate

MOVING (emotionally) well	not at all	somewhat	well	very
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Please elaborate

SATISFYING well	not at all	somewhat	well	very
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Please elaborate

3) Was this performance research in any way relevant to you? If so, how?

4) What questions has this performance raised for you?

5) Any insights you have to share regarding: a) The role of the guide...

b) Process of becoming a guide (in any sense yet especially as a therapist, teacher, leader, etc.