

**FACE:**

**Renegotiating Identity**

**through Performance**

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**Two DVDs of FACE at Kent University's Lumley Studio on 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2006**

**1. First Half - Scripted**

**2. Second Half - non-Scripted**

# Introduction

Eurasians were tangible products of colonialism. In early Hong Kong their status was indeterminate at best. Neither fish nor fowl, they hovered between Caucasians for whom they symbolised shameful liaisons with native women, and the Chinese community which, holding strict ideas about kinship and lineage, scorned anyone who couldn't emblazon his father's name on an ancestral tablet. (Holdsworth 2002: 186)

I am a storyteller/performer of mixed-race<sup>1</sup>, bi-cultural heritage from a colonial background. I identify myself as a British Hong Kong Eurasian<sup>2</sup>, and over the years, I recognise how this sense of self has influenced my creative processes and choices; and how my performance work has evolved in relation to this identity. I also notice how my sense of self has shifted as a consequence of my work. This thesis examines through practice a project of autobiographical performance which began in 1998, and over time in several incarnations, became the performance presentation at the Lumley Studio, Kent University on September 22 & 23, 2006.

I sensed from an early age the ancestral burden of shame and scorn that Holdsworth speaks of, from observation of my parents and the world around me at the time. Parker & Song suggest how the 'spectre of mixed-race has recurrently haunted modern thought' and chronicle the views on miscegenation held by eminent writers and scientists in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They refer to Nietzsche, Eze, Taguieff and Williamson about how the 'emergence of 'mixed race' children was an ominous portent of the genetic deterioration of the nation, and indeed the human race itself' (Parker & Song 2001:12-13). They also note how these views are changing, and how 'hybridity, mongrelisation and syncretism are no longer pathologies, but celebrated as exemplars of contemporary cultural creativity' (2001:20).

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<sup>1</sup>Mengel states "The most common designation imposed on mixed race people of all ancestries is the inference that they are fragmented beings" reinforcing 'the ideology that the mixed race individual is somehow less than a whole person' (2001:100-101).

<sup>2</sup> While first usage of this term appears to come from the Anglo-Indian experience, it is commonly used in Hong Kong and Singapore to denote children of Chinese and European parentage. Sweeting notes common English descriptors of Eurasians including "'half-caste", "hybrid", "mixed [often, by implication, impure] blood", and such contrasting metaphorical colloquialisms as "banana" (yellow on the outside, white on the inside) and "egg" (white on the outside, yellow on the inside). Historically, these alternatives have borne pejorative undertones. (2007:5-6).

In parallel with this, over time, I have also made productive transformation of this ancestral burden into material for performance. Growing up as an introspective, solitary child, I found the camaraderie of the theatre ensemble, the full-bodied expressivity of performance work, offered a context for an expansion of my sense of self and a valid professional path for which I felt a natural inclination. However, it wasn't until I discovered the realm of autobiographical performance that I felt most at home in my work. Hearing other people's stories<sup>3</sup> and the resonance of those stories to mine, has made me want to tell my own - "between identity and narration...there is a tenacious relation of desire" (Caverero 2000:32). I recognise now through this process of reflection on my creative journey, how my intuitive choice to work with autobiography aligns with many other artists on the margins '...autobiographical performance... as a means to reveal otherwise invisible lives, to resist marginalisation' (Heddon 2008:3).

I have also found that my physical being - my bodily sensibility - has been a vital source and vehicle of my creativity. 'And we begin with the body, since this is, and has always been, the mediator between who we are and the world (Marshall 2002:8). Languellier speaks of 'equivocal and embodied knowledge' (2002:441) as an important contribution to the field of qualitative research in the social sciences, where performance practices are increasingly being utilised. In the field of ethnography

what we can learn in no other way than through performance and performativity is just this: the enhancement of experience and the constitution of identity in personal narrative depend upon our bodies as our access to and means of expression. (2002:461)

In this Practice as Research process I revisited a solo-show I created in 1998 entitled FACE. I wanted to -

- Take directorial ownership of this work hitherto directed by others, and create a performance event that was more fully bilingual; and include a second-half of audience interaction to facilitate deeper awareness and exchange of information stimulated by the topic.

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<sup>3</sup> One inspiration was the work of William Yang. An Australian, whose grandparents migrated from China to Northern Australia in the 1880's, he performs monologues with slide projection in theatre spaces. I saw *Sadness* in Hong Kong & London, when he spoke of discovering his Chinese heritage hitherto lost to him by his complete assimilation into the Australian way of life.

- Analyse the creative process since its inception, and how the experience of performing this work in two languages in different audience contexts has informed and transformed my understanding of myself as an artist.
- Place it in the context of contemporary theatre practice.

FACE was a commission from the Hong Kong Arts Centre to create a solo performance which would give insight to the experience of Hong Kong Eurasians. Many years of storytelling in schools, libraries, museums and art galleries as well as my practice in Playback Theatre, particularly in the role of conductor, gave me confidence to hold the stage in this endeavour.

Playback Theatre is an interactive, non-scripted theatre practice developed in the mid 1970s by Jonathan Fox and the original Playback Theatre Company, in the mid-Hudson valley of upstate New York. Looking to revitalise the relationship of theatre and audience, Playback Theatre makes a place for real stories of the community, to be immediately told and spontaneously re-enacted. Fox says ‘this new Playback Theatre, in which the people could see their stories acted out and share with their neighbours aspects of their daily lives and deeply felt concerns, was a way to bring an ancient way into the present’ (Fox 1986:2). My experience in Playback Theatre gave me trust in the power of personal stories to create connections with and for an audience.

However, understanding the sensitivity of older Hong Kong Eurasians about the details of their birth,<sup>4</sup> I realised that I must offer my own ancestral story first in this endeavour. The performance was, as so many others in this genre, made with the spectator in mind. (Heddon 2008:5)

FACE has now had several incarnations in English and Cantonese, performed to audiences in Asia and the UK. The title refers to a fundamental aspect of my theme – that my outward appearance, face, does not reveal my full identity to onlookers. This misperceived identity has been the source of much personal angst,

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<sup>4</sup> Eurasian Peter A Hall was commissioned by the Hong Kong University Press to write a book about Eurasian families in 1990. He was asked to make some changes to the text ‘so as not to upset certain well-known Eurasian families’. When HKU Press eventually ‘relinquished the project’ he chose to publish the book ‘In the Web’ without revisions himself. (Holdsworth 2002:196)

as well as humour. The story of my journey from child to adult and from Hong Kong to England, within the frame of my inner and outer identity, forms the main content of the show. The revised version presented at Kent University's Lumley Studio in September 2006 is now in two sections. The first half creates a provocation for the audience's contribution in the improvised second half of the show. The opportunity to include unscripted Playback Theatre as a performative element alongside my solo scripted autobiographical work is a new development of my practice.

Holledge & Tompkins offer a formulation of interculturalism 'as an exploration of intersubjectivity, (where) cultural encounters...through audience perceptions, as well as the motivation and subjective experience of the artists' are investigated. They also suggest that 'the space between intention (of the artist/s) and reception, provides a rich seam of intercultural enquiry' (2000:10-14). The second half of the show serves this intention directly. It creates an opportunity for the audience to query and express their thoughts and feelings on the issues brought up in the first half. The content was about intercultural encounter, and the context was an intercultural encounter between audience members from different language communities (primarily English and Cantonese).

The progress from creating a show which tells 'my' story to developing the show to include stories from the audience can be paralleled with theories of child development from infancy to mature adulthood - generating a secure sense of 'self' leads to the capacity for proper attention to the 'other'. In common with many other artists, I have used 'performance...as a way to bring into being a self' (Heddon 2008:3). I draw on notions of self from Jung, as well as Moreno's psychodrama.

Additionally my life story, during the preparation and delivery of these performances at Kent University, also involved major surgery and implications for my sense of mortality and womanhood. These considerations add another layer of subjectivity to the research process.

The analysis of this work therefore offers perspectives on how performance can be instrumental in enabling renegotiation of identity.

The following Chapters will explore three key questions:

- How is my praxis located within the framework of autobiographical and intercultural performance? I present the production history of FACE; investigate its bilingual material; and consider cultural differences in audience perceptions of FACE.
- How is identity renegotiated through the creative process? I discuss the importance of the dragon in FACE, and investigate its cultural symbolism. This work is also analysed through the theoretical lens of psychodynamic theory, with reference to psychoanalysis & Jungian analytical psychology. The creative process itself is reframed within the theory of child development derived from Moreno's psychodrama.
- How can the relationship between audience and performer be developed through participatory performance practices? I discuss the mise en scene; look at Face and Ritual Theatre; and analyse the Kent performances, particularly the improvisational second half within the frame of Playback Theatre practice.

# Chapter One: CONTEXTS

*How is my praxis located within the framework of autobiographical and intercultural performance?*

This chapter primarily investigates the development of FACE prior to its revision at Kent. Scripting FACE crossed cultural landscapes from Britain to Hong Kong and back; involved two directors, one British and one Chinese; and two languages, English and Cantonese. I discuss its production history; choices that were made in relation to cultural and linguistic contexts; and analyse excerpts from the script which give insight into intercultural experience and cross-cultural encounters. Examples from performance texts are given, and the challenges of translation are considered. I reflect on hybridity in performance style and subjective experience; and on my experience with different audiences.

Holledge and Tompkins refer to Zarrilli in their discussion of how theatre provides ‘an arena for the constant process of renegotiating experiences that constitute culture’ (Zarrilli 1992:16). In the context of FACE, the invitation to create this work came from an acknowledgement that the Eurasian experience in Hong Kong had been under-represented and a desire that this be made intelligible to the majority Chinese culture. This opportunity enabled ‘identity spaces contained within the performed texts’ to offer glimpses of ‘a lived reality that is insufficiently symbolised within the existing frameworks of the host culture’ (2000:54-55).

In the process of creating FACE, I drew on dual cultural traditions that are within my experience which bypasses the common criticism of intercultural work as being exploitation or appropriation (2000:10-12). The paradox of this experience is that it is local in two cultural contexts...although one could say even with these two cultures there was an imbalance of access which was a product of colonial inheritance.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> As an example, the fact that I was not permitted to speak Cantonese in my primary school, and was not encouraged to learn Chinese, inhibited deeper access to Chinese culture through books and literature.

Since European traders began to explore and then eventually to settle in Hong Kong from the Mid 1800s, sexual liaison with local women often led to offspring, which were regarded by both Europeans and Chinese with disdain. These children were called Eurasians. Over the years, they often inter-married which has led to the creation of a subculture within the Hong Kong population<sup>6</sup>. However the history of Eurasians in Hong Kong is little known and poorly recorded<sup>7</sup>. While Eurasians have been influential in the world of trade and the civil service in Hong Kong, their identity as people of mixed-race heritage has rarely, until recently, been openly spoken of, or alluded to directly (Sweeting 2007).

In Hong Kong, the isolation of the community was much less obvious and discrimination less consistent than elsewhere in Asia.....But on a subterranean level, their sense of marginalisation and isolation was perhaps much more acute and insidious... as they found themselves stranded between two mutually aloof, at times mutually contemptuous, cultural worlds (Lee 2004:8)

When FACE was commissioned by the Hong Kong Arts Centre for their *FESTIVAL NOW '98: Invisible Cities*, it was specifically inviting stories from a



hitherto hidden community of long-standing in Hong Kong, to be seen and heard<sup>8</sup>. It was a timely invitation as the recent death of my mother<sup>9</sup> had engendered in me a desire to assert the history of the Hong Kong Eurasian community in some form (Needa 2000:277).

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 1 for the transcription of a recorded conversation with Reverend Guy Shea on Eurasian history.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Hall's *In the Web* (1992) provides an important record of Eurasian families in Hong Kong. However it was published privately it is now out of print. My copy is on loan from a Eurasian cousin. The Broadbridge (my mother's side) family tree on page 170 is incomplete.

<sup>8</sup> From Festival Now '98 Programme Booklet's Introduction, the choice of theme '...is an artistic investigation...to bring into focus the invisible side of our community which has long been living a shadowy existence'.

<sup>9</sup> She passed away on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1995.

My experience in playback theatre convinced me that personal stories carried a power to reflect universal truths in ways that generate empathy, and liberate resonating stories in the audience. It became clear to me that to tell my own story would serve very well. Anderson states, “Autobiography re-situates the writer *in* his work, thus mitigating the dangers of anonymity and authorship” (2001:7). In creating a script from autobiographic material, I would be making myself visible as a Hong Kong Eurasian woman in a dominantly Chinese environment in the hope that the collective as well as personal wound of anonymity is mitigated through this testimony. ‘The personal has political purchase when its place in history and culture is examined’. (Heddon 2008:162). My mission was to come out and stand for children of mixed-ethnicity, to expunge the burden of shame carried by generations of Eurasians before us, where both lines of ancestry - the Chinese and the colonising British - disparaged miscegenation. We can place this work as autobiography moving beyond its original frame as “a genre which privileged a white masculine subject” to one where we can see “its potential or use as political strategy” (Anderson 2001:103).

In making FACE I was also deeply conscious of the criticism of ‘self-indulgence’ in such work. Having experienced several forms of therapeutic processes<sup>10</sup>, I felt able to separate out my need to tell a good story – which happens to be my own – as emblematic of other stories, and any narcissistic need for public self-revelation. Heddon refers to this as ‘contested terrain’ suggesting a feminist perspective on reclaiming validity for this genre of work against the criticism of self-indulgence (2008:4).

## **PRODUCTION HISTORIES**

While my experience in improvisational theatre is extensive within the genre of Playback Theatre<sup>11</sup>, work in writing or devising was minimal, so I depended on extensive guidance from director Chris Harris to generate the first script of FACE,

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<sup>10</sup> As well as personal growth processes in the late 1980s marketed as ‘the Mastery’, and ‘Insight Seminars’, I have also worked with art therapists, a Jungian analyst, and experienced over 150 hours of group therapy in the form of Psychodrama.

<sup>11</sup> The practice is devoted to a range of outcomes - developing ensemble complicity & shared artistic vocabulary; deepening listening and empathy, as well as sensitivity to personal, socio-cultural-political resonances in stories – but working from or towards creating a script is not normal; and indeed, we practice ‘letting go’ of the enactment immediately afterwards to make cognitive and emotional space for the next story. It is now actually quite difficult for me to remember what I did in a playback improvisation.

in my working language of English. This was translated into Cantonese and then re-worked with Tang Shu-wing, a Chinese director in Hong Kong, to create the FACE that was shown at Festival Now '98. This second version of FACE was translated back into English<sup>12</sup>, and has subsequently been performed in both language versions, in Asia and in Europe.

Harris' performance training is in European physical theatre with extensive experience of popular theatre especially pantomime<sup>13</sup>. Over the last 30 years he has created several one-man shows which he has toured internationally. This experience and our fortuitous Hong Kong connection<sup>14</sup> gave us a synergetic working relationship. His rapid rhythm of thinking and action was familiar, and energized our working process. Excerpts from journals were used directly as script, and matched with specific performing skills, for similarity or counterpoint in style. We patch-worked a show of storytelling vignettes that had a variety of movement, physicality, and moods. With limited financial resources we had very simple technical demands and design features: general lighting, a portable cassette player as sound source operated by the performer, some chairs and props. While my experience with Harris was empowering and collaborative, it foregrounded outcome rather than process. His authority and speedy working style forestalled any performance anxiety, but also did not allow for deeper reflection on the material. However I also knew this work would go through redevelopment in Hong Kong where there would be considerably more resources available.

This was performed only three times<sup>15</sup> in the style of 'salon' performances where artists can expect a more welcoming gaze on their work especially when the work is new and untried<sup>16</sup>. The response was very positive as might be expected from a friendly familiar audience. I was reassured that the presentation was artistically

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 2 for Script of Second FACE – English version directed by Tang Shu-wing

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 3 for Chris Harris' biography.

<sup>14</sup> He knew me initially as props-maker/stage manager for Chung Ying Theatre Company in Hong Kong, had noticed my potential, and encouraged me to train as an actress.

<sup>15</sup> Once in a church hall to local Bristolians (25+), once to some friends from the anthroposophy community, and finally to a hall full (70+) of friends and family in London.

<sup>16</sup> There are records of many examples of this kind of theatre from the feminist tradition such as Natalie Barney's Paris salon in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Benstock 1987), and more recently from Carlisle, where "the salon celebrates the personal history and extends a welcome to enter the artists' private world" (1996:57). While I was not creating an event designed for a home setting (for example Bobbi Baker's 1991 "Kitchen Show"), I was nevertheless consciously creating a welcoming atmosphere in the tradition of the salon.

interesting, was not in any way experienced as therapy on stage, and received helpful feedback<sup>17</sup>. This work was documented on video, the script translated into Cantonese by Diana Pao<sup>18</sup> and this package was brought to Tang Shu-wing<sup>19</sup> for further development.

I had seen Tang Shu-wing's work on stage as an actor<sup>20</sup>, and knew instinctively that he had the depth of sensitivity, intelligence, and breadth of perspective to help me transform what Chris Harris had begun with me into something just right for the Hong Kong stage and audience. Both had studied acting in France, are multi-lingual, articulate, and world-travellers. Both knew Hong Kong well.<sup>21</sup> Both are very expressive physical performers themselves. This aspect of their contribution, I realize now, was deeply significant. Their whole body expressivity with keen ear for language/s, are qualities I appreciate, and became more conscious of through this research process, and of which I speak further in this thesis.

They were also both men. From a feminist perspective the 'Big Daddy' director that Donkin & Clement suggests 'is synonymous with control and power in ways that are profoundly linked to the social structures of marginalisation and erasure' (1993:3) does not feel applicable to my experience with these two men. While we did not approach the material with consciousness of gender issues<sup>22</sup>, the material we worked with addressed race directly. Their purpose as directors in this was to support me to present myself as a solo woman performer and 'to believe that theatre can change the way people think and how they see' (1993:8). Their working styles however were different. Harris' approach was very pragmatic, collaborative and fast. Tang seemed more methodical, ostensibly slower, and

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<sup>17</sup> Such as including slide projections of family photos onto the stage in some way, an idea which Tang Shu-wing embraced readily.

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 4 for her Biography. Diana gave me my first contract in professional theatre as her DSM with Chung Ying Theatre Company in 1981, when she was their production manager.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 5 for his Biography.

<sup>20</sup> "Two Men on a No Man's Land" in Hong Kong which was devised and performed by Tang Shu-wing and Jim Chim in the Mid 90s.

<sup>21</sup> Tang is Hong Kong-born and grew up there, but Harris too worked for many years in Hong Kong alongside Chinese actors.

<sup>22</sup> When I was considering other possible directors I could work with in Hong Kong, Wong Yuen Ling had shown interest but made it clear to me that the material would be seen through a feminist perspective. She is a theatre maker I had great respect for and with whom I had a good friendship, but I was clear that my show should focus simply on racial/cultural lines. The inclusion of sexual politics in this experience would complicate my process. I was not ready nor was I interested in this at that time. Now, twelve years later, I am, and keen to make a second show which looks at womanhood.

approached the material given to him intellectually, reconstructing it with more explicit aesthetic considerations which included sophisticated visual, sound and lighting elements. During this second rehearsal process, I consciously invited an authoritarian directorial approach, which I was more than happy to submit to<sup>23</sup>. With hindsight, it feels clear that my close and positive relationship to my father influenced my desire for, and compliant attitude towards working under the artistic guidance of these two directors - representing, one could say, two different masculine orientations to action. Perhaps I was indeed subject to the 'cultural conditioning... internalized by women' looking for 'His pleasure' to authorize the validity' of my work' (1993:4). Certainly with this project at Kent, I take ownership of this work in a new way.

### **From England to Hong Kong**

Reworking the first script of FACE, Tang was clear that there were certain sections which needed to be cut as unsuitable for a Hong Kong audience<sup>24</sup>, and replaced with other material. Two key examples are discussed below. Both exemplify significant differences in cultural associations between an English audience in the UK, and a Chinese audience in Hong Kong.

**Painted Skin** At an early stage of the performance, as prologue to the real stories that follow, I tell a ghost story from the Chinese tradition: Painted Skin by Pu Songling<sup>25</sup> (1644-1715). The theme of this story is that one should look beyond the face into the heart of everyone in order to know who they are, a lesson that is learnt by a scholar who falls for a pretty girl who turns out to be a demon spirit. A non-Chinese audience will see a woman storyteller who, as well as narrator, will move in and out of all three roles – the Scholar, the Taoist Priest, and the Demon Girl, without identifying the storyteller in any one role more than another. This audience should be able to comprehend the moral of the story. As allegory, the prologue is meant to introduce the audience, in an engaging warm way, to a key underlying theme to everything that follows. To a Chinese audience, however, the story would be highly confusing. The storyteller they see is a woman

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<sup>23</sup> I was struggling with learning my lines and had no extra capacity to offer creative agency.

<sup>24</sup> Appendix 6 compares the first and second versions of FACE, and shows what was kept, cut, and new material.

<sup>25</sup> From his collection of ghost stories *Liaozhai Ziyi*  
<http://www.renditions.org/renditions/authors/pusl.html>

with occidental features. The vernacular term for Western girl is ‘gwai-mui’ = demon girl, a long-held inheritance from colonial imperialism. It is a generally uncomplimentary term for a non-Chinese female. As the story unfolds many people would, like a muscular reflex, consciously or unconsciously, associate me with the demon girl. The kernel of the story says not to trust the outward appearance of the girl because she is a demon behind the face. This knee-jerk response to my occidental features enmeshes the Chinese audience into a myriad of confusing associations, which defeats the purpose of the prologue which is to invite warm interest in the stories to come. The story of the Dwarf, which replaces Painted Skin, serves very well in its place, being a real story of my own and more directly emblematic of the whole.

**The Cynic** The Role of the Cynic was cut out entirely. I was never comfortable with this role and was merely compliant with Harris’ insistence that another voice was necessary to add balance to the work. It was a critical stance I never felt ‘at home’ with.

The taboo on earnestness is deeply embedded in the English psyche. Our response...is...a blend of armchair cynicism, ironic detachment, a squeamish distaste for sentimentality... (Fox 2004:402)

I wonder if this contrast between Harris and myself reflects an aspect of deep-rooted Englishness which I struggle with even today after living in England for over 25 years. I tend to be earnest in all my endeavours, with a tendency towards the sentimental, and generally distressed by irony and sarcasm. It was as if, in order for my material, so very subjective, to be acceptable in an English context, he instinctively felt I needed to provide some distancing through a detached cynical voice.

In my view a Hong Kong audience in contrast would rather tend to have a more respectful identification with and acceptance of what’s offered to them on stage. It is difficult to generalise, especially as Hong Kong is itself caught between the democratising energy of the West, and the insidious normalising hierarchy of mainland China, with people learning to exercise and assert their own judgement, and also acquiescing to external authority and precepts. Certainly Tang wrote off the Cynic straightaway. However this is not to say that he did not value emotional distancing. He exhorted me to be as unemotional as possible in telling my story.

He felt it imperative that I did not label each segment of the story with my feelings in relation to it - allowing the audience to have their own emotional response to whatever information was offered to them.<sup>26</sup>

I recall one performance in Macau, when three people (all connected to theatre work/academia) from mainland China came to see the show. They were looking forward to my performance as they had seen me the year before in Macau 1, 2, 3<sup>27</sup>. After the show they were disappointed. They wanted to know how I felt about my experiences, they wanted *to see my feelings portrayed*, rather than *reflect on how they felt* about the story of my experiences. The Q&A after the show needed three-way translation, Mandarin, Cantonese, and English. The conversation became so heated between the Chinese mainlanders and Tang about this issue, that all efforts to translate into Cantonese and English were given up, while they argued in Mandarin.

This is a clear example of very different expectations of what makes good theatre in Hong Kong and Mainland China. The mainland Chinese wanted to me to demonstrate my feelings, so that they might know how to feel with me. My Hong Kong Chinese director wanted me to engage the audience in feeling and thinking for themselves.

### **From English to Cantonese**

How one's physical appearance is socially recognised impacts on identity and the "politics of authenticity and belonging" (Parker & Song 2001:12-14). In contrast to many experiences where the face presents a racialised body, my story insists on acknowledging what is invisible in my face, revealing my roots through aural experience, and in the physicality of language – embedded in body, voice and tongue.

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<sup>26</sup> This was particularly difficult for me when I talked about the Eurasians who died in the Battle of Hong Kong during WW2. I often had tears, but was never overwhelmed by feeling. Nevertheless he was very insistent that I should hold back and not demonstrate my own emotional response.

<sup>27</sup> Macau 1, 2, 3 was produced by the Asian People's Theatre Festival Society to honour Macau's return of sovereignty to China. I played a role representing the Macanese – the mixed-race sector of Macau society. I was very moved by the stories I was telling, and often shed tears. Asiaweek said I gave a 'rivetting performance'.

FACE was first commissioned for performances to a mainly Hong Kong Chinese audience, whose first language is Cantonese, and whose knowledge of English might be quite elementary. The journey from English to Cantonese is complicated by the fact that Chinese is a character-based written system rather than alphabetic, and Chinese writing is most directly connected to spoken Mandarin, not Cantonese.

Besides Mandarin spoken in the north, Chinese includes six or seven other major languages used in the remainder of the country and abroad, among which Cantonese, Shanghainese, and Min (which includes Taiwanese) are the most prominent. These "southern" varieties are primary languages for tens of millions of Chinese speakers...Each has significant differences in phonology, vocabulary, and syntax and all are mutually unintelligible...Cantonese has a minor orthographic tradition carried on locally in signs, informal writing, textbooks, and some newspapers...texts...largely illegible to Chinese literate only in the standard Mandarin-based script. (Hannas 2003)

One significant choice my translator, Diana Pao, made was to translate the work directly into Cantonese 'as if spoken'<sup>28</sup> This script was read out, recorded on tape, then transcribed into my idiosyncratic phonetic system. Inevitably, in translation some things are lost and some gained<sup>29</sup>.

**Shifting Metaphors** Sometimes a metaphor in English needed another expression in Cantonese. For instance, life in England resembling 'porridge' in English, became 'like quicksand needing great determination to climb out' in Cantonese. The metaphor of 'moving' through honey being 'sweet but thick' - in English with an edge of irony; becomes 'immersed' in honey, 'sweet enough to enter the heart' in Cantonese - directly sentimental.

**Chinglish** Certain sections of the script were left in their 'Chinglish' format - mix of English and Cantonese - a patois common to Hong Kong Eurasians.

DRING Jeannette's... Susie. What can I do for you? 買花? (Mai-faa? *Buy flowers?*) 梗係得啦! (*Gung hai duk la! Of course!*) The usual? Pink

Carnations? 兩打 (*Leung-daa two dozen*) 有 (*yow have*) 卡片呢? (*Car-peen*

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<sup>28</sup> Literate Cantonese actors would be doing this automatically as they read a Chinese script, and be making significant choices in semantic decoding according to context, but I could not. So my Cantonese script needed to be written exactly as I should say it.

<sup>29</sup> Appendix 7 gives examples of how meaning shifted in translation from English to Cantonese.

*leh? Card?) Nice. 地址一樣 (Day-zee yut-yeung Same address) mm. First thing tomorrow morning. 好嗎? (Ho-ma? Alright?) (Needa 2000:287)*  
(the phonetic and semantic translations above are italicized)

While it may be that "...it is becoming increasingly common to find audiences that are entirely or partly able to understand more than one language used in a play" (Carlson, 2006:8), to perform the whole show in 'Chinglish' in Hong Kong, would have limited its access to the majority of people. Our choice was to present the bulk of the play in Cantonese, only interpolating examples of English and Chinglish to demonstrate the linguistic world of Hong Kong Eurasians.

The rehearsal process with Tang was very challenging for both of us. Learning and remembering my Cantonese script was excruciatingly difficult and slow. I could not make any contribution to staging as a mature experienced actor<sup>30</sup>. This affected his creative choices. Tang could see that he needed to radically adjust his aesthetic vision in relation to my capacity to remember my Cantonese script. Several sections were delivered as recorded voice-overs, as I silently physicalised my responses. The childhood school days were delivered in English - true to my lived experience - text sufficiently simple and explicated by action, for non-English speakers to grasp meaning.

This Cantonese FACE, for first performances in Hong Kong, was then translated back into English for subsequent performances over the years. Both these versions had some interpolation of the other language into the text, to underline my bi-cultural experience.

## **PERFORMANCE HYBRIDITY**

Holledge and Tompkins suggest that 'hybridity is more than merely identifying two separate cultures in one entity. For hybridity to remain a productive form, the two parts must generate an energy that is almost chemical in its recombinative effects.' (2000:120) Over time, the experience of working with one and another language gave me insights into the location of the voice in my body in relation to language. My

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<sup>30</sup> I discuss the process of returning to a kind of infancy through this rehearsal period in Chapter Two.

delivery in Cantonese in the first performances of FACE was very slow and careful. I was more confident about remembering the English version, and anxious about delivering the Cantonese accurately, feeling more able to improvise in English than in Cantonese if I to go blank. However, my voice felt more embodied in Cantonese than English, and I felt a visceral pleasure in delivering the Cantonese text. Eventually, the text became much more integrated into body memory. More than knowing the text as sounds, the sounds sank into muscular memory. Meaning too made a physical impression, my body understood the text.

I recognise the physical tension, and connection which Nicole Jouve-Ward speaks of in relation to her first language, French, while living in England, “The cord has been stretched, it’s tugging at you”. Referring to Cixous and Kristeva’s idea of “maternal” language, as “of the body”, Jouve-Ward speaks of how immersion in English drove her French “...inwards and downwards” (1991:24). In my case, the mother refers to carers/nanny, to whom I was consigned at a very early age, when my mother went to long days at work. Cantonese surrounded me in babyhood and toddler-time<sup>31</sup>. It was only ever a verbal, corporeal experience for me, left to slumber deep inside the body, when from first days at Kindergarten I was forbidden to speak it. I never became literate in it<sup>32</sup>. English, however, was most certainly directly connected to the patriarch, my father, who only spoke English<sup>33</sup> at home, and whom I adored. So English was encouraged and became my primary language, located in my heart and mind, while Cantonese “continued its subterranean ... existence.” (1991:25)

Cultural hybridisation is intrinsic to the material of the show, and plays with ‘conventional notions of spectatorship.’ The audience sees the Europeanised ‘body of the performer’ presenting her Chinese ‘performer’s body’ through the auditory channel. (Hollidge & Tompkins 2000:134) This is a conscious choice. ‘Some ... Eurasian people who are assumed to be White, for instance, may have no wish to pass. While passing can be a resource in certain situations, it can also

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<sup>31</sup> Nascimento describes how reconnecting with early childhood language powerfully influenced the creative process for performer Ang Gey Pin (2009:67).

<sup>32</sup> Now in my fifties, I begin again, after many aborted efforts, to learn written Chinese, and spoken Mandarin. This time I feel more confident in staying the course and acquiring good enough communication skills. The playback theatre community in Taiwan and China grows apace and I would like to support these developments.

<sup>33</sup> He also knew Shanghainese, Russian and Japanese, but never spoke Cantonese when he came to live in Hong Kong after WW2.

involve misrecognition...between how someone perceives her own ethnic identity and her identity as seen by others'. This 'disjuncture' which is part of my personal story is provocatively utilised as a performative device. (Song 2003:69)

My performance storytelling with some elements of physical stylisation, also have roots in both European and Chinese theatre traditions. Trained formally in the classical British theatre tradition, and in Playback Theatre, I have also accumulated experience through many short-term workshops in theatre, dance and music. I cannot say that I have developed the training I had in Beijing Opera<sup>34</sup> or the 8 years of Tai Chi into the sort of conscious, ongoing practice of many intercultural performers. Daniel Mroz chronicles the development of Taiqiquan from its origins as a martial training to its incarnation in contemporary actor training programmes, and its significance in his own performance work (Mroz 2008). Claudia Tatinge Nascimento expands on this to include the 'many actors (who) consciously train to be cultural border crossers' and where 'after years of training, these embodied techniques become an integral part of the actor's identity' (2009:54). Nevertheless I do have an understanding of Chinese theatre aesthetics which have laid traces into my physical performance vocabulary. And I must not diminish my 18 years of practice as a playback theatre actor. As an improvisational performer in this context, I have learnt to blend 'the sensibilities of the two distinct modes of witness/response – empathic listener and bold producer' (Dennis 2009: 57-58).

I have also worked in many countries and language communities, absorbing cultural differences and embracing foreignness within the playfulness of the playback encounter.

## **AUDIENCES**

Over the 11 years since the first FACE was performed, I have encountered a range of audiences in different cultural contexts<sup>35</sup>. The first public performances of FACE were in Hong Kong – in Cantonese (with some English). The audience

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<sup>34</sup> With Cardiff Laboratory Theatre's *Beijing Explorations* and Pan Project:1986-88.

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix 8 for list of performances of FACE 1998-2008.

were Hong Kong Chinese theatre-goers<sup>36</sup>. In the first run of 5 sold-out performances we had one after-show discussion. I enjoyed the vitality and curiosity of the audience so much I decided to offer this as a norm in all following re-runs of the show. From 1999 to 2003, I returned to Asia - Hong Kong, Macau and Singapore - for several re-runs of FACE, of both language versions, to audiences in public arts venues, schools, polytechnics and universities. The play was published by the International Association of Theatre Critics (HK) in 1999, in the collection of 10 Best Plays for 1998<sup>37</sup>. In 2005, FACE was included in an anthology of Hong Kong plays published by the Hong Kong University Press.<sup>38</sup> In the context of shifting identities for Hong Kong people over the last decade, FACE offered a mirror for many of the Hong Kong audience to recognise an aspect of themselves in me, catalysing a re-evaluation of their assumptions. This was also the case in Macau, and in Shenzhen, where majority populations are Chinese. In Singapore, the Eurasian identity is more overtly recognised<sup>39</sup>, and the transferral of colonial power to political independence left more positive feelings towards their colonial inheritance, than in Hong Kong. While not without its own problems of racial & cultural intolerances, it is nevertheless a nation-state established on multi-ethnic, multi-lingual principles. Carlson cites several examples of heteroglossia in monodramas presented in Singapore (2006:146). The Singapore audience was less amazed by my dual-identity, and more able to recognise the dilemma of multi-heritage allegiances.

Of the tours of FACE between 1998 and 2008, only three included audience questionnaires. Responses are tabled in Appendix 9. My most vivid memory of UK performances was at Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre, which reassured me of the relevance of this work beyond its specific cultural reference. While there is a substantial Chinese population in Birmingham, only one Chinese person was there, from Australia, who spoke no Cantonese. That no other members of the

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<sup>36</sup> See Dino Mahoney (2005), in his foreword to *City Stage: Hong Kong Playwriting in English*, for his commentary on the vibrancy of the theatre community during the 1990s, and especially the years before and after the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997.

<sup>37</sup> Cheung Ping Kuen (ed) *The Drama After: Hong Kong Drama 1998*, Hong Kong: International Association of Theatre Critics (Hong Kong)

<sup>38</sup> Ingham, Mike & Xu Xi, (Eds.) (2005) *City Stage: Hong Kong Playwriting in English*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press pp24-37

<sup>39</sup> From <http://www.eurasians.org/association/index.html> (20-12-07), the Eurasian presence in Singapore is organised, and self-publicising, which is somewhat different to the Eurasian experience in Hong Kong.

Chinese community came was a disappointment, but not surprising<sup>40</sup>. However I had a good house. The venue advertised widely to its South Asian community, and many came. The after-show discussion was warm and extended. I facilitated opportunities for people to speak of their challenges with British/Asian mixed-race identity and experience of inter-racial marriage, and this seemed to have offered, for many, something of a welcome catharsis. From my desire to offer testimony of Eurasian history, presenting my own story matured towards offering a mirror for the audience. Re-orienting my curiosity to meet them, I also facilitated them to meet each other. ‘In a publicly experienced cultural event, the opportunity to talk about the event afterwards is important socially’ (Bennett 1990:176) and in its journey from West to East and back West again, I awaken to its potential as vehicle for cross-cultural conversations between us all.

This chapter has presented some of the contexts within which my work and my identity as a theatre practitioner can be understood. I came to this research with a view to reflect on my practice so far, and with a wish to weave separate strands of my performance work together with more coherence and effect. ‘Creative needs and the conditions that satisfy them vary constantly in theatre – and creative directors must constantly invent responses to those needs’ (Schenkar 1993:256). These considerations of my praxis within the framework of autobiographical and intercultural performance lead me to analyse another aspect of my hybrid identity – through the symbol of the dragon. In the next Chapter I analyse the creative process since inception to latest incarnation, and how the experience of performing this work in two languages, in different audience contexts, has informed and transformed my understanding of myself as an artist.

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<sup>40</sup> My professional work over the past decade has been in community arts, capitalising on my Cantonese-speaking skills in relationships with Chinese organisations in the UK. As Outreach & Education Coordinator for Yellow Earth Theatre until 2005, and Cultural Ambassador for Artsdepot, a north London arts venue 2004-6, it has been a considerable challenge to develop strategies to galvanise members of the British Chinese community to attend events at mainstream arts venues. General advertising, even within the Chinese media, rarely makes any impact unless the event is also supported by youth and community workers. In this instance, Birmingham Chinese community organisations had not been directly contacted well in advance of the show.

## Chapter Two: EMERGENCE

*How is identity renegotiated through the creative process?*

From the intuitive desire to bring into tangible existence my claim to an icon of Chinese mythology, I see how my creativity profoundly reflected the construction and renegotiation of my identity. My subjective experience of the ancestral burden of shame and scorn is transformed through the birthing of my dragon into multi-cultural ownership and authority. Holledge & Tompkins refer to Friedman's notion of 'identity spaces' and suggest that "culture is located in the construction of the self, and in the context for that self" (2000: 3-4). The identity space that I allowed myself to explore subconsciously through the physical making of my dragon enabled me to literally sew, button and embody a larger sense of self. This self, presented to audiences East and West, in both language cultures of my identity, matured to incorporating the not-self – recognising the other. I analyse this development within a Jungian perspective. Moreno's theory of child development also offers another analytical construct for understanding the creative process of FACE from inception to its current incarnation.

From the very first meeting with Louis Yu, when discussing his commission for me to create a solo performance, I knew I would include a Chinese dragon<sup>41</sup> in my show. I have a strong affinity to the dragon, particularly as a composite being. He cautioned me on the sensitivity of this symbol to the Chinese audience,<sup>42</sup> and that Chinese people's identity with the dragon is complicated by political history<sup>43</sup>. The erstwhile Emperors of China sat on the Dragon Throne. In ancient China, "the *Lung* denotes the highest human being...hence the Chinese Emperor appropriated the *Lung* as his Imperial symbol" (Ong, 1991:271). Since China became a republic and communist state, Louis felt that contemporary Chinese people's relationship with the dragon might be uncomfortable and complex. Added to which my claim of identification with the dragon could be controversial to a Chinese audience, with the weight of colonial history behind us both. Having

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<sup>41</sup> The more correct term is *Lung* and should not be confused with the demonised western dragon implicated with the serpent (Ong 1991:256).

<sup>42</sup> For more on the importance of the dragon as a cultural symbol for the Chinese see the Forum discussion in Beijing Review. "Is the Dragon a suitable symbol for China?" [http://www.bjreview.com.cn/forum/txt/2006-12/29/content\\_52225.htm](http://www.bjreview.com.cn/forum/txt/2006-12/29/content_52225.htm) (22.12.07)

<sup>43</sup> A Chinese audience member in the first of the Kent University performances made similar comments about the dragon. See Appendix 15: p1-2

said this, he then confessed it would be an interesting element in my show, and that this would be my dragon, and was already curious as to how it might be.

## **DRAGON BIRTH**

It took me two weeks to make what I called my ‘dragon-baby’. I went into a silent retreat, minimized social contact, and delightedly submerged into a ‘making’ meditation. I had no pattern – and no plans other than it should be -

- Made of fabric – old clothes to represent my lived past, and new, rich, textural materials. I have made simple fabric puppets before.
- Decorated in sequins and beading. I have worked with these since childhood.
- Stuffed in some way – soft to the touch but firm enough to have shape – like a child’s toy.
- Large enough to drape across my shoulders with head and tail in hand’s reach.
- With detachable body parts – according to its nine resemblances to other animals.



From the 1980s onwards I had been collecting books on Chinese myths and legends, and had discovered that the Chinese dragon is a composite creature, its body resembling nine different animals found in nature – a camel’s head, deer’s horns, rabbit’s eyes, cow’s ears, snake’s body, frog’s belly, carp’s scales, hawk’s legs and claws, tiger’s palms (Ong 1993: 60). This information resonated deeply inside me as a person of mixed race. I wanted to make a dragon that could be assembled and taken apart. In the process I was content that the head, horns, eyes,

ears, body, legs were detachable - there was not time enough to engineer removable claws, scales and belly. I made the dragon before going into rehearsals, with the practical notion in mind of handling him<sup>44</sup> as a large puppet.

When complete there were two discoveries which affected his contribution on stage. His substantial length and weight meant that I could work with him only for brief periods of action. And the attachment devices I chose for reasons of nostalgia<sup>45</sup> were impractical for swift fastening/unfastening in performance. I eventually replaced the buttons with press studs and Velcro, and found the sounds they made when pulled apart offered a dramatic and satisfying punctuation for the action.

In the first version of FACE in England, for speedier presentation, I revealed Dragon almost entirely intact, and only assembled one leg on stage. In the second version of FACE, Tang decided that I should take Dragon apart - swiftly and dramatically. We conceived that Dragon and I would be complicit in surprising the audience with this trick. I rationalised this action by knowing that as much as my dragon can be taken apart, he can be put together again, which parallels my self-investigation through therapy over the years<sup>46</sup>.

## **DRAGON LORE**

Of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac only the Dragon cannot be found in the natural world as a living entity<sup>47</sup>. However archaeological findings in China show one of the earliest images of the dragon, on a large pottery plate, resembling a combination of snake and crocodile, dating back over 4000 years ago (Cheng 1995:68). In Chinese myth and folklore, dragons are supernatural creatures connected to wind and water. While the fire-breathing dragon of the west seems very different from its Chinese counterpart, early dragons were symbols of the great goddess religions, which ‘worshipped the natural energies of the earth and sky’. Hoult suggests that the demonising of the dragon coincides with the rising of

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<sup>44</sup> The Chinese Dragon is connected to the masculine principle.

<sup>45</sup> Buttons & buttonholes from childhood remembrance felt deeply pleasing to use for my dragon.

<sup>46</sup> My relationship with my mother had, for many years, been very difficult, and I chose to deal with this, as well as other issues in my life, through psychotherapeutic counselling in various forms. Also my training in Playback Theatre required at least 100 hours of psychodrama group therapy.

<sup>47</sup> It is the fifth animal in an orderly cycle of twelve – Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig.

the masculine godhead. (1987:9-11) So we can say that the dragon is deeply connected to the regenerative cycle of nature, but that with the uprising of patriarchy some cultures have demonised the archetype while others, like China, have identified with it.

The Chinese dragon is connected to male - archetypal Yang - energy. The feminine counterpart to the dragon is the phoenix – of which much less is commonly known, except that they appear prominently at weddings paired with the dragon, symbolically representing the union of male and female. One could say that this mirrors the cultural order of male supremacy in China.

### **ME, MYSELF THE DRAGON**

As an archetype within the Jungian framework, the dragon/monster is a primal entity that needs to be battled with as a rite of passage in the hero's journey. For boys there is a masculinising energy that derives from encounter with the dragon. Gender consciousness for girls, however, does not require such a 'radical shift of identification from mother's world to father's world as it does in boys' (Stevens 1994:75-76). The masculine counterpart for women 'the animus' has a different developmental process, and 'when integrated into the conscious awareness of the woman...helps her to become a whole person by turning the energy that was formerly repressed into active and creative endeavours' (Singer 1994:185). We can posit the emergence of the dragon from my creative resources as an emblem of the 'animus'. I was very close to my father who had a charming and expansive personality – and also had a less visible fierceness and unforgiving nature. The association of the dragon with my father seems clear. 'Archetypes ...surface as images which help us organise our life experiences in ways that point toward their ultimate meaning' (Singer 1994:129).

The dragon in FACE is, therefore, an iconic representation of multiple aspects of my identity - not just through an association with my Chinese cultural background.

One could say that within Jung's concept of the individuation process - which is 'the conscious realisation and integration of all the possibilities immanent in the

individual' (1994:136) - my deeper self called this dragon into being through dreams as evidence of my creative authority and composite identity. We can also liken the process of making him, well before the start of rehearsals and the generation of scripted text, to that stage in early life when a baby develops a deep ongoing attachment to an object which substitutes for the mother. Winnicott termed this the 'transitional object' which over time, and when the infant is entirely freed of dependence on the mother's milk, gradually loses its importance, but which is an essential part of the progress to self-hood. This inanimate thing will seem to give 'warmth, or to move, or to have a texture, or to do something that seems to show it has a vitality or reality of its own' (Winnicott 1951:288). Baraitser & Bayly, in their comparison of the rehearsal process to psychotherapy, refer to Winnicott when looking at the role of objects that actors use in the devising process of rehearsal.

Before play is possible, the child needs to experience this unchallenged space where self and object remain crucially unresolved, where the infant does not yet have to make up her mind about what is and is not her. In order that the infant can develop the capacity to relate to objects, she builds a special relationship with her first 'not-me' possession. (Baraitser & Bayly 2001:64)

If we parallel the creation of FACE in its various stages of development with that of a baby growing to adulthood, then we can say that the process of making the dragon functioned as a transitional object for the infant FACE.

### **ME/NOT ME**

This sense of me/not me in the infant is also importantly mediated by caregivers. We borrow from J.L Moreno<sup>48</sup> and his theory of child development integrated by Bannister into her regenerative model of working with abused children (2003:15). Moreno describes three phases in the development of the infant:

- finding identity
- recognising the self
- recognising the other

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<sup>48</sup> J.L. Moreno, Austrian psychiatrist, invented psychodrama as a method of psychotherapy. Theory of child development first published in 1944, refined in 1952 (Fox 1987).

In the first phase, the expression of feelings, and some acknowledgement of this by others, helps the child to create an individual identity. In psychodrama this technique is called ‘doubling’, and enables the unspoken to be made explicit. “Moreno suggested that this technique is used instinctively by a competent carer who reacts to the child’s cry or smile with words and actions which seek to interpret that which the infant is trying to express. This enables the child to express itself in a way which is understood” (Bannister 2003:15-16). In the scripting and staging of FACE, I would say that my creative process with translator Diana Pao, and directors Chris Harris, Tang Shu-wing, and the stage-management teams, was akin to ‘doubling’. With their support, what I, through FACE, was attempting to express, was enabled in a very satisfactory way.

Once on stage, and in the world, the reaction of the audience to FACE provided a reflection back to me. Their acknowledgement that my story mirrored many of their own experiences helped me recognise myself. Mirroring is a psychodramatic technique - “This must be done in an honest way which does not mock or exaggerate... for an infant, these reflective actions by an adult or a sibling help the child to see how they are perceived by others” (Bannister 2003:16).

Over time, the performance of FACE grew beyond its own story. The creation of an opportunity for the audience to share their stories became even more important than just telling mine. “The third stage of child development, according to Moreno, is role reversal, when a child begins to understand that others have feelings and needs and that these may be different from those of the self” (2003:16).

## **GROWING UP**

Perhaps the choice to give that part of myself, which might represent the masculine – the dragon - more space and presence on stage, is also connected to my choice to edit out my father’s story in the new FACE. The original script treated my father’s story in detail. I wanted to honour him and offer, through his story, an example of the deep wound that so many people of mixed-race carry within themselves. I could not find my way to bilingualise this section, without lengthening the show too much. I felt I could not present edited portions of his story as its impact is cumulative. Nor did I want to re-write this section entirely.

So I had to let it go. I had to outgrow my personal connection to my father in these considerations.

### **ASSEMBLING THE PARTS**

In this revision, I returned to my original concept - that I should reveal the dragon in pieces, and then put him together, while telling stories of his making and his life so far, leaving him complete and whole by the end of the show. My intention, however, is for this section to be non-scripted. I would know more or less what I would tell, but that I should make choices in the moment. By so doing, I move into the “fluid, improvised text” characteristic of storytellers and actors from the popular theatre tradition (Wilson 2006: 46-47) and from this more equal relationship, the audience - as listener - “is not merely a listener, but a potential storyteller, whilst the storyteller is also a listener-in-waiting” (from Walter Benjamin in Wilson 2006:57). In this way, I prepare the ground for the second half of the show. The sofa on stage right is a new element, the back of which provides a resting place for the dragon, taking his weight off my shoulders, and allowing his full display and presence on stage - as if fellow actor and companion rather than just a dramatic but brief presence in the finale of the previous versions of FACE.

Over the years of performing FACE, the affirmation of its worth as a piece of work in itself, has inevitably supported my maturation as a person as well as artist. Letting go of emotional attachments to the script, I feel sufficient distance to take ownership of the material and re-form it – making choices to edit and add new material. And importantly, use this material as provocation to dialogue with the audience in the second half of the show. This process also coincided with some major life decisions for me.

### **SURGERY**

As well as considerations on editing the script, at the beginning of 2006 I was facing some serious excisions to my body. Although I had a strong sense of wellness, an ovarian cyst had grown to a size that doctors recommended should be removed. I prevaricated for many months. They could not confirm that it was life-threatening. For many years my normal practice on questions of health has been to consult Chinese doctors, herbalists and acupuncturists. I rarely sought help from

my GP, or recourse to Western Medicine. This growth, however seemingly benign, was nevertheless abnormal and grew rapidly once discovered by ultrasound. Once I agreed to surgery, I fully committed and signed away many parts of my inner anatomy to be removed as necessary.

This procedure took place at a personal threshold in my life – a month before my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, and two months before the MA performance. I prepared the voice-over material and as much of the script in advance as possible. The surgery went well and, considerably lighter by several organs – womb, ovaries and appendix - I recovered quickly.

Some women believe that their bodies and lives had been greatly altered by surgery, others sense very little change and some perceive no change at all. The one consistent factor was that all forty-four respondents said that gynaecological surgery was the reason for reflection about gender identity. (Elson 2004:171-172)

Certainly not just gender identity, I also contemplated on my mortality during this period. I had no prior experience of surgery or hospitals, so my embracement of Western medicine at this juncture of my life was not insignificant. My abdomen had become distended like a strange pregnancy, and I began to regard this process as a kind of birthing to a new phase of life should I survive. During the first weeks of recovery I began to make something with paper, glue, sequins and feathers that resembled an egg – of a Phoenix. I found a place for it on the stage of FACE, and see this as the seed of my next work on the theme of womanhood and medicine. My re-working of FACE at this time was thus inextricably connected to a new consciousness of my body and self - on the threshold of the next phase of womanhood<sup>49</sup>.

I had begun a period of renewal, developing autonomy as a performer, was encountering new practices and traditions, and identifying myself within these contexts. FACE as a piece of work – an emblem of myself - was coming to

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<sup>49</sup> Many archetypes across cultures are identified with the older woman – the crone, wisewoman, Hecate, Hestia, Sophia, Ceridwen, Saraswati (Bolen 2008). I look forward to researching the Goddess of the Western Mountains in the Chinese tradition whom many older women identify with.

maturation and looking for integration – of languages & cultures, its own story amongst others.

I went ahead with the show in September, 2006. However my capacity to fulfil all my research interests was severely limited. A full exploration of the second half - after expending energy on a one hour solo first half - was compromised. The experience was, nevertheless, extremely fruitful. An investigation of this follows in Chapter Three.

## Chapter Three: INTEGRATION

*How can the relationship between audience and performer be developed through participatory performance practices?*

For the Kent performances I prepared a new script (Appendix 10). My considerations on this process and the various devices I used to combine the two languages in aesthetically interesting ways are given in Appendix 11. Appendix 12 tables the actual changes that were made between old and new FACE.

I also prepared for a bilingual audience by making contact with the local Chinese community in Canterbury. Through a storytelling event in London in February 2006, I made a fortuitous connection with a Eurasian family from Canterbury, and came to tell stories at their Chinese Supplementary School<sup>50</sup> in May. In turn I invited them to a drama play-day at the Lumley Studio. This event took place on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2006, barely three weeks after surgery. The investment in this relationship was well rewarded when several members came along to the September performances of FACE. Many sent apologies for absence because of work. The community

as a whole sent flowers with best wishes for the show. None came from the Cantonese-speaking student population as they go home to Asia for the summer and would not return till



after my performance date. Both Kent performances had monolingual English speakers, and some of them multilingual in languages other than Cantonese. The first performance had at least three, and the second at least 12, bilingual English-Cantonese speakers.

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<sup>50</sup> There are over one hundred Chinese Supplementary Schools in the UK. These are organised by community members to teach their children Cantonese and/or Mandarin. Many are members of the UK Federation of Chinese Schools ([www.ukfcs.info](http://www.ukfcs.info)). They hold classes on a Saturday or a Sunday.

A full record of the first of the two Kent performances is on two DVDs – the scripted first half, and the improvised second half. A full transcription of the second half of this performance is given in Appendix 13. Appendix 14 is a record of my own Notes made after the two performances. In this chapter I review the mise en scene of FACE<sup>51</sup>, and discuss FACE in the context of Ritual Theatre.

My parallel professional journey with playback theatre - unscripted ensemble performance - now merges with scripted solo work. I compare and contrast Playback Theatre in relation to other forms of participatory and autobiographical theatre. And then reflect on what happened in the Kent performances of FACE from the perspective of a playback theatre practitioner.

### **THE MISE EN SCENE**

At an after-show talk in the first run of FACE, Tang revealed he had chosen to create the mood of the show as a ‘poetic journey’ and that ‘honouring the ancestors with tea’ was a key dramaturgical concept. This is entirely consonant with my vision for the work and I have fully integrated his mise en scene into my performance vocabulary for this material, making my own edits and revisions within this conceptual framework.

Looking at FACE in terms of the ‘spatialisation of personal/cultural memory in an intercultural context’ I note how ‘the definition of home and the consequences of homelessness in postcolonial contexts are... often substantially exacerbated’ (Hollidge & Tompkins 2000:88). The audience take seats facing a stage offering contemplation beyond present-time and suggestive of a Eurasian home. The Chinese furniture SL is mirrored by the European sofa SR. The doorway/frame has an image of a young child, and its position USC is matched by the candlelit tea-table DSC set for seven. My middle teacup/saucer is in see-through glass - signalling that I make the contents of my experience visible. The music, from my childhood – a popular Italian song of the 1960s – offers a tangential European ambiance. I begin and end the performance/journey through the doorway/frame

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<sup>51</sup> Patrice Pavis, in an interview, invited me to discuss the mise en scene of FACE in detail, indicating that this might be valuable to my inquiry.

USC. With a permeable screen<sup>52</sup>, it is both magical doorway to changes of time – from Adult-self to Young-self - as well as picture frame for images with the potential to overlay double images when standing in front or lit behind the screen - suggestive of simultaneous identities. The chair and side table on SL locates old Hong Kong experiences, more recent and contemporary experiences take place on the SR sofa.

A path of light from the upstage frame down to the tea-table creates a specific space for present-time physicalisation of past-time storytelling through voice-overs. This light could be said to represent the pathway of life, and in this space is revealed the body's response to significant moments both relating to misperception of identity by others - at drama school and in the streets of Hong Kong. The pain of this experience is expressed through stasis in the first instance, and walking away into darkness in the second instance.

Through the memory space of car journeys across the landscape of Hong Kong, the senses are engaged... the smell of the stagnant water, the taste of favourite food, the sound of the electric trams, the shuddering of the old VW. 'The attempt to recapture the essence of childhood space is both physical and psychological' (Hollidge & Tompkins 2000:98)

Whereas the scripted first half utilizes the dramatic values of lighting and sound, with the audience in darkness, the second half requires general lighting on both stage and audience areas. The shift from a traditional theatre experience to participative, interactive performance is facilitated through convivial tea-sharing during the interval. When the audience returns to their seats for the second half, the dialogue has begun, the rules of engagement are managed by the host/conductor/facilitator<sup>53</sup>, rather than through the formality of 'aesthetic theatre'. The second half resembles 'social theatre' which Thompson and Schechner define 'as theatre with specific social agendas...where aesthetics is not the ruling objective' (2004:12).

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<sup>52</sup> The frame for the Kent performances was newly made to support vertical strips of lycra material through which I can pass easily. The earlier version used bamboo blinds which took time to roll up/down and sometimes became entangled. This innovation enables speedier and less hazardous use of this staging device.

<sup>53</sup> For example, where lighting would normally indicate where an audience's attention should be, the conductor in a playback context signals attention onto the actors with the words 'let's watch'

## FACE AND RITUAL THEATRE

Ritual in intercultural theatre has been associated with...re-making connections to 'lost spirituality' (Hollidge & Tompkins 2000:57). The making of FACE was associated with a wish to cleanse ancestral wounds subjected by their identities as Eurasians, so one can say FACE has a transformative and transpersonal purpose embedded in its production, offering the ancestors an opportunity for renegotiating identity in spirit<sup>54</sup>. Not only is it meant for the audience of here and now, but is offered as redress and, ultimately, celebration for all our Eurasian ancestors. The scripted first half begins with a prayer to the ancestors. The dramatic action of pouring tea gives respect and invites blessing. The candlelit tea-table echoes the role of the ancestral altar found in many traditional Chinese homes. These altars sometimes show photographs of forebears in front of statues of Buddha or Kuan Yin or other Taoist gods/goddesses<sup>55</sup>. Here the cultural reference is muted; the tea set could be Chinese or English. The action is more important than the objects.

The second half of Playback Theatre can be categorised as a contemporary form of ritual which aims to enable community bonding and healing. '...individual revelation spurs communal feeling. We are brought together through the teller's stories' (Fox 1986:54). Bani Shorter suggests that 'our present-day civilisation is depleted, exhausted, and nowhere is this more evident than in our yearning for encounter with the irrational along with our incomprehension and mishandling of the rituals that we enact' (1996:36). She speaks as an analytical psychologist within the Jungian tradition and of 'happenings that occur in the theatre of the soul' (1996:40). She suggests that we must revitalise our connection to rituals – and compares 'programmed and spontaneous enactments (of ritual). The latter often appear less polished but their message comes across as markedly compelling, honest...reflecting an immediate sincerity that communicates a memorable validity' (1996:22)

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<sup>54</sup> In traditional Chinese thinking, which is a part of my world-view, the ancestors have an omnipresence in our everyday lives. Though not my practice, an example would be the burning of Hell money and paper models of cars & houses, especially to the recently departed, offering greater comfort in the other world.

<sup>55</sup> They are lit with incense, and bear offerings of fresh fruit and flowers especially during periods of Chinese festivals. I have my own version of this in my home in London.

The ritual of serving of tea during the interval echoes the action in the first half, reinforcing a form of community identity and peace-making. The tea-trade with the Far East in British colonial history provides a subtle resonant shadow; and within this lifetime, every member of the audience will have their own history of tea-drinking - green tea or camomile, Pu-Er or PG Tips. The sharing of tea together, therefore, creates a simple connection between us, across all our differences. As an everyday event, the sharing of tea, is the precursor to, and normalises, another level of sharing through the theatre which follows. Both can be seen as acts of communion – examples of Turner’s ‘liminoid activities’ - voluntary rituals which can create a feeling of *communitas* where ‘people encounter each other directly’ (Schechner 2002:61-63).

As Schechner suggests, ‘the purpose is the most important factor determining whether a performance is ritual or not’ and describes the Efficacy-Entertainment dyad (2002:71). Under the list of qualities across a continuum, FACE strides between both ends: looking towards effecting change, as well as offering entertainment; the audience are both observers and participants; creativity is collective and individual. Certainly the transformation of self is possible. Analysis of the transcription of the second half of FACE (Appendix 13) provides examples of several audience members/participants reporting shifts of perspective. For example, Wing Hong Li says “...when I see your show today, this is the first time, and I wish to find my dragon as well. In here.” (p2), and Renie says “so it’s really made me think about learning to know deeper about people, rather than just taking people at face value” (p18). These are not post-show comments, they are public declarations made within the performance event itself.

### **PLAYBACK AS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL/PARTICIPATORY THEATRE**

Playback Theatre is created through a unique collaboration between performers and audience. Someone tells a story or moment from their life, chooses actors to play the different roles then watches as their story is immediately recreated and given artistic shape and coherence. “Any life experience may be told and enacted in Playback Theatre, from the mundane to the transcendent, the hilarious to the tragic – and some stories may be all of these” (Salas 2007:7).

Playback Theatre is inextricably and consciously working with an active audience telling their own stories. While Verbatim Theatre works with autobiographical material, the performance is often carefully edited, and then performed by actors. However the content of the personal testimony is meant to be honoured in this process<sup>56</sup>. Reminiscence theatre offers empowerment for both performer and audience, and may be enacted only once or repeated. This kind of ‘performed history’<sup>57</sup> alongside the presentational revolution in the field of ethnography<sup>58</sup> can include improvisational elements, but is often well rehearsed. The Life Game<sup>59</sup>, on the other hand, works with autobiographical material in the ephemeral moment. Personal stories are told as part of the theatre event - unscripted. Someone sits on the stage and is interviewed in much the same way as in Playback Theatre. Similarly the actors spontaneously improvise an enactment of the story just told, aiming to capture some verisimilitude to the experience. It matters that the story is *recognised* as belonging to the guest’s experience.<sup>60</sup> This is in direct contrast to Theatresports<sup>61</sup>, also invented by Keith Johnstone, where the material offered by the audience is trivia, and the challenge for the actors is to be as entertaining as possible. As improvisers, the Life Game actors therefore have the same intention as Playback Theatre actors. This aspect of the process is identical to one part of a Playback Theatre experience. But the profound difference is that the guest in The Life Game is selected beforehand, and the audience is only engaged as observer/witness.

Motion Theatre, developed by performance artist, Nina Wise<sup>62</sup>, is spontaneous theatre/dance which consciously utilises autobiographical material. The improvisational performance may be solo, or with others in duet, trio and group

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<sup>56</sup> For more on questions of responsibility and accountability in Verbatim Theatre see Heddon (2008:124-143). See Rowe for extensive discussion on the ethical limits of Playback Theatre (2007:152-157).

<sup>57</sup> Kershaw (1999:177)

<sup>58</sup> Lincoln & Denzin discuss how contemporary re-evaluation of dualistic thinking and the recognition of the primacy of orality in human experience, has led to extensive experimentation and debate on appropriate scientific discourse (2003:7).

<sup>59</sup> Created and trademarked by Keith Johnstone, The Life Game has been successfully performed by Improbable Theatre around the world. I saw their performances in London and New York.

<sup>60</sup> The guest is given a horn and a bell to signal, during the improvisation, how accurate the performance is to his experience.

<sup>61</sup> Popularly adapted for television as ‘Whose Line Is It Anyway?’

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.ninawise.com/> I attended two weekends of training with Nina Wise in Nov 2005 in New York City, and found a kinship with her work. See also Wise (2002).

forms that she has created<sup>63</sup>. So while *The Life Game*, *Motion Theatre* and *Playback* all present spontaneous improvisational performance working with autobiographical material, it is *Playback Theatre* that reaches across the footlights into dialogue with the audience as an essential part of its process. This engagement with the audience implicates them, as Etchells says, ‘in some fundamentally ethical way, to feel the weight of things and one’s own place in them’ (1999:17).

Shifting the audience from spectator to witness in the theatrical event, playback theatre, like Boal’s *Theatre of the Oppressed*, invites participation. And both, in quite direct ways, work towards awakening the audience to their own presence and culpability in the experience of their personal everyday life and their social and political reality. Boal’s work, emerging from political beginnings, focuses on oppression, empowerment, and change of behaviour, where the personal story is ‘springboard for public exploration and...mined for its socio-political issues’ (Fox 2005:343). *Playback Theatre*, however, values the uniqueness of the personal story as a paradoxical mirror to the collective story and shared experience of the human condition. It offers cognitive insight through an artistic lens, and stimulates human empathy through identification with the other.

### **Engaging the Audience**

Bennett (1990:162) separates out three aspects of interactive relations between the audience and the stage. The audience-stage interaction includes all those facets of a performance which enable the audience to enter a fictional experience offered by the actors’ art along with external signs such as set, sound, lighting and so forth. In relation to *FACE*, my factual experience told directly to the audience with only occasional use of the fourth wall<sup>64</sup>, is the ‘fictional stage world’. The audience is drawn into imagining the Hong Kong I grew up in, the culture shock I encounter at drama school, and how I ‘am’ my mother in the flower shop, aided by images on the screen and music.

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<sup>63</sup> *Playback Theatre* can readily absorb this work into its performance practice. The early part of a playback performance, where the actors introduce themselves by telling a short true experience of theirs, models authenticity and personal storytelling as a warm up for the audience. Where appropriate, a motion theatre-inspired presentation could be a very effective aesthetic vehicle for this stage of a playback show.

<sup>64</sup> For instance, when the Cantonese opera music draws me into a trance memory of my grandmother, and then into stylised body movements suggestive of Beijing Opera – the events on the stage is ‘as if’ the audience is not there.

However the audience-actor interaction is particularly energised in FACE, as fictive imagination moves in and out of factual encounter with the actor; and the actor offers herself at various moments as character/storyteller/host. An audience which meets me for the first time may well be imagining who I am beyond the story I am telling, and those unfamiliar with interactive theatre in the second half are very likely to experience some tension in relation to me and my invitation to their potential and more active involvement<sup>65</sup>. “This is a dynamic process; performers and spectators will be engaged in a constant negotiation and re-negotiation of what can be revealed in a public space” (Rowe, 2007:54), and my role as host is tested by them. As Heddon cautions, if autobiographical theatre is ‘to be utilized for political impact in the forging of community or in the prompting of action...then it must be skilfully handled (2008:167). Inevitably, these questions of effect and affect by actor on audience, and audience on actor, will even more critically influence creative choices for a solo performer.

Bennett invites focus on the audience-audience relationship - how audience members may interact with, and affect each other during a performance. The bilingual FACE offers many opportunities for audience members to become acutely conscious of each other, for example, through their own audible responses to the humour in one and then the other language. Suddenly the ‘presence’ of others in the audience becomes differentiated, and curiosity may ensue. Appendix 15 gives a record of audience feedback from these performances at Kent.

Roger Green “kept wondering what it was like for those in the audience who either didn’t know Hong Kong or had forgotten, especially those fluent in Cantonese” (Appendix 15, p3). As a bilingual speaker, he also became acutely conscious of the difference between my English and Cantonese and found it

even distracting. Your English was very ... English, in the sense of formal, correct, good for reading the news on the telly. It felt like you used Cantonese more to fill in the gaps, where English was perhaps inadequate to really convey everything. English was for the audience but Cantonese felt more like it was for insiders. (pp3-4)

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<sup>65</sup> The experience of Playback Theatre audiences and the tension of their participation are discussed in detail in *Public Performance, Personal Story: A Study in Playback Theatre* - Rea Dennis’ PhD Thesis - Griffith University 2004.

The aborted acquisition of my first language has now been so well repaired through multiple performances of FACE in Cantonese that in natural discourse, it seeps out to fill the ‘gaps’ of meaning when English feels insufficient. My pukka English accent I share with so many others who were educated in the British colonies. As one of the bilingual speakers then, he felt he had not just additional, but privileged access to the communication, compared to his neighbours.

During the interval and the second half of FACE the audience-audience relationship becomes even more highly energised. As a storyteller/performer and as a Playback Theatre practitioner I am most interested in creating an atmosphere of openness and ease between audience members as quickly as possible. This is my practice. From this place of trust, people are invited to volunteer their stories for enactment, reflection and witness.

Lives are represented in theatre, yes, but life itself is an affect that performance makes manifest through a process of hide and seek, excitation and pleasure. This is why theatre is always a simultaneous binding and unravelling of instances of intimacy and engagement... (Read 2008:70)

At Kent, I met the audience directly at the interval by serving tea. This action was dramatically interrupted in the second performance by a fire alarm. An evacuation from the premises led audience members to find a collective solution by settling down in a circle on some grass outside the theatre. This catalytic shift created a very relaxed atmosphere. The conversation with the audience continued, as did some improvisational work with simple playback forms with volunteers from the audience performing alongside me. While one could say that these mini-performances were aesthetically primitive<sup>66</sup>, they were still able to capture something of the teller’s<sup>67</sup> inner world in some satisfying<sup>68</sup> way. There was some deep sharing from several people about their personal connections to the issue of identity. Unfortunately none of this was documented on video.

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<sup>66</sup> This is unsurprising as these volunteers from the audience, while having been students of mine in the past, had never acted or rehearsed with each other before, and had no prior experience of developing ensemble complicity.

<sup>67</sup> We use the term ‘teller’ for the person who tells something of his personal story, whether a short moment or longer story. It avoids association with mythic and non-biographical stories that a Storyteller, from the tradition of Storytelling, might tell.

<sup>68</sup> At least for the tellers, who were moved by recognising the ‘reflection in action’ offered by the actors.

In the first performance, without the intervention of fire alarm, the audience nevertheless returned to their seats ready to continue engaging with me as host/performer. My intention was to facilitate a co-creation of a second half of further stories, insights and enactments, stimulated by themes of the first half. With reference to Appendix 13 and 14, I compare this process with the arc of a classical Playback Theatre performance, and discuss some of my considerations and significant choices I made in the Kent context, as well as omissions and differences.

### **Structural Differences**

The structure of a Playback performance has considerable flexibility, however it generally follows a pattern of opening, warming up through short forms, invocation to and then sharing of stories, and then some integration through closing forms, followed by an ending. In this context, we could say that

- the first half of FACE was a very extended opening and warming up to theme;
- the interval and initial conversations with the audience was a warming up to the space, and conductor/audience relationship;
- the invitation to Michael to emerge from the audience to sit in the teller's chair<sup>69</sup> was a shift to Stories (in this case only one was shared from this place);
- the short forms with 'audience up'<sup>70</sup> led towards closure and ending.

Solo Playback is hardly known. There are accounts of duos where the conductor might jump in to join the other actor, but this is rare. Jonathan Fox describes an Australian modification for touring to schools called Shuttleback<sup>71</sup> with two storyteller/performers. Zurich Playback Theatre offers two-person performances as part of their corporate portfolio. Bennett & Simon have performed as a

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<sup>69</sup> There are normally two chairs – often but not always DSR – on a Playback stage. The upstage chair is for the teller so that their faces are visible and voices directed towards the audience while the conductor sits on the DS chair.

<sup>70</sup> A term we use for times - during a performance when the audience is well engaged and aware of the process - when the conductor will openly invite volunteers to join the actors on stage for some of the enactments. This is not common, but can be deeply empowering for audience members as participants and as witness.

<sup>71</sup> Chardi and Hall began with prepared stories and then invited stories from the audience. (Fox 1992: Vol.III, No.3, p.3)

playback duo in healthcare settings to small audiences.<sup>72</sup> My colleague Anna Chesner and I offered a short performance for the International Haiku Society in 2001. Our intention was to demonstrate the similarity of Playback to Haiku<sup>73</sup>, through brevity and metaphor.

To forgo the deep satisfaction of an actor working in ensemble, and to burden the conductor's task with the mindset of an actor was hard to contemplate. With surgery in the background of this event, I gave no thought to rehearsal or practice of this. I had, however, mentioned to some of my playback colleagues in advance that I might require their assistance at some point.<sup>74</sup>

### **Conducting Choices**

At the beginning of the second half, I chose to satisfy the curiosity of the audience, rather than engage my own. I could have, instead, launched straight into questioning them on their reflections on the first half, which, in a normal playback context, would have been responded to with Fluid Sculptures or other short forms<sup>75</sup>. But here I was alone. I had not prepared a way to work solo on the short forms, and it seemed to me that inviting questions from the audience would be a satisfying way of continuing a direct relationship with them in my new role as host.

At this early stage I made an important omission. I neglected to make explicit to the audience that I would be following the form of Playback Theatre in this next phase of our engagement, and that this may involve volunteers from the audience to join me onstage on the sofa, to tell their own stories, with some performative response by actors (either myself or a team). At the time I was unclear myself as to what I would be doing. In hindsight, I realise how my invitation to Michael to

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<sup>72</sup> See Appendix 16 for notes from them in an email to me about these experiences.

<sup>73</sup> John Stevenson, Haiku master and playback practitioner, suggests common aesthetic qualities as “concision”, viewing “everything in nature as potentially articulate”, “the reader/audience finishes the work”, and that “both forms involve overlooking the subjective for the sake of expressing a larger ‘self’” (1998, Vol. IX, 2, p1 & 3)

<sup>74</sup> Except for this exigency, I would generally insist on some history of practice for any playback team. Fortunately all had been my students, and I trusted their capacity to join with me on this adventure.

<sup>75</sup> See Salas 1993:31-44 for descriptions of some of the principal ‘forms’ of enactment in Playback Theatre. Over time, many companies have evolved their own idiosyncratic forms, but the classic forms of Fluid Sculptures, Pairs, Tableau (also known in variations such as Snapshots, FreezeFrame or VideoClips), Chorus, and Stories (also known as Scenes, or sometimes FreeForm), are a common shared performance language for playbackers around the world.

sit on stage with me had no context, and might be more shocking to the audience, not least Michael himself, than had I found a way to prepare for this eventuality earlier.

At the outset, a question about the Dragon gave me an opportunity to include a Chinese audience member in conversation about this, and have his presence visible and opinion validated. Other questions about Japanese/Syrian ancestry, and Tai Chi created opportunities for the storyteller/performer role in me to re-emerge. The next question on the subject of home and belonging came from Michael, a fellow Eurasian well known to me – a fact I made clear to the audience. Our dialogue was interesting me to explore further on stage in performance, and I felt strongly that whatever he might offer to tell would be pertinent to the theme.

It is not uncommon for the conductor to make a direct invitation to an audience member to come forward. Within the normal rhythm of a playback performance, the invitation to the teller's chair is at the heart of a playback performance. There might be a second, third or fourth person who would volunteer to come forth in this way to tell a longer story and, at a practical level be seen and heard by everyone in the audience. Also, in terms of community ritual, the tellers are giving tacit permission to the audience to act as their witness.

In this instance he acquiesced to my insistence that he join me on stage. From this place, he tells a story that begins with “Our grandmothers knew each other 100 years ago...” and fills in with vivid detail the early Hong Kong Eurasian history that I could only allude to in my own story. Rowe states

Narratives told in playback...are forged by the circumstances of their telling... inflected by context, the dialogue between teller and conductor,...performed in the presence of an audience, and by their tendency to draw upon other texts. (2007:70)

### **Acting Alone**

In a normal Playback performance I might have invited enactments from the actors much earlier. My physical weariness influenced a longer dialogue, the performer in me reluctant to move back onto centre stage. Additionally I wanted to delay leaving the side of the teller, as this is transgressive behaviour within our

practice. As I switched roles from conductor to actor, I offered the company of my dragon as companion. Poor substitute to the active listening/watching, and implicit holding of ritual space that is the conductor's office - especially beside a teller during an enactment. As actor, however, I held onto key images and moments of his story. I note how I brought in some extra information to the enactment. "Playback Theatre... builds empathy in audience members. But we insist on balancing that with a commitment to social justice" (H. Fox 2007: 93). With more experience in our playback work, as well as listening for the individual's story, it is the actors' challenge to place this story into its socio/political framework, particularly when the story has direct implications for a larger cultural perspective without losing the personal thread. "Individual stories from the community are used as beacons to illuminate more general patterns and situations" (ibid. 2007:92). I attempted in this enactment, to include some suggestion of colonial hierarchy and privilege, to name other Eurasians who contested this, to acknowledge the impact of war, as well as the Eurasian diaspora - all the while developing the poetic personal connection, for the teller, between the two islands of Hong Kong and England. The enactment was in the narrative mode - I attempted to lift its theatricality with storyteller language. My physical condition inhibited any further exploration of metaphor through movement/dance which at another time I might have brought in.

I note that I referred back to the teller several times during the enactment. I am sure I did this from anxiety, as this transgresses another key aspect of the playback ritual which moves to and from social encounter and theatrical play. "In fact the entire performance can be regarded as an oscillation between dramatic and everyday reality" (Fox 1986:46). Recalling Bennett's analysis of interactive relations we see that this 'oscillation' in playback theatre between the 'audience-stage interaction' (which brings the fictive elements of theatre alive to an audience on the stage), and the 'audience-actor' and in particular the 'audience-audience' encounter, is signalled by certain repetitive behaviours by the actors and conductor. We practice these assiduously in our playback rehearsals, so that they are skilfully embodied, and form the ritualistic framing of the work. During an

enactment, we create an imaginary world, a dramatic ‘spell’<sup>76</sup> which we hope to draw both teller and audience into, and this fictive reality is at risk when an actor looks directly at the teller during the enactment. Then the audience-actor relationship is brought to fore, trance broken, interrupted by the social demand of the gaze<sup>77</sup>. In this instance with Michael, the audience-actor relationship is unusually strong, in that we share family history, and it is very likely that this would anyway be deeply enmeshed with whatever fictive world I was attempting to create for him on stage.

### **Closure**

I had energetic capacity for this one exploration of solo playback enactment, and depended on playback students of mine to join me on stage to conclude the performance for the audience. Returning to the role of conductor with relief, I facilitated four more people to share. Each spoke to the theme of intercultural encounter. Two on shifts of perception, one delighting in possible miscegenation in her family history, and the last spoke to a moment earlier in the performance when I shared a joke with a Chinese member of the audience in Cantonese which went unexplained. We were reminded of this moment, and an enactment was offered to acknowledge the curiosity. The desire to know was also satisfied, the joke explained. My final statement on stage before the bows answered a question asked of me earlier in the performance, about where home is for me - England or Hong Kong. “This is home” I declared, indicating my colleagues and the playback stage.

These reflections reveal some of the complexity of relations between audience and performer in participatory performance practices, as well as some of its potential in shifting subjectivities and in generating *communitas*.

‘The intimacy of singular individuals hovers between the new nature of things, and that old call to engagement in a space called community-in-the-making’  
(Read 2008:272)

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<sup>76</sup> Fox traces a connection to pre-literary drama, ‘with its appreciation of trance, communal interaction, redressive outcome, and environmental adaptation’ in his discussion of Playback Theatre as an example of oral theatre (1986:36).

<sup>77</sup> Seminal research in the field of social psychology by Argyle & Dean (1965) and subsequent work chronicle the importance of gaze and eye-contact in interpersonal and social relations.

# CONCLUSION

The analysis of this work has offered multiple perspectives on how performance can be instrumental in enabling new insights on identity; and how identities are facilitated to emerge through the creative process. In this thesis, I have attempted to move ‘between interior and exterior perspectives’ (Allain 2002:10) for a deeper understanding of bilingualism and hybridity in performance. From the subjectivity of straddling two cultures and languages, this work contributes to the field of intercultural theatre. Considerations of translation and differences in audience reception, offer insights in cross-cultural performance practice. Tracking creative impulses and choices, I have used psychodynamic theories to analyse the emergence and development of my autobiographical performance work. Participatory performance practice is fundamental to my praxis, and this process has given me vocabulary and conceptual frameworks to more critically reflect on the relationships between audience, stage and actor, especially from the perspective of Playback Theatre.

In his investigation of the role of the actor in Playback Theatre, Rowe regards the “polyphonous response” from a collaborative team of Playback actors allows a “potential for registering multiple and reflexive voices” (2007:170) and “is crucial for both effective and ethical Playback Theatre” (2007:142).

Perhaps my resistance to doing solo Playback at Kent – putting aside constraints on capacity because of surgery - recognises this intuitively.

Since those performances at Kent I have performed this new FACE in Singapore and Toronto during the autumn of 2007. In both places, with myself in role of conductor, I invited teams<sup>78</sup> to perform a full – and very



<sup>78</sup> All had practiced with me previously.

rewarding - second half of Playback Theatre. My interest in creating solo scripted autobiographical performances continues, but wanes for solo Playback. However my experience affirms the efficacy of ensemble Playback Theatre as a contemporary ritual for addressing themes of social interest.

Within the realm of ethnography, this work is a record of Eurasian experience in the British Hong Kong context, during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, revealing cross-cultural differences in perception and reception. The improvisational second half created an opportunity for other autobiographical stories on the theme of identity and belonging to emerge into the public realm. The Playback Theatre element in this work<sup>79</sup> can be seen as an alternative tool for qualitative research in the social sciences<sup>80</sup>.

Hetherington speaks of how identity - ‘that sense of self-recognition and belonging with others’ - is achieved through ‘identification with others, identities that can be multiple, overlapping or fractured’ (1998:24). Parker & Song refer to “the complex formations of identity” which arise from “legacies of colonialism, global migration” (2001:12-14). By bilingualising the scripted FACE, and having the capacity to facilitate bilingual dialogue in the non-scripted second half, I have attempted to make a performance event that asserts value in hybridity as a post-colonial identity, and facilitates access to, and dialogue with, members of the Chinese diaspora in multicultural Britain.

In December 2005, the editorial of *The Independent*<sup>81</sup> celebrated the introduction of the Race Relations Act 40 years before, and quotes the 2001 Census showing that Britain has the highest rate of ethnic intermarriage in Europe. While the promotion of ‘multiculturalism’ is contentious, it is credited for what success there has been in race relations in Britain over the years. As Safraz Manzoor, in an

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<sup>79</sup> With appropriate permissions, this work can be audio or video recorded for future reference and analysis, as in this instance.

<sup>80</sup> See Salas and Gauna (2007), and Feldhendler (2008) for more on the application of Playback Theatre in Life History research and documentation.

<sup>81</sup> Editorial, “Britain’s four decades of progress and imperfection”, *The Independent Newspaper*, 8.12.05, p.32

article in *The Guardian*<sup>82</sup> asserts ‘Time and social contact are what will break down cultural barriers’.

Read speaks of the ‘Last Human Venue ... where the urgency of our human condition at the edge of nuclear obliteration, global warming, wars, brings us together with a purpose through theatrical performance as a place where we can deeply deliberate our existence’ (2008:273-4). Intimacy and engagement are critical in this endeavour. My sense is that Playback Theatre has something powerful to offer here.

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<sup>82</sup> Manzoor, Sarfraz, “It’s about feeling you belong here”, *The Guardian Newspaper*, 27.04.05, p.5

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## **Appendix 1: Eurasians in Conversation - Veronica Needa interviews the Reverend Guy Shea - London, April 1997**

V: I just feel that you are a treasure in very many ways!

G: Goodness!!

V: You are! And not only do I want information about what you know of my family which I know you know lots that I have no clue about, but I am also interested in your own story too. I would like to offer some oral history - real stories and memorabilia and old photographs etc. It's an opportunity to affirm and make visible a community that for all sorts of reasons has been invisible. Hidden for all sorts of reasons, as you know, because it was a very painful thing to be in generations before. Not now of course, but in the earlier generations of Eurasians.

G: Well basically the whole thing really started when European merchants and European seamen came to the Chinese waters. In those days it was all travel by sea and by sail, so it took ages and was awfully dangerous. And by and large the men came on their own. Well, the human being is a sexual creature. They may not have their own mates but they still need to express their sexuality. It all started with the boats being met by the local Tun Ka population. This is how we get the term cum shaw. In Cantonese it sounds like golden comb, but it isn't that. Its English! Cum shaw cum shaw, daai baan cum shaw - come ashore. And of course they went ashore for one thing and one thing only - for sexual liaison. And in the old days, one of the things Eurasians were called were haam seui - salt water - because it was a short hand way of saying you are the product of the Tun Ka people who lived on salt water and the Europeans. So haam seui jaiie, haam seui mui - that's where the term came from.

Then the next stage, you have European merchants and European officials settling in China proper - particularly in the South China coast and even more so in Sha Meen, in Canton. Again because they had no mates they very often set up temporary cohabitation situations, where the women concerned were Chinese. They were not necessarily Tan Ka people. They were shore people sometimes and they never really married anybody. The term that they used was Kow See Tow - Seeking for a Master. The set up was such that they used to carry on all the Victorian social things of calling on one other and giving dinner parties - with Mrs Smith or Mrs Jones being a Chinese woman who couldn't speak proper English. And the way they communicated was by Pidgin English.

There is one story of a particular woman who spoke to her husband and said Tomor eat meh meh which translated was Tommorrow we are eating lamb. Here is another story which illustrates this Pidgin English. There was a woman who had a Eurasian son who was sent to DBS as a boarder. The headmaster, the Reverend Featherstone, asked if she would permit the boy to go on a school expedition to Macau. Her reply was my son Chong Dai belong go San Tung Daai Laam Deng belong go Ma Kow maai ju tsai ngoh do no saa be - lo! m' bay heui And she was understood! My son Chong Dai whether he goes to Shantung province in the north or the place called Daai Laam Deng or Macau - I am afraid of him being sold into indentured labour - I wouldn't know about this. No! He is not to leave.

And by and large that's how we communicated - turn of the century, 19th Century. And very often these liaisons produced families. They were what we call high class Eurasians because the husbands were not soldiers or ordinary seamen. They were officers, managers of firms and things like that - people with education and with middle class backgrounds by and large, and some even superior backgrounds. And the result is that this group of Eurasians later dominated the colony. People like Sir Robert Hotung came from that background; my grandfather Geroge Tyson, my grandfather Paul Samuel Shea both came from that background. And there are many many more families too.

The next generation had proper marriages between people who were working in Hong Kong for the government like your grandfather. Mr Broadbridge was in the Public Works Department and he married your grandmother and it was a proper wedding. Like Auntie Katie marrying Mr Frith, and Auntie Bolt marrying Uncle Tom Bolt. They were proper marriages - they were not Kow See Tow and they brought up the next generation of Eurasians. Even later still, we started getting other sorts of Eurasians. They were the products of prostitutes and soldiers and sailors - one night stand johnnies, no permanent liaisons. So when we talk about Eurasians, we are really talking about quite a large contingent, coming from very diverse backgrounds.

The original Eurasians Sir Robert Ho-Tung and that lot were all brought up by their mothers because their fathers left them when they left the colony. Therefore they had a Chinese upbringing and Chinese education. They were very often baptised originally at the cathedral and then slipped into Chinese paganism because that's what mother practised. They were mainly born in money and when they married they married Chinese style - and they would have sun ju paie Ancestral Tablets and everything. They spoke Cantonese very often and they could both read and write Chinese. In the main, culturally speaking, they were Chinese.

The next generation was less Chinese and more English. Your mother and Auntie Doris, Auntie Grace, Kath Seymour, Eva Leonard - they are more English than Chinese. And then the generation after that you started getting people courting, meeting foreigners abroad and meeting foreigners in the colony and marrying. They were usually educated, university educated, and they were accepted by the families. So that's the current generation, and that's quite different.

But the old style Eurasians, were the product of Kow See Tow and because of that they were wealthy, had advanced socially, they had good jobs - they thought it was beneath them to marry any Chinese who were willing to marry them because usually it would be for their money. They didn't want that, they didn't want the poor Chinese, the boat people. If they wanted to marry somebody with education and superiority, the Chinese wouldn't look at them twice because of their European blood. Then there was the problem, of course, of the English who wouldn't want them either. The end result was that they married within their own community and that's why we are all related. It's the old Eurasians who are related, the younger ones are less so.

The first and second generations are all tied up as a knot - mainly within five different families...the Hos, the Los, the Simmonds, the Halls and the Choys - who are completely tangled up together. And other families would be tangled up with individual members of those five - like your family. We are all connected. It's a clan.

It's easy for me to talk about all this because of three reasons: the first important fact is that I don't have a feeling of shame.

V: Very important!

G: A fact is a fact.

V: What happened is what happened.

G: The second is that I have a very good memory. And what I have been told I remember. The third thing is that I was brought up using only the Chinese titles. I was never allowed to say "Good morning Uncle Edward I had to say Jo sun Say Sook 4th paternal younger uncle by birth. So I know exactly how they fit in. Now Tonie can't do that. She has never called Auntie Grace anything but Auntie Grace. Whereas if I had been brought up in her position, I would address Auntie Grace as Ng Yee 5th maternal younger aunt by birth. She is not an aunt by marriage, she is an aunt by birth. And she is the fifth one on my mother's side! It sounds terribly complicated but if you know it it's very clear. As my father once said to me, "If you were to say Auntie Rose - you've got four of them, which one do you mean?!"

V: I was always under the impression that my grandfather was a Master Mariner.

G: I have no idea, and even if he was, I thought that he worked for the government, but I may be mistaken there. Anyway, he was English.

V: From Everton!

G: And his wasn't going to be a liaison, a Kow See Tow, it was a regular marriage.

V: Do you know anything about my granny's adoptive mother? I think she was called Anne Hunter. Is that correct?

G: I don't know what her name was, but I do know something about her.

V: I do have a photo of a grave stone. She died in 1937.

G: As late as that! She was a Eurasian woman, and she had a proper Chinese name, but I can't think of it now. She made a living by buying young girls, and bringing them up.

V: Like courtesans?

G: No! They were not courtesans, they were adopted, brought up and then married off for a daaih lai see big money packet. That's why your mother had so many so called 'Aunties'!

V: My grandmother was first a Wong, and then became Lily Hunter, first adoptive daughter of Anne; and then Lily Broadbridge when she married Alfred Cyrus Broadbridge. You don't know anything about my Dad do you?

G: Nothing. I knew him as a person but I know nothing of his background. I hear he had some connection with the Portuguese community.

V: Yes, well he had many Portuguese friends.

G: He was in with the Jockey Club.

V: He rode, he was a Champion jockey - in those amateur days they were called Gentlemen Riders - first in Shanghai in the 20s and 30s, and then here in Hong Kong. But his mother, my grandmother, was Japanese and his father, my grandfather, probably French Syrian - Damascan.

G: French Syrian, that makes sense.

V: Yes, doesn't it, because French Syria had interests in Japan at the turn of the century - shipping and engineering. It was very much Madame Butterfly. He married his Japanese lady, had two children and then disappeared, whizzed off.

G: That was the normal pattern in those days. You see the difference in Hong Kong's 'Kow See Tow' was that it was known to the women concerned that this was not a permanent liaison.

V: ...but that they would be financially catered for at least to the end of their lives.

G: Not necessarily. They were catered for while the man was there, and some were catered for later, some were not. And very often what they did was find somebody else.

V: Wow!

G: For instance there is one Eurasian family by the name of Altman. Their Chinese surname is Lee, and my aunt married one of them, and another aunt of mine married the son of one of them. Auntie Vi married Uncle Ling's son, Auntie Winnie married Ng Yee Po's 5th maternal great aunt by birth son. But if you go farther back you will find that number one, number two and number three all had different fathers.

V: So this was the Altman family.

G: No. The Altman name came on with number four. Number two was a child of Sassoon, and you could see the Jewish blood in her face.

V: So the children took on their father's name.

G: Not necessarily. In her case yes, she became known as Miss Soon, the Chinese version of Sassoon. And to the moment she died, the Sassoon family from Shanghai looked after her - they recognised her without recognising her, if you know what I mean!

V: How much of what you know is not found in Peter Hall's book?

G: Quite a lot probably. Peter's book *In the Web* really concentrates on his own family, the Hall family, whose Chinese name is Sin. You weren't in DGS were you?

V: No I wasn't.

G: Well there was a teacher at DGS called Miss Sin, who was Peter Hall's tenth aunt. Their family is one of the well known families of the senior generation of Eurasians. The eldest son married a Miss Shea.

V: So he's related to you.

G: The second son married a Miss Tyson.

V: Oh! Also related to you!

G: The first one I called Yee Gu Jeung Gung 2nd paternal great uncle by marriage. The second one I called Daaih Yee Jeung eldest maternal uncle by marriage. Because the first one married my grandfather's second sister. The second one married my mother's eldest sister. The wives were from two different generations, but the husbands were brothers. In actual fact I am connected to the Hall family four times over. Twice on my mother's side and twice on my father's side. And Peter Hall is similarly connected to me. Twice on his mother's side and twice on his father's side.

You see Peter Hall's mother was a Gittins. Auntie Mabel, his mother, was a daughter of a Miss Altman - the sixth one. So on Auntie Mabel's side...my father's youngest sister, Auntie Vi, married her first cousin Uncle Charlie (who was an Altman, though by that time they were known as Lee). My mother's tenth sister Auntie Winifred married Jimmy Wong, who was the son of an Altman, again a first cousin. So that was twice over with the Gittin's connection; and twice over with the Hall connection was the eldest brother and the second brother. One married a Miss Shea and the other a Miss Tyson.

V: This is an example of the tangle!

G: Now this story again illustrates this: it was my mother's 60th birthday. As it was Baai Daaih Sau Big Birthday and I am the only child it was incumbent upon me to greet the guests coming in. I had no trouble with most of the guests, I knew them all. In came a couple where the woman was obviously Eurasian and the man was obviously Chinese. I took one look at them and thought to myself I am sure these are chun chik' relations.

So I immediately approached my mother's first cousin Emily Moraes, and asked her Look Yee Ma 6th maternal elder aunt by birth (notice Look Yee Ma, not Auntie Em) Look Yee Ma, been go lai ga? who are they? She said Go go mai Ah Luen lo! thats Ah Luen! I said, Ngor chee la I know now!

V: Nay chik kaak chee la? You knew immediately?

G: Ngor chik kaak chee la, Immediately! I remembered my Dad calling 'Ah Luen' and referring to her as Yee Goo Tse go Yeung Nui - the adopted daughter of Yee Goo Tse 2nd paternal younger aunt by birth the oldest of Sin Jaak Daaih Siu Naie eldest daughter in law of the Sin family So my next question was, Keui daaih ding haih ngor lo douh daaih? Who's older? Her or my Dad? And Look Yee Ma said to me Nei Lo douh daaih Your Dad. So I went straight up to her and welcomed her as Biu Goo Tse cousin by paternal younger aunt by birth A hole in one, gave her the right title you see. And she said Ahh, nei sut haih Guy ne You must be Guy Ngor haih....Yes I am...Gum ngor tung keui king gay geui ne, ...kung hei kung hei a etc. Then we chatted and so on.

Now they were always talking about Ah Luen go Kwok Ping; and in Cantonese when you refer to Ah Luen 'go'..., it usually means one generation down. So I turned to the man and said, "Biu Go" cousin elder brother (Biu Goo Tse go tsai mai haih Biu Go lo)

V: He was her son?!!

G: No! keui haih keui go Lo Gung a....her husband!

V: Oh dear that was a mistake!

G: That was a mistake. So I came back and asked Look Yee Ma ngor gum ching foo keiu deh ngaam m ngaam a? Did I address them correctly? And she said Nay giu chor yun a! Wrong! Keui haih keui ge lo gung a, he is her husband not her son nay ying goi giu keui Biu Goo Jeung seen ngaam. you should call him Auntie's Husband..but gwo do m paa...but don't worry nay gun lo douh gor been jow giu Ah Luen jo Biu Goo Tse if you follow your father's side to call her Auntie jow ho goong do thats fair; daan hai nay giu Kwok Ping jo Biu Go but if you call him cousin douh hai toong thats OK too, yun wei nay go Daaih Yee Ma gor neu because your eldest maternal Auntie by birth's daughter haih nay go Biu Tse is your cousin Nee gor hai nay gor Biu Tse gor Tse Foo this is your cousin's brother in law...giu duk Biu Go so you can call him cousin I addressed him from the Chan connection and addressed her from the Shea connection. Saved my bacon.

V: They understood it!

G: Well they accepted it. They didn't try to correct me or anything.

V: That's extraordinary.

G: We are connected like nobody's business. Now recently I did a wedding. The bride and groom were living in Hong Kong and they wanted to be married in England and the groom is Roman Catholic and the bride is Anglican. They were originally going to have a Roman Catholic wedding but when the groom's father made enquiries, he found that they have to reside in the parish for three months before they could qualify. Working as junior lawyers in Hong Kong, they couldn't get three months leave; so he approached me. I said well you can get married by Archbishop's licence. So I sent them down to Number One The Sanctuary. Back came a letter asking why can't they get married in his parents parish or her parent's parish? Besides that what connection was I? So I wrote back a letter saying, unfortunately both of them had been living in Hong Kong for the last three years. The groom's father resides in Paris, France, and there is no question of a groom's father's parish. The bride's family comes from Devon, and there is only a maternal grandmother left alive, so they can't apply to the mother's parish either.

V: They are both Eurasian?

G: No no. He is, she is English. As to my connection with the family, we have been connected for five generations. The Wong family and the Shea family were brought up together. In fact my great grandmother and the groom's great grandmother went through the Chinese pagan ceremony of becoming blood sisters. Because she was a dipsomaniac, her son was brought up by my great grandmother! He was brought up in my family and he and my grandfather also went through the same ceremony to become blood brothers. In the next generation his father's sister married my mother's brother. His father's first cousin married my mother's first cousin; and his father's brother married the sister of the sister that married my father's brother; so I share two sets of first cousins in common and all my life I have been referred to by the groom's grandfather, as 'my nephew', and I have always introduced him and his wife as my uncle and aunt. And there has never been any question of it. And the groom's father and myself refer to each other as 'my cousin'. So in actual fact there is no blood connection but we are related through 5 generations! So they said OK to the couple to get married in my parish!

Wong tzaak di yun ching, gifts for celebrations and occasions, ngo gung jo I must do it yun wai gum chun because we are so close I mean if you take the Chinese line, laam gwo chong tau see foo mouh going over the bedhead becomes family then all those are really all my cousins, and my mother's cousins. You don't even need to lie on the bed, all you need to do is to climb over the bed head and you become a father or a mother. In other words, you may be a concubine - you are not connected by blood - but gone over the bedhead, you are my mother or father.

V: Its lovely, its about community. Just because you have no blood link, doesn't mean you are not family!

G: You see a concubine has very little in the way of rights but thats one of them - that she belongs and theres got to be something major for you to get rid of her. Like adultery or equivalent before she loses the minimal right of claiming allegiance and belonging to a family.

V: I think some of the younger generations of Eurasians, don't have this sense of community - this alliance network.

G: By the time we come to this generation, the old tradition of concubinage has died out so nobody's been taught the meaning of relationships.

V: What would my relationship to you be then..?

G: It would be what one would call say moon tow yun chun and its four doors of relationship by marriage. There is your wife's side of the family - thats the first door; the in laws of your wife - thats the second; the in laws of the in laws of your wife - the third door; and then the fourth door is after that, an extension strictly by marriage. You preface the term with word yun so you would say yun bak foo, yun bak mo Matrimonial connection uncle and aunt. Sounds very awkward in English.

V: So how would I call you?

G: You will probably follow Brian who is your cousin and call me Biu Gor cousin

V: I have become a lot more aware of family connections since my mother died, but its also probably something to do with age! and I am an only child yat lup neu with no one left - no children, no mama, no papa.

G: "No mama, no papa, no club whisky soda, daih baan cum shaw"

V: So whoever is connected to me by marriage or blood is precious!

G: Have you ever heard of Reggie Fox?

V: Now he is very familiar, I think Brian has claimed him as, is it uncle?

G:Cousin. In their case its real cousin. Reggie's mother was a Miss Lyson, cousin to Auntie Leander but Chinese style - a sister. And Reggie calls Auntie Leander Say Yee 4th maternal younger cousin by birth You see Reggie, is again a cousin of my cousin Margaret, Look Yee Ma's 6th maternal older aunt by birth daughter. Because Look Yee Ma's mother was a Miss Orr, and Reggie's maternal grandmother was also a Miss Orr, they were sisters. See what I mean.

V: So thats another connection with Auntie Leander!

V: Tell me that wonderful story about how the Eurasian families got their names.

G: It varied from family to family. I mean with us, my family, my great grand father was a Norwegian and he came out to act on behalf of the Chinese government as a Customs Inspector. Up in the north, might have been Tianjin. But he had had a Kow See Tow who was Cantonese. The unusual thing about him is that though he was a pure bred Norwegian. a) - he could speak the Chinese language, and b) - he could read and write Chinese. And because of him working in customs & excise, he rose to the Mandarincy of the third rank - that is three from top. Thats very very high. He was called Fredrick Christian Schjote. And because he was appointed a Chinese Mandarin he had to make reports, and he also had to have his name put down on the list of Officials to receive his Pay etc etc. So they gave him a Chinese name Se Duk which in Mandarin was what is as close to Schjote as possible, and this was granted by Imperial Edict. So unlike other Eurasians in Hong Kong, our Chinese surname was Se ... its official, granted by the Emperor.

V: Where does Shea comes from?

G: My grandfather got fed up with people not being able to spell the name when they heard it and not being able to pronounce it when they saw it. He was even further fed up with being called Mr Shit! So he decided to change his name to a common variation - Shea. And to this day they still don't know how to spell my name! I have had it spelt Shae, Shay, Sheigh. I have been called Father Shen, Father Shan, Father O'Shea. And I have thought Ah yeh paternal grandfather your changing your name by deed poll was a waste of time! That was my grandfather, first generation Eurasian.

V: There must have been very few Eurasians at that time.

G: Oh no, his wife was Eurasian, a Miss Cunningham. Her mother was Chinese and she rejoiced to the Chinese surname Leung - how she got that I don't know. But I can tell you how the Tysons became Chan. The old lady went to the Miu Temple to Kow Cheem consult the oracle and out came the character Chan. She wanted a Chinese surname for the children. She was Mrs Tyson. She was half Spanish and half Chinese. She was Eurasian married to a pure bred American called Tyson. Her maiden name was Lum, her Spanish name we think is Bardoo or Partoo, we don't know what it is. And she can't give her Chinese maiden surname to her children, so she gave the Chinese name of Chan to her children in addition to the English name of Tyson. My grandfather was known as Chan Kai Ming, he was also known as George Tyson.

My mother went to school as Gertie Tyson and she was also known as Gertie Chan. Auntie Fanny was the sixth concubine, that's why she is my grandmother. And Ossie was her son. That's why he is the youngest brother of my mother, a half brother. And you see Aunt Victoria, the oldest, was something like 50 odd years older than Uncle Ossie, although they are the same generation - they were brother and sister.

Chan Kai Ming, my grandfather, had a first wife who was a Eurasian girl who was brought up in one of the villages in Dai Leung which is one of the outer suburbs of Canton, and came out to Hong Kong on a Fa Kiu wedding sedan chair. Now for a Eurasian girl to be found in one of the villages there is very unusual, and the reason she had to come out to Hong Kong to marry, was because she needed to marry a Eurasian - the Chinese wouldn't want her. So she came down to Hong Kong and married my grandfather and she died after giving birth to Auntie Victoria. My grandfather then married again, his own first cousin. That's how Joyce Symons is related to me - she is the daughter of the sister of the second wife! And my second grandmother produced a son who died at the age of 14.

Then grandpa, when she reached a stage when she could no longer receive him on the marital bed, went outside and had number two. Through her he had Auntie Agnes Sam Yee Ma 3rd maternal older aunt by birth, another son who died at child birth called Say Kow Foo 4th maternal uncle by birth, and Auntie Annie - Chat Yee Ma 7th maternal elder aunt by birth, and another son called Gow Kow Foo 9th maternal elder uncle by birth, who died very young, and then Aunt Winifred who married Jimmy Wong. These were all by number two. Then when the wife died, he took in a number three but she had no children. So my great grandmother got very agitated when number two couldn't produce any sons that could be brought up, and also died; said to her son, 'you're not going to have one of these courtesan types, I am going to let you have my slave girl and so the slave girl married my grandfather as the number four concubine and produced a son who survived, Kenneth, and my mother Gertie, and then she died. So by that time number three says, "one come in one die. My turn (might be) next. Either you don't bring anybody in or if you bring anybody, bring two!" So Five and Six came in together. And then Ossie from number six. Seven children survived.

Why is it that my mother was the number twelfth sister? Living with my grandfather was his brother and his wife. And Chinese style you're not first cousins you are brother and sister. And because there were so few men, grandfather said "Count them all together!". So Aunt Agnes is number three, number four died and didn't count, and then his sister in law produced a son which was then number four, lived for about four or five and then died. And then produced another son called Norman, who is number five; then came Emily, Look Yee Ma, who is number six. Meanwhile, concubine number two produced Annie - number seven; and then great aunt Mary produced number eight - Carrie; and then grandma number two produced Uncle number nine, and Aunt Winifred who was number ten, and then my mother's mother produced Uncle Kenneth who was number eleven and then my mother who was number twelve. And Uncle Ossie was number thirteen. And in the Chinese set up this is absolutely normal, and they all grew up in the same household. Their household was very heavily within the Chinese culture.

We are the products of Hong Kong and it's not generally known within the Hong Kong population.

V: My uncles were all prisoners of war in Japan. When peace was declared, Uncle Reggie, who was the most gwailo of them, apparently ran out of the compound and relieved a passing Japanese person of his camera. Whether he pinched it or made a barter for it, I don't know! But he used this camera to take photos of the POW camp. My Uncle Norman has kept an album of all these pictures of the camp and the POWS who were incarcerated there. And to this day, my cousin has

this camera. And these photographs show some of the many Eurasian volunteers who were taken prisoner defending Hong Kong.

G: Well they are always getting at me to write things down, and its such an esoteric thing. I don't think many people are interested. I do have a book in my stomach but I can't write it till one of my cousin's dies. I don't want to embarrass her. My family had three mui chais maidservants in the family - switch your machine off!.....

When I last went to Hong Kong in 1987, it had so changed that I felt completely alienated and pushed out. I was born there and brought up there. I had always considered it my home. And as a Eurasian, I had always been proud of my Chinese heritage. I have never been ashamed of it. Yet when I go now, I feel I have been pushed out. I just don't belong there anymore - which is understandable. I have been away since I was 17. The other thing that alienates me is this constant changing of the scenery. This constant digging up of hills, filling up of the harbour, and every building is replaced. This dairy farm building, not many of these left! In fact I wrote a poem about this.

Yow jee lay ga	The travelling one has left home
Saam sup joi	For thirty years
Yee cheung yee taap	The carved window has collapsed
Mui but hoi	The plum blossom no longer blooms
Dai ho teen yuen	The great fields and good gardens
Gum hor joi	Where are they now
Do chu yee san	Everywhere they have shifted the hills
Kay do hoi	And emptied the sea

And its true, its all gone. I can express myself in this kind of thing. I can't do it in English! And yet English is the language I use all the time. Chinese is the language of my poetry and feeling and it all comes out in classical verse! and English is my working language. I eat with it, sleep with it, but when it comes to poetry I can't do it. I studied with my Chinese teacher, three times a week, from the age of ten to 17. She taught me the Chinese Classics. Leem ging. Bui suu. My father, John Shea, being a scholar, he would have me repeat it all to him. He wrote in the classical style when he wrote letters. But my father wanted me to be a barrister - he was a frustrated lawyer - so he was very disappointed when I became a priest.

No there are no Chinese in my congregation. I have always been in an English parish. In fact I find it very difficult to preach or teach in Chinese. Its the technical terms! My theological studies and early church experiences have all been in English. My Cantonese experience hasn't been in these terms. So once in Hong Kong I was asked to preach at St Paul's in Glenealy by the vicar Go Mook Si. So I said to him "Lo lo sut sut, nay giu ngo gong see, nay jow yiu wun yun tung ngo fan yik" If you want me to preach here you will have to find someone to translate for me He said "Aiyah Guy deem guy nay yiu yun tung nay fan yik, nay di chung mun gum ho" Why do you need translation! Your Cantonese is so good. And I said "Ngodi Chung Mun hai ho, my Cantonese is good ngo m hai m sik gong; It's not that I can't speak daan hai ngo di Chung Mun may chung yong gwo lay gong Gow Wui leui been di yeh. But I have never used it for teaching the scriptures Nay giu ngo gong toi see ngo jow gow m deem" I can't teach or say my prayers in Cantonese! So it was arranged; Cheung Mook Si came and translated. and before we started I said in Cantonese - "Ngo m hai m sik gong, its not that I can't speak daan hai ngo haih gor been yung lai yung heui do haih yung Ying Mun but over there I only use English in the church; ngo yup Sun Hok Wui yik do haih yung Ying Mun when I was in the seminary school I only used English. Ngo Ngau Tsun dook Sut Hok yow yung Ying Mun when I studied at Oxford University it was in English. Nay jow yiu yu su ngo you'll have to forgive me. Ngo m haih saa ch'un I am not being arrogant, ngo m haih wa ch'oong I don't want to distance myself daan haih leh, ngo gun boon seung jow haih mouh gum go hor nung its just that I can't do it!. So I then started in English and he started translating and at one point he gave the wrong translation, so I said " wai wai wai wai, hey hey hey hey! ngo mouh gum wa douh a!! I didn't say that! And the whole congregation burst into laughter.

That is the situation, all my life I have used English. This is why I find it so peculiar that when it comes to writing poetry it always comes in Classical Chinese. and when I recite it, my cousin Jasmine, who speaks perfectly good colloquial Cantonese, can't understand a word I am saying!

She's never had any classical education. m sik teng a! I remember my cousin Veronica the artist one, told me she was doing a painting for my cousin George. So I asked, "whats the occasion?" And she said "Oh its the fortieth anniversary of his wedding" So I asked "What are you painting?" She said, "I am painting a pine forest, and there are two people wandering in it". So that was that, you see; and I went away and had lunch. I was talking to my friend Graham Palmer and I suddenly said "Have you got pen and paper?" It was as sudden as that. An idea had come into my head and I composed a poem then and there based on the painting. And I rang Veronica and asked if she minded, and she said, "No, I think its a good idea!" and then got somebody to write it as I dictated it over the phone to her.

Seung seung kwai sow yup chow lum  
Chu chu ch'ing yeep fa wong hoong gum  
Ga bui see yuen ch'un siu duen  
Tung haai bahk faht yow jee yum

It talks about the painting, its two figures walking in the forest, and its an autumn forest. Everywhere the green leaves have turned red and gold, which is autumn again and of passing time - aging. When we exchanged toasts, we were then complaining that the Spring evenings were too short. To be together with white hair, I now have a companion who knows my music.

I never never never once tried to pretend that I don't know anything about it (being Eurasian) or its not part of my background or anything like that. I hate it when Eurasians pretend. I hate it when they pretend they don't have any European blood, I hate it when they pretend they don't have any Chinese blood. I am a Eurasian, I am born a Eurasian, and I am glad to be one, and no hang-ups about it at all! I can go to the Covent Garden and enjoy a good session of Ballet and Grand Opera and I can go to Po Hing, the Cinema, and sit down and chor gerk jee rub toes and tai daaih hay watch Cantonese Opera, ngun ngun gerk swinging legs. I can sit down and discuss novels and literature in English, and I can similarly discuss Chinese writing. I mean how wonderful to enjoy haam yu salt fish on the one hand and equally enjoy caviar, to eat cheese and eat dow foo bean curd at the same time! Ngo Ch'ow Haam Daan do yow sik  
I also eat stinky smelly eggs!

## Appendix 2: Script of Second FACE – English version directed by Tang Shu Wing

### FACE

Written & Performed by Veronica Needa  
Directed & Designed by Tang Shu Wing

*Stage Preset: Screen/backcloth upstage centre; Frame 2' downstage of this with bamboo screen let down; Chair and Side Table at midstage left; tea set of 7 cups/saucers & teapot filled with hot tea on Prayer Mat downstage centre. Two candles lit each on DSR and DSL corners of Prayer Mat. Candles lit throughout and calculated to burn out at end of show.*

*Props preset: Little car/glasses/newspaper article behind frame. Dragon puppet in bag on SR. Jewellery box on Side Table with Tow Chai – a Chinese hair ornament - inside.*

*Tech preset: Slide 1 – preset (Baby V)*

*SQ1 – La Golondrina playing as audience enters*

*After FOH clearance*

*Slide 2 - blackout*

*SQ1 – fade out*

*Slide 3 – (V now)*

*V enters stage, stands behind frame*

(in Cantonese) Ngo jeung yi ha ge to mun soong bay ngo ge seen yun  
Gum jeh nay-day ling ngo ling leuk doh nay-day ge yung hay, seen leung, yeet  
sing, tung mai seung jeung lik  
Yik gum jeh nay-day ling ngo ming bak doh ho kay sum kay sut haih yun-leui  
deui kow-jee ge keung leet yuk mohng  
Gum jeh nay-day ling ngo jee doh nay-day yik hai jo fung yik ging jee-jung  
ch'ung-ging fun lo gwo tung-mai bay seung gwo  
Gum jeh nay-day ling ngo liu gaai doh yi yun loi, heui sing sau tung foo ge jung  
yiu  
Gum jeh nay-day deui ngo ge ngoi woo  
I offer a prayer to my ancestors. You gave me bloodlines that straddle that world,  
that dig deep into four countries across many seas. I give thanks for your courage  
and your goodness; your passion and your imagination; your curiosity and your  
greed. I give thanks for your anger and your tears – and for bearing your pain with  
such patience. I give thanks for your love.

*Slide 4 - blackout*

*V rolls up bamboo blind, steps through frame. As she speaks she lowers  
the blind from downstage*

I have become conscious of a call within me to tell the stories of my ancestors, to  
tell of my confusion of identity and belonging; to create something that tells my  
story and thereby be the voice of my ancestors too. Welcome to you, friends and  
strangers, witnesses to these stories...foon ying... welcome.

Some years ago a woman offered to read my past lives. I sat on a chair in a circle  
of crystals and she put her hands on my shoulders. And then she spoke of the  
images she saw in the ocean of her mind. She spoke of many things, but I most  
remember the mis-shapen dwarf. I have a sense of the place - surrounded by hills,  
dry land, low shrubs. North African or Middle Eastern. 500 years ago, maybe

more. The dwarf is mis-shapen at birth and then abandoned by his people. There was someone who accepted him with love – maybe his grandmother – but this person was now dead. Outcast from his society, he finds some sort of community with a band of thieves in the mountains, as a servant or cook. He tends to their needs and is accepted by them. But he knows to the end of his life that these people do not see him truly. His goodness and inner sweetness has no home there. Even if this is not a real past life of mine, I feel deeply for him. His isolation, his hunger for acceptance and the pain of his rejection are things I am sensitive to – in this life. Maybe my Eurasian-ness is part of my soul's journey in transforming this sensitivity – into something positive and creative.

*SQ2 – African Rain, softly*

*V walks DS towards Prayer Mat*

I was born in Hong Kong, an only child. My mother was Janet Broadbridge.

*Slide 5 – Mother*

A fleshy soft-featured Hong Kong Eurasian beauty – 15 years younger than my father. I was a jeung seung ming ju – a pearl in the palm of their hands – a cheen gum siu jeh – a one thousand taels of gold young lady. People said I was a spoilt brat. My father was Victor Vander Needa,

*Slide 6 - Father*

a glamorous Champion jockey from Shanghai with a big charming personality. My mother adored him. So did I. I was born, and I held his hand for the rest of his life, loving and accepting him in a way that maybe no-one else ever did. My Englishness comes from the North – Everton, County of Lancaster. Alfred Cyrus Broadbridge,

*Slide 7 - Grandfather*

my mother's father – an adventuring sea captain. He went up and down and across the China seas. My Chineseness comes from Hong Kong – British Crown Colony – as was then. My granny – my mother's mother – was born Wong Seui Gum.

*Slide 8 - Grandmother*

She was an orphan, adopted by a Eurasian lady – a Mrs Hunter. So my grandmother had an English name too – Lily Hunter. Lily's mother – made marriages between her Chinese daughters and suitable foreigners in Hong Kong. Captain Alfred Cyrus Broadbridge married Wong Seui Gum – also known as Lily Hunter – on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1913 at the Hong Kong Marriage Registry. They already had 4 children by then. Four more followed, including my mother, the baby. When she was 6 months old, her father died of bronchial pneumonia at the age of 51. My Japaneseness comes from my father's mother

*Slide 9 – half empty frame*

who was probably from Yokohama. And my father's father

*Slide 10 – other half empty frame*

possibly came from Damascus in Syria which was under French Mandate at the time.

*Slide 11 - blackout*

Pretty mixed up huh? Interracial marriage happens all over the world. We Eurasians of Hong Kong come from very diverse backgrounds and circumstances. And its becoming more and more common. What looked clear on the surface, is not so below.

*SQ2 fades out*

*V taking her tea with her goes to sit on Chair*

Of my four grandparents I only knew my mother's mother. When I was very small, except for my mother, the rest of my Grandma's children had left Hong

Kong to live in England and Australia, so Grandma came to live with us. She died when I was 10 years old. I remember she always wore a long dark cheongsam.

*Slide 12 - Grandmother*

We would eat three different dinners at home. First, my grandma and Ah Woon would eat Chinese style. Ah Woon was our amah, our cook. Then my mum would come home from work and eat their tasty leftovers, and maybe dad's tasty leftovers from the night before – she ate everything. That's why she was so fat. Then my dad would eat Western food – artichokes, avocados, asparagus, maybe pig's knuckles with sauerkraut. Always something fancy. I hardly ate anything – that's why I was so thin - except for Ah Woon's Lor Baak Go... Turnip Pudding and Hung Yun Woo...her Sweet Almond Dessert. She made Lor Baak Go specially for me the way I like it – very plain, just turnip, with none of the fatty pork and dried shrimps. And when she made Hung Yun Woo I would help her grind the almonds the old fashioned way until the electric liquidisers came on the market. But she always said that grinding it by hand made it much better and finer. She only recently passed away – 86 years old. Not so long ago I visited her, and had a chat.

*SQ3 – Conversation in Cantonese*

*Slide 13 – Ah Woon & V*

*Slide 14 – Ah Woon looking grim*

*Slide 15 – Ah Woon smiling*

*SQ3 – Conversation ends*

In case you didn't understand her Dong Guan dialect. She said that whenever people asked she would say she worked for Boon Tong Faan - a family half-Chinese, half-foreign devil. And that when my English grandfather died my Grandma was never given the rights that an Englishman's wife would have been entitled to, because she was Chinese. And she also said that when I was very young I only spoke Cantonese – didn't speak English until I went to school. She worked for our family for over thirty years.

*Slide 16 - blackout*

I hardly remember anything about my grandmother. We would pass each other at home almost like ghosts.

*Slide 17 - Grandma*

She didn't speak much English and seemed wrapped up in memories of old Hong Kong. I do remember she was a very good seamstress. I am too. Good with my hands, and made all sorts of things, costumes, and old Chinese-style hair decorations – T'ow Ch'ai.

*V takes T'ow Ch'ai from Jewellery Box, and puts in hair*

And I feel that she approved of this. I wish now of course that I could have been her friend. She was old and sad, that was my impression. In the afternoons. She would sit on a chair and I would sit on a stool. And we would watch TV.

*SQ4 – Cantonese Opera faintly*

Yuet Yu Cheung Peen – the Cantonese films and Guangdong Daaih Hay – the Cantonese Operas.

*V gets up from chair as if in trance and moves toward Prayer Mat*

We wouldn't say anything. I was a quiet little girl. But sometimes very wilful and bad-tempered if I didn't get my own way. My mother would give in to me every time. And then my grandmother would quietly disappear. She always kept herself separate and distant.

*V takes sip of tea from Grandma's teacup; looks upstage at slide, gets up & moves upstage in Chinese Opera style.*

*SQ4 – Cantonese opera fades out*

So from the time I was a little little girl, I was listening and watching Chinese opera and drama, and Chinese music, folksongs, and pop songs of the day. And when, in 1986, a chance came up for me to learn Beijing Opera in Wales, I was drawn to it like a magnet. It felt like coming home. This was 20 years after my Grandma had died.

*Slide 18 – open light, V lit by slide lamp only*

I love Tai Chi too. I started learning when I was 19. Mouh-gik-sung-tai-gik, Tai-gik-sung-leung-yee, Leung-yee-sung-say-jeung, Say-jeung-sung-baht-gwaa. Nothing becomes Something, Out of Something comes the Two Things, From the Two Things come Four Things. The Four Things give rise to the Eight. Ch'um-geen-jeui-jow. Hum-hung-but-bui. Hay-ch'um-daan-teen. Lower the shoulders and drop the elbows, hold in the chest and strengthen the back, bring the chi down to the dan teen. All this became part of my life. Although my grandma had little to say to me, she was very important in my childhood, giving me an experience of two completely different worlds. I'd now like to show you what that other world of my childhood was like.

*Slide 19 – baby V*

*V lifts bamboo blind, climbs under to behind frame.*

*SQ5 – Cartoon music up*

*V jumps through frame rushes to Prayer Mat, on knees, hiding car and glasses behind her*

*SQ5 – fade Cartoon music to faint as V, youngself, speaks*

Granny gave birth to mummy. Mummy gave birth to me. I was born at St Paul's Hospital in Causeway Bay, and we lived nearby up Tai Hang Road. Chun Fai Terrace – number 3. Early early in the morning, from my bedroom window, I can see pigs in baskets, being carried across the hillside. I wonder where they are going. They're scared. Time for school. Glenealy Junior School. I had to wear glasses from the age of 6.

*Slide 20 – V with glasses on*

*V puts glasses on*

At Glenealy we spoke only in English. I never got a chance to speak Cantonese there. We weren't allowed to.

*V reveals car*

Our car, a trusty powder blue VW Beetle, takes me to school.

*Slide 21 – car*

Vroom vroom vroom puh puh puh puh.....

*V makes journey with little car upstage in circle to Chair*

Up Tai Hang Road, past Blue Pool Road, Jardine's Lookout, up to Wongneichong Gap roundabout, then along Stubb's Road, to Peak Road, Magazine Gap Road, May Road, Old Peak Road, and finally to Glenealy.

*V puts little car on Side Table, and stands on Chair*

Morning assembly.

My Song is love unknown

My Saviour's love for me

Love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be

O who am I, that for my sake

My Lord should take frail flesh and die.

I was in Miss Catto's class.

*V turns on chair, takes glasses off, as Miss Catto*

Lets wake you up with some mental arithmetic. 3 times 8 minus 2 divide by 2 add 5 times 3 divide by 8 square minus 1 divide by 7... Well? Come on then....

Veronica we know you know...anyone else? Alright then, Veronica...? Correct.  
5.

*V turns on chair, puts glasses on, as youngself.*

My mother wanted me to grow up like a little English girl, so she got me into Glenealy Junior School by hook and by crook. She even played Bridge with the headmistress, Miss Handyside, and would have played golf if she had the time and the money. I should have gone to Diocesan Girls School. That was my mother's old school – where so many Eurasian girls went. But that was in Kowloon and we live on Hong Kong side. So Glenealy Junior School suited me much better.... the Power and the Glory Forever and ever Amen. Dring! School's out!

*V picks up little car and makes journey to Prayer Mat.*

Vroom puhpuhpuhpuhpuh vroom vroom...down Old Peak Road, along Upper Albert Road, past Government House, 'hello guv!', past the Botanic Gardens, 'hello peacocks!', onto Garden Road, past St Joseph's Church – Catholic, very rich and always busy. St John's Cathedral – Anglican, where I was baptised, great Michaelmas Fair. Then Queen's Road Central, past the Bank of China, the HongKong and Shanghai Bank, Chartered Bank, Pedder Street, then Des Voeux Road Central....trams....ding ding....and finally to the middle of Central, where my family had a flower shop.

*Slide 22 - Mother*

*V puts little car on top of mother's tea cup, becomes Mother*

Dring! Good Afternoon, Jeannette's florists. Hello Mr Hamilton. How are you? Good. Your in-law's are in town? Oh lovely. What kind of flowers would they like. Cameras? Oh.. I see. Go to Long Hing in Central Building. Ask for Annie or Robert Chan. My good friends. Utterly reliable. Mm-hm You are welcome. G'Bye. Dring! Jeannette's good afternoon. Hm? No. You have got the wrong number, we're not a jewellery shop, we sell flowers. Mind you, there is a little shop round the corner from me. If they don't have what you want they can make it for you. Tell them I sent you and you'll get a better price. Hm? Oh you're welcome. G'bye! Dring! Jeannette's..Susie. What can I do for you? Mai faa? Gung hai duk la! What flowers would you like? The usual. Mm...hm, pink carnations. Leung daa...yes we have two dozen, card peen leh? Nice. Day zee yut yeung. First thing tomorrow morning, ho-ma? Oh m sai m goy. Ha? Tomorrow's tips? Oh, my husband says, in the 5<sup>th</sup> race, Daisy Bell must win. Haih...Emperor's Gate, Merry Memories and Bandit Queen are also very fit. But Daisy Bell is in another class. Should be easy. Yeng – jou cheng ngor yum cha la wo! Mm! Ting yut geen. Bye Bye!

*SQ5 – Cartoon music out*

*V as nowself*

My mother was a maan see toong. Knew everyone in town. Could get anything done for you.

*V takes little car off tea cup, and brings Mother's tea cup towards her.*

My mother was my grandmother's last child.

*Slide 23 – granny & children*

My grandmother must have been grieving and struggling to cope with seven children and very little money. I think my mum, as a baby, was starved of her mother's love. That's what it felt like.

*Slide 24 – mother & V*

She needed so much love from me it was overwhelming. I couldn't give it to her, until much later, maybe two or three years before she died.

*V drinks tea from Mother's cup*

Emotional wounds go down the line. Until you break the chain.

*V puts cup down*

*SQ6 – Cartoon music cuts in and fades to faint as V, youngself, speaks*

Five o'clock, lock up shop. My mother's shop is on the ground floor.

*V moves little car to sit on top of Father's tea cup.*

My father's Club - is on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor.

*Slide 25 - Dad*

*V gets up and goes upstage through frame, as if in elevator*

Take elevator – 20.

*V comes downstage through frame*

Walk up one. The Sports Club. They played lots of games here – Bridge, Poker, Cameroon, Mahjong, all sorts. The Snooker Room was the most private of inner sanctums. For men only. It was only because my dad was such a popular bloke and I was such a quiet little girl that I was allowed in very occasionally to watch him play. Pocket the black, pocket the black. Yes! Game over. Time to go home!

*V picks up little car and journeys across downstage of Prayer Mat*

Vroom vroom puh puh puh puh...Sometimes we'd go home along the waterfront road, past Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter, and the stench of stagnant water.

*V inhales deeply*

Reminds me of Chow Dow Foo – stinky deep fried fermented tofu. I love Chow Dow Foo. And Ju Cheung Fun. Ju Cheung Fun is like cannelloni without the stuffing – very thin sheets of rice flour and water, steamed and then rolled into long strips, cut into little chunks, covered with soya sauce and sesame oil, a dollop of plum sauce, a dab of chilli sauce. Eaten with toothpicks. Heaven.

*V circles upstage and steps through frame, as if going home*

*Slide 26 – window frame*

Back at home again. From our living room window we can see Tiger Balm Gardens – Woo Mun Foo. Its an elegant Chinese mansion and gardens with exquisite and grotesque statues and paintings of Chinese heaven and hell. Climbing the mountain of knives. Boiling in oil. Hanging. Severing the tongue. Disembowelling. I love all that!

Television next. Flintstones, we're the Flintstones, have a yabba, jabba do time there....321 Thunderbirds are go.....Thats the news for today, coming up next is a live report from Happy Valley...round the corner, Daisy Bell in front, Emperor's Gate coming up from behind, Merry Memories in third position. Oooh Bandit Queen is pushing through into the straight, Daisy Bell still leading.

*V jumps through frame to centrestage*

Yes Daisy Bell wins the fifth race. Win\$147.30! Place \$56.20.

There's more!

*Slide 27 - V and peach blossom*

Sui Pow Jeung! Firecrackers! Sun leen faai lok! Happy New Year! Cheung mehng foo gwai, loong ma tsing sun, chut yup ping on, dai gut dai lay. Kung hay fat choy, lai see dow loy....which means....May you have a long and prosperous life, with the health and energy of the dragon and the horse, peaceful journeys, and great abundance. Happy new year and now its time for you to give me a lucky red packet with lots of money inside – hung bao, lai see! You won't get all the blessings I wished you unless I get my lucky red packet....I was such a cute little girl with curly brown hair, I made a fortune at Chinese New Year!

*Slide 28 – blackout*

*SQ6 – fade out*

This was my Hong Kong. My childhood. Perhaps a little different from yours. Perhaps not. But let me tell you about my father. His story is even more unusual.

*SQ7 – softly up*

In the late 40s and early 50s many Shanghainese businessmen and entrepreneurs flooded out of China in the wake of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War & the Communist revolution. My father was one of them.

*Slide 29 – young father*

*V picks up candle sticks, goes upstage to place them one on either side of frame, reaches through frame towards image thrown on screen/backcloth*

*SQ8 – voice over*

*V kneels and moves slowly forward downstage on knees to Prayer Mat through voice over, drinks from Father's tea cup*

“I have a strange fantasy – that my father's father was half French and half Arab – he had a French first name – Andre, and his surname Zahar, comes from the Middle East. That he worked for a shipping company which had interests in Japan, met and – maybe – married his Japanese lady. Had two children with her – my Auntie Mary and my father Victor, and then abandoned them in Shanghai. It seemed to me that my father was like the child in Puccini's Madame Butterfly. But then, unlike Madame Butterfly she doesn't kill herself – not my grandmother – she waited six months and then married a Japanese man and had another family. Auntie Mary was put into a French Convent School; and my dad went to an English Protestant Missionary School in Shanghai. No father, no mother – to speak of – a Japanese/Arab mixed race stateless boy growing up in Shanghai. That was my father”

*SQ8 – voice over ends*

My Auntie Mary became a nun.

*Slide 30 – Auntie Mary*

She left China in 1951 to go to France. She died there at the age of 94.

*SQ7 – fade out*

How my father got his surname Vander Needa, I don't know.

*Slide 31 – Father*

*V gets up and goes to frame*

Did one of the missionaries give him that name because, then, it was better to be associated with the Dutch than with the Arabs? Perhaps he had a rich benefactor, I don't know.....But I do know that the first half of his life was in China –

*SQ9 – Japanese pop softly*

*V pushes frame across to midstage right*

Shanghai, Beijing, Tientsin, Tsingtao, Harbin, Wayhaiway, Canton, Hong Kong sometimes, but mainly Shanghai. He spoke English and Shanghainese, and quite a bit of Japanese and Russian. Many Eurasians like my father, were multi-lingual and often worked as translators and compradors. Compradors are the middlemen in business between the Chinese and the foreigners. My Dad was nicknamed ‘Victor Sharkskin Needa - the most versatile man in town’. He was reputed to be quite a character. I have even got a newspaper article about him.

*V gets article from pocket behind frame and sits on frame to read*

*Slide 32 – Father receiving Cup*

*Slide 33 – Father on horse*

*Slide 34 – Mother leading horse in with Father on saddle*

Its says here...”Victor Vander Needa had an uncanny knack for riding horses. He won many races in China during the 20s and 30s. Racing wasn't professional then. The gentlemen-riders – as they were called – were very tall. Needa was 5 feet 10 and a half inches tall – and the China ponies they rode were small, squat,

very strong horses. Legs dangled down on long stirrups – quite different to the jockeys and horses of today. Here is a picture of Needa leading his own horse into the winners circle. He owned several horses under the pseudonym of Zylch” That is slang for ‘nothing’ isn’t it? Zylch. “His other pseudonym as a horse-owner was Mortimer Snerd – the name of a cartoon character.” That’s how he made fun of himself.

*SQ9 – fade out*

My father was 53 years old when I was born.

*Slide 35 – Father*

*V wraps arm around frame and drags back to original position*

He was my friend. He took me everywhere with him. I would hold his hand, and in the winter he would put our hands into his coat pocket to keep them warm. When I grew older, I would put my arm through his arm and we would walk - often around the Peak; or along Bowen Road, or we’d drive to Big Wave Bay or Shek O and breathe in the fresh air. And we would sing. All sorts of songs.

*V picks up candles and while singing circles stage*

Aroamin’ in the gloamin’, on the bonnie banks of Clyde, aroamin’ in the gloamin’ with my lassie by m’ side. When the sun has gang to rest, that’s the time that we love best. Oh its lovely aroamin’ in the gloamin’ or this Harry Lauder song... Gi’ me a doc and doris, och gi’ me a drap that’s all....just a wee doc and doris afore we gang awa’. I’ve a wee wife be waiting at the wee button ben, och its braw bricht, moon licht nicht tonicht. Its alricht ye ken. You know that Doc & Doris is the other name for Whisky and Water!

All these songs my Dad taught me, he learnt in China. He never travelled out of Asia.

*SQ10 – My Prayer softly*

*Slide 36 – Father & little V*

*V places candles back in original position on Prayer Mat*

My mother told me that as soon as I was born the first thing he did was to count my little toes and fingers to make sure they were all there.

*V goes upstage to frame and lowers bamboo blinds*

Mum said she often wondered if I would get drunk from the alcohol in his breath. He liked to drink .....whisky, vodka – zakuski was the order of the day in their society. But however late it was when he came home, he would always come to say goodnight to me.

*SQ10 – fades out*

When I was 5 or 6, he went into hospital for 3 months with suspected Tuberculosis, and when he came out he never drank again – except beer. And he gave up smoking. He put on a lot of weight.

*V sits on Chair*

*Slide 37 – Father and older V*

“Sweet thou art sleeping, cradled on my heart. Safe in God’s keeping while I must weep apart” My father taught me to love music. “Around thy head the moonbeams dart. Sweet thou are sleeping. Poor Madame Butterfly.” He loved opera.

*SQ11 – Enrico Caruso singing I Pagliacci*

Enrico Caruso – the finest tenor of all time. My father said he heard Enrico Caruso sing in China.

*SQ11 – quieter*

I knew he had been married to someone else before my mother, in Shanghai, from a wealthy European shipping family who looked down their noses at him. He was a nobody as far as they were concerned.

*Slide 38 - Father*

There was a divorce but there was a daughter. So I know I have a sister. But he never spoke of her. It wasn't until three years ago that I met my sister for the first time. Her name is Diana. She remembers him taking her to ride horses. This was for two years after the divorce, but she was told to call him Uncle Victor.

*SQ11 – fade out*

*V sips tea*

Although I was very close to my father, we never talked about his past and I never asked him. All I knew was to love him completely and that was the best I could do to the end of his life. I breathed in his pain.

*SQ12 – Lazy River softly*

*V gets up from chair and moves slowly to frame*

One day in his bedroom, I put some music on for him. And then I went to the living room to practise some tap dancing. I heard the cassette tape in the bedroom click and the music end. The click seemed to echo for ever. 16 years later my mother died too.

*SQ12 – cut out*

*Slide 39 - blackout*

*V turns from frame and moves to Side Table*

My parent's expectation was for me to come to England.

*Slide 40 – Mother, Father & little V*

*V puts tea cup on jewellery box and takes both to Prayer Mat*

So many Eurasians have this dream of England as the motherland – we've inherited this way of thinking from our colonial fathers. And it's a Chinese belief – that the homeland is where your father comes from – so for my mother that was England.

*V puts Mother's tea cup back in original position*

My own father, under the circumstances, could not offer an alternative.

*V puts Father's tea cup back in original position*

In 1967 I went to Island School in Hong Kong.

*Slide 41 – V and school friends*

My fellow students were of many races and cultures and we all spoke English. Our second language was French, of course. We might utter a few words of Cantonese to each other, but I could only speak with the vocabulary of a five-year-old. In 1974 I left Hong Kong and came to England for the first time to go to university. But I went back to Hong Kong straight after graduation because my father had lung cancer, and stayed there, after he died.

*Slide 42 – Father*

One time I saw a performance by the Chung Ying Theatre Company. There were English actors working with Chinese actors. They were speaking Cantonese as well as English. I was amazed and deeply moved.

*SQ13 - music*

It was as if I was being called to do this work myself. In 1983, I was lucky enough to get into the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School back in England.

*Slide 43 – V as actress (1)*

*V gets up and walks backwards upstage to frame, mime walk to voice over*

*SQ14 – voice over*

“I was very excited and enthusiastic and I told myself to work very hard. At dance classes I would wait to see if anybody would go to the first row just behind the teacher and in front of the mirror. It was the best place to learn. It seemed like everybody wanted to be in the back row. So I would go and take that place. There

was another time, when I was selected to take part in a professional production at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre Royal. I went mad,

*Slide 44 – V as actress (2)*

I was thrilled. My English friend Kathy touched me on the shoulder and said quietly to me to tone it down. Many others had not been chosen and they would not enjoy seeing me go crazy like this. So I suppressed myself...

*Slide 45 – V as actress (3)*

My challenge was for me to understand Englishness. I might have spoken excellent English and looked as if I was English, but I was behaving 'differently'. My enthusiasm unnerved them. No one wanted to work with me. Now the American girl in the other class was also incredibly hardworking and keen – she was a 'swot' – but that was OK. She was from the States and they made allowances for her. It wasn't OK when the 'swot' was me – a very very English girl – one of their own, it seemed. Of course now I realise I was behaving in a perfectly normal Hong Kong way. Then... I didn't know how different I was"

*SQ14 – voice over ends*

*SQ13 – fades out*

*Slide 46 – V in white jacket*

They never asked me where I came from. And I didn't know how important it was for me to tell them. If I had, they would have known how different I was, and so would I.

*Slide 47 – blackout*

*V crawls forward and stands in special lighting square*

The next fourteen years I lived in London. My Chineseness became even more invisible here. It was in my cooking – or the way I burp and make a frightful noise when I am eating – well, that's quite acceptable in Hong Kong but not in England. I got so caught up in learning how to fit in and find my place here, that I forgot where I came from and what I'd brought with me. For a long time I felt a large part of me was missing.

*V steps backwards leaving hands in light doing hand-mime*

Life in England has sometimes felt like pushing through porridge, or like treading water, hard work to stay afloat. On good days, it's like moving through honey, sweet, but thick. And like droplets of life-giving rain, opportunities came which helped me piece myself together again. One day I bumped into someone at Euston Station. He looked so familiar, but I couldn't place him. We chatted and eventually he reminded me that we knew each other from university.... It was a shock, because I had actually forgotten that I had ever been to university! Another time, I was a member of a women's theatre cooperative, developing some projects for the community. Two of them knew me from the time we had worked together for Chung Ying Theatre company in Hong Kong. They wanted me to bring our work into London's Chinese community. Me? Why me? It was obvious to them. And eventually it became obvious to me too as I fitted more and more of my jigsaw puzzle together. I began to see myself as the other side of a coin to many Chinese people born overseas. They are perceived as Chinese, and assumed to be Chinese when some feel quite differently inside. And I feel a Chineseness inside which isn't normally visible. My face overwhelms my identity.

*V walks back into special lighting square*

Now, having made my home in London, found my ground here, consciousness of my Chinese cultural heritage becomes more and more strong, and I find myself drawn back to Hong Kong. My Cantonese helps me to slip right in there; and I feel like a fish in water, even though, sometimes, I do feel like a salmon going upstream, pushing against the flow.

*SQ15 – music*

*V walks backwards upstage to frame and begins mime walk*

*SQ16 – voice over*

“In Hong Kong whether I am shopping or in a taxi, people say to me “Wa nay sik gong Gongdonghua, ga?” “Oh you speak Cantonese?” “Nay dee Gongdonghua haih been do hok ga?” “Where did you learn it?” “yu-gwor ngo m geen do lay, ngo joong yee-wai nay hai JungGwokyun teem!” “If I didn’t see you, I’d think you were Chinese” .....and some of them stare at me with great big eyes, and others just think I am English. Its so difficult to explain. I know they don’t mean to be unkind. But one moment I am feeling at home, part of the community, another moment I feel pushed out, alien, from another world. As if I don’t belong to this place as much as they do”

*SQ16 – voice over ends*

*SQ15 – music fades out*

*V walks out of light & kneels on Chair*

My face overwhelms my identity again.

Peen fook yu suu, yow yu kum	Yut chai gu miu, yeh yup lum
Youh seui jee doh peen fook foo	Sow sun ch’ong jerk niu yi sum
The bat is like a rat and a bird	During the day it lives in the ancient temple
By night it enters the forest	Who knows the bitterness of the bat,
Within the body of a mouse	It has the heart of a bird.

My cousin wrote that in 1955 about his Eurasianess. I wonder if it still speaks for some of us, even today. I feel a belonging that isn’t recognised, and am seen as a stranger in the land of my birth.

*V stands on Side Table*

So much is unknown and forgotten in the history of Hong kong. So much is being re-written. So much Eurasian blood is soaked into the ground of Hong Kong. Unacknowledged. During the Second World War. Eurasians formed the No. 3 Company of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps. All 5 of my uncles joined up - like so many others. General Maltby, Commander of the Hong Kong Garrison “I wish to pay special tribute to the Hong Kong Volunteers and to the superb gallantry of No. 3 Company. In the defence of Wongneichong Gap, 3000 Japanese fought against our 250. The Volunteers simply would not give ground and the casualties were appalling. The No. 3 company lost half its officers and 60% of its men dead or wounded. It was a heroic defence”

“They sowed in blood, that we in joy may reap  
In the peaceful evenings, who’ll remember them?  
Only the stars will their nightly vigil keep.  
Only the sighing pines’ll chant their requiem.”

*V sits down on Side Table*

In war-time, our history is written in blood. During peace-time, our history is woven through our culture. Our cultural identity has always been ambiguous. Straddling two stools and sometimes falling in between. Or passing, on the side where there is power. Or just don’t know that other bloodline. Denied access. And how many of us, like me, have ever felt thoroughly mixed-up?

*V goes to SR, gets large bag and begins to unzip it and take dragon out.*

We carry so much baggage around with us. Some of it we inherit, some of it we create or pickup on the way. Weighs us down. And one day we could decide to have a good look.....I have got a friend I would like to introduce to you....

*SQ17 – Dragon music*

Several years ago I began to dream about making a dragon. I kept favourite old clothes, saved up bits of cloth, and braiding and sequins. And eventually I brought him to life.

*V circles stage with him, greeting the audience, and then gradually dismembers him, placing him carefully around the stage.*

The dragon is said to have nine resemblances. Its body resembles that of a snake. It has an abdomen like a large oyster's. Its scales are like those of a carp. Its claws are like an eagle's. The soles of its feet like those of a tiger. It has a head like a camel. It has the ears of an ox. Horns of a deer. And its eyes are like those of a devil. But in China, the dragon is not an evil being, it has very positive qualities. They are the spirits of the waters with supernatural powers. They are the symbol of dignity and good fortune, and in partnership with the phoenix, the dragon is a symbol of fertility... and the everlasting cycle of life, which nurtures the earth.

*SQ17 – Dragon music fades out*

No one knows if there really are dragons, but I will always know that there is a dragon in my heart.

*Slide 48 – baby V*

I have a dream. That we can all learn to face the world, face each other (however mixed-up, mis-shapen, and invisible we may feel) and tell our stories knowing that we are heard. And that, wherever we may be, in our hearts we are at home. Once upon a time, I thought I had no stories to tell. Now I tell them. Once upon a time, I was lost. And then I found myself - through listening to other stories and hearing my own.

*V rises and goes to frame, rolls up bamboo blind, sits on frame*

I was in Hong Kong, that June and July of 1997, when we gave Hong Kong back to China. The heat and humidity forced me to sink under and inside my skin for the first time in my life it seemed. I love the sweating. That oily wetness of body and heat. I walked and walked. For miles. My feet ached. It was as if they spoke to me. I gave them my attention. Stroked them. Rubbed them softly at night. And listened to them as they touched the ground. I knew where I stood. And I also knew that I would keep on walking, along my path.

*V gets up and steps through frame, lowers blinds from behind*

*SQ18 – La Golondrina*

*Slide 49 – blackout*

The End

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### Appendix 3: Chris Harris - Biography

<http://www.chrisharrisproductions.btinternet.co.uk/>

#### Chris Harris - Director

He has toured extensively, for the British Council, and in 1986 directed **The Comedy of Errors** in the Philippines. He directed for the Chung Ying Theatre Company in Hong Kong, and other productions include **Noises Off** for the State Theatre in Istanbul which received two Best Productions of the Year Awards and **The Playboy of West Africa** for The National Theatre of Namibia. He has directed four shows for the late Derek Nimmo's British Airways Playhouse which toured the Middle and Far East. He co-directed the opera **Griselda** for the Buxton Festival and appeared in two productions for Dutch Television with members of the Welsh National Opera.

#### Directorial credits include

<b>How the Other Half Loves</b>	Theatre Royal, Plymouth Drum
<b>Noises Off</b>	State Theatre, Istanbul, two awards
<b>Plaza Suite</b>	Bristol Old Vic Company
<b>Plaza Suite</b>	Derek Nimmo tour
<b>Pinnocchio</b>	Chung Ying Theatre Company, Hong Kong
<b>Comedy of Errors</b>	University of the Philippines, Manilla
<b>Dick Whittington</b>	New Vic Studio, Bristol Old Vic
<b>Follow the Star</b>	Chung Ying Theatre Company, Hong Kong
<b>Kids</b>	Chung Ying Theatre Company, Hong Kong
<b>Ouch!</b>	Dual Control Theatre Company
<b>What the Butler Saw</b>	Theatre North, Sheffield
<b>Spider's Web</b>	Bristol Old Vic Theatre School
<b>Alfie</b>	Rose Bruford College
<b>She Stoops to Conquer</b>	Rose Bruford College
<b>Griselda</b>	Buxton Festival (co-director)
<b>Some Great Fools</b>	Nola Rae Mime Show
<b>Chasing Rainbows</b>	TV project (ass director F. Karno)
<b>Knockout!</b>	National Youth Theatre of Wales
<b>A Tale of Cerne</b>	Community Play, Cerne Abbas
<b>The Sneeze</b>	State Theatre, Istanbul
<b>A Midsummer Night's Dream</b>	State Community Theatre, Singapore
<b>Chapter Two</b>	Derek Nimmo tour
<b>Table Manners</b>	Derek Nimmo tour
<b>Dracula Spectacular</b>	Chung Ying Theatre Company, Hong Kong
<b>Blue Remembered Hills</b>	Necessary Stage, Singapore
<b>Merchant of Venice</b>	Act 3 Company, Singapore
<b>Cider with Rosie</b>	Bristol Old Vic Theatre School
<b>Face</b>	Veronica Needa Show
<b>Mansfield Park</b>	Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

#### Chris Harris - Actor

Chris Harris was born in Bridgwater, and trained at the Rose Bruford College, the Jacques Lecoq mime and Theatre School in Paris, Ladislav Fialka's Pantomime Company in Prague, and for a short time at the Moscow State Circus School. In addition to his world-famous one-man shows, his theatre work includes seasons with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Bristol Old Vic, the New Shakespeare Company, Lincoln, Salisbury and Worthing Reps.

His television appearances include Tobias in **Tobias and the Angel**, **The Virtuoso**, **The Magical Mystery Tour**, **Hey Look That's Me** (nine series directed by Patrick Taggart and an R.T.S. Award) **Into the Labyrinth**, **After You Hugo**, (a play he co-wrote for the BBC).

He has done numerous documentaries including **Soho**, the story of the Monmouth

Rebellion, **In Search of Mother Kelly's Doorstep** (about Randolph Sutton), and **A Tale of Cerne** which told the story of the Millennium of Cerne Abbass. Other television includes **A Leap in the Dark**, **The Eddystone Lighthouse**, and **The Rocking Horse Winner**.

He toured the United States for Sam Wanamaker with a company which included Cleo Lane and Johnny Dankworth, Douglas Fairbanks Junior and Michael York. The purpose of the trip was to raise sponsorship for the re-building of the Globe Theatre on the South Bank of the Thames. For nine years he co-wrote the Christmas Pantomimes for BOV Company at the Theatre Royal Bristol and also played dame. These pantos were **Aladdin**, **Mother Goose**, **Cinderella**, **Jack and the Beanstalk**, **Dick Whittington** and **Babes in the Wood**.

They are published by Josef Weinberger Ltd 020 7580 2827.

In Bristol he presented the **Chris Harris Road Show** for BBC Radio Bristol. His book, **Will Kemp, Shakespeare's Forgotten Clown**, is published by the Kylin Press. His latest book is **Chris Harris' Alphabet of Pantomime** available by ordering via e-mail: ccharris@btinternet.co.uk; price £3-50 plus 60p P&P.

He lectures and runs a workshop called *How to Make a Fool of Yourself and Get Away with It!*

#### **Chris Harris - Writer**

During his long career in theatre and TV, Chris Harris has co-written a number of programmes and shows.

#### TELEVISION

BBC TV **After you Hugo** Play co-written with Nola Rae

BBC TV **That's the Way to do it!** Co-written with John David, directed by Patrick Taggart

HTV **In Search of Mother Kelly's Doorstep**

HTV **Soho: The Story of the Monmouth Rebellion**

HTV **The Crimson Curtain: 50 Years of Theatre-going in Bristol**

*All HTV shows directed by Ken Price*

#### THEATRE

**Kemp's Jig** World-famous one-man in its 24th year

**Beemaster** One-man show co-written with Chris Denys

**That's the Way to do it!** Co-written for BBC TV with John David; directed by Patrick Taggart

**Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday** One-man show written with Chris Denys

PANTOMIMES for BRISTOL OLD VIC (All co-written with Chris Denys)

**Aladdin**, **Mother Goose**, **Jack and the Beanstalk**, **Dick Whittington**, **Cinderella**, **Babes in the Wood**.

The pantomimes are published by Josef Weinberger Ltd. Tel: 020 7580 2827.

#### BOOKS

**Clowning** Macdonald Books with Carol Crowther

**Kids** Chung Ying Theatre Company, Hong Kong

**Will Kemp: Shakespeare's Forgotten Clown** Kylin Press

**Chris Harris' Alphabet of Pantomime** with scenery by Paul Gunning.

#### **Appendix 4: DIANA PAO - Biography**

BA (Hons) in English & Philosophy  
Polytechnic of North London, UK. (1978)

Diploma in Stage Management  
Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, UK. (1979)

MA in Drama & Theatre Arts  
University of Leeds, UK. (1983)

For her MA thesis, she translated excerpts from three Chinese social comedies to examine the genre and their function as "mirrors of society".

She has both English and Chinese reference materials for the thesis and so has also translated all the quotes from the Chinese reference books.

The three plays are :  
"The Hornet" by Ting Hsi-lin  
"Just Thinking" by Tsao Yu  
"The Lady Shop Assistants" by Lao She

Diana comes from a family active in Hong Kong's development of theatre.

Her father, Pao Han Lin, made a significant contribution towards the early development of Chinese drama in Hong Kong and his work was featured in a recent exhibition called:

PLAY: Hong Kong Theatre - Romance with China Exhibition.  
<http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/ce/Museum/History/en/hktheatre.php>

From the official leaflet of the exhibition:

"The exhibition is a joint effort of the Hong Kong Federation of Drama Societies and the Hong Kong History Museum to mark the 100-year development of Chinese drama in parallel with the 6th Chinese Drama Festival."

Both Diana Pao and her father had played an important role in different stages of the development of theatre in Hong Kong and have influenced my own career in the sector.

Diana was Production Manager for Chung Ying Theatre Company from 1981-82, and offered me my first professional theatre contract - as DSM for the company in 1981.

## Appendix 5: TANG SHU-WING - Biography

One of the most important theatre directors in Hong Kong, Tang has studied acting in l'Ecole de la Belle de Mai and theatre studies in the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris where he obtained a Maîtrise Certificat. He has also participated in various master workshops conducted by Ariane Mnouchkine, Jerzy Grotowski, Ferruccio Soleri and Philippe Hottier. He was particularly inspired by Grotowski's idea of "poor theatre". He has worked as an assistant director and actor in Théâtre de la Main d'Or and other theatre, film and television production companies in Paris before returning to Hong Kong in 1992. Since then, he has been very active in directing, acting, education and writing.

He was co-artistic director of Theatre Resolu from 1993-96. In 1997, he founded his own company, No Man's Land, and has remained its artistic director ever since. No Man's Land has received administration grant from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council from 1998-2004. Tang joined the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts as a full-time lecturer in 2004 and was promoted to senior lecturer in March 2007, and becomes Dean of Drama in September 2009.

His works range from solo to large scale classics and have been presented in many different cities: Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Singapore, Macau, Tashkent, New York, San Francisco and Sydney. His artistic pursuit has witnessed different phases, covering multi-media productions and cross-cultural collaborations. Now he is interested in a minimalist theatre where the Body is his main field of investigation as opposed to the overwhelming influence of technology on the theatre. The elements of his physical approach to training and creation are drawn from Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Tai Chi and Yoga. This approach has formed a very distinct style in the Hong Kong theatre scene.

His major directing works include:

*Life and Death Trilogy (1997-2000), Face (1998 and 1999), The Hour We Knew Nothing of Each Other (2000), Between Life and Death (2002, 2003 and 2004), Deathwatch (2002), Kuan-yin: Our Lady of Compassion (2002 and 2005), The Two or Three Ways of Making Love Around Sunset (2003), The Man, The Chair and the Turtle: A Meditation on Cultures and the Mind (2004), Phaedra (2005 and 2007), Kiss of the Spider Woman (2005), Hamlet (2006), Princess Chang Ping (2007)*

His stage acting credits include:

*Miss Margarida's Way (1993 and 2003), Two Civil Servants in a Skyscraper (1993, 1994), Two Men on a No Man's Land (1996 and 1997), Dream City (1998), Millennium Autopsy (1999 and 2000), Deathwatch (2002) and Sunshine Station (2002).* He has also acted in the main role in the Hong Kong film *From the Queen to the Chief Executive* which opened the Panorama, Berlin Film Festival 2001.

In 2001, he published *Analysis and Reflections on the Theories of Acting of Meyerhold* in Chinese and *Life and Death Trilogy: a Theatrical Research* in both Chinese and English. In 2004, The International Association of Theatre Critics (Hong Kong) published a special study on him: *The Art of Synthesis: The Theatre World of Tang Shu-wing*.

He is also a yoga acharya, a performing arts advisor of the Hong Kong Leisure and Cultural Services Department and an honorary advisor of the Hong Kong Dance Company and Hong Kong Children's Choir.

Tang's awards and grants include:

- 2007 *Award for Arts Achievement*, Hong Kong Arts Development Council
- Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, the French Ministry of Culture and Communication
- Certificate of Commendation*, Secretary for Home Affairs, Hong Kong SAR Government, China
- 2007 Best Director, Hong Kong Drama Awards (for *Hamlet*)
- 2006 Best Director, Hong Kong Drama Awards (for *Phaedra*)
- 2003 Best Actor in the Main Role, Hong Kong Drama Awards (for *Sunshine Station*)
- 2001 Publication Grant, Hong Kong Arts Development Council
- 1998 Jebsen Fellowship, Asian Cultural Council, Rockefeller Foundation (as a visiting artist to the USA)
- 1996 Puppetry Research Grant (as an artist-in-residence in the Guangdong Puppet Troupe of China), Hong Kong Arts Development Council
- 1993 Distinguished Experimental Performance, Hong Kong Drama Awards
- Distinguished Interpretative Performance, Tashkent International Theatre Festival

## Appendix 6: Old Faces - Comparison of First & Second FACE

The script is broken down into sections, with brief description of action

<b>First FACE developed with Chris Harris In ENGLISH</b>	<b>Second FACE developed with Shu Wing Tang in Two Versions</b>	
	<b>CANTONESE with some English</b>	<b>ENGLISH with some Cantonese</b>
Technical Requirement: simple lighting state – general on stage with some light on the audience. Music from portable cassette player operated by performer	Technical Requirement: Black box set with several lighting states, 38 lighting cues, 50 slide projection cues. Two MD sources for sound cues. SM operates all sound, lighting and slide cues. USC: 4’X 6’ wooden frame with bamboo blinds that roll up and down from in front and behind. DSC 2’X3’ Prayer Mat with tea set for 7.	
<b>Prayer to the Ancestors</b>	<b>Prayer to the Ancestors</b>	
Entrance from V as if from outdoors with several bags, proceeds to mime cleaning the floor, sets stage with contents of bags. Then takes coat off and creates ‘altar’ on chair, lights incense, kneels and prays to the ancestors in Cantonese quietly. Then moves to CS where she begins Tai Chi movements as she speaks the prayer in English.	Preset Slide on Screen: Baby V. Audience then sees double image of V’s FACE on screen. A slide of V as young adult is projected onto the screen, the other is of V lit standing behind the screen. Two images: Face upon face, then and now. Non-moving dual image, just voice speaking in Cantonese.	The prayer is first spoken in Cantonese and then in English
<b>A Welcome</b>	<b>A Welcome</b>	
V welcomes audience directly speaking to them as herself	V welcomes audience directly speaking to them as herself	Includes some words in Cantonese “foon ying” = welcome
<b>Prologue: Painted Skin</b>	<b>Prologue: Dwarf</b>	
A Story from Liaozhai Ziyi – a collection of strange stories by Pu Songling (1640-1715) of the Qing Dynasty. V uses musical instruments from a cloth bag she puts on, and tells this classic ghost story in storyteller language with stylised movement and gestures derived from traditional Chinese theatre. Key theme: Mistake not the pretty face for the devil behind it - Look to the heart of a person to check his goodness.	Talks to audience about a real incident when someone offered to ‘read’ her past lives, and how she remembers vividly a mis-shapen dwarf and identifies with him. Key theme of story: Mistake not the ugly face for a devil. Can you not see his goodness of heart?	
<b>Genealogy</b>	<b>Genealogy</b>	
Talks directly to audience about origins of parents & grandparents; places photos of parents onto altar on chair USL, and moves around stage for each country named	Talks directly to audience about forebears, while pouring tea into cups as if ritual offering of tea to the ancestors.	Includes some words in Cantonese Cheen gum siu jeh –thousand taels of gold young lady Seung jeung ming ju – pearl in palm of hand
<b>The Cynic</b> Veronica sits on chair amongst audience which has sign on it signifying ‘Cynic’ and challenges V onstage with questions. They dialogue.		
<b>About home life as a child</b> V sets up chairs for child-self and granny,		

as if watching TV, She plays out both roles. Granny speaks Chinglish to audience. About eating habits and favourite foods. Grandma talks to Ah Woon (as if offstage) and has conversations on phone to friend about gambling, racing, losing 'face' and mahjong.		
	<b>Fragments about Grandma 1)</b>	
	bridge to Eating at home	
	<b>Eating at home</b>	
	V takes own cup of tea and sits in chair telling stories in direct address to audience, with slides illustrating people she talks about.	
	<b>Ah Woon Voice Over</b>	
In Dong Guan dialect talking about the meaning of Boon Tong Faan – an impolite term for Eurasians in Cantonese, racial prejudice against Chinese grandma by the British, and V not speaking English till she was 5 years old.	With translation in English at end of voiceover	
<b>About Hong Kong &amp; School</b>	<b>About Hong Kong &amp; School</b>	
Describes geography of Hong Kong, and significant places, then talks about Going to School. Takes role of Child-self and Miss Catto, her favourite school teacher	<b>Fragments about Grandma 2)</b>	
	<b>From my bedroom window</b> As child-self, initially in Cantonese then switches to English	
	<b>Journey 1)</b> as child-self from home to School in English	Same
	<b>Psalm hymn</b> as child-self in English	Same
	<b>Miss Catto</b> as Miss Catto in English	Same
	<b>About School</b> as child-self in English	Same
	<b>Journey 2)</b> as child-self from school to shop in English	Same
<b>Mum in flower shop</b> in Chinglish: Eurasian Canto/English	<b>Mum in flower shop</b>	
	As Mum in Chinglish: Eurasian Canto/English	Same
	<b>Mum and Me</b> reflection on our relationship	
	As present-self in Cantonese	
<b>The Sports Club</b>	<b>The Sports Club</b>	
Takes on role of Ah Bor, a waiter in father's club. Talks about journey home, Tiger Balm Gardens, watching TV, horse-racing and Chinese New Year	As child-self in English	Same
	<b>Journey 3)</b> as child-self from the Club to home in English with some Cantonese	
	<b>Parenthesis about Food</b> as present-self in Cantonese	Some words in Cantonese, Chow Dow Foo - stinky fermented bean curd Chu Cheung Fun – Chinese cannelloni; Ho Sik – yummy

	<b>From my living room window</b> as child-self in Cantonese with songs in English. Ends as present-self in Cantonese to audience	Some words ie. Chinese New Year greetings spoken at top speed, in Cantonese
<b>Father's Story</b>	<b>Link to Father's Story</b>	
Talks about father. Takes on role as father singing songs to V. Plays music on cassette tape. Talks about fantasy of father's origin. Reads newspaper article in role of journalist. Talks about racing and his pseudonym as horse-owner. Talks about his first daughter. Tap dances to ending of tape, and father's death.	As present-self addressing audience	
	<b>Voice Over 'I have a fantasy'</b>	
	Brings candle to either side of frame, reaches out to image of father through frame, turns, kneels and moves on knees DS to Prayer mat, as if in meditation and prayer	
	<b>About Dad 1) Victor Sharkskin Needa</b>	
	To audience with slides and reading newspaper article in role of journalist	
	<b>About Dad 2)</b>	
	To audience about Caruso & other daughter, talk about tap-dancing while he is dying.	
<b>Coming to England</b>	<b>Coming to England</b>	
V clears set and tells of invisible Chineseness, missing part of body. England like porridge. Feeling of dispossession among Eurasians with return of HK to China. Poem in Chinese, on tape, with English translation spoken over	<b>Link to England</b>	
	<b>School &amp; coming to University</b>	
	<b>Voice Over 'At Drama School'</b>	
	Silent physical action reflecting mood	
	<b>Forgetting</b>	
	Lit from above in tight box of light, steps out of light leaving only hands visible in light	
	<b>Remembering</b>	
	Telling story as hand mime in light	
<b>In Hong Kong</b>	<b>Voice Over 'In Hong Kong'</b>	
Talk about feeling like an alien, slaps own face. States opinion that Eurasians are the true people of Hong Kong, gets belligerent, stakes claim to land by running from one side of stage to other. Talks about Eurasians during WW2 – TaiChi Sword. Takes on role of General Maltby.	Silent physical action reflecting mood	
	<b>Bat Poem</b>	
		In Cantonese, then in English
	<b>Battle of Hong Kong</b>	
	Testimony to the Eurasians who died in defence of HK, as General Maltby. Standing on Table in salute	
	<b>Link – Straddling two stools</b>	
Talks to audience about history and cultural identity, About carrying baggage. Goes to bring big bag on stage.		
<b>The Cynic</b>		
Taunts V about her emotional venting, and what she is trying to say. About speaking out before history is erased or re-written.		
<b>Enter the Dragon</b>	<b>Enter the Dragon</b>	
V picks up parts of Dragon that have been littering the stage, takes out body of	Talks about making the dragon and removes him	

Dragon from bag and attaches parts to it, finally revealing all of dragon, talks about dragon while dancing with it.	intact from bag, introduces to audience as puppet, then dismembers him as V talks about his nine-faceted identity. Places bits of body on stage, talks about dream for the future	
<b>About 1997 and Sore Feet</b>	<b>About 1997 and Sore Feet</b>	
Tells audience while sitting on chair embraced by dragon	Tells while drawing up bamboo blinds, sits on wooden frame. Then exits through wooden frame, in the same way that V entered at the beginning of play, with overhead light showing image of V overlaying slide of her, this time, as baby.	
<b>End &amp; Bows</b>	<b>End &amp; Bows</b>	<b>End &amp; Bows</b>
	Sometimes informal chat with audience afterwards	Invite audience to stay for Tea and chat. V serves tea, and initiates dialogue with audience. Sometimes as whole group, sometimes less formally

## Appendix 7: Examples of English to Cantonese Translation

For the purpose of this investigation, ‘the Prayer’ & ‘Life In England...’ texts are given below in segments, with the Cantonese translation from Diana Pao alongside the relevant sections. This Cantonese translation is re-translated back into English by me for the purpose of clarifying the significant changes to the original text.

<b>The Prayer</b>	An example of added poetic value	Translated back into English
<b>My English</b>	<b>Cantonese</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as written Cantonese/Chinese</li> <li>• phoneticised script</li> </ul> (words in brackets have no equivalent written sign/word in Chinese and are designated as □ )	
I offer a prayer to my ancestors.	我將以下□禱文送比我□先人 Ngo jeung yi ha (ge) to mun soong bay ngo (ge) seen yun	I, this following prayer, offer to my ancestors.
You gave me bloodlines that straddle that world, that dig deep into four countries across many seas.		
I give thanks for your courage and your goodness; your passion and your imagination;	感謝你地令我領略到你地□勇氣、熱誠、善良同理想像力 Gum jeh nay-day ling ngo ling leuk doh nay-day (ge) yung hay, seen leung, yeet sing, tung mai seung jeung lik	<i>Thanks be given to you for enabling me to have awareness of your courage, goodness, passion &amp; imagination</i>
your curiosity and your greed.	亦感謝你地令我明白到好奇心其實係人對求知□強烈慾望 Yik gum jeh nay-day ling ngo ming bak doh ho kay sum kay sut haih yun-leui deui kow-jee (ge) keung leet yook mohng	<i>And thanks be given to you for enabling me to have clarity curiosity is humanity towards knowledge, a strong desire.</i>
I give thanks for your anger and your tears	感謝你地令我知道你地亦係遭逢逆境中，曾經憤怒過同埋悲傷過 Gum jeh nay-day ling ngo jee doh nay-day yik haih jo fung yik ging jee-jung ch'ung-ging fun lo gwo tung-mai bay seung go	<i>Thanks be given to you for enabling me to have knowledge additionally when you met with challenges, have been angered, and have been wounded.</i>
and for bearing your pain with such patience.	感謝你地令我了解到以忍耐去承受痛苦□重要 Gum jeh nay-day ling ngo liu gaai doh yi yun loi, heui sing sau tung foo (ge) jung yiu	<i>Thanks be given to you for enabling me to have understanding; patient endurance, to bear pain, is most necessary.</i>
I give thanks for your love.	感謝你對我□愛護 Gum jeh nay-day deui ngo (ge) ngoi woo	<i>Thanks be given to you towards me your love</i>

<b>Life in England</b>	An example of changes to metaphor and irony.	
has sometimes felt like pushing through porridge	辛苦嘅時候就好似跌咗落浮沙度 Sunfu (ge) see-how jow ho-chi deet jor lok foh saa doh.	In challenging times, like falling into quicksand
or like treading water, hard work to stay afloat	要掙扎爬翻出來咁 Yiu jung-tzaat pah fan chuut laih-gum	needing great determination, climbing out as if
On good days, it's like moving through honey	順利嘅時候 就好似浸在蜂蜜裡面一樣 Seun-lay ge see-how jow ho-chi jum hai Mut-tong yup meen yut-yeung.	Smooth times are as if inside honey the same
Sweet but thick	甜到入心 Teem doh yup sum	Sweet enough to enter the heart

## Appendix 8: List of Performances of FACE 1998-2008

Date	Venue	Language of Performance	Audience Numbers (approx)
<b>First FACE (directed by Chris Harris)</b>			
Apr – June 1998 (3 shows)	<b>In England</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church Hall, Bristol</li> <li>• Turtle Key Arts Centre, Fulham, London</li> <li>• Classroom at Emerson College, Forest Row, E. Sussex</li> </ul>	English	30 75 10
<b>Second FACE (directed by Tang Shu Wing)</b>			
30 Oct-2 Nov 1998 ( 5 shows)	McAulay Studio, <b>Hong Kong</b> Arts Centre as part of its INVISIBLE CITIES: Festival Now '98	Cantonese (with some English)	120 X 5
(Beyond Appearances: Eurasian Treasures & Surprises An exhibition, workshops and playback theatre performances linked to FACE)			
(19 Nov-3 Dec 1998)	Fringe Club, <b>Hong Kong</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibition at the Agfa Gallery</li> <li>• Workshops at the Fringe Studio</li> <li>• Playback Theatre performances X2 with workshop participants as performers at the Fringe Studio</li> </ul>	Workshops & Playback Performances conducted in English and Cantonese	Workshops 15 participants Playback Theatre 2 shows 2 X 70
<b>Second FACE (directed by Tang Shu Wing)</b>			
7 & 8 Dec 1998 (3 shows)	La Cremeria Theatre, Fringe Club, <b>Hong Kong</b> Presented by No Man's Land	English (with some Cantonese)	3 X 90
Dec 1998 (6 shows)	Tour of <b>Hong Kong</b> schools	Both versions	6 X 100
Feb 1999	Yan Huang Festival, London Docklands, <b>England</b>	English (with some Cantonese)	1 X 80
21 Mar 1999	Hope Centre, Bristol, <b>England</b> Presented by the Puppet Centre	English (with some Cantonese)	1 X 70
7-9, 11-13 Oct 1999	La Cremeria Theatre, Fringe Club, <b>Hong Kong</b> Presented by No Man's Land	7/9/12 Oct English (with some Cantonese) 8/11/13 Cantonese (with some English)	6 X 90
1-17 Nov 1999 (20 shows)	Tour of 16 <b>Hong Kong</b> schools, polytechnic and universities, plus 2 shows in <b>Macau</b> And 2 shows at <b>Shenzhen</b> University	Tour in HK: about as many shows in English as Cantonese Tour to Macau and Shenzhen in Cantonese (with some English)	800+
25 Mar 2000	The Bull Theatre, Barnet, London, <b>England</b> in F:East Pan Asian Arts Festival	English (with some Cantonese)	100
2 Nov 2000	Half Moon YPT, London, <b>England</b>	English (with some Cantonese)	60
7-12 Jan 2001	Lycos Asia Theatre, Fringe Club, <b>Hong Kong</b> in Star Alliance City Festival 2001	7-9 Jan Cantonese (with some English) 10-12 Jan English (with some Cantonese)	6 X 90
30 Jan – 1 Mar 2002	ACE-funded tour of <b>England</b> Presented by Yellow Earth Theatre	13 shows in English (with some Cantonese) 1 show in Cantonese (with some English)	14 X 70 (averaged across venues)

8-11 May 2002	McAulay Studio, <b>Hong Kong</b> Arts Centre, public as well as performances to school students, as part of their Aesthetic Education Programme	3 public shows in English (with some Cantonese) 3 public shows in Cantonese (with some English) Plus 6 shows in Cantonese (with some English) for Form 1&2 students	6 X 100  6 X 100
May 2002	Conservatory of the Arts, <b>Macau</b> As part of the Drama Department's Drama/theatre In Education programme for school teachers	1 show in Cantonese (with some English)	1 X 70
13 Feb 2003	Huayi: Chinese Festival of Arts Esplanade – <b>Singapore</b>	English (with some Cantonese)	100
29 Jan – 16 Feb 2005	Tour to London Arts Centres and Community venues, presented by Yellow Earth Theatre <b>England</b>	3 shows in English (with some Cantonese) 4 shows in Cantonese (with some English)	7 X 60 (average across venues)
Apr 2005	Manchester Contact's Palavra Festival, <b>England</b>	2 shows in Cantonese (with some English)	2 X 90
21-22 Jan 2008	Buffo Theatre in Warsaw, <b>Poland</b>	5 shows in English (with some Cantonese)	5 X 250
<b>New FACE</b>			
22-23 Sept 2006	Lumley Studio, Kent University, Canterbury, <b>England</b>	2 shows Bilingual	2 X 30
1 Sept 2007	Camden Chinese Community Centre, London WC1, <b>England</b> With members of True Heart Theatre performing Playback in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Half	2 shows Bilingual	2 X 30
13-14 Sept 2007	United World College, Southeast Asia, <b>Singapore</b> With students & members of Tapestry Playback Theatre performing Playback in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Half	2 shows Bilingual	2 X 100
13-14 Oct 2007	Across U-Hub, Toronto, <b>Canada</b> With members of Refeel Playback Theatre performing Playback in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Half	3 shows Bilingual	3 X 100

## Appendix 9: Analysis of Audience Questionnaires for Performances of FACE

### A: 1999 Performances presented by No Man's Land at the Fringe Club, Hong Kong

October 1999

Only information directly relating to questions about FACE has been extracted from these questionnaires.

The English Language questionnaire was in a very different format to the one in Chinese, with open questions.

The Chinese questionnaire had boxes to tick for answers to questions.

1999 – English (with some Cantonese) 5 Questionnaires returned			
Number of Questionnaires returned: 5	Comments on Artistic Quality	Comments on messages and associations from this work	Any other comments
1	Fantastic, touching story	A sense to search for my own belonging	Should recommend to others in similar situations ie. Canadian Chinese (Toronto). I think my friend would love the play.
2 (Maureen)	Excellent. The only thing that struck or rather puzzled me was the granny part and the older lady (who still lives) are they one? I was really impressed with the sincere intention Veronica 'Played' the piece. That made it worthwhile.	The universal message and also the extra information about Hong Kong history (& me wanting to be multicultural) Two cultures in one family/person	Sharpen the dragon part (being part of Veronica's love) and the end (the suggestion about family photos) I did like the message: 'this is the way it is, it took me a while to understand that that is a rich part of me'
3		Cultural identity and love among family members	
4 (Olga)	It could be performed even with no words. That's my way of describing a very artistic performance.	Helped me to understand my husband (Paul Tarrant) in a more deeper level. Thank you!!	Beautiful – as Eurasians Intriguing – as Eurasians Outstanding- as Eurasians
5 (Paul)	Great. Love action/running expression of emotion	Cooperation, connections	Intermix with others? Make a group of connections?
1999 – Cantonese (with some English) 17 Questionnaires returned			
Why did you come?	Subject/content	5	
	Playwright	0	
	Leaflet	4	
	No Man's Land production	1	
	Other	4	Friend's recommendation x3
	Director	4	
	Actor	5	
	Poster	0	
	No particular reason	2	
What elements of FACE do you like?	Script	10	
	Direction	7	
	Acting	13	
	Theatrical elements	Set 3	
		Lights 7	
		Music 7	
	Other	1	The show talks about the meaning of life: standing here, what shall I do?
Comments	2	Am so happy to see such a stimulating performance A little bit confusing	

### B: 2002 Tour of England & Record of Audience Comments (presented by Yellow Earth Theatre)

January to April 2002

(the show also toured with an exhibition Eurasian Treasures & Surprises)

Venue	No. of Questionnaires returned (approx total no. of audience)	Comments	What was your overall opinion of the show?					Ethnic identity	Age range			M ale	Fem ale
			Excellent	Very good	Good	Room for Improvement	Nil		Under 25	26-44	45+		
Theatre in the Mill – Bradford	None (60)												
The Midland Arts Centre – Birmingham	2 (120)		1	1				White 1 Scottish/Pakistani 1		2			2
The Castle – Wellingborou	32 (100)		16	8	2		6	Black/Caribbean 1 European/Jewish 1	16	4	12	12	20

gh								White 28 Nil 2					
Old Town Hall – Hemel Hempstead	10 (70)	4 a,b,c,d	4	2	4			Anglo-Mauritian 1 Chinese 1 White 8	2	5	3	4	6
Cramphorn Theatre – Chelmsford	20 (100)	5 e,f,g,h,i	8	5	4 ½	½	2	White 19 Nil 1	15	1	4	6	14
Windsor Arts Centre	2 (10)		1		1			Indian 1 White 1	1		1		2
Hoxton Hall – London (2 shows)	11 (140)	3 j,k,l	8	3				White 11		3	8	2	9
DH Lawrence Pavilion – Nottingham (2 shows)	4 (80)	1 m	3	1				Black 1 Chinese 2 White 1	1	1	2	3	1
The Hawth Studio - Crawley	13 (120)		6	5			2	White 12 Nil 1		1	12	4	9
Pegasus Theatre – Oxford	12 (80)	1 n	5	3	4			Chinese 1 White 11	7	4	1	5	7
Dorchester Arts Centre	12 (100)	3 o,p,q	5	6	1			English/Irish 1 White 11		1	11	3	9

**Total 118 (980) 17 57 34 16 ½ ½ 10 42 22 54 39 79**

What made you come to see this?	Recommendation 38	The Play 26	Issues raised 25	Professional interest 24	Reviews 3	Company's reputation 10
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**C: 2005 Tour of London & Record of Audience Comments (presented by Yellow Earth Theatre)**  
January & February 2005

Venue	No. of Questionnaires returned (approx total no. of audience)	Comments	What was your overall opinion of the show?					Ethnic identity	Age range			M ale	Fem ale
			Excellent	Very good	Good	Room for Improvement	Nil		Under 25	26-44	45 +		
Arts Depot (2 shows) One English/one Cantonese	2 (120)	1 r	1		1			Chinese 1 Jewish 1		1	1		2
Soho Theatre Studio	1 (50)	1	1					Chinese 1			1	1	
Croydon Clocktower (2 shows) One English/One Cantonese	None (70)												
Studio Theatre (NWCS)	None (40)												
New Wimbledon Studio (2 shows) One English/one Cantonese	(90)												
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

Comments:

- a Fascinating tea and discussions afterwards (photographer/self-employed)
- b I'm scared I want a debate about something I understand. Teletubbies (full-time student)
- c There were some really fascinating styles visually used – the screen/frame worked very well especially as a double-layered image. The dragon was a fine piece of art and compositionally worked very well as a circle and when against screen. I'm an art teacher hence references. Great hand-talking scene
- d As I wrote on the comments book at the venue I thought this was a wonderful event – it was, by turns, amusing, moving, educational. It was continually changing in mood and form, which made it highly entertaining. I felt it stimulated a lot of ideas at different levels – about Eurasians, about mixed-race people from all places, about identity for all of us. Some of the post-performance got a bit political but perhaps that is inevitable. After all,

there a strong links between the history of Eurasians/mixed races and the history of colonialism. And lastly, I did enjoy the exhibition greatly. I saw most of it and I think it was an excellent complement to the show.  
(management consultant)

- e I thought your performance was absolutely excellent. I was particularly impressed with your role-changing and how you broke up the performance with humour. Your use of props was very versatile and effective (full-time student)
- f I very much admire your performance however I found that the seats were a little uncomfortable. It was an extremely friendly atmosphere and I enjoyed the after-show talk (full-time student)
- g John Millar – Lamma Island (full-time student)
- h Montage was v. effective. Dragon was fantastic. V. successful as alternative theatre © (full-time student)
- i I thought your performance was excellent, I was shocked with the broad range of experiences and characters you portrayed, with only one actor. I am impressed with the moral behind your play. I grew up in a very multi-racial society and was accustomed to it. I now live in a 99% white town and I find it so different to where I used to live. I cannot understand, and hate racism and lack of knowledge of other cultures. I thought your performance was inspirational, and truly came from your heart. My cousin's wife is Burmese, but looks 100% white, so simply by face value you would assume she was white, so I feel I can associate with how you felt, as I see it with her everyday (full-time student)
- j Although I have lived in the area for the last 18 years, it is the first time that I have visited Hoxton Hall, and I am very agreeably surprised by the facility. A very moving and inspirational performance. (artist)
- k Thankyou!(unemployed)
- l A very vivid evocation of the different sides of Chinese society and the skill and sensitivity needed to live in amongst them all. I was also brought up between 2 different cultures and had to find my own place when I grew up. A very thought-provoking performance – Thankyou. I especially loved the dragon. (aromatherapist)
- m We think you are amazing! Loved “Rashomon”, the best thing we saw last year. Every success! (director of construction)
- n Super experience!
- o Thank you for a wonderful show. I really enjoyed it. I am interested to talk to you further, Veronica, about your Chinese experience. I have just taken on some consultancy work with Bristol & Avon Chinese Women's Association. I'll email/ring you.
- p Well conceived and well acted. Too long – point made etc. (teacher)
- q The combination of simple props, visuals and narrative were fantastic. The images they conjured were very vivid and as the story grew I found I could relate to the complexity of Veronica's experience on the world stage as well as on a personal level. I have come across similar complexities in the lives of some of the people I work with – I feel it was portrayed so simply but powerfully. Thankyou. (training consultant/teacher)
- r Brilliant acting and very interesting. I saw something similar in content at the Barbican about an Australian whose parents were Greek immigrants

Additional material from show at Hemel Hempstead on 5<sup>th</sup> February written in the Theatre's Front of House Book for audience comments.

“Fantastic performance very glad we came!”

“I'm so very glad I came and heard your story – it was most fascinating – thankyou for sharing it!”

“Thankyou so much for a very enjoyable evening”

“Have filled out the questionnaire – hope to hear from you from one mixed up person to another! Enjoyed it very much (my mother and father and husband too!)

“Thankyou! It was wonderful and moving. X”

“Veronica. Thank you ever so much for a wonderful evening of such personal theatre. I was amused, moved and educated (not to mention the tea and nibbles!) What more can anyone want? Fantastic”

Email From: Michael Gray (Michael-Gray@lineone.net

Sent: 09 February 2002 20:30 To: Denise Rigby Cc: Jim Hutchon; Jules Easlea; Emily Banfield; admin@yellowearth.org

Subject: Face Review for the 14.02.02 issue of the Chelmsford Weekly News:

FACE Yellow Earth Theatre at the Cramphorn Theatre 06.02.02

A woman emerges from behind a childhood photograph. She is Veronica Needa, a Eurasian woman whose Western face shows little hint of the “bloodlines that straddle the world”. “FACE” is her play, directed by Shu-Wing Tang, the story of her journey from Hong Kong to Nottingham. She has invited her ancestors, and us, to tea in true Chinese style. We meet the family whose tree hangs on a bamboo mobile in the foyer. Her father, a horseman, with Arab and Eastern blood, but a Dutch name, and a passion for Caruso and Harry Lauder. Her mother, chain-smoking in her flower shop. She unpacks the dragon in her baggage, and, sitting on her mother's furniture, she takes us back through childhood and school days to her drama studies where she realised Englishness has to be learned, and that her face overwhelms her identity. A fascinating piece of theatre, personal and unique to its creator. And after an hour or more of solo performance, Veronica stayed to offer us jasmine tea and New Year nibbles, and to share her thoughts on barriers and bridges, on cultural belonging, and on the changes in Hong Kong since 1997.

Michael Gray

## Appendix 10: Script of New FACE

# FACE

Written and performed by Veronica Needa

(edited for MA Presentation at the Lumley Studio, Kent University on 22 & 23 Sept 2006)

*Stage Preset: Frame USC; Chair and Side Table at midstage left; tea set of 7 cups/saucers & teapot filled with hot tea on Prayer Table downstage centre, plus two candles. Sofa at midstage right. Props preset: Little car/glasses behind frame. Big car under side tea table. Dragon puppet and assorted cloth in big bag set stage right. Jewellery box on Side Table with Tow Chai – Chinese hair ornament - inside.*

*Tech preset: LX1 – preset (prayer table/chair on SL/Sofa on SR softly lit)  
Visual 1 – preset Baby  
VSQ1 – La Golondrina playing as audience enters*

*After FOH clearance*

*LX2 – blackout  
Visual 2 – blackout  
SQ1 – fade out  
Visual 3 – V now*

*V enters, stands behind frame*

*LX3 – US Special, V lit from above, visible through screen*

Ngo jeung yi ha ge to mun soong bay ngo ge seen yun

Gum jeh nay-day ling ngo ling leuk doh nay-day ge yung hay, seen leung, yeet  
sing, tung mai seung jeung lik

Yik gum jeh nay-day ling ngo ming bak doh ho kay sum kay sut haih yun-leui  
deui kow-jee ge keung leet yuk mohng

Gum jeh nay-day ling ngo jee doh nay-day yik haih jo fung yik ging jee-jung  
ch'ung-ging fun lo gwo tung-mai bay seung go

Gum jeh nay-day ling ngo liu gaai doh yi yun loi, heui sing sau tung foo ge jung  
yiu

Gum jeh nay-day deui ngo ge ngoi woo

I offer a prayer to my ancestors. You gave me bloodlines that straddle that world,  
that dig deep into four countries across many seas. I give thanks for your courage  
and your goodness; your passion and your imagination; your curiosity and your  
greed. I give thanks for your anger and your tears – and for bearing your pain with  
such patience. Thank you for your love.

*Visual 4 – open white*

*LX4 – general comes up as US Special above V fades*

*V steps through frame*

Some years ago a woman offered to read my past lives. Youh yun wa hoyi tai-doh  
ngo ge ch'een-sai hai deem ge. I sat on a chair in a circle of crystals and she put  
her hand on my shoulders. And then she spoke of the images she saw in the ocean  
of her mind. Keui gong jor ho-dor yeh but I most remember the mis-shapen dwarf.  
Ngo ho-yi tai-doh dongsee ge ts'ing ging haih deem. Youh hodor saan wai-ju.  
Youh-dee ho ngai ge chu'ung lum. North African or Middle Eastern. 500 years  
ago, maybe more. Nee gor juu-yuu, yut chuut-sai jow haih kay-ying. The dwarf is  
mis-shapen at birth and then abandoned by his people. There was someone who  
accepted him with love – maybe his grandmother – Daan-haih nee gor yun yi-ging  
say-jor la. Outcast from his society, he finds some sort of family with a band of  
thieves in the mountains, as a servant or cook. Bong keui day jo-yeh, juu-fan, sai-

saam. He tends to their needs and is accepted by them. But he knows to the end of his life that these people do not see him truly. His goodness and inner sweetness has no home there. Nee bahn yun gun-boon tai m'doh keui junzing ge yut meen. Tai m'do keui loi sum seen leung ge yut meen.

Even if this is not a real past life of mine, ngo ho gum-doong, His isolation, his hunger for acceptance and the pain of rejection are things I am sensitive to – in this life.

***Visual 5 – Words in English***

***Maybe Heaven made me Eurasian so that I must face the challenge of this unique identity, and in so doing, dig deeply into the ground of my creativity***

Waak-je seung teen huk-yee ngorn pai ngo sing-wai wun-huet-yi. Yiu ngo hok-zaap deemyeung heui meen deui nee-gor duk-suu ge sun-fun; tung mai deem yeung t'ow gwor nee gor sun-fun heui faht-gwut ngo ngai-seut-seung ge ch'ong jo lik.

***SQ2 – African Rain, softly***

***LX5– General fades as Central Strip of light & Special on Prayer Table comes up***

*V walks DS towards Prayer Table*

I was born in Hong Kong, an only child  
My mother

***Visual 6 – Mother***

was Janet Sylvia Broadbridge - a fleshy soft-featured Hong Kong Eurasian beauty – 15 years younger than my father. I was a jeung seung ming ju – a pearl in the palm of their hand – a cheen gum siu jeh – a one thousand taels of gold young lady. Yun-day wah ngo haih yut-gor joong-wai-sai ge faan-dow- sing. People said I was a spoilt brat. My father

***Visual 7– Father***

was Victor Vander Needa, ngo Ba Ba haih yut gor ho fung-gwong ge goon-gwun kair see – he was a glamorous Champion jockey from Shanghai with a big charming personality. My mother adored him. So did I. I was born, and I held his hand for the rest of his life, loving and accepting him in a way that maybe no-one else ever did. Ngo ho ngoi woo keui. Ngo goo ngo haih wai-yut yut-gor ho-mouh tiu-geen gum jeep-sow keui ge yun.

My Englishness comes from the North – Everton, County of Lancaster.

***Visual 8 – Grandfather***

Ngo Gong Gong haih Ying Gwok buk bo ge yun. Alfred Cyrus Broadbridge, haih yut gor ho youh mouh-heem jing-sun ge hoi-yuen. My mother's father – an adventuring master mariner. He went up and down and across the China seas. Ngo ge Jung-gwok huet tung laizee HeungGong. My Chineseness comes from Hong Kong – British Crown Colony – as was then. Ngo ge Po Po

***Visual 9 – Grandmother***

My granny – my mother's mother – was born Wong Seui Gum. She was an orphan, adopted by a Eurasian lady – one Mrs Hunter. So my grandmother had an English name too – Lily Hunter. Lily ge ma ma, hai Heunggong juenmoon jo mui-yun. Ho lo lik gum tung keui di JungGwong jik ge yeung leui, mut sik ngoi jik ge leui sai. Lily's mother made marriages between her Chinese daughters and suitable foreigners in Hong Kong. Captain Alfred Cyrus Broadbridge married Wong Seui Gum – also known as Lily Hunter – on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1913 at the Hong Kong Marriage Registry. They already had 4 children by then. Four more followed, including my mother, the baby. When she was 6 months old, ngo Ah

Goong, yun-wai fai-yeem gwor-sun, Jung neen 51 seui, her father died of bronchial pneumonia at the age of 51.

My Japaneseness,

***Visual 10 – half frame***

ngo ge Yup-boon huet tung laizee ngo Ah Ma, comes from my father's mother who was probably from Yokohama. And my father's

***Visual 11 – other half frame***

father possibly came from Damascus in Syria which was under French Mandate at the time. Ngo ba ba ge ba ba, ho nung laizee Jeui-lay ge Dai Ma See Gak. Dong neen haih Faht gwok ge Tok Guen Keui.

***Visual 12 – Open white***

Haihmhaih k'ow doh luen sai loong ne? Interracial marriage happens all over the world. We Eurasians of Hong Kong come from very diverse backgrounds and circumstances. And its becoming more and more common. Yi-jook tung fun, chuen sai gai do youh, haih yut dee doh m-chut kay ge.

***SQ2 – African Rain fade out if not already out!***

*V taking her tea with her goes to sit on Chair on Stage Left*

***LX6 – Crossfade from Prayer table to Side table & Chair***

Of my four grandparents I only knew my mother's mother.

***Visual 13 – Grandmother***

She died when I was 10 years old. Ngo Po Po sehng yut jerk dee ho sum sik ge cheung saam. I remember she always wore a long dark cheongsam. We would eat three different dinners at home. Ngo ook-kay mui yut sik sam ch'ee maan faan. Sow seen haih junggwok choi. Ngo Po Po tung Woon-je sik ge. My grandma and Ah Woon would eat Chinese food first. Ah Woon was our amah, our cook. Then my mum would come home from work and eat their tasty leftovers, Mamee faan ook-kay sik mai dee sungtow sung may, and maybe dad's tasty leftovers from the night before – she ate everything. Keui mut yeh do sik ge. Thats why she was so fat. Sor-yi ngo MaMee gow do ho fay. Then my dad would eat Western food, ngo Dairdee sik sai chaan, ngau-yow gwo, guen sum choi, duk gwok ham juu sow loh dee suen choy – artichokes, avocados, asparagus, maybe pig's knuckles with sauerkraut. Wah! Ho gwai jeui diu ge. Always something fancy. Yi ngo jow ho sow, yun wai ngo sik ho siu yeh. I hardly ate anything – thats why I was so thin - except for Ah Woon's Lor Baak Go...her Turnip Pudding; and Hung Yun Woo...her Sweet Almond Dessert. She made Lor Baak Go exactly the way I like it – Keui gor-di LorBaakGo jun-haih yut low. Mut doh m'lok. Mouh ha mai, mouh laap yook. Ho ch'ing ge - just turnip, with none of the fatty pork and dried shrimps. And when she made Hung Yun Woo I would help her grind the almonds the old fashioned way, yung ge joong hai gum mor, until the electric liquidisers came on the market. How-loi mai-jor deen-dong gow-boon-gay, ngo-day jow yut sun soong saai.

***Visual 14 – Ah Woon 1***

Ah Woon and I had a chat some years ago. She is speaking in a Dong Guan dialect.

***SQ3 - Conversation with Ah Woon***

*(Ah Woon speaks, then pause)*

Whenever people asked she would say she worked for Boon Tong Faan - a family half-Chinese, half-foreign devil.

***Visual 15 – Ah Woon 3***

*(Ah Woon continues, then pause)*

When my English grandfather died my Grandma was never given the rights that an Englishman's wife would have been entitled to, because she was Chinese.

*(Ah Woon continues to end)*

She said that when I was very young I only spoke Cantonese – didn't speak English until I went to school. She worked for our family for over thirty years. I hardly remember anything about my grandmother.

***Visual 16 – Grandma***

We would pass each other at home almost like ghosts. Ngo m'haih ho gay gwaan yu Po Po ge yeh. Ngo day ch'ung loi do m king gaie. Ho chi juu hai leung go m tung go saai –gaa gum. She didn't speak much English and was wrapped up in memories of old Hong Kong. Ngo gayduk ngo Po Po dee jum-jee ho-lek. She was a very good seamstress. I'm good with my hands too. Made all sorts of things, costumes, and old Chinese-style hair decorations – T'ow Ch'ai.

*V takes T'ow Ch'ai from Jewellery Box, and puts in hair*

***Visual 17 – Grandma***

And I feel that she approved of this. Gum-see gum-yut, ngo jun-haih ho seung sing-wai keui ge pung-yow.

***LX7 – Add Pin spot under table  
for grandmother's tea-cup***

***SQ 4 – Cantonese Opera, very softly***

In the afternoons. Mui yut ha-ch'au, keui jow chor-hai yut-jeung yee doh, ngo jow chor-hai yut-jeung dung-jaie doh. She would sit on a chair and I would sit on a stool. And we would watch TV together. Yut chai tai deen see.

***LX8 – Cross fade Chair special to Prayer Table***

*V moves from Chair to Prayer Table*

Tai Yuet Yu Cheung Peen – the Cantonese films - and Guangdong Daaih Hay – the Cantonese Operas.

*V takes sip of tea from Grandma's teacup; looks upstage at slide, gets up & moves upstage in Chinese Opera style.*

***LX9 – Fade out Prayer Table Special  
so that V is lit only from video projector***

So from the time I was a little little girl, I was listening and watching Chinese opera and drama, and Chinese music, folksongs, and pop songs of the time.

***SQ4 – Chinese opera fades out***

I love Tai Chi too. I started learning when I was 19 years old

***SQ5 – Tai Chi Voiceover in Cantonese***

***Mouh-gik-sung-tai-gik,***

Nothing becomes Something

***Tai-gik-sung-leung-yee***

Out of Something comes the Two Things

***Leung-yee-sung-say-jeung.***

From the Two Things come Four Things.

***Say-jeung-sung-baht-gwaa***

The Four Things give rise to the Eight.

***Lower the shoulders and drop the elbows***

Ch'um-geen-jeui-jow

***hold in the chest and strengthen the back***

Hum-hung-but-bui

***bring the chi down to the dan teen***

Hay-ch'um-daan-teen.

***Visual 18 – Open white***

***LX10 – Blackout***

*V steps backwards through frame*

***Visual 19 – Baby V***

***SQ6 – Cartoon music up***

***LX11 – General up to bright, as V comes through frame***

***SQ6a – Fade Cartoon music to very faint as V speaks***

Ngo Ah Po sang-jor ngo Ma Ma. Ngo Ma Ma sang-jor ngo.

I was born at St Paul's Hospital in Causeway Bay, and we lived nearby up Tai Hang Road. Chun Fai Terrace – number 3. Early early in the morning, from my bedroom window, I can see pigs in baskets, being carried across the hillside.

Keui-day gow-ging jeung-dee ju ling-heui been doh ne?

Time for school. Glenealy Junior School. I had to wear glasses from the time I was 6

***Visual 20 – V in school uniform and bag***

*V puts glasses on*

At Glenealy we spoke only in English. Ngo yuen chuen mouh gay-wui gong GongDonghua ge. I never spoke Cantonese there. M'jun ah. We weren't allowed to.

*V reveals car*

***Visual 21 – VW Beetle***

Our car, a trusty powder blue VW Beetle, takes me to school. Vroom vroom, puh puh puh puh puh puh, - (asking audience) youh mouh yun sook Heung Kong ge Tung Lo Wan ah?

***LX12 – House lights up slightly***

Is anyone familiar with Hong Kong island? Say yes, and wave at me. Hello! Ho la, yut chai hang la... ] up Tai Hang Road, Laam Tong Doh, Jardeen Saan, to Wongneichong gap Roundabout, then along Stubb's Road, Waan lai, waan heui... Vroom vroom vroom puh puh puh puh puh.....

Peak Road, Magazine Gap Road, Mui Doh, Gow Saan Dehng Doh, and finally to Glenealy.

***LX13 – House lights fade down and out***

*V puts little car on Side Table, and stands on Chair*

***LX14 – Special on chair***

Morning assembly

My Song is love unknown

My Saviour's love for me

Love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be

O who am I, that for my sake

My Lord should take frail flesh and die.

My mother wanted me to grow up like a little English girl, and she got me into Glenealy Junior School by hook and by crook. I should have gone to DGS. That was my mother's old school – where so many Eurasian girls went. But she wasn't happy there, and that was in Kowloon, across the harbour, and we live on Hong Kong island. So Glenealy Junior School suited me much better.... the Power and the Glory Forever and ever Amen.

***FX1 – School Bell (live)***

***LX15 – Lose chair light, general brighter, as gets off chair***

*V picks up little car and makes journey to Prayer Table*

Fong hok lor!

Vroom puhpuhpuhpuhpuh vroom vroom...down Old Peak Road, along Upper Albert Road, past Government House, 'hello guv!', past the Botanic Gardens, 'hello peacocks!', onto Garden Road, past St Joseph's Church – Catholic, very rich and always busy. St John's Cathedral – Anglican, where I was baptised, great Michaelmas Fair. Then Queen's Road Central, past all the banks in a row. Gunju, Peet Da Gaai, Duffu Doh joong, and oh - ding ding – Trams!..Deen Cheh, Heung

Kong ge bo bui, ..... years and still running; and finally to Union House in the middle of

***LX16 – General down, concentrate on prayer table area***

Central where my mother

***Visual 22 – Mother***

***LX17 – Pin spot for Mother under Prayer Table comes up***  
was Jeannettes of Jeannettes florist.

***SQ6b – cartoon music out***

*V puts little car on top of mother's tea cup, becomes Mother*

Dring! Good Afternoon, Jeannette's florists. Hello Mr Hamilton. How are you? Good. Your in-law's are in town? Oh lovely. What kind of flowers would they like. Cameras? Oh.. I see. Yes Yes. Go to Long Hing in Central Building. Ask for Annie or Robert Chan. My good friends, utterly reliable, of course good price, good service. Mm-hm You are welcome. G'Bye. Dring! Jeannette's good afternoon. Hm? No, I am sorry you've got the wrong number. We're not a jewellery shop. We sell flowers. Mind you, there is a little jewellery shop round the corner from me. Yes. Union House. Tell the taxi, U-wun Hong. Tell the shop I sent you, and you'll get a better price, Jeanneattes. You're welcome. G'bye!  
Dring! Jeannette's..Susie. Ho ma? What can I do for you? Mai faa? Gung hai duk la! What flowers would you like? The usual. M...hm, pink carnations. Leung daa...card peen leh? Nice. Day zee yut yeung. First thing tomorrow morning, ho-ma? Oh m sai m goy. Ha? Racing tips? Ngo loh-goong wah, daaih mm cheung, 5<sup>th</sup> race, Daisy Bell must win. Haih...Emperor's Gate, Merry Memories and Bandit Queen are also very fit. But Daisy Bell is in another class. Should be easy. Yeng – jou cheng ngor yum cha la wo! Mm! Ting yut geen. Bye Bye!

***SQ7 – cartoon music very faintly***

Five o'clock, lock up shop. My mother's shop is on the ground floor.

*V moves little car to sit on top of Father's tea cup.*

***Visual 23 – Dad***

***LX18 –Pin spot for Father under Prayer Table comes up***  
My father's Club - is on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor.

***LX19 – General up***

*V gets up and goes upstage through frame, as if in elevator*

Take elevator – 20.

*V comes downstage through frame, and journeys around the space as if in Sports Club*

Walk up one. The Sports Club. They played lots of games here – Bridge Kiu Pai, Poker, Cameroon, Mahjerk, all sorts. The Snooker Room was the most private of inner sanctums. For men only. It was only because my dad was such a popular bloke and I was such a quiet little girl that I was allowed in very occasionally to watch him play. Pocket the black, pocket the black. Yes! Game over. Time to go home!

*V picks up little car and journeys across downstage of Prayer Table*

Vroom vroom puh puh puh puh..... Sometimes we'd go home along the waterfront road going past Tunglowan Bay-foong-tong, and the stench of almost stagnant water. Reminds me of ChowDowFoo. Stinky deepfried fermented Tofu. Ngo ho jung-yi sik Ch'ow Dow Foo gaaa. I love it! And Juu-Cheung-Fun. Ju Cheung Fun is like cannelloni without the stuffing – very thin sheets of rice flour and water, steamed and then rolled into long strips, cut into little chunks, covered with soya sauce and sesame oil, a dollop of plum sauce, a dab of chilli sauce and Eaten with toothpicks. Waaah ho sik! Jun-haih zeng!

*V circles upstage and steps through frame, as if going home*

*Visual 24 – Tiger Balm gardens*  
*LX20 – Cross fade general down to US Special up,*  
*keep under table pin spots up*  
*SQ7 – cartoon music out*

Back at home again. From our living room window we can see Tiger Balm Gardens – Woo Mun Foo. An elegant Chinese mansion and gardens with exquisite and grotesque statues and paintings of Chinese heaven and hell. Ngo ho jung-yi gor-di ho duk yun gehng ge goong-jaie. Climbing the mountain of knives. Seung Doh Saan. Boiling in oil. Lok yow wok, Hanging. Jeen lay gun, Tiu gerk gun, Disembowelling. I love all that! Daan haih, woo mun foo yi ga, mai jor, ch'ak jor la! Its all gone - sold for development into expensive flats. Television next. Flintstones, we're the Flintstones, have a yabba, jabba do time there....321 Thunderbirds are go.....Thats the news for today, coming up next is a live report from Happy Valley...round the corner, Daisy Bell in front, Emperor's Gate coming up from behind, Merry Memories in third position. Oooh Bandit Queen is pushing through into the straight, Daisy Bell still leading, fut yihn jee-gaan ja-ja sehng how been ch'oong seung laih. Laih yup jik low – wah joong-yu ch'oong gwor joong deem.

*V comes through frame*

*LX21 – Cross fade out US Special to Central strip*

Daisy Bell wins the fifth race.

*Visual 25 – English words :*

*Win \$97.50 Place \$56.40*

Dook yehng pai choi \$97.50.....Wai-jee pai choi \$56.40.

Jung yow ah! Ngo jeui joong-yi gwor-neen. Chinese New Year

*Visual 26 – young V at CNY*

*LX22 – Bring up general, bright*

Sui Pow Jeung! Firecrackers! Sun leen faai lok! Cheung mehng foo gwai, loong ma tsing sun, chut yup ping on, dai gut dai lay. Kung hay fat choy, lai see dow loy....which means....May you have a long and prosperous life, with the health and energy of the dragon and the horse, peaceful journeys, and great abundance. Happy new year and now its time for you to give me a lucky red packet with lots of money inside – hung bao, lai see! You won't get all the blessings I wish you unless I get my lucky red packet....I was such a cute little girl with curly brown hair, I made a fortune at Chinese New Year!

My parents expectation was for me to come to England.

*Visual 27 – Mother, Father & little V*

*LX23 – Crossfade general with Prayer table special up*

*SQ8 – Motherland Voiceover in Cantonese.*

**Dong-see ge HeungGong ying-yihn haih YingGwok ge jikmunday**

So many Eurasians have this dream of England as the motherland

**Ngo foo-mouh ge mong-seung haih jeung ngo soong laih  
YingGwok lok day sang gun.**

We've inherited this way of thinking from our colonial fathers. And it's a Chinese belief – that the homeland is where your father comes from

**Ngo Ah Gung haih YingGwok yun,**

so for my mother that was England

**sor yi deui ngo Mamee lai-gong, YingGwok jow-haih  
keui ge gaa-heung.**

My own Father, a Japanese/Arab mixed race stateless boy who grew up in Shanghai, and then came to Hong Kong just after the second world war

**Ngo Ba Ba haih yut gor mouh gwok-jik ge YutBoon A-lai-baak wun-huet-yi,**

well... he could not offer an alternative.

**sor yi deui keui lai-gong, hai dongsee ge ch'uu-ging, keui yik mouh kay-ta suen-tzaak.**

In 1981 saw a performance by the Chung Ying Theatre Company in Hong Kong. There were English actors working with Chinese actors. Yow gong Jungmun, yow gong Yingmun, speaking Cantonese as well as English. Ngo ho ging-kay, yik do sum sow gum doong.

Jow hai gor-jun-see, ngo jee-doh, ngo yiu gaan li tiu loh.

*SQ9 – Drama School Voiceover in English & Cantonese  
LX24 – Central Strip*

1983, I was lucky enough to get into a Drama School back in England.

*Visual 28 – V as actress (1)*

**“I was very excited and enthusiastic and I told myself to work very hard. Ngo wa-bay jee-gay tehng yiu lo-lik dee. At dance classes, Youh ch'ee seung tiu-mo tong. I would wait to see if anybody would go to the first row just behind the teacher and in front of the mirror.**

**Ngo geen-do hai jeui kun lo-see how-meen youh gor hung-wai ho-yi ch'ing ch'or tai-do keui-ge doong-jok. It was the best place to learn.**

**Daan haih dee tung-hok ho ch'ee jing-haih jung-yi kay hai how-been**

**Nobody wanted to go there, It seemed like everybody wanted to be in the back row. Sor-yi ngo jik-haak ba-jor gor-gor wai. So I would go and take that place. (pause for action)**

**Jung youh yut ch'ee, youh yut gor kek-tuen seung gaan 3-gor tung-hok ch'aam ga keui-day yut-gor yeen chuut. There was another time, when three students were to be selected to take part in a professional production at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre Royal.**

*Visual 29 – V as actress (2)*

**Dong ngo geen do jee-gay bong seung youh ming, When I saw my name on the list, I went mad, I was thrilled.**

**ngo jun haih ho hoi-sum. Ho-ch'ee deen-jor gum, yow giu yow tiu. My friend Kathy touched me on the shoulder and said quietly to me. Ngo ge pungyau Kathy kay haih ngo jup-been, daap-juu ngo bok-tow. Sai sai sehng tong-ngo gong, to tone it down. Giu ngo sow-leem dee. Yunwai youh ho-dor yun suen m-do. Keui-day wui ho sut-mong. Deui ngo ge tai-do wui faan-gum. Many others had not been chosen and they would not enjoy seeing me go crazy like this. Sor-yi jeui how ngo jow ngaak-yik-ju jee-gay. So I suppressed myself.**

**My challenge Ngo ge tiu-jeen was for me to understand Englishness.**

*Visual 30 – V as actress (3)*

**jow haih hok-tzaap deemyeung ch'ee yut gwor YingGwoyun gum sungwoot. I might have spoken excellent English and looked as if I was English, Ngo**

**gong Yingmun tung YingGwokyun yut-yeung. Go yeung jute-deui haih sai-yun yeung but gwor hung-wai geui-zee jow youh ho daaih fun-beet, but I was behaving ‘differently’. Yut yup jor for-sut dee tung-hok jow wui gok-duk ho m'suu-fook. So people felt uncomfortable with me in the classroom. My enthusiasm unnerved them. Jo goong-for gor-jun mouh yun wui yuen-yi tung ngo yut jo. When we had to divide up into smaller groups, it seemed that no one wanted to work with me. But-gwor gaak-lay baan youh dee MayGwok leui jaie jow mo-mun-tai. Dee toong-hok yu-jor gor-dee MayGwok yun jo-yeh wui ho hoi-fong. Seung-ngorn, mouh see. Now the American girl in the other class was also incredibly hardworking and keen – she was a ‘swot’ – but that was OK. She was from the States and they made allowances for her. Leen keui-day jee-gay do m'j'ee deem gai wui gum. It wasn't OK when the ‘swot’ was me – a very very English girl – one of their own, it seemed. YingGwok yun ge sing gaak haih ho m-jungyi gor-dee yow k'un-lik, yow yeet-sum ge yun. Of course now I realise I was behaving in a perfectly normal Hong Kong way. Nee-joong yun, jo-see ho faai, ho tow-yup - ngo jow haih nee-joong yun. Then... I didn't know how different I was”**

*Visual 30 – Words in English:*

**They never asked me where I came from. And I didn't know how important it was for me to tell them. If I had told them, they would have known I was different, and I would have known too.**

Keui-day ch'ung-loi mouh mun ngo hai been do laih. Ngo yik do m-lum-do ngo ying-goi wah-bay keui-day teng. Yu-gwor ngo youh gum jo, ngo-day dai-ga do wui ming baak ngo tung keui-day youh ho daaih ge fun-beet.

*Visual 31 – blackout*

*LX25 – CS box special on V*

*V crawls forward and stands in box special*

The next fourteen years I lived in London. Gun-ju go 14 neen, ngo hai YingGwok ju. My Chineseness became even more invisible here. Ngo ge boon been JungGwok sun-fun ho-yi wa siu sut duk mo ying mo jung. It was in my cooking – Ch'ow ch'oi, ju see-you gaai, yung fai-jee sik faan - or the way I burp and make a frightful noise when I am eating – Sik yeh gor-jun – jaap jaap seng. Nee-joong seng-yum, hai HeungGong ho haan. Daan haih hai YingGwok jow wui youh ho-dor yun mong-ju nay - well, this noise is quite acceptable in Hong Kong but not in England.

*SQ10 – Finding Place Voiceover in English & Cantonese*  
**I got so caught up in learning how to fit in and find my place here,**

Ngo ho lo lik gum heui sik-ying YingGwok ge sair-wui mun fa

**that I forgot where I came from and what I'd brought with me.**

gay-foo mong gay-jor ngor ge jun meen muk

**Youh yut duen ho cheung ge see-gaan,**

For a long time

**ngo ge sun-tai ho-ch'ee youh yut bo-fun m-geen-jor gum.**

I felt a large part of me was missing.

V steps backwards out of box leaving hands in light doing hand-mime  
Hai YingGwok ge sungwoot youh foo yik youh teem. Life in England has  
sometimes felt like pushing through porridge Sunfu ge see-how jow ho-chi deet  
jor lok foh saa doh. Yiu jung-tzaat pah fan chuut lai-h-gum or like treading water,  
hard work to stay afloat. Seun-lay ge see-how jow ho-chi jum hai Mut-tong yup  
meen yut-yeung. Teem do yup sum. On good days, its like moving through honey,  
sweet, but thick.

***SQ11 – Droplets of Rain Voiceover  
in Cantonese & English***

**Seui-yihn yiu sik ying sun waan ging, ling-do jee-gay ge  
sun-fun gung-ga wun ngow**

And like droplets of life-giving rain

**daan haih youh-see yut dee ngow yihn ge gay wui**

opportunities came

**yow bong do ngor heui tai ch'ing ch'or ngo ge jun meen  
mook**

which helped me piece myself together again.

**One day I bumped into someone at Euston Station. Ngo  
johng-do yut-gor sook how sook meen gor yun. He  
looked so familiar, but I couldn't place him. We chatted  
and eventually he reminded me that we knew each other  
from university,**

Daai-hok sik ga! Haak ngo yut tiu,....

**It was a shock, because I had actually forgotten that I  
had ever been to university!**

Ngo yuen chuen m-gay duk ngor ch'ung-ging dook-gor Daaih-hok!

**Another time, I was a member of a women's theatre  
cooperative, developing some projects for the  
community. Youh yut ch'ee ngor ch'aam-ga jor yut gor  
kek-tuen Two of them knew me from the time we had  
worked together for Chung Ying Theatre company in  
Hong Kong. Youh leung gor tung-si haih ngor yee-cheen  
HeungGong JungYingKekTuen ge tuen-yow. .**

Keui-day haih YingGwok yun, daan haih jow jee-do ngor ge bui-ging.

**Keui-day seung ngor doi biu kek-tuen wai Lundun ge  
wah-yun-sair-wui fook mo. They wanted me to bring  
our work into London's Chinese community. Deui keui-  
day lay gong, ngo haih jeui sik-dong ge yun suen**

Me? Why me?

**It was obvious to them. Do-jor how-loi, ngo jow jook-  
jeem ming baak keui-day ge yee-see And eventually it  
became obvious to me too as I fitted more and more of  
my jigsaw puzzle together. Ngo tung gor-di hoi ngoi ge  
wa-yun ngaam ngaam seung faan**

I began to see myself as the other side of a coin to many Chinese people born  
overseas.

**Yun-day gok-duk keui-day haih JungGwok yun,**

They are perceived as Chinese, and assumed to be Chinese

**daan haih keui-day jow m-haih gum lum.**

when some feel quite differently inside.

**And I feel a Chineseness inside which isn't normally visible.**

Yi ngo jow gok duk ngo m-haih sai-yun.

**Daan haih yun-day ho-laan tai duk chut.**

**My face overwhelms my identity.**

Ngo go yeung ling-do yun mo baan faat tai do ngo jun-zing ge sun-fun

Now, having made my home in London, found my ground here, consciousness of my Chinese cultural heritage becomes more and more strong, ngo yuet-laih yuet-seung ga sum deui JungGwok mun fa ge ying sik. and I find myself drawn back to Hong Kong.

*Visual 32 – open white*

*LX26 – central strip*

Hai HeungGong ngo ho yung-yi sik ying, yun-wai ngor sik gong GuangDonghua. My Cantonese helps me to slip right in there; and I feel like a fish in water, even though, sometimes, I do feel like a salmon going upstream, pushing against the flow.

*SQ12 – In Hong Kong Voiceover in English & Cantonese*

**In Hong Kong whether I am shopping or in a taxi, mo lun haang-gun gaai, waak-je ch'or gun dik-see - chaa m-dor gung yow yun tung ngo gong, people say to me “Wa nay sik gong Gongdonghua, ga?” “Oh you speak Cantonese?” “Nay dee Gongdonghua haih been do hok ga?” “Where did you learn it?” “yu-gwor ngo m geen do lay, ngo joong yee-wai nay hai JungGwokyun teem!” “If I didn't see you, I'd think you were Chinese” .....and some of them stare at me with great big eyes, Keui-day youh-dee jow juhng daaih ngaan gum mong-ju ngo, and others just think I am English, youh-dee jow yee-wai ngo haih YingGwok yun. Ling-do ngo ho fan. Its so difficult to explain. Do m-jee deem tung keui-day gaai-sik. I know they don't mean to be unkind. Ngo jee - nee-dee-suet-wa haih mouh ngok-yi ge. Keui-day jee-haih tai-do ngo-ge yeung yuen chuen m-jee ngo ge bui-ging.**

**But one moment I am feeling at home, part of the community.**

**Nee yut fun-joong ngo ho youh gwai-sook-gum. Another moment, ling yut fun-joong, I feel pushed out, ngo jow gok duk bay yun pai-j'aie. Alien, from another world. Ho-ch'ee nee-gor day-fong ngo haih mouh fun ge. As if this place doesn't belong to me as much as it does them.**

*V walks out of light*

*LX27 – blackout*

*V kneels on Chair*

*LX28 – Special on V sitting at chair*

My face overwhelms my identity again.

*SQ13 – Bat Poem Voiceover in English*

**The bat is like a rat and a bird**

Peen fook yu suu, yow yu kum

**During the day it lives in the ancient temple**

Yut chai gu miu, yeh yup lum

**By night it enters the forest  
Who knows the bitterness of the bat,**

Youh seui jee doh peen fook foo

**Within the body of a mouse**

Sow sun ch'ong jerk niu yi sum

**It has the heart of a bird.**

My cousin wrote that in 1955 about his Eurasianess. I wonder if it still speaks for some of us, even today.

***LX29 – general as V moves across stage  
to bring SR bag to CS***

*V gets off Side Table and goes across to Stage Right to bring big bag on stage*

Ngo day sing yut do mair-ju ho-dor bow fook. Some of this baggage we inherit. Yow-dee haih jo-seen low lok ge. Some of it we create or pickup on the way. Weighs us down. And one day we could decide to have a good look *deem yeung seen jee ho-yi dum-jor di mouh yung ge bow-fook.*

***SQ14 – Dragon music***

*V takes items out of bag and brings out small dragon puppet*

I love the dragon – its magical – and so deeply embedded into Chinese myth & legend. The small dragon is like the silk caterpillar. The large dragon fills the heaven and the earth. Loong, hai sai ge see-how, jow ho-chee tiu ch'aam ch'oong. Daih-jor, jow kwa – teen – koi – day. There is the celestial dragon who guards the mansions of the gods. Teen Loong sow woo teen-sun ge goong-deen. There is the divine dragon who causes the winds to blow and the rain to fall. Sun Loong haih foo-foong woon-yu ge juu-see. And then there is the earth dragon who marks out the courses of the rivers and the streams. Day Loong jow waak-chuut chuen-hor ge gaai seen. And lastly for each of us there is the dragon of our hidden treasures. Jeui how jow lun doh ngo deh mui gor yun sum leui meen ge Bo Loong.

*V goes back to pieces of dragon and begins to assemble him*

Several years ago I began to dream about making a dragon. I kept favourite old clothes, saved up bits of cloth, and braiding and sequins, ngo cho mai ho-dor sam foo, bo, fah been. This was my old dressing gown. And this was a very fancy pair of jeans that I found in an Oxfam shop. Eventually I put him together. Seung chuen keui ge sun-tai ho-chee 9yeung m-tung ge Sangmut. The dragon is said to have nine resemblances to other animals.

Keui-gor sun, ch'ee Sair. Its body is like that of a snake. Keui-gor toh, ch'ee Yook pong. It has an abdomen like a large oyster's. Its has the scales of a carp. Keui youh Lay-yuu ge luun. Keui youh Maa-ying ge jow. Its claws are like an eagle's. Keui-ge gerk-baan-dai tung Lo-foo ge yut-yeung. The soles of its feet like those of a tiger.

*V may improvise more storytelling about the dragon and his adventures*

It has a head like a camel. Keui-gor tow, ch'ee Lohk-tor. Ears of an ox. Ngow ge yee. Doesn't hear very well. Keui yow Look ge Gok. It has the Horns of a deer. And his eyes.. well some say he has rabbits eyes, Yow-yun wah keui deui ngan jow ch'ee Siu bak to ge, but some say he has the eyes of a devil! But in China, the dragon is not an evil being, it has very positive qualities. They are the spirits of the waters with supernatural powers. Youh-see keui haih gut-cheung juen-gwai ge jeung-jing. They are the symbol of dignity and good fortune. Youh-see yow doi-biu naam-neui ge fun-yun. And in partnership with the phoenix, the dragon is a symbol of fertility. Sung-sung but-sik, Yun-yook, daaih-day, and the everlasting cycle of life, which nurtures the earth.

***SQ14 – Dragon music fades out***

Seui-yihn mouh-yun jee-do haih m-haih jun-haih youh Loong ge ch'uen-joi.  
Daan-haih, ngo jow jee-doh, ngo wing-yuen youh yut-tiu Loong hai jee-gay ge  
sum leui-been. No one knows if there really are dragons, but I will always know  
that there is a dragon in my heart.

*Visual 33 – baby V*

*SQ15 – I have a Dream Voiceover in English*

**I have a dream.**

Ngo youh yut gor mung-seung.

**That we can all learn**

Jow-haih yun-yun do ho-yi

**to face the world,**

meen deui jee-gay, meen deui saai-gaai,

**face each other**

mo-lun ngo-day gok duk jee-gay ge sun-fun gay wun-luen, day-wai gay miu-siu,

**however mixed-up, mis-shapen, and invisible we may**

**feel**

ngo-day do ho-yi gong chut jee-gay ge goo-see

**and tell our stories**

tung mai jee-do youh yun wui gwan sum ngo-day

**knowing that we are heard.**

Ngo-day heui been do

**And that**

gor-do

**wherever we may be**

jow haih ngo-day ge ook-kay

**in our hearts we are at home.**

Yee-cheen ngo wun m-do sung-woot ge yi-yi.

**Once upon a time, I thought I had no stories to tell.**

Gum-yut ngo ho hoi sum nung-gow gong chut jee-gay ge goo-see

**Now I tell them.**

Gung-ga hoi sum ho-yi teng do yuet-lai-yuet-dor yun gow daam gong chut keui-  
day ge ging lik. Once upon a time, I was lost. And then I found myself - through  
listening to other stories and hearing my own.

*V stands up and prepares to leave through frame*

*LX30 – Slow crossfade general to central strip*

I was in Hong Kong, that June and July of 1997

*SQ16 – 1997 Voiceover in Cantonese*

**1997neen.**

when we gave Hong Kong back to China.

**Gor-gor yow yeet yow ch'iu sup ge haa-teen, ngo hai**

**HeungGong.**

The heat and humidity

**Moon yeet ge teen-hay**

forced me to sink under and inside my skin for the first time in my life it seemed.

**ling ngo dai yut ch'ee, t'ow gwor jee-gay ge sun-tai heui**

**tai jee-gay ge sun-fun.**

I love the sweating. That oily wetness of body and heat.

**Ngo hang jor ho-dor loh, but-duen low-horn**

I walked and walked. For miles. My feet ached.

**Ngo seung gerk ho-tung**

It was as if they spoke to me.

**Keui-day ho-ch'ee hoi-ch'ee tung ngo gong-yeh**

I gave them my attention. Stroked them. Rubbed them softly at night.

**Ngo yut-lo hang, yut-lo teng**

And listened to them as they touched the ground. I knew where I stood.

**Ngo jee-do jee-gay kay-gun hai been-do**

And I also knew

**Daan haih ngo yow jee**

that I would keep on walking

**ngo ying-yeen wui gaai-jook seung-loh**

along my path.

*V steps through frame*

**LX31 – Cross fade central strip with US Special up**

**LX32 – soft light up on Prayer table**

**LX33 – V's tea light comes up as Prayer table fades**

**LX34 – US Special fades out**

**Visual 34 – Baby V goes to blackout**

**LX35 – Blackout**

**LX36 – general for bows**

**LX37 – houselights**

I invite you all to stay for tea with me, and after tea, those of you who would like to stay a bit longer, please do. There may be more stories and a little more action on stage.

**SQ 17 – interval music**

*During Interval, tea is served to audience.*

**SQ17 – interval music fades out on cue from V**

*Second half of show, Improvised! House lights up all the time.*

**LX38 – Sofa special up, houselights up, general up, and the standing lamp is switched on.**

**End of the WHOLE show**

**FINAL BOWS and goodbyes.**

**SQ18 – end of show music for audience exit**

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## Appendix 11: Notes on Bilingualising the new FACE

How do I reduce the material I have already in FACE from 65 minutes to maybe 50 minutes, yet add more bilingual elements, and some audience interaction? Perhaps it does not need to be shorter, though even to keep it to an hour's length with the revisions, would still need editing. Looking through versions of FACE, I break the script down into topic sections/themes, and consider the following possibilities.

- 1 Deletions of text
- 2 Intermixed as spoken text
- 3 Use of voiceovers in one or other language, with spoken text
- 4 Create dual language voice-overs
- 5 Slides of text shown in one language while speaking in the other language
- 6 Create new text/develop existing material

### 1. Deletions of text

Deleting personal material which isn't essentially connected to the Eurasian experience for instance, comments on my relationship with my mother. These may connect with other stories in the audience of parent child angst but is unconnected to the bi-cultural theme.

Deleting linking statements – I am looking at transitioning from one block of material to another more boldly without linking commentary. Investigate how this feels different to actor and audience.

Deletion of Section on Father – for brevity's sake.

### 2. Intermixed as spoken text

The sample of Chinglish in FACE would not have been a suitable model for bilingualising the complete text. It was used to characterise my mother and to offer an example of our Eurasian patois. As stated before, it can really only be understood fully by others who are bilingual, and I am aiming to create a bilingual narrative that is accessible to mono-lingual speakers of either language. However there are several other sections which are not characterised into a persona which could also have some interpolations of Cantonese into a predominantly English text, without too much redundancy for the bilingual hearer. One example of how I attempt to intermix the languages is in the first story I tell of the Dwarf.

For example, from the 'Dwarf story': (the translation of meaning is given in *italics*)

“...Even if this is not a real past life of mine, ngo ho gum-doong [*I feel deeply for him*] His isolation, his hunger for acceptance and the pain of rejection are things I am sensitive to – in this life. Waak-je seung teen huk-yee ngorn pai ngo sing-wai wun-huet-yi. Yiu ngo hok-zaap deemyeung heui meen deui nee-gor duk-suu ge sun-fun; tung mai deem yeung t'ow gwor nee gor sun-fun heui faht-gwut ngo ngai-seut-seung ge ch'ong jo lik [*Maybe heaven made me Eurasian*]

*especially to face the challenges of this identity, and through this identity dig deeply into my creative power]”*

There is something very robust and meaty in the Cantonese sounds of the final sentence. I would hope to find some natural gestures which would give some sense of the meaning to the mono-lingual English person listening to this chunk of Cantonese.

### **3. Use of voiceovers in one or other language, with spoken text**

Some blocks of story have delicious imagery in both the English and Cantonese texts, and have a satisfying rhythm of delivery. Rather than interrupting the flow, better to let one text be heard in voiceover, and the other spoken over live. This requires subtle timing in recording the voiceover, leaving sufficient space so that sometimes both languages are heard simultaneously and sometimes only one language is heard. I have also varied lengths of text in one language or another, for rhythmic interest, but not too lengthy, so that monolingual speakers can maintain some coherence between their chunks of text. It would be interesting to know whether the other language interferes with or adds something positive to their experience. An example of Voiceover in English (**in bold text**), and spoken text in Cantonese

**“I got so caught up in learning how to fit in and find my place here,**

Ngo ho lo lik gum heui sik-ying YingGwok ge sair-wui mun fa

**that I forgot where I came from and what I’d brought with me.**

gay-foo mong gay-jor ngor ge jun meen muk

**Youh yut duen ho cheung ge see-gaan,**

For a long time

**ngo ge sun-tai ho-ch’ee youh yut bo-fun m-geen-jor gum.**

I felt a large part of me was missing”.

I chose this and other instances of speaking Cantonese to an English Voice over, because of my visceral connection to Cantonese, this being my first language, and deeper in my body. I feel I would be able to communicate something beyond words in speaking this text live to the audience. However in the closing section which is about ‘Feet’, I chose to speak this in English, with Voiceover in Cantonese (**in bold text**).

“I walked and walked. For miles. My feet ached.

**Ngo seung gerk ho-tung**

It was as if they spoke to me.

**Keui-day ho-ch’ee hoi-ch’ee tung ngo gong-yeh**

I gave them my attention. Stroked them. Rubbed them softly at night.

**Ngo yut-lo hang, yut-lo teng**

And listened to them as they touched the ground. I knew where I stood.

**Ngo jee-do jee-gay kay-gun hai been-do**

And I also knew

**Daan haih ngo yow jee**

that I would keep on walking

### **ngo ying-yeen wui gaai-jook seung-loh**

along my path.

The congruent experience this time is more for me in the English language – the language of my maturity. Also this story comes from my lived reality in 1997.

These are not metaphors for the experience.

#### **4. Create dual language voiceovers**

Learning how to use the multitrack sound editing system, I edited the voiceovers and then integrated them into a dual language voiceover. In every case I chose not to overlap the languages, as it feels important to allow clarity of understanding the text in either/both languages.

#### **5. Slides of text shown in one language while speaking in the other language**

I have resisted using the method of surtitling, as too distancing, but in three instances I have put text onto the screen in English, when I am speaking in Cantonese. In the first instance, the image of the text is across my body as I stand in front of the screen. I imagine the English-hearing audience catching sight of some of the words. And it feels ok to me if they cannot read it, but sense its meaning through my body language speaking Cantonese.

“Maybe Heaven made me Eurasian so that I must face the challenge of this unique identity, and in so doing, dig deeply into the ground of my creativity”

In another instance,

“Win \$97.50 Place \$56.40”

I imagine that the English hearer may need some support in realising that I have been talking about racing and gambling in Cantonese. And the projected text does not interrupt my flow.

The third example is from the long voiceover about my experience of culture shock at Drama School

“They never asked me where I came from. And I didn’t know how important it was for me to tell them. If I had told them, they would have known I was different, and I would have known too”.

While I am saying this in Cantonese, I am crouched low on the ground, in as much to signify how cowed I felt during that time in my life, as to enable the audience to read the text on the screen behind me.

#### **6. Create new text/develop existing material**

There is plenty of potential new material. Another part of FACE which could bear developing or altogether erasing, are the Journey sections. The little blue VW is used both as a child’s toy in playing out the geography of the island of Hong Kong, and bringing alive again the oft traversed car journeys in the day of a child’s life. It is also used as a rhythmic energising of that section of text. It needs to be presented upbeat, at a fast tempo, so adding bilingual material must not take away from this purpose. If the bilingual material could also find a way to engage the audience, in conversation, and identify those in the audience who might know

this place too, then that might add value. Much of this dialogue with the audience would be largely extemporised. However it might sound something like this. “our car, a trusty powder blue VW Beetle, takes me to school. Vroom vroom, puh puh puh puh puh puh, [youh mouh yun sook Heung Kong ge Tung Lo Wan ah? Is anyone familiar with Hong Kong island? Say yes, and wave at me. Hello! Ho la, yut chai hang la...] up Tai Hang Road, Laam Tong Doh, Jardeen Saan, to Wongneichong gap Roundabout, then along Stubb’s Road, Waan lai, waan heui...”

*The translation goes something like this: “our car, a trusty powder blue VW Beetle, takes me to school. Vroom vroom, puh puh puh puh puh puh, [is there anyone here who knows Hong Kong’s tung lo wan? Is anyone familiar with Hong Kong island? Say yes and wave at me. Hello! Good, then lets travel together...} up Tai Hang Road, Blue Pool Road, Jardine’s Lookout, to Wongneichong Gap Roundabout, then along Stubb’s Road, twisting here, twisting there....”*

The section with Dragon, when I take him out of the bag and put pieces of him together I prepare to tell stories of about him from improvisation and impulse. I intend to be spontaneous in sharing information about the making of him, and what has happened to him since he was made – when he was stolen, and then found in the gutters of Mongkok.

## Appendix 12: From Old to New - Comparison of the second FACE & the new FACE

The script is broken down into sections, with brief description of action: and notes on what was changed, deleted, or added.

Second FACE developed with Shu Wing Tang in Two Versions		New FACE first presented at Kent University Sept 22 & 23 2007 - Lumley Studio
CANTONESE with some English	ENGLISH with some Cantonese	ENGLISH/CANTONESE
Technical Requirement: Black box set with several lighting states, 38 lighting cues, 50 slide projection cues. Two MD sources for sound cues. SM operates all sound, lighting and slide cues. USC: 4'X 6' wooden frame with bamboo blinds that roll up and down from in front and behind. DSC 2'X3' Prayer Mat with tea set for 7. SL: Chair and side table. USR: Suitcase with dragon inside		Changes: images on screen from video projector, all voiceovers and sound on one CD. USC: Frame reconstructed in metal for easier touring. Bamboo blinds replaced by vertical see-through lycra strips of material, for quicker entrances and exits through frame. Prayer mat replaced with low tea table with video projector hidden below. Tea table surface has cutouts below mother, father, grandmother and V's tea cups to allow spotlights under table, to light up tea cups from below. SR: sofa with dragon and coloured cloth in big bag hidden behind.
<b>Prayer to the Ancestors</b>		
Preset Slide on Screen: Baby V. Audience then sees double image of V's FACE on screen. A slide of V as young adult is projected onto the screen, the other is of V lit standing behind the screen. Two images: Face upon face, then and now. Non-moving dual image, just voice speaking in Cantonese.	The prayer is first spoken in Cantonese and then in English	As before
<b>A Welcome</b>		
V welcomes audience directly speaking to them as herself	Includes some words in Cantonese "foon ying" = welcome	Deleted
<b>Prologue: Dwarf</b>		
Talks to audience about a real incident when someone offered to 'read' her past lives, and how she remembers vividly a mis-shapen dwarf and identifies with him. <b>Key theme of story: Mistake not the ugly face for a devil. Can you not see his goodness of heart?</b>		Cantonese insertions into English text
<b>Genealogy</b>		
Talks directly to audience about forebears, while pouring tea into cups as if ritual offering of tea to the ancestors.	Includes some words in Cantonese Cheen gum siu jeh –thousand taels of gold young lady Seung jeung ming ju – pearl in palm of hand	Cantonese insertions into English text
<b>Fragments about Grandma 1)</b>		
bridge to Eating at home		As before
<b>Eating at home</b>		
V takes own cup of tea and sits in chair telling stories in direct address to audience, with slides illustrating people she talks about.		Cantonese insertions into English text
<b>Ah Woon Voice Over</b>		
In Dong Guan dialect talking about the meaning of Boon Tong Faan – an impolite term for Eurasians in Cantonese, racial prejudice against Chinese grandma by the British, and V not speaking English till she was 5 years old.	With translation in English at end of voiceover	Voice Over edited: shortened and with gaps for spoken English translation in between Dong Guan dialect
<b>About Hong Kong &amp; School</b>		
<b>Fragments about Grandma 2)</b>		Edited; and add Voiceover in Cantonese to spoken text on Tai chi
<b>From my bedroom window</b> As child-self, initially in Cantonese then switches to English		Cantonese insertions into English text
<b>Journey 1)</b> as child-self from home to School in English	Same	Cantonese insertions into English text
<b>Psalm hymn</b> as child-self in English	Same	Same
<b>Miss Catto</b> as Miss Catto in English	Same	Deleted
<b>About School</b> as child-self in English	Same	Edited
<b>Journey 2)</b> as child-self from school to shop in English	Same	Same
<b>Mum in flower shop</b>		
As Mum in Chinglish: Eurasian Canto/English	Same	Same
<b>Mum and Me</b> reflection on our relationship		Deleted
As present-self in Cantonese		
<b>The Sports Club</b>		
As child-self in English	Same	Same
<b>Journey 3)</b> as child-self from the Club to home in English with some Cantonese		Add material in English and Cantonese

<b>Parenthesis about Food</b> as present-self in Cantonese	Some words in Cantonese, Chow Dow Foo - stinky fermented bean curd Chu Cheung Fun – Chinese cannelloni; Ho Sik - yummy	Same
<b>From my living room window</b> as child-self in Cantonese with songs in English Ends as present-self in Cantonese to audience	Some words ie. Chinese New Year greetings spoken at top speed, in Cantonese	Same
<b>Link to Father’s Story</b>		Deleted
As present-self addressing audience		
<b>Voice Over ‘I have a fantasy’</b>		Deleted
Brings candle to either side of frame, reaches out to image of father through frame, turns, kneels and moves on knees DS to Prayer mat, as if in meditation and prayer		
<b>About Dad 1) Victor Sharkskin Needa</b>		Deleted
To audience with slides and reading newspaper article in role of journalist		
<b>About Dad 2)</b>		Deleted
To audience about Caruso & other daughter, talk about tap-dancing while he is dying.		
<b>Coming to England</b>		Cantonese voiceover, spoken English
<b>Link to England</b>		Cantonese insertions into English text
<b>School &amp; coming to University</b>		Deleted
<b>Voice Over ‘At Drama School’</b>		
Silent physical action reflecting mood		Integrated English and Cantonese voiceovers ending with spoken Cantonese and text in English as Visual Q
<b>Forgetting</b>		
Lit from above in tight box of light, steps out of light leaving only hands visible in light		Voiceover in English/Cantonese to spoken Cantonese/English
<b>Remembering</b>		
Telling story as hand mime in light		Integrated Cantonese/English voiceover, with spoken English/Cantonese
<b>Voice Over ‘In Hong Kong’</b>		
Silent physical action reflecting mood		Integrated English/Cantonese Voiceover
<b>Bat Poem</b>		
	In Cantonese, then in English	Voice over in Cantonese with English spoken
<b>Battle of Hong Kong</b>		Deleted
Testimony to the Eurasians who died in defence of HK, as General Maltby. Standing on Table in salute		
<b>Link – Straddling two stools</b>		Deleted except for baggage
Talks to audience about history and cultural identity, About carrying baggage. Goes to bring big bag on stage.		Cantonese insertions in English text about carrying baggage
<b>Enter the Dragon</b>		
Talks about making the dragon and removes him intact from bag, introduces to audience as puppet, then dismembers him as V talks about his nine-faceted identity. Places bits of body on stage, talks about dream for the future		Add material in English and Cantonese  The ‘dream’ text is spoken in Cantonese to English voiceover
<b>About 1997 and Sore Feet</b>		
Tells while drawing up bamboo blinds, sits on wooden frame. Then exits through wooden frame, in the same way that V entered at the beginning of play, with overhead light showing image of V overlaying slide of her, this time, as baby.		Spoken English to Cantonese voiceover
<b>End &amp; Bows</b>		<b>End of first half</b>
Sometimes informal chat with audience afterwards	Invite audience to stay for Tea and chat. V serves tea, and initiates dialogue with audience. Sometimes as whole group, sometimes less formally	Invite audience to stay for Tea. V serves tea and chats informally. After interval, audience invited to take their place for second half.
		<b>Second half</b>
		Discussion with audience, which leads to playback theatre. Solo playback or with playback team by prior arrangement or by invitation in the moment to audience members who are practiced in playback theatre. Audience members when telling longer stories invited to sofa so that they are visible, and audible to audience. Dragon can be companion to teller, if V then moves from conducting role to actor in solo playback. Sharing of stories from the audience on themes stimulated by first half.
		<b>Final Bows</b>

## Appendix 13: Transcription of Second Half of FACE September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006 at Lumley Studio, Kent University

*In Italics: what happens; who is being spoken to;* (in brackets: translation of English to Cantonese, or Cantonese to English)

V= Veronica; A=member of the audience + *name if known*

**In BOLD – comments referring to shifts in perception and cultural identity openly acknowledged by audience member**

**In colour – language shifts**

Who speaks?	What is said...	Notes & additional information on my inner process
	<i>During the interval, the audience have been served tea by me off stage to the right, with convivial chat. They are welcome to traverse the stage; the children play with the dragon and cloth. There is also a table of books and paraphernalia off stage to the left for them to peruse, though few do. After Teatime, the audience return to their seats. V sits on the sofa on SR with the dragon draped on the back of the sofa, the dragon foot over the shoulder. The audience is invited to ask questions.</i>	I answer questions as I serve tea. As soon as we settle for the improvised second half, I plan to pursue a process of satisfying this curiosity before inviting the audience to share their own reflections & stories.
A	When did you make the dragon?	
V	When did you make the dragon! I made it in 1998, when I knew I was going to do this play; when I was commissioned to write the first version of FACE. And, I wanted to have a dragon in my play. I wasn't quite sure how it would be, and I wanted to have a dragon that would come apart, in different ways, of course ideally in 9 different ways. But it was too complicated to have.. all the nine... so.. its... how it is. I remember that when I mentioned to the man who commissioned me, Louis Yu, who was the director of drama at the HK Arts Centre, I said "I want to have a dragon in my play," and he said " <b>waah... hah! Nei siu sum ah (be careful) loong... ah nei chee la chung kwok yun deui loong haih ho mun gum ga (dragon, you know the Chinese are very sensitive about them).</b>	
	So to HK people, well Chinese people in general, the dragon is a sensitive thing, cos it has many levels of meaning to a Chinese person, <b>nay wah haih m haih ah, Wing Hong? (Would you say this is true, Wing Hong?)</b> So say something about what the Loong means to you... What do you think?" <i>to Wing Hong</i>	V asks the Chinese people in the audience – in particular a friend Wing Hong Li - if they agree to this notion. They murmur agreement
A <i>Wing Hong</i>	<b>Actually when I see your show today, this is the first time, and I wish to find my dragon as well. In here.</b> Because why its so sensitive to us, because there are so many meanings in the dragon. If we misuse it, then people will just get it like a stereotype?	
V	Stereotype, that's the fear.	
A <i>Wing Hong</i>	Stereotype, fear when we mention about Chinese and Dragon. And.. Yeah I think most of the Chinese people, especially grow up in Hong Kong, we are looking for it. Where is our Dragon? Even though I am not Eurasian, I am grow up in Hong Kong but because of the culture, British and Chinese, so its quite complicated for us, as well.	
V	in terms of identity. Huh?	
A <i>Wing Hong</i>	Yes	
V	ha, so you got Louis said, "you be careful, what do you mean by the dragon" Because you see the dragon is a symbol of the emperor, is another thing. Of course there is no emperor in China now, it supposed to be a communist country.	
A <i>Roger Green</i>	No its not a communist country	Roger Green interrupts with comment. He is a member of the Canterbury Chinese community, fluent in Cantonese. He met his Chinese wife in Hong Kong, and they have two Eurasian children, all four were at this performance
V	Exactly, you and I know its not a communist country, but they think it is. So anyway, I was determined... I took his point, I said "OK I understand that the dragon is sensitive to Chinese people, but its very important to me. I got to have my dragon", so I made him. Two weeks. It took me two weeks. <b>Any other questions?</b>	
A <i>Rufus</i>	I am curious. Was it your grandfather that was of Japanese and Syrian descent as well? Where did that, does those bloodlines come from?	
V	Oh OK, maybe it was too quick. My father was also of mixed race, so I am second generation Eurasian. My mother was Chinese English, my father was Japanese Arab. Probably	
A <i>Rufus</i>	The question is really, have you explored any of those?	

V	Its impossible for me to do that other than at a psychic level. Because there is no record.	
A <i>Rufus</i>	So there was no influence when you were growing up.	
V	No. Culturally I was influenced by the HK British colonial atmosphere which was Chinese and British/English, but from a <b>Huet Tung (bloodline)</b> a a...	
A <i>Roger Green</i>	<b>Bloodline</b>	Offers translation from Cantonese to English for me when he sees me struggle
V	from a.. blood .. point of view. Yes I have some Japanese in me. And probably I don't know actually. Its my fantasy that my father's father was Japanese Arab because there are two sources of his name. I have two names for my father's father. One is Andre Zahar. And Zahar apparently is quite a common name in Lebanon, and Syria; and Andre is a French name. So I thought maybe Syria, Damascus maybe because it was under French mandate at the time. So it kind of made sense. And I asked a psychic actually whether he had an opinion, and he said yes Damascus. Fantasy! But I also have another source for his name. My father actually wrote Andrew Zaharoff on either his marriage certificate or my birth certificate. So does that make him... Russian? I don't know. But if you look at my father, my sense of my father is that he had Arabic blood in him. Which pleases me enormously, because I don't know whether its Jewish or Arabic or Islamic. It pleases me enormously that I don't know. Because I can say yes to whoever I meet in the middle east because who knows, they may be a relative of mine. So...other than feeling the Japanese run through my veins. So that when I go to Japan, again I don't who my Japanese relations are. So everybody is related to me as far as I am concerned; which is a rather interesting and warm sort of feeling. So...uh... are there any other questions?	
A	Yes, its a bit about the way that Tai Chi influenced your subsequent practice. Because you talked about growing up with it, so you must have come over here and done actor training and all that sort of stuff....	
V	I am happy to. The reason I took up Tai chi when I was 19 is that when I was 18, I went up some stairs, I ran up some stairs and was so desperately out of breath that I felt I like I was an 81 yr old not an 18 yr old. I was terribly hopeless at sports at school. Really a weed – a total bookworm, was really embarrassing. No it was just what it was. I was so unfit, I thought to myself, what can I do? Otherwise I shall be 81 growing older, you know, into my 20s. So I thought, I don't do sports, I don't do competitive games...So I thought well I'll do Tai chi. There was class, a weekly class, not far from me, at the YWCA at Macdonnell Road. There was an old lady Mrs Lee. And I joined her class. I studied with her for two years. And then I joined another class Mr Cheung. So eight years in Hong Kong, I studied Tai Chi of different forms and Swords - both the straight sword the double sided sword as well as the single sided sword. But having said that, and having taken it into my body, as soon as I left Hong Kong to come to England. I stopped... learning. Because it was very hard for me to find a teacher I could trust. I had such good teachers, <b>Ngo di see foo haih Hong Kong jun haih yut low (my teachers in Hong Kong were really very good)</b> I had such good teachers in Hong Kong it was difficult for me to trust another teacher. And they always want you to go back to the beginning... so in a way its in the shadows of my body. And its only recently in the last five years that I have picked it up again. And want to, I am of that age when its normal for you to learn Tai Chi. Because actually, wouldn't you agree...Eighteen is very young to learn Tai Chi. Generally you start learning Tai Chi when you are in your 50s. Because you want to live longer. I am just there now so its about right for me to..	
A	To start again.	
V	To start again.	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Can I ask Vickie, you know you live, you were born in Hong Kong you have lived there and then you came to this country. Which do you actually in your soul regard as your home. Where is your home?	Michael Prew has a home in Canterbury since he retired. He is a distant relation by marriage. It was a great surprise that he was able to come, as he travels frequently to and from Asia. We haven't seen each other for many years. He knows me by my family nickname – Vickie.
V	<i>sighing</i> ...Its so hard isn't it, so hard... <i>sighing</i> . My home is in the friendships I have. Actually, I feel my home, is not a place anymore. Maybe I am beginning to feel London is my home. I really do begin to feel that London is my home. Because I know how to get around, its been 20 years, and I am even bumping into people in the depths of London's underground, so I must have lived long enough in London to know a few people. And the truth is Michael, when I go back to Hong Kong it is so rapidly changing. There is so little to that you and I would recognise. When were you last in Hong Kong.?	

A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Two weeks ago.	
V	Oh really, I mean do you recognise much of Hong Kong	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	I am fortunate because I go back 3 or 4 times a year so I don't.. I mean there are changes, but I don't see the changes as much as you would if you haven't been going back.	
V	I have been going back twice a year for the last 10 years. But even so.. I feel, for instance I used to drive in Hong Kong. For the Chung Ying Theatre Company, I worked for Chung Ying theatre for two years as a stage manager. I was one of the two drivers of the van, and I loved it, bombing around Hong Kong in a van. Now I would be terrified driving in HK, because the roads are so complicated. Really excellent..I really think the HK Government has designed the roads... they are double layers ... three layers, quite attractive aren't they? Green things growing over the side. Its... Landscaped! So its not horrible; double layered roads. But very efficient, but my god there's traffic. It doesn't stop. <b>Haih m haih ah (right?) But ting ah (it doesn't stop).</b> They are very tight on rules now. You can't change lanes and stop anywhere you like. Whereas in my day you could wander across the road. It was much easier. So I find HK quite - challenging for me to actually be in. So it doesn't feel so much like my home. However, the people that I have become close to in Hong Kong over the years; especially my students, as I do a lot of teaching there in Hong Kong - they are my home. So when I meet my students and I play with them and do playback theatre with them - that's my home. And when I travel anywhere in the world, and I am doing what I do. I am looking at Wing, because he is a member of my group. And I am looking at Sara, because she studied with me. When we do playback theatre that's my home. Because it's about being with people in a very special way. And that is what home is to me. Thank you for that question. What about you? All these years. Where home for you, Michael?	In the audience are several people who have studied Playback Theatre with me. Wing Hong is a member of my True Heart Theatre group. Sara Prosser and Annie Hamloui were members of a Playback training hosted by Kent Creative Partnerships in 2005, which I delivered with three other Playback colleagues.
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Its very difficult to ... Very difficult, to say	
V	Michael ah. Can I be bold and ask you to sit here... with me. Would you be willing? I tell you why, because they can only see the back of your head. And I'd like you to be... Come and sit next to me and let my dragon... so ... So this way we can. So let me introduce Michael. We have known each other since I was very little. Because our families have a connection. Your auntie is my auntie. <i>Michael comes to sit upstage of V on the sofa. The dragon's other paw is draped on his shoulder.</i>	I sense that Michael's story will be especially interesting to the audience and connected to the theme of intercultural history. Inviting him to the 'Teller's' chair formalises his contribution within the ritual of Playback Theatre. And I am listening with an expectation to perform this story as a solo enactment.
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Thats correct	
V	Auntie Grace is... Michael's mother's sister is my mother's brother's wife. No! Yes ! Something like that.	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Your mothers brothers wife.	
V	My mum's brother's wife	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	That's right	
V	So say a bit about what home means to you.	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	For Eurasians I think it was very difficult. Our grandparents knew each other 100 years ago. And certainly my mother and Vickie's mum they were also good friends, they have known each other all these years. The sad thing in life is that the world changes all the time, and you find many of those families are no longer in Hong Kong. People have moved on. But certainly Hong Kong; it's a very dynamic city, and it draws you back. My grandfather worked for the colonial service. And was the .. he worked in the secretariat; the Governors sort of ah office boy; he was an Administrative officer. Which meant that he had a nice bungalow on the peak. And in the summertime he was allowed to stay there. He used to walk down, and take the peak tram, which is about 1800ft down to the office. And then in the evening he would go up on the Peak Tram. But because they weren't any roads in those days, he used to have a sedan chair, and he'd have four people to carry him back to his bungalow to relax.	
V	Uphill	

A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Uphill. But that was the sort of lifestyle that they had. And when my grandfather retired he brought his family back to England. But my mother was drawn back to Hong Kong and so she went back to Hong Kong and got married.	
V	So your grandfather was Mr Prew	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Ahhh No Frith	
V	He was Frith. You're Prew. That's right.	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	That's right.	
V	Mr Frith was English. And he married Auntie Frith, who was Chinese	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Eurasian	
V	She was also Eurasian. So that's how the generations of Eurasians... so your mum Auntie Iris was Eurasian	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Yes	
V	And say about Auntie Frith... came, came here.....	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Round about '35	
V	That's right.	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Then in 1936, my mother decided that she would go back to HK and marry, that's where I was born. Then I came back here to study. The east drew me back. And I joined the colonial service in Hong Kong, and I worked on the transition. And when that finished - I had had children in Hong Kong, all my daughters wanted to go back to Hong Kong. And then, having come back here.....One of them married the HK Solicitor General's son and stayed there. And then my grandchildren were also born in Hong Kong. So the generations for me have somehow stayed in Hong Kong...	
V	Yes that's actually quite rare.	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	...so there is always this feeling of wanting to go back to Hong Kong. Although having retired I live in Canterbury, but I find my soul is drawn between living in England and the spirit of Hong Kong and the family in Hong Kong.	
V	But even so though you have family in Hong Kong. They are now pretty much Europeanised now. Aren't they? Wouldn't you say? Do they speak Cantonese?	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	They speak Mandarin now.	
V	Really!	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	My granddaughter is 2 years old she speaks to me in Putongua.	
V	<b>Waaaah!</b>	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	<b>Women jiang Putonghua (we speak Mandarin)</b>	
V	That's amazing. Cos that's the other thing. We of our generation as Eurasians, didn't speak Cantonese, except casually. We didn't learn. We didn't study Cantonese. But you actually studied Chinese, didn't you?	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	I studied at your mum's school.	
V	DBS (Diocesan Boy's School)	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	DGS	
V	DGS - Diocesan GIRLS school	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	That is because we went back to Hong Kong after the war. It was unfortunate, in fact I was captured by the Japanese on Boxing day 1941.	
V	How old were you?	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	I was two.	
V	Oh sorry	

A <i>Michael Prew</i>	I spent nearly four years in an internment camp. So then we were repatriated to this country but then the draw of the East took my family back to Hong Kong again.	I realise that there has been a lot of information already. And its time I do something about this in an enactment of some kind.
V	Um ah, just stay there. <i>Getting up off the sofa</i> So what I am going to try to do now... I don't know what I am going to do, basically... But I am going to have a go. I am going to leave you with my dragon to keep you company. OK. <i>Helps drape the dragon's head over Michael's lap.</i> I am going to go on stage and I am not quite sure what I am going to do.. So..um.. I will try and do something.	As this is solo, I must shift from conductor's role to the role of actor. Leaving the side of the Teller, as if abandoning him, never normally happens in a Playback performance. I use the dragon as a symbol of companionship with the Teller as he watches the enactment.
V	<i>Goes onto the stage, takes fabric and sets it onstage as a circle to represent Hong Kong Island.</i> <b>Ho loi yee cheen (a long time ago).</b> A long long time ago. On a little island in South China Ships would come and visit from a long way away. And they brought people who spoke a very funny language called English. Because you see the people here <b>gong gong dong hua ga. (speak Cantonese)</b> And they came and they liked what they saw and they stayed. They built many wonderful buildings. And they actually found a way of climbing up the tallest hill on the island. Which they called Victoria Peak, because Victoria was the Queen at the time. And they wanted to live above everybody else. And that's why in fact no Chinese was allowed to live there. Enclave of the English.	I use cloth to designate location and atmosphere. I am aware of my own less than normal energy capacity – and needing to contain and minimise physicality. The incision from the abdominal surgery 8 weeks previously is vertical, and has cut through my stomach muscles. The wound is healing well, but is nevertheless sensitive. I am 20lbs lighter than I was prior to surgery.
V	And it wasn't until the early 20s and 30s, I think, Sir Robert Ho-Tung; because he was Eurasian. And he built the first house on the peak and lived there. He actually wore a Chinese gown and lived in a very Chinese way. More Chinese than the Chinese. Wouldn't you agree with me? <i>to Michael</i>	I decide to add contextual comment and more information than the Teller offered.
V	Anyway this Mr Frith...?... was it Mr Frith? <i>to Michael</i> Yes it was Mr Frith he would travel up and down. And then he met and married someone from that place and they had a family and that family had another home. That other home, so far away, so far away, across the sea... and then they did have to travel, on the sea. Many months, to go to this place. Another island, England, a much larger island. England. <i>Moves to square side table</i> And there they lived for a time, and then as time passed, the world began to change, and there were wars and people were separated. And .. but even so.. the family kept in touch, because it was a big family. There were many many people connected to the Friths. Other people like the Broadbridges.	As a playback performer I would never look at the Teller during the enactment. However in this situation as solo actor/conductor, I broke this ritual several times, by referring back to Michael for confirmation of information and affirmation.
V	Like.. all the other Eurasians. Because you see... the Eurasians stuck together. They did. They often intermarried. Because being Eurasian was challenging and sometimes there was no point looking for a husband or a wife amongst anyone else other than a Eurasian. So generations and generations of Eurasians married each other. And the family of Eurasians grew and grew and spread all over the world, and somehow we are all connected. Someone's auntie is someone else's cousin, someone's uncle is someone else's brother.	Michael's first words in the telling of his story was 'for Eurasians it was very difficult' – I expand on this with my own information of our shared Eurasian history.
V	And the Friths 100 years ago to now, still have this lovely connection that weaves the world together. But now of course they don't go by sea - they fly. And its so easy. And not just to Hong Kong now. But also to Dubai, Is it Dubai? <i>to Michael</i> And also to other family. Canada. There is even some family in South Africa. Canada, South Africa...is there anywhere else? Plenty other places. Probably. Australia. My goodness, Australia. Definitely Australia.	
V	So here is Michael, right here in the southeast of Canterbury, I mean the south east of England, Canterbury, maybe even the southeast of Canterbury. And there is that jewel of a home. Original home. Hong Kong. Hello! Back soon!	I realise I made a mistake re location, correct myself and then re-integrate it playfully.
V	For you. <i>Returns to sofa</i> I tried to pick some of the themes up.	I signal to Michael and the audience that the enactment
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	That's excellent.	is over and return to sofa in role as conductor
V	Did you enjoy it?	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	I did, I did	
V	Do you keep your Cantonese up Michael, then	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	When I go back to Hong Kong.	

V	But now its Putonghua as well.	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	Now its Mandarin	
V	Fantastic.	
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	the language of China.	
V	Yeah... We haven't seen each other for a long time. So I am very happy we have had this opportunity. Thank you very much for coming. Any more stories you would like to tell.	As conductor I am finding a good way to conclude this conversation
A <i>Michael Prew</i>	In private, maybe.	and bring Michael back to his seat in the audience
V	OK, so I will come and make a date and we can talk. Thankyou very much my dear <i>V gets up off sofa taking Michael by the hand to his place in the audience</i> We are very lucky to have this... So we could go on like this. Is there anyone else who would like to tell a story. What its been like growing up for them.... I...Just to finish, cos I think we need to finish soon. You must be pretty weary after all these stories and being bombarded by information. New information. I would like to try something, if you willing to try it with me. I would like to invite, arm-twist. I am arm-twisting now. But I am going to armtwist people I know ... very well. So I am going to invite Wing Hong, so come ho ma? Lai a (OK? Come) to come on stage. And Sarah would you like to? So Wing Hong and Sara...and Annie. Is Annie still here? Annie darling... Would you like to have a go? Come on sweetie! Come on! Are you sure its OK? <i>To Annie</i>	After one story, I am looking to invite a second story, but then become aware of timing and energy, both for the audience and in myself. I shift gears to move into some closure with Playback Theatre, in a more formal way, inviting colleagues in the audience to join me on stage for some 'short forms'. I have told them that I might do this. I know Annie is least experienced, and shy, but open to having a go. So when she is successfully persuaded to join the team, I
A <i>Annie</i>	Yeah	am also checking with her that she feels genuinely OK about doing this.
V	oh come come come come come. So we'll start over here <i>indicating to actors to stand USC in front of screen and then to audience...</i> So this is what we are going to do. We are just going to hear from you. Some words about what you are left with. How are you feeling? After having spent an afternoon with us here. Hearing these stories. How are you? Just a few words about how you are and some thoughts that you are left with. And my team here are just going to mirror them back to you. In a form of theatre which I have been working with in the past called playback theatre. And that means you get a chance to see playback theatre. And you get a chance to have it being used as a vehicle for our dialogue. Up for it? <i>Audience murmurs assent.</i> So um, what are you left with? Who hasn't had a chance to say anything? Finds it difficult to speak up but might like to be supported in saying just a couple of words. Literally can be a couple of words.	Contrary to normal Playback practice, this team have never worked together before. I trust their creativity, my teaching, and the structure of the forms, for this experiment to work in a good enough way to serve the audience.  Although I have imagined the whole second half within the frame of Playback Theatre, this is the first time I openly refer to it, and invite audience engagement with this process.
A <i>Jenna</i>	<b>I am quite surprised. My family come from India. I mean they came, went to Africa and then me and my brother were born here. So for me its all part of Asia, but I have never really thought about Eurasians in terms of Chinese and Japanese and then coming to England. So um yes surprised</b>	
V	So it's a surprise for you, because this sense of mixed culturalness is not unusual for you because its part of your family. But this whole idea of the Chinese and Japanese connection is a surprise, a surprising new element.	I repeat the work 'surprise'; which Jenna has used several times. Having this mirrored enables her to reconsider and reframe her experience
A <i>Jenna</i>	Its not so surprising, its just something I never really considered.	
V	never considered and your name?	
A <i>Jenna</i>	Jenna	
V	Jenna. So for Jenna, a surprise. Something has expanded her thought of what Eurasian and mixed race and culture might be. A fluid sculpture. Lets watch. <i>Fluid Sculpture by Wing Hong, Sarah and Annie</i>	I use her original word but offer another connotation.
V	Jenna did it capture a little bit the way you feel?	Checking in with Jenna, and signalling to the audience, that the actors are attempting to capture some verisimilitude to her experience.
A <i>Jenna</i>	Yeah the way you came from that direction and looked into this direction.	

V	Yeah. Thanks. <i>to Jenna</i> . Thankyou folks, some more! <i>to actors</i> . You are welcome to applaud if you feel.... <i>To audience</i> <i>Applause</i> Its quite risky, isn't it? Quite risky! they don't know what they are going to get. So another one, someone else.	Acknowledging Jenna, the actors and signalling to the audience what is the ending point of this sort of short enactment, so that they can feel free to applaud.
A Cynthia	<b>I feel like although I am Chinese person, I always feel like I am a Eurasian.</b>	
V	Haih meh? (Oh really?)	
A Cynthia	Cos I have been here for so long. And my home is still in Hong Kong but part of me I feel like London is more home for me. And I feel maybe there is English blood inside me as well.	
V	Yes the culture is so deep now it actually has gone into the veins. The cells.	
A Cynthia	Actually my mum once told me that her mum, like my grandma's mum ?, had some Portuguese or Spanish blood inside her.	
V	oooh...	
A Cynthia	So I have might have inherited from there as well, I am not sure, I wanted to find out, but its almost impossible. VN: Yeah, because its back there. But it kind of pleases you to know that there is a European connection. Ha, Cynthia. So for Cynthia. Hmmm her Englishness grows in her Chineseness. Lets watch.	
	<i>Fluid Sculpture</i> <i>Applause</i>	
V	Haih gum ah hoh? (like that right?) <i>to Cynthia, and then to the audience...</i> A couple more and then we will call it a day. Who else? Who else? It can be anything. It doesn't have to be... something that you are left with, that you would quite like to say before you go...	
A Rufus	I want to understand the meaning of that joke which...	
V	The loong? Loong, the loong.. I will tell you in a minute. But you are sitting with this puzzle that you want to understand. That's connected with the language, yeah? Ok and... Remind me of your name?	I am staying with the frame of playback theatre by reflecting back his feeling before satisfying his curiosity.
A Rufus	Rufus	
V	Rufus wants to know about this joke. Lets watch.	
	<i>Fluid Sculpture</i> <i>Applause</i>	
V	Because it's a homophone. <b>Loong</b> is the word for Dragon which is a homophone for <b>Loong</b> which means deaf. <b>Loong haih loong. The dragon is deaf.</b> Ok one more last one. Someone who'd just like to say... can be anything...	Now I explain the joke.
A Renie	Really I have I learned that if I was to meet you on the street.	
V	Yes	
A Renie	I would class you, I would say you were oh she is English or she is European <b>so its really made me think about learning to know deeper about people, rather than just taking people at face value.</b>	
V	Yes! Oh.. Great! And your name?	
A Renie	Renie.	
V	For Renie its opened another way of looking. For Renie. Lets watch.	
	<i>Fluid Sculpture</i> <i>Applause</i>	
V	<b>Dor jeh sai (Thank you so much)</b> Thank you so much. Do you want to say anything? How was it for you? <i>to the guest actors</i> <i>To audience</i> how was it, what do you think? <i>Applause</i> Ohhh my darlings. <b>This is my family, you see. This is home for me. This is home.</b> That is enough for now. Lets all take a bow. So ... bye bye.. see you again...	As this was an unusual situation for this playback team, I felt I needed to acknowledge them formally and separately from me. And then some final comments which echo the text at the conclusion of the first half.
	<i>I say goodbye to people, strangers and friends, and begin to tidy up. I take time to thank my adhoc playback team and offer a chance for them to say something to me and to each other once their feelings become coherent again. They are satisfied with their experience. We all go home.</i>	I have one more show the next day. And am wondering already how different the second half might be, with different audience & different responses.

## Appendix 14: My Notes on the Second Half of Both Performances at Kent

**(in bold: the audience connecting to themes from first half)**

*In Italics: considerations from perspective of Playback Theatre)*

### **First Show:**

As I stand behind the screen, as soon as I begin to speak the very first words – the Prayer to my Ancestors in Cantonese – I am tearful. Recalling Shu Wing’s exhortation to me to keep my own feelings well under control, I do so as I emerge onto the playing area in front of the screen and continue, uncomfortably aware of snot dribbling from my nose! I imagined that the audience might be disturbed by my emotionality. I feel a sense of uncertainty amongst them and wonder if this might distance them from me. I normally get a ‘temperature’ of the audience through their response to my humour as I introduce my ancestors to them. Here, I feel it is muted to begin with, but the audience seem to warm up to my banter as the show progresses. I dry my nose with tissue. I am glad I hide them in places on stage and on my person! The rest of the show seems to go well. I am conscious of laughter in different sections of the audience depending on the language I am speaking, and really enjoy that both language communities are responding to the same funny bit but in staggered timing. Warm buzz after first half.

I forget to draw attention to the books and paraphernalia on the other side of the room. Serving tea, and chatting, takes all my focus. Then I invite audience to sit back down in their chairs for next half of show. I sit on sofa with dragon draped behind, and say to audience, that there might be more performing to come, but let’s chat to begin with. *I invite audience to satisfy their curiosity with some questions.*

First question: “How long did it take to make **the dragon?**” I describe at length about the intention to include a dragon at the initial conversation with Louis Yu who commissioned me. *I refer to a colleague, Wing Hong, in the audience, and make a passing joke in Cantonese about the ‘Lung’ and I invite him to say something about his feelings about the dragon.*

Wing Hong says: **“I want to find my own dragon for myself...Why it’s so sensitive to us.. so many meanings...where is our dragon... because of Hong Kong and British history - quite complicated...”**

Second Question: **A question concerning my Japanese Syrian grandfather and exploring this background.**

V: I explain that my connection to Japan and someone Arabic, is only genetic, and knowledge about my grandfather, particularly, is fragmentary. My primary cultural influences are Chinese and British. My fantasy is that grandfather is French-Syrian and I had asked a psychic about origin of father’s father, who said likely to be Damascus. I talk about feeling some Japanese-ness running through my veins when I visited Japan for the first time in 2003.

Third Question: **About tai chi influencing my subsequent practice.**

V: I tell story about when I was 18 running up stairs out of breath, looked to tai chi to get fit. At the time (mid 1970s) it was unusual for anyone under 20 to learn tai chi. And tell that as soon as left HK to come to England I felt I couldn’t find a teacher that I could trust. I only picked it up again 5 years ago in London, but the body knowledge was easily re-kindled.

Fourth Question: Michael (*I introduce him to the audience as my cousin’s cousin*) asks me **“HK or England, where is home?”**

V: London is so much more familiar now, HK so changed. (*I invite conversation about HK with Michael who feels that through frequent travelling, he has been able to keep up with changes in Hong Kong, and does not, as I do, feel discomforted by them.*)

I say that when we do playback theatre that’s home for me.

I ask Michael: “What about you? All these years...”

Michael: “So difficult to say...”

*I invite him onto the stage. Initially hesitant, I explain that the audience would be able to see him and hear him more clearly if does so. When settles upstage of me on the sofa, I explain our family relationship again. My mother's brother's wife is his mother's sister. Then I invite him to say about what home means to him.*

*He begins his story "Our grandmothers knew each other 100 years ago... world changes... and people move..."*

*He describes the Peak in Hong Kong, and English grandfather, Mr Frith, English. Auntie Frith, his wife, was Eurasian. Speaks of 1936 when his mother, Iris, went to HK to marry. Later generations have stayed in HK, though he himself is now retired in Canterbury. We have more conversation about language. Studied at DGS, which is the Girls school that my mother went to (but I believe it had a junior section for Girls and Boys for a period of time) and he says that on Christmas eve, 1941, HK was overrun by Japanese and he was interned with his mother to the end of the war...*

*The Story he has told is full of detail. I could interview him for another half an hour about his experiences in Hong Kong and so forth. I have a lot more personal information about him from our family connection that I could mine for a longer conversation, which is very unusual in a playback situation.*

*In a normal Playback performance I would not have engaged him in so much conversation, and would have invited an enactment from my playback team on the stage much earlier. I will have trusted my team to be listening very deeply to key moments and themes in the story. In this case, I have no team, and I have to trust the inner actor in me to have remembered key images and moments. I am also aware that Michael is naturally reticent, and not at all emotionally expressive.*

*I am aware of the present context I am in... a public performance, albeit, with an audience warmed up to friendly dialogue and exchange. I am checking the audience and where their attention is. I include them visually in my questioning of Michael. I make sure my spectrum of attention INCLUDES the audience. Although I would hope they are interested and curious in the story that Michael is offering from his own experience, I am also aware that soon I must move into some sort of enactment.*

*I draw Michael's talk to a close, and explain to him and to the audience that I am about to 'do' something on stage.*

*To leave conductor's role, vacate my position beside the Teller is very hard for me to do. I say that the dragon will be the substitute companion for him in the Teller's Chair/sofa, and move the dragon's head so that Michael can be holding him while I am on stage.*

*I go on stage... I begin with a storyteller's invocation...*

*A long time ago...ships would come a long way away... **I introduce Victoria Peak,** arduous climb up... living above everyone else... **indicate that this was how the Europeans separated themselves, rising above the locals below.** I mention Sir Robert Ho Tung as first Eurasian to live there, more Chinese than Chinese. Talk about Mr Frith... and marrying and making a family, I introduce **that other home so far away.. another island. England..** As time passed, the world began to change... **Wars, separation.** Family big, **many connections,** Friths, Broadbridges, and all the Eurasians. Because they stuck together. **I suggest that being Eurasian was challenging.** Generations married each other.. families grew and spread all over the world. The Friths still have this **connection that weaves the world together...** not by sea, they fly, and not just to HK, but Dubai, Canada, South Africa.. Australia... So here is Michael in the Southeast of **England, Canterbury, and there is that jewel of a home, the original home. Hello!! For you!***

*I conclude the enactment in a freeze, then relaxing, look to Michael in acknowledgement. I indicate to him and the audience that I have finished. And return to my place on the*

*sofa. Moving back into conductor role, I invite a closure with Michael. If I had sat next to him through the enactment, I would have sensed - with him beside me as I check his response to my team's work on stage – how he has received the details (metaphor, images, poetry) of the performance, whether there is some recognition and some satisfaction. But I was not sitting beside him, there was no team, just myself on stage. I recall that even on stage, I sometimes threw a reference directly to him, which as a playback actor I would never normally do.*

*However, I do feel that there was some satisfaction, some recognition of the enactment to his story. I explain to him that that was what I was attempting to do, “I tried to pick up some of the themes”, and then instead of inviting an explicit judgement on the enactment, I banter about whether he kept his Cantonese up and ventured if there might be anymore stories he might like to tell... He replies with humour that he does but would tell them “in private”, which suggests to me that this is a good point of closure for him and myself in this public conversation. I thank him for coming on stage, and see him back to his seat.*

*I explain to the audience that we could go on like this and ask “is there anyone else that might like to tell a story?” Of course I know that there are many stories that could be told in that context. What is a question that would enable someone to volunteer? I realise that I have just asked a closed question. A yes or no answer is demanded, rather than an open question like “who is the next person to tell a story?” ...which could be preceded by a statement like, “well that was a story that fills out and puts into a larger perspective the Eurasian experience that I told in the first half, and there is space for other stories, maybe very different, about home, identity, belonging...”*

*I realise that my energy level is dropping, and that I really don't feel up to engaging someone else to tell a story from the sofa, and that I need some energetic support. I go into plan B which is to invite playbackers I know in the audience to come up and support me on stage. I tell the audience that I would like to try something new. I had mentioned that I might do this beforehand to my colleagues, but had not rehearsed in advance. Wing Hong, Sara & Annie came on stage to stand ready to respond with some fluid sculptures for the audience.*

*I ask, “How are you feeling? Just a few words about how you are? And my team here will just mirror them back to you.”*

*I also offer “What are you left with?” as the audience thinks about a potential answer. Jenna says something about having **expanded her notion of inter-racial connections, the Chinese/Japanese element surprised her.** The team performs. The audience recognises the connection between the enactment and Jenna's statement, so does Jenna. I tell the audience that they are welcome to applaud... I say “its quite risky isn't it?...they don't know what they are going to get!”*

*Cynthia says although she is **a Chinese person, she always feels like a Eurasian, having lived in England for several years.** She adds that her mum suggested that there might be some Portuguese blood in her... I conclude our little dialogue and launch it over to the actors with ‘for Cynthia: her Englishness grows in her Chineseness – lets watch’*

*I say “A couple more...” signalling that we are ending soon.*

*Rufus says he is still **curious about the joke** I had made earlier with Wing Hong in **Cantonese about ‘Lung’.** Rather than satisfy his curiosity straight away, I acknowledge that he has been sitting with his curiosity unsatisfied and launch to the actors “Rufus wants to know about that joke about ‘Lung’”*

*After the fluid sculpture which enacts this curiosity, I do **satisfy his curiosity...that ‘lung’ is a homophone for ‘deafness’, so the joke is that the lung is lung... the dragon is deaf.***

*I invite the “last one”*

Renee says “**so its really made me think about looking more deeply at people rather than at face value**”

I launch, “For Renee its opened a new way for her to look at people...lets watch” *I note the nice metaphor offered by Sara in digging more deeply*

*These Fluid Sculptures, simple as they were, enabled some closing statements from the audience who were warmed up to sharing something. My little team, who had never worked with each other before, were able to respond spontaneously, creatively, and appropriately. I was satisfied. Just before we all take a bow to the audience I declare: ‘This is home!’*

### **Second Show:**

I choose a different way of speaking the prayer to my ancestors. My inner attention is only to them when I speak. I am not saying it in such a way that the audience is directly included. Although they are witnessing me in a very private moment of communion with the ancestors, I create a fourth wall, because acknowledging their witness overwhelms me emotionally, as it did yesterday. When I emerge through the screen to look at the audience, the fourth wall disappears; I am calm and open to them, rather than struggling with emotion. The rest of the show goes well.

The second half is interrupted by a fire alarm. The audience want to continue, and we find a good solution on a grassy patch under trees just outside. (no video documentation: I cant remember much of the content of our conversation, and *I do not attempt to do solo playback here. Karen and Neil volunteer to stand up with me as conductor/actor, to do some fluid sculptures for a few people*)

I recall Esther, from Hong Kong, talked about how she hopes, as a parent, that she has instilled sufficient understanding of Chinese values and identity into her teenage children, which, even if not visible now in their behaviour, will stand them in good stead as they grow older. A final year drama student told how painful it was, in her first year at university, to have her offer of friendship to be rejected by other African and Afro-Caribbean students, when she was so looking forward and expecting a welcome acceptance by them of her half-black ancestry.

Warm feelings after this show. The response to the ‘emergency’ speeded up our connecting to each other. Some deep sharing from audience. Helpful feedback to me about my anxiety of being ‘self-indulgent’. It is theatre. Its OK to be seen and heard. Phew! I keep needing the reassurance. Gosh that wound is deep.

## **Appendix 15: Audience Feedback on Performances of FACE at Kent in September 2006**

In this context many in the audience were known to me, and had come by invitation. Here are some comments from them emailed to me, some immediately afterwards and some much later. In each case I note my relationship to the contributor.

**Ursula:** Ursula is a student at Kent University. I did not know her before she came to see the show.

### **FACE**

**Date:** 24/09/2006 14:43:17 GMT Standard Time

**From:** um21@kent.ac.uk

**To:** vneeda@aol.com

Dear Veronica,

I attended your performance of FACE on Friday afternoon and wanted to tell you it is helping me through a difficult part in my life. I've only just turned 18 and have been taken out of the comfort zone of my home town St Neots, near Cambridge. I was (and still am) very scared, but your piece helped me to remember to be myself. It has also made me curious about the life of my parents and their parents too.

Thank you for helping me to remember my roots and be myself!

Kind Regards,

Ursula McCabe

**Karen:** Karen is an English teacher at a school in Kent, and studied Playback Theatre with me at a Kent Creative Partnerships training programme over a period of 9 months in 2004/5. She was in the Friday afternoon performance and was willing to come on stage and do some Playback Theatre short forms)

**Subject:** **Your wonderful performance**

**Date:** 27/09/2006 22:09:15 GMT Standard Time

**From:** arcus444@hotmail.com

**To:** vneeda@aol.com

Hi Veronica, Just a quick note to say thank you for an afternoon I will never forget; you spoke to my soul, reaching me on a rarely touched level. I was mesmerised by the simple humanity present in your delivery - the love, yearning and down-to-earth humour made a perfect mixture for the audience. My 17 year old daughter, Rebecca, wants to send you a special message as she was moved by certain aspects of the performance, and wanted to speak to you afterwards, but was too shy, i think.

I am proud to know you and wish you all the best with your studies - sorry my playback effort wasn't brilliant, but unlike you, I haven't practised properly for a while!

I would like my head of Drama to be involved with Playback so please let me know if there are any more courses in the future.

Speak

soon,

**Karen**

**Roger:** Roger Green and his wife Susan from Hong Kong, and their two Eurasian children Michael and Emily found me at the Natural History Museum in February 2006, and are my primary connection to the Chinese community in Canterbury, through the Chinese Supplementary School there. He lived in Hong Kong for 18

years before returning to make a home in England with Susan. They came to the Saturday performance. (His replies to my email questions are in **blue**)

**Subject: RE: FEEDBACK!!**  
**Date:** 24/10/2006 19:44:57 GMT Standard Time  
**From:** info@patientprotect.org  
**To:** Vneeda@aol.com

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Vneeda@aol.com [mailto:Vneeda@aol.com]  
**Sent:** 14 October 2006 05:56  
**To:** info@patientprotect.org; jennyzo@tiscali.co.uk  
**Subject:** FEEDBACK!!

Hello friends in Kent

**Hi from Roger. I'll try to get the others to contribute, but first a few quick comments from me.**

Just sending you greetings and wondering if you would be willing to give me some written feedback on the show I performed last month.. FACE. I cant remember exactly who of you managed to make it... there was a little gang of you on the Saturday... I was so grateful that some of you made it.... i know Friday Saturday is a busy working time for most of you. Can you pass this email on to any of the others that you know were there. Also its fine if any of you want to answer these questions in Chinese. I can get it translated for me. Before the show fades too much in your memory....I am curious to know:

What you observed on stage, or when we were outside after tea, (which is also part of the show)?

**What about offstage? I'm pretty sure most of your audience had very different experiences of Hong Kong. Do you take that into account when considering their feelings of your performance? For me, I lived in HK between 1980 and 1998. I knew nothing of HK before arrival and really saw many things through the eyes of a child (even though I was 25) so a lot of what you said felt very personal.**

What did you notice and what did you feel about the experience? Any specific moments? and in general?

**It made me wonder about my own parents/grandparents. Did they have an interesting history? I'll never know. I loved the route to/from school. I even owned a blue beetle for a bit with an A-something numberplate. But usually I was hurtling around those same streets in a blue mini – BX6174. It's funny, but I can only remember the number if I say it to myself in Cantonese. I kept wondering what it was like for those in the audience who either didn't know HK or had forgotten, especially those fluent in Cantonese. I felt a special thrill when you mentioned things, sights, sounds, smells - maybe because I knew exactly what you meant – not perhaps your personal feelings ( I guess they are always unique) but I know we both really know what Causeway Bay typhoon shelter smells like in summer (and fermented bean curd, Durian, we could probably fill a day just remembering smells that we don't get in UK!)**

How was it to hear the two languages ... ? Any specific moments? and in general?

**Made me feel at home – Friends, staff and students at HKU were all mixed up. I found the difference between your English and Cantonese very noticeable, even distracting. Your English was very ... English, in the sense of formal, correct, good for reading the news on the telly. It felt like you used Cantonese more to fill in the gaps, where English was perhaps inadequate to really convey everything. English was for the audience but Cantonese felt**

**more like it was for insiders. Made me wonder where you *really* feel you belong.**

What was interesting? New? Different?

**Everything**

What does the dragon mean to you?

**It reminds me of a very interesting lady from the natural history museum with bits from all over the place.**

Any thing else?

**I kept thinking how strange it was that you left HK for some very interesting experiences in UK and I did exactly the opposite.**

You could ask the children who came too, for their thoughts and observations. I would love to include their comments in my thesis! But all comments need to be recorded, you see. So best if these comments are written down, even an email is fine! You are welcome to write lots!!! or even just a couple of words.....

**Keep in touch!**

Very grateful.....warm wishes

Veronica

**Esther:** Esther Liu came to the Saturday performance. She was visiting London from Hong Kong where I know her as a friend. It was great good luck for me that she was willing to add this performance to her programme of activities during her stay in London. She has two children, in their late teens and twenties, and during the second half of the performance in the grassy area outside the theatre, she told of how she hopes to have instilled enough Chinese-ness in their upbringing in terms of essential values in the face of modern Hong Kong and an international school education – we played this back as a fluid sculpture. The following feedback came as an attachment to an email to me several weeks later. She saw me facilitate a playback performance several years ago in Hong Kong – this is what she means by second time. It was not FACE that she saw)

“FACE

This is my second time for this performance, the first one being several years ago at Hong Kong Fringe Club with my two children. It always takes me a while to understand and take in new thing. At first, it is a first contact with what is ‘playback’ theatre. Then, the art form itself either as self therapy or as a mean to communicate impresses me, and makes me want to learn the art form itself. The message, though, I remember only vaguely, and does not stay in my mind.

This time, I was deeply impressed by your performance at Canterbury – your theatrical skills, the organization of your story, the meaning of the dragon being pull together (as symbolic of your ability to find meaning of your existence and an unique place under the sun). Your message comes over as very vivid and strong. The handout, with poems in both languages, adds and enhances the impact of the message. You speak with gratitude and understanding towards your parents and ancestors. This manifests your state of mind – you must have let go a lot of baggage and forgiveness to come to this. (I have seen some carrying ancestral baggages with a lot of hatred.) As a result, the feelings I have throughout the performance are peace, calm, empathy and forgiveness. These feelings and atmosphere of course come from you and your message.

We all have a meaning of existence. Apart from self-actualization, if we could do something for the society(ies) or the global village where we live, then it is a gain already. With your unique self, you play a part in raising the awareness of the

situation of Eurasian people, their dilemma and the helplessness of ‘within the body of a mouse, one has the heart of a bird’. So, it is not self centre that you talked about your story. In fact, your daring to share is amicable. In talking about self, many cannot hold back tears. Though you also have your emotional moments, you control your feelings well. For this, it must take you long time to practice in order to distance yourself from your story. I especially like the dragon being pulled together instead of tearing apart. Audience does not like seeing a real personal story has an unhappy ending. We all wish you well, and seeing that you have confidence and certainty about yourself makes us feel good as well.

I do not know much about theatre. I only know a little about performance arts through toastmasters training. Looking from this angle, your voice, the pace of your story and organization of your scenes are all very well done.

For suggestion to consider, I tried hard to think of something. (And, it is the reason why I take so long to write this email.) I am not sure whether it will work or not. Try to use a Chinese song as a soft background music to remind the audience or to emphasis the inside Chinese-you throughout your play. At certain stage of your life where the western influence is strong, the music goes soft or even inaudible. The music should be just soft music – they are there as background and can in no way drown your voice or overshadow (song being too popular) your message and your story. The music could be melancholy at your time of confusion, and happy and upbeat with the pulling together of your dragon.

Lastly, I would like to say thank you for sharing your personal story with us. It takes courage to expose your inner self. Your story makes audience think. Also, personally, I think ‘playback theatre’ should be spread to the wider audience. The skills and the performance are both a self-therapy and if done well, could make audience think.”

## **Appendix 16: Bennett & Simons on Two-Person Playback Theatre**

Re: From Amy Bennett & Justin Simons on Two-person PT

From: justin simons <justin59@earthlink.net

To: Vneeda@aol.com

Date: Sun, 6 Jan 2008 7:56 pm

Two person playback has not been written up in Interplay. Amy wrote her Leadership paper on it but the paper is not on the website. I have also done one person playback in workshops with success so long as expectations are clear; and reasonable that at least one person is creating the container and keeping the ritual. We did 2 person playback at annual meetings of a spirituality network, a church appreciate day, workshops, conferences, just about anywhere there is a small group and you don't have all your actors. Mostly we did it for healthcare professionals.

### **Advantages are:**

- 1) It's an opportunity for close audience engagement
- 2) It solves the problem of not having enough trained company members to do a performance/workshop. Another advantage to having the 2 person PT performed, is that the audience has a chance to make deeper connections to one another as they play roles in others' stories - even from their seats or with cloth and very few words or hand instruments. We used the teller's actor also as a bit of a stage director - often encouraging audience/actors with "I'll give you a cue as to when to come in."

### **Disadvantages are**

- 1) Only works for small groups of audience
- 2) While you can cast the teller's actor, it's difficult to cast another important role. We used the conductor - having him switch from conducting the story to acting the role of the important other or leading a group of audience (even from their seats) in that role (i.e. disgruntled employees). In that case the conductor asks the teller to choose someone to sit beside them to witness the playing back of the story then excuses that witness at the end of the story and resumes his seat and role as conductor.

Even though we almost always did this style in a workshop setting, it still contained a performance element. However at the same time, this is not expected to replace a regular playback performance by a trained company, with full complement of actors, musician, and conductor.