Investing in Play:

Expectations, Dependencies and Power in Australian Practices of Community Cultural Development

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Performance Studies
University of Sydney, 2008
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Abstract

This thesis is an enquiry into the social and political role, in Australia, of practices that have attracted such labels as ‘community arts’, ‘cultural animation’, ‘cultural action’, or ‘community cultural development’ (CCD). It is often argued that such practices offer an effective means to bring about social and political change for people and communities who participate in them. Looking specifically at theatre-based approaches to CCD in Australia, this thesis examines an alternative hypothesis, namely that such projects and programs can contribute to the continued marginalisation of those who take part in them.

Using a combination of Pierre Bourdieu’s theoretical approach to field analysis, Don Handelman’s analytical framework of special events and Baz Kershaw’s theory of potential efficacy, I carry out an ethnographic and performance-based analysis of a particular project called The Longest Night (TLN), which was devised in collaboration with young people from The Parks, a cluster of suburbs north west of Adelaide, South Australia, and in collaboration between Urban Theatre Projects, a small Sydney-based theatre company with a reputation for doing socially and politically challenging work, young people living in The Parks and local partner organisations, for the 2002 Adelaide Festival.

I find that in some instances participation in CCD projects and programs is an enabling factor, creating change opportunities in cultural, economic and/or political spheres in the lives of those who take part, whilst at other times it is a constraining factor. Participation in CCD projects and programs creates possibilities because the practices are potentially subversive and foster elements of learning and change in some participants. It also creates limitations because CCD practitioners operate within a subfield of social and cultural practices where the mechanisms and structures in place, indirectly, tend to help reproduce legitimised social and cultural values and norms.
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### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agitprop</td>
<td>A contraction of the terms ‘agitation’ and ‘propaganda’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWL</td>
<td>Art and Working Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-BOying</td>
<td>A form of Hip Hop dancing characterised by short sequences of spinning and balancing floor movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat boxing</td>
<td>Sounds made with the mouth imitating the music made by DJs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bong</td>
<td>Home-made device for smoking cannabis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAB</td>
<td>Community Arts Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>Community Arts Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CADF</td>
<td>Community Arts and Development Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>Community Arts Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Community Arts Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCD</td>
<td>Community Cultural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCDB</td>
<td>Community Cultural Development Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCDU</td>
<td>Community Cultural Development Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDT</td>
<td>Death Defying Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJ</td>
<td>Disc jockey in Hip Hop culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAYS</td>
<td>South Australia Department of Family Assistance and Youth Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>Visual artform associated with Hip Hop culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip Hop</td>
<td>African-American style of music and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSYHS</td>
<td>High Street Youth Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manga</td>
<td>Contemporary Japanese fiction style cartoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Master of Ceremony, rappers/ringmasters in Hip Hop culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACA</td>
<td>National Arts and Culture Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCAC</td>
<td>National Community Arts Co-operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunga</td>
<td>Aboriginal people of the south-western parts of Australia, including parts of South Australia and Western Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Popping  A form of dance from Hip Hop culture, mostly upright, jerking dance movements
R’n’B  Rhythm and Blues, a style of dancing typically seen performed by urban young African American women in contemporary Soul or Hip Hop music clips
Rapping  A form of singing which belongs to Hip Hop culture, characterised by a spoken word delivery.
SIDS  Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
TAFE  Technical And Further Education
TLN  The Longest Night project
TLN  The Longest Night performance event, comprising the *Dance Off*, the *Tour* and *The Longest Night* play
UTP  Urban Theatre Projects
WYD  Western Youth Directions
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Acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of a fantastic journey that started in February 2000 with a meeting with staff and affiliates of the now defunct Centre for Popular Education (the Centre), University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). That meeting is significant because it marks the starting point of my work as evaluator, lecturer, workshop facilitator, conference and forum organiser and editor of the Bulletin of Good Practice for CCD practices. Further, this period is significant because it marks the development of an important work relationship with Dr Rick Flowers, the former Director of the Centre.

I wish to acknowledge here my gratitude towards Dr Flowers for opening that door of possibilities for me. So thank you for taking a chance with me, but also thank you for your vision, friendship and informal approach to academia that have been central in guiding me to where I am today and making the six years of work at the Centre some of my most professionally rewarding and fulfilling years. In addition, I wish to acknowledge my relationship with Alicia Talbot, Artistic Director of Urban Theatre Projects, inspired artist and friend. Thank you for your time, patience and generosity in sharing ideas about CCD practices. Third, I wish to thank Dr Paul Dwyer, my supervisor. Thank you for providing me with the support, guidance and coaching necessary to complete this thesis and to develop the evaluator into a more rounded researcher. I am also grateful for editing comments, references and discussions with Dr Lowell Lewis, my associate supervisor, Dr Paul Moore, my ‘soundboard’ on Pierre Bourdieu’s theories, and John Mahony, my thesis’s proof-reader.

This period has also been significant on a more personal level. During that period I became a mother to Louis. This event was significant because it taught me to make the most of short stretches of time. As well during that time, I experienced the death of a close member of my family, which helped me remember to focus on what I think is important in life.

This thesis wouldn’t have been possible without the insights of The Longest Night project participants, Urban Theatre Projects staff, artistic and production team, and
The Parks Community Centre services workers. Thank you for your readiness to be observed and willingness to answer my, at times, numerous questions.

At home, this thesis wouldn’t have been possible without the love, support and critical eye of my partner, Simon Peart. Thank you for being a hands-on father and my most frank critic. Thanks too to my mother for being a great mamie (grandmother) and to both my mother and father for nurturing in me a confidence and belief that I can do anything I set my mind to.
Declaration

Approval to carry out this research was sought in 2001 and obtained in 2002, from the University of Technology, Sydney’s (UTS) Human Research Ethics Committee, prior to enrolling at the University of Sydney to undertake my PhD studies in 2002.

I certify that the work in this thesis is my original work and that no part of this research has been used for the award of any other degree.

Signed:

Date: 02 September 2008
Part 1 – Establishing this enquiry
CHAPTER 1 – Leading statements

1.1 Problem and aim

The general focus of this thesis is on practices that have attracted such labels as ‘community arts’, ‘cultural animation’, ‘cultural action’, or ‘community cultural development’ (CCD) (the term most prevalent in Australia in recent decades). CCD practices are varied, but can, broadly speaking, be described as collaborative aesthetic practices. To cite but a few examples, they might involve a group of theatre practitioners working with unemployed men on devising and performing a theatrical performance; a visual artist working with young male detainees on creating a mural inside their detention centre; or a writer working on a poetry anthology with women experiencing domestic violence. The particular focus of this thesis is on the ways in which participation in CCD projects can enable or constrain cultural, social and/or political development for those who take part in them.

Most CCD practitioners and theorists agree that CCD programs and projects can help bring about social and political change for participants. There may be debate about defining and measuring degrees of socio-political efficacy, yet the fundamental assumption that CCD practices must be efficacious, at least to some extent, is rarely called into question. If I place such questions at the centre of this thesis, it is in part because they have proved difficult to raise directly in professional gatherings where CCD practitioners might be expected to want to debate the issue.

A case in point: It’s August 2006 and I am in Edinburgh, attending the 1st International Conference on the Arts in Society. Artists, academics, policy-makers and arts administrators are meeting to discuss, under the theme of ‘Arts of Engagement’, “how to link interdisciplinary forms of creative expression with social action and meanings” (Common Ground, 2006b, p. 2). One session in particular stands out for me. It is a ‘Talking Circle’ where we have met to discuss the relevance of some of the key ideas presented at the conference to those of us who create, promote and study ‘Art in Communities’.
There are fifteen of us. In a previous session, participants ‘brainstormed’ ideas in response to the highlights and lowlights of their work. These ideas have now been synthesised into a list of recommendations or actions that they hope to see implemented, by whom I am not sure, and I don’t think the rest of the group knows either. The list (see Appendix 1), which is read out loud to us by the appointed note-taker, is organised under three headings that group members agree are core elements of their work: inclusivity, healing and change. Under these headings, the group members have spelt out what they consider important, both for themselves and for the people with whom they work (“The arts can contribute to wellness and to the well-being of people. This occurs through involvement in a creative process”). They have also spelt out the hoped-for responses of policy-makers (“the ability of the arts to initiate transformation and be an important agent for change — good or bad — must be recognized”). Further, they have spelt out some of the positive and negative aspects of their work, including a note of “warning that one need not always go with change and indeed [that] the ability and strength of the arts can be mis-used” (various authors in Common Ground, 2006a).

This somewhat amorphous list of recommendations or actions highlights some of the complex issues that CCD practitioners often grapple with. The list highlights, for instance, the nature of the arts and the importance of processes of engagement and participation as “part of coping with and actively constructing one’s environment”. It also highlights some of the changes for participants in this kind of work (“The arts are able to comment in abstract, ironic and pertinent ways and add to the free-flow of thought”) and the role of practitioners in this (“This powerful voice is sometimes feared, as artists are the initiators of change”) (various authors in Common Ground, 2006a). It highlights the importance practitioners place on the efficacy of their practices in achieving social change as well as their implied ‘disinterest’ or altruism in choosing to do this work. This list of recommendations or actions is also familiar as it offers a very similar discourse to that of practitioners in Australia.

At the end of the list the note-taker pauses and waits for comments. He hasn’t got long to wait, as most of the people present are willing to participate in the conversation (after all participation is a core aspect of their work) and are fairly
articulate. The note-taker is busy writing down comments: the need to replace ‘should’ with ‘may’; the need to emphasise the outreach aspect and quality of the work; the need to provide more resources and support to practitioners; etc. I sit on the fence, choosing to listen rather than speak. As I have heard at other conferences, what I am hearing here again is the importance of CCD practices in fostering transformation or change. I hear about the need to develop ‘community’ and ‘culture’. I hear about the need to empower communities, to provide access to ‘culture’. I hear people making claims about CCD practices, especially about their efficacy in bringing about social and political change for community participants. These conversations are important, of course, but they also side-step questions about the particular kinds of interest and investments that CCD practitioners, other professionals and organisations with whom they affiliate, as well as community participants, all have in these practices. Furthermore, they avoid questioning the role and place of the key concepts of ‘community’, ‘culture’ and ‘development’ that underpin this kind of work.

As this short session is nearing its end, I finally decide to talk about what I am not hearing, about the need to debate the three central concepts embedded in the label CCD, about the need to define more clearly our own and others’ vested interests in these practices. Some take my comments kindly. I take their nods as approval. Others, however, take my comments as out of place; those of an outsider, an intruder. I do, after all, present myself, whenever working in the area, as a peripheral ‘player’. Unfortunately, having spoken, I have to leave quickly for another appointment. My departure is accompanied by booing and hissing from the group. I take this as a playful rebuke for having opened and closed a conversation in the same sentence, but also as genuine disapproval of a view that, were it expressed too loudly in public, could serve to undermine the work of CCD professionals.

There is an implied sense that only the ‘positive’ aspects of CCD practices should be highlighted, as practitioners need all the support they can muster to keep working in the hostile political and aesthetic environment they operate in. I don’t, however, see my questions as negative. I too believe in the potential of CCD to provide an avenue for the production and consumption of alternative cultural expressions; in its potential to bring about a certain level of social and political awareness and change. I am,
however, sceptical about CCD practitioners’ capacity to foster positive sustainable social and political change at an individual and/or collective level, as their discourses explicitly or implicitly claim, given the social and political context within which they operate. Secondly, I am sceptical about the way many practitioners see themselves as operating first and foremost from an altruistic interest in others, thereby implying a ‘disinterested’ attitude towards any economic benefit or cultural capital that they might accrue for themselves in the process. I am sceptical in part because I see this as ultimately a hindrance to their practices’ efficacy. I, thus, see this questioning as essential in order to foster actually progressive, vigorous and ethical practices that might have a greater potential of achieving some of the practitioners’ intended changes. By voicing my scepticism, I am not belittling the quality or importance of the work of practitioners such as the ones present at this conference, denigrating their discourses or denying the legitimacy of their practices. I am questioning the interests that motivate practitioners to carry out this kind of work. I am questioning the structures within which these practices operate, such as the systems of cultural (re)presentation and values. I am not questioning the practices themselves, but questioning the lack of open debate around prevailing concepts resulting in claims about the efficacy of CCD practices being taken for granted rather than problematised.

In my work as an evaluator of Australian CCD projects and programs I have found little evidence of such efficacious and altruistic practices and changes (Flowers & McEwen, 2002, 2004; McEwen, 2002a, 2002b, 2000; McEwen & Flowers, 2004; McEwen, Trede, & Flowers, 2003). I have found some evidence of change for individual participants and/or spectators attending such projects, programs or their presentations (such as performances or exhibitions of artwork generated by projects or programs). I have not, however, observed positive sustainable collective or structural changes. I have not observed an aggregation of individual changes leading to collective mobilisation or the raising of group consciousness. I have observed no change for the betterment of society, for the ‘good’ of the majority, such as alleviation of poverty or changes in structures or mechanisms of reproduction of culture, which I take to be the main indicators of social and political change.
This all points to a major ethical and moral dilemma that has only rarely been expressed in debates among CCD practitioners and the organisations which promote and sponsor their work. If (as I will certainly be arguing in the first half of this thesis) a wide gap exists between practitioners’ discourses of efficacy and the evidence of actual changes for those who participate in CCD projects and programs, then how is this gap to be explained and what are we to make of the way these discourses of efficacy persist? Furthermore, what are we to make of the fact that government agencies at local, state and federal levels continue to make some funds available under socially progressive schemes or welfare programs for CCD practices regardless of the lack of strong evidence to support practitioners’ claims of socio-political efficacy?

As described above, this line of questioning has not always been welcomed though, for Australian CCD practitioners at least, it is becoming more difficult to avoid. Firstly, these practitioners have recently witnessed the dismantling of the Community Cultural Development Board (CCDB) of the Australia Council (the federal government entity which had long been responsible for funding their work) and are being forced to renegotiate their place within the broader field of cultural production if they are to continue being funded, Secondly, as Deborah Mills, a CCD practitioner and bureaucrat as well as freelance cultural consultant, has recently argued, some CCD practitioners are coming to a view in which “the work itself is seen as contributing to the continued marginalisation of … individuals and communities [who take part in CCD projects]” (Mills, 2006, p. 11). This is a paradox which prompts the central question of my thesis:

*What is the social and political role of community cultural development practices in Australia?*

In this study, I address my core question in three stages: first, by analysing, beyond anecdotal evidence, some of the change effects CCD practices have on participants; second, by examining some of the reasons for the gap between discourses of efficacy and these changes; third, by understanding why practices that don’t appear to achieve their stated goals of social and political efficacy continue to be funded by all levels of
government in Australia. By doing so, I aim to unpack the relationship between ideology, discourses, interests and action, in relation to concepts of ‘community’, ‘culture’ and ‘development’, that occurs around and within CCD practices.

1.2 Scope and tools

My initial involvement in CCD has been as an advocate. My previous work as an evaluator was motivated by a desire to increase the visibility and status of CCD practitioners and their practices as well as a desire to contribute towards a better understanding of CCD practices and their related changes. This is not to say that while in that position of advocate I have never felt the need to be critical about some of the discourses and practices associated with the concept of ‘CCD’. Though these positions of advocate and critic are not necessarily opposing positions, they have produced a delicate situation where I have struggled between wanting to express my opinions without restraints, needing to meet government evaluation criteria and wanting to support practitioners in their work. It has also created a delicate position for me when it comes to making the sort of claims to objectivity or impartiality which are generally expected in a doctoral thesis.

As a Ph.D. candidate, I obviously have a professional interest in gaining a positive reputation and credibility for insightful critical work (whilst negotiating certain time, content, style and financial constraints, including the conditions associated with an Australian government postgraduate scholarship and Australia Council funds). In a sense, this doctoral research project could be seen as a strategic action on my part, trading off a position acquired within CCD in order to get ahead in the field of academia. This hasn’t necessarily been my intention. Nevertheless, this recontextualisation has the potential to affect my analysis of CCD: where, previously, as an evaluator, I might have tended to overemphasise the positive nature of CCD practices and outcomes, now I find there are incentives to foreground the limitations of CCD since these have received less attention in the scholarly literature and this lends a desirable critical ‘edge’ to my thesis.

At the same time, my position as an evaluator gave me the benefit of access to a great number of practitioners with experience and insight into CCD practices and an even
greater number of projects or programs. The arguments made in this thesis owe much to my observations as a privileged (though and/or because peripheral) member of the CCD field and to my relationships with some CCD and affiliated professionals. In particular, there is my personal investment in UTP, as a former board member of the company, a casual research advisor and evaluator on other recent UTP projects (such as Back Home¹ and The Last Highway²), which has meant that I have wished to maintain positive relations with the company and Alicia Talbot, a friend and colleague, rather than alienate them and betray their trust. This balancing act is a challenge and requires acknowledgment of the privileges of my current position, one of relative power and distance from the subject matter and the ‘action on the ground’.

Finally, my orientation towards CCD is consistent with a personal and scholarly interest in investigations of a certain type: looking at the ways in which members of low socio-economic groups can improve their social and economic conditions by bringing about social and political change, be it through their participation in creative activities, educational programs or social movements. In other words, this study is influenced by my ideologies and beliefs pertaining to the potential of the arts to foster change and learning. I believe that there is an alteration of the social realm of participants who take part in CCD projects or programs that can be described in terms of change. Though sceptical, I remain aligned with most of the principles and ideologies connected with CCD practices, because they are in line with my own desires for a better life for all through the reform of existing bureaucratic structures. My ideologies and beliefs are of a Left-leaning tendency. Efficacy is thus for me of a Left-leaning or collective sort, rather than a capitalist or individualistic sort.

¹ Back Home was created in 2005 by UTP and performed as part of the 2006 Sydney Festival, an international arts festival held in Sydney in January each year that is described as “Australia’s largest and most attended annual cultural event … [which] presents the very best international and national performing and visual arts” (Sydney festival, 2006, p. 1). It was devised in Mt Druitt, part of Blacktown Local Government Area, western Sydney, with local Indigenous men aged twenty-seven and over (McEwen, 2007).

² The Last Highway was created in 2007 by UTP and performed as part of the 2008 Sydney Festival. It is set in an isolated service station in Bankstown, western Sydney. It was devised with local street workers and taxi drivers and deals with issues of territory, isolation and risks members of those marginalised communities face every night.
Associating efficacy with Left-leaning ideology and collective action can be problematic, however. These concepts don’t always go together and when they do they can create somewhat didactic, restrictive situations counter to principles of democracy.

In order to address the questions raised in the first section of this chapter, I draw on multiple methods and perspectives in an analysis which operates at two levels. To begin with, I offer a broad review of the commonplace discourses, and tensions within these discourses, in terms of which many CCD practitioners understand their work. The discourse sample under review includes not only formal position papers but also some of the many informal observations and comments made by practitioners in the course of various conferences and forums on CCD that I have been responsible for convening (Centre for Popular Education, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b). These ways of talking about ‘CCD’ are considered not just in relation to the work of major scholars and practitioner-theorists who have helped to shape the field (including other writers who have been involved with evaluating CCD), but also in relation to the social structures (including historical relationships to funding agencies and the like) that help bind all these people together in the first place. The second level on which my analysis operates is via a specific case-study: an in-depth, qualitative investigation of the work carried out by one company, Urban Theatre Projects (UTP), on one particularly high-profile CCD project called The Longest Night (TLN)\(^3\), a community-based theatre production which became a headline act at the Adelaide Festival of the Arts in 2002.

CCD projects and programs will often involve a variety of aesthetic practices within and across a range of artforms, including visual and performing arts, as well as literature. There are, however, a number of reasons why I have selected a specifically theatre-based CCD project as a case-study (aside from my personal background in the performing arts) which are worth briefly outlining here. First, in the disciplines of

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\(^3\) The Longest Night was a community-based theatre project that produced a series of performances: the *Dance Off*, the *Tour* and *The Longest Night*. From here on I refer to The Longest Night project as TLN (non-italicised), the series of performances as the *TLN* event and the performance as *The Longest Night*. 
theatre and performance studies, there is already a well-developed literature (arguably better developed than that which exists for many other artforms) in which theatre is seen by numerous theorists and practitioners (Auslander, 1994; Boal, 1979; Brecht, 1977; Kershaw, 1978; McConachie, 2001; Schechner, 1974) as a powerful tool to help foster some level of social and political change among particular groups of people who might be considered ‘disadvantaged’ or ‘marginal’ (however problematic the connotations of these or similar labels). Second, and more importantly, theatre/performance-based CCD practices have often served as a kind of flagship for the more general development of ‘CCD’ in Australia, as evidenced by the significant number of government-funded projects labelled ‘CCD’ that are theatre-based compared with those that draw on dance, music, visual arts or literature (Mills, 2006, pp. 46–47).

While there is not the space here for an in-depth discussion, it is clear that this major thread of CCD activity owes much to the set of practices that emerged in Australia during the mid-1970s and early 1980s as part of what was then called ‘the community theatre movement’ (Fotheringham, 1992). Community-based theatre practices at this time drew more or less explicitly from a number of different traditions, including the long (if somewhat irregular) history of theatre practitioners aligning themselves with labour movements in the struggle for worker’s rights (Filewod & Watt, 2001, pp. 42–49; Kirby, 1991, pp. 20–21), a (real or imagined) history linked back to the use of agitprop techniques during the Russian Revolution and to the New Theatre Movement developed in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth from the 1930s onwards, based on similar models established by the English Workers’ Theatres and the American New Theatres (Filewod & Watt, 2001, pp. 20–23; Harper, 1984, p. 58),

4 Community theatre refers to a particular set of diverse alternative Australian theatre-making practices that had a common political aim of “telling the stories of those politically marginalised and positioned as Other by ‘the community’ at large” (Burvill, 1998, p. 182).

5 agitprop is a contraction of the terms ‘agitation’ and ‘propaganda’. It refers to a kind of theatre characterised by satirical cartoon-like characters, actors facing and speaking directly to the audience and audience participation (Himelstein cited in Dietz, 1970, p. 52).
both affiliated with their respective country’s Communist party (Harper, 1984, p. 58). Australian community theatre practices were also linked to international cultural, social and political movements of the 1960s and early 1970s, such as the American civil rights movement, the radical anti-Vietnam war movement and the trend in western Europe, the UK, USA and Brazil to use theatre practices (Binns, 1991a, pp. 11–12; Filewood & Watt, 2001, pp. 15–17, 58–65; Cohen-Cruz, 2002, p. 3; Kirby, 1991, p. 19–20; van Erven, 2001, pp. 209–211) as a way of reclaiming a space for the ‘voiceless’ or as a catalyst for social and political change (Watt & Pitts, 1991, p. 123–124). While the term ‘community theatre’ may have lost currency in favour of terms like ‘community-based theatre’ or ‘applied theatre’, there remains at least a notional, underlying connection with antecedent theatre practices such as those of Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1979) or Brecht’s Epic Theatre (Brecht, 1977) and these influences too have left their mark on CCD practices in Australia in general.

In many respects, the company whose work I examine in this thesis, UTP, formerly known as Death Defying Theatre (DDT), offers a compelling example of the way in which the energies of the 1970s/1980s ‘community theatre movement’ have flowed into and through the subfield of CCD. Indeed, from one perspective, the commissioning of UTP to create the TLN event for such a prestigious festival as the Adelaide Festival might be seen as long overdue recognition of the artistic ‘legitimacy’ of CCD practice. TLN was certainly a sophisticated attempt to combine CCD principles with ‘contemporary performance’ processes and high production values in order to engage with a particular site, its history, local people and their issues. Compared to other CCD initiatives, TLN stands out by virtue of the length of time dedicated to the project, the amount of funding received from all levels of government, the quantity and quality of the people involved in the project, and the level of exposure it received from being part of a major arts festival. From another perspective, however, especially after the recent restructuring of the Australia Council, which involved the demise of the CCDB (a long-time and major funder of DDT/UTP), it might be worth asking whether the increased profile and ‘legitimacy’ given to this kind of work represents not so much a point of culmination for ‘CCD’ as
the point at which it begins to lose coherence as a relatively distinct area, or subfield, within the broader field of cultural production.

As the technical language, which I am starting to introduce here, suggests, one of the key theoretical reference points for this thesis is the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu’s sociology offers a useful framework to examine human relations, interactions and transactions, with a particular focus on social positions and actions. I especially draw on Bourdieu’s concept of ‘field’, which refers to spaces that attract human activities, events and relationships because of a common history and a common understanding of the rules and rewards (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 113–120, 1994, pp. 13–29, 54–57). I also draw on Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1979a, pp. 109–113, 1984, pp. 133–136, 1994; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and ‘interest’ (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 113–120, 1994, pp. 151–153) as they are useful in unpacking the inner workings of the time and space within which CCD practices take place and the explicit and implicit possible, probable and impossible changes and processes that might explain the potential, actual or lack of capacity CCD practitioners have in fostering efficacious changes for participants in their projects or programs (Swartz, 1997, p. 104).

In addition to the work of Bourdieu, and in keeping with the fact that my case-study involves a specifically theatre-based approach to ‘CCD’, another key reference point is the work of Baz Kershaw (1992). Kershaw’s concept of potential efficacy is useful to engage in a discussion of CCD practices as social and aesthetic experiences. With his framework he offers a series of conditions that underpin the potential for efficacy required to bring about social and political change. These conditions are, however, only applicable to performances themselves, rather than to a broader context of social relationships for instance. Finally, as a complement to some of the ideas drawn from Kershaw’s work, I have made use of the analytical framework developed by Don Handelman (1990) in his work on the anthropology of ‘public’ or ‘special’ events. Handelman’s framework is another useful tool for the analysis of the complex relationship between efficacy, public or special events and everyday life. He argues that performances can be divided into three types of public events according to their
impact on everyday life: ‘events-that-present’ that are axiomatic icons of versions of realities; ‘events-that-re-present’ that enable people to compare and contrast social realities; and ‘events-that-model’ that make change happen by directly affecting social realities.

1.3 Overview

The results of this study are presented in three parts. In the first part I establish my enquiry, by mapping out the problem, the body of knowledge related to my study, the gap it intends to fill and the way in which I intend to do this. In the second part I relate my enquiry to an ethnographic study of one particular CCD project, TLN, to determine what kinds of change-effects CCD practitioners and their practices have on participants in CCD projects and programs. I examine the potential and actual part that processes and products generated play in this change effect. In the third part, I specifically address the core question guiding this study, in light of my theoretical framework and the findings of my ethnographic investigation. I also give a wider explanation of the mechanisms of continuity and change or the ways in which participation in CCD projects and programs can enable or constrain social and/or political change for participants.

More specifically, in Chapter 2, I examine the practices of and the body of literature about CCD. I examine characteristic aspects of CCD practices and products. I point out some of the problems that arise from trying to define characteristic elements of CCD practices. I discuss some of the major expectations CCD practitioners and bureaucrats have in relation to CCD practices. I compare members’ discourses mobilised within the subfield of CCD, especially as they apply to the concepts of ‘community’, ‘culture’ and ‘development’, with some of the evidence produced within the subfield to support these discourses. I argue for the need to define CCD as a social subfield located predominantly within the field of arts, while also attracting a variety of practices and practitioners from other fields and subfields such as education, health and welfare. In Chapter 3, I outline the methods and methodology I use in this enquiry. I explain my choice for a triangulation of approaches that combines evaluation and ethnographic tools and theories, with a performance analysis
framework and a Bourdieuean approach to the sociology of human relations and interests.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I discuss in detail the data collected from the case study of TLN. In Chapter 4, I examine the various groups and people involved in the project and their interests in being part of the project. I also examine processes used to draw local residents and workers into the project as well as processes used to devise the resulting performance. I highlight the difficulty in catering for a wide range of people and the need to use a variety of processes to deal with this issue. In Chapter 5, I analyse the aesthetic product generated by TLN as it was performed to a wide range of spectators, including local participants and regular arts festival-goers. I also analyse changes for some of the participants and local organisations in the aftermath of the project. This analysis suggests elements of continuity as well as elements of change in participants’ everyday life. It also points to the complexity as well as the added richness and depth of the relationship between an ethnographic analysis of the processes used and relations between the different parties in this project and that of a performance analysis.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are my concluding chapters where I tie together the findings of my literature review, discussed in Chapter 2, my ethnographic study, discussed in Part 2, with theoretical ideas discussed in Chapter 3. I discuss the ways in which mechanisms and structures in place in the subfield of CCD create and maintain dependencies and power relations between CCD practitioners and people in positions of power and the ways in which they limit or enable change in ‘marginal communities’. In Chapter 6, I concentrate on understanding some of the reasons for the gap between the discourses of efficacy and actual changes for those who take part in such work. I relate these reasons to the historical, political and relational context within which the practices are located and practitioners operate. In Chapter 7, I focus on understanding some of the reasons why regardless of the disjunction between discourses and actual changes, there is ongoing funding of CCD practitioners and their practices by all levels of government in Australia. I argue that this can be explained because the funding of CCD practitioners and their practices can help people in positions of power address issues of social risk by containing and/or
mitigating social risks for those ‘communities’ most exposed to these social risks. I also point out some parallels between CCD practices and elements of the carnivalesque (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 15). Finally, in Chapter 8, I re-iterate my key findings, highlighting the enabling and constraining factors in bringing about some level of change that comes for participants taking part in CCD projects and programs. I also suggest some possible future directions in the study of CCD practices.
CHAPTER 2 – CCD as a social, cultural and political set of practices

2.1 Introduction

One immediate difficulty when discussing the relationship between CCD practitioners’ claims of efficacy and any actual social and political change is that ‘CCD’ is a term used to different effect by a range of people with a range of vested interests. In Australia, arts practitioners and bureaucrats commonly use the term ‘CCD’ to describe a wide ranging set of practices across different artforms. Indeed, at times, the range appears so wide that, as one participant in an online forum on ccd.net (one of the main Australian websites dedicated to ‘CCD’)\(^6\) commented:

\begin{quote}
the definition of CCD seems to increasingly occupy the spectrum of all forms of human expression (Allen G. in ccd.net, 2002, p. 3).
\end{quote}

This is an exaggeration, but still a noteworthy comment in that it reflects a recurring dilemma for some practitioners and other affiliated professionals: is a narrow or broad definition of CCD to be preferred? And I might add, if so, who decides and on what basis? As another contributor to the same online forum put it:

\begin{quote}
I think it is important that a definition is sufficiently open that community based practices which only meet part of the definition are not excluded (Carmen in ccd.net, 2002, p. 3).
\end{quote}

Several definitions and histories of the development of CCD practices might be written depending on whether the writer focuses on specific artforms, the practices or key CCD practitioners. For instance, a definition and history of the development of CCD practices could be written focusing on the need of some artists, social and welfare workers and bureaucrats to address issues of access to education, health, etc. by using the arts. Another definition and history could be written focusing on the

\(^6\) ccd.net was established by Community Arts Network South Australia (CANSA) with Australia Council funding in 2002. It is a website which serves as a professional networking tool and a national information ‘clearinghouse’ for CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals.
belief in the civilising effect of particular kinds of arts (especially the ballet, opera, etc.) leading to the need to increase access to these artforms for the masses of ‘ordinary’ people perceived as ‘uncultured’ and ‘uneducated’ by some people in positions of power or gravitating around people in positions of power. Another definition or history could be written focusing on the financial and political support CCD practices enjoy. Yet another definition and history could be written focusing on the need of some artists and arts bureaucrats to challenge established aesthetic values and the commodification of cultural products. These definitions and histories are all relevant; however, when told in isolation, each only tells part of the story of CCD practices.

In this chapter, I bring these definitions and histories together by carrying out a historical review of the discourses mobilised by CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals and bureaucrats and by discussing the historical development and professionalisation of CCD practices. I do this by first defining CCD practitioners’ and bureaucrats’ common assumptions about ‘community’, ‘culture’ and ‘development’. This takes the form of a discussion about the processes used or favoured by CCD practitioners, the kinds of communities CCD practitioners work with, and the intended and/or stated goals of CCD practices. Then I discuss the products generated by CCD practices and the type of relationships built between practitioners and bureaucrats with a vested interest in CCD practices. This discussion reveals a wide range of historical influences on CCD practices and practitioners. It also reveals expectations which practitioners, policy-makers, funding bodies, and so forth, have of such participatory processes. Further, this discussion moves from a description of ‘CCD’ as a set of practices to a description of ‘CCD’ as a social space of interactions, or what Bourdieu calls a field or subfield (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 102–104).

2.2 Participatory and creative processes

The use of participatory and creative processes is one area where there appears to be some sort of general agreement across the spectrum of CCD practices. An examination of the particular processes most often used in, and associated with, CCD
practices highlights the emphasis CCD practitioners place on playfulness and the ways in which CCD practices bring together social, cultural, educational and/or political processes. By way of example, I begin this section with brief vignettes from three different CCD activities, illustrating some of the possible range involved.

First, imagine a project led by a young male theatre practitioner, employed by a local council with a high proportion of residents from diverse cultural backgrounds, to work after school hours in the local hall with a small group of adolescents interested in devising a piece of theatre about ‘rites of passage’. The project is intended to help participants become empowered by gaining theatrical and social skills, building confidence and developing a taste for a particular kind of theatre. Over ten weeks, using processes of ‘engagement’ and ‘participation’, the practitioner attracts about twenty people to the project. Through group discussions and other collective devising processes, he directs the making, rehearsal and performance of a piece of interactive theatre, where spectators are led through a maze, in an attempt to recreate an experience similar to that of teenagers in this transitional period of their lives and highlight the need for ‘rites of passage’ to help teenagers move through a period often characterised by confusion, and the struggles of separation from their parents, into adulthood (McEwen, 2002a).

Imagine another CCD project where an entrepreneurial group of city-based theatre practitioners, musicians and writers have sought funds from philanthropic organisations, non-government organisations (NGOs) and all levels of government to work over a period of nine months with residents and social welfare workers from a regional area of Australia on developing a performance that deals with issues of
reconciliation. The project is intended to help participants reveal some of the causes of local community divisions, racism, religious intolerance and poverty, in order to bring the community together around an acknowledged common local history and identity. Through meetings, informal discussions and performance workshops, a theatrical performance is devised around a skeleton script. Local musical and Aboriginal dance acts are also integrated. The resulting performance is a musical that tours regionally, playing in schools and local halls (Flowers & McEwen, 2004).

Finally, imagine a continuing CCD program run by an experienced female visual artist in a poor urban area. The program, conceived as a ‘drop-in’ centre for young adults labelled ‘at-risk’, is designed to provide “a safe and secure environment for young people to explore the arts” (Thiele & Marsden, 2003, p. 22). The program aims to facilitate participants’ ‘engagement’ with art, but also to bring about “broad social change outcomes for marginalised young people” (Thiele & Marsden, 2003, p. 23) by helping them ‘re-engage’ with mainstream society. It provides participants with an art studio space they can attend at will during particular times and days of the week to use art resources and develop art and social skills while working under the guidance of the resident visual artist on their own painting or drawing projects. The work produced in this studio is sometimes later displayed as part of a collective exhibition.

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7 Reconciliation refers to a movement in Australia led by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians to deal with the negative impact on Aboriginal people of the initial invasion of and settlement on their land by British subjects and convicts. The movement started in 1991 with the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. The zenith of the movement was reached in May 2000 when an estimated one million and a quarter people took part in rallies across Australia to show their support for a reconciliation of differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians and an acknowledgement of past atrocities perpetrated against Aboriginal people in Australia (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 2000).

8 The term ‘drop-in’ is a term commonly used in the field of community development, which refers to a centre or a set of activities that has no rule of attendance, thus allowing clients or users to attend without making an appointment.

9 ‘At-risk’ is a term commonly used in Australia in relation to education, health promotion or welfare to describe someone likely to have a higher use of public services because of their higher that average likelihood of not finishing school, getting in trouble with the law, suffering from diseases caused by poor hygiene or nutrition, etc.
These brief descriptions of what practitioners and participants may do in CCD projects and programs are given here as broad examples of the variety of practices that co-exist, rather than as a representative sample of the whole spectrum of CCD practices. They are also offered, however, to show variations around key processes, to do with engagement, participation, collaboration, discussion, consultation, etc., usually considered to be central aspects of CCD practices. In emphasising the centrality of these processes, CCD practitioners also see them as keys to the ‘change agenda’ or efficacy of their work. As one experienced practitioner stated at a forum on arts and health:

*Every time people engage in that type of cultural expression they’re advocating for themselves, their families or their communities. That’s what cultural practice is. [How] do we build trust? First of all, you’ve got to be engaged in a community to have meaning for people, for that community* (Demos in Centre for Popular Education, 2001a).

Participatory processes are often pedagogical strategies borrowed from community development and popular education practices (Freire, 1981, 2000; Newman, 2006). They are often described by CCD practitioners as ‘grass-roots’, ‘bottom-up’ processes that promote participants’ control and choice. Some key principles include: dialogue (or ‘two-way learning’), *praxis* (a spiral of inter-related processes of reflection and action), strategic questioning, and storytelling. Techniques based on these principles are used to help participants identify key themes, issues and contradictions in their everyday lives, share information and ideas in order to reveal taken-for-granted habits, to ‘rename’ their own world and ultimately to help participants act on their new-found knowledge.

Under ideal conditions, participatory processes are seen as a way for ‘community’ members who might be described as silent or silenced by other dominant groups or communities to plan actions against dominant (authoritarian, oppressive and pacifying) methods of reproduction of culture; to negotiate learning content and form; to formulate relevant solutions to problems; and to increase social awareness that leads to acts of social and political change, such as voicing their views and opinions about the world, a goal often referred to as empowerment or, to use a key Freirean

It is not uncommon to have participatory processes linked with creative processes because participatory processes are often seen as creative acts where “learners must actively create knowledge” (Hickling-Hudson, 1988, p. 12) that result in the production of original material or original aesthetic material. In CCD practices, this relationship between creative processes and participatory processes is more than accidental. Creative processes are seen as intrinsically part of participatory processes. Further, creativity is considered by most CCD practitioners to be a core element of or a synonymous term for the arts.

There is an assumption that creativity, as a process, offers greater opportunities in engaging with ‘hard to reach’ people, allowing them to talk about issues without being singled out or judged. It creates a space away from the seriousness of everyday life allowing more of a ‘trial and error’ approach. Some CCD practitioners have said that creativity allows one to learn without the triggering of negative connotations often associated with learning in a more formal context; it allows the use of metaphors and hypothetical scenarios as prompts to experiment with situations and work towards solutions. Moreover, creativity is also often ultimately seen as increasing participants’ ability to overcome the negative effects of capitalism, consumerism and ‘decaying’ social values. As one experienced CCD practitioner stated at a forum dedicated to a discussion about the relationship between CCD practices and well-being:

*I personally believe it [creativity] gives people a sense of abundance, which then makes them relate and engage differently with the community and with other people. It reduces competition and people begin engaging differently with the world and with other people ... And that is subversive. By its very nature. It doesn’t have to be radical art or activist art. It doesn’t matter what you call it (audience member in Centre for Popular Education, 2001a).

What is alluded to here is not just art or creativity but essentially playfulness, as another experienced practitioner, and convener of an online forum on the evaluation of CCD practices, observed: “[t]here is a theory about arts providing the legitimate
opportunity for adults to ‘play’” (McLaughlin, 2001). Most CCD practitioners would agree with Shepherd and Wallis that play is “work which is not alienated” (2004, p. 125). Play, on this account, involves a form of escapism from everyday life but is also ‘productive of culture’ in that it reframes other social practices and potentially acts as a catalyst for social and political change (Shepherd & Wallis, 2004, pp. 123–127). Consequently, creativity and the arts become catalysts for change and the expression of a culture counter to the hegemonic culture of people in positions of power.

In CCD projects and programs, playfulness is used in a structured way perhaps to counter any misgivings participants might have concerning the difficulties of imagining, let alone enacting, social and political change, but also as a way of managing the complex relationship between CCD practices and other social, cultural, educational and/or political practices. As Shepherd and Wallis (2004, p. 123) suggest, play, to a certain extent, rekindles a lost relationship between the areas of religion, science, law, war and politics.

The importance placed on participatory and creative processes is also significant because it indicates an emphasis placed on the lived experience of community participants as active co-creators of a CCD project, rather than as simply vehicles to represent the artistic vision of a professional CCD practitioner. Though, having said that, the fact of having an outcome such as a public performance, exhibition, etc. is also an important element of CCD practice, increasing the value and recognition of a project and supporting its change agenda. As I discuss below in Section 2.5, performance can in fact be seen as part of the CCD process, not simply as product. The emphasis on participatory and creative processes also, of course, leads to the question of establishing who the specific individuals and groups are whom CCD practitioners see as their ‘co-creators’ and as collaborators working towards particular forms of social change.

2.3 Marginal communities

CCD practices are frequently characterised by the specific constituency of participants whom practitioners and affiliated professionals ‘target’ through their
work or funding schemes. Even a cursory examination of discourses of ‘community’ circulating in the CCD field shows an almost exclusive association with groups, or areas, that tend to be labelled ‘disadvantaged’ or ‘marginal’. However, closer examination of the ways in which the term ‘community’ has been mobilised in these discourses shows that there have been noticeable shifts in meaning, highlighting a range of interests and reasons for investment in CCD practices by CCD practitioners, bureaucrats and affiliated professionals.

‘Community’ has proved a multifaceted and malleable concept, encompassing a range of meanings from ‘target group’, or category of people, to self-defined group with a shared identity (perceived or espoused) founded on a common geographical location (country, neighbourhood, etc.), social location (class, age, occupation, etc.), interest or phenotype. ‘Community’ is thus an object or a set of relationships that can be used to divide or unite groups of people. As Gupta and Ferguson argue, the term ‘community’ can refer “both to a demarcated physical space and to clusters of interaction” (1992, p. 8).

As already noted, discourses about community are usually mobilised by CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals in conjunction with discourses about ‘marginality’. ‘Marginal communities’ are often seen as groups of ‘ordinary’ people under-represented in mainstream culture in general, and mainstream arts in particular, who need to be engaged with, mobilised and organised in order to work with, strengthen and/or create a sense of ‘community’ (Watt & Pitts, 1991, p. 130).

The association of ‘marginal’ with ‘community’ is interesting in that it brings together a concept, ‘marginal’, which is seen as mostly negative, because of its association with notions of social deficit, with the mostly positive concept of ‘community’ which, as Williams argues, “seems never to be used unfavourably” (1983, p. 76). This association is interesting because it encapsulates the problem and the solution to the problem in the same concept. Indeed, the remedy to marginality is perceived by most CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals to consist in developing communities (Everingham, 2003, pp. 11–13; Rose, 1997a).
This association of terms is also, however, problematic because it refers to other discourses regarding the ‘decline’ of community. This is an issue because these discourses are related to practices and values that further entrench marginality. Indeed, in her examination of the use of the term ‘community’ in Australian public policy debates in general, and welfare and social justice discourses in particular, Everingham argues that discourses of ‘community decline’ are a problem because they appeal to

*the current mood of community nostalgia which seeks to address the fragmentation of today’s social order by resurrecting the traditional ‘family values’ of the 1950s. These are the very values, however, which isolated families in the suburbs and oppressed women and minority groups (2003, p. 3).*

Further, this association is awkward because, as Raymond Williams argues (1983, pp. 75–76), it implies another set of challenging concepts, ‘normal’ and ‘other’, and also the administrative and political governance of subordinate groups. For these reasons it is worth examining in closer detail the recent history of the use of the term ‘community’ at a government level.

At the level of governance of the arts and CCD practices, the Australia Council introduced the term ‘community’ into government discourses in the 1970s following Gough Whitlam’s Labor government’s social democratic policies (Everingham, 2003, pp. 13–15). Bureaucrats of the Australia Council, however, kept the term open to interpretation by adopting a multiplicity of discourses (not only about ‘community’, but also about ‘culture’ and ‘development’) and artforms. This fairly ambiguous concept of ‘community’ was introduced in response to the need to reform the way in which the arts were funded as well as in an effort to recruit new constituents to the Australia Council’s funding schemes (Hawkins, 1993, p. 36).

If the ambiguity of use of the term ‘community’ was strategic on the part of the bureaucracy, so was its taking up by the emerging group of CCD practitioners. Many artists involved in the various countercultural and other social movements were attracted to the funding provided by the Australia Council. They were also attracted by a sense of increased possibility and the belief that their work would be valued,
recognised and legitimised by their association with an institution. These artists brought with them their ideologies and practices, imbuing the term ‘community’ with radical or progressive ideas of production, and of countering elitist art and mass culture; a term that embodied decentralised power and self-determination (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 19–20).

By the 1980s, though, the concept of ‘community’, mobilised by CCD practitioners, bureaucrats and affiliated professionals, as the site of what was possible as a collective, was slowly being replaced with a range of things (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 59–61), including at one end of the spectrum a return to romantic notions of pre-industrial tribalism and, at the other, the existence of one Australian culture transcending class, transcending the division of people according to social position based on their education, wealth, etc. (Williams, 1983, pp. 75–76).

As evidenced by government discourses and policies, ‘community’ was becoming synonymous with ‘them’ and with notions of homogeneity, consensus, consultation, sameness and democracy (Mills, 1986). Further, the concept was shifting from describing groups of people experiencing cultural disadvantage to describing groups of culturally diverse people (Hawkins, 1993, p. 157); shifting from describing self-defined groups of people to describing groups of people targeted on the grounds of their ethnicity, their risk-taking behaviour, etc.

A final shift occurred in government discourses in the 1990s, still within the parameters of discourses about ‘marginality’, where the term ‘community’ was understood no longer as describing diversity or multicultural groups but as describing difference (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 13–14). This last shift can be seen, on the one hand, as the consolidation of a move back towards an emphasis on nationalism through the arts started in the 1980s, or ‘imagined communities of nations’ (Anderson, 1991) where diversity or difference is once more integrated. A conception of ‘community’ some practitioners embraced as the authentic social sphere and the antidote to mass-society and bureaucracy (where ‘community’ is the anti-political) (Rose, 1996, p. 332). On the other hand, it can be seen as an emphasis on individual people, their families and communities’ management of their own levels of social risks, or a devolution of the
management of social risk to communities by various levels of government (Rose, 1996, p. 351).

As Nikolas Rose argues (1996, pp. 329–333), the concept of community became prominent at a broad level of governance in Australia in the late twentieth century, when it began to replace the concept of society in government discourses. This shift from ‘society’ to ‘community’ was prompted by the need for government bodies and the police to create “a new territory for the administration of individual and collective existence” (Rose, 1996, p. 341) and the need to categorise groups of people within society in order to locate, manage and ultimately rid society of all its ‘ills’. This historical turning point is significant because it indicates the creation of imagined territories of communities of risk or ‘marginal communities’, as well as the transformation of ‘community’ into a tool for governance (Rose, 1996).

For other practitioners, this multiplicity of meaning indicated the loss of potency of the concept (Bauman, 2001, p. 16), which points towards a crisis of identity and purpose for CCD practitioners when the concept of ‘community’ has been so fundamental for so long. Of course, the recent restructuring of the Australia Council, in which the CCDB has been dismantled and federal government arts funding for CCD practices placed at risk, has done nothing to lessen this sense of crisis.

Thus, discourses of ‘community’ and ‘marginality’ have tended to remain closely coupled in the history of Australian CCD practices, although the meanings given to these terms are clearly strongly shaped by practitioners’ historical affiliations with practices that pre-date the emergence of CCD as a relatively discrete field and by the influence of the prevailing political context on practices and practitioners (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 18–26). However the terms ‘community’ and ‘marginality’ have been deployed, some notion that CCD can assist communities to address or redress their perceived problems has also remained a constant and it is these notions of change, ‘development’ or efficacy to which I now turn.
2.4 Intended goals of efficacy

CCD practices are often defined as related to a more or less coherent set of principles about processes and about intended changes, as the following comment suggests:

*CCD is a process in which community development principles (democracy, social justice, participation, advocacy) in conjunction with cultural roots (theatre, new media, visual arts) [are used] to create community based arts practice that is powerful, has collective meaning and has long term impact on participants* (Michelle in ccd.net, 2002, p. 1).

Indeed, most Australian and international CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals agree that ‘change’ for participants taking part in CCD projects and programs, or what I and some theorists mostly concerned with the study of ritual-like practices and performances call ‘efficacy’ (Kershaw, 1992; Schechner, 1974), is a core or defining element of CCD practices. In general, it could be said that CCD practices focus on providing activities to ‘marginal communities’ in order to bring about a certain level of social, economic and political change. However, when it comes to identifying specific changes that might be encompassed in practitioners’ visions of the efficacy of ‘CCD’, there is considerable variation. In what follows, I investigate these varied meanings, paying close attention to the wider cultural and political frameworks that relate to discourses of efficacy and CCD practices. I find that the range of meaning conveyed by the term ‘development’ is closely related to a particular history and tradition of radical arts, politics and education.

A review of some of the discourses mobilised by some practitioners and affiliated professionals about the kind of change claimed and/or expected in relation to CCD practices shows a lack of consensus on the specific intended changes, but an agreement on the need to ‘develop’ ‘marginal communities’. This examination of discourses about ‘development’ associated with CCD practices reveals meanings ranging from ‘community building’ to ‘empowerment’. Some of the most common statements about the change agenda of ‘CCD’ talk of ‘developing’ ‘resistance’ (Adams & Goldbard, 2001; Filewod, 2001; Rose, 1997a), ‘coping mechanisms’ (Cahill, 2002; Thiele & Marsden 2002) or ‘local solutions’ (Lowe, 2001; Haedicke & Nelhaus, 2001; Williams, 1995) to aspects of the harsh conditions some people live
in. Other statements refer to ‘increasing democratic rights’ by transforming participants from ‘passive’ to ‘active citizens’ (Beck, 2003, p. 204; Thompson, 2002, p. 8), or else to ‘increasing consciousness’ and ‘empowering marginal’ people and communities in response to ‘exclusionary’ social conditions (Adams & Goldbard, 2001, pp. 4–5; Ball & Keating, 2002, p. 46; Clark, 2002, pp. 103–104; Haedicke & Nelhaus, 2001, pp. 13–15; Heather, 2001, p. 159; Lowe, 2000, p. 382; Sonn, Drew, & Kasat, 2002, p. 12), or even to developing a ‘counter-hegemonic force’ for progressive social change (Cohen-Cruz, 2002, pp. 6–7; Watt, 1991, p. 63) by providing people with the opportunity to be successful critical learners. Much of this variation in rhetoric can be explained in terms of an ideological division according to three major sets of ideals or worldviews: first, an ideology derived from Marxist radical politics; second, an ideology of ‘social democracy’ derived from the field of community development; and third, an ideology of ‘community capacity building’ derived from the health promotion sector.

Marxism, in various forms, is perhaps the most enduring and most significant set of ideologies associated with CCD practices. Since the emergence of CCD practices as an organised profession in Australia in the mid-1970s till today, this set of ideologies has often been present in CCD practitioners’ and affiliated professionals’ discourses. These discourses and associated values, upheld by CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals espousing these socialist ideologies of radical politics, can be traced back to the anti-establishment movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as the local labor movements, the wars of independence from European colonisers, Anti-Vietnam war movements in the USA and Australia as well as the various women’s liberation movements (Binns, 1991a, pp. 11–12; Hawkins, 1993, p. 38; Kirby, 1991, p. 19–20; Watt & Pitts, 1991).

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10 These processes of empowerment, transformation, etc. occur by challenging taken for granted stereotypes and assumptions, as well as by challenging issues of dominance and subordination (central to matters of social justice and equity), bringing down barriers (within and without), finding a common ground between subordinate groups, and using ‘difference’ as a learning springboard. For a more detailed discussion about the relationship between learning and social change see Freire (1972, 2000), Horton and Freire (1990) or Newman (2006) for example.
Under this set of ideologies, CCD practitioners claim to help establish, through their practices, a sphere of participation outside of the state and family as well as to create a connection through resistance, encouraging people to assert control over their lives and redefine social truth, as this comment by Watt (1991, p. 65) indicates:

*Community artists must remember the central power of their work, which does not lie in the ability to offer diverting activities to ‘disadvantaged’ groups. It lies in the possibility of assisting in the consolidation of alienated individuals into a coherent social group, operating on democratic principles, and able to fight for the extension of democracy into a world dominated by entrenched power structures.*

The CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals who mobilise these discourses claim to help ‘oppressed people’ assert control over their environment in particular, and over the world in general. CCD practices are seen as focusing on social issues through the education and mobilisation of a collective group using critical thinking, dialogue, contextual and site-specific strategies and processes (Gillam, 1986; Mills, 1986) in a sort of “prelude to political activism” (Pitts & Watt, 2001, p. 9). They claim to be interested in reversing the usual hierarchies at work in society and/or at the ‘community’ level, challenging the legitimacy of the inculcated sense of taste acquired from childhood by working with popular arts and aesthetics which are often negatively perceived by people in positions of power because they have a ‘popular’ and ‘outmoded’ quality and a restricted production value rather than an ‘art for art’s sake’, ‘avant-garde’ or ‘orthodox’ quality or a large-scale production value (Bourdieu, 1979a; 1993, pp. 50–53). Typically, these claims go together with a greater emphasis on CCD as process rather than product. The production and consumption of culture that is specifically Australian and working class is also often emphasised (Kirby, 1991, p. 19), along with the need to challenge established aesthetic values and the commodification of cultural products (Binns, 1991b, p. 148).

Evidence of the significance of this set of ideologies for CCD practitioners, bureaucrats and affiliated professionals can be seen in its role and place in the development of the Art and Working Life (AWL) program, a significant Australia Council funding program of CCD practices. The AWL program ran from 1982 to 1996. Most CCD projects and programs funded by the AWL program were seen as
political tools that furthered the class struggle through a celebration of working class values. Though it was seen as a tool in the resurgence of union life, it was also seen as a way to rekindle a dwindling tradition (often idealised and nostalgic, however) of a close relationship between the arts and the labour movement (Filewod & Watt, 2001, pp. 44–45). One good example of a project funded under this scheme is Coal Town, a project developed by the company DDT (the predecessor of UTP, the work of which I will be examining in detail later). Coal Town was a performance devised in 1984 in collaboration between DDT’s artistic team and coal miners of Collinsville, central Queensland. The project resulted in a large-scale outdoor performance, presented on the local football field. It combined elements of pantomime, socialist realism and agitprop theatre. While Coal Town praised the values of working class culture and idealised the unity of the local miners, it also provided a mild critique and a somewhat didactic socialist solution to issues pertaining to life in the Australian coal mines of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s: economic progress, expansion and technical change as well as class divisions and increasing attacks on unions by ‘management’ (Barnes, 2000, p. 201; DDT, 1985).

The second set of ideologies associated with CCD practices, which I have labelled ‘social democracy’, has also been core to many CCD projects and programs since the early 1970s till today. It is evident not only in the discourses mobilised by CCD practitioners and other affiliated professionals but also in Australian government’s discourses. Arguably, in the early 1970s, discourses of social democracy were a dominant set of ideologies at a broad level of governance, as evidenced by the Whitlam Labor government’s implementation of populist social policies and reforms aimed at increasing access to education, health and the arts for all Australians.

Under this set of ideologies, CCD practitioners tend to claim that their work provides skills and activities, turns communities into groups of citizens and/or increases participants’ awareness of their existing individual rights. In this context, practitioners argue that “[t]he value of community arts is in its expression of community culture, as part of the wider society” (Williams, 1997, p. 8); thus, the value of CCD practices is in helping to create cultural democracy (Hawkins, 1991, pp. 52–53 Kirby, 1991; Watt, 1991).
An example of a CCD project underpinned by this set of ideologies might be ‘The Torch, Re-igniting Community’ (‘The Torch’) series of projects. ‘The Torch’ is a series of collaborative projects between several Victorian regional towns and The Torch Project, a Melbourne-based community theatre company. Since 1999, The Torch Company has worked with a number of residents and community-based organisations around Victoria with the aim of addressing local social needs. The results of these projects have been theatrical performances integrating local talent, dealing mostly with issues of migration, including the early invasion of Australia by British subjects and today’s repercussions on the first people of Australia (Flowers & McEwen, 2004).

The third set of ideologies associated with CCD, which I have labelled ‘community capacity building’, is a more recent influence. It appears to build on the lessons learnt from the movements espousing radical politics and social democratic theories and practices. Broadly speaking, this set of ideologies, and its related set of discourses, are underpinned by a belief that social improvement occurs by encouraging self-government and shared social responsibilities between ‘citizens’ and the government and/or by building communities’ capacity to look after themselves and participate in ‘civil society’ (Everingham, 2003, pp. 11–20; Mowbray, 2004, pp. 13–14).

The integration of this set of ideologies into CCD discourses occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It can be traced back to the funding of CCD practices by non-arts government schemes, especially those from government bodies dedicated to the management and promotion of health issues. Its rise in popularity might be linked to the fact that these discourses help couch social benefits of participatory approaches in economic rationalist terms. Discourses of community capacity building are highly prominent in the health promotion sector, for instance, as an alternative to residual discourses of government welfare. As the NSW Department of Health now defines it:

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11 The Torch Company was created by Steve Payne, a founding member of Melbourne Workers Theatre, which was created in 1987 to deal with and present working class issues (Melbourne Workers Theatre, 2007). Payne also worked with several other theatre companies in Australia such as Arena Theatre Company, Jigsaw Theatre Company and Canberra Youth Theatre (The Torch Project, 2006).
Another characteristic of this set of ideologies is its close relationship to discourses of ‘social capital’. Though this is, of course, a key term in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, going back to his 1972 *Esquisse d’une théorie de la pratique* (2000), most CCD practitioners and government agencies involved in such activities are making reference not to Bourdieu but to an alternative understanding of ‘social capital’ espoused by writers such as Robert Putnam, for whom the concept “refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1995, p. 67). The difference between Bourdieu’s approach and Putnam’s will become clearer in the analysis I provide in later chapters but might be summarised briefly here as follows: whereas Bourdieu (1986, pp. 248–252), broadly speaking, sees social capital as one of many forms of capital for which members of ‘fields’ compete, Putnam understands social capital as something which is acquired or accumulated through cooperation and takes it as a ‘measure’ of a given community’s level of social bond and bridging (Putnam, 1995). From the mid to late 1990s, these latter discourses of social capital appear to be the Australian government’s dominant ‘social’ discourse as evidenced by their broad integration in government policies (Everingham, 2003; Mowbray, 2004). This relationship between ideologies and discourses of ‘community capacity building’ and ‘social capital’ can be explained by the fact that ‘community capacity building’ projects or programs are seen as one of the means of generating ‘social capital’.

Under this set of ideologies, practices vary from contributing to the healing process of individual people, by creating a sense of self, to providing healing environments by creating a sense of place (Cintra, 2004; Oppermann, 1996). The Messengers’ Program might be an apt illustration of a CCD project or program underpinned by this set of
ideologies. The Messengers’ Program, a CCD program directed by Garry Fry\textsuperscript{12} based at the Tuggeranong Arts Centre, in Canberra, is “a resilience-fostering program for young people”. The program aims to promote individual health and to disseminate messages of well-being to the wider community. Fry collaborates with young people experiencing mental health illnesses to devise theatrical performances that deal with the participants’ health issues (Fry in Centre for Popular Education, 2001a).

Arguably, today, these three major sets of ideologies, and their related discourses, co-exist without seeming to be in opposition. This co-existence is, however, not of an equal nature. Because of the different historical connections these discourses and sets of ideologies’ have with CCD practitioners, their practices and affiliated professionals and bureaucrats, these discourses and ideologies have different currency and value within the subfield today. Indeed, today most bureaucrats and some CCD practitioners under pressure to secure funding have placed greater value and emphasis on community capacity building ideologies and their associated discourses and practices. Also, though this co-existence of sets of discourses and ideologies might suggest an increase in the range of opportunities for CCD practitioners and an increase in the range of possibilities for participants in CCD projects and programs, it actually represents a significant reduction of opportunities and possibilities as it would seem that the more recent discourses render inoperative the earlier discourses that contested the social exclusion of ‘marginal communities’, thus promoting the ideological exclusion of those they appear to integrate (Everingham, 2003, p. 11).

This examination of discourses of ‘development’ mobilised by CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals has highlighted these discourses’ relation to particular ideologies. It has also highlighted the range of claims of intended or expected changes for participants in CCD projects and programs made and/or espoused by CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals. It reveals a range of meanings of the term

\textsuperscript{12} Garry Fry is, with Errol Bray, a founding director of Shopfront Theatre for Young People. Shopfront was established in 1976 with a special focus on youth/community collaboration work (Shopfront, 2006). It is still today one of Australia’s leading youth theatre companies in Australia.
‘development’ and claims of change depending on the meanings CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals give to the concepts of ‘community’ and ‘marginality’, as well as the different emphasis they place in their work on engaging with the individual or the collective and engaging with the personal or political and/or cultural. In addition it has highlighted a shift away from ideologies, theories and associated practices that promote social justice, government bodies as providers of social welfare and NGO community-based organisations (including CCD practitioners) as watchdogs of government activities and practices in these matters; towards the support of ideologies, theories and practices that promote social order, government bodies as facilitators of social welfare and NGO community-based organisations (including CCD practitioners) as agents of welfare services delivery on behalf of the government (Everingham, 2003, pp. 13–15).

Furthermore, it reveals a close relationship between CCD practitioners and their practices and a particular history and tradition of radical arts, politics and education work such as agitprop, Theatre of the Oppressed, Epic Theatre, etc. and their related ideologies (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 38–39). Moreover, it reveals a broader relationship between CCD practices and practitioners and a particular bureaucracy as well as with practices antecedent to the creation of CCD practices as a profession. In addition, it reveals the importance placed on the processes or activities that practitioners rely on in order to achieve those changes. Lastly, and perhaps more significantly, it also reveals that CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals and bureaucrats have an expectation that the change sought with/for ‘marginal communities’ are positive changes that will benefit these communities in the short- and long-term.

### 2.5 Aesthetic product

Practitioners often talk about the aesthetic product generated by CCD projects (a theatrical or musical performance, a mural, a painting exhibition, a book, etc.) as an aspect of CCD practices that is of a lesser concern or importance in defining CCD practices than the intended changes or processes used. Below, I discuss some of the reasons for this rhetorical understatement. I find that it is often motivated by CCD practitioners’ need to create a space for CCD practices apart from the more
mainstream cultural goods and services. I argue that this has proved to be, at times, advantageous, while at other times disadvantageous for the development of CCD practices and its professionalisation.

As an example of how practitioners sometimes situate themselves in relation to ‘the arts’, consider the following statement by an experienced visual arts CCD practitioner:

_The beauty of the arts is that, yes, we are anarchists, we are social activists and we are subversive. And the beauty of working with the communities that I work with, which are often highly marginalised and disadvantaged, is that my connection point with those people is as an artist and it is that notion that we can’t be boxed in, that we are different, that makes us unique and acknowledges their uniqueness and the beauty of it_ (Centre for Popular Education, 2001a).

Three points stand out very clearly here: the belief in the importance of the arts as a creative process; the belief that artists hold a unique position in society as subversive agents of change; _and_ the belief in the value of the product as a reference to a set of processes that help achieve efficacious changes, rather than a belief in the value of the product as a good in and of itself. These notions are quite widely espoused by practitioners for whom the aesthetic products generated by CCD practices are mostly considered as ‘milestones’ that mark or celebrate the work done over a series of processes, or else are considered as another process, rather than a product with commodity value in its own right. This isn’t to say that the arts in themselves are not valued by CCD practitioners but it highlights a tendency to give value to the art-making practices of CCD in terms of very general notions about ‘the nature of the arts’, rather than in terms of specific qualities particular to these aesthetic products. In most evaluations of CCD projects, for instance, aesthetic products are not examined in any detail at all, leaving untapped a huge amount of data that might be relevant to understanding the impact CCD practices may have on their participants. Furthermore, consciously or unconsciously, such attitudes can reinforce, for people unfamiliar with CCD practices, a perception that the aesthetic products they generate must be ‘inferior art’ when compared to the products of more ‘mainstream’ artists and institutions.
This rhetorical understatement of the value and role of CCD aesthetic products can be explained, in part, with reference to a set of shifting discourses about ‘culture’, which have been mobilised by CCD practitioners, affiliated professionals and bureaucrats. Indeed, the history of discourses about ‘culture’ related to CCD practices is every bit as complex as the history of discourses about ‘community’ and ‘development’ discussed in sections 2.3 and 2.4 above. Starting in the mid to late 1970s, with the emergence of CCD practices as a profession, ‘cultural development’ for marginal communities often meant developing community members’ appreciation and access to institutionalised forms of art, such as the work of renowned painters, the opera, etc., through education and improvement of popular tastes, bringing them more into line with ‘middle class’ values and tastes (Hawkins, 1993, p. 16). This tendency was linked to a narrow understanding of ‘culture’, promoted at the time by the Australia Council as particular kinds of aesthetic product, or (Capital ‘C’) ‘Culture’.

This process of promoting ‘legitimate’, institutionalised arts amongst people perceived as belonging to ‘marginal communities’ was, at the same time, in contradiction with the more radical understandings of ‘community’ being mobilised by many CCD practitioners. By the early 1980s, a shift had started to occur in the meanings given to the term ‘culture’ towards a broader anthropological understanding where ‘culture’ is seen as a set of everyday, as well as ‘special’ or ‘marked’, social processes. This broadening of ‘culture’ in CCD practitioners’ and bureaucrats’ discourses corresponded with an opening up of the concept of cultural development that, by then, privileged engagement with cultural processes over engagement with or the making of cultural products (Hawkins, 1993, p. 157). The shift was significant because it marked a period of closer alignment between bureaucrats’ and practitioners’ understanding of the terms ‘community’, ‘culture’ and ‘development’ as positive, diverse and rich in traditions. It also meant increased possibilities about what might be considered ‘CCD’. This shift and alignment were largely the result of some radical practitioners gaining positions on the then CCD Board of the Australia Council and arguably represented a ‘coming of age’ for CCD.

From the 1990s until today, the term ‘culture’ in CCD parlance has retained a broad anthropological meaning to which an emphasis on the changing and plural nature of
‘culture’ or, as practitioners would more readily say now (lower case ‘c’) ‘cultures’, has been added. ‘Cultural development’ then became about placing control of the production of art and culture in the hands of communities, seen as the site of pluralism and common identity, and about stressing the making of community rather than the making of arts. It was about developing ‘cultures’ (participation in civil society, social glue, etc.), rather than developing ‘Culture’ (excellence, innovation in the arts, etc.).

This general focus on diversity and pluralism indicated a shift from ethnic or multicultural arts as a separate and special part of Australia’s multicultural existence towards a more equal presence within the other priority areas of the Australia Council. This shift was also concomitant with a push to raise cultural awareness within Australia Council boards, to have people from non-English speaking backgrounds on all artform boards and to have diversity integrated into Australia Council’s mainstream activities and policies. This integration of multiculturalism across the boards of the Australia Council was a success for the then CCD Board because it meant an end to the exclusion of ‘others’. For some of the non-CCD Board members, though, this was seen as being at the risk of watering-down artistic quality and standards (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 86–88).

These shifts in the last three decades or so between a narrow definition of culture, as a particular kind of aesthetic product, and a broad anthropological definition of culture, as process, as well as shifts between an understanding of cultural development as ‘access’ and ‘participation’ more or less in opposition to notions of ‘nation’ and ‘excellence’ in the arts, are worth stressing because the different meanings invested in the term ‘culture’ add a layer of complexity to the understanding of the ‘politics of community’ discussed earlier. Also, they reflect some bureaucrats’ and practitioners’ interest in fostering the production and consumption of culture and arts that is tied with a desire to shape Australia’s national identity. This desire is not, however, based on a common vision of Australia as a ‘nation’. For some members of the field/subfield of CCD, their interest is in the circulation and transmission of a national cultural identity that has value as a commodity on the international arts scene; for others, their interest is mostly in producing a national cultural identity at a grass-roots
level that is relevant to ‘community’ members, and has an emphasis on process. Further, these visions are not necessarily in line with the reality or interests of the community members CCD practitioners work with. Moreover, the creation of ‘grass-roots’ variants of a national cultural identity often draws on a range of particular aesthetic styles, which people unfamiliar with CCD practices might perceive as rather amateurish or popular.

While there is a multiplicity of CCD practices within and across artforms, it can be argued that the aesthetic products of CCD adhere mostly to a relatively small pool of aesthetic styles or genres. This is not to say that there is a single form common to, or characteristic of, CCD practices. However, a considerable number of CCD practitioners’ aesthetic tastes have been developed or are informed by a particular history and set of traditions. In the case of theatre-based CCD practitioners, some key influences would include the Russian Revolution’s agitprop, Bertolt Brecht’s Epic Theatre, and naïve or folk art. These influences often give theatre-based CCD aesthetic products a noticeable (and intentional) emphasis on ‘outwardness’ and ‘immediacy’ which makes them seem more focused on context (foregrounding process, a grass-roots ‘feel’, etc.) and text (e.g. the delivery of a ‘message’) rather than on the enduring merits and excellence of the form of the product.

In this sense, the dominant styles of CCD aesthetic products are usually in opposition to what might be referred to as institutionalised, established, valued and accepted art practices, such as the opera, the ballet, expressionist paintings and the like. The relative emphasis on content rather than form in CCD work and its oppositional relationship to ‘established’ art can be explained in several ways. Broadly speaking, it fits with a view held by many CCD practitioners’ belief that it would be inappropriate to judge CCD aesthetic products solely by the criteria of what constitutes ‘good’ or ‘bad’ art according to the legitimised and accepted aesthetic values of ‘established art’, especially if this were to mean that the role and value of processes would be lost to those assessing the levels of success of CCD practices (Hawkins, 1993, p. 76).

However, this downplaying of the quality of the aesthetic product is problematic in that it has held back the development of possibly more appropriate, alternative or
complementary frameworks to assess CCD aesthetic products. This lack of a more appropriate framework can also be linked to the challenge of combining formal analysis of CCD aesthetic products with an analysis of the goals and process involved, not to mention an assessment of any actual changes which CCD projects and programs might help foster in participants’ everyday lives.\(^\text{13}\)

Though this rhetorical underestimation of CCD aesthetic products has some disadvantages, such as a lack of interest by CCD practitioners, bureaucrats and affiliated professionals in analysing the role and place these products, and their quality, have in establishing efficacious practices, or the lack of consideration in the value or worth of these products outside of the profession, there are also some advantages. These include the development of a niche area within the broader context of production and consumption of arts and a greater control over the production and consumption of the particular cultural goods and discourses that circulate within the field and/or services they deliver: hence, once again, the understandable anxiety of Australian CCD practitioners over the recent Australia Council restructure. These concerns will now be set in a fuller historical context.

### 2.6 Close relationship with government bureaucracy

As the examination above of discourses about ‘community’, ‘culture’ and ‘development’ has highlighted, another common element to most CCD projects and programs, and a factor of critical importance for the professionalisation of CCD practices, is their relationship to the federal government’s main funding and advisory body for the arts, the Australia Council. Indeed, from the creation of the Australia Council, with the passing of the Australia Council Bill in 1973, until today, this government body has not only been key in shaping and supporting CCD practices and practitioners through its own programs, it has also played a lead coordinating role in

\(^{13}\) Developing an appropriate framework for the evaluation of CCD aesthetic products is challenging. One of the challenges is to move beyond a simplistic binary opposition between good and bad art based on criteria of how well a product is delivered according to given aesthetic canons. Ian Maxwell and Fiona Winning (2001) have addressed some of these issues in relation to theatre-based CCD practices. They argue for the use of and offer a performance analysis framework to assess CCD practices.
informing and advising other arts and non-arts bodies, at federal and local government levels, about CCD practices in Australia (Hawkins, 1993, pp. xx, 83–86).

In what follows, I examine the trajectory of CCD practices and practitioners in the history of the Australia Council and the political context of the times. In doing so, I am also beginning to develop a complementary description of CCD to that which has been so far foregrounded in this chapter, moving from a view of CCD as a (more or less coherent) set of artistic practices towards seeing CCD as a (more or less discrete) field, or subfield, of practice within the overall field of cultural production (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 102–104). I present this outline of Australia Council history in four sub-sections to highlight what can be seen as four relatively distinct eras in the development of CCD practices. Though it is not always acknowledged by practitioners, I argue that their very close relationship with the Australia Council has been significant in establishing, institutionaising and professionalising CCD practices (Binns, 1991a, p. 12; Hawkins, 1993, pp. 66–70, Watt, 1991, p. 55). The Australia Council has certainly played a central role in defining CCD as a social space, or field/subfield, where practitioners enjoy at least some measure of autonomy and where they can be remunerated and recognised for their practice.

2.6.1 First era: 1972 to 1975

The first era in the history of the development of CCD practices is the era between 1972 and 1975. It wasn’t an era that saw the creation of CCD practices per se, but an era that saw the creation of a bureaucracy dedicated to CCD practices and an era of “growth in state provision of culture that was already underway” (Hawkins, 1993, p. 31). Indeed, CCD practices, or community arts practices as they were referred to then, were already happening in Australia. The term was used and practices had been funded through the Australian Council for the Arts14 Special Projects Fund15 since

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14 The Australian Council for the Arts was established in 1968 following a proposal put forth by the Liberal Prime Minister, Harold Holt, in response to lobbying by some powerful advocates for the arts (especially ballet, drama and opera) to get the federal government to take responsibility for the development of the arts and protect them from the “rigours of the marketplace” (Hawkins, 1993, p. 7). The proposal was implemented during the subsequent
the late 1960s.

In 1972, after years of Liberal governments, the Labor candidate, Gough Whitlam, was elected Prime Minister of Australia. His election was soon followed by many social and cultural reforms. Some of those reforms, such as the establishment of the Australia Council in 1973, is an independent “statutory authority to administer Australian government assistance to the arts” (Bowen, 1974, p. 1), were instrumental in stimulating a major growth in the arts industry (Carroli, 1999, pp. 21–22). Whitlam believed assistance to the arts was essential in developing a viable and prosperous society (Whitlam, 1973b). He believed this assistance needed to be provided in the form of funds to support the development of excellence and the encouragement of participation by all in the arts:

You will see that the government attach [sic] immense importance to the place of the arts in Australian society, just as it does to education. Our policies have a two-fold objective – the pursuit of excellence and the spread of interest and participation. Within a few weeks of our election, we took the first step to improve the range and effectiveness of ... the arts. We appointed the new Australian Council for the Arts, an autonomous body independent of the government. It is autonomous for this basic reason: Artists need protection from unnecessary restraints and official pressures, however benevolent they may be. I recognise that vitality in the arts is often accompanied by innovation, by controversy, by challenge to establish conventions of taste, belief and behaviour. Independent councils have worked well in Britain, Canada and the boards, has [sic] already made an outstandingly successful start (Whitlam, 1973b).

Whitlam’s belief in the need and the right for all citizens to participate in the arts led


This fund was created to deal with ‘unclassifiable’ arts projects. As such, it was considered by some arts bureaucrats as a dumping ground. The Special Projects Fund supported non-artform specific or multi-arts projects, especially focusing on supporting art activities outside of the mainstream or recognised artforms; fostering new talent; attracting young people to the arts; and stimulating the production of innovative or experimental arts. This fund not only supported the development of amateur productions, it also supported more ‘risky’ productions, such as those of the avant-garde or radical art (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 37–40).

The Australia Council gained full statutory authority with the passing of the Australia Council Act in 1975 (Carroli, 1999, p. 20).
to the growth of CCD practices, with the establishment of a Community Arts and Development Fund (CADF) managed by a Community Arts Committee (CAC) in 1973, to

... give special support to activities which will enable participation in the arts to be spread throughout our society ... The Council expects to receive applications for assistance from local government, social services organisations and other groups of citizens. The fund can be expected to play an important part in satisfying our determination to enable all ... to have access to artistic activities (Whitlam, 1973a, p. 1).

While the Whitlam government’s reforms opened up new possibilities for artists and arts practices (in general) and for CCD practitioners, their practices and project or program participants (in particular), Hawkins (1993, p. 45) argues that these reforms were also essentially conservative, supporting rather than challenging established and legitimised aesthetic tastes and values.

2.6.2 Second era: 1975 to 1983

The election of Malcolm Fraser as Prime Minister of Australia in 1975 marked the beginning of a second era in the history of the development of CCD practices. These started as difficult years for CCD practitioners and bureaucrats: Fraser’s Liberal-Country Party Coalition government was focused on reforming all areas of governance, making them more exposed to forces of the market economy, as evidenced, for instance, by their initiative to corporatise government bodies. However, by the end of the era in 1983, this period had proved to be advantageous to CCD practitioners and bureaucrats.

The Community Arts Program (CAP) (as the CADF had been renamed) and the CAC were soon after Fraser’s election under threat from his government, the media and other Boards of the Australia Council. CCD bureaucrats and practitioners were under threat because of an enquiry commissioned by Fraser’s government into the Australia Council on ways of cutting back on government expenditure. This enquiry, led by McKinsey and Company in 1976, found that the Australia Council needed to focus on excellence in the arts and the development of a national identity through the arts (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 47–51). It also recommended
To increase the involvement of state, Territory and local governments, and other appropriate regional organisations, the Council will consult with appropriate authorities to begin a program of devolution of grant-giving activities. Community arts activities and small grants to individuals or groups are areas where the program of devolution might begin (Fraser, 1976, p. 1).

These threats to dismantle the CAP were, however, thwarted by several factors. First because of a certain level of protection awarded to the arts, including CCD practices, by a few key people in positions of influence, most notably (and paradoxically) Malcolm Fraser himself, who had liberal views about the arts as a civilising agent, and Ken McKinnon, the then deputy chair of the Australia Council (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 54–55). Other factors included the commitment of CAC staff; the fact that the term ‘community’ and its embodiment posed no political threat to most Liberals in government; and finally the show of strength of CCD practitioners through the activities of the National Community Arts Co-operative (NCAC) created in 1977 as a response to these threats (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 51–55).

This show of support, commitment and force was instrumental in not only saving the CAP and CAC, but was also instrumental in promoting the CAP in late 1977 to the status of Board (and its renaming as Community Arts Board (CAB)). This change from Program to Board was significant for CCD practitioners and bureaucrats because it signalled the maturity of CCD practices, as a legitimate, semi-autonomous and rational set of practices (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 55–58).

Indeed, this change meant greater legitimacy and autonomy for CCD bureaucrats, and consequently for CCD practitioners, because it meant that as a Board CCD bureaucrats were now able to have directors, responsible for reviewing or assessing applications for funding, appointed from a pool of CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals rather than from a pool of directors from other Australia Council boards. This change also prompted CCD bureaucrats and practitioners to reframe definitions, policies and funding schemes in more explicit social and political terms (Carroli, 1999, p. 22). Further, it prompted a shift away from specific communities towards organisations and practitioners involved with CCD practices and a shift towards CCD practices with an emphasis on the placement of artists in community contexts. These
changes further resulted in attracting ‘progressive’ or radical artists with their related discourses and aesthetics to CCD funding schemes (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 123–124).

Lastly, McKinsey and Company’s recommendations to encourage the establishment of other sources of funding at state and local government levels was implemented giving CCD practitioners an additional, rather than alternative, source of funding. The establishment of CCD state representative peak bodies called Community Arts Networks (CAN), responsible for the provision of infrastructure, training and development courses, is evidence of that additional support. CAN supported the newfound strength of CCD bureaucrats and practitioners, but also further led to the professionalisation of CCD practices and practitioners, resulting in transforming ‘CCD’ into an industry sector, with the subsequent increase in affiliated lobby groups, researchers and evaluators seeking to establish the economic legitimacy of the sector (Hawkins, 1993, p. xx).

2.6.3 Third era: 1983 to 1996

The third era in the historical development of CCD practices is marked by the return to a Labor government, with the election of Bob Hawke in 1983. At this stage, CCD practices had become a viable career option for artists (Grostal & Harrison, 1994, p. 148). However, by the end of this era in 1996, marked by the election loss of Paul Keating, the Labor Prime Minister elected after Hawke, CCD practices and practitioners were again undermined.

This era is significant for CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals because it marks the renaming of ‘community arts’ as ‘CCD’, and thus mark the introduction of the concept of ‘culture’ alongside concepts of ‘community’ and ‘arts’ as central in the definition of CCD practices. It is also a significant era in that it is marked by the increasing need to justify the existence and support of CCD practices in economic terms. This shift was first triggered by findings of the enquiry, commissioned by Hawke’s government, into the federal government’s arts funding practices (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure, 1986).
Though the committee’s recommendations were “by and large uncontroversial” (Throsby, 2001, p. 557), they did threaten the existence of the CAB, forcing the board to prove the cost-effectiveness of CCD practices. In response to this report, CCD bureaucrats and practitioners formulated a rationale about CCD practices focusing on the importance of its cultural work in economic terms as well as a rationale about CCD practices that included the emerging concept of multiculturalism (with CCD practices stimulating harmony and integration). This shift in rationale was consolidated with the renaming of the practices as ‘community cultural development’ instead of ‘community arts’ and the renaming of the CAB as CCD Unit (CCDU), before being renamed CCD Board in 1991 (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 78–88).

In 1994, the publication of Creative Nation (Department of Communications and the Arts, 1994), commissioned by Keating’s government to formulate a new cultural policy, further cemented the role and place of ‘culture’ in CCD practices. With this new cultural policy the government was confirming that “the creative industries could be seen as a significant force in generating employment and economic growth” (Throsby, 2001, p. 558). This cultural policy was seen as forward looking and progressive at the time. It is interesting to note that, to this day, it has “remained broadly consistent with the approach to arts policy espoused by subsequent conservative governments” (Throsby, 2001, p. 558).

These shifts in rationale of CCD practices were about repositioning the arts in relation to culture by using a broader definition of culture and defining arts as a subset of culture. With this repositioning, CCD bureaucrats and practitioners were also redefining the relation of the arts to power structures whereby the control for the production of arts and culture was seen to be placed in the hands of ‘communities’. These changes in discourses were thus emphasising the political and community development aspects of CCD practices; problematising ‘artistic excellence’; focusing on processes rather than products; and celebrating communities as culturally rich (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 156–167; Pitts & Watt, 2001).
2.6.4 Fourth era: 1996 to date

From 1996, under the Coalition government of John Howard, economic rationalism was further pursued in “aggressive and anti-social ways” (Carroli, 1999, p. 35) as evidenced by the Howard government’s drive to privatise previously government owned enterprises such as telecommunications, electricity, gas, etc. (Aulich, 2007). This aggressive pursuit of economic rationalism marks the fourth era of CCD practices and maybe the last in terms of its relationship with the Australia Council.

The years since 1996 can be characterised as years of neglect and cutbacks for the arts in general and CCD practices in particular. Compare, for example, the amount of funds dedicated to CCD practices by the Australia Council in recent years with the funds dedicated to CCD practices in the past and the number of projects or programs funded by these funds. Though the actual amounts dedicated to CCD practices have risen in 2003/04, compared with previous years, the proportion of funds dedicated to CCD practices, compared to the rest of the artforms and the number of projects and programs funded (Graph 1), have dramatically been reduced (Graph 2).

The impact of the Howard government’s budget cuts on CCD practices is clear. So is the impact of its reforms. Once again the focus of the arts in general, and CCD practices in particular, is on ‘artistic excellence’, innovative art, audience development, emerging artists and the (economic) development of regional Australia (Australia Council, 2006a, p. 7).

Since December 2004, the destabilisation of CCD practitioners, their practices and affiliated professionals seems to have quickened pace with the dramatic restructuring of the Australia Council, resulting in the demise of the CCDB. In December 2004, the Australia Council announced the dismantling in stages of the CCDB and related programs and the relegation of the management of the CCD portfolio to a newly created unit called Community Partnerships. This relegation of authority to the Community Partnership Unit indicates a loss of legitimacy and autonomy for CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals and maybe too the end of this historical relationship between CCD practitioners and their practices and the Australia Council.
Graph 1: Proportion of funds dedicated to the CCDB compared to the total Australia Council funds between 1973 and 2004 (Australia Council, 1973; 1980; 1990; 2004).
Graph 2: Number of CCD projects and programs funded in full or part by the Australia Council’s dedicated funds and boards between 1973 and 2004 (Australia Council, 1973; 1980; 1990; 2004).

The restructuring of the Australia Council was presented as crucial to the survival of the arts sector. As Jennifer Bott, the Australia Council’s CEO, argued, the changes were implemented to help the government body take a greater leadership role in the sector and for the arts to get back on the national agenda. More specifically, she stated:

*The Australia Council has to drive improvements in the arts sector, by building the capabilities of artists and arts organisations, and by looking for ways to increase support for the arts from all sources* (Dimasi, 2005, p. 2).

Several reasons were offered for the change. One reason was to see this change as a way of improving CCD practitioners’ relationship with the Australia Council (Australia Council, 2006a). Another related reason was the incapacity to meet all the demands for funding, inflated by the funding opportunities and advocacy work of the CCDB, as suggested by this statement by Bott:

*The Board acknowledges that the spectrum of community arts is far broader than it is able to support ... It is clear that the success of the work of this Board and its predecessors has contributed significantly to an increasing community demand for arts experiences at a community level* (Australia Council, 2005b, p. 3).

Though the years since the restructuring of the Australia Council have been difficult years for CCD practitioners and bureaucrats, they have also prompted the resurgence
of vitality amongst the most established and new guard of practitioners. Indeed, this restructuring incited the creation of the National Arts and Culture Alliance (NACA) in 2005, mirroring the creation of the NCAC spurred on by disruptions to the Australia Council under Fraser’s government (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 53–54).

This history shows that the production and consumption of arts is complex and closely linked to the political history of Australia. It also shows, though, that this relationship is not as simple as one might have expected from fairly regular political swings between Liberal and Labor governments and their related impact on the internal operations of the Australia Council. It is not as simple a relationship as politicians from the Left supporting the production of community-produced, alternative or radical arts versus politicians of the Right exclusively supporting a certain kind of ‘excellence’ in the arts. This historical account also shows that the development of CCD has been influenced by a combination of political swings at the federal government level according to Prime Ministers’ and their cabinets’ dominant ideology as well as by the ripple effects of decisions and policy statements made in relation to the arts in general, and CCD practices in particular, within preceding eras and governments and the taste and values of influential people in positions of power. Further, it shows that regardless of the rhetorical desire to establish an independent government body to manage the arts portfolio at a federal level (unaffected and removed from unnecessary restraints and official pressures) development in the arts, including ‘CCD’, were affected by changes of governments. Further, this history shows that this relationship between CCD practitioners and CCD bureaucrats was a two-way relationship, where, at different times, CCD practitioners have sought support and advice from CCD bureaucrats, while at other times bureaucrats have sought support and advice from practitioners.

2.7 Conclusion

With this review I have provided a brief history of CCD practices that outlined the major ideological stakes involved in defining an egalitarian art form. What this review shows is that, though what is now accepted and funded as CCD practices is different to what might have been funded in the early to mid-1970s when the Australia Council
was created, there has been continuity in the existence of CCD as a set of practices. The elements that indicate continuity include what most CCD practitioners agree defines CCD practices: a particular set of processes used by CCD practitioners with a particular group of people towards particular social and political changes. They also include particular kinds of CCD aesthetic products, discourses about them, and a close relationship to the Australia Council.

What this review also shows is that, with the advent of government funding, a group of ‘players’, constituted of primary producers (artists or CCD practitioners) and secondary producers (politicians, bureaucrats, etc.), have established an interest in promoting CCD practices as an egalitarian art with an ‘inclusive’ purpose. In addition, it shows these ‘players’ competing over scarce resources and definitions of what they espouse ‘CCD’ should be and should aim to achieve, which leads me to conclude that ‘CCD’ can also be defined as a social space of production and consumption of aesthetic and non-aesthetic culture or what Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 102–104) calls a field or subfield.

Further, as a result of this review, I have highlighted that ‘CCD’ practices are a set of practices that bring different definitions of ‘culture’ together. This relationship between CCD and culture is, however, more problematic than these discourses and practices allow for because of the confusion that exists around ‘culture’ as a concept. This confusion impacts directly on the specific workings of CCD practices and practitioners. I address this issue in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3 – Method and methodology

3.1 Introduction

My critical review of practices and discourses associated with CCD has, firstly, highlighted the minimal attention given to the analysis of the aesthetic products it generates and, secondly, introduced the notion that CCD can be usefully defined, in Bourdieuan terms, as a subfield of cultural production. In this chapter, I begin to tease out the implications of these initial conclusions, looking more closely at the uses of ‘culture’ in relation to ‘community’ and ‘development’. In particular, I consider how and why the production of potentially subversive cultural products by so-called ‘marginal communities’ is supported not only by the ‘primary producers’ within the subfield of CCD (that is, CCD practitioners) and various ‘secondary producers’ (CCD bureaucrats and affiliated professionals) but also, in some cases, by members of what Bourdieu calls the field of power, or people in positions of power, despite their typical preference for dominant, ‘legitimated’ forms of culture.

As an evaluator, my usual approach to assessing the significance of a CCD project would be to use an ‘objective-based’ evaluation approach characterised by a combination of survey and interview tools, mostly drawn from Anthropology, together with an analysis comparing project outcomes to goals set before the project. In this case, however, I am seeking to go beyond simply assessing the project’s level of success and realise the limitations of my usual tools of analysis. Capturing the relationship between the production and consumption of culture, CCD practices and efficacy and understanding the ways in which CCD practices can produce elements of culture that might lead to socially and politically efficacious changes for participants, is a complex task that requires a multifaceted approach.

For this reason, the analysis of ethnographic data from the Urban Theatre Projects case-study, to be presented in Part 2 of this thesis, relies on a triangulation of approaches which I will introduce below: methods drawn from Bourdieu’s sociology of human relations, a performance analysis framework and an objective-based evaluation approach. The comparison of findings from these different methods enables me to better understand the gap between the claims made in discourses of
efficacy and the observable changes for participants in CCD projects or programs, as well as providing a clearer understanding of the role and place of CCD practices in the Australian social and political landscape. First, however, I review the findings, and methodological limitations, of some seminal studies of CCD which have been based on a more conventional objective-based evaluation approach.

3.2 The evaluation of CCD projects and programs

The claims that CCD practices are efficacious in bringing about social and political changes for participants are supported not only by the anecdotal evidence of practitioners reporting on their experiences but also by an increasing number of formal evaluation initiatives carried out by practitioners themselves and/or affiliated professionals aimed at assessing to what degree participation in arts-related activities in general, and CCD practices in particular, makes a difference to people’s lives, including ways in which it might redress issues of social inequity.

It is my observation that in Australia there is already a quite substantial literature on the evaluation of CCD practices and an increasing number of reports looking at specific projects and their outcomes. Indeed, it is increasingly demanded of CCD practitioners that they provide (in grant acquittals, for instance) evidence of the efficacy and outcomes of their work, an expectation which has been prompted by the need for the government bodies that fund their practices to justify to politicians and other people in positions of power their level of spending on the arts in general, and the need to fund on an exclusive basis CCD practices in particular. It is also prompted by the need of practitioners who wish to advocate for further support of their practice to have available for sponsors (government bodies, NGOs, charitable foundations etc.) some form of ‘hard’ evidence (or, at least, the appearance thereof) regarding the benefits to communities of participating in CCD practices and their overall value (e.g. their cost-effectiveness compared to other forms of social intervention).

This evaluation literature provides a great deal of data, available to members of the CCD subfield and to the general public, on the social and cultural impact for participants in CCD projects and programs and it is worth examining: not only does it support some claims made by practitioners, it also clearly informs some of the
funding and policy decisions of bureaucrats. Moreover, these evaluations are one way in which the relationship between CCD practices and ‘culture’ is discussed in the subfield. For my purposes here, they are also worth examining because the strengths and limitations of their methodology have informed the approach I take to my own case study.

There are three major studies that have contributed to a better understanding of CCD practices and their changes. All three can be labelled objective-based evaluations. They include a study by Deidre Williams (1995, 1997), a study by François Matarasso (1997) and a study by Edward Fiske et al (1999). In 1991, Williams carried out a meta-evaluation of over one hundred projects from across Australia. The results were published in two separate reports, one in 1995 and another in 1997 (Williams, 1995, 1997). Williams mostly used questionnaires to gather the data on which her analysis is based. She also, however, used some observation and face-to-face interviews on nine projects, which she decided to evaluate more closely in order to gather more substantial data to cross-reference with the other survey-type data gathered. She then compared her findings to a set of indicators she developed for the occasion to assess CCD practices’ long-term value in terms of ‘social capital’, defined as “the capacity for mutual cooperation towards the collective well-being within a community or wider society” (Williams, 1997, p. 10), a definition of ‘social capital’ more aligned with Robert Putnam’s (1995) beliefs rather than with those of Pierre Bourdieu, which I discuss in Section 3.3 below.

Williams found that CCD practices are economically and socially beneficial to individual participants, because participation in such projects or programs contributes to raising levels of self-confidence, self-esteem, group working skills and understanding of other groups. She also found that CCD projects and programs were beneficial to the wider society because of a ripple effect, created by the aggregation of individual changes, from the local to the regional and public spheres, as well as from the social to the economic spheres. She argued that “[t]he major lasting impact of this kind of work was in developing informed, active and cohesive communities and an improved quality of life” (Williams, 1995, p. 11). Williams’s work is significant because it was influential in shaping some of the Australian public and funding
bodies’ understanding of the impacts these kinds of practices have on participants in terms of social and economic changes. It is also significant because it paved the way for these kinds of meta-evaluations and developed a set of social, rather than economic, indicators to measure change.

Further, Williams’s work was one of several case studies included in François Matarasso’s (1997) seminal meta-evaluation work surveying CCD projects and programs, mostly from across Europe. In this work, Matarasso examined the social impact of participating in CCD projects based on data collected from fifty CCD projects. Using Williams’s indicators (1995), he argued that participation in CCD projects had an important and wide-ranging social impact and contributed to a “stable, confident and creative society” (Matarasso, 1997, p. v). Moreover, he found that participation in CCD projects was a unique and effective means for change: “Participatory arts projects can also be empowering, and help people gain control over their lives ... They encourage people to become more active citizens, and strengthen support of local and self-help projects” (Matarasso, 1997, p. vii).

Fiske et al. (1999) were the first to carry out a longitudinal study, comparing the impact of participation in CCD-type activities with participation in sports activities for young people in the USA. Researchers in this study found that participation in CCD-type activities fostered learning for young people from all backgrounds not only about the arts but also in other disciplines. The authors argued that learning occurred through the arts because it provided a full ‘mind-heart-body’ experience that was meaningful to participants. They also found that the use of arts activities had a greater impact on people labelled ‘hard to reach’ because their application was more relevant and had a broader purpose for those involved. For example, they found that participation in CCD-type activities had a greater impact on those who took part in them than sports activities because it provided participants with a “sense of creation” rather than a sense of “recreation” as well as a “sense of success” rather than a sense of “recess” (Fiske et al., 1999, p. xii). Moreover, they found that participation in CCD-type activities created connections within and between participants and across age groups, transformed any environment into a learning one and enhanced learning
by connecting the experience created through participating in these activities to their lived world.

These three meta-evaluation works are significant contributions to the subfield of CCD. They are key empirical studies (Ferres & Adair, 2005, p. 8; Merli, 2002, p. 107; White & Rentschler, 2005, p. 2) that provide a meaningful and important analysis of the impact of taking part in CCD projects or programs. However, these meta-evaluations have been critiqued for some of their ideological and methodological limitations (Ferres & Adair, 2005; Merli, 2002; White & Rentschler, 2005). These limitations also generally apply to most evaluation works of CCD practices.

First, evaluations of CCD practices are limited because of the range of data gathered. The data gathered is limited because the evaluation tools and frameworks are selective and reductionist and/or inadequate in describing the complexity of what happens. They have not been designed to provide insights into the relationship between change, processes used, the aesthetic experience created and everyday life or to provide a rich enough analysis of the processes of cultural production and consumption. They are especially inadequate in capturing and measuring long-term change as well as the symbolic, unspoken, ‘unthought’ and/or unrealised ideas, actions and/or changes.

Measuring change is complex because it requires being able to track change. This is especially difficult if the assessment occurs after the fact, as is often the case with these evaluations. Indeed, measuring change requires being able to maintain contact with a group of people and being able to measure the unpredictable and unexpected. Change needs to be looked at in relation to what a researcher or a participant imagines might have happened had the participant not taken part in a CCD project or program. Further what might constitute evidence of change for one group of people might not be change for another. Moreover, it is difficult to be sure that any change observed or self-reported is directly and solely attributable to participation in the project studied. It could be, for instance, that the participants attracted to a project were already thinking about change, and seeking ways of making changes. Also, having established evidence of individual change, how does one know whether this is translated into
collective or community change? How can the effects of connectedness and solidarity be assessed?

Second, these kinds of evaluation are often limited because of the political nature of the work involved (McEwen, 2004); that is to say, most evaluation work is quite tightly defined by the purpose for which and the context within which any reports are to be disseminated. Reports are often commissioned by CCD practitioners or bureaucrats for the express purpose of naming achievements (or failures) of practices in order to reward participants or win public or government support. These evaluations are tied to other constraints, such as the often tight guidelines and timeframes imposed, as well as the requirement to fit in with government rhetoric and their need to provide evidence to members of the field of power that the CCD projects or programs they fund through their schemes are effective in addressing social needs (Spilka, 2003/2004). At local and state government levels, there is often a need to be accountable to higher levels of government and people in positions of power for the ways in which their limited resources are spent (Hirschon Weiss, 2003/2004).

Further to this, most evaluators are also advocates of CCD practices. This is certainly the case for Deidre Williams17 and François Matarasso18, as well as for Deborah Mills19 who carried out a recent evaluation of the state of affairs within the subfield of CCD (2006). This is not, of course, to accuse these authors of fabricating results or to

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17 Williams has worked in the subfield for many years as a practitioner, advocate and bureaucrat in positions such as Project Officer with the South Australian Arts Council and Department for the Arts, and eight years as the Executive Officer of Community Arts Network South Australia (Cansa). She is now a freelance arts and cultural development consultant based in South Australia.

18 Matarasso has been involved in the subfield of CCD in the UK since 1980, first as a CCD practitioner and, since 1994, as a freelance writer, researcher and consultant in CCD or community arts practices working for a variety of organisations including national and local government bodies and NGOs. He is currently an Honorary Professor at Gray’s School of Art, Robert Gordon University, UK.

19 Mills is a long-term member of the subfield of CCD, at times working as a practitioner, freelance consultant and bureaucrat. She first worked for the Australia Council as a board member as well as being the CCDB Director between 1987 and 1992. After working as a policy advisor in the subfield for local government and not-for-profit organisations she is now a freelance cultural consultant.
underestimate the relevance of their work. After all, I am not myself a dispassionate and disinterested analyst of CCD practices. This is simply to acknowledge how their work (and my work as an evaluator), tied in as it is with attempts at convincing bureaucrats of the importance of providing ongoing funding for CCD practices, is, at least in part, functioning to help secure some sort of, (admittedly precarious) career path for themselves and other CCD practitioners. This is also to acknowledge that, among other things, this thesis is taking knowledge acquired in the subfield of CCD across into the field of academia (where a different kind of precarious career path might await me).

Because of these conditions and constraints, the evaluation of CCD practices tends to be a narrow comparative analysis of outcomes, an analysis which lacks focus on the broader aspects of cultural and aesthetic production. This lack of focus represents a substantial opportunity loss for the analysis of the cultural and social impact participation in CCD projects and programs has on people and/or the collective (Maxwell & Winning, 2001, pp. 8–9). It also represents a substantial opportunity loss for the analysis of the ritual-like and performative nature of CCD practices. While drawing on some of the insights offered by the work of researchers such as Matarasso and Williams, my own study is not restricted by quite the same time factors, agendas and rhetoric of government bureaucrats, funding concerns or the need to continue being an advocate for CCD practices. This has allowed me to plan this study with a timeframe flexible enough to accommodate the gathering of follow-up interviews and other data several years after the project, thus allowing some insights into mid to longer term outcomes. It has also allowed for the combining of an objective-based evaluation approach with a sociology of human relations and a performance analysis, which I examine next.

### 3.3 Sociology of human relations

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are many contested definitions of ‘culture’. The term ‘culture’ refers to a complex and confusing set of concepts. At the basis of this confusion is the fact that, broadly speaking, ‘culture’ is jointly used as an umbrella term, that attempts to describe the full spectrum of human activities including the way
humans do things (processes inextricable from culture) and the rules (recognised, agreed, negotiated and/or imposed) that dictate human social and political activities and relations, as well as a term used to describe aesthetic cultural products (commodities or ritualistic objects extractable from culture) generated by some human activities (Hannerz, 1996, pp. 30–43; Williams, 1983, pp. 219–224).

Thus, ‘culture’ can be construed as everything humans do or as a small aspect of what humans do. More recently, though, some of these differences of opinion over the term ‘culture’ have come to a critical stage because of an analysis of the present world as globalised or characterised by the uprooting of, or loss of relationship between, elements, which when brought together were considered to make up culture (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 9–13; Hannerz, 1996, pp. 44–55; Lull, 2000, pp. 129–135). In some instances this has led to some vigorous debates about whether the concept of ‘culture’ as a theoretical tool is still useful in developing a better understanding of human relations and creations. Some theorists have come out in defence of the concept while others advocate the use of different concepts (Boggs, 2004; Brumann, 1999; Hannerz, 1996, 1999; Lewis, 2006). Generally speaking, most of the disagreements in the debates are based on the fact that the concept is not specific enough, because it has a multiplicity of sometimes opposing meanings.

Indeed, meanings of ‘culture’ have oscillated over time and according to location and theorists’ perspectives and interests. When focusing on culture as a complete entity, meanings have oscillated between ‘enduring collectivities’ and the ‘universal’, between set of processes and product, between learned and developed (opposed to or ensuing from nature), between uniting and dividing humans (Hannerz, 1996, p. 32) or between a ‘meaningful whole’ or a ‘standard of excellence’, linked to a (romanticised) past or a (utopic) future reflecting a conservative or critical perspective (Hebdige, 1979, pp. 5–19).

To make sense of this conundrum, one theorist I find to be of particular relevance to this study is the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. He developed a theoretical framework to better understand Western capitalist societies and their cultures, in their entirety and complexity. The remainder of this section focuses on some of Bourdieu’s
apparatus and the ways in which I utilise it to answer my core question. Though this thesis makes no claim to being an exhaustive, in-depth application of Bourdieu’s work, his key works on the sociology of cultural production are of interest to me because its application to the analysis of the operations of CCD as a subfield of cultural production suggests some new answers to those long-standing questions about the socio-political efficacy of such practices.

Bourdieu’s sociology focuses on human relations, interactions and transactions with a particular interest in social positions and action. For him societies are areas of regulated relationships between people who belong and/or don’t belong to a particular place, space or time. These relationships are often power relationships where an individual and/or groups of people struggle to impose their rules or vision and compete for the means to achieve this. Thus, Bourdieu shares, with Marx, an understanding of social life based on a notion of conflict. Unlike Marx, though, who argues that these conflicts occur at the macro social levels, through what he calls the class struggle, Bourdieu argues that these conflicts occur at the level of field, between people competing for the limited resources available in the field (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 113–120, 1994, pp. 13–29, 54–57).

This distinction between class and field struggle is important. Indeed, according to Hage (2002a), for Bourdieu, ‘to be’ is to accumulate recognition and “have a capacity to display yourself”. This quantity of being or meaning of life is distributed by society. Societies are competitive and structured in domination. This points to an unequal distribution of rights and power and a competition to fulfil that being. Though this analysis highlights a class conception, Bourdieu argues that societies can’t be analysed simply in terms of social classes and ideologies. Instead, he offers an analysis based on concepts of ‘field’ and ‘habitus’, because as Swartz (1997) states, for Bourdieu, “Cultural practices ... are markers of underlying class distinctions” (p. 143), rather than economic practices or the ownership of means of production.

For Bourdieu, ‘social classes’ are the result of social conditioning. In other words, they are the result of mechanisms of reproduction of culture and structures of
domination. Bourdieu’s concept of social class is twofold: 1) a scientific construct; and 2) “real mobilized social groups” (Swartz, 1997, p. 148) (Bourdieu, 1979a, p. 118–121). ‘Social classes’ are not an identity or cultural forming factor, but a concept used as a way of categorising individuals and groups towards a particular political end, and in relation to the level of ownership of means of economic production. It refers to a network of relationships. In comparison, fields are spaces of social interactions that exist across and beyond classes. In other words, ‘class’ is a political tool that can serve members of the overarching field of power, or meta economic field, as well as members of the lower social hierarchies in their struggle for capital (Bourdieu, 1979a, pp. 112–126).

Bourdieu argues that culture is a system of communication, relations and social hierarchies constitutive of the reproductive process of the conditions of people’s collective existence in a particular time and place (Swartz, 1997, p. 1). This understanding points to culture as being ideologically based: an expression of political content and of the dominant vision specific to a particular place and time. He sees culture as a set of classifications imposed by people in positions of power through social institutions (schools, marriage, governments, etc.) and their homogenising norms or naturalising processes (language, the law, education, etc.) that help reproduce a system of governance. These classifications are based on “des principes de vision et de division communs”\(^{20}\) (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 114) that appear to be coherent, systematic and legitimate. Consequently, it might be said that culture is power, defined as a complex system of signs and its effect on people (Lewis, 2006, p. 11), because its production and consumption maintains and reproduces social hierarchies of “both material and symbolic dimensions” (Swartz, 1997, p. 40).

While Bourdieu seldom uses the term ‘culture’, he developed an elaborate apparatus of concepts to describe the system and mechanisms of production and consumption of

\(^{20}\) “Common principles of vision and division”.

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culture. These concepts include: ‘field’, ‘habitus’, ‘capital’, and ‘interest’. Bourdieu defines ‘fields’ as “structured arenas of conflict” (Swartz, 1997, p. 9) within which practices occur in order to acquire specific forms of capital in accordance with particular (although contestable) regulations. They are spaces, such as political, religious, legal, literary, intellectual, artistic, scientific, bureaucratic, etc., where people compete for positions, goods and services in order to acquire capital. By ‘capital’ Bourdieu refers to a resource that enables people to act as well as provides them with certain marks of recognition and status. Various forms of capital are accumulated according to quite specific logics and values and can generally be converted into economic capital, the most influential form of capital. Though Bourdieu often discusses capital under four banners (social capital, cultural capital, economic capital, symbolic capital), it is important to realise that there are, however, as many forms of capital as there are human interests and as many ‘fields’ as there are capitals. Each capital is distributed throughout a specific field. It is also important to realise that capitals under each banner can in fact represent and mean different things in different contexts according to people’s interests (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243).

Fields are, thus, symbolic spaces that exist because of the specific interests members of those fields have, including an interest in producing particular products or investing oneself in a ‘real life’ ‘game’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 34; Swartz, 1997, pp. 117–119). They are spaces defined by an ‘economy of interest’. This interest can be materialistic, economically deterministic, mechanical as well as non-rational or philanthropic. Moreover, it can be conscious or unconscious as well as explicit or hidden or misread (and appear as self-interest or disinterest) or yet again personal or collective (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 147–168; Swartz, 1997, pp. 65–90).

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21 Later in his work, Bourdieu replaces the term ‘interest’ with ‘illusio’ to highlight the suspension of belief or lack of critical lucidity that underpins people’s investment in a field. In this thesis, however, and contrary to Bourdieu’s more recent usage, I have chosen to continue using the term ‘interest’ because I believe the distinction between conscious and unconscious interest is far more intertwined than what Bourdieu argues for.
This notion of ‘field’ is not only related to the notion of ‘interest’ it is also closely related to the notion of ‘habitus’. As Bourdieu states “the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of a field … [and] habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and with value, in which it is worth investing one’s energy” (Wacquant, 1989, p. 44). ‘Habitus’ describes elements of culture that are the product of a socialising process that predisposes people to value certain things and seek them out. This predisposition is a set of historically constructed structures that are internalised by people to help them to act in given social contexts. More specifically, the experiences humans develop when acquiring their habitus teach them how to act, improvise and strategise or teach them which field(s) to participate in so as to further their interests. Habitus is, thus, internalised subjectivities, or internalised dispositions and tastes that enable people to act, not according to a strict set of rules or norms, but based on lessons learnt from specific historical, situated and contextual experiences. Habitus is learnt and embodied shared beliefs and attitudes about what is possible, probable and impossible within given social contexts. It is what, on a precognitive level, predisposes people to behaving and thinking in particular ways, which in turn leads to a particular social position within particular fields and is the cause of their inheritance of certain forms of capital and capacity to fulfil their potential creativity (Bourdieu, 2000, pp. 256–285; Hage, 2002a). Habitus is also what guarantees the continued dominance of a particular group of people over another because of the internalised and naturalised understanding about people’s social positions, capacity to learn, etc. and the internalised and naturalised relationships between members of given groups or classes of social conditions (Bourdieu, 1979a, pp. 189–195; Swartz, 1997, pp. 95–116).

Having said that, fields also have a relative autonomy from “the material economy in which they are placed” (Moore, 2004, p. 49). Indeed, for Bourdieu, all fields are, by degree, relatively autonomous to the field of power. The degree to which agents can establish their own sense of worth, by seeking to accumulate various forms of capital in accordance with their own logics and regulatory principals and by asserting their particular logic over any particular field, determines the autonomy or dependence of
the given field to the field of power, the overarching, or meta, economic field at the centre of power made visible by its members, the monetarily dominant of society (Swartz, 1997, pp. 126–128). In other words, a field’s autonomy decreases the more its members recognise and legitimise the forms of capital that are of value to members of the field of power (Accardo, 2002, pp. 14–16). Indeed, depending on how autonomous these fields are, each develops its own logics and regulations regarding the accumulation of the particular capital on offer. These ‘regulations’ are adhered to, although they, and the very boundaries of the field, are flexible and can be challenged and changed as agents seek to position themselves as legitimate contenders.

Though Bourdieu’s conceptual framework provides a useful way to approach my core question, I am aware that it doesn’t provide all the answers to what one might want to ask about CCD practices. I am also aware of some of the limitations and criticisms others have made of Bourdieu’s work. For instance, as Swartz recounts (1997, pp. 211–212), some of these limitations and criticisms have included criticisms of his concept of ‘habitus’ as a reductionist and deterministic concept. It was criticised for reducing a motivation for action to a motivation of interest. In addition, it was criticised for its lack of account for change and innovation as he argued that over time habitus is resistant to change. This critique of lack of account for change and innovation was also levelled at his concept of ‘field’ as an analysis lacking the “actual processes of political action and mobilization” (Swartz, 1997, p. 293), as Swartz argues. These limitations and criticisms are often attributed to Bourdieu’s work, though, mostly because of the limitations in the readings of his work (Swartz, 1997, pp. 211–217).

It is not my purpose, though, to enter these debates, because of the constraints of this thesis. Further these critics don’t take away the strength of Bourdieu’s conceptual apparatus in highlighting mechanisms of consumption and reproduction of culture. What I must consider, however, is whether Bourdieu’s conceptual apparatus is applicable to Australia’s society in general (a society popularly believed to be or described as a relatively classless society) and its field of cultural production in particular.
Bourdieu’s conceptual apparatus was taken up in Australia by some social theorists to discuss various aspects of Australian society and culture. Arguably, the first significant Bourdieuean study of Australian society and culture is Ghassan Hage’s (2000) analysis of the relationship between nationalism and multiculturalism in Australia in the 1990s. Drawing on elements of Bourdieu’s apparatus, such as ‘cultural capital’ and ‘field of power’, Hage focuses on the ways in which notions of ‘white’ nationalism are reproduced and reinforced by discourses and practices of multiculturalism. He argues that ‘whiteness’ can be defined as a form of capital that has been legitimised by some members of the Australian field of power and the field of media.

Another significant study of Australian society inspired by Bourdieu’s work in *La Distinction* (1979a) is that of Tony Bennett, John Frow and Michael Emmison (1999), which examines patterns of cultural consumption in Australian society in the 1990s. They argue that, as Bourdieu’s analysis demonstrates for France in the 1960s and the 1980s, there exists in Australia class-based cultural distinction. Indeed, they argue that those with the most cultural capital are members of the most-educated classes, and thus that members of lower classes are disadvantaged in this area because of their restricted levels of cultural practice (Bennett, Frow, & Emmison, 1999, p. 268). For this study, the authors apply a great deal of Bourdieu’s apparatus. They, also, however, reject some elements of Bourdieu’s apparatus as inadequate in capturing Australia’s everyday social life. More specifically, though the authors argue that Australia is a class-based society, they reject Bourdieu’s conception of class (the sixteen-level typology of class fractions that he develops in *La Distinction*) (Bourdieu, 1979a) as unsuitable in understanding the relationship between class and culture in Australia. Instead they adopt a neo-Marxist definition of class defined by people’s relationship to the means of production (Bennett, Frow, & Emmison, 1999, pp. 17–23). Though I do not agree with the authors’ division of Australian society into seven distinct classes (employers, self-employed, managers, professionals, para-professionals, supervisors and manual workers), I too espouse, in this study, a similar neo-Marxist concept of social class. For this I draw on Kuhn (2005), McGregor (1997) and O’Lincoln’s (1996) social class analyses of Australia, where they define
Australian society in terms of ruling (or upper), middle and working (or lower) classes.

A further analysis of the Australian field of cultural production that applies a Bourdieuean approach has been carried out by Paul Moore (2004). In his analysis of the Australian field of actor training and acting, Moore argues that though Bourdieu’s findings on his analysis of French society in the 1980s is not applicable to the Australian situation, his conceptual apparatus is an appropriate approach to analyse the Australian field of cultural production in general, and theatre in particular. He concludes that the Australian field of cultural production is more dependent on members of the field of power than its French counterpart (Moore, 2004, pp. 78–162). I come back to this discussion in more detail in Chapter 6.

Thus, despite these limitations and challenges in applying Bourdieu’s conceptual apparatus to the Australian context in general, and to this case study in particular, it remains important to my enquiry in that it enables me to examine ‘CCD’ as a set of practices as well as a subfield. This is significant because it places an emphasis on CCD practitioners, as primary producers and agents, making strategic decisions about their relationship with each other, decisions about their relationship with secondary producers, such as bureaucrats, other affiliated professionals and members of ‘marginal communities’, and decisions about their practices of production and consumption of culture, ultimately aimed at improving their economic, social and political status or that of the ‘marginal communities’ they work with. Moreover, Bourdieu’s apparatus is useful because it helps me understand the broader relationship between ‘CCD’ as part of mechanisms and structures of social and cultural (re)production and ‘CCD’ as ‘special event’, which I discuss next.

3.4 Performance analysis

When Australian and international CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals argue that participation in CCD projects and programs is efficacious, they often point to three major reasons. First, because of CCD practitioners’ use of creative and artistic processes and strategies and their association with the realm of the imagination and the use of metaphor (Clark, 2002, p. 103; Cohen-Cruz, 2002, p. 3; Matarasso, 1997, p. 78
such as role-play (Brice Heath, 2000, pp. 4–12) and storytelling (Haring-Smith, 2001). Second, because of CCD practitioners’ use of participatory processes and their capacity to create a sense of community (Ball & Keating, 2002, pp. 46–47; Lowe, 2000, Matarasso, 1997, pp. 59–60; Rose, 1997a; Williams, 1997). Third, the combination of these two processes which can be seen as a form of “communal enactment” (Haring-Smith, 2001, p. 287), or a way of communicating a sense of community and social order.

What these practitioners and affiliated professionals are hinting at here are the ritual-like, including performative, aspects of CCD practices. Arguably, in the context of an analysis of performance or theatre-based CCD practices, Baz Kershaw’s concepts of potential efficacy and ideological or performance crisis (1992); and Don Handelman’s (1990) work on rituals and their relationship to action and change in the wider context of the everyday life, are useful in understanding the relationship and potential for change for participants who take part in CCD projects and programs in general, and TLN in particular. While Kershaw’s analysis of the conditions required to establish the potential efficacy of performances is a useful tool in understanding the ways in which performance or theatre-based CCD practices can be efficacious, Handelman’s analysis of the relationship between special events, including performances, and everyday life is useful in understanding the kind of influence special events have on changing everyday life and vice versa.

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, I am particularly interested in theatre or performance-based CCD projects; that is, theatre or performances produced and consumed with, by and for a given ‘community’. This kind of performance is closely related to ritual-like practices and activities. I am aware that, as with the concept of ‘culture’, drawing on the concept of ‘performance’ is entering yet another minefield (the territory, amongst others, of Performance Studies theorists). It is, however, important for me to draw on this concept as its theorists highlight some of the complex relationships between cultural production, participation, social change and everyday life.
3.4.1 Potential efficacy

Kershaw’s framework of potential efficacy offers an analysis of community-based theatrical performances in the UK in the 1960s and 1980s. His analysis can be applied to Australia today, as the history of Australian community theatre and CCD has, arguably, many similarities with that of the British alternative theatre movement. Indeed, the UK and Australian contexts have a similar ideological coherence and similar heterogeneity in their form, content and outcome.

Building on Schechner’s (1974) analysis of the complex relationship between efficacy and entertainment, rituals and theatre, Kershaw’s framework of potential efficacy, or performance efficacy, highlights some (dependent) conditions, which, he argues, are present in performances, or forms of cultural intervention, made for, with and in a given community that seek to develop oppositional popular culture, or a counter culture, and engage with relevant moral issues. These forms of cultural intervention are potentially efficacious, or have the potential to effect social change, because they have the potential to influence “the community and culture of the audience, and the historical evolution of wider social and political realities” (Kershaw, 1992, p. 258).

Kershaw defines these conditions by drawing out common elements of exemplary theatrical performances that he describes as having had an impact on culture and societies at a macro-level. By bringing together these common elements he establishes a theoretical framework that is, he argues, not only relevant to alternative or community theatre, but to all kinds of theatrical performances. He argues performers and directors can foster these conditions, and thus can create a potentially efficacious practice. Further, he argues that, in an ideal situation, performance works can lead to ‘real’ changes at a macro social and political, individual, collective and structural level through the establishment of these major conditions. It is worth emphasising, though, that this is an ideal situation, which Kershaw doesn’t describe as in opposition to a more nuanced analysis of change, where the promotion of change, rather than change in itself, also has its place and benefits. In what follows I discuss these controllable conditions as three related conditions.

One condition is to create a playful (or ludic) and familiar, or non-threatening
environment. The playful environment is mostly established by the early gathering phases and social frames that mark out the performance as a ‘liminoid’ experience which Victor Turner defines as an experience gained from participating in an event which is

... historically connected with and often displace rituals which possess true liminal phases, and ... also share important characteristics with liminal processes and states, such as “subjectivity”, escape from the classifications of everyday life, symbolic reversals, destruction – at a deep level – of social distinctions, and the like (1979, p. 491).

The meaning, role and place of ‘play’ in society is contested and complex. Most Performance Studies theorists agree, though, that ‘play’ is an important element of human societies. For some, it is important because it has “the potential for enacting self-awareness, through the creation of special events” (Lewis, 2006, p. 6). For others, it is important because it is “a mode of activity whose spatial, temporal, and symbolic ‘in betweenness’ allows for social norms to be suspended, challenged, played with, and perhaps even transformed” (McKenzie, 2003, p. 27). Furthermore, ‘play’ creates on the one hand a “role distance” (Goffman cited in Handelman, 1990, p. 100) while on the other it creates dependency or mutuality through the use of rules players must adhere to. ‘Play’ can also be conceived as a way of making sense and gaining control (Handelman, 1990, p. 104). In addition, underpinning the concept of ‘play’ are concepts of magic, make believe (Bateson cited in Handelman, 1990, pp. 99–100) and a sharing of experience. Whether ‘play’ is seen as a part of a special event or as part of everyday life, it is an essential element of potential efficacy because ‘play’ contains its own power of reproduction (Handelman, 1990, pp. 100–104).

A performance is made familiar through the use of “conventions or signs which enable the spectator to recognise and react to a performance as a particular type of theatre event” (Kershaw, 1992, p. 257). These are what Kershaw calls, following Elizabeth Burns (1972), rhetorical conventions. The content of a performance also requires a certain level of familiarity. This is important if the performance and performers are to engage spectators with the ideas presented or played with in the performance. To this end, a performance needs to draw on and present beliefs,
customs, ideas, signs and events that point to a given community’s sense of identity. This is what Kershaw calls the authenticating conventions:

... conventions or signs through which the spectator establishes a relationship between the ‘fictions’ of performance and the nature of the ‘real world’ of his/her socio-political experience (especially its values/norms, etc.) (Kershaw, 1992, p. 257).

Another condition in establishing a performance’s efficacy is the presence of an ideological crisis. An ideological crisis is the intended result of a series of moments that challenge spectators’ taken-for-granted assumptions about particular moral issues. These moments, carefully seeded in the structure of a performance, serve to create a major break in the expectations that have previously been set up in the performance through some other major paradigm (McAuley, 1998). An ideological crisis is thus “the effect produced by a breaking or rupturing of the rules/laws/norms which govern the uses of conventions/signs (authenticating and rhetorical) in performance” (Kershaw, 1992, p. 257). The breaking of the rules relies on the presence of elements in the performance that challenge the community’s ideology and blur the lines between the authenticating and rhetorical conventions so that spectators are unsure about what is real and not real. It is the creation of a disjunction between what spectators have come to expect, or what, in the first part of a performance, they are often led to believe will happen, and what actually happens in the second part of a performance. In other words, it is the point when the specific social role within this playful and liminal-like context spectators expect to fulfil (or the ‘horizon of expectation’) is played with by the performance and its performers.

Thus, a potentially efficacious performance is one that draws on elements of ceremony, as a natural cultural resource, and manipulates narratives and symbols, drawn from the past, the everyday life, to comment on the here and now of a given community and its culture. It is a performance that attracts, engages and challenges by presenting a narrative and form that is both familiar and playful while also being confrontual. It is a performance that strikes a balance between being populist and oppositional in its nature, between its playful and ideological aspects and between being real and not real.
A final condition in establishing a performance’s efficacy is the performance or theatre makers’ intention to create an “oppositional popular culture” (Kershaw, 1992, p. 7). It is the intention to create a performance or piece of theatre that has a populist impulse, to “appeal to an ever expanding audience” (Kershaw, 1992, p. 7), as well as seeks to make a difference in naming and changing the world. Achieving this intention of creating a counter-cultural movement that seeks popularity and opposition is where the challenge lies for performance or theatre-makers. This is a challenge because it is a balancing act. Indeed a performance that appeals to a wide range of audiences (from the converted to the resistant or unfamiliar with the ideas dealt with), however oppositional it might be, runs the risk of being incorporated into mainstream culture and governments’ policies and discourses to the point of losing its meaning and intention.

It is unclear, though, what constitutes that balancing point where a performance can be populist and oppositional without being usurped of its intentions. Because of that, Kershaw’s framework can be criticised for side-stepping the issue of efficacy. Indeed, this analysis does raise some important questions, such as: what constitutes evidence of change (besides a riot)?; what is the recommended balance between authenticating and rhetorical conventions?; or what is the relationship between performances and their impact outside of the local theatrical space, into the global? (Kruger, 1993). Kershaw only suggests that performances that are potentially efficacious have the potential to bring about social and political changes of a collective nature as individual people’s commitment and choices of change spread through a ripple effect caused by an aggregation of individual changes to their community and culture, then to the wider social spheres. It might be that this potential is accumulated and activated or accessed when hard times come. Thus, it is a potential that can only be measured in cases of extreme changes or crises (Beck, 2003, p. 207).

Further, though with his concept of potential efficacy, Kershaw sets up a framework to discuss conditions under which social and political change can be triggered, he fails to provide the tools to carry out an analysis of moments of ideological crises in relation to each other and in relation to the performance as a whole. To address this issue I draw on Gay McAuley’s performance analysis schema (1998) and Don
Handelman’s public events analysis framework (1990) (which I come to in the following section). McAuley’s socio-semiotic schema (1998) is a practical tool which provides a structured way of establishing the meaning of a performance through the analysis of the relationship between the performance’s presentational system (the material signifiers and the patterns, such as repetitions, contrasts, redundancies, etc., they form) and its narrative structure of fictional events (the story told and its segmentations).

Kershaw also fails to provide the tools to contextualise a performance and its moments of ideological crisis outside the performance context. In doing so his framework fails to take into account the kinds of dense imbrications and conflicting interests at play in such work. To overcome this weakness in Kershaw’s model, I support and extend my analysis of those moments of ideological crises with an ethnographic study, which I discuss later in this chapter.

Notwithstanding these limitations, Kershaw’s framework is interesting for several reasons. First, Kershaw considers a performance as a transaction and ongoing negotiation of an ideological nature between performers and audiences. In other words, he considers it to be a relationship between two sets of active participants or agents (performers and spectators), that interact and negotiate in order to create and develop meaning and conventions. This is appealing to me because it enables me to draw parallels between Kershaw’s framework and a Bourdieuean analysis of CCD practices. Second, Kershaw’s framework takes into consideration not just the events happening on stage, but also “all the events in and around the staging of a show, including everything done in preparation (the ‘gathering phase’) and in the aftermath (the ‘disposal phase’) of the production itself” (Kershaw, 1992, p. 257). Third, it is interesting because it offers processes and strategies (attracting, engaging and challenging) underpinning the major conditions (familiarity, playful, ideological crisis) that match common models of CCD practices (engagement, participation, change) (Slattery, 2001; Sonn, Drew, & Kasat, 2002; Thiele & Marsden, 2002). Finally, Kershaw’s framework is interesting because it helps to addresses issues around the relationship between ideology and socio-political change and an aesthetic experience made in, for and with a specific community, however mindful he is of the
difficulties in measuring the actual impact of such work outside of the performance space, let alone on a global scale.

3.4.2 Events that present, re-present and model

Handelman is an anthropologist who developed a framework for the analysis of ‘public events’. Most of his analysis is based on the study of Israel’s public holidays and other public holidays and celebrations such as the French Bastille Day and Mumming in Newfoundland, Canada. His conceptual framework of ‘public events’ (1990) is a complementary tool to Kershaw’s framework because Handelman offers a classification of events (‘events-that-present’ and ‘events-that-re-present’ and ‘events-that-model’) which is helpful in nuancing Kershaw’s argument that all performances have the potential for some sort of efficacy (Kershaw, 1992). Further, unlike Kershaw who focuses on ideal conditions and the relationship between efficacy and an aesthetic experience, Handelman focuses on the relationship between social and cultural activities and everyday life and draws attention to actual conditions that lead public events to effect change in everyday life.

As briefly stated in Chapter 1, in his book Models and Mirrors, Handelman (1990) examines the place and role of public events in society. He argues that public events can be seen as one of three types of events according to their capacity to affect a given social order or lived-in world: ‘events-that-present’, ‘events-that-re-present’ and ‘events-that-model’. Handelman defines ‘events-that-present’ the lived world as axiomatic icons of versions of realities “designed to arouse emotion and to evoke sentiment” (Handelman, 1990, p. 42). They are “declaratives and imperatives and not interrogatives” (Handelman, 1990, p. 41). In that sense, they are selective mirrors that reflect a version of social order that reinforces established or dominant significance.

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22 Bastille Day is France’s national day. It is celebrated in France on 14 July every year to commemorate the storming of the Bastille, in Paris, on the same day in 1789, during the French Revolution. It is seen as the symbol of the birth of the modern French nation.

23 Mumming, or mumming, is reminiscent of some of the European carnivals, with the presence of elements of disguise, grotesque and inversion of the mundane. It occurs during the Christmas period of plays and parades (Handelman, 1990, p. 57).
and meaning. Events that fall within this category are characterised by the fact that they are a synecdoche, defined as a part, simplification and reduction of an event that behaves like the whole, a microcosm that is controllable and can also affect the whole. They are also characterised by their historical relevance to a particular social and cultural context (Handelman, 1990, pp. 41–49). One set of event-that-presents are Anzac Day memorials in Australia. Anzac stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Anzac Day is celebrated in Australia on 25 April every year to commemorate the landing of Australian and New Zealand troops at Gallipoli, Turkey, on the same day in 1915 during the First World War. This is an important event in Australia because it symbolises some defining values of Australia’s dominant national identity, such as the ‘Aussie battler’ and the ‘fair go’, which helped this event become “the major marker of Australian nationhood, rather than Australia Day, which commemorates the landing of the first convict settlers from England in the eighteenth century” (Handelman, 1990, p. 153).

Handelman describes ‘events-that-re-present’ the lived world as characterised by the fact that they are synecdochal and historically, socially and culturally relevant (two conditions that define ‘events that presents’), but also characterised by an explicit purpose and the existence of procedures to make change happen (Handelman, 1990, pp. 49–58). They are also events that offer multiple visions of social order that enable people to compare and contrast social realities. They express doubt and conflicts about the legitimacy and validity of social order through the use of playful inversions and contradictions. This concept of inversion is a concept I draw on in the latter parts of my discussion in this thesis. The concept of inversion is based on a binary opposition (high/low, true/false, etc.) of moralities and social hierarchies (Stallybrass & White, 1997, p. 298). It is a sort of ‘inside out’ logic, in which playfulness is key. It is a parody of everyday life that kills the everyday life in order to give it birth again (Bakhtin, 1968, pp. 11–21). The inversion of social rules is often made visible by the playful sacrifice of recognised members of the field of power, such as politicians. The power of inversion is in creating “altered boundaries of relevance” (Handelman, 1990, p. 98), around a shared experience. Through such playful inversions, participants in these events make sense and gain a certain degree of control over their everyday life.
They also invert social order by withdrawing from the norm, which enables them to comment on the seriousness of the everyday life, without jeopardising their place or situation in a given group. This type of event is, however, not transformative, as the inversions and contradictions are contained and offer no real alternative to the established norms. Rather, ultimately, the inversions and contradictions offer a restatement of established values. In that sense, thus, this type of event is partly oppositional, but mostly integrative (Handelman, 1990, p. 107). An example of ‘events-that-re-present’ includes the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in Sydney, Australia. The Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras started out as a protest in March 1978 and became a month-long annual event culminating in a parade down Oxford St, Paddington. It is a celebration of “difference through the pleasure and spectacle of carnival” (Hawkins, 1993, p. xvii) which functions as a public expression of ‘community’ for people who identify as homosexuals (Hawkins, 1993, pp. xvii, 128–131).

Handelman defines ‘events-that-model’ the lived world as events that directly affect social realities (Handelman, 1990, pp. 23–41). These events include characteristics of ‘events-that-present’ and ‘events-that-re-present’ in that they are characterised by the fact that they are synecdochal, that they are historically, socially and culturally relevant (two conditions that define ‘events-that-present’) and that they have an explicit purpose and procedures to make change happen. They are also characterised by their capacity to be self-regulatory, or to monitor their own development and stage of procedures as well as by the presence of elements of conflicts and contradictions that the event solves through internal mechanisms as it unfolds. An example of an ‘event-that-models’ includes the event of May 1968 in France. May 1968 is a significant example of large-scale change brought about by the mobilisation of a significant number of people. Widespread discontent over social and economic conditions created a social and political crisis in France. The resulting extensive movements of protest, led to significant social and political changes, such as the passing of bills changing the university system and the organisation of presidential elections (Halbert, 1998; Wacquant, 2006, pp. 12–13).
Though Handelman is unclear as to what constitutes processes of transformation, he argues that this type of event is transformative because there is a risk that elements of uncertainty and instability might extend outside of the established social order into the lived-in world and be disruptive and/or destructive of that established social order (Handelman, 1990, p. 31). According to Handelman, though, these ‘events-that-model’ are rare occurrences around the world. Indeed, he argues that most events can be categorised as ‘events-that-present’ or ‘events-that-re-present’.

As does Handelman, I believe that special events (or what he calls public events, such as performances, ceremonies, rituals, celebrations, play, drama and fun) have an important role to play in society, which includes to communicate a coherent message, to index social order and to present “ways of signifying order in the worlds of their participants” (Handelman, 1990, p. 8), which are otherwise usually diluted in everyday life. However, as Errington argues (1991, p. 123), because of a lack of substantial discussion in Handelman’s work about “how the politics of culture affect public events”, I complement Handelman’s analysis of public events with that of Bourdieu’s conceptual apparatus.

This aside, Handelman’s categorisation of public events according to their function and capacity to effect change in the wider social contexts is of particular interest to me, not only because it presents special or public events as devices of praxis (reflection and action) that merge “the ideal and the real, to bring into close conjunction ideology, practice, attitude and action” (Handelman, 1990, p. 16), but also because he sees such events, that might include community-based performances and practices, as both limiting and efficacious in bringing about change. As he writes: “[t]hey are configurations of potential dynamism that both exercise and limit possibilities of empowerment within social orders” (Handelman, 1990, p. 7). This is significant because it highlights the difference between intentions, or potential, and actual happenings, a difference between cognitive and precognitive behaviours and responses. These precognitive responses are important to consider when applying Bourdieu’s conceptual apparatus, as one is aware that cognitive responses do not always reflect actual behaviours.
3.5 An ethnographic investigation

Having outlined some guiding concepts and hypotheses, I now need to outline the methodology used in my ethnographic fieldwork, beginning with the choice of Urban Theatre Projects’ The Longest Night (TLN) as my central case study. One point which is worth noting up front is the preference of Alicia Talbot, UTP’s Artistic Director on TLN, for describing the work as one of the company’s “community collaborations” rather than using the label ‘CCD’. Though this has not always been the case\textsuperscript{24}, this may well reflect a recent (more or less conscious) desire on her part to avoid some of the issues about aesthetic judgment discussed in Chapter 2 and to create more opportunities for her work beyond local spheres of influence. Nevertheless, TLN fits quite comfortably within the parameters of what I have been describing in this thesis as CCD practice for a number of reasons. For one thing, the project can be strongly characterised in terms of the five elements which, as I argued in Chapter 2, are constitutive of many other CCD practices: TLN was implemented using participatory and creative processes, it engaged with a ‘marginal community’, it had intended efficacious goals, it generated an aesthetic product that did not belong to the category of institutionalised, valued and recognised art, such as the ballet or the opera, and, most tellingly, the project was significantly funded by the Australia Council’s CCDB, as much of the company’s other work has been over a long period of time.

UTP’s reputation as a company doing aesthetically innovative but also socially and politically challenging work, in and with communities, has attracted a lot of interest, nationally and internationally, from researchers, practitioners and students, leading to requests for mentoring and numerous evaluation and analyses of its work (Burvill, 2001; Foster, 2003; Hammond, 1994; Maxwell, 1999; Maxwell & Winning, 2001; Mitchell, 1998; Reid, 2000; van Erven, 2001). UTP presents itself today as creating “distinctive new theatre works based on a process of dialogue between contemporary theatre practice and Sydney’s diverse communities” (UTP, 2006b). However, in its

\textsuperscript{24} In 2000, Alicia Talbot described her practice as combining the roles of “professional artist but also as a community cultural development worker” (Talbot, Interview, 2000).
former guise as Death Defying Theatre (DDT), the company was already working with and in communities in 1983 (two years after its inception) with its first grant from the Australia Council, provided under the Art and Working Life scheme (Spinks, 1992, pp. 155–156). As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, the company has, over the years, produced a variety of performance experiences ranging from agitprop, to theatre-in-education, community collaborations and contemporary performances. It is today one of only a few companies still in operation from what was once the vibrant subfield or movement of community theatre. Also, it is one of a small number (twenty-eight) of companies funded under the Australia Council’s key organisation or triennial funding schemes. Further, in the six years before the CCDB was dismantled (2000–2005), UTP received more funds for their work than any other theatre company engaged in CCD activities (Mills, 2006, p. 96).

A second reason for selecting TLN as a case study is that I saw it as having the capacity to overcome many of the constraints to which CCD practitioners most often mention when discussing the limitations of their work: this was to be a CCD project in which any shortcomings in terms of its success at meeting intended goals could not simply be attributed to a lack of recognition, a lack of focus on the quality of the aesthetic product generated, bad planning, incompetence or lack of understanding of the practices and skills required to lead a collaborative art-making project, lack of time, resources and support, etc. (McEwen, 2002b). Indeed, TLN was a project that was largely funded by the Adelaide Festival and the Australia Council for a team of CCD practitioners and performers led by Alicia Talbot to collaborate over nine months with young residents from The Parks, a low-socio-economic area of Adelaide, on issues of belonging and change in order to devise a performance that was premiered at the Adelaide Festival in 2002.

Third, in hindsight and as I have already alluded to, TLN was a pertinent choice of case study because it was devised just prior to the restructuring of the Australia Council and the resulting loss of the CCDB in 2005. The combination of those three reasons make TLN an exemplary case study that seemed to have a greater potential than most CCD projects or programs to achieve some social and political efficacious
changes and offer a better opportunity to analyse the relationship between processes, aesthetic product and change.

Data from this case study was gathered over a five-year period, combining ethnography, focusing on agency, structural analysis and statistical inquiry. This provided ample and rich data, of a cognitive and precognitive nature, to understand actual changes and reasons for people’s involvement with this project. This length of period also, however, created some challenges especially in maintaining contact with all my informants, because of a high number of transient people among them and because of the effects of the forced relocation program of Housing Trust tenants, implemented in The Parks as part of the Westwood (Parks) Urban Renewal Project. Nevertheless, though I was, at times, only able to personally contact or follow up with a few of them, I was able to find information (and cross-reference it) about informants’ circumstances.

I gathered data as an external observer as well as an internal participant. My role in this project was as a researcher observer, but also as a volunteer member of UTP’s team, lending a hand in workshops and sessions whenever needed. By shadowing UTP’s artistic team members, observing participants and Parks workers as well as, on some occasions, participating in the project as facilitator, I was able to observe processes used to engage with potential and, later, actual participants. I was also able to document events and activities in a chronological manner. The data gathered was then organised according to two broad categories of community and artistic development practices, which enabled me to reveal a model of practice and enabled me to compare and cross-reference data gathered in different situations.

This dual role carried with it some difficulties. First, these difficulties included the difficulty of being socially situated in the context one is analysing while trying to create a distance between the context and oneself without risking turning the subjects studied and ‘objectified’ into simplistic, shallow re-presentations of themselves and their everyday life relations, interactions and transactions. Second, this role also carried with it difficulties associated with being an observer, such as the altering effects the presence of the observer has on the behaviour of the participants observed
(increased self-consciousness, for instance). I address these difficulties throughout the thesis by being as candid as possible about my own position in the fields of academia and CCD as well as about my interests in undertaking this study. Undeniably, my work with this thesis is an objectification and a critique of CCD practitioners and their practices. It also is, however, insofar as this is possible, a reflexive critique of my own habitus: part of which has been developed as the product of, amongst others, my experiences and my parents’ experiences of colonisation and economic migration and our desires for social change, evident in our trajectories out of French rural poverty and the overcrowded conditions of a small Caribbean island, and up the French, British and Australian social ladders through education and the attainment of ‘respectable’ professions; and another part of which has been developed as a member of the subfield of CCD partaking in the consumption and production of discourses of social and political efficacy and the struggle over the subfield’s boundaries.

The nature of such a long and complex investigation also carried with it some difficulties, particularly emerging from my choice of data gathering tools and context of study. More specifically, some questions arose about the complexity in capturing proof of social and political change beyond an evaluation-type or anecdotal analysis of observable behavioural or self-reported changes. Other questions arose about the quality and rigour of what might be labelled empirical evidence gathered using an audience survey instrument. Also, because of the comparatively lavish levels of funding involved, the payment of informants, the production’s inclusion in an international festival, the company’s operational base is in Sydney, and the potential these aspects of TLN had in attracting participants to the project perhaps more ‘committed’ than most participants in other CCD projects, questions arose about how representative the case study and the sample of participants observed were. These were some of the potential inadequacies and distortions that I was aware of. I took them into consideration in my analysis knowing that there were some risks: a risk that at least partially the failings of CCD practices that I discuss might be, in this case, the result of the choice of case study; and a risk in extrapolating conclusions from this case study to most projects in the subfield of CCD. However, some difficulties I was able to address by adjusting my methodology. For instance, by gathering data of ‘continuity’ within the active participants’ group, I avoided, to some extent,
difficulties that might have arisen from my decision not to include in this study a
c control group to gather data of ‘continuity’ to be compared with data of ‘potential
change’ gathered from the active participants in this project. Further, because the
purpose of this study was to carry out a sociological analysis of common forms of
changes that occur for most participants in CCD projects and programs, my decision
to focus on those participants that had a greater level of engagement and participation
within the project, rather than on a representative sample of people participating in
such activities, didn’t have as much a repercussion on my analysis than had I solely
focused on the percentage of participants who experienced any level of change after
taking part in such activities.

During seven months, between September 2001 and March 2002, I gathered
ethnographic data in Adelaide drawing on conventional tools of evaluation and
ethnographic investigation, such as observation and interviews (see Appendices 3 and
4). My decision to draw on these methodologies was based on a desire to apply a
grounded quality to this study of CCD practices as potentially socially and politically
efficacious as well as based on my belief that one knows one’s subject through verbal
and non-verbal communication with informants and that the collection of such data is
best done through the observation of immediate small-scale life being and doing.

In that respect, I used participatory and non-participatory observation of workshops,
staff and production meetings, rehearsals, consultation sessions and performances.
During those sessions I was observing and recording attitudes (moods, laughs, smiles,
jokes, etc.), language use (levels and kinds of change in vocabulary, increased level of
analysis, etc.), activities (attendance, carrying out tasks with responsibility, back with
family members, back in school, starting training, etc.) and products generated (the
artwork or the performance, poems, posters, production tasks, etc.).

I also conducted a substantial number of informal and formal interviews (see
Appendix 2). A variety of techniques were used at different times with different
people to gather different kinds of data as well as to establish, develop and maintain
different kinds of relationships between informants and researcher. Indeed, I
conducted interviews face-to-face and over the phone, with individual people or
groups of young people, participants’ carers, festival staff, UTP staff and Parks Services staff, at the beginning, during and immediately at the end of the project as well as a year, three and four years after the project. Interviews of between thirty minutes and two hours were conducted using formal and informal semi-structured questions designed to collect individual subjective data. Data gathered was recorded by taking notes on paper as well as on audiotapes that were later transcribed.

For instance, during the early stages of the project, in order to gather general data and establish close relationships with key informants, I conducted long interview sessions one-on-one and face-to-face, loosely guided by a series of broad questions. Typically, starting the interview with a general question, I would then allow the interviewees to ‘lead’ the conversation, prompting them with further questions to seek clarification on a particular point or when they stopped. By the end of the interview, I would ask a few specific questions to seek answers to questions that have not been addressed during the conversation. A similarly loose process was used with the same key informants later in the project to strengthen the relationship and/or reconnect as well as gather further data on local, personal and collective changes (see Appendix 3). At other times, for instance, I carried out interviews with two people, tightly guiding the conversation with a short series of very specific questions. In all cases, these interviews served to gather cognitive data. They also served to reveal pre-cognitive responses, highlighted by the contradictions and repetitions at an individual as well as at a group level.

Further, I designed, distributed and collected a post-performance audience survey to gather data on the impact of the performance on spectators (see Appendices 5 and 7). This survey yielded two hundred and thirty completed questionnaires from spectators attending one or more of the six performances of the TLN event held during the 2002 Adelaide Festival season. This represented a response rate of about a third of the total of spectators who attended the event. The survey was divided into three sections. One section included questions about spectators’ demographic information. A second section included questions about spectators’ level of familiarity with theatre, international festivals, and UTP’s work. The third section included questions about spectators’ impressions of the event and its context.
Though data collected from the survey could be critiqued as adding little empirical value to this study, the value of this survey was in capturing a significant number of spectators’ demographic information and immediate reactions to the event and its context that could be compared to data gathered from the project’s young participants and partners. It was a unique way of assessing the degree of reflection and comments (subjective understandings included) generated by people not directly involved in the project about the aesthetic quality of the artistic product generated by the project. Moreover, this data served to support or infer the findings from my performance analysis as well as the analyses and critiques of other performance analysts published in the local, state and national media. It was thus used as an attempt to overcome some of the issues associated with performance analyses such as the privileging of the analyst’s particular reading.

The emphasis on the collection of observational and interview data highlights my reliance in this case study on narratives. Indeed, subjective data such as participants’ opinions, personal accounts of participation in the project, their life stories and changes in circumstances, beliefs or attitudes, is important to a qualitative study like this one because of the central place of story-making and telling in participatory and creative processes. Data from these narratives and responses were organised in a matrix according to a thematic grid derived from data gathered itself. It is also worth noting that though I rely mostly on an ethnographic approach, I also use a statistical analysis that is complementary to my ethnographic approach. Indeed, by using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, I am able to build a more integrated and holistic picture of the complex situations analysed.

Finally, I also conducted a literature review about the site where the project took place and talked to members of the local community and local workers in order to ascertain the history, demographics and socio-economic profile of Adelaide and the local population as well as the existing levels of arts activities and resources. Framing the work in this way helped me compare and measure the level of change against what already existed in terms of resources, infrastructure and activities as well as determine what characterised the ‘community’ I was working with.
3.6 Conclusion

So far in this chapter, I have discussed the various components of my method and methodology, which can be labelled a triangulation of approaches. It is an approach that combines Kershaw’s framework of potential efficacy, with Handelman’s analysis of public events, Bourdieu’s sociology and an ‘objective-based’ evaluation in order to increase the ways in which I can capture and analyse the complex mechanisms of production and consumption of culture, as a process and an aesthetic product, at a local as well as wider social context. Kershaw’s framework of potential efficacy suggests a list of controllable conditions that might lead to social change for individual people participating in a community-devised performance, while Handelman’s analysis of public events offers a close analysis of the relationship between special events, everyday life and actual change. Bourdieu’s sociology enables an analysis of the complexities of mechanisms and structures of social and cultural (re)production. The ‘objective-based’ evaluation allows a comparative analysis of data pertaining to the outcomes for participants in TLN with data about the stated and implied goals of the various parties involved. This approach will become clear as I present and discuss TLN case study and my findings as well as further unpack the problematic of ‘community’, ‘culture’ and ‘development’ central to this study in the following chapters.
Part 2 – Having a closer look at ‘The Longest Night’ project and performance
CHAPTER 4 – Implementing The Longest Night

4.1 Introduction

We would like to make a new work for Adelaide Festival utilizing the same devising process as the original work [The Cement Garage]25 in a youth service provider in Adelaide ... By making the new work in partnership with an Adelaide based youth organization the creative process will encourage both authenticity and reciprocity with young people in South Australia. In this way young people ‘at risk’ in Adelaide, are no longer excluded or invisible during the festival, but co-creating an artistic product (Talbot & Stumm, 2000).

This text was part of a proposal submitted by Urban Theatre Projects to the Adelaide Festival. It was one of the starting points that led to the implementation of TLN. Over nine months, from July 2001 to March 2002, UTP’s artistic team worked in residence in The Parks, western Adelaide, South Australia, consulting and collaborating with local young people. The result was an event presented at the Adelaide Festival in February and March 2002 consisting of a Dance Off, followed by a Tour, leading also to a theatrical performance entitled “The Longest Night”. The Dance Off was set outdoors and showcased local young people’s enthusiasm and vitality in a sort of battle of skills including acrobatics, R’n’B dancing, rapping and b-Boying. The Tour involved local young people and workers in the role of tour guides, leading small groups of spectators in and around The Parks Community Centre services and presenting a local vision of The Parks. The Longest Night was staged in the community centre’s machine maintenance workshop. In a style ranging from hyper-naturalist to surrealist, the performance depicted one night in the life of Bernie, a single mother living in public housing, that marks a turning point as she is faced with crucial decisions about her future in general, and her son’s future with her in particular.

Detailed description and analysis of these performances and outcomes for participants, spectators and local organisations will be presented later, in Chapter 5, when I consider the potential and actual impact of the project on those who

25 As I discuss later in this chapter, The Cement Garage was the prequel to TLN.
participated in it. In this chapter I focus on how this project was made and what made it possible. To this end, I discuss the TLN event as not only the result of processes of devising, rehearsal and performance, but also the result of other circumstances such as the relationship between a particular group of professionals (their history, interests and decisions) and a site (its history and people, their interests and decisions).

I start this discussion by examining some of the reasons why TLN was seen as an attractive project by funding bodies. Then I discuss the processes and strategies used in working with The Parks residents and local community centre staff to devise a performance for the 2002 Adelaide Festival. My account of the implementation of TLN includes narrative descriptions of the actions of staff members from participating community organisations and some of the young people involved, as well as verbatim quotes from these participants, along with some statistical information and an analysis of data gathered through the filters of my multi-method approach. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the bulk of this discussion is very much written from UTP and Alicia Talbot’s perspective. This is because I am interested, in this chapter, not only in discussing the complex picture of the social, cultural and political influences at play in and around the project, but also in emphasising how the change agenda of CCD practitioners is both constrained and enabled by their actions and actions of other members of the subfield of CCD according to the mechanisms and structures in place within the subfield. In Chapter 5, my focus will shift to consider in more detail the views of the participants and workers involved in the project.

4.2 Pairing UTP with The Parks

The appointment in 1999 of Peter Sellars, an internationally renowned American contemporary theatre and opera director, signalled for UTP, and other community-based organisations such as Para//elo26 for instance, an opportunity to be part of an international arts festival and, perhaps too, be part of an opportunity to challenge the

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26 Para//elo, formerly known as Doppio Teatro, is an Adelaide-based theatre company that was founded in 1984 by Teresa Crea that pioneered bi-lingual (Italian and English) and bi-cultural theatre in Australia. The company made Stories from the Market in collaboration with UK-based sound artist Robin Rimbaud (Scanner) which was performed at the 2002 Adelaide Festival at the Adelaide Central Market.
tacit rules of international arts festival programming in Australia. Sellars’s ambition was for the 2002 festival to set a precedent in Australia for international arts festivals by departing radically from the Adelaide Festival’s tradition of bringing big international acts to Australia. The Adelaide Festival is an arts festival modelled on the Edinburgh festival with a rather conservative purpose: “to bring culture to Adelaide” (Caust, 2004, p. 115, italics in text). The first festival took place in 1960 and was funded by a few well-established and wealthy local businessmen. It is no coincidence then that this festival emerged in Adelaide, a city with a reputation for having a great concentration of wealthy and well-educated individuals with a taste for ‘high arts’. While the city and its residents have this reputation of affluence and being conservative, the city also counts a great proportion of poor and dispossessed, as evidenced by the higher than national average percentage of unemployed people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006b), who are excluded from the image of the ‘festival state’, as the state has been familiarly known since 1980, and usually excluded in the planning of the Adelaide Festival.

In this context, Sellars’s vision for a festival where patrons experience, participate and respond to art differently to what is typically expected or accepted at arts festivals, represented a huge leap of faith for the Adelaide Festival Board members who appointed him. Sellars’s stated primary interest was in promoting performances that move art away from ‘distraction culture’ to a ‘culture of focus’, to help spectators in particular and Adelaide in general “focus on what requires our attention” (Sellars, 1999, p. 4). He stated that his vision was:

... to use the Adelaide Festival as a point of focus for this country and that is going to attract the world’s attention, because the issues that need to be discussed need to be discussed everywhere (Sellars, 1999, p. 4).

Sellars claimed that the 2002 Adelaide Festival would “spark focus and challenge” (Downton, 2000, p. 45); that it was “an invitation to put something on the ground now, rather than be held suspended in theoretical limbo” (Downton, 2000, p. 45). To this end he wanted the Festival “to have a wider range of voices in the building process” (Downton, 2000, p. 43); to “reflect a range of views” (Downton, 2000, p. 44); and to hear “what this next generation is going to do” (Downton, 2000, p. 44).
Despite Sellars’s early departure from the directorship of the Adelaide Festival in 2002, due to irreconcilable differences with members of the board, he made an impression on a few Australian arts institutions and organisations and was able to make UTP’s TLN part of his ambitious program aimed at establishing a long-term impact of the arts on society. With UTP’s agreement, Alicia Talbot pitched TLN to Sellars. Alicia knew of Sellars prior to his appointment at the festival. She had heard him speak at a conference and felt she shared some of his ideas. With his appointment, Alicia, who had recently been appointed UTP’s Artistic Director, saw an opportunity to work on a different scale. A proposal was presented to him and his team of Associate festival Directors which was accepted.

Another significant decision made by Sellars and his team of directors for UTP’s TLN was to suggest that UTP’s artistic team work in residence in The Parks as well as perform there along with a few other performances and workshops such as William Yang’s Shadows, Mongrel, Sunrise Performers of Cambodia and weaving workshops with some renowned Australian weavers. This was a strategic decision based on the area’s history and reputation which I discuss in detail next.

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27 For example, his ideas and politics of cultural production and consumption found currency with Fergus Linehan, the director of the 2006 Sydney festival, who commissioned and presented UTP’s Back Home, a ‘community collaboration’ work that concluded the work begun with The Cement Garage and TLN.

28 William Yang is a well-known Chinese-Australian photographer. Shadows was a monologue about dispossession and reconciliation by Yang, performed to his photographs of Indigenous Australians and German migrants to Australia.

29 A London-based company directed by Richard Davis that developed, in collaboration with Oak Valley Aboriginal School, The Parks Community Health Service’s Nunga IT, and Raukkan Aboriginal School in Coorong, stories about “truth and reconciliation”.

30 A group of young Cambodian orphans under the care of Geraldine Cox who perform traditional Cambodian dances and music.

31 Including Sandy Elverd, Nalda Searles, Ellen and Tanya Trevorrow and Yvonne Koolmatrie.
The Parks is an area of about five square kilometres consisting of several suburbs (Angle Park, Mansfield Park, Ferryden Park and Woodville Gardens), north-west of the heart of the city of Adelaide. It is a large residential area with a high proportion of public housing. The houses on the public housing estate are in a familiar Adelaide workers’ cottage style: solid, square, low density, single-storey brick buildings plonked in the middle of flat and treeless gardens. The streets are laid out straight in a grid. Driving through The Parks, there is a sense of distance and isolation. Traffic is light, buses rare, people hardly visible and the few shops often empty. But there are also signs of pride in the area as evidenced by the numerous well-manicured lawns and flowered garden beds.

The estate was built between 1945 and 1965 under the leadership of Liberal Premier, Sir Thomas Playford. It was planned as a transitory area for new migrants to acclimatise themselves to the area before settling into permanent accommodation in and around Adelaide. Later, the area was used as emergency accommodation for low-income residents (Peacock, 1974, pp. 25–16; Pioneer Projects Australia, 1996, pp. 31, 133), attracting a high proportion of Aboriginal people (double the proportion of that of the rest of Adelaide) (Pioneer Projects Australia, 1996). Thus, the area is characterised on the one hand by a large transient Indigenous population and on the other by great waves of new migrants with a low rate of turnover, often remaining in The Parks for more than ten years (Peacock, 1974, p. 22; Pioneer Projects Australia, 1996, p. 33).

These Department of Housing Trust rental houses were not meant to be for permanent settlement, but they were built strong, and leases could be long, so migrants and other low-income people channelled into or attracted to the area by the low rents decided to
make it their home. It is not surprising then that The Parks has mostly been perceived as a ‘poor’ area by most residents of Adelaide. Indeed, it is one of the poorest areas in Australia (Lloyd, Hardin, & Greenwell, 2001, p. 284). Since the 1970s, most residents are unemployed, surviving on government benefits or in precarious and underpaid positions due to the decline of the manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing industries located in the industrial zone nearby (Baker & Arthurson, 2006, p. 5; Pioneer Projects Australia, 1996, pp. 34–35).

The Parks’ sense of community or belonging has been discussed for some decades. Some studies of The Parks have found the area to be formed by “very tight knit social networks” (Badcock cited in Baker & Arthurson, 2006, p. 6), while others have contested calling The Parks a ‘community’ (Pioneer Projects Australia, 1996, p. 40). For this latter group, they have described the area as a collection of suburbs with co-existing communities rather than a single homogenous community. Some reasons presented for the area’s heterogeneity included the lack of a traditional sense of community or belonging, linked to a lack of kinship and friendship ties within the neighbourhood and a lack of cultural homogeneity (Healy & Parkin, 1980, pp. 188–195).

Though there is a noted lack of agreement on whether The Parks is a close-knit community or not, this sense of community, or its lack, has been offered as a key reason behind some of the social reform projects imposed on the area for years. One of these social reform projects included the construction in the mid-1970s of The Parks Community Centre, based on redistributive principles. In 1973, the South Australian Department of Education, seeking administrative and financial support within other government departments to upgrade the segregated boys and girls Technical high school of Angle Park, attracted the interest of the state’s Department of Community Welfare. The latter department stated an interest (which they perceived the Department of Education’s proposal could help them accomplish) in developing or reviving a sense of community and providing a better image of The Parks to help give local residents a “feeling of increased status” (Healy & Parkin, 1980, p. 185). Construction of the centre started in 1975, informed by community consultation processes seeking residents’ comments on and wishes for the project. By September
1979, the Community Centre, a multifunctional complex, was built (housing activities and services such as welfare, health, childcare, library, education and sports) (Healy & Parkin, 1980, pp. 185–186; Pioneer Projects Australia, 1996, p. 138–140).

Though initially financially supported by various state departments, the Community Centre was, by the late 1990s, no longer seen as a favourable project, despite a local study’s findings that showed that the Community Centre had over the years emerged “as a significant feature of life in The Parks” (Pioneer Projects Australia, 1996, p. 138). By 2001, the various state departments’ withdrawal of support meant that most local services were experiencing great reductions in levels of social and financial investment, as evidenced by the closing of the local high school, overall budget cuts and a redirection of government focus from the public to the private sector.


At the time of planning the Adelaide Festival, major changes were underway in the area. Housing Trust residents were being informed of their imminent (and forced) relocation further out of town as part of the ongoing South Australian Government’s Westwood (Parks) Urban Renewal Project, Australia’s largest regeneration project to
date. Over a twelve- to fifteen-year span, about 1,750 public tenants are being relocated and their homes refurbished or demolished to make place for new ‘McMansions’ \(^{32}\) to be sold to young professional first time home-buyers. The project also includes the renaming of The Parks as Westwood.

Advocates of the project see it as the solution to the social ills of the area (a common practice of neoliberal governments) (Jones cited in Tesoriero, 2002, p. 153) because it explicitly aims to increase levels and instances of community cohesion, by breaking up the concentration of poverty and improving “the housing situation of disadvantaged populations” (Baker & Arthurson, 2006, p. 9). Research on the early stages of the project has, however, shown it to be yet another controversial example of social intervention in The Parks; the latest in a series of social engineering practices imposed on the area and its residence since The Parks’ conception post-Second World War. It has shown the project to be “servicing the needs of market capital, rather than tenants” (Arthurson, 2001, p. 822).

The Adelaide Festival’s financial support and its pairing of UTP with The Parks were key in implementing TLN, but not sufficient. Further funding was applied for and secured from the Australia Council. \(^{33}\) The CCDB of the Australia Council granted UTP funds because the project met the board’s priorities and criteria of the time. For instance, the project could be seen as “extending public participation in the arts, with particular emphasis on youth and young people” (Australia Council, 2002, p. 33). Moreover, the project fitted the Australia Council’s understanding of CCD activities as “an enormous range of activities” that “give communities the opportunity to tell their stories, build their creative skills and be active participants in the development of their culture” (Australia Council, 2002, p. 34) by facilitating “interactions between

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\(^{32}\) A phenomenon of big houses built on small blocks of land for a relatively low price, leaving no room for trees or kitchen gardens, that has been occurring in Australia for the past fifteen years.

\(^{33}\) The NSW Ministry for the Arts, Western Sydney Program, and Parramatta City Council also provided another source of funding for the project, but to support a short devising and rehearsal period at HSYHS and a season of performances of TLN in Granville (both HSYHS and Granville are located within Parramatta City Council, in western Sydney, NSW. This part of the project is, however, outside of the scope of this study.
and within cultures where, with the assistance of professional artists, creative ideas, skills and knowledge can be shared” and enhancing “aspects of cultural life, provid[ing] a tool for economic development, address[ing] social issues, develop[ing] self-representation, express[ing] identity, or reclaim[ing] public space” (Australia Council, 2006b).

Further, the project met the Australia Council’s (including the CCDB) general interest in presenting and supporting a multiple vision of Australia. Though this interest might seem to be in line with Sellars’s vision, the Australia Council’s motivation was different to Sellars’s on two accounts. First, the Australia Council’s interest was motivated not so much by a desire to challenge, but by a desire to find recognition at an international level for some Australian artists (“Promotion of our arts and artists internationally has always been a strong focus of the Australia Council” (Australia Council, 2002, p. 23)). Second, the Australia Council’s interest in multiple vision was not so much motivated by a desire to hear collective stories that speak of struggle and otherness, but rather to hear stories of individual people (to “[i]ncrease community engagement with the arts and to promote individual participation in them” (Australia Council, 2002, p. 6)) that speak of resilience (capacity building and strengthening) and innovative approaches.

Though UTP’s project proposal for TLN did comply with some of the Australia Council’s and its CCDB’s policies, and did resonate with Sellar’s vision for the 2002 Adelaide Festival, the explanation for these organisations’ interest in funding UTP and its project is obviously more complex. UTP’s proposal would not have been funded simply because of the merits of the project or because it matched the general funding criteria and priorities of the Australia Council and the Adelaide Festival; of critical importance were UTP’s past achievements, status and reputation, which I discuss next.

4.3 UTP's position within and interests in participating in the subfield of CCD

UTP turned twenty-five in 2006, a rare-enough milestone for any Australian performing arts organisation, let alone one which has located much of its work in the
subfield of CCD. As the brief history outlined below suggests, the company’s success can be attributed to the way in which, over the years, its staff and board members have shown a capacity to make the ‘right’ moves at the right time, or a capacity to implement some changes while maintaining a certain level of continuity, because of some of these individuals’ position, connections and understanding of practices within the subfield of CCD and/or the field of arts.

Attending UTP’s twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations at its Bankstown premises were industry partners, funding body representatives, performers, present and past associates (many from when the company was still Death Defying Theatre (DDT)) and other members of the field of arts and the subfield of CCD. While guests mingled, Claudia Chidiac, former UTP project manager, Tony Stewart, state Member for Bankstown and representative for the NSW Minister for the Arts, Tanya Mihailuk, Bankstown City Council Mayor, and Alicia Talbot, UTP’s Artistic Director, made speeches. These speakers talked about UTP/DDT’s long history of making socially and politically relevant performances and the special position the company has in the subfield of CCD and the field of arts on a national level (the company was recently named “one of Australia’s outstanding arts organisations” (Australia Council, 2006b)) as well as locally in the western suburbs of Sydney. They also talked about the company’s innovative work. Speakers talked about some of the inspiring people that had worked within it at various times. Further, they talked about their hopes for a greater future with promises of increased funding from the Australia Council and of new and better premises in the yet-to-be-built Bankstown Arts Complex. In addition, speakers talked about the difficulties and rewards associated with CCD practices. Finally, speakers congratulated those involved in the company for their successes, vision and tenacity in doing this kind of work.

Company associates who spoke on the night, and others interviewed by Alicia Talbot for the occasion, attributed UTP/DDT’s longevity and achievements over the years to the original founding members’ vision and philosophy. Kim Spinks, Paul Brown and Christine Sammers created the company as an outdoor performance company
specialising in making political theatre accessible to a non-theatre-going public. It started out as an anti-naturalistic theatre company, interested in creating “a smaller ‘shared’ space which brings us close to the audience – a space that is neither ‘ours’ or ‘theirs’”, as Spinks stated in her discussion of the company in Fotheringham’s book *Community Theatre in Australia* (1992, p. 157). It was built as a collective of theatre-makers, rather than as a group of actors working under the direction of an artistic director. DDT’s members were interested in developing new collaborative theatre-making processes as well as exploring aspects of postmodern performance and critical theories. The founding members named the company Death Defying Theatre in reference to British theatrical producer and director, Peter Brook, and in opposition to what he called ‘deadly theatre’, or escapist theatre (Spinks, 1992, p. 155).

Another reason for UTP/DDT’s longevity and achievements is the company’s capacity to draw on a variety of processes to devise performances, including blending the use of CCD processes with the production of aesthetically ‘legitimate’ and valued performances. Even a cursory overview of past UTP productions illustrates this variety as well as the shifts in processes used by the company over the years. For example, one of DDT’s earlier CCD projects was *Coal Town*, an AWL-funded project which I briefly discussed in Chapter 2. It was a large-scale community project devised by the company’s small core ensemble based on some interviews with local residents, but solely performed by the company’s core ensemble (DDT, 1985; Stumm, 2003, p. 1). In 1991, UTP produced *Café Hakawati*, a performance made in response to the first Gulf War, the concerns it raised and the effects it had on local Arabic communities. It was a performance devised in collaboration with and performed by a group of western Sydney Arab-Australians in a church hall in Auburn (Stumm, 2003, p. 1). This production represented a departure from DDT’s core ensemble work and a shift towards workshop-based processes and the use of local residents in the devising and performance of the work. In 1995, *Hip Hopera*, a part Hip Hop jam, part contemporary spectacle and part CCD (Stumm, 2003, pp. 1–2), was produced. It was

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34 For instance, in a style largely reminiscent of commedia del arte and agitprop, many of the company’s early shows involved performers playing directly to audiences rather than focusing on each other.
the result of collaborative work between UTP, eighty young rap, DJ, breaking and graffiti emerging artists, and a team of established professional Hip Hop artists. This marked UTP’s new interest in working with young people and their cultural forms of expression as co-creators in performance work. In 1997 TrackWork, co-directed by John Baylis and Fiona Winning, was devised in collaboration with residents from various parts of the western suburbs of Sydney. The performance took spectators on a railway journey through some of the suburbs of western Sydney. This project marked a new stage for the company in devising works that required complex logistical planning, building close relationships with local councils and other Australian institutions and attracting an audience of art theatre goers (Maxwell, 2006, p. 6).

TLN followed yet another approach to community collaboration, a model of CCD practice initiated by Alicia Talbot (prior to her becoming Artistic Director of UTP) while she was employed as an artist in residence at High Street Youth Health Service (HSYHS). This model of practice is, in a way, a combination of some of the processes DDT used in the 1980s with those UTP used in the 1990s and others used in health promotion practices. Her model of practice was first implemented in 1999 when she co-devised The Cement Garage (the first work in a series of three community collaborations that also included TLN and Back Home) with young people attending HSYHS (who were remunerated for their contribution) and a team of professional performers.

Alicia’s model of practice, though established for and during the making of The Cement Garage, was developed based on three major experiences: first, her contemporary performance training and education at the University of Sydney; second, her work as an artist-in-residence in a health service, HSYHS; and finally, her mentoring by John Baylis and their co-direction on the production of <subtopia> for UTP in 1999. These three major influences informed a model of practice that she has

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35 High Street Youth Health Service is a youth health service located in Harris Park, western Sydney, that provides primary health care, counselling and support (as is customary with most Australian youth health services) but also more innovative health education and creative therapeutic programs to young homeless people or people ‘at risk’ of being homeless (Talbot, 2000).
continuously been refining and adapting to the various collaborative projects she has initiated since The Cement Garage project. These experiences are significant in that they explain the mixture of approaches in and principles underpinning Alicia’s practice, such as health promotion, radical education, social activism and contemporary performance. They also explain why, though goals of social and political efficacy are implied in her practice (especially in her use of ‘exit interviews’ which I discuss in Subsection 4.5.5 and her belief in the company’s work and history), she is cautious not to explicitly use the prevailing rhetoric of the subfield of CCD outlined in Chapter two and the expectations which tend to accompany CCD funding.

In addition to UTP/DDT’s versatility, in terms of the range of aesthetic styles and methods of community collaboration it has employed, company associates also attributed the company’s longevity and success to the way in which it had managed to change with the times. Arguably, the most critical turning point in the company’s history occurred in 1991, after a decade in operation. The company felt the need to make some changes to the way it worked or risk closing down. The threats the company faced were twofold: an internal lassitude of working as a collective; and an increasing external disinterest in the performances they were producing (Brown, 1991). Paul Brown was commissioned by DDT’s Board to assess the company’s situation and provide some options for the future (Brown, 1991). His main recommendations included that the company change name, restructure and move out of the eastern suburbs of Sydney (home to a mostly artist-friendly, Anglo/European-Australian, educated and ‘middle class’ population) to the western suburbs of Sydney (on the one hand, derided as a cultural wasteland, and, on the other, held as one of the centres of multiculturalism in Australia and home to about two million people of various backgrounds (Butcher, 2003)). These recommendations were conceived not only as a way to rejuvenate the company, but also as a strategic move to increase the company’s profile and make it more visible to relevant funding bodies.

Following Brown’s recommendations, DDT’s Board agreed to restructure the company and appointed Fiona Winning as Artistic Director. Winning, with Paul Brown, was credited by the company’s associates for successfully managing this turning point in the company’s history. Winning was especially credited with having
turned the company from an anti-naturalist/agitprop/street theatre company to a company drawing on radical practices from community theatre and CCD. This was a move from a company that aimed “to create socially responsible entertainment” (Spinks, 1992, p. 154) (critically examining Australia’s institutions, by drawing on popular and working class cultural elements such as circus, music, dance, slapstick, rather than text-based theatre to attract and keep its audience) to a company that was “committed to producing stimulating, diverse and aesthetic new Australian theatre that is relevant to the Western Sydney community” (DDT, 1995, p. 2). Relating this back to the discussion about discourses of culture I carry out in Chapter 2, it could be said that this was a move away from a cultural activist approach to theatre and performance-making, to one of cultural rights (Brown, 1991, p. 3).

Board members also agreed to move the company to western Sydney in order to work exclusively with diverse local communities in creating theatrical spaces to represent these communities and reflect contemporary Australia from a multitude of cultural perspectives (Brown, 1991). DDT thus moved to Auburn first and then to Bankstown where it is still located today. The move to western Sydney established the beginning of UTP/DDT’s reputation as a company that contributes significantly to the production of multicultural theatre (Lo & Gilbert, 2002, p. 49).

After 1991, the company experienced several more significant shifts. In early 1997, John Baylis, co-founder of the Sydney Front,\(^36\) was appointed as DDT’s Artistic Director. He was instrumental in renaming the company Urban Theatre Projects, marking a change of focus from an overtly political practice to a practice that focused on a particular kind of collaboration with a specific site and its people (Reid, 2000, p. 55). This change was carried out with the purpose of “acknowledging, [and] asserting that an inner city culture is just as valid as opera or ballet” (Baylis cited in Agarwal, 1998, p. 1). Again, in the early 2000s, another shift occurred. In 2001, Alicia Talbot was appointed Artistic Director. Her appointment, and subsequent work, also brought

\(^{36}\) The Sydney Front was a collective closely associated with the Performance Space and a postmodern ‘contemporary performance’ aesthetic. Their productions from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s toured nationally and internationally, attracting a strong following and critical acclaim in ‘intellectual’ or ‘avant-garde’ circles.
the company recognition at an international level, with the programming of four of UTP’s productions in Australian and overseas international arts festivals’ programs since 2002.37

These shifts point to a company managing to change with the times: most often being on par with, or one step ahead of, the Australia Council; riding the waves of change; making strategic decisions at opportune moments; and periodically reinventing itself artistically and structurally with every new artistic director and manager. These shifts, however, also point to a company being able to attract the ‘right’ people at the right time: people who are now “all over the cultural scene” and contribute to culture in many varied ways, as one of the company’s founding members stated in an interview conducted by Alicia Talbot about the company’s twenty-fifth birthday (Sammers, 2006). UTP/DDT has had the capacity to attract company managers, directors and board directors (people like Dr Paul Brown, lecturer at the University of New South Wales in Environmental Studies, and John Baylis for instance) with close relationships to academic institutions and the Australia Council, with a good understanding of the field of arts and the subfield of CCD and with a great capacity to attract funding from both the theatre and CCD boards.

This capacity to attract the ‘right’ people and funds has also led to some criticism. One recurring criticism I have heard some members of the subfield of CCD make of the company is that its members and their work are monoculturalist and opportunistic. In other words, UTP is, at times, criticised for the fact that, though they produce work that often engages with issues related to Australia’s multiculturalism or cultural diversity, this engagement doesn’t reflect the profile of most of the company’s members and staff, who have been over the years, generally speaking, ‘white’ Australians, identified by critics as representatives of a dominant

37 The Cement Garage was performed at the 2002 Adelaide Festival. The Longest Night was devised for and performed at the 2002 Adelaide Festival. Back Home was devised for and performed at the 2006 Sydney festival and performed at the 2007 festival of the Dreaming in Woodford, Queensland, Australia, and the Harbourfront Centre’s New World Stage International Performance series and the festival of Arts & Creativity Luminato in Toronto, Canada. The Last Highway was devised for and will be performed at the 2008 Sydney festival.
‘Anglo’ culture. Further, this disjunction between company members and the work produced is seen by some as evidence of a company that has sought to advance within the subfield of CCD by seizing funds made available for the development of culturally diverse projects (in collaboration, form and/or content), thus being evidence of opportunism, rather than evidence of an interest in working with specific communities and their related issues. It is not, however, my purpose within this thesis to defend or criticise the company. My purpose in mentioning these criticisms here is to draw a picture of the company, in order to understand some of the reasons for their relatively privileged position within the subfield.

4.4 Sharing goals or overcoming historical tensions

Once UTP had attracted the support of the Adelaide Festival and the Australia Council, the artistic team needed to establish a working partnership with staff from The Parks’ Community Centre services with which UTP had been paired. This was required if UTP was to be accepted in the area, have a base to work from and have access to an extensive network of local young people. These partner organisations included The Parks Community Health Service (Health Service), The Parks Youth and Children’s Services (Youth Services) and The Parks Arts and Function Complex (Arts Complex).

UTP faced some difficulties in establishing a working relationship with these partner organisations. These were related to two major issues. First, though the three respective managers of these partner organisations had agreed to have a ‘youth’ project developed on site that would be part of the 2002 Adelaide Festival, they had not been active in initiating the proposal or in selecting UTP for their staff and clients to work with for about ten months. Second, UTP needed to accommodate a variety of partners’ interests and practices that were at times in conflict with each other. In what follows, after briefly outlining the three organisations’ position in The Parks, I discuss the ways in which UTP negotiated with these organisations the project’s parameters. I find that the success of these negotiations rested mostly on the understanding and experiences of UTP’s Artistic Director, Alicia Talbot, in both welfare and artistic discourses and practices.
The Health Service, Youth Services and Arts Complex were established in The Parks in the mid-1970s with the creation of The Parks Community Centre. All three organisations have developed close relationships with various local groups, including groups of young people. Though their role supports the Community Centre’s main purpose of encouraging greater citizen participation and welfare/education/arts intersectoral collaboration (Tesoriero, 2002, p. 150), their operation, position and beliefs informing the kind of involvement they each have with local community groups in general, and young people in particular, are, nevertheless, quite distinct. Thus, negotiating shared goals proved not to be a straightforward task for UTP.

Under the authority of the South Australian Health Department, the Health Service provides a range of services, including clinical and community development practices, to people in receipt of a healthcare pension and benefits. As well as being a centre for the delivery of health promotion, it is a teaching centre for health professionals and social workers. The Health Service has a history of dealing with individual people’s health issues, community education and development issues with a special focus on the health needs of culturally diverse communities settling in the area (Vietnamese, Cambodian, Aboriginal, Ethiopian, Somali and Sudanese, just to name a few). Over the years, though, their way of dealing with health issues has varied, sometimes as a direct result of changes to their position within the South Australian Health Department. It has oscillated between an understanding of health defined in clinical terms with direct reference to notions of illness, to notions of health defined in terms of capacity building and/or well-being.

The Youth Services fall under the control of the City of Port Adelaide Council. Their role within The Parks is to provide support and ‘needs-based’ programs\(^\text{38}\) for young people ‘at-risk’. These programs take on the form of generic youth work activities, such as advocacy, assessment and referral, basic counselling, ongoing recreational programs and one-off recreational projects on their premises and in local schools.

\(^{38}\) A needs-based approach implies the provision of services based on the expressed or perceived needs of a client or group of clients.
These recreational programs and projects are divided into two categories, reflecting the recent amalgamation of two separate entities: one section, the Children’s Service, providing programs and childcare for zero to twelve year olds; and a second section, the Youth Service, providing programs and projects for twelve to twenty-six year olds. Most of these programs are aimed at fostering interests other than petty theft and crime by boosting young people’s self-worth and self-esteem as well as by educating them so that they can “make well informed choices with their lives” (Youth Services staff member A, Interview 2001). Projects and programs are thus devised based on a belief that people with offending behaviours can be rehabilitated into people with more conventional attitudes and values that benefit society, by keeping them occupied in structured recreational (sports and arts) activities (Cooper & White, 1994, p. 31).

The Arts Complex is a semi-entrepreneurial organisation run by a manager appointed by the City of Port Adelaide Council. Their activities are broadly divided into two areas. One consists of the arts and craft area, with staff in charge of implementing and running visual arts-based CCD projects and craft classes as well as curating visual art exhibitions of local, established and ‘community’ artists in the gallery space. The other area consists of the management of venues and functions. This includes staff running and maintaining council-owned venues, such as The Parks Art and Craft facilities, The Parks high school, the two local theatres, the catering service and facilities, and the machine maintenance workshop (a shed used by The Parks Community Centre services to maintain their car fleet).

The roles of these three organisations in TLN were varied, but overall the Health Service, Youth Services and Arts Complex all provided UTP’s artistic team with access to a vast network of young people, resources and infrastructure. More specifically, the Health Service appointed a community development and youth worker to the project on an ongoing basis, ran activities within the project and provided UTP’s team with access to their offices and premises to run a range of activities. The Youth Services also appointed one of their workers to the project and ran activities and workshops in support of the project. The Arts Complex gave the project access to The Parks high school, where UTP’s artistic team rehearsed *The Longest Night* and ran consultation sessions. They also established negotiations with
the local municipal council to secure permission to work in, and have all heavy machinery removed from, the machine maintenance workshop. This workshop was selected as a venue in which to stage the play, *The Longest Night*, for a number of reasons: it was a non-purpose-built ‘found’ venue on site (which UTP favours); it was not in full use at the time of the project; it was located near a car park; it was big enough to contain a stage area and raked seating banks; it allowed for a more flexible stage/auditorium relationship; it made the project more accessible to the local community and participants; and the Adelaide Festival Directors approved of the venue.

Though the organisations’ interests in participating in TLN weren’t always in harmony with each other, there appeared to be a loosely shared goal around creating opportunities for increasing the sustainability of local projects and programs by increasing the level of resources, the profile of the arts in The Parks, and the level of participation in local activities for local young people. Their other goals, though not openly in conflict with each other, reflected the tensions between them, created by their different positions and roles in The Parks; their different views and ideas about what makes a community (mostly linked to who their constituency was), what is culture and what kind of development is desirable; and their different approaches to welfare and service delivery.

In particular, the Health Service’s aim in participating in TLN was to engage young people already accessing their services in an interesting project; in order to give them “an amazing opportunity and an opportunity for young people to engage in something that they haven’t had a chance to do before”, as one of the Health Services staff members dedicated to the project stated (Katherine, Interview, 2001). Their aims were also to attract young people who weren’t accessing the service and develop greater cross-cultural relationships. Finally, their aim was to overcome years of tension between the Health Service, Youth Services and Arts Complex in order to join forces in securing funds and to avoid duplication and/or creating gaps in addressing local residents’ perceived needs.
This ongoing tension between the various organisations was something that had been brought to my attention by several of the Health, Youth and Arts Complex staff I interviewed in the early period of the project. The tension was, at times, explicitly mentioned and linked to the often conflicting overarching beliefs or interests, conflicting ways of engaging with local residents, as well as years of competition over scare resources, including arts and welfare funds. It was also linked to competition in attracting and maintaining relationships with local residents, and workers blaming some of the recurring local problems, often to do with local young people’s criminal activities, on other organisations’ inadequate programming or lack of understanding of welfare practices.

Similarly, Youth Services’ participation in TLN was motivated by an interest in providing an exciting project for its constituency to participate in. It was further motivated by an interest in providing positive exposure for local young people, in order to show the wider community of Adelaide that, contrary to commonly held beliefs, young people from The Parks had “the same positive outlook as other young people. Just because they live here, doesn’t make them any different”, as stated by a senior staff member of the Youth Services (Youth Services staff member A, Interview, 2001). Lastly, the Youth Services were motivated by a need to create a new profile for themselves. Staff hoped that by participating in TLN they would be able to shed the organisation’s association with “Asian youth’s gang activities” (Sonia, Interview, 2001), which they blamed for their lack of success in attracting other local young people to their services. They also hoped to be able to have “new and creative ideas” (Youth Services staff member A, Interview, 2001) to incorporate into their existing programs which would help them in creating new experiences that might attract more young people to their services and make it more visible as an active and innovative organisation.

As with the other two organisations, the Arts Complex’s staff initially presented their primary interest in participating in TLN as wanting to create an exciting artistic experience for local young people. And as was the case both with the Health Service and Youth Services, further discussions revealed that in fact the Arts Complex’s foremost interest was in increasing their profile in order “to create a point of reference
for future [funding] applications” (Arts Complex staff member, Interview, 2001; 2005). This meant not only increasing the profile of the organisation, but also being seen as a “model of good practice” (Arts Complex staff member, Interview, 2001) in running local government-owned arts complexes; increasing the local community’s level of access to and participation in the arts in general, and the Arts Complex in particular; increasing the level of quality of the arts in The Parks; and creating a “‘buzz’ around The Parks that might attract interest and investments into the Arts Complex” (Arts Complex staff member, Interview, 2001). Unlike the other two organisations, though, this interest in increasing their profile was also seen as a way of supporting a more radical program of social reforms, as providing “a structure for change for this community” (Arts Complex staff member, Interview, 2001) that might lead for instance to the reopening of the local high school as a place for local residents in general, and young people in particular, to meet on positive grounds and overcome their isolation perceived to be linked to a lack of wider networks of peer support.

UTP was successful in discerning and bringing together these, at times incompatible, organisations. Alicia established a working partnership with and between the various local organisations by determining and emphasising common goals and interests especially around their interest in collaborating with local young people. For UTP this interest in collaborating with young people was motivated by a need “to encourage both authenticity and reciprocity” in the project as well as a desire to help young people “no longer feel excluded or invisible during the festival” (Talbot & Stumm, 2000, p. 2) and develop a performance in which “artistic excellence and real social goals can co-exist rather than be mutually compromised” (Talbot, Interview, 2001).

This sense of common goal was achieved, in part, by physically bringing these organisations together to discuss, clarify and negotiate their interests, work ethics, collaborative processes, and so forth as well as address their major concerns. One meeting in particular, which occurred in the middle stages of the project, with the three local organisations, The Parks’ head of security, festival staff and UTP team members, highlights this phenomenon quite clearly.
Some of the concerns expressed by members of the partner organisations included the use of UTP, a team of outsiders, to work in The Parks when local “talent” was thought to be available and a more viable option. It also included the use of professional performers, which was considered a departure from more conventional approaches to CCD and a missed opportunity for participants to be trained and to perform in all parts of the performative event. Another concern was the use of a model of practice and a set of themes that some Parks staff saw as perhaps not relevant to the local community because they had been developed elsewhere. Another concern still was an ethical concern about the use of participants in underpinning UTP’s credibility, authenticity and authority to represent this ‘marginal community’ and their social and moral dilemmas.

In the context of this particular meeting, members’ concerns included concerns about pressures the project was creating for most local workers, some members of the community and festival staff to deliver, produce and support a wide range of ideas, activities and logistical decisions. More specifically, the head of security was concerned about what might happen to the community in the aftermath of the project, as highlighted by his comment: “[y]ou can’t come and meddle with a community”. He expressed concerns about the safety at night of non-local spectators once the show was over because, as his experience had taught him, “with all shows you attract crime”. He feared that criminal acts against non-local spectators might have the opposite effect to what was intended by the project partners, reinforcing rather than changing the image of The Parks as a crime-ridden area.

What these voiced concerns were actually highlighting was local partners, local security staff and festival staff’s need to be reassured about UTP’s processes and the organisations’ specific areas of responsibility. Having understood this, Alicia set out to reassure those present by stating that she was interested in working closely and safely with the “fragile” local community.

This voicing of concerns was however only made possible because a certain level of distrust had been overcome. During this particular meeting, distrust was palpable in the cold reception afforded Alicia by most of those present. It was made evident by
the physical distance between people, the silence in the room and the intent scrutiny and focus on Alicia standing exposed and vulnerable in the cold, wide, bare and dusty machine maintenance workshop with only a small whiteboard to lean on. This was further enhanced by the philosophical distance Alicia knew separated each of those present.

By airing concerns and negotiating rules and solutions, trust, a sense of ownership and shared goals were established between UTP and these local gatekeepers. This then allowed for UTP to create a sense of shared interest and ‘ownership’ of the project amongst the local organisations, in part, by building on the organisations’ common understanding of aspects of CCD activities familiar to all. This was achieved by discussing some of the processes Alicia used during meetings between UTP, local partners and festival staff.

For instance, during this meeting Alicia explained the importance of following the “right” protocols when working in such a community context. She explained the underlying principles of her model of practice in greater detail than she had done before. Using the metaphor of a cyclone that sweeps a community up through different stages of development, she described her practice. She explained how the outside edge of the cyclone represented the initial stages of a project, characterised by community development processes that focused on getting to know the local people and their history, then developed closer relationships with potential participants and local partners. As the cyclone/project progressed, processes sped up and became more and more turned inwards introducing artistic development processes alongside community development processes. As the project progressed further and reached its climax (the eye of the cyclone) the community and artists development processes merged in the presentation of a performance.

Alicia’s metaphor of the cyclone is unusual and in some ways problematic because of the complex ethical and moral considerations it invokes, as cyclones normally leave a trail of devastation behind them. This metaphor might have reminded those familiar with community development and CCD practices that this type of work has the potential to elicit risks and harm for participants, such as negative changes, unfulfilled
raised hopes, or mishandling of sensitive and personal information, leaving participants exposed and vulnerable to self-harm, depression, etc. In that context, a metaphor which suggested a disregard for and abandonment of those participants unable or unwilling to maintain their level of participation in the process of collaboration and change, could be seen as a careless and unethical model of practice. However, the negative connotations of this metaphor weren’t perceived by those present and the explanation was well received. Alicia’s metaphor of the cyclone was understood as an uplifting force where (once community and artistic development processes were implemented) participants would be swept in (rather than out) and the project would take on a life of its own, making the processes and results relevant and unique to The Parks.

Alicia’s capacity to participate in both welfare and artistic production discourses and practices was an important factor in helping her negotiate and maintain a consensus view of the value of the project with The Parks organisations and festival staff. In the context of this particular meeting the changed reception of Alicia’s ideas and intent was evidenced by, for example, the head of security whose earlier stand-offish demeanour had started to relax. Instead of being on guard, with his arms crossed over his chest and shoulders to ears, he was more openly engaging with Alicia (smiling and leaning forward). He talked about what he liked about the project and about Alicia’s approach to working in The Parks. For instance, he liked the fact that UTP’s artistic team included an Aboriginal performer, which he saw as “a good tool” in providing a role model for local Aboriginal young people and in maintaining order and security during the festival. He had been reassured by a combination of Alicia’s manners, personality and confidence: “[S]he’s a very bubbly person and very confident at this … She’s very skilful with her nature. That makes you want to talk to her. In terms of the self, doesn’t matter what I do nobody comes down here. People will always run run run”, he confessed later.

Alicia’s way of asking people to express their concerns and listening to them, her way of explaining her practice, and her interest in others, combined with a certain frankness and approachability, had won them over. Not only had she reassured the head of The Parks Security, but she had also reassured festival staff by showing them
that the production of a meaningful and powerful performance was one of her concerns and that she intended to deliver on those expectations. She further reassured them by showing that she knew and understood the imperatives of producing and delivering a performance of high artistic standards. In addition, she had shown the Health Service’s and Youth Services’ staff that she too was concerned about minimising risks of harm to participants, and disclosure of participants’ personal information. She explained that close attention would be paid to those areas and that she would refer to the relevant Health Service staff any participants who, in spite of her precautionary measures of highlighting the hypothetical nature of the situations discussed during the consultation sessions, might show signs of distress or harm. Alicia had reassured all present because she had shown them that she knew and understood the ‘rules’ of working within a health promotion and youth service environment.

By clinching full endorsement for and appreciation of their work in The Parks, Alicia established the project’s worthiness and the benefits of those partners’ involvement. It also afforded her the opportunity to make demands and raise concerns of her own. During this particular meeting, she wanted to make sure that festival staff understood their role and responsibility in this project, a role and responsibility different from those usually associated with the production of festival events. For example, she wanted to ensure a certain quota of free tickets for community members in order to reward local participation and ensure the presence of local people in the audience to add to a potentially destabilising or challenging experience for regular-festival-goers or non-local spectators. By the end of the meeting local partners and festival staff had gained clarity about the task ahead.

Not only was this meeting a clear example of the ways in which an agreement on the overall goal of the project was reached and tensions overcome, but it was also an event which marked a turning point in the project. These kinds of meetings were, however, but one way of negotiating the projects’ parameters. Further relationships and decisions were made, undone and/or strengthened through the activities and processes used to establish the community’s collaboration on the project. I address these in more detail next.
4.5 Community collaboration

As mentioned earlier, *The Longest Night* was devised using a model of practice Alicia Talbot had developed for and refined since working on *The Cement Garage*. Typically, over a period of nine months, Alicia and her artistic team take residency in a chosen area, characterised by the presence of ‘at-risk’ and/or ‘marginal communities’, with the aim of collaboratively devising a performance work deemed to be relevant to the local participants, their community and the broader Australian society by members of UTP, local welfare and/or arts organisations and funding bodies. In what follows, I examine the details, specificities and implications of Alicia Talbot’s model of practice, characterised by the use of conventional CCD and community theatre processes as well as elements of mainstream artistic production, as it was applied to TLN.

Though many of the processes used in TLN were drawn from CCD and community theatre processes, such as those of Ann Jellicoe for instance (Jellicoe, 1987), with which most Parks workers were familiar, some of the processes Alicia used also departed from this type of approach on several accounts. One obvious point of difference was the payment of local participants for their dramaturgical work based on Alicia’s conscious decision to reward participants for their contribution in a direct way rather than in a symbolic or tokenistic way (Talbot, Interview, 2000). Another difference was the employment of professional performers from outside the area to co-devise and perform in *The Longest Night*, a point of departure based on Alicia’s interest in finding other ways of working collaboratively outside of the more conventional ‘workshop’ structure (Gallasch, 1999). Despite these points of departure, most workers were more than respectful of Alicia’s way of working, perhaps because a majority of young people responded positively to Alicia’s approach and TLN, as was evidenced by the high quantity and quality of participation and engagement in the project.

For TLN, Alicia used three core types of structured activities: focus group sessions, consultation sessions and workshops. Within these structured sessions a range of active and reflective games and activities were used for various ends. These,
ultimately, highlighted a desire to engage with and foster participation of the immediately accessible local young people as well as those less visible or those not reached by The Parks Community Centre services. Alicia also used less formal gatherings and meetings to establish and develop relationships. Further, towards the end of the project, she used informal mentoring and role-modelling processes to increase opportunities for change for participants in TLN. These processes included nurturing the more eager participants’ interests and imagination as well as challenging their assumptions and desires. In this way she enhanced levels of engagement and participation secured through the structured sessions. She also consolidated newfound confidence and increased the potential for change. Next, I look more closely at these relationship-building strategies, structured sessions and mentoring processes and their role in shaping *The Longest Night*.

4.5.1 Developing relationships

For Alicia, developing relationships with local gatekeepers and leaders is essential to her work. As she stated during one of our conversations: “[y]ou have to go to the powerbrokers … you need to have the right people on your side” (Talbot, Interview, 2001). Gatekeepers and leaders can assist a practitioner to access more people and give them approval and support to work in a particular area. Not working with local gatekeepers is often a barrier to accessing relevant groups. For instance, because the Health Service worker with contacts to the local Cambodian and Vietnamese community groups was leaving her position at The Parks, relationships with these local leaders were not developed which led to the lack of representation of members from these ‘communities’ in the project. Conversely, relying solely on gatekeepers to work with community groups and members also carries with it its own constraints, such as having to enter into local group politics, or having to work with one group to the detriment of others (not that there were any immediate examples of this in TLN).

One example of a relationship Alicia developed with a local gatekeeper is her relationship with Katherine. Early in the project, Alicia met Katherine, a young, cheerful and enthusiastic community development worker with the Health Service. She had been working at The Parks for about two years. She found part-time
employment at the Health Service following her work placement there, working with the local Somali community towards the completion of a Bachelor in Social Work. She complemented this part-time work with another part-time position within the Health Service, working with local Aboriginal young people. Her work was mostly about “building better relationships with the Health Service” through cultural activities (Katherine, Interview, 2001). At the time of TLN, Katherine had become a full-time community development worker. Part of her work focused on African refugee communities, while the other part focused on working with residents of the Housing Trust estate on “personal health-related issues” as well as with established local community groups on issues pertaining to the changes brought on by the gentrification of the area, supporting the local community: “that was basically around social action to make that stuff not happen … and advocacy on behalf of Housing Trust tenants, to make sure the process is as equitable and fair as possible” (Katherine, Interview, 2001, italics added). Katherine’s involvement in the project opened up many doors and solved many logistical problems. Though she was designated by the Health Service to work on the project, she was also attracted and won over to the project by the skills and passion of Alicia. Further, she was young and inspired enough to welcome her involvement as an opportunity for her to do her work better. Moreover, she saw the project as a way of creating new opportunities and increasing resources for local people and The Parks’ organisations:

... [it] isn’t just about doing one performance. It’s about, I guess, creating opportunities for increasing resources here, increasing the profile of the arts here in Parks and, you know, assisting a process that can enable some sustainability. And, therefore, [it] will inspire a lot of young people and create opportunities for young people to be involved in something they have previously not been able to be involved in, that won’t just come and go. That won’t just be three months for them, something fun to be involved in, that can actually be a real opportunity for their lives and something that’s going to be ... long term or ongoing, you know; it’s not necessarily a service, but, you know, things like having an arts officer here or youth community development whatever person, to enable, you know, more funding to come through to do all those, more projects, like The Longest Night, to continue on.

Katherine’s contacts and enthusiasm for her work and local community, coupled with the Health Service’s longstanding work in the area, meant that she was in a position to broker positive relationships between UTP and some local groups and people.
Both in her work with Katherine and in her interaction with local young people, Alicia’s strength was in developing relationships by tapping into existing networks of gatekeepers and leaders. One particular event, a dance party organised by UTP and the Health Service for young participants from African origin, presents a clear example of this. The dance party was planned as a way of discussing in a relaxed and friendly manner TLN project’s aims and the ways in which young people from a variety of African origins might take part in it. By working first with Katherine and then with one of Katherine’s informants (John, a young Sudanese man) in ‘recruiting’ some of the young African people for this gathering, Alicia managed to attract to this event about thirty young people (a majority of Sudanese and some Somali and Ethiopian people) ranging in ages from fifteen to twenty six.

Alicia’s capacity to develop meaningful relationships was also based on her ability to establish adaptable structures and work through flexible strategies to allow her to respond to and negotiate potential pitfalls. As a case in point, the Health Service had developed a habit of working with local African people and groups from different nations and considering them as one ‘target community’ for their projects and programs. This lumping together of various community groups and people hadn’t seemed to be an issue in the past and indeed most of the young African people present at the dance part were already familiar with each other. However, on the night of the dance party this lumping together of people from different African communities became an issue because of their different religious practices. A halal dinner had been prepared to cater for the mixture of people of Christian and Muslim faith within the group. This dinner was, however, unacceptable for some of the Ethiopian girls of Christian faith. They wouldn’t eat the dish because the meat had been blessed according to Muslim customary practices. After a somewhat lengthy deliberation amongst themselves and with some of the staff present, the apparent leader of the group of girls reached a compromise: they would eat the meat if they were allowed to recite a prayer to their God over the food. Though the prayer had solved this potential pitfall, Alicia had, in the mean time, decided to order pizzas, to the delight of some of the young men present.
Another example of Alicia’s ability to be adaptable and flexible in her approach to this kind of work was illustrated by the way in which on the night of the dance party she managed to create a sort of unity and negotiated the differences between the various groups of young people present. After gathering all the people present in a circle to discuss the project’s aims and their possible involvement in it, Alicia asked the young people for their initial impressions. The most vocal of the group were some of the young Ethiopian men, who had been in Australia the longest and mastered spoken English better than some of the Sudanese, the most recent migrants (as recent as three months) to arrive in Australia. The project seemed to be confusing for some of them who didn’t understand the purpose and process of TLN. They expressed, however, interest in doing theatre, dance and rap workshops. This confusion resulted in a loss of focus and interest. Quite a few young men were leaving the circle milling around the edges of the room, moving in and out of the room, uncertain whether to stay or leave. In a bid to save the night, Alicia decided to introduce a hypothetical game: “What would you do if you had a million dollars?” She hoped the exercise would provide a way of bringing the group together and getting participants to open up in a relaxed manner. Alicia also hoped to provide a way of determining young people’s current social position, their dreams and ideas about ‘belonging’. Alicia pointed to the group of Sudanese boys to start the game. A boy of about sixteen, seeing the amusing and imaginative aspect of the game, started with eagerness, smiling while explaining what he would do with a million dollars. His eagerness, however, soon turned into frustration and embarrassment when his reply was met with laughter from some of the Somali and Ethiopian boys. They were not laughing at his ideas but at his lack of mastery of the English language.\(^39\) In his eagerness to participate, the Sudanese boy had blurted out a string of words that were incomprehensible to the majority of people present. Not only did these laughs embarrass the Sudanese boy, they also signalled to the other Sudanese boys that they risked being mocked in the same manner. This made them reluctant to join in the game. They remained for a short while in the circle, but their expressions showed

\(^39\) As the most recently arrived migrants, most of the Sudanese youths’ level of spoken English language was, at times, less than fluent.
resentment (stern faces, sitting sideways, arms crossed over their chests, etc.) for having been put on the spot. Again, they slowly started to physically withdraw from the circle. Once more, Alicia changed activity to keep the group together.

Finally, Alicia’s capacity to represent and align herself with the ‘underdogs’ was another quality that enabled her to develop trusting relationships. In the context of the dance party for example, because Alicia was cautious about her role and position in these seemingly informal situations, she often adopted the position of a ‘dag’.\(^40\) This was evident during the dance party especially when interacting with the Sudanese boys. This position-taking of the ‘dag’ afforded her the opportunity to cut through some of the boy’s cultural protocols around issues, such as gender, age and ‘class’/’occupation’ difference, that might have otherwise been an impediment to developing a relationship with some of the young people in the amount of time she had to develop the project. This allowed her to work around the room chatting to various group leaders present to gauge their interests in theatre or performance activities in general, and their levels of interest in being part of TLN project in particular. It also allowed her the chance to make specific offers and counter-offers relevant to what she perceived to be the group’s general interests, which was in addition a way of nurturing prospective participants’ interests. This was another of Alicia’s strength in negotiating relationships with young people and potential participants. For instance, based on casual conversations with some of the young people present on the night of the dance party, Alicia decided to organise another gathering with the same group of young people for her next visit to The Parks during which she would offer dance, rap and capoeira\(^41\) workshops led by members of UTP’s artistic team.

These last points are interesting because they are characteristic of what Bourdieu calls an ‘economy of debt’ (Bourdieu, 2000, pp. 337–348). For Bourdieu an ‘economy of debt’ is a unique relationship between people who exchange ‘gifts’ or symbolic

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\(^40\) Australian vernacular used to describe a clumsy and unsophisticated, yet likeable, person.

\(^41\) Capoeira is a form of Brazilian martial arts, which combines fight, dance, lore and music.
goods. Though this exchange appears to be free of conventions and/or obligations, it most often creates, unconsciously, an ambiguous and unequal relationship that often benefits one party over the other. Because of a combination of Alicia’s ways of developing relationships and the types of activities that were on offer, which I further discuss next, most participants who engaged with TLN had an ongoing, though not necessarily regular, relationship with it. In addition, some also attracted or brought along more participants.

4.5.2 Focus group sessions

From July to November 2001, Alicia led twelve focus group sessions. These were conceived as a one-off activity, in the early stages of the project, with a number of groups of young people referred to the project by local workers or invited to attend by Alicia. These sessions had two purposes. On the one hand these sessions were meant as a way of establishing a relationship based on trust between UTP’s artistic team and The Parks’ gatekeepers, leaders and participants. To establish that trust Alicia had to, first, give potential participants an idea of what she intended to do with and throughout the project. Second, she had to demonstrate to local partners UTP’s artistic team’s ability to run CCD projects. Third, she had to negotiate with participants in order to establish what they might want out of the project. The dance party discussed above is an example of this.

On the other hand these sessions served to develop sub-themes and possible storylines for The Longest Night around the major themes of ‘belonging’ and ‘change’. These major themes were chosen by Alicia based on Maslow’s ‘Hierarchy of Needs’ (Maslow, 1943). Maslow’s theories are often associated with welfare discourses and practices adopted by members of the subfield of health promotion. His ‘Hierarchy of Needs’ is a seven-stage model, which maps the requirements of human development from basic needs to personal fulfilment and growth (Maslow, 1943). It is used to understand the psychosomatic causes of illness and the triggers for addictive behaviours (Gale, 2002). The themes of ‘belonging’ and ‘change’ are Maslow’s second level of needs in his hierarchy. They built on and developed the issues and themes of survival, basic needs and homelessness (Maslow’s first level in his
Hierarchy) faced by some young people explored in The Cement Garage (Talbot, 2000, p. 20), the prequel to The Longest Night.

The success in realising these sessions’ purposes hinged on the use of a diversity of games, activities and processes. One focus session in particular, that Alicia led with a group of young people attending a local alternative schooling program, called Western Youth Directions (WYD), aimed at leading out-of-school-teenagers back into the public education system, highlights this diversity as well as some of the reasons behind Alicia’s choices of games, activities and processes.

Parks high school, Angle Park, Adelaide. Photographer: Celina McEwen, Focus group session with WYD students, 2002

For these sessions the choice of games, activities and processes constituted an important decision because they served some predetermined aims. In the case of this particular session, the decision was taken to start following a barbecue a small group of WYD students had requested during a brief initial encounter with Alicia the previous month. This was to help extend the relaxed atmosphere of the barbecue into
the classroom. Alicia had also planned to keep the session ‘open’, allowing the young people to decide on its direction and structure. She quickly realised, however, that she would need to impose some structure and set activities if she were to overcome the lack of enthusiasm most of the young people present showed as soon as they entered the classroom (the students’ regular WYD classroom) where the session was held: moving slowly to take positions in a circle in the middle of the room, then sitting in clusters, leaving gaps in the circle, sitting with their arms crossed, bodies sideways, faces down with their caps and hats over their eyes, chairs back to front or tilted on their back legs, propped up against the wall, silent or whispering amongst themselves.

The first game Alicia introduced was a kind of musical chair game (without the music) to spark interest in the young people. Alicia briefly explained the rules. The game started and immediately generated a lot of laughs. After a short while, though, the game degenerated with people pulling and grabbing each other and swearing at each other. Alicia stopped the game, requesting young people’s attention and focus. She commented firmly on their behaviour and language, requesting rules be agreed to regarding communication and exchanges within the group for the duration of the session. Once the group had agreed to these rules, Alicia introduced a second game.

The second game was a game of focus, memory and speed. It was also a game aimed at enabling young people to present themselves in a fun and positive light. Again Alicia took them through the rules. The game consisted in remembering moves or gestures each person had presented to the rest of the group as ‘signifying’ him or herself. Standing in a circle, one player had to perform their own signifying move before performing the move of another player, who would then perform his or her own move and that of another player, and so forth, with increasing speed. Players who hesitated too long, forgot moves or made a ‘wrong’ move were eliminated from the game. The last player ‘standing’ had won.

This choice of game didn’t have the intended outcome. First, it was a complicated game that saw most of its allocated time spent on explaining the rules. Second, young people felt ‘put on the spot’, or exposed, because they felt inadequate in performing their own moves to the rest of the group or to people they weren’t familiar with;
because they couldn’t remember moves; or because they were being mocked by other players distorting or exaggerating their moves. Soon players were disengaging, showing disinterest and disapproval of the game by stepping out of the circle, leaning against the wall or deliberately making ‘wrong’ moves in order to be disqualified. Again Alicia had to use a strong tone of voice, correcting people on their use of swearing, their tone of voice and behaviour. Soon the game was over and followed by a short break, which helped to release some of the tension created by this last game.

When the group reformed, Alicia decided it was time to explain the purpose of her visit and TLN project. Her presentation was aimed at giving a general overview of the project and how young people might be involved. It was also aimed at gaining support from some of the leaders of the group, whom Patricia, WYD Director and occasional tutor, had pointed out to Alicia earlier. Alicia seemed to be struggling in getting young people to talk. They seemed unreceptive to the ideas presented. To overcome this obstacle and engage them in a conversation immediately more graspable than TLN and unrelated to their presence at WYD, unemployment, study or other problems, Alicia chose to introduce the same hypothetical game she had used during the dance party with the African young people discussed in the previous subsection: “What would you do if you had a million dollars?” Unlike the African young people, the WYD young people got into the game quickly, talking about their wishes to settle away from the area in order to escape “drugs”, “Chinese people” or “boredom”. But it also revealed a strong attachment to “dope” and alcohol (“woodies”). Thanks to the playful approach of the exercise, young people were finally expressing ideas about their lives and providing potential material for the theatrical performance.

In some cases, these decisions to choose one game or activity over another had been made in advance while, at other times, they were taken on the spot to respond to a particular situation. These decision-making processes highlight Alicia’s strategic approach and skills in facilitating such sessions.

This particular session also highlighted a transition in the levels of engagement of participants. During the barbecue most young people present displayed outwardly signs of friendliness: smiling, joking, laughing, chatting amongst themselves and with
members of UTP’s artistic team they weren’t familiar with. They were also willing to participate in preparing food, cooking and cleaning. It was clear to me that Alicia had made a favourable impression during their initial encounter. From this point on, however, the atmosphere changed. The beginning of the two-hour long focus group session was met by fifteen or so young people whose demeanour had shifted from open and cheerful to what seemed a more distant and defiant attitude. It was only after the ‘million dollars’ game that Alicia managed to turn the session around. A majority of young people started to show an acceptance of Alicia, her project and her processes: they were still present by the end of the session (something WYD staff were struggling with themselves), they were participating in the game, sharing their dreams and ideas with Alicia and others, and after the session at ended they were milling about the room waiting their turn to talk to Alicia.

What the dance party, discussed in the previous sub-section, and WYD’s focus group session show is that different groups responded to different offers. They also show that despite Alicia’s skills and passion, she, at times, had to engage in significant struggles to engage young participants, which required the assistance of gatekeepers and leaders.

4.5.3 Consultation sessions

From January to February 2002, six consultation sessions were held at The Parks. These ‘consultative dramaturgy’ sessions brought together UTP’s artistic team and a group of ten participants who were paid twenty-five dollars for their advice. For example, the first of the consultation sessions was attended by a group of ten participants between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, about half male and half female, mostly ‘recruited’ from the WYD’s program or referred to the project by the Health Service’s Parenting Services. Interestingly, though African youths did contribute to TLN event, none were present at this or the other subsequent consultative sessions, showing their disinterest in and/or lack of understanding of the devising process being used. Besides UTP’s team and the ten participants, there was also one local worker present.
The overarching aim of these sessions was to generate material for *The Longest Night* play around themes and sub-themes previously established through the focus group sessions. This was typically done in two ways. First, these sessions presented a section of the work-in-progress performance. In the case of the first consultation session, the performers launched into their characters (Bernie the main character of *The Longest Night* (performed by Bernadette Regan) and her friends Carlos (Charles Russell), Morgan (Morgan Lewis), Shannon (Shannon Williams) and Lucia (Lucia Mastrantone)) and their work in progress scene for which UTP’s artistic team were seeking participants’ feedback. This thirty-minute scene had been devised by UTP’s artistic team during four weeks of intensive improvisation sessions in Sydney based on Alicia’s initial idea of developing Bernie’s character (one of the characters from the first performance in the trilogy of UTP’s recent large-scale community collaboration works, *The Cement Garage*), the performers’ first impressions of The Parks, and ideas generated by participants during focus group sessions.

Though the performance was presented in UTP’s initial rehearsal space, a carpeted room in The Parks high school opened onto the internal paths of the Community Centre by a long bay of windows, devoid of some of the usual rhetorical conventions, such as props, lighting, stage, seating (young people were sitting on the floor), the young audience recognised and reacted to the performance as a theatrical event: they remained seated, focused on the staged action, attending to their babies quietly or taking them aside when their squealing, in response to energetic, loud or emotionally charged sequences, might have distracted others from the performance. All the young consulting dramaturgs remained focused on the scene depicting Bernie’s relationship with her friends, her fragile situation and the changes she was seeking in her life:

*It’s night time. It’s quiet. The five performers are lying down, relaxing or reading, except for Lucia who is pacing the room, showing signs of restlessness and boredom. She turns the radio on and starts to dance. Shannon pretends to film something. Morgan and Carlos soon join in pretending to be at war against terrorist, Bin Laden. Finally all join in the film fantasy. The game soon deteriorates into violence with the boys upturning the house. Bernie reacts violently to the boys’ actions and is supported in this by Lucia who throws the boys out. While Bernie and Lucia clean up,*
Bernie expresses her fear that her place will be turned into a squat, reminding her of her past life of homelessness. Lucia helps her calm down by giving her a ‘joint’ to smoke. They both finally relax and start talking about the boys and who might make a good father. The boys return bearing gifts of alcohol to apologise for their earlier behaviour. Lucia and Shannon leave for the shops, while the others discuss ideas for an action film over another ‘joint’. Soon Shannon returns followed by Lucia, hysterical, alleging that Shannon has tried to rape her. Bernie tries to comfort Lucia and resolve the conflict while the boys launch into a rap. They all finally settle: the boys writing a script for their action film and the girls building a train set. Their activities progressively transform into a slow-motion fight sequence between the boys and the girls where each in turn gain and lose control of the action. The scene ends with Shannon cornered, interviewed at toy-gun point by the girls about the earlier alleged rape incident. Satisfied with the result, the girls let go of Shannon. Bernie offers tea. The boys leave to get some milk but return with more alcohol instead.

Second, this work-in-progress performance was followed by a discussion of sections of The Longest Night. This part of the session was intended as away of checking the credibility of the material generated by the artistic team. During the first consultation session, following the end of the presentation of the work-in-progress scene, Alicia brought participants and performers together in a circle. Participants seemed a bit stunned, but Alicia hardly needed to prompt them to get their feedback on what they had seen. This was quite a different reaction to the sometimes begrudging acceptance of offers and participation in relationship building exercises used by Alicia in the earlier stages of the project. When Alicia asked “What do you think?” some participants were quick to reply: “Full on!”; “Catches your attention because of the changes and conversations, behaviour and rhythms”. The ensuing discussions touched on many issues, including the scene’s relationship to the performance The Cement Garage which some of them had seen screened during a previous focus group session, and the characters’ behaviour (Lucia, for instance, was described as “good at showing her emotions” but her character was not trustworthy because of her unpredictable moods, a point which also shows that the young consultants made a fuzzy distinction between Lucia the performer and the character). Yet another discussion followed about aspects of the content, for instance: how some participants didn’t relate to the
action film aspect of the section, and certain elements of performance, or how the gender relations portrayed seemed to be stereotypical rather than ‘real’. Another discussion still ensued about the overall quality of the performance, which was described as “good” because of the felt tension in the conflict between the characters. Alicia asked another question to help the discussion progress: “Was it believable?” Participants responded quickly: “At the end of the night there is always one or two that really want to sleep”; “Bernie needs to look after her baby”; “The swearing level depends on the place”; “Bin Laden talk could be offensive”; “You can live fucked up lives, but still have dreams”; “The action film needs to be clearer”; “They [the boys] should not return all feeling sorry, ‘cause on drugs you might not remember what happened before”; “You smoke a joint on the run and a bong at home”, and so on. Alicia, probing further, asked: “What happens next?” Again a flurry of comments came back, some more grounded in reality than others, but mostly suggesting that the section performed had potential: “Flashback of what happened on the walk with Shannon and Lucia”; “They get into heavy stuff and their lives become hard”; “Someone gets hurt or killed and the other ones are trying to deal with it”; “Neighbours would complain”; “Take Bernie’s baby away”; “An accident with the baby … a wake up call”; “Bernie goes for a part-time job, gets off the dole and Lucia baby-sits the baby”; “Shannon gets murdered in the action film”.

In addition, these sessions aimed to consolidate UTP’s processes and intentions in participants’, and workers’, minds. During this particular example of the first consultation session, the session started with a brief reminder about group rules and boundaries of safe communication and interaction. Alicia re-iterated that the purpose of the session was to engage in a discussion about their opinions on a hypothetical story rather than a discussion about personal experiences or the disclosure of confidential information. As I discuss further in Chapter 5, this explicit disclaimer about only drawing on the ‘not-real’ for the young community participants was, however, intentionally reversed for the performers and their characters, in order to blur the lines between real and not real (between the characters and the performers) for the benefit of the audience. This reversal was also evident in the blurring of the ‘real’ and ‘not-real’ between the performers and their characters who seemed to have the same name: Bernadette Regan’s character Bernie, Charles Russell’s Carlos,
Morgan Lewis’s Morgan, Shannon Williams’s Shannon and Lucia Mastrantone’s Lucia.

By seeking suggestions from the group of young people, confirming the accuracy of the content performed and proving that they had been heard during the earlier focus group sessions, as evidenced by the incorporation of some of their suggestions in the scenes watched, UTP’s artistic team was using these sessions to provide the authenticating conventions that would underpin The Longest Night play. These sessions provided a certain legitimacy and authority to the project: a project informed by a socio-political practices and a performance produced as fictitious yet grounded in the ‘real world’ of local young people. This first consultation session was what UTP’s artistic team hoped might happen. This didn't, however, always happen to this extent during the five remaining consultation sessions. For most participants attending these consultation sessions, the processes and project were finally making sense and they were feeling valued by the team’s attention. Because of this, some participants were now eager to participate in the project in more ways than through these sessions.

In response to this eagerness, some participants were invited to attend a limited number of “open-door” rehearsal sessions. Though these rehearsal sessions were designed for UTP’s artistic team to generate and shape material for The Longest Night, these sessions also became an additional and informal vehicle for participants’ dramaturgical input. Finally, these open-door sessions allowed eager participants to be rewarded with greater attention as well as allowed them to witness rehearsals and improvising processes first-hand.

Alicia’s other response to participants’ eagerness was to invite some of them (as well as a few eager workers) to be part of the Tour. The idea of the Tour arose from Alicia’s first visit to The Parks and meetings with local workers and young people. Alicia saw the need for spectators to hear some local voices and stories directly from local residents. She also saw the need for some participants to perform in the Adelaide Festival, to express their sense of belonging to the area and the project and to be seen by other local residents and non-local spectators. It is worth noting here that these
needs were further met by developing the *Dance Off*, as I discuss in the following subsection and chapter.


Several concurrent tours of The Parks were planned and developed as a way of helping reveal, mostly to those non-local spectators, a certain reality of The Parks. Indeed, the *Tour* was conceived as a way of leading spectators into the fictional world of *The Longest Night* by guiding them around the buildings and services housed in The Parks Community Centre and through personal stories depicting the lived experience of The Parks area. The idea was well received by participants and workers. As a result, it was integrated into the *TLN* event. Through individual meetings set up
on a needs basis with the *Tour* guides, UTP’s Artistic Director and Dramaturg devised the *Tour*.

4.5.4 Workshop sessions

![Image of workshop session]

**Community Centre Square, Angle Park, Adelaide. Photographer: Sophia Koutroulis, Community Development/Youth Worker, Adelaide Central Community Health Services, Parks, Dept. of Human Services, Government of South Australia, B-boying workshop, 2002. Local young people and Shannon Williams (standing to the left) and Morgan Lewis (on the linoleum mat centre)**

The last type of structured group activities used in TLN project was a series of workshop sessions organised by Alicia and Youth Services during the last couple of months of the project. Over six weekly two-hour sessions, participants were invited to attend a series of free workshops. These included music-making and recording workshops led by Rose Turtle, UTP’s musician and composer on *The Longest Night*, and Carlos; acrobatics workshops led by Bernie; R’n’B dance workshops led by
Lucia; and Hip Hop culture workshops led by Morganics (Morgan Lewis), and BrothaBlack (Shannon Williams).42

To illustrate the type of processes used and the level of activity, take for example the first workshop session. This session attracted one young girl in the recording workshop who decided to sing some of her favourite songs, five girls who gravitated towards Lucia and Bernie (who decided to join Lucia on this occasion due to a lack of interest in acrobatics) to dance to CDs of their favourite American rap and R’n’B artists, and about fifteen boys, aged between eight and fourteen, who gathered in and around Morganics and BrothaBlack, maybe hoping to rap, but in the first instance playing ‘cool’ and ‘hard to get’. As workshops went on, levels of attendance soared from around thirty participants at this first workshop to about seventy at the second and one hundred at the last session. This was evidence that what had come across as a classic ‘drop-in’ session in an Australian suburban youth or community centre had created a new and positive experience for those present.

It is worth describing the actions of the boys during the first session as they are fairly representative of what happened on other occasions during the project, but also because they are fairly representative of decision-making processes common to participants of this age group. Further, they showed a moment when participation is transformed into engagement. The boys were constantly moving in and out of the room where Morganics and BrothaBlack were. They were at times standing around the pool table, or the computers, while at others peeking at the R’n’B girls in a nearby room. Despite the to-ing and fro-ing, Morganics and BrothaBlack were diligently and steadfastly demonstrating their b-boying and beat boxing skills. It was interesting to note that, though these boys appeared to be ignoring their tutors, they weren’t leaving the premises. It might have been because of Morganics and BrothaBlack’s persistence, or because of the presence of the girls next door, or because the boys had seen something they aspired to learn. Whatever the reason, some of the boys finally

42 Morgan Lewis and Shannon Williams are accomplished Australian Hip Hop artists who perform respectively under the stage names of Morganics and BrothaBlack.
decided to show off some of their Hip Hop skills. Seizing this opportunity, Morganics started to encourage these boys to try beat-boxing or rapping using their names. Though the boys kept moving in and out of participation during this session, most of them had an attempt at rapping, beat-boxing or b-boying.

These workshops were seen as a way of embracing and showing adherence to processes and strategies more familiar to some Parks Community Centre services’ staff. In that sense, they were thought of as a useful way of providing participants with a playful, active and physical outlet, a way of creating friendships among young people and a way of overcoming ‘ethnic’ divides. They were also thought of as a way of giving something back to some of the participants, a way of engaging with younger participants. In addition, the workshops were seen as useful in establishing close teacher/student-type relationships between performers and participants in the hope that these relationships might create a strong learning experience.

Though these workshops helped gain respect for performers through the demonstration of their skills and perseverance, this wasn’t an easy task for most performers. Indeed, although most of UTP’s performers had worked on community collaborations before TLN, they weren’t necessarily all familiar with Alicia’s model of practice and/or working away from home. Performers found their work on TLN project challenging at times because they began working on the project not knowing what to expect from participants. Further, not only did they have to collaborate and devise a theatrical performance, they also had to: be part of most focus group and consultation sessions; make sense of the information gleaned during those sessions; translate that information into a performance vocabulary during extensive improvisation and rehearsal sessions; teach young people performance skills; and organise a short performance piece based on those skills taught, which would be part of the Dance Off. Yet, most of them understood the significance of working collaboratively in order to devise a performance informed by local community members’ lives.

One such example of perseverance and understanding was evident in the progress of the first workshop session. The lack of young people at the start of this first session
seemed to augur badly for the rest of the sessions. Though some of the performers who were leading the workshops seemed partly relieved by this (because their work at The Parks had proven to be very intensive), their reaction to what looked like a lack of interest in what they had to offer created a sense of disappointment which saw local partner staff and performers head outside, into the square, in a bid to save the session. They were hoping to attract a few young people who might in turn call their friends to join them in the workshops. Within half an hour of this recruitment drive, UTP’s team and local workers had rallied about twenty young people aged between eight and fourteen. Half way through the session, though a few young people had left, more had arrived, increasing the number of participants to around thirty.

In the context of a large-scale theatrical production, these workshops also served to maintain focus in the lead up to the performance season as well as to contain the enthusiasm of some of the younger local people not able to participate in other structured sessions. These workshops were also devised as a way of providing a sense of ownership and value to some of the participants. This, in time, led to the development of material for the Dance Off, one performance component of the TLN event, which emerged as another way of dealing with participants’ enthusiasm and desire to perform during the Adelaide Festival.

Though each type of session had a different purpose and drew on different types of games and activities, they all worked together to fulfil a broad aim of local engagement and participation. What was significant about these sessions was that they helped maximise local engagement and participation. Indeed, in their own way, each different type of session led to a significant number of local young people becoming participants in one area or another of the project.

4.5.5 Mentoring and role-modelling processes

Outside of the structured sessions, other less formal activities occurred, which I call mentoring or role-modelling. This mentoring initially involved activities such as “hanging out”, having a chat, and exchanging skills, which allowed for the development of closer relations between some participants (and the occasional worker) and some members of UTP’s artistic team. These activities occurred mostly
during performers’ working hours as they had to be transported into The Parks every day from their serviced apartments in North Adelaide, a suburb close to Adelaide’s central business district. Though not formalised, this part of the project was a very important component as it enabled UTP’s team to nurture young people’s interests and imagination in order to reach a point in time that might allow some members of the team to ‘challenge’ participants. This was a key element, according to Alicia, in creating meaningful relationships that not only engaged young people (and, I would add, workers and gatekeepers) with the project and moral and social issues, but also provided an opportunity to foster change in some of the participants and potentially the community.

The success of mentoring young participants rested mostly on whether participants would feel an affinity with members of UTP’s team. Thus, the choice of performers, according to not only their skills, charisma and compatibility with other performers, but also their background, gender, spheres of influence, reputation, etc., was crucial. It was crucial because people are usually attracted to and seek involvement in a project to the extent that they can identify with and/or draw some benefits from parts of that project.

The importance of choosing the ‘right’ performers can be illustrated by an examination of Greg’s, a young Nunga man of fifteen, involvement with the project. Following the recent death of his mother in a car accident, Greg was living at The Parks with some relatives and looking after his two younger siblings. Greg came to the project after attending a focus group session organised for WYD students. He was reaching the end of his WYD course and about to decide whether to go to college or TAFE. Greg was attracted to the project partly because of the presence of Morgan and Shannon, both Hip Hop performers and MCs (interestingly, both artists nurtured through UTP). He was attracted by the performers’ energy, talents and position in the public eye. He was also able to identify with Shannon who is, like himself, a young man of Aboriginal descent. Greg sought out the performers’ presence and they responded by nurturing his interest in Hip Hop culture. He became very involved in the project, attending most consultation sessions and open-door rehearsals. Further, his engagement with the project led to a significant participation from other young
people attending WYD and others from Aboriginal and European-Australian backgrounds. Greg became one of the ‘stars’ of the project: loved by UTP’s artistic team as well as appropriated by local staff as ‘their’ success story. During the Adelaide Festival, Greg became MC for the Dance Off and a Tour guide with his friend Ben.

Another example of this mentoring and nurturing process is the case of Dale, a single teenage mother living in foster care with her eight-month-old daughter, who had only recently been diagnosed with a mental illness. At the beginning of the project, Dale had a bit of a penchant for drugs and a more serious one for drawing and writing ‘manga’ cartoons. Before becoming a mother, Dale had been in and out of foster care, occasionally living on the streets as well as in and around violent and abusive relationships. She hadn’t been to school much. She had stopped regularly attending school when she was nine years old. Her happiest memories were of being pregnant. During the project Dale turned eighteen and was able to leave her foster carers to settle in The Parks housing estate with her daughter and near her best friend, Ann, and her young son. Dale was referred to the project by one of the Health Service’s staff members. She saw in the project the opportunity to be creative that she longed for. She was also drawn to the project by Alicia’s energy and empathy. Alicia nurtured her interest in drawing and poetry even long after the project had ended. Dale became very much involved in the project, as she explained in an interview with one of the local radio stations: “I am pretty much just a community member, but we’re required to come once a week on Tuesday night, but I was very interested so I came in during the day to watch rehearsals and been there pretty much everyday giving them first hand advice without having to write it all down and ask everyone questions once a week” (Dale, 2002).43 As with Greg, Dale was a ‘star’ of the project, appropriated by local workers as another success story. Further, she became a key informant on the project and one of eight Tour guides, taking spectators around The Parks on her own after Ann dropped out of the project.

43 To maintain the informants’ anonymity, the names I use are not their real names. For this reason, this same convention has been applied to this reference.
Mentoring eager participants increased their involvement in the project and increased how they directly benefited from it. This mentoring process also increased the number of participants in the project as those mentored were often leaders amongst their peers. Finally, it increased the chances of fostering changes in some participants’ attitudes and outlook on life by giving them a greater sense of worth, helping them reflect on their lives and open their eyes and minds to other possibilities. Thus, some of the more eager participants were nurtured by the presence of UTP’s artistic team in their everyday environment, but also challenged in their assumptions by that same presence.

Indeed, these non-formal activities culminate in what Alicia considers to be the most powerful aspect of her practice: the creation of a space and time at the end of the project for participants’ self-evaluation. This self-evaluation consists of one-on-one confidential conversations which Alicia calls ‘exit interviews’. They aim at fostering greater reflection for participants on their learning and challenging them to think ‘bigger and better’ about their future. Alicia sees these ‘exit interviews’ as providing an opportunity to discuss and highlight instances of learning and change in order to maximise some of the participants’ new-found confidence. It is a way of seizing or creating what Alicia has termed, in conversations with me, a ‘moment of realisation’; in other words, as I understand it: a moment in time for participants when they might be able to envisage the possibility of change in their everyday lives that speak of greater potential.

Typically, during these conversations Alicia comments on changes she has observed in participants and asks them pertinent questions. She no longer enquires about their hopes and dreams, but about their concrete plans for the future. She asks some general questions about what they want to do. She also asks some more detailed questions according to her specific individual observations. She also suggests possible ways to achieving the sought-after changes, such as where to seek professional help, what kind of course to enrol in, and so on.

During TLN, these ‘exit interviews’ were conducted during the end of project celebrations organised as a way of acknowledging, valuing and rewarding
participation. In this relaxed atmosphere Alicia asked questions to the young participants and local workers most involved in the project. For some this meant her asking questions about the way they sought and maintained relationships, while for others it meant asking questions about their commitment to a task, for instance.

### 4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter about the implementation of TLN, I have discussed aspects of the local community and culture within which the project took place and with which UTP’s artistic team engaged. I have also discussed in detail the processes used. This discussion has highlighted the role and place of forming and maintaining relationships in such a project as well as ways in which participation and creativity were triggered, stimulated and amplified. Moreover, it has highlighted the need for a flexible and opportunistic approach to this kind of work, in order to achieve some of the stated goals and outcomes for the project. In addition, it has highlighted how historical tensions between local organisations and different interests and expectations were overcome using a range of activities and strategies.

To conclude this chapter, this discussion about the implementation of TLN has revealed a structured practice, with a particular logic, design and intentionality. In other words, it has revealed the importance of developing particular relationships and implementing interrelated participatory and creative activities in situations somewhat detached from everyday life, with the aim of engaging with young people from The Parks and encouraging reflection about their culture and everyday life experiences. This detachment from everyday life was further enhanced by performing the *Dance Off*, *Tour* and *The Longest Night* within the Adelaide Festival; by engaging in a celebratory ‘special event’ which took participants somewhat outside the routines of their everyday life (including the presence of a large audience of non-local spectators and the interactions between these groups) and had mid- to long-term impacts on

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44 There were also other ways in which participants’ contributions were acknowledged, valued and rewarded: for instance, placing participants in the position of paid expert; placing participants in the festival as performers; including participants’ names in TLN program; and reserving a certain number of free seats for local spectators every night.
some of the participants and local organisations. I turn to these impacts in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 5 – Outcomes

5.1 Introduction

Having outlined the processes used in TLN, I now focus on some of the outcomes for the various parties involved in this project. These included not only the event produced for and presented at the 2002 Adelaide Festival but also changes and continuities for participating individuals and organisations of a somewhat longer-term nature.

I begin this chapter by analysing the TLN event performed in February and March of 2002, using elements of Kershaw’s (1992) framework to examine its potential “socio-political efficacy”. This analysis includes a discussion of the Dance Off and the Tour as elements of an extended gathering phase for the performance. I find that they proved to be highly significant to its potential efficacy and an integral part of the event. They provided a balance with the sometimes challenging material portrayed in The Longest Night. They also allowed for distance and critical engagement with the theatrical performance. Second, I discuss The Longest Night. I find that it offered moments of ideological crisis that had the potential to challenge spectators in their assumptions about life at the ‘margins’. Third, I examine some ways in which TLN might have fed into a program of social change. I do this by relating the analysis of the TLN event to the broader context in which the performances were located.

Finally, I expand the analysis of the TLN event to an analysis of some of the changes and continuities that have occurred for the various parties involved during a period of five years from the beginning of the project in 2001, as a result of their participation in TLN. I find that participation in TLN helped give some individual participants and spectators a new perspective on everyday life in The Parks as well as helped some participants express their hopes for a better life. I do, however, also find that, in the context of The Park (an area accustomed to social interventions and to community-based arts practices), the overall impact on participants wasn’t as extensive as discourses in the subfield of CCD might suggest.
5.2 The gathering phase or framing of The Longest Night performance

At the end of Chapter 4, I argued that UTP’s artistic team was, in a sense, obliged to respond to the interests of youth participants by creating opportunities for them to perform in the festival. This resulted in the Dance Off which ultimately served as a crucial gathering phase. As with the Tour, it served to frame the way in which spectators approached The Longest Night, or the performance ‘proper’, and to push the event towards a ‘liminoid’ experience (Turner, 1979, p. 491). As Kershaw (1992, pp. 16–23) argues, echoing Victor Turner and Richard Schechner, the events happening in and around the staging of a performance are part of a ‘whole performance sequence’ and can greatly influence the negotiation or transaction of meaning between spectators and artists. As outlined in Chapter 3, according to Kershaw (1992, pp. 22–32), one of the necessary conditions for a performance to have any potential socio-political efficacy is that spectators adopt a playful role as they make the transition from participating in ‘everyday life’ to being involved in a ‘special event’. In this way, they become open to the performance as a kind of “ideological experiment”, a chance perhaps to play with long-established cultural norms and community beliefs in relative safety. In many ways, the Dance Off and the Tour helped to establish this possibility.

5.2.1 The Dance Off

The event started with the Dance Off, a highly physical set of four distinct performances showcasing young local performers’ acrobatics, b-boying, Soul and Rap music, and R’n’B dancing abilities. Given that at least some festival patrons were likely to have framed the TLN event as a trip into a marginalised ghetto, the Dance Off served as a reminder that global cultural flows are more complex than a simple binary opposition between ‘high art’ (the established art which is institutionalised, recognised and valued by middle and upper class people living in major cities) at the ‘centre’ and ‘low art’ (the popular, folkloric and/or amateur forms of art) located at the ‘periphery’ in suburban, rural and regional areas.
Community Centre Square, Angle Park, Adelaide. Photographer: Sophia Koutroulis, Community Development/Youth Worker, Adelaide Central Community Health Services, Parks, Dept. of Human Services, Government of South Australia, *Pre-Dance Off and gathering of participants in The Parks, 2002*

On the nights of the *TLN* event, spectators would slowly gather at The Parks Community Centre, a typical example of 1970s welfare architecture. It was built in an attempt to bring what were thought to be the best facilities to the poorest areas. Spectators were directed to the square, a large outdoor space bordered by grey concrete buildings and a few eucalypt trees. The buildings housed the library, sports centre, youth centre, security services and the canteen. Slightly off to the side of the square was an elevated podium decked out with three concrete sails decorated with Aboriginal dot painting designs of a brown serpent, three black death-like figures, a starry sky and a black and white animal-like figure, possibly a reminder of the high proportion of Aboriginal people in the area. While spectators might have expected to be ushered immediately into one of the theatres of the nearby Arts Complex, they were, instead, left to mill in this outdoor space to witness a joyful celebration of
global youth culture performed by young people from various places in the world, appropriating and adapting ‘black culture’, or performing ‘blackness’ (Ibrahim, 2001).

Young performers were wearing their own clothes. For instance, the boys were wearing Hip Hop clothes (baseball-style caps, large T-shirts and baggy jeans falling below their waists) while the girls were wearing ‘glamour’ clothes (crop tops or tight T-shirts and short and tight skirts or trousers). Their outfits were accessorised with dark glasses, chewing gum and what had become coveted status symbols: festival performers’ passes especially designed for the TLN event by the Adelaide Festival; and bandanas given to the young performers by Youth Services and worn around the head, neck, arms, wrist or leg.

A crowd had formed with the spectators and over one hundred young people standing in seemingly ‘ethnic’ (African, Aboriginal, Anglo-Celtic), age (prepubescent and teenagers) and gender-based clusters busily singing, running, dancing, playing football, etc. A young MC, standing on the square’s podium, welcomed spectators to The Parks and the event. After this brief introduction, Morganics, BrothaBlack and Elf Transporter, a visiting American-Australian rapper, launched into a short beat-boxing and rapping performance to warm the crowd up.

This was quickly followed by a performance by “the little acrobats”. About a dozen eight to ten year old children were rolling on gym mats set up in a cross formation. Under the guidance and vigilance of their tutors standing nearby, rolls were followed by cartwheels, shoulder stands and counter balances. The MC was encouraging them over the microphone and leading the crowd in applauding their finale, a balancing line.

While the mats were being removed, spectators’ attention was drawn back to the podium where a young girl of about thirteen was about to sing a popular contemporary R’n’B song to a backing tape. Standing very still, she delivered the song with a quivering voice, but to the delight of most of the other young people who joined in the chorus. Next, a young boy sang “The Family Rap”, a rap he had written
with his brother, about his mother and sister. Another rap, by four Sudanese girls between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, followed. They were performing their own compilation that mixed parts of a song by a hardcore Hip Hop group (NWA or Niggaz With Attitude) with a traditional Sudanese song. This marked the end of this set.

Community Centre Square, Angle Park, Adelaide. Photographer: Celina McEwen, Spectators watching the Dance Off, 2002

In another section of the square, a dozen b-boys from various backgrounds (Sudanese, Aboriginal and Anglo-Celtic), between ten and fourteen, were standing in lines on a piece of linoleum behind Morganics and BrothaBlack. The boys and their tutors were about to perform a choreographed sequence of break moves. This was followed by improvised solos displaying the boys’ individual talents, including two Ethiopian boys who performed kicking and balancing tricks with their soccer ball. Next, a demonstration of Morganics and BrothaBlack’s movement skills on the floor and a balancing line with all the b-boys closed the third set. All along the MC encouraged the crowd to join in with applause.
The MC then introduced the last act, the R’n’B dancers. The choreography was a sort of battle between two groups of young girls and women. Facing each other they were, in turn, stepping and turning, moving back and forth to the sound of recorded music, performing ‘sexy’ moves drawn from the popular dance vocabulary of African-American R’n’B culture. The battle seemed to reach a climax when the whole group moved into a semi-circle formation allowing for improvised duos and trios in the middle. The battle was, however, resolved with the arrival of a young boy of about eleven whom they encircled while he performed a ‘popping’ solo. By the end of this set the square was buzzing with activity and music, filled with sounds of laughter and chatter.

Elements of celebration, a kind of ‘public event’ that is playful and joyful (Handelman, 1990, pp. 10–16), were particularly evident in the Dance Off, especially in the form of circus skills and ‘talent quest’-like displays. The inclusion of the Dance Off in the TLN event gave it a special festive atmosphere, as if to mark this important occasion when young people from ‘marginal communities’ have a voice and presence in a reputable international arts festival. This also helped recognise young local people’s role as producers of valued culture and highlighted the area as a vibrant hub of cultural activity. This, combined with the use of R’n’B music and elements of Hip Hop culture, served to give the TLN event a popular appeal for a younger generation of spectators.

Initially, spectators tended to stand on the edge of the square, their bodies marking the perimeter of the performance space. To the extent that they did move around the square, their movements seemed at first uneasy. This unease might have been the result of witnessing first-hand the extravagant celebration of youth, diversity and vitality. It might also have been a result of the short distance between the performers and themselves, or the blurring of the lines between performers and audience space, further enhanced by a sense, for the spectators, of being outnumbered. However, as one act followed another in the Dance Off, gradually the spectators were drawn in closer to the young local performers until, by the end of the performance, their unease seemed mostly to have been replaced with an openness and readiness for the next component of the event.
At the end of the Dance Off the sun was setting, casting a red glow in the sky. The event was still in a sort of extended transition stage, or perhaps more accurately in-between what Kershaw (1992, p. 24) calls the gathering and performance phases. The MC was calling spectators’ attention to the coloured ribbon they had been given upon collection of their tickets. He was directing them towards one of several local young people and workers who had a similar ribbon. This was the beginning of the Tour.

5.2.2 The Tour

Spectators were allocated to one of six groups led by Tour guides. One group was led by Dale, a young European-Australian mother accessing one of the local services, whom I have briefly talked about in the previous chapter, and her one-year-old daughter. Another group was led by the event’s MC, Greg, a young Aboriginal man whom I have also briefly talked about in the previous chapter, and his friend Ben, a young European-Australian man attending the WYD. A third group was led by Carl, an Aboriginal man who volunteered his time at one of the local services, accompanied by his wife, who attended another of the local services, and their son. A fourth group was led by John and Mark, two young Sudanese men also accessing one of the local services. John, as discussed in the previous chapter, was one of the local leaders instrumental in gathering young African people for the dance party. Yet another group was led by Ruby, a European-Australian youth worker with the Health Service. The sixth group was led by Katherine, a young enthusiastic community development worker with the Health Service, who worked closely with Alicia in developing personal relationships with local young people, as discussed in Chapter 4. The groups were slowly forming and waiting to depart. After Tour guides briefly introduced themselves, the groups were off for a twenty-minute tour in and around The Parks Community Centre services.

As with the Dance Off, the Tour presented a small window onto the lived reality of local community participants and an expression of ‘belonging’. Each Tour took spectators on a different journey around The Parks. Carl, for example, showed his group of spectators around The Parks high school. There, he talked about his experiences as a student ten years prior. He talked about the high school as an important place in the community but also as “a bit of rough place”. Later, leading his
group through the Health Service, he talked about his use of the Service. Continuing on, he led the group to the Bike Shop where he talked about how, on occasions, he helped local young people put together and repair bicycles.


Dale, while pushing her one-year-old daughter along in a stroller, led her group of spectators to a range of sites: the canteen, the crèche, the library, the high school, the shops (“where we go and get our regular smokes, chips and cokes”), the Hells Angels Bike Club (“Go to hell it’s right there!”) and the Health Service. During her walk, she talked about the transformation of The Parks over her time there as well as her daughter’s disability.

The *Tour* allowed for information to be disseminated to spectators, contextualising, situating and personalising the event in relation to the area, its local healthcare and welfare services and their use by local residents. It also allowed for local young people to display their practical mastery over the space (de Certeau, 1998, p. 9).
Spectators were listening to local voices while following guides who were taking ownership of The Parks Community Centre space, moving around the square and in and out of buildings, around the concrete maze in different directions, even sometimes clashing with other tours, but never remaining stuck as guides quickly negotiated the smooth continuation of their tour. By following a guide and listening to his or her stories, spectators were asked to step briefly into local residents’/performers’ shoes to experience fragments of their life in The Parks. In a way, this had the effect of reversing the assumption that the outside spectator, the cosmopolitan festival-goer, was the privileged person in this transaction.

The Dance Off and the Tour were significant components of this event because they helped to reveal a reality of The Parks which spectators might not have been aware of and to prepare them for the world depicted in The Longest Night. They helped spectators hear local voices and stories directly from community members. They also helped spectators experience youthful exuberance and the life of ‘others’, through their stories, which were carefully mediated and partly controlled by local young people themselves, rather than a representation of their world constructed or demonised by the media. Further, the Dance Off and the Tour were significant elements of this event in that they helped to frame The Longest Night by presenting familiar and playful aspects of the local communities and their cultures.

By the end of the Tour, guides had led spectators around The Parks to the machine maintenance workshop, where The Longest Night was about to take place. Spectators were arriving from different directions all within five to ten minutes of each other. Waiting for the show to start, spectators were milling about the place amongst local performers of the Dance Off and Tour guides. Finally, spectators were ushered, by some local young people, into the shed, an obviously makeshift performance space, to experience The Longest Night.
5.3 The Longest Night performance or an examination of moments of ideological crisis

According to Kershaw (1992, pp. 27–37, 69–92), one of the conditions present in potentially efficacious performances is the incorporation of material that challenges some of the social and cultural norms of a given community through what Kershaw calls a performance crisis or ideological crisis. These are moments that involve a heightened tension between ‘rhetorical conventions’, or the implicit or explicit agreements that bind spectators to the event, reassuring them that it is ‘just’ a performance, and ‘authenticating conventions’, or the shared understandings on the basis of which performance may be interpreted as ‘real enough’ to constitute some challenge to fundamental beliefs.

If the Dance Off and the Tour dealt with positive aspects of ‘belonging’ and enjoying a certain level of practical mastery over one’s space, The Longest Night, the third and last part of the event, questioned more conventional notions of ‘belonging’ and was carefully structured to confront spectators with moments of ideological crisis. It did this by engaging with strong emotional, as well as social, cultural and political, issues. It also did this by presenting a narrative that raised some challenging questions: Can a drug-taking homeless person be a ‘good’ mother?; Do perpetrators of crimes and/or abuse have extenuating circumstances?; and What constitutes a family?

These challenging questions were made the more jarring by the mixed use of comedy, gentle teasing and playfulness, on the one hand, and drama and moments of barely contained violence, on the other. This was further heightened by the relentlessness in the delivery of the performance, marked by no intermission, set changes, or blackouts, drawing of curtains, etc. Moreover, the relentlessness in the delivery of this fast-paced, action-packed performance as well as the relentlessness in the attacks on the five characters’ identity and their position in society highlighted the fragility and ambiguity of the notion of ‘change’.

At this point a brief summary of The Longest Night will elucidate some of the issues dealt with. The Longest Night is about Bernie’s (the performance’s main character) identity crisis. Bernie, a single mother, has recently been allocated a house in a public
housing estate. She is trying to find a way to reform her old habits of homelessness and drug-taking in order to secure the custody of her son who is in the care of the State. Bernie’s decision to change is, however, challenged by the arrival of friends from her former life on the streets. Though they only stay with her for one night, their presence is a constant test of her will. At the end of this long night, her friends leave, while she stays, thus seemingly ending where the night started, with Bernie alone in her house, leaving spectators to wonder whether change had occurred or was about to occur (see Appendix 6).

Entering through open roller doors, spectators were ushered to their seats on raked seating banks, past Bernie, in her living room, playing with her son and past a couple of television sets hanging from the ceiling to the right and left of the stage showing pre-recorded images of The Parks. In a way, these video images operated to authenticate the performance by reminding spectators of their walk around The Parks and encouraging them to see the performance as a slice of life from The Parks.

On their way in, spectators might have also noticed the performance’s set, a space which clearly established the sense that Bernie’s life was in a precarious balance. The set consisted of rough light-brown brick walls, bare concrete floor and dysfunctional fixtures and furnishings. To the right hand side of the stage was a small room with a window which spectators were soon to find out was the bathroom. To the back of the stage was a larger room which seemed to serve as storage space. The house’s front door, to the back left of the stage, was closed. The disparate second-hand furniture and objects spread across the space further conveyed a sense of scarcity and bare necessity: a single bed, a bedside table and a radio; a couple of cupboards, a fridge, a microwave, a broom and a sink; and a couch, a couple of stools, a makeshift coffee table and a television on a crate covered with a crocheted shawl. Moreover, as spectators were soon to find out, little in Bernie’s house worked (the microwave donated by a charitable organisation never worked, the television had no reception because the house had no antenna, and the radio wasn’t working because Bernie couldn’t afford to buy batteries).
For the opening moments of the performance, however, none of this poverty and scarcity seemed to matter. There was an air of festivity on stage as Bernie was playing, joyfully, with a three-year-old child: her child, Ollie. Though spectators might not have been aware that Ollie was played by Oliver Regan, Bernadette Regan’s son in real life, they would certainly have perceived an intimate, playful relation between ‘mother’ and ‘son’. The room was decorated with a “Happy Birthday Ollie” banner and some balloons hanging across the back wall. Holding a sparkler in one hand and a lighter in the other, Bernie was singing “happy birthday”, to the sound of some soft nursery music-box-type of music, while Ollie was playing on a mat with his toys and a balloon.

Bernie’s birthday celebration for Ollie, a reminder of the celebration of the Dance Off, and the local stories of belonging heard during the Tour, was in sharp contrast with the dreariness of Bernie’s place, a symbol of Bernie’s struggle to control her life. This struggle was soon to be confirmed. Ollie’s birthday festivities were interrupted by several firm knocks on Bernie’s front door and a female voice calling: “Hello! Bernie!” It was Bernie’s caseworker arriving to pick Ollie up to return him to his foster carers. With the appearance of the caseworker, Bernie lost her smile. She seemed frozen and distant, even with her son Ollie. During the segment that followed between Bernie, Ollie and the caseworker, it became clear that Bernie was in some ways distressed, that her relationship with her son was problematic and that Ollie possibly had a closer relationship with the caseworker than with his mother. When the segment ended, with the departure of Ollie and the caseworker and the unsettling feeling caused by the knowledge that Bernie might not be able to contact her son on his actual birthday, the reason why Ollie was in foster care became apparent as Bernie, lonely and helpless, started a frantic search about her kitchen for what spectators soon discovered to be alcohol.

Bernie’s struggle with her life was also made further evident by the lack of control she experienced over the internal space where she lived. This was initially hinted at when spectators were ushered to their seats, walking past the scene between Bernie and Ollie, physically blurring the lines between spectators’ and performers’ space. This blurring of the lines not only made spectators feel like they were stepping over
the line of the performers space, but also that they were infringing on this very intimate moment between a mother and her very young son. This closeness to the staged action had the additional effect of highlighting Oliver’s fascinating qualities as a child performer, as he carried on with his performance unperturbed by the audience, possibly making spectators wonder whether the relationship performed on stage was real or not. These tensions and blurring of the lines between spectators and performers as well as between real and not real (Kershaw, 1992, p. 32) had the potential to increase some of the spectator’s unease and sense of intrusion, or invasion, which were a recurring theme in The Longest Night. Indeed, throughout the performance, Bernie struggled to maintain a sense of self and agency as her house was invaded, first by spectators, then by the caseworker and later by her friends.

This point in the play was the first in a series of ideological crises: Whom might spectators align with as the most appropriate carer for the child? The former and possibly still drug-taking mother or the friendly yet officious caseworker? Would Bernie be able to prove that she was or could be a competent mother, contrary to bureaucrats’ perceptions from the Department of Family Assistance and Youth Services (FAYS)? The tragedy of seeing Ollie taken away during his early birthday festivities was poignant. So was the lack of flexibility shown by FAYS policies and guidelines, which stopped Bernie from seeing her child on his birthday, a non-regular visit day.

Bernie’s sadness was understandable and a sign that she cared for her son. Her response to the situation, however, showed that she might actually not be a fit mother. Bernie’s barely contained violence in her search for alcohol (slamming cupboard doors and throwing kitchen utensils around the room) showed spectators that she had a tendency to drink but that she was struggling with giving it up. It showed Bernie’s internal struggles between being a responsible mother and an adult and a careless teenager with violent outbursts and a drugs and alcohol ‘habit’. This conflict between the need to be serious and responsible in the face of everyday life challenges, however grim they might be, as well as the need to escape, play and laugh at that reality, was evident throughout The Longest Night.
It was at this stage that her long-term friend and neighbour, Carlos, arrived. He was soon followed by three friends from Bernie’s past life on the streets that she hadn’t seen since the birth of her son. The awkward arrival of long-lost friends Lucia and Morgan, and his friend Shannon, marked the beginning of a long surreal night where five young people, at times friends and at others enemies, flip back and forth between play and seriousness, showing their struggles to gain or maintain control over their lives and identities in a hostile and dysfunctional environment.

Though, initially, these friends only came to ‘score’ drugs, upon finding Bernie they decided to stay and use her place for purposes in conflict with Bernie’s house rules. As their entry without knocking foretold, throughout the night Bernie’s friends helped themselves to her belongings without permission. Further, her three friends continually challenged her drug-free rules. While she struggled to keep her house drug-free, or at least needle-free, they used her place to consume drugs. Also, Carlos, unbeknown to her, had been using her house as a collection point in his drug deals.

This Housing Trust house and her rules were important to Bernie. She was proud of living in a house because it meant that she was off the streets and more likely to secure the custody of her son. However, on most days, Bernie struggled with looking after her house and this wasn’t made any easier by the arrival of her friends. She struggled with maintaining a sense of order in her house. Nothing in her house seemed to work for lack of maintenance from the Department of Housing Trust and her lack of money. Making repairs seemed like a lost battle because the Housing Trust bureaucrats were unable or unwilling to authorise much needed repairs to a house tagged for refurbishment or demolition to make room for a new house to be sold to first time home-buyers. This point was made clear, for instance, by a recurring incident with Bernie’s toilet. Her toilet leaked and had not been fixed for weeks. Even though Carlos had tried to fix it, it remained in a state of disrepair. It remained broken because Carlos was not a handyman, but also because Bernie’s friends in their drug-induced states kept forgetting not to sit on it as instructed by Bernie and Carlos on several occasions.
Bernie’s struggle with maintaining a sense of order in her house wasn’t made any easier by the arrival of her friends. This was made especially clear during the first of two high-paced, ‘surreal’ and frenzied sequences of the performance that resulted in the upturning of Bernie’s house. After an initial period of reacquainting themselves with each other and airing some of their resentments over past actions that led to their separation, the friends rapidly lapsed into their old habits of drug-taking and play. As the friends took turns in the bathroom to consume drugs, they started to relax: lounging about the place, giggling and joking. Slowly, however, as the drugs were starting to take effect, the energy level picked up. Morgan and Shannon launched into a musical duo, exchanging rap lines and beat-boxing. Starting as a rap about Bernie’s desires, the duo soon turned into a rap about the boys’ fantasy to be heroes in action films. One by one the rest of the friends joined in the fantasy with slow-motion movements highlighting the characters’ detachment from reality: walking and crawling across the stage, rolling on the floor, jumping off furniture. Suddenly, the slow-motion movements gave way to chaos: fast-paced movements (kicking, climbing up the wall, pacing across the stage, throwing cushions and toys about the stage, fighting) and increasingly louder sounds (heavy techno beats, gun-shots, screams and screeching) and faster flashing lights. Only Bernie had not joined in the changed pace. She was slowly being pulled up the wall (literally, by means of a harness), highlighting her separation from her friends and her slow realisation of what was happening to her house. Her wake-up was violent. Coming back down the wall, Bernie started running about the stage, shouting (“Lucia can you hear me?... Can everyone just get out! Can everyone just get out [now]! ... Just get out! Just get out!”), an indication of her shock (as well as the spectators’) in seeing such unrestrained and destructive behaviour. Unlike Morgan and Carlos who, sensing Bernie’s fury, promptly left the house, Shannon was taking his time, further angering Bernie (shouting “Just get out!” while trying to push him out the front door). Shannon’s violent reaction (pushing Bernie with his whole body, threatening her with his fist, and pinning her against the wall, shouting “Don’t you fucking touch me!”), his words enhanced by low discordant music) before leaving the house was, however, another

45 A form of electronic music.
shock for Bernie (and the spectators), which highlighted the vulnerably and precariousness of her situation.


The upturning of Bernie’s house and her failure to stop it were a challenge to her sense of control and achieving her goal of securing the custody of her son. These challenges were suggestive of her broader struggles that rendered her dealings with FAYS difficult, as she explained to Lucia: “They took him away from me. And how the hell am I going to get him back with you arseholes fucking it up for me? I’m never going to get Ollie back if they see the house like this. This is fucked. This is fucked! … I need time”.

This moment highlighted another point of ideological crisis in the play. Bernie struggled because she was trapped in a dysfunctional house and in a transitory period
in her life. She struggled with displacement and dispossession, a reality some spectators were acutely aware of. These struggles also highlighted a tension played out in *The Longest Night* between the need for support in such a hostile environment and the underlying hostility present in those who provide support. For example, though welfare and government agencies were meant to provide support to those in need, they were also, at times, the source of obstacles in the lives of those they were meant to assist, as was the case with Bernie’s caseworker. Similarly, though friends were, at times a supportive force, they were also, at other times, a destructive force. Friendships were clearly important to survive the general hostility (distrust and fear) against youth, homeless people, single teenage mothers, drug-takers, etc. They were needed to suppress, or considerably reduce, for a time at least, expressions of violence and/or needed to restore or create a sense of community, harmony and social cohesion. Yet friends were also the cause of the hostile environment the characters inhabited, because friends could be, at the same time, victims and perpetrators of violence. This might have led spectators to wonder whether the characters’ behaviour was excusable or a punishable offence. It might have led spectators to wonder whether they were victims or criminals and whether they could be trusted.

With this chaotic segment, and its framing between calm, playful and/or comic segments, the elements that once united the five characters as friends (their past lives on the street, their drug and alcohol use, etc.) were undermined, revealing the fragility of what were in fact only temporary alliances, further enhancing the characters’ uneasiness and lack of control over their lives in general and Bernie’s lack of control over her space in particular (in stark contrast to the use and control of space spectators had experienced during the *Dance Off* and *Tour*) as well as the tension between the themes of hostility and support.

The combination of these two moments of ideological crises and the accumulation of contrasting moments of violence and calm highlighted the characters’ internal crises and created a tension between ‘fragmentation’ and ‘collaboration’ or between ‘communal belonging’ and ‘individual belonging’, which might have led spectators to experience a third ideological crisis around the notion of ‘belonging’. Spectators
might have wondered whether Bernie would align herself with her son or her old friends, cum-family. They might have wondered what might define Bernie’s future: her present semi-stable situation or her unpredictable but fun past?

The constant renegotiation of friendships (depended on, or sacrificed and undermined) resulting from the characters’ management of the tensions created by the oscillations between ‘hostility’ and ‘support’, enhanced the dialectic between ‘fragmentation’ and ‘collaboration’, but also the dialectic between ‘distance’ and ‘intimacy’. Bernie’s desire for closeness was always disappointed, none the more so than in her desire to be with her son. The tension between ‘distance’ and ‘intimacy’, played out in this area of Bernie’s life, was perhaps one of the most powerful and dramatic elements of The Longest Night. Though Ollie was absent during most of the performance, his presence was constant because of the markers and reminders of his importance in Bernie’s life, such as his photograph on the wall and in frames near Bernie’s bed, his playing area demarcated at the front left hand side of the stage with toys thrown on a mat, his stroller parked inside the house at the back of the stage and Bernie’s occasional comments about him or her court case.

Another moment in the performance that brought this third ideological crisis to its head was the segment where Lucia accused Shannon of having tried to rape her. This segment followed a classic case of inversion of the binary polar opposites of male/female roles and attributes (Ivanov, 1984) (where Shannon role-played a ‘check-out chick’ and Bernie a male customer at the local ‘bottle shop’) that went wrong when Bernie and Shannon showed desires of intimacy by kissing each other, in opposition to Carlos’s and Lucia’s own desires for intimacy (respectively, with Bernie and Shannon). To avoid confrontation Lucia and Shannon left for the shops, leaving Carlos, Bernie and Morgan to talk about their dreams (for Bernie to stack shelves at the local supermarket and for Morgan to direct a film with Keanu Reeves “on a bike in Medieval times”). The respite was not for long. Soon Shannon came back joining in Morgan’s talk. However, a bit later Lucia returned, slamming the front door, hysterical, dishevelled, crying and yelling at Shannon: “You just fucking left me. You prick”. Bernie, Carlos and Morgan’s initial reaction seemed to be one of disbelief as indicated by their lack of immediate action. Very quickly, though, their silence was
replaced with short, sharp and loud exchanges and Bernie frantically moving back and forth between Lucia and Shannon, in turn, trying to comfort Lucia and trying to hear Shannon’s side of the story. The sense of chaos and barely suppressed violence created by Bernie’s movements and the characters’ shouts were further enhanced by sharp and increasingly louder techno beats. Carlos, Morgan and Bernie (as well as the spectators) were not sure who of Lucia or Shannon was telling the truth: Did Lucia try to kiss Shannon? Or did Shannon “crack on to” Lucia? The mounting confusion, frustration and sexual tension were no longer contained. The friends had become enemies and the sense of belonging to a close-knit community of friends had been shattered. In the heat of the moment, Lucia revealed herself as the liar and schemer she was (“got to get out of this shit hole!”) which sent Bernie running to the bathroom offended and hurt after once again having entrusted Lucia with her friendship and having given in to her desire for closeness and ‘belonging’. This last action, combined with Shannon no longer able to repress his anger, physically threatening Lucia, sending her running to the back room to the sound of increasingly louder techno music, further increased the sense of breakdown and fragmentation.

The sense of fragmentation was also created by the rapid transitions between dramatic lows and comic highs, such as between moments of tears, violence and planning for the future and moments of laughter, play and living in and for the present. This combined with the characters’ breaking of rules, leading to the destruction of communal relationships and spaces, had the effect of further highlighting the bleakness and uncertainties of the characters’ situations played out on stage. Moreover, it had the effect of further highlighting not only the difficulty the characters had in expressing and achieving a certain level of intimacy, but also their misplaced energy and difficulty in changing their behaviour.

This fragmentation and dialectic between distance and intimacy was further enhanced by the presence of surveillance cameras simultaneously projecting and reframing, on three television screens, attached out of reach high on the walls of Bernie’s house, images of part or all of the action on stage; images of the outside space hinted at during the Dance Off and the Tour; images of a world of isolation and lack of action on the local streets; and related images of the action on stage, such as the cartoon-like
‘Pow!’ and ‘Bang!’ during some of the more frenzied scenes. It also had the effect of isolating the action, creating a sense of distance between spectators, the action and characters on stage, turning the spectator into a distant voyeur looking in on a reality television show.

Thus, The Longest Night presented a series of ideological crises during which spectators saw Bernie struggle, during this one long night, between her old self (the Bernie remembered by her friends who lived a transient life and liked to smoke and drink), and the new self she was trying to achieve (the responsible mother and tenant). This confrontation between Bernie’s old and new self, or her identity crisis, was a core element in The Longest Night. Bernie was at a turning point in her life. She had moved off the streets to a barely furnished and functioning house on the margins of the city, the margins of society. But Bernie was not from The Parks. She had come to the area because the government had given her a house there. Like many other people from the area, she had come to The Parks partly by choice (the desire to stay put in order to secure the custody of her son), but mainly because of an externally imposed decision by a bureaucracy that matched her needs with the area. Further, her house was only a temporary place for her to live in because of economic imperatives outside of her control, adding difficulty to her decision to change.

These internal conflicts, between the desire to use alcohol and drugs and the need to extricate herself from a world of violence and abuse (suppressed and enacted) in order to be a fit mother, were highlighted by the external conflicts with her friends played out on stage. Their presence reminded her that her old friendships, drugs and the nomadic life on the streets had once been dear to her, had been what defined her, where she belonged. Their presence was, therefore, a test. Did she belong with her friends back on the streets? Did she belong to The Parks, the house and with her son? Would she be able to keep herself and her house together? Would she be able to prove to FAYS (and the spectators) that she was able to change and be a responsible mother who should have the custody of her son? Bernie was no angel. She had broken many social rules (taking drugs, being a nomad, not being able to keep her son), but might her environment and position constitute attenuating circumstances that might justify her breaking of these rules? What, in her situation was right or wrong? The lack of
alternative or solution to this dilemma had the potential to challenge or create a disjunction between what spectators might have expected and understood concepts of ‘motherhood’, ‘belonging’ and ‘change’ to mean.

The theme of Bernie’s personal crisis was central in establishing the overall ideological crisis in The Longest Night. It was essential in challenging some of the spectators’ assumptions about some aspects of the local communities and their cultures. As Kershaw (1992, p. 41) argues, this challenging of assumptions and ideas is essential in cementing the ideological crisis and establishing the potential efficacy of a performance. Though The Longest Night offered a proposition (a world of transience and abuse) and counter proposition (a world of social responsibility and motherhood), it didn’t explicitly offer an alternative social order or an explicit solution to Bernie’s personal crisis. Bernie’s commitment to change wasn’t presented in a didactic way or through an explicit message of right and wrong to help spectators make sense of her challenges or what made people feel a sense of belonging to an area like The Parks. It was represented by the slow departure of her friends at sunrise.

Though the departure of the friends and the arrival of daylight was a relief for Bernie and the spectators because it meant the end of chaos and violence, it was also uneasy because it left Bernie still in transition. It left Bernie’s personal crisis partially unresolved because though she had made progress towards understanding what she needed to do in order to change her situation, she had not, by the end of The Longest Night, achieved a new ‘self’: the repenting, reliable and respectable mother. Yet Bernie’s desire for change was stronger than her attachment to her old lifestyle and friends. Her determination to change was highlighted by her decision not to follow her old friends on the road. With each chaotic segment and its ensuing calm, Bernie was realising how she needed to part from her friends if she was to survive another night. She was realising how much she had changed, how strong her desire for change was and what she needed to do in order to ensure that she did achieve this change, but also how easily she could revert back to her old habits. This was perhaps an uneasy ending which potentially raised more questions for the spectators than it answered. It was an end, though, which showed Bernie’s strength in staying put, as a way of breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect and a way of facing up to her responsibilities.
as a mother and an adult. This was an end which showed a notion of change as fixity, perhaps challenging assumptions of change as a state in motion that some spectators might have held.

At the end, many spectators dispersed slowly, some even reluctantly, while others remained seated taking time to fill in an audience survey. Others still were wandering about the stage, having a closer look at the set or talking to performers. Outside, people were milling in the enclosed courtyard of the makeshift performance venue. Some spectators (mostly those from The Parks and other similar ‘communities’) seemed to need to share their enthusiasm of having been ‘understood’, while others (mostly the cosmopolitan festival-goers) seemed to need reassurance from participants, local spectators and performers that life in The Parks might not be as grim as portrayed in The Longest Night. Others still were slowly leaving, walking towards the car park, looking a bit baffled.

5.4 Between popular and oppositional

Having examined, in the previous two sections, the ways in which the TLN event playfully presented familiar aspects of local ‘community’ and ‘culture’ and created moments of ideological crises, in this section I examine the ways in which the TLN event was ‘popular’ while also being ‘oppositional’. As Kershaw (1992, pp. 6–7, 67–92) argues, a third condition for a performance, performed outside of traditional theatrical institutions, to be potentially efficacious is to be oppositional, by engaging with social and moral issues and seeking to generate, or at least feed into, the energies of a counter culture, while also being popular enough to attract a wide range of spectators who might be labelled ‘converted’ and ‘non-converted’.

A diverse audience of more than six hundred people over six sessions were attracted to the TLN event (see Appendix 7), a noteworthy achievement in and of itself given that CCD aesthetic products, while they may be regarded as ‘worthy’, are not generally considered a ‘hot ticket’ item. The TLN event was an unusual choice for a headline act at such a prestigious international arts festival and its success in attracting audiences needs to be considered in light of the fact that it was presented in a non-
traditional venue, well away from the city centre, in a manner which subverted many familiar conventions of theatrical performance.

There was, no doubt, a ‘novelty factor’ around the TLN event’s presence in the festival which contributed to attracting a large and diverse audience, as the data collected from the audience survey showed. It was also a significant factor in establishing the event’s greater impact beyond the local. Indeed, the presence of the TLN event in the festival increased the event’s chances of being potentially efficacious. The meeting of ‘established art’ with popular or community-based art practices had the potential to challenge the function and conventions of arts festivals. It also had the potential to challenge the representation of the absent other or the non-participation of the other in ‘established art’. Further, it had the potential to challenge the ‘grass-roots’ principles of CCD or community theatre practices.

In addition, the presence of the TLN event at the festival was significant because it highlighted the intention of Peter Sellars, the initial festival Director, to reposition the centre of culture, art production and consumption, to the economically poorest suburbs of a city, to the margins of urban society. It was significant because it showed the festival director’s power to dictate the place and role of the arts as well as to legitimise certain kinds of cultural production and consumption. These decisions might have, however, as Kershaw argues in his discussion about the performance of multicultural and community theatre on the international scene, risked turning the event into “just another hot ticket to be snapped up by the jet-setters and globetrotters of the international cognoscenti” (Kershaw, 1999, p. 203), thus making it difficult to resist or displace dominant cultural forms and forces as well as transcend forces of consumerism.

While some non-local spectators might have assumed The Parks to be a ‘cultural wasteland’, ridden with crime, isolated from the global flows in which the Adelaide Festival is enmeshed, others might have expected to see ‘authentic ethnic cultures’. The TLN event, however, presented a multicultural hub of activity where people have rich traditions, community spirit and life, where young people negotiate between local and global cultural processes and where young people can be co-authors in a
performance backed by an international arts festival. Thus, whether spectators attended the TLN event out of an interest in what might have been another representation of ‘otherness’ or out of interest in the aesthetic product UTP had shaped, their attendance had the potential to challenge their concept of life at the ‘margins’ and ‘otherness’. This had the potential to challenge those spectators who assumed ‘margins’ to be a permanent state of being or a fixed space and place where inhabitants lack control and/or are distant from the centres of social, cultural and political action or governance, as opposed to the multifaceted concept depicted by the TLN event: a transitional time or space; and a place central to some people’s everyday lives, at times a vibrant and festive place where culture is produced.

Performing the TLN event at the ‘margins’, outside the more traditional conventions of theatrical performance, created a space for spectators to engage with and potentially be challenged in their assumptions about particular social and moral issues, especially about ‘marginality’, ‘belonging’ and ‘change’. It created an altered, or in-between, space where familiar, playful and challenging aspects of local communities and their cultures were presented. Also, through a combination of playfulness and seriousness, the event symbolically presented and contextualised the everyday contradictions (joys and uncertainties) that come from living on the spatial margins of society. Furthermore, it provided a channel for expressing the values and opinions of people who traditionally have not been valued.

Placing spectators from the inner suburbs of Adelaide or interstate next to local people and performers who belonged to those communities, were part of those cultures and for whom the issues depicted were directly relevant, firstly helped non-local spectators respond to the performance as more ‘real’ in its representation of local everyday lived experiences. It gave them clues as to the local culture. One spectator went so far as to suggest that the “smellscape” (referring to the smell of local teenager boys in the audience, some of whom were participants in the project) added an invaluable dimension to the event. Other spectators found that it made them feel uneasy. The proximity it created confronted them, as this spectator stated: “I felt confronted by the language and the kids in the audience” (spectator, Audience Survey, 2002).
Secondly, it had the effect of placing non-local spectators in the space of ‘others’ who were no longer invisible but present in their everyday life, as spectators and on stage, as performers or in the form of professional performers embodying characters that channelled some of the voices of local residents. The visibility of ‘others’ and/or those usually absent was significant because it had the potential to challenge notions of ‘marginality’ and ‘other’ as producers of culture for those who attended the event (some of them also possibly an ‘other’ to participants and local residents) as well as for those who took part in the project.

The credibility and authority of this presentation of ‘others’, which was authenticated, for instance, by the use of collaborative processes and local young people performing slices of ‘real life’ in the gathering phase with the Dance Off and Tour, had the effect of challenging rhetorical conventions of re-presentation, the presentation of emotions and experiences, through and with the presence of ‘others’, or through mediation authorised by ‘others’, and had the potential to question and critique the more traditional re-presentation of ‘others’ by distant performers/actors. This was so because those devices blurred the lines between the absent ‘other’ represented and the person/actor playing a role (Shepherd & Wallis 2004, pp. 226–233). This situation might have left some spectators guessing as to how much of themselves the professional performers were portraying and how much of local voices they were hearing, as suggested by the fact that the professional performers in The Longest Night were performing under their own name. Further, performing the TLN event about The Parks, in The Parks, with local performers, to local and non-local spectators, had the effect of blurring the lines between what non-local spectators might have thought was real and not-real, as this non-local spectator confirmed: “Having the local kids performing beforehand, it seemed real and placed it somewhere it could happen” (spectator, Audience Survey, 2002).

In general, according to Kershaw’s (1992) criteria, the TLN event possessed the characteristics of potentially efficacious theatrical performances. Through a combination of performances that celebrated and challenged aspects of ‘community’ and ‘culture’, and blurred the lines between the real and the not-real, the TLN event created an environment where a range of spectators were given an opportunity to
adopt new values presented and adapt their existing knowledge and expectations to create new meaning and cope with new situations.

By taking part in a symbolic representation (performance and/or devising processes) that encouraged spectators and participants to decode and recode meanings attached to parts of hypothetical characters’ everyday life, the TLN event created a space and time that was not ‘theirs’ (the other or the local residents) nor ‘ours’ (the non-local spectators). It also created a space where everyday life was turned into, or re-imagined as, a special event filled with laughter, festivity, playfulness, visibility and abundance, potentially enabling participants and spectators to reassess meaning in a new context. It created an environment where spectators and participants could analyse their relationship to and be challenged in their assumptions about place (geographical, social, emotional and political) and aspects of their everyday life, and/or that of ‘others’. This attempt at creating meaning, at re-inscribing space, time and place with new meaning, was an attempt by participants and/or artists to show agency and claim ownership of their ‘territory’ as well as an attempt to achieve legitimacy and autonomy for their group and/or region or the group and/or region they presented, therefore possibly leading the group towards self-regulation and self-organisation (Handelman, 1990, pp. 23–40).

5.5 Changes and continuities in the aftermath of the event

Having applied Kershaw’s analytical framework (1992) to the three performance pieces that formed the TLN event, in what follows I discuss TLN in a broader context of social change. In doing so, I am mindful that Kershaw would be somewhat indifferent to this direction, as he argues that the actual social and political impact on spectators is difficult to trace and measure outside the theatre ‘walls’ (1992, pp. 1–2). Despite Kershaw’s position I am interested in extending this discussion about the potential efficacy of a performance to a discussion about the actual impact on spectators and participants, in the short-term and beyond. This discussion leads me to conclude that though TLN was, according to Kershaw’s criteria, potentially efficacious, on the whole, participation in the project did not lead to long-lasting, or sustainable, positive changes in the lives of those most concerned.
Participation in the TLN event and project had created a space and time where participants, spectators, local staff and artists had the potential to experience and engage with processes of social and political change (Kershaw, 1992). Spectators were potentially challenged, for instance, in their assumptions about ‘motherhood’, ‘margins’, ‘otherness’, ‘belonging’ and/or ‘change’. Some participants were potentially challenged by taking part in something new, which required that they make social and aesthetic judgements about the staged life of several young people as well as express opinions about their own lives. Other participants might have been challenged by performing to an audience of family members and non-local spectators. Others still might have been challenged by the presence of UTP’s artistic team (and myself, the researcher), a team of outsiders observing, asking questions in order to ‘present’ and ‘re-present’ them. Local workers were potentially challenged in their work by being stretched professionally, physically and emotionally in meeting the demands of the project, such as time commitment, transport of participants to and from activities, safety of participants, cost of running parallel workshops and sessions, management of large numbers of participants, and so on. Other local workers might have been challenged by being subjected to close scrutiny by UTP’s artistic team and researcher, the wider community of Adelaide and members of the fields/subfields of arts, CCD, health and welfare. The artistic team were potentially challenged in their practice through the use of dialogue with non-performers placed in the position of expert dramaturg as well as through the renegotiation of the tacit contract of rhetorical conventions with their audience.

Although UTP didn’t, with this production, explicitly draw on the prevailing discourses of the subfield of CCD about social and political efficacy outlined in Chapter 2, the company’s history and the importance Alicia placed on the ‘exit interviews’ discussed in Section 4.5.5 tells us of an implied adherence to these discourses. But how much of these challenges actually led to changes for participants and local organisations in the aftermath of the project? What did participation in TLN foster or leave behind beyond the event? In what follows, I discuss instances of observed and self-reported changes in circumstances, knowledge and/or attitudes for individuals and organisations involved in TLN. I argue that these changes were made
possible because participation in the project brought an increased sense of belonging to a community, increased recognition and increased levels of sustenance for those people directly concerned. I also argue, though, that these changes were short-lived.

One of the dedicated youth workers involved with TLN, reflecting on the immediate aftermath of the project, commented in an interview in 2005:

_I think that within the group [of] young people that were involved they certainly had a stronger sense of community and a stronger sense of achievement. And they certainly walked away from the process with a greater understanding of their abilities. And knowing that they could tackle new things more effectively_ (Sonia, Interview, 2005).

Her observations were supported by participants’ comments, immediately post-project, which highlighted some changes in circumstances, some acquisition of new skills and/or insights into themselves or into other people’s experiences as well as some changes in attitude. By the end of the project I had gathered some evidence of change. Some participants, for instance, who prior to TLN had low levels of self-efficacy, that is had low expectations and belief in their capacity to achieve particular outcomes, at the end of the project were starting to express a belief in their own ability to make decisions and starting to assert the value of their new-found knowledge and position as ‘expert’.

When some participants were interviewed at the beginning of the project, they stated that their involvement would bring a “good memory”, some skills (“Learn to break dance” or “Trying acting and comedy”) and new friendships (youth participants, Interviews, 2001). A small number hoped that the results of the project might lead to some change beyond changes that might directly have an impact on themselves, such as this comment by a key informant reveals: “[s]how the snobs what it’s like in people’s house [sic]” (Dale, Interview, 2001). By the end of the project, however, the same questions yielded some different answers. Most participants interviewed saw new opportunities for their lives. They expressed new aspirations (“It might lead to work as a youth worker”, “I am going to make my own film and help with workshops as a volunteer” or “might work at the bike shop”) and some changes in circumstances (“Made me go back to dad, to my family instead of bumbling around”, or “Got work
as a volunteer driver”). They also expressed changed views about themselves (“I learned that I am special and I have a role to play in the community”) (youth participants, Interviews, 2002; 2005).

These changes occurred for several reasons, one of which was because participation in TLN fostered a sense of belonging to a community. By making some practical and artistic decisions and by creating opportunities to build relationships, as discussed in Chapter 4, Alicia and UTP brought together heterogeneous groups of young people and workers with different views about what constitutes a community and interests, including workers’ interests mentioned in Chapter 4 and young people’s interests, such as wanting to have fun, wanting to be part of something exciting and wanting to gain some experience and a better understanding of the processes involved in the production of a performance. Because UTP created a ‘web of relationships’ (Cohen-Cruz, 2002, p. 7), based on dialogue and the development of alliances between and across local organisations and young people’s perceived differences, some participants became part of a more or less durable set of networks of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance (of other participants, local workers and/or Sydney-based artists). In other words, their involvement in TLN had enabled them to acquire some forms of social capital.

Over time, these social networks were transformed into a temporary community which we could call “TLN community”. This process, however, was not without its problems. A major challenge was the task of bringing together such a heterogeneous group of people in a place with a long history of, at times, contentious government social interventions. These difficulties were overcome as a result of Alicia and UTP creating opportunities to form a shared sense of social order. While there might have been a perceived lack of a sense of community in The Parks and historical tensions between local organisations, there was also a past history of resident participation in local groups and organisations to build on, such as the local self-help groups, the group of volunteers who worked at the Health Service (Pioneer Projects Australia, 1996, p. 134), as well as a history of mobilisation, or temporary alliances, of residents and social and welfare workers around local campaigns, such as the campaign to fight for the completion of The Parks Community Centre, the campaign for a Council run
swimming pool (Healy & Parkin, 1980, pp. 194–195) and a desire by some local organisations to deal with the issues that might arise from the local urban regeneration project, as mentioned in Section 4.5.1. In addition, these difficulties were overcome because individual artists, young people, staff and bureaucrats with different values, histories, beliefs, opinions, languages and cultures found in TLN common and/or compatible goals and interests that could bridge the usual divide, as well as aspects of the project they could benefit from. Lastly, they were overcome by working collaboratively on a performance which helped transform an imagined community into a lived one (however temporary), or a “viable and ‘voiced’ social entity” (Watt & Pitts, 1991, p. 130). Thus, this transformation from social network to community occurred by enabling participants (local expert dramaturgs as well as local performers and Tour guides) and workers to make artistic and logistical decisions that drove them to “engage in the ordering of ideas, people, and things” (Handelman, 1990, p. 16).

The formation of TLN community was significant because, in turn, this helped some of the participants and local workers create meaning in their personal and/or professional lives by ordering and prioritising rational, or intentional, activities in which they took part. In addition, by constructing meaning, they also constructed powerful relationships and a sense of power (Goffman, 1959, pp. 22–58). For example, for local staff, the new order created amongst organisations, as evidenced by the new ways in which they were working with each other as well as with young people and government departments, was still in place in 2005. Between the time when UTP’s artistic team left The Parks and 2005 when I conducted my last series of interviews, as a result of the stronger and extended relationships local staff had established between the different services of The Parks and local young people, they were able to make links with young people’s extended families and communities and jointly plan and work on projects, such as the Helix Project which aimed to address issues not dealt with before such as safety and peace-making.46

46 The Helix Project is a three year CCD-like initiative that commenced in May 2004. It is a collaborative CCD-like project between local residents of Westwood, City of Port Adelaide Enfield, Arts SA, Parenting Network, Ridley Grove School R-7, Parks Community Health Service and Flinders University of Public Health. Its aim is to
Another reason why these changes occurred was because some participants were heard and seen in a different light by their family and/or outsiders of The Parks. On a psychological level, it is important because it increases an individual’s confidence, as this comment by a participant, also a key informant, implies:

_You can see the input that you’ve put into it, and that’s pretty much the most valuable thing because you give something to make something good ... People see it first hand and we know it’s us and they don’t know it’s us. Their reactions is [sic] probably the best thing_ (Dale, 2002).

What Dale was commenting on was a need for recognition of the young people’s existence and contribution to the project. On a social level, recognition is important because it often leads to further opportunities to be seen and heard. An example of such recognition and the resulting increased opportunities is the experience of Greg and Dale, two key participants in the project whose participation in TLN I have discussed in Chapter 4. In 2001, Greg was a young Nunga man of fifteen who was taking care of his two younger siblings. He became involved in TLN first as expert dramaturg, then as MC in the _Dance Off_ and guide in the _Tour_. Dale was a single teenage mother, involved in the project as expert dramaturg and _Tour_ guide. On account of their enthusiastic contributions to the project, Greg and Dale were perceived by some local workers as success stories and rewarded with further opportunities for engagement in and beyond the activities of The Parks Community Centre services. This resulted in most local workers treating them as local celebrities. For instance, Greg had become a sort of official ‘The Parks MC’ for subsequent youth activities, such as Youth Week. For Dale, it led to her presenting at conferences in Adelaide and Sydney and talking on radio programs about her involvement in the project. These examples of increased levels of recognition, resulting from these participants’ contribution to TLN project, illustrate the acquisition of some forms of symbolic capital.

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engage local residents from The Parks in “expressing the positive aspects of their lives and suggesting positive ways of addressing perceptions of safety in The Parks area” (Urban Pacific Westwood, 2006, p. 9).
As these vignettes about Greg and Dale’s participation in TLN and their subsequent achievements imply, this increase in recognition is also important, because it is often linked to an increase in status and levels of sustenance. According to Bourdieu (1979a, pp. 397–398), an increase in recognition often happens along with an increase in status, which then sometimes results in increased resources and financial gain. Further examples of this phenomenon include the immediate financial gain of $25 received in payment for participants’ dramaturgical expertise in TLN, as well as the acquisition of gainful employment during or in the aftermath of the project.

The trajectory of June, a young woman who had been referred to the project by a member of staff of the Health Service, is an example of such acquisition of gainful employment. June was attracted to TLN by the level of activity. She had been looking for something to distract her from her life and her struggle in securing the custody of her son. In a post-project interview she reflected that she had been attracted to the project because “[T]he Longest Night was like a job, kind of thing, like, you know, come in to work every[day], like coming to Parent[ing Network]47 or coming to The Longest Night and helping The Longest Night out ‘cause we had to do that at least a couple of times a week if not more” (June, Interview, 2005). At the beginning of the project, June’s son was living with his father. Family life for her was a struggle and had been since her childhood. She had grown up in an orphanage in India and had been adopted by an Anglo-Celtic family in Australia at the age of eleven. When I first met June, she was withdrawn and sad not to be able to be with her son. She was finding it difficult to acknowledge the fact that she couldn’t “handle him” on a daily basis. During TLN project, she had been in and out of court trying to gain the full custody of her son. When I met her again in 2005, she had been successful in her quest and was living with her son. After TLN, June remained involved with the Health Service. Between 2002 and our last interview in June 2005, she had become and remained a volunteer driver for the Health Service’s Parenting Network, leading to one day a week of paid work as a driver for the broader Health Service. Her newly

47 The Parenting Service is a section of the Health Service responsible for the promotion and delivery of health services to first time parents and their babies.
found status as an employee and taxpayer, which she directly related to her involvement in the project, made her proud of herself. She also became involved in a subsequent large-scale inter-services project undertaken in The Parks, the Helix Project, mentioned above. Further, she had become a volunteer at her son’s school canteen. In addition to this, she had enrolled at TAFE in an eight-week course in the hope of later becoming a community worker. She was also being coached in numeracy and literacy at her son’s school (“Monday afternoon I go to my son’s school and listen to all the kids read”) and attending a short course in peer education organised by the Health Service.

There was also some evidence of increased recognition and status with subsequent increases in financial capacity, or evidence of acquisition of some forms of economic capital, for some of the local organisations, which had taken part in the project. The project created a high profile for The Parks and the work of the Community Centre services. This, in turn, created new funding opportunities for some of these organisations. For instance the Health Service, with the help and interest of Janine Peacock, the TLN event’s Production Manager, was successful in applying for funding to the Australia Council’s CCDB to maintain a similar level of workshop activities to what had occurred during the project. Also, the South Australian Department of Human Services offered financial support to the Health Service to document and evaluate the impact of CCD projects in the area in promoting healthier lifestyles and developing “ways to maintain and sustain momentum and energy for community arts” in the aftermath of the Adelaide Festival (Verity, 2004, p. 2).48 The Arts Complex and Health Service were encouraged to apply for ‘Social Inclusion’ funds from the Premier’s Department, which they were successful in getting and which led to the implementation of the Helix Project. In addition, funding was provided to the Health Service to employ more workers, including a male Aboriginal

48 In her report, Fiona Verity compared findings from an evaluation report I wrote on The Longest Night (McEwen, 2003) with findings from the Health Service’s staff evaluation of two ‘Community Arts Action Research’ projects. She found that CCD projects were beneficial to health promotion, but that, in order to be sustainable, they needed to integrate pathways to economic, cultural and social development.
youth worker. Finally, funds were secured by The Parks Security Services to employ a couple of Aboriginal security guards.

It is worth noting that the increased funding, linked to increased recognition for the local organisation, didn’t mean an increased economic autonomy. Rather it meant that those organisations were able to manage the chaos that might have ensued had they not maintained a certain level of activity for local young people in the aftermath of TLN project. This increased funding helped local organisations and workers avoid having to turn back significant numbers of young people attracted to The Parks Community Centre and their services by the presence and reputation of the project. It also avoided leaving participants feeling, to a certain extent, used, exposed or depressed and abandoned.

Besides these instances of acquisition of forms of social, symbolic and economic capital, some participants also acquired some other forms of capital. Although marginal, some participants had acquired some forms of cultural capital; for instance, in the form of an extended vocabulary to describe their situation and the special event they had taken part in and had been instrumental in staging. They also acquired forms of cultural capital by being exposed to new forms and genres of art, that led them to develop another aesthetic sense and/or taste.

These changes and/or success stories were, however, short lived. By 2005, Greg was no longer performing voluntary duties at The Parks. He had fathered two children, had been unable to follow up on his earlier hopes to study at TAFE, and was in and out of employment. As for Dale, by the end of 2005, she had been struggling with her everyday life, battling severe bouts of depression (once following the birth of her second child and a second time following the death of her third child at ten weeks from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)). By 2005, though June had gained increased levels of confidence, an increased sense of responsibility and importance as well as an increased sense of connectedness to the local community, she was still feeling isolated (“My television’s my best friend” (June, Interview, 2005)) and was struggling to remain focused and occupied when not with her son.
Thus, in spite of the new opportunities generated by participating in TLN, in 2006 there was an overwhelming impression of continuity rather than change. For local partners, though new opportunities had been created or doors opened by having the project set in The Parks, there was also a feeling of ongoing struggle to secure funding. Further, the increased funding or levels of recognition did not prevent the South Australian Government’s decision to relocate The Parks Arts and Craft facilities within the Arts Complex’s facilities to make way for a supermarket (Kanck, 2006; Zollo, 2007). Moreover, soon after the end of TLN, all local staff directly involved in the project had taken extended periods of leave and by 2005 only one of The Parks Community Centre services workers involved in the project was still working at The Parks. The others had moved on to other positions, working with young people in other welfare organisations or in schools. For those staff who had remained at The Parks, there was a sense that, at best, their work had continued in a similar way, as before TLN, and, at worst, that they were struggling to manage local young people’s increased interest and demands for more events and activities similar to those which had taken place during TLN or to deal with local young people’s boredom, which, in the immediate aftermath of the project, had led to a higher than usual incidence of altercations between local young people and local welfare and youth workers as well as local security staff and the police.

‘During my last visit to The Parks in 2005, I witnessed some other changes but possibly not for the better. The Parks I had first encountered in 2001 was no longer. In 2005, though some parts of The Parks had remained unchanged, considerable parts had dramatically changed. Walking around the area, the site itself was showing signs of depression. The juxtaposition of vacant lots, showing fresh signs of demolition, with deserted and/or neglected old houses as well as with well-cared-for new ‘modern’ houses, gave a sense of abandonment and desolation. The co-habitation of transient people, or people in crisis, living in the remaining Housing Trust houses and new owners recently moved in to a freshly renamed ‘Westwood’ gave me an uneasy feeling. More importantly perhaps, these changes indicated that most participants and clients of The Parks Community Centre had moved away from the area.


Though in 2005 there was a sense of continuity rather than change for most participants and workers involved in the project, it should not be ignored that some positive changes did occur for them (and, of course, there were positive career benefits, too, for the practitioners and artists involved in the project, an issue to which I will return in Chapter 6). In the aftermath of the project, some of the positive changes that remained included, notably, increased levels of hope and interest in participating in social life for some participants and workers. As a local worker commented, participation in TLN “brought a lot of hope and enthusiasm” (Arts Complex staff member A, Interview, 2005). It helped some participants and workers gain or regain hope for the future as they talked about and briefly experienced what possibilities life might offer (Hage, 2002b, p. 151). It should not be ignored though that, as briefly mentioned in section 4.5.5, another pattern, seemingly in contrast with what I argue here, does occur, a pattern of sustained change as the ‘success’ of people
like Morgan Lewis and Shannon Williams or other artists and workers nurtured by UTP shows. These changes are however, of a different nature to the changes or lack of changes that occurred for people like Dale, Greg or June because they were involved in different processes, had different intentions in participating in the projects with UTP and had different habitus.

For participants, this increase in levels of hope was consistent with an engagement with creative activities, including theatre or performance-making activities. Engagement in these activities has the capacity to help participants imagine a life of abundance. It also has the capacity to help participants reflect and expand on their experiences, articulate their desires and develop new expectations for their lives (Kershaw, 1978, p. 88, 1998, p. 75; McConachie, 2001, p. 40). Participants’ engagement in these activities had the capacity to motivate them to seek change or to pursue new opportunities, which happened for a short while after the project. Some workers also experienced increased levels of hope as they witnessed some of the initial changes in participants, which they felt they had played a role in bringing about. Some felt elated because they had been able “to lift a person to the next peak” (Health Service staff member B, Interview, 2005).

This discussion about change and continuity has highlighted that participation in TLN did overall have an impact on participants and local staff. Though not insignificant, positive changes were not as far reaching as suggested by discourses circulating in the subfield of CCD. Participation in TLN did, for a time, enable the acquisition of various forms of capital or strengthen a sense of community, create some order and meaning, and increase levels of recognition, sustenance and hope. Also, in some instances, it provided a step for some of the parties involved towards participation in, support or production of other similar projects. It provided a step towards (re)engagement with further studies with entry points in the fields of the arts or social welfare. These changes were, however, also often short lived, and by late 2005 what remained of the experience were mostly good memories. For a Youth Service staff member who worked closely on the project, what was seen as most significant in the aftermath of the project was that participants did “revel in that experience and really love[d] the association and their memories and share[d] with others” (Sonia,
Interview, 2005). Thus, though participants had a glimpse at some possible pathways and new identities, they did not, on the whole, embody or embrace change in a way that might have led to significant changes in their social, political and economic conditions.

5.6 Conclusion

The Parks was not new to social interventions and to arts-based practices. Participants were not new to participating in CCD projects, but TLN was a project with a difference as this comment made in an interview in 2005 by a Health Service staff member closely involved in TLN reveals: “the festival experience was unique and nothing can duplicate that … It made things ecstatic for that time” (Katherine, Interview, 2004). It achieved something other arts-based projects hadn’t, such as: higher levels of participation and engagement; developing a sense of belonging and ownership; increased levels of sustenance; raised levels of hope; and the production of a performance that attracted high levels of recognition and was, by Kershaw’s criteria, potentially efficacious (1992). TLN achieved something other arts-based projects hadn’t because participation in the project had the potential to challenge participants and spectators in their understanding of their position in The Parks and their lives as well as their understanding of the life of others, be it at the ‘margins’ or nearer the centre of power.

TLN was significant because its development made explicit things which normally remain tacit and suggested something beyond the perceived and lived complexities of everyday life in The Parks. It was significant because it fostered the creation of a sense of community through shared practice and the temporary suspension of dominant repressive social rules and hierarchisation, as evidenced by the authority individuals from this ‘marginal community’ gained, for a time, from representing themselves through a performance. Also, it was significant because participation in TLN had the potential to create a space where participants were able to engage mentally and/or physically with notions of social transition and new political relationships. Finally, TLN was significant because, as these points highlight, it was
characterised by ritual-like elements, further stressing its potentially efficacious power.

Yet, the overall impact in the aftermath of the project, for the various parties involved, was not as far reaching as discourses in the subfield of CCD might suggest. Though there was some evidence of changes in circumstances and attitude, five years later there was little remaining evidence of these earlier changes and an overwhelming sense of continuity. I do not wish to underestimate the impact of good memories and increased levels of hope, but these did not, within the timeframe of the study, translate into lasting or sustained positive changes in circumstances. Moreover, there was a lack of evidence that participants might have gained deeper or new insights and knowledge about local or global historical themes and events. There was a lack of evidence that participants were able to name changes required, challenges to and issues in the development of a better community beyond a focus on individual and personal changes (Freire, 1972, pp. 60–63). Further, there was no evidence of aggregation of individual changes into collective change, for instance. There was, within the timeframe of this study, no evidence of collective or individual empowerment, in the sense of having greater power to make a difference on a social and political level. There was no evidence of achievement of greater democratic rights for residents of The Parks. Thus, though the conditions for a potentially efficacious performance were established and changes in circumstances and attitudes occurred, these did not amount in the aftermath of the project to changes of a collective and/or structural social and/or political nature.

Most evaluation work would conclude here. I am, however, interested in understanding why participation in a project like TLN didn’t lead to longer-lasting changes. I am also interested in understanding why CCD practices are still funded by government regardless of the limited evidence showing successful changes. In what follows, I discuss the complex relationship between intentions of efficacy, CCD processes, production of a performance and everyday life. I do this by linking concepts and frameworks defined in Part 1 with the analysis of TLN I have carried out in this part.
Part 3 – The social and political role of CCD practices in Australia
CHAPTER 6 – Between rhetoric and reality

6.1 Introduction
Most CCD practitioners firmly believe that their practices are efficacious at different levels and for several reasons. As discussed in Part 1, this belief is sustained by years of practice, exchanges and relations between members of the subfield of CCD, advocacy groups, government funding bodies and evaluators producing studies of CCD projects and programs that suggest that CCD practitioners and their practices help build or strengthen a sense of community and restore in participants a sense of agency as makers of their own history. The case study of TLN which I have presented in Part 2 of this thesis, however, gives pause for thought: if a project as well-resourced and carefully planned as this yields no more than the short-term benefits described above, can any CCD practice be expected to match the claims of socio-political efficacy so commonly found in CCD discourses?

In this chapter, I present some of the reasons why a gap between discourses of efficacy and the actual levels of social and political change for participants in CCD projects or programs is always likely. I do this by examining relevant elements of my analysis of TLN and the subfield of CCD in light of Bourdieu’s concepts and frameworks. I argue that there are four main factors contributing to any gap between discourses of efficacy and actual levels of change. First, people’s capacities to effect change are, to a large extent, shaped and limited by the ‘nature’ of what Bourdieu understands as their habitus. Second, the gaps between discourses of efficacy and actual levels of change can be linked to the mobilisation of, at times, competing sets of unrealistic and/or idealistic discourses that misrepresent the lived experience of ‘community’ and ‘culture’. Third, CCD practitioners are operating in a subfield of cultural production that is only weakly autonomous; hence the ‘legitimacy’ of their practices is limited inside the broader field of arts, and outside in the field of power. Finally, I argue that members of the CCD subfield, as much as they may be explicitly engaged in promoting the interests of people in ‘marginalised communities’, are also pursuing strategic actions in their own interest, as artists trying to ‘get ahead’ in the
broader field of arts, although this self-interest is generally misrecognised as a form of ‘disinterest’.

6.2 Limited aptitude for change: a question of habitus

I now return to Bourdieu’s work, outlined in Chapter 3, and his concept of habitus in particular. As David Swartz (1997) argues, this concept is central to the way in which Bourdieu attempts to explain the relationship between individual action and social structure. While many features of an individual’s habitus (all those deeply ingrained patterns of thought and action that seem like ‘second nature’) are formed early in life and are strongly correlated with class background and other social factors, human action is not simply determined by social structure in a direct, unmediated way, nor is it purely a matter of “conscious intentions and calculation, as posited by voluntarist and rational-actor models” (Swartz, 1997, pp. 8–9). Rather, as Bourdieu himself puts it, habitus is a set of “structures structurées prédisposées à fonctionner comme structures structurantes”49 (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 256). It is a set of structures and dispositions that constrain people’s actions and ability to effect radical change while nevertheless providing the means by which people and groups are able to adapt in numerous small ways to processes of social change that are already in motion.

On the one hand, Bourdieu argues that “the existence, form and direction of change depend … on the ‘state of the system’, i.e. the ‘repertoire’ of possibilities which it offers” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 34). Then, people’s ability to change, or to be prepared and respond to change over time, is limited because they rely so heavily on the dispositions of thought and actions learnt from past experiences to ascertain what present and future actions are possible, probable or impossible (Swartz, 1997, p. 104). As a result, people become more or less resistant to change because they have internalised what to value and how to compete for it. These values and ways of accumulating valued things or experiences rarely change and are promoted in the social world and reinforced, through a process of naturalisation, on a cognitive and

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49 “structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures”.

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precognitive level. Thus, the structure offered by one’s habitus is seen as one’s reality because its subjective nature is objectified and made to feel natural.

On the other hand, Bourdieu also argues that people are, potentially, in a constant state of change as they assess what they have and what they want and set about improvising ways to obtain more of these things or experiences by drawing on and/or recombining limited and historically defined sets of strategies. Some people can experience this improvisation and/or recombination as a process of change (which also serves to keep them ‘interested’ in participating in their chosen field/subfield). This change, however, is still a form of adaptation rather than transformation (Swartz, 1997, pp. 107–109). It is a change on a small scale which has little effect on social mobility and does not necessarily lead by increments to major structural change (Swartz, 1997, pp. 107–113, 217–239).

Insofar as Bourdieu does countenance the possibility of large-scale social change with the potential to change dominant values and norms, this involves structural changes triggered by a social movement and/or a social crisis. When this type of change occurs, it often occurs through the mobilisation of a large group of people around the organisation of political events. During these events some of the dominant values and visions are challenged and replaced with another set of values and visions, which then leads to changes in the structures and mechanisms of reproduction of culture and domination (Swartz, 1997, pp. 211–239).

According to Bourdieu, large-scale changes are significant to the majority of people because they help make domination visible, or rather they help overcome the state of no opposition, also called a state of orthodoxy. In times when there is no conflict, the source of domination becomes difficult to locate. In this state of affairs, those in

50 Bourdieu’s analysis disputes theories of social mobility which would see education as inevitably and systematically a means whereby people of lower socio-economic backgrounds, in contemporary post-industrial societies, can achieve equality of opportunity and an entry into a higher social class (Swartz, 1997, pp. 147–160).

51 One such example is the social events of May 1968, which I have discussed as an ‘event-that-models’ in Chapter 3.
positions of power can, through a process of covert imposition of a hierarchy of symbols of power, also known as ‘symbolic violence’, see their cultural values, including aesthetic productions, used as the norm. This happens because this symbolic hierarchy enables those in positions of power to justify their comparative wealth in ‘naturalising’ terms, such as ‘taste’ and ‘common sense’ (Bourdieu, 1979a, pp. 559–561). This naturalisation process is of benefit to those in positions of power on two accounts. First, it gives them legitimacy and credentials. Second, the collective acceptance and usage of values and norms prized by those in position of power maintains their position of power (Swartz, 1997, pp. 65–94).

For Bourdieu, while major structural changes of this sort are possible, they are rare occurrences because they are an elaborate process that require dominant positions on offer within a field, including those with(in) established hierarchies, to alter and, in turn, affect all other positions. This only rarely happens because most positions tend to be reinforced through conservative education and other symbolic hierarchies (Swartz, 1997, pp. 212–214).

Turning to TLN, as discussed in Chapter 5, there were signs that some individuals and some of the community organisations who participated in the project had experienced changes in their lives and/or their organisations’ operations. There were also signs that those involved regarded their involvement in TLN as having generated positive outcomes for them and the local community. Further, it was with great interest that I observed that The Parks had the potential to be a place where significant changes might occur. Indeed, at the beginning of the project, there were several movements and activities seeking change taking place at the same time in The Parks. The history of resident mobilisation against the government’s regular attacks on the local sense of community, and individual resentment developed from the negative experiences of people directly affected by The Parks relocation program, combined with the intentions and effects of Sellars’s Adelaide Festival of the Arts on The Parks, might have created a social movement necessary for large-scale changes to occur. Within the time of my study, however, no large-scale changes had occurred.
Three years on from the end of TLN, it was clear that the changes that occurred for those who took part in the project proved to be mainly on an individual level and mostly temporary. Change for those who took part in TLN was limited to the acquisition of small amounts and forms of capital, limiting participants’ capacity to compete for resources and other positions in society. There was no evidence to suggest that participation in TLN helped foster change at a broader level, such as the accumulation of significant levels of capital or an increase in individual and/or collective exercise of power. Though participation in TLN might have changed The Parks’ environment, this was, perhaps, not for long enough to allow people to adapt their habitus to the change, not long enough for the small-scale types of changes to become ‘natural’. I do not wish to underestimate the value of the small-scale types of changes that were brought on by participating in TLN (I return to these in the next chapter), but in the five years spanning this research project, there was little evidence of actual structural or power shifts and changes gained from participating in TLN. CCD practices were not combined with other strategies to create a social movement that might have led to the alteration of hierarchical relationships with(in) established institutions and/or made connections and established common interests across movements and projects that might have been struggling against The Parks regeneration project.

This was also the case in other CCD projects I have researched and evaluated. For instance, the evidence gathered from the study of ‘The Torch’, another similarly outstanding CCD project previously mentioned in section 2.4, highlighted the fact that the project had a positive impact on most of those who took part. Flowers and McEwen found that the project “provided a high level of public education and awareness-raising activities that [led] to so many concrete outcomes for reconciliation” (2004, p. 102). However, they also concluded that though “[i]t achieved some individual change, … there [was] still much to be done to achieve structural change” (ibid). Another case in point might be that of ‘Maze’, a CCD project that drew on theatre to engage with young people, mentioned in section 2.2. Evidence gathered from this study led to the conclusion that “[t]he project didn't so much foster changed views in the young people involved about themselves and others rather it gave them
an opportunity to assert themselves by expressing a view about themselves not previously done in public” (McEwen, 2002a, p. 14).

Perhaps, this lack of significant change can be linked to the fact that though habitus is transposable, and conditions, attitudes, etc. do change, changes that occur for individuals who, outside of their participation in a CCD project, might engage in activities in different fields to other participants and/or outside of the subfield of CCD changes can not occur because often there is no porosity of boundaries or homology between ‘their’ dominant field of practice, that of CCD and the field of power. Perhaps too, significant changes within any given (sub)field can not happen without the help of changes in other fields, especially structural and power relations changes in more dominant fields (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 57–58). These assumptions (that would require a special study to establish their validity) highlight the enduring critique of Bourdieu’s conceptual framework of ‘field’ and ‘habitus’ discussed in section 3.3: that it doesn't provide a complex enough instrument to understand the intricacies of change. This isn’t to say that Bourdieu’s concepts are inadequate in analysing change but that they need to be adapted, as tools rather than as theory, to understand ‘change’ in any given historical context.

Another possible explanation for this failure to effect significant change might be that, overall, The Parks residents’ had a diminished interest in acting on local matters, as a key informant within the Health Service suggested:

> People are really unhappy. And we’ve certainly found that as a community development team that it’s harder to engage people around “let’s do some community action together” or “what issues are important to you?” There’s certainly issues [sic], but [there’s] not necessarily the energy that people want to commit to actually working with us on a project that might take twelve months, because they don’t know if they’re going to be here ... Even if they’ve been here a while, the community that they’ve lived [in] is being, you know, dismantled, so you know, why would they want to put energy into a community that, you know, they might not be a part of and that they don’t think is the same community that they used to be a part of (Katherine, Interview, 2005).

This diminishing interest, or lack of belief, in participating or intervening in local matters is a key issue, which can be linked to people’s lack of hope for a better future.
(Hage, 2003, pp. 222, 225). Though some major difficulties in working in The Parks were overcome, some of The Parks residents’ wariness and the habit of being disappointed by the familiar short-term and one-off community development and social intervention programs and projects that came and went with little long-term benefit for local residents, were more entrenched, and thus more problematic to overcome. This was another reason for the lack of significant large-scale change. Further, some social workers interested in maintaining a good reputation for their work and interested in protecting the ‘good’ relationships they had developed with various groups and people from the local community were also wary of these services, programs and projects. Again, as Katherine, the Health Service community development worker, suggested:

A lot of my concerns come from working with young people in the local area and knowing that their experience has [been] that they may’ve been given things at some stage and then things are taken away from them. Or, things like the sports centre here being free five years ago or however many years ago and now being, you know, a privatised, yeah, privatised business that wants to make money that they can no longer afford to access. And, you know, The Parks high school being here that they used to go to, no longer exists. And things like that, things that come and go in young people’s lives, that often set them up and are either disappointed or something, you know, really significant, like education, is taken away from them. So, I guess that’s sort of some of the disadvantage that I see in the community that I, as a community development worker, I feel I have a responsibility not to further. So, I guess that’s, as far as I’m concerned, setting young people up, kind of, not to fail necessarily (Katherine, Interview, 2005).

As this comment implies, ongoing reforms and financial investment in projects (supported by ‘positive’ discourses of development of ‘community’ and ‘culture’) that intend to improve the quality of life of local residents have been seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand this kind of investment is seen as developing or strengthening social cohesion. On the other, it is seen as a potential threat to local residents developing a sense of community because of the gap left behind once the project investments are over. Though this comment doesn’t mean to say that Katherine (and other workers in similar positions) wouldn’t want another TLN to take place in The Parks, it means that she would probably be even more forceful than before in arguing that the CCD practitioners must not make promises to the community participants that they can’t keep. These conflicting positions about
'community’ are another reason for the gap between discourses of efficacy and actual change, as I argue next.

6.3 Misrepresentation of community and culture

Some of the ‘positive’ discourses and intentions about the development of ‘marginal communities’ and their culture circulating in the subfield of CCD are often in sharp contrast to, or at least an oversimplification of, the lived experience of ‘community’ in places like The Parks. Such misrepresentations of the lived experience of ‘community’ and ‘culture’ often involve expectations about what a ‘community’ is, or should be, and, to the extent that these expectations are determined outside of the control of those most concerned with this kind of work, may have the effect of ultimately legitimising and reinforcing a dominant conservative social order.

As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the features of the subfield of CCD is its members’ reconstitution “through political processes” (Everingham, 2003, p. 6); their mobilisation of, and movement between, a variety of at times ambiguous and conflicting discourses and concepts of ‘community’. On the one hand, there are notions of ‘community’ associated with the development of ‘marginal communities’ and their cultures, which treat the concept in an almost exclusively warm, positive way, where ‘community’ is related to ideas of ‘harmony’, ‘solidarity’ and ‘collectivism’ and connections based on shared religious beliefs, values and so on. On the other hand, in some CCD discourses, the meanings given to the concept of ‘community’ stress much more the decline in solidarity and collectivism and highlight serious instances of internal conflict and protest, to the point where ‘community’ becomes almost entirely a negative concept (Everingham, 2003, pp. 21–23; Kershaw, 1999, p. 193).

There are several reasons for this ambiguity and tension around the idea of ‘community’ in CCD discourses. For one thing, many conservative government bodies have, in recent decades, accommodated or appropriated some of the rhetoric around ‘community’ more commonly associated with persistent counter-discourses, or discourses that have been on the margins, often to the point of devaluation or ‘conceptual inflation’ of their key concepts (Watt, 1991, p. 58). This certainly appears
to be the case insofar as the notion of ‘empowering communities’ runs across all manner of progressive and conservative CCD discourses (McEwen, 2007).

Discursive ambiguities around the notions of ‘community’ and ‘culture’ can also help create a boundary between members of the field of power and others (Rose, 1997b, p. 4) by redefining the effects of, say, poverty and exploitation in more benign terms such as ‘social exclusion’. Indeed, the ‘fuzziness’ of ‘community’ as a concept is strongly reminiscent of the ambiguities and conflicting meanings to be found in discourses about ‘class’. In many instances, the term ‘community’ seems to have replaced the terms ‘lower class’ or ‘working class’. Its mobilisation can be seen as a way of unifying or segregating certain groups of people, with or against others, as a way to “legitimate the growing disparities in wealth and the hardening of public sentiment towards those most disadvantaged by the new economic conditions” (Everingham, 2003, p. 11).

These are, however, irreconcilable differences which, inevitably, lead to the misrepresentation of lived experiences of communities because this lived experience is more complex than either the more ‘wholesome and positive’ or the more ‘constraining and negative’ conceptions of community which tend to circulate in CCD discourses. Looking at TLN, understandings of ‘community’ which were mobilised by The Parks organisations involved in the project directly impacted on the role they saw ‘The Parks community’ playing in it and in the Adelaide Festival more broadly, but these understandings did not break down strictly into positive or negative conceptions, let alone map neatly onto the lived experience of community in The Parks.

Some local organisations saw the local community as a geographical location where groups of “difficult” and “disparate” (Arts Complex staff member, Interview, 2001) people live, who experience deep-seated problems that need external impetus to be resolved or managed. In other words, they saw local residents as clients needing direction and framing; as clients needing “to come and access the services” (Arts Complex staff member, Interview, 2001). This mostly negative notion of community was in opposition to an understanding of the local community as knowledgeable
people who can manage most of their affairs internally, as this local worker stated: “The community has more expertise than I do in any capacity” (Katherine, Interview, 2001). This vision of the local community as experts went with a vision of The Parks as a place where people have a sense of family and an extended network of social connections (“[The Parks has] been a generational place where four or five generations of people have lived in houses with the same [people] next door to each other, brothers and sisters, fathers and cousins” (Security staff member, 2001)). This diversity of meanings was the result of these organisations’ different purposes and ways of working in The Parks, which I have discussed in Chapter 4. It was also the result of having organisations from different fields/subfields working together, a point I come back to in section 6.5.

Further evidence of this diversity of meanings was also gathered in other studies of CCD projects, as for example this statement by an informant on ‘The Torch’ project shows:

What is community? Is it inclusive or exclusive? Successful groups are not necessarily welcoming of other people. ‘Community’ is clouded, compromised by vested interest and historical as well as hierarchical precedents. People at the top have the impression that they are the community. They’ve got to be seen to be there (Flowers & McEwen, 2004, p. 24).

This diversity of meaning and expectations about the role ‘community’ might play in TLN project and the festival was not an impediment to creating at least a temporary, intimate sense of community. Despite the fact that, as discussed in Chapter 4, some researchers have contested labelling The Parks a ‘community’, a temporary ‘TLN community’ did come together in The Parks around this project and in response to the way discourses of ‘community’, ‘culture’ and ‘development’, which outwardly upheld positive intentions of change, were mobilised in it. This occurred because Alicia used a wide range of strategies that met the expectations of the various parties involved. TLN community was not, however, as long lasting as some might have hoped it would be. This was well captured by a senior Health Service staff member who oversaw the development of UTP’s residency:
I think context here is very unique at the moment with the community being torn apart by the redevelopment. And so, I think at the moment it’s not at its strongest ... because people have been moved and houses are being knocked down. But there is still a community strength you know. But it’s usually with what we’ve come to realise is with community development the focus or the assumption rather is stability, geographic stability. [It’s] that people put time into their local community when they know they’re going to be there for a while and ... That’s different about the area at the moment ... It’s a community in transition or upheaval probably ... Community strengthening is more important than anything at the moment. Because people still have to live here, you know. And in the absence of that, there’s fear and distrust in neighbours and all that sort of thing (Health Service staff member A, Interview, 2005).

This lack of sustainability in the local sense of ‘community’ can be linked to several factors. As discussed in Chapter 4, The Parks ‘community’ and the community that was formed through participation in UTP’s cultural collaboration project was not initially a community of extended personal connections or shared values, but a heterogeneous community of individual people and families from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds with a precarious geographical connection, who came together, for a time, around a project, motivated by a diversity of interests. Further, the range of interests was perhaps too broad to retain a certain coherence and the experience of participating in TLN perhaps too personal to create a complex enough set of relationships that might have sustained TLN communities beyond the life and immediate purpose of the project.

The disjunctions between lived experiences of ‘community’ and the way this concept is understood across diverse CCD discourses are matched by a similar discursive ambiguity around concepts of ‘culture’. As discussed in Chapter 2, tensions exist between, on the one hand, a narrow understanding and promotion of culture as mostly ‘legitimised’ and institutionalised arts and, on the other hand, a broader anthropological understanding and promotion of culture as ‘the way we do things’, including a whole range of artforms and genres. This reflects the tension between members of the subfield of CCD who support the welfare, cultural and ‘critical’ development of ‘marginal communities’, according to the particular interests of the people who live in these communities, and members of the CCD subfield whose interests lie more in the production and/or consumption of culture and arts that may in some ways promote a conservative vision of national identity and the naturalisation of
dominant aesthetic norms. In other words, depending on how CCD practitioners position themselves in relation to the broader field of arts or fields related to CCD such as health and education, there will often be tensions between, on the one hand, the strategies that they pursue in the interests of those people in ‘marginal communities’ whom they see themselves as ‘developing’ or ‘empowering’ in some way and, on the other hand, the strategies that CCD practitioners might pursue to secure personal and professional advancement, to ‘get ahead’ themselves as ‘artworkers’.

Had UTP only worked on devising The Longest Night, the performance ‘proper’ of a play essentially group-devised by the professional ensemble, these tensions between ‘culture as lived’ in the experience of people from The Parks and ‘culture as conceptualised’ in various CCD discourses might have been detrimental to the development of the project. As it happened, however, UTP’s interests and strategies were broad enough to encompass some of the local residents’ interests in the production and consumption of arts and culture. As discussed in Part 2, the lived cultural reality of The Parks was different to what some of the discourses about ‘culture’ I described in Chapter 2 might imply or seek to develop. The Parks was not at the time of UTP’s residency, nor is it today, a place of one particular culture. Nor was it a place where participation in ‘culture’ was lacking. Rather, The Parks was, and is, a place where residents participate in a range of cultures that co-exist and contribute towards the diversity of the Australian nation. Though not always valued by non-local residents or in harmony with each other, local cultures were rich, diverse, inclusive and joyful, as the analysis of the Dance Off carried out in Chapter 5 showed. But they were also, at times, as the analysis of The Longest Night in that same chapter showed, exclusive, violent, abusive and destructive.

Arguably, the key feature of UTP’s work in the last decade or so has been the company’s capacity to find ways of reconciling its own goals as a ‘player’ in CCD (and the field of arts more broadly) with the particular interests of its partner institutions and the complex tapestry of local (sub)cultures in which the community participants on a project are engaged. As discussed in Chapter 4, UTP has made a point of emphasising in its CCD projects the everyday life context of people broadly
labelled ‘marginal’. In so doing, the company is clearly able to demonstrate its credentials (to funding agencies, bureaucrats and other CCD ‘players’) in terms of opening up greater ‘access’ to, and ‘participation’ in, the arts. In TLN, this ‘access’ and ‘participation’ agenda was evident, for instance, in the processes of consultation used to devise the various performances that made up the whole event, as well as in the company’s frequent preference for working outdoors where they are most visible to their ‘target’ audience (this is something which goes right back to the early work of DDT, as the company was first called, and which has continued with more recent shows on trains, in town plazas and suburban streets).

At the same time, the company has worked hard to enhance its reputation for standards of artistic ‘excellence’ which, in the broader field of arts, are typically aligned with ideas of the ‘nation’, a ‘national culture’ etc. Thus, as in TLN, familiar participatory and creative CCD processes sit alongside performance strategies informed by ‘avant-garde’ and/or contemporary aesthetic values. These are values that the company shares with many ‘progressive’, dominant members of the field of arts (festival directors, tour promoters, Australia Council program managers and other people who have influence in debates about where ‘new’ and ‘innovative’ artwork is to be found). These values are also, of course, often in opposition to the more conservative tastes of dominant ‘players’ within the field of economic and political power (who may include, for instance, government arts ministers, festival board members, corporate sponsors and the like). UTP has, in fact, always been interested in producing performances that deal with notions of ‘nation’ and national identity, albeit an alternative identity to that which is usually implied by people in positions of economic and political power, as Spinks (1992, p. 158) acknowledges in an early essay on the company. As described in Chapter 4, UTP has been concerned with the production of a national identity of a popular and grass-roots kind, inclusive of a broad cultural spectrum. This was evident in TLN (the project and the event) and its presentation of a complex community where diverse and emerging artists met established arts producers and consumers, where popular art forms met valued art forms and where the local met the global.
UTP’s use of professional performers in shows like *The Longest Night, The Cement Garage, Back Home* and *The Last Highway* clearly serves as a form of guarantee regarding the interests which both ‘progressive’ and ‘conservative’ members of the fields of arts and power might have in the company’s work. UTP, in effect, has made it possible for festival directors, tour promoters, and so forth, who want to be seen to be ‘taking a risk’ on a community-based show, to reassure festival board members, corporate sponsors, local, state and federal government bodies etc. that UTP is still ‘a pretty safe bet’: they do ‘excellent’ work, up to the best ‘national’, indeed ‘international’ standards. (Of course, as in the case of Peter Sellars at the Adelaide Festival in 2002, the ‘conservatives’ are not always going to be convinced.)

In short, UTP has been successful with projects like TLN and has been a dominant member of the subfield of CCD. The company’s success can be seen by the way in which it has positioned its work in, and with, ‘communities’, managing to negotiate a wide range of other people’s and other institution’s interests while also advancing their own and, in particular, seeking to produce complex representations of ‘community’ and ‘culture’. The company has been successful in aligning itself with ‘marginal communities’ *and* with people in positions of power, appearing to resolve what (from a Bourdieuian perspective) is a fundamental paradox, namely that artistic ‘excellence’ (which is usually defined by the tastes of a cultural elite seeking social distinction) might serve ‘democratic/egalitarian’ ideals. On the face of it, the company’s approach to combining processes of participation with an increasingly professional level of presentation has allowed its CCD practices to thrive in a conservative political climate that has been generally unfavourable for the last decade at least while also allowing the company to maintain a mostly oppositional stance in its critique of many aspects of Australian society.

This discussion has highlighted the ways in which the discourses about ‘community’, ‘culture’ and their development, mobilised by members of the subfield of CCD, directly impact on the specific workings of CCD practices and their outcomes. It has also highlighted tensions between the use of discourses about the development of ‘marginal communities’ and their culture to, at times, highlight and address issues pertaining to the lack of a sense of community and participation in arts and culture,
while, at other times, to legitimise a particular vision of ‘community’ and ‘culture’ which reinforces dominant and conservative views and positions (Bourdieu, 1994, pp. 114–115). Further it has highlighted the ways in which UTP negotiates these potential impacts and tensions. Finally, as I elaborate in the following section, these tensions point to the limited autonomy of the subfield of CCD and legitimacy of the products and services CCD practitioners generate.

6.4 Limited autonomy and the struggle for legitimacy

The tensions made visible by the previous analysis of discourses of ‘community’ and ‘culture’ circulating in the subfield of CCD are, not surprisingly, symptomatic of greater struggles. Bourdieu argues, as discussed in Chapter 3, that struggles are constant occurrences in fields (Bourdieu, 1979a, 1984, pp. 114–115; Swartz, 1997, pp. 1–14). Members struggle over the means and right to carry out their practices and have them valued and recognised in order to accumulate various forms of capital. This is no less true of the subfield of CCD. Recently, though, these struggles within the subfield have been heightened by the most important withdrawal of support and resources in years by the Australian Government.

In what follows, I argue that regardless of numerous historical attempts by various members of the subfield to stress their legitimacy within the field of arts, the extent of the existing struggles within the subfield reveals members of the subfield’s extremely limited autonomy and legitimacy. These issues of limited autonomy and legitimacy are noteworthy because they are an additional reason for CCD practitioners’ limited capacity to carry out efficacious practices within and outside the subfield.

Bourdieu uses the concept of ‘relative autonomy’ to describe the complex relationship between members of fields/subfields and members of the field of power. The concept conveys a sense of dependency, often not perceived, as well as a sense of independence. For Bourdieu, no field (its members, their practices and their values) is entirely autonomous from the field of power. Rather, fields are, to varying degrees, dependent on practices of, and the norms valued and recognised by, members of the
field of power. Some fields are more dependent on, others more autonomous from, the field of power; they are all relatively autonomous (Swartz, 1997, pp. 206–215).

This relative autonomy can be measured, in part, by a field and its members’ capacity to self-organise and reference their own history and traditions as well as their capacity to impose their own laws and norms of production and consumption of goods and services. Further, a field’s relative autonomy can be gauged by its members’ capacity “to develop a distinct status culture and [their] own organizational and professional interests, which may deviate significantly from labor-market demands or dominant-class interests” (Swartz, 1997, p. 206).

As discussed in Chapter 2, members of the subfield of CCD have organised themselves around a bureaucracy as well as around a particular history, traditions, laws and norms. The subfield’s history, traditions, laws and norms are, however, not supported by a homogenous set of discourses, but by a set of multiple heterogeneous discourses, which highlights members’ struggle, not only over the establishment, defence and/or maintenance of their practices and discourses, but also, and more importantly, over the establishment, defence and/or maintenance of one of many ideological and political boundaries of the subfield of CCD. The maintenance and establishment of particular discourses, practices and boundaries is important because, though abstract, they are considered by members as ‘right’ and/or natural. It is also important because it gives those members whose practices, discourses and boundaries are accepted as the norm an advantage in competing for the subfield’s resources (Swartz, 1997, pp. 117–142). Notwithstanding this organisation, the professionalisation of the subfield, the increase in number of members of the subfield and the production of discourses and practices that are clear attempts to break free from the restrictive values and definitions such as ‘nation’ and ‘excellence’ (discussed in chapter 2) held as important by dominant members of the field of arts, the porosity of the boundaries between the field of arts and the subfield of CCD (exemplified by some members’ trajectories, moving in and out of the field and subfield in search of work and legitimacy that I discuss in the following section 6.5) is an indication of the subfield’s struggle in achieving a significant independence from the field of arts and, increasingly, an indication of the subfield’s limited autonomy.
Also, the lack of value or interest placed in a particular set of practices and/or discourses leads to a loss of position within the field/subfield for those members who promoted and adhered to them. While UTP has established itself as one of the most successful CCD ‘players’ over the last decade in particular, others have found it harder to win recognition. These others would include many practitioners and companies\textsuperscript{52} who were, during the ascendancy of the ‘community theatre movement’ in the 1980s, very well established, prominent and highly experienced. The discourses embraced by some of these formerly dominant players were arguably more closely aligned with radical politics and practices, and their positions within the subfield of CCD have weakened following internal shifts of focus within the subfield, often led by bureaucrats, and the difficulties of adaptation to the subsequently dominant, and typically more conservative, practices and discourses mobilised within the subfield.

Fields/subfields are spaces where members struggle to acquire capital by competing over limited valued resources. One way of reducing such competition is to reduce the boundaries of the field by limiting definitions and meanings of key concepts that circulate within the given field. Members successful in this can then rely on the establishment of a monopoly that ensures they acquire a certain level of capital. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, it has often been the case within the subfield of CCD that these decisions have been made by CCD and arts bureaucrats and people in positions of power. This lack of a decision-making capacity on the part of CCD practitioners in these aspects of the subfield’s development and identity is symptomatic of practitioners’ dependency on bureaucrats and people in positions of power. In other words, it is symptomatic of the subfield’s limited autonomy and legitimacy.

The constant need for CCD practitioners to justify their practices and products by providing an increasing number of evaluation reports, as discussed in Chapter 3, is another example of practitioners’ limited autonomy and the struggle for legitimacy of their practices and the products they generate through their practices. Though these

\textsuperscript{52} For example, Sidetrack Theatre Company (NSW) and Mainstreet Community Theatre Company (SA).
reports help practitioners advocate for their practices and prove their worth, they also divert members’ energies away from developing their practice to its full efficacious potential. This dependency on external approval and references is a reason for the disjunction between discourses and practices.

Yet another example of this autonomy and legitimacy conflict can be found in the limited value often placed by non-members of the subfield on the aesthetic products generated by CCD practices. Though the subfield of CCD is characterised by its own status culture and interests as well as distinctive and popular practices that are produced and consumed not only by CCD practitioners and participants, but also by some practitioners within other subfields, such as welfare, health and education, and a specific range of cultural products, the aesthetic aspects of the work produced often lacks legitimacy and isn’t generally valued by non-participants and practitioners unfamiliar with CCD practices, including some members of the broader field of arts from whom ‘art for art’s sake’ prevails (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 50–51). These products aesthetic tend to have little legitimacy outside of the subfield because they differ too greatly from the aesthetic values recognised and accepted by most members of the fields of art and power, and thus have little symbolic value that might help members achieve a better position for themselves and their subfield within the broader field of arts (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 67–68).

The fact that the aesthetic products generated through CCD practices are often judged by the accuracy of the content and the validity of the solutions brought to bear on a perceived problem, rather than in the same way artworks produced by members of the field of arts are judged, shows a disregard for the value of CCD aesthetic products. Though this is partly due to some practitioners’ own strategic actions and positioning within the subfield, as discussed in Chapter 2, it might also be the result of their prevalent use of popular aesthetics (such as Hip Hop culture for instance) which, in Bourdieu’s terms, is an aesthetic that lacks distinction (1979a), or that is seen as lacking ‘finish’ and professionalism when compared with the traditionally valued forms, including technique and aesthetics, of art products consumed by members of the field of power.
As I argued above, in TLN this issue of legitimacy of the aesthetic product generated was dealt with, to some extent, by the use of professional performers with knowledge of contemporary and popular performance modes and techniques. In addition, it was dealt with by contextualising the event in an international arts festival. These elements were also, however, initial areas of contestation by The Parks workers as to whether the project constituted a conventional approach to CCD practices (according to more recent trends) or a site-specific contemporary performance piece.

This difference between the value given to dominant forms of art as opposed to that given to CCD art products, or between the former as a more legitimate form of culture and the latter as a less legitimate form of culture, has further been made clear by the restructuring of the Australia Council instigated in late 2004. The demise of the CCDB, resulting in the relegation of the management of CCD practices, and the aesthetic products they generate, to the various remaining artform boards—and under the umbrella of an all-purpose unit concerned with audience development, youth arts, arts education and regional development—can be seen, on the one hand, as an attempt by the Australia Council to encourage the production of CCD aesthetic works that can compete against non-CCD practices. On the other hand, it can be seen as an attempt by the Australia Council to more clearly disassociate non-competitive CCD products (that is, projects which fail to secure funding against more ‘legitimate’ art) from their aesthetic worth by emphasising CCD practices’ educational aspect. Further, it can be seen as an attempt to deal with the pressures the federal government brings to bear upon the Australia Council to streamline its activities, without totally withdrawing support for its most threatened set of activities and practitioners: CCD practices and practitioners.

In other words, the restructuring of the Australia Council has forced CCD practitioners to make a choice about whether their practices are predominantly about developing aesthetic products or else more to do with developing/educating new and future audiences and artists. Also, the impact the Australia Council’s support, or withdrawal of support, has on the level and quality of activities in the subfield, as discussed in Chapter 2, is significant because it is another phenomenon which highlights, contrary to what some members might say, the control the Australia...
Council exercises over the subfield of CCD. This shows CCD practitioners’ dependence on the arts bureaucracy and, ultimately, the field of power.

Historically, this dependency started in 1975, when the Australia Council gained full statutory authority and the legal task of advancing both ‘participation’ and ‘excellence’ in the arts. This legal provision marked the creation of the subfield of CCD as the replacement of the Australian Council for the Arts’ Special Projects Fund which served, as discussed in Chapter 2, some politicians’ and bureaucrats’ need for a political and administrative justification for a sort of dumping ground for residual and alternative arts practices and activities often associated with discourses about amateur and radical arts (Hawkins, 1993, p. 29). The creation and maintenance of this niche funding for CCD practices was also important to some dominant members of the fields of arts and power, because it allowed for the creation of an alternative space for their personal and economic advancement.

Despite this evidence that the subfield of CCD is ultimately significantly dependent on the field of power, members of the subfield maintain a discourse of great autonomy and legitimacy. As discussed in Chapter 2 and as Bott stated in a speech in 2004 (Bott, 2004) (see Appendix 2), discourses produced about the Australia Council reinforce the idea that they are largely immune to influence from people in positions of power (such as senior bureaucrats from other government agencies and politicians), thanks to the principles of “peer assessment” and “arm’s-length funding” which have, for decades, been presented as the ‘cornerstone’ and ‘rock’ of the Australia Council’s bureaucratic operations. This kind of discourse is, in fact, further evidence of the historical positioning of the arts against material profit and the (not necessarily conscious) strategic use of ‘disinterest’ in economic gains, which I discuss in section 6.5, to disguise the subfield’s limited autonomy from members of the field of power, their interests, norms and laws as well as the strictly limited legitimacy of the aesthetic products generated by CCD practices.

Though the Australia Council’s bureaucrats might not have consciously set out to establish a tight control over the subfield, this bureaucratic control is problematic because it is not necessarily conscious and is often misrecognised as interest in others.
It is also problematic because, as Bourdieu argues, “the bureaucratic field contributes decisively to the constitution, and to the consecration, of ‘universal’ social problems” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 239). This control is, however, moderated, at least to some extent, by the fact that CCD and arts bureaucrats from the Australia Council are not the only dominant members of the subfield of CCD. Besides the bureaucrats of the Australia Council, there is a core group of long-term or well-established members of the subfield. Evidence of their dominance can be found in their positions as directors of the CCDB and regular recipients of grants.\(^{53}\) Evidence of their dominance can also be found in the impact of their decisions to create lobby groups, such as the NCAC or the National Arts and Culture Association (NACA), on other members of the subfield, including bureaucrats (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 53–54). Further, the distinction between CCD bureaucrats and practitioners is sometimes blurred as the Australia Council at times employs CCD practitioners who then go back into practice and vice versa.

Though this situation suggests a more complex relationship than the permanent binary opposition between dominant and dominated, it doesn’t take away from the fact that members of the subfield of CCD struggle for greater autonomy and legitimacy of their practices and the products they generate. What this situation might suggest, however, is a mutually dependent relationship between CCD practitioners and CCD bureaucrats where, despite struggles for autonomy and legitimacy, both find value in investing their time and efforts in the subfield of CCD (as implied by the estimate that there were, in 2004, two and a half thousand\(^{54}\) artists working in the subfield (Throsby cited in Mills, 2006, p. 68)). It also suggests CCD practitioners’ need to be strategic in their actions and practices within the subfield, and sometimes across fields/subfields, in

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\(^{53}\) An examination of the Australia Council’s CCD funding schemes’ records reveals that over the past three decades there has been an increase in the amount spent by the Australia Council in the field. It also reveals, however, that the number of groups in receipt of grants hasn’t increased proportionally and that it is often the same groups of people who receive grants. These include, for instance, theatre companies such as Sidetrack theatre, PACT, Shopfront, the Canberra Youth theatre, Urban Theatre Projects and Somebody’s Daughter Theatre Inc (Australia Council, 1974, 1978, 1980, 1985, 1986, 1990, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004).

\(^{54}\) This was a slight decline from three thousand in 1993, but a significant increase from one hundred in 1983.
order to successfully establish a position in the subfield in accordance to their dispositions that will help them compete for the increasingly scare resources available within the subfield.

6.5 Interests and strategic actions

The existence of struggles and conflicts within the subfield of CCD reveals the existence of conflicting and/or competing interests. As discussed earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 2, discourses and actions motivated by altruistic interests in improving the social conditions of ‘marginal communities’ contrast sharply with discourses and actions motivated by personal and economic advancement. Indeed, while most members of the subfield of CCD often present themselves as primarily interested in the cultural development of and efficacious outcomes for the ‘marginal communities’ they work with, a close examination of the discourses mobilised within the subfield reveals a conscious and non-conscious investment in the subfield on the part of some members towards the maintenance and reinforcement of their tastes and positions. In other words, it reveals members’ ‘self-interest’ and the interests of those in overarching fields of arts and power.

This mingling of conflicting discourses is noteworthy because it is important that members of the subfield realise that many CCD practitioners and affiliated professionals and bureaucrats are self-interested, so that they can work towards transparent and ethically sound practices. It is also noteworthy because it means that members seeking to achieve or support efficacious practices within the subfield are often unaware of their own limitations as well as those imposed on them and their practices by other members of the subfield.

For example, the creation and maintenance of the subfield of CCD might be seen as a way for the government to show its capacity to successfully develop and maintain a space of social interactions and practices. This helps senior bureaucrats and politicians further their appearance of interest in ‘marginal communities’ and their plight. Another interpretation might be to see the maintenance of the subfield of CCD as a way of using members of the subfield and their activities as a scapegoat or a place to lay blame and divert attention from the broader field of arts’ core members.
and activities when the field of arts is under threat from members of the field of power. As discussed in Chapter 2, Hawkins’s (1993) historical analysis of the Australia Council shows that on several occasions members in senior, or dominant, positions within the Australia Council have used the CCD Boards and the subfield’s activities as a flagship, when notions of community participation and inter-government strategies have been favoured by politicians and newly elected members of the numerous federal governments that have been in power since 1973. It also shows that, on other occasions, the CCD Boards have been used as a safety valve or scapegoat to manage threats to the authority of the Australia Council or its other boards, and to protect their privileges.

In what follows, I examine the relationship between interests, strategic actions and positions people have or adopt within the subfield of CCD. I do this by first examining members of the subfield of CCD’s interests and some members’ career paths within the subfield. I find that this examination reveals the porosity of membership between the subfield of CCD and the field of arts. I also find that many people and organisations involved in the production of CCD works seem to be unaware of their vested interests and/or misrecognise their own strategic actions, and those of others, as personally and economically disinterested.

The subfield of CCD is defined by a variety of members who have vested interests in participating in the subfield, including materialistic, idealistic, as well as conscious and/or unconscious explicit or implicit interests. Though members’ interests in participating in the subfield are varied, they seem to share two basic types of interests. They appear to have an interest, often overt and conscious, in working for the social and political benefit of the ‘marginal communities’ they engage with in their cultural and aesthetic practices. Indeed, despite the variety of positions within the subfield, CCD practitioners are often presented by other members of the subfield, or present themselves, as interdisciplinary self-effacing professionals who carry out a particular practice of ‘outreach’. CCD practitioners are presented as motivated by an altruistic interest in engaging with and organising members of ‘marginal communities’ towards the betterment of society. They are seen (for instance in the following quote from a long-term CCD artist and filmmaker) as people who need “humility, first of all, which
is essential, and also this willingness to learn and engage” (McKinnon in Centre for Popular Education, 2001a). Or, as another experienced CCD practitioner, a visual artist, puts it: they are “by nature, compassionate … because you can’t help but be caring and considerate towards the communities you’re working with” (Marsden in Centre for Popular Education, 2001a). For Deborah Mills, in her recent review of the subfield, the ideal CCD practitioner is seen as a “leader, catalyst and a facilitator who, through a process of self revelation, helps people to become cultural producers and helps them to see their environment in a different way” (2006, p. 43).

Interestingly, these comments, quite representative of the prevailing discourses circulating within the subfield, were made by well-established members who promulgate, consciously or not, this vision of the selfless and altruistic practitioner through Australia Council commissioned reports and/or at national conferences and forums on CCD practices. What is also interesting about comments like these is that they imply little or no interest in developing CCD practitioners’ own careers, economic capacity, or art practices.

This was also the case in TLN. As discussed in Chapter 4, Alicia and UTP expressed a variety of interests in initiating and working on the project, including the desire to collaborate with young people in addressing “real social goals”, the opportunity to seize funding made available by arts bureaucrats, and being part of an international arts festival, like the Adelaide Festival, that promised great exposure under the direction of Artistic Director Peter Sellars (Talbot & Stumm, 2000).

However, when asked about the project by local partner organisations and the media, they routinely presented the first of these many interests—their altruistic interest in others—as dominant. In Bourdieuean terms, the bringing to the fore of their altruistic interest can be seen as the (not necessarily conscious) ‘misrecognition’ of their self-interest. This ‘misrecognition’ doesn’t, however, negate their interest in the welfare of others, but reveals members of the subfield’s habitus (Bourdieu, 1994, pp. 161–164). In addition, it shows the complex relationship between ‘self-interest’ and an interest in the welfare of ‘others’ where self-interest can serve to advance the welfare of ‘others’ (and vice versa), but also to the exclusion of the welfare of ‘others’. In this
instance, by foregrounding their interest in ‘others’, Alicia and UTP were able to work with, negotiate and cater for the needs and interests of a number of parties, including the Adelaide Festival, the three Community Centre services of The Parks and a large number of participants. They were also able to attract and engage participants in the project; deal with some difficult situations, such as the diversion of session purposes, or some participants’ defiance of some of the rules and processes; and address some of the concerns local partner organisations had about some aspects of the project, as discussed in Chapter 4.

As a means to clarify the extent to which CCD practitioners may, no matter how unconsciously, be acting in their own self-interest as professional artists trying to build a career (however poorly paid and precarious the work may be), it is useful at this point to consider in a little more detail the backgrounds of some of the people who, in Chapter 4, I identified as important ‘players’ in the history of DDT/UTP. Again, I must stress that by objectifying the relations and positions of some people who participate(d) in the subfield of CCD and in highlighting how CCD practitioners are motivated, not simply by altruism but also by self-interest, I do not mean to suggest that when they come into a community project they are somehow acting “in bad faith”: solely consciously, skilfully and strategically manoeuvring motivated by a capitalistic interest. I do not mean to suggest either that economic gains and altruism are mutually exclusive. Rather, these descriptions are presented here in an effort to show the complexities, contradictions, mutability and historical arbitrariness of the subfields of CCD and to acknowledge what makes it possible or desirable for some ‘players’ to act at all without “posing it explicitly as a goal, below the level of calculation and even consciousness, beneath the discourse and representation” (Wacquant, 1989, p. 45). At the risk of being seen as overly simplifying and reducing the play of habitus and field, these descriptions show the importance habitus, individual contributions and interests have in ‘shaping’ the subfield.

John Baylis, for instance, UTP’s Artistic Director from 1997 until 2001, left a position as a project officer with the Theatre Board of the Australia Council to join UTP and returned afterwards to become the Australia Council’s Theatre Board Director, thus consolidating his position within the broader field of arts and its
bureaucracy. Significant also for the direction which UTP has taken over the last decade was the fact that, prior to his first period of employment at the Australia Council, Baylis had worked for over two decades in theatre and dance as a performer, dramaturg, manager and director with companies such as One Extra Dance Company, Entr’acte, Gravity Feed, Performance Space and Sydney Front. Currently, he continues to freelance, on an occasional basis, outside of his Australia Council commitments, as a dramaturg for companies such as Sidetrack or Salamanca Theatre Company. His movements into and through the subfield of CCD remind us of the historical alignment between CCD practices and experimental theatre, an alignment based on a common interest in challenging the cultural status

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55 One Extra Dance Company, also know as The One Extra Company and Oneextra, was a dance company established in 1976 to cater for the production and performance of contemporary dance, dance theatre and dance on screen. Though the company ceased to operate at the end of 2006, part of its work was taken over by the Performance Space (Oneextra, 2006).

56 Entr’acte Theatre, formerly known as the Sydney Corporeal-Mime Theatre, was a Sydney-based corporeal-mime and experimental theatre founded in 1979 by Elisabeth Burke and Pierre Thibaudeau. In 1983 it became the resident company at Performance Space. It ceased to exist in 1999 (Australia Dancing, 2006).

57 Gravity Feed is an ensemble of male performers combining performance with highly visual and psychological effects. The company was established in the late 1960s in Sydney and is still in operation to this day (Gravity Feed, 2006).

58 Performance Space was established in 1983 and has been ever since dedicated to the development and performance of experimental theatre especially focused on “challenging the certainties of modernist theatre” (http://www.performancespace.com.au/history.php). The venue is located in Redfern, an inner city suburb of Sydney, which is being gentrified and slowly losing its earlier characteristics of a high proportion of Indigenous, migrant and working class population.

59 Sidetrack is one of Sydney’s long-standing community theatre performance groups. It is also a venue located in the Addison Community Centre, in Sydney’s inner west suburb of Marrickville. The company specialises in the telling of stories that reflect the cultural diversity of the inner west of Sydney (Sidetrack Performance Group, 2007)

60 Salamanca Theatre Company, now known as ‘Is Theatre’, is one of a few companies established in the early 1970s still in operation today. It was established in 1972 in Hobart, Tasmania, as a ‘theatre-in-education’ company, later working with young people to produce and tour theatre around Tasmania. Today it no longer specialises in theatre for young people, but in the production of new contemporary performances (Is Theatre, 2007).
quo, values and norms. His participation in the subfield of CCD is also interesting in that, as Baylis himself admits with hindsight, UTP’s community-based work appealed to him because of the greater opportunities of artistic experimentation it seemed to offer than were available in an ‘avant-garde’ scene (the inner-city Performance Space where Baylis and his collaborators from The Sydney Front had achieved pre-eminent status): “It just got too easy and irresponsible in a way. We could do anything that we wanted. There was a converted following, and it felt silly” (Baylis in Maxwell, 2006, p. 35). Because of his ability, within the subfield of CCD, to work closely with some of the well-established community theatre companies, or theatre companies undertaking some CCD work, he was able to carry out some of his experimental work within the subfield. Therefore, his interest in others might be seen as rather motivated by an interest in testing contemporary performance theories and practices on an actual audience of non-regular theatre-goers or an audience of ‘non-converted’. In spite of this, and though intermittent, his participation in the subfield of CCD was significant in helping UTP strengthen its contemporary performance vocabulary. It was also significant because he was an important mentor for Alicia Talbot, whose membership of the subfield I discuss below.

Paul Brown started working in the subfield in the late 1970s as a writer, but also as a community activist. His participation in the subfield is interesting because he contributed significantly to the early development of the subfield, with the establishment of DDT and his work as a playwright, screenwriter, documentary film-maker and song writer, before semi-permanently exiting the subfield to become a tenured academic at the University of New South Wales in the fields of History and Philosophy of Science and Environmental Studies, as well as a one time Greenpeace Australia campaign manager. He continues to be involved in CCD-type film and theatre-making activities, but mostly as a way of enhancing his work and contribution to the fields of academia and politics (Brown, 2003; Gardiner, 2006).

Fiona Winning’s participation in the subfield of CCD is an example of a long-term relationship with and dominant position in the subfield of CCD. Her contribution to the subfield is interesting because it led to a dominant position within the field of arts. Years of working as a CCD practitioner, including as producer, writer, dramaturg,
performer and curator on and off CCD projects and as Artistic Director of DDT, partly led to her position of Artistic Director of Playworks, a women’s performance writers network, and more significantly, since 1999, to her current position as Director of Performance Space. Evidence of her dominant position within the field of arts can be found in her position on the NSW Ministry for the Arts’ Theatre Program Committee (1993–1998) (including three years as Chair) and her membership of the Asialink Performing Arts and Arts Management Program Committees since 2002. Her contribution to the subfield of CCD has been considerable in that she was responsible for ‘relaunching’ UTP/DDT in western Sydney. Further, her involvement in the subfield of CCD was rewarded and recognised by the Australia Council’s CCDB in 1995 when they awarded her a Fellowship (interestingly, as she was exiting the subfield) (Winning, 2006).

Another interesting example of contribution to the subfield of CCD might be that of Claudia Chidiac who steadily rose in position and involvement in the subfield from participant and ‘other’, or a member of a ‘marginal community’, to newcomer and more recently to that of an established and recognised member of the subfield. Chidiac is currently the Artistic Director and Executive Officer of Powerhouse Youth Theatre.61 Her association with the subfield of CCD started when she was a graduate of Theatre Nepean62 and became a community participant in UTP’s projects (1999–2000). She has been involved in collaborative theatre-making with a range of community groups and members from across western Sydney since then (Chidiac, 2007). Her work in the subfield of CCD was recognised and rewarded, along with that of nine other young Australians, with the opportunity to participate in a two-week social change-making course in Wales, UK, and the U.S.A. in 2002. Her work was further acknowledged when she was awarded a Western Sydney fellowship from the

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61 Powerhouse Youth Theatre is a youth and community-based theatre company located in Fairfield, western Sydney. It was established in 1986 “in response to a strong demand for local and accessible youth arts opportunities” (Powerhouse Youth Theatre, 2006).

62 Theatre Nepean was, till recently, an actor training institution in New South Wales, which offered undergraduate and postgraduate courses within the School of Contemporary Arts at the University of Western Sydney.
NSW Ministry for the Arts in 2004 as well as an Australia Council Young Leaders Award in 2006 “for outstanding leadership and contribution to the advancement of community arts and culture” and the production of “art that addresses social issues” (Australia Council, 2006c).

Lastly, an examination of Alicia Talbot’s contribution to the subfield of CCD is interesting as it offers an example of a trajectory from newcomer to a potentially dominant position, with the presentation of her CCD work within major international arts festivals. 63 What is also interesting about her involvement in the subfield is that though she was already working within the field of arts as writer and performer, her initiation into the subfield of CCD happened from across fields/subfields and was based on a recent temporary alliance between the subfields of CCD and health promotion. At the time of TLN project, Alicia was a relative newcomer to the subfield of CCD. She had just joined UTP as Artistic Director, following her success on The Cement Garage project and performance piece developed at, for and with High Street Youth Health Service (HSYHS) and the culmination of five years of working as artist in residence there. She had also previously collaborated with UTP, which resulted in her being mentored by John Baylis. By the end of TLN project, Alicia had achieved a more senior position within the subfield, presumably because of TLN project’s complexity and size as well as the exposure created by the project’s association with the Adelaide Festival and Peter Sellars. This position was also achieved because of her capacity to negotiate not only discourses and practices from both the field of arts and subfields of health promotion and welfare, but also because of her capacity to manage the variety of interests involved in the making of projects like TLN. Since TLN, Alicia has worked both in the subfield of CCD and the field of arts as performer, director and dramaturg. Her contribution to the subfield of CCD and the field of arts was rewarded in 2001 with a position as member of the Australia Council for the Arts’ New Media Arts Board (Talbot, 2000; UTP, 2006a). 64

63 *The Cement Garage, The Longest Night, Back Home and The Last Highway.*

64 Also dismantled in 2005 alongside the CCDB.
This review of some members’ trajectories within the subfield of CCD highlights the porosity of the boundaries between the subfield of CCD and the rest of the arts field. It also illustrates that the subfield is constituted by a group of heterogeneous members who make different choices according to the given principles that rule their practice. It exposes some of the position-takings by group of members of the subfield of CCD and what is possible within the subfield. These include: those in dominant positions discussed in Section 6.4; newcomers to the subfield who are still learning the rules of the ‘game’ and seeking to find a favourable position for themselves within the subfield; members of the next generation or the cultural heirs to the subfield, whose investment in the subfield is, consciously or not, motivated by the desire to secure their succession to those in dominant positions, adhering to the subfield’s rules and only making minimal waves; members with little to lose in the way of capital, reputation, status, and so forth, by being subversive within their main subfield’s current state of affairs, because challenging the status quo or the internal laws of functioning is perhaps the only way for them to progress within the subfield or redefine the recognised and accepted standards of the subfield; and finally, socially mobile practitioners and bureaucrats, members of other fields/subfields, such as health, welfare or education, seeking a temporary alliance within another field/subfield in order to acquire an edge in the competition for resources within their main field/subfield of practice.

Further, this review of the contribution of some members of the subfield of CCD has highlighted the great diversity of individual interests and the ways in which they interconnect with the shared interest that can broadly be divided into two parts: i) an interest in working for the social and political benefit of the ‘marginal communities’ they engage with; and ii) an interest in participating in the subfield as a career path. This is interesting because it reveals, as Bourdieu argues, that the belief that one is acting in an altruistic and economically disinterested way is characteristic of the attitude of successful members of the field of arts. In the context of the arts, this is part of a successful historical positioning of the arts against material profit and/or a common practice used by dominant members to acquire capital and to disguise the (overt or covert, conscious or unconscious) control they exercise over field members.
and their production and consumption of culture (Bourdieu, 1979b, p. 4, 1994, pp. 107–120).

Lastly, these descriptions of some members’ involvement in the subfield of CCD reveal another type of practice which Bourdieu calls inter-field relationships, or field homologies. This is a familiar course of action that occurs between fields/subfields that appear to share or have complementary interests, beliefs, attitudes, values and ideologies. It is a two-way relationship where members from other fields/subfields also bring with them into the field/subfield some elements of discourses and practices dominant within their original field/subfield. Members of a given field/subfield can gain great advancements in competing for capital within their main field/subfield of interest by forming temporary relationships across other fields/subfields. It should be noted, though, that these field homologies can result in increased conflicts and struggles over status, recognition and positions of influence when interests from other fields are misrecognised as common, or when values and ideologies are contradictory (Swartz, 1997, pp. 117–143).

There is some evidence of such a homology between the subfield of CCD and other fields/subfields, such as the fields of welfare, health, environmental sciences, and education, for instance. Establishing these inter-field relationships is one way in which members, for whom the subfield of CCD is their main field of practice, can find some greater personal and professional autonomy and legitimacy. That is, they are able to gain a certain level of autonomy and legitimacy by demonstrating that their practices have a value and an effect outside of the subfield of CCD. However, this movement in and out of the subfield of CCD can also prove to be problematic because, by taking their work out of its usual context, members can see their aesthetic values delegitimised again and the lack of autonomy of the subfield increases (Moore, 2004, p. 83).

In this section I have examined the strategic positioning of members within the subfield of CCD. This discussion has revealed the co-existence of actions and strategies within the subfield of CCD, at times complementary, while at others oppositional, which members draw on more or less successfully according to their
needs and opportunities in gaining an advantage in the competition over a limited pool of resources. Whether members are dominant, newcomers, temporary members or subversives, they do, when deemed useful, borrow from a range of conservatives, successives, and/or subversives strategies (Swartz, 1997, pp. 124–125) including moving across fields/subfields. Furthermore, this discussion has highlighted the dominant role the Australia Council has within the subfield of CCD through its funding and training schemes; through its policy-making and advisory role; and in having developed and organised CCD practitioners and their practices into an institutionalised subfield. To draw any further conclusions about the motivations and implications of such strategic actions a study is required of practitioners’ social capital and dispositions, which is outside of the scope of this study.

6.6 Conclusion

This examination of some of the reasons for the gap between discourses of efficacy and actual changes has focused on four major factors. Firstly, the gap between discourses of efficacy and actual outcomes can be explained by the fact that change is constrained by people’s habitus. Secondly, there is a disjunction between practitioners and associated professionals’ expectations or ideals of change and the lived reality of ‘community’ and ‘culture’. Thirdly, the struggles within the subfield over definitions and the close relationship between CCD practitioners and CCD and arts bureaucrats limits the autonomy of CCD practitioners and the legitimacy of their practices, and products generated by their practices, which prescribe to a certain extent the value and impact of CCD practices and products outside of the subfield. This dependency and power relationship between CCD practitioners, bureaucrats and people in positions of power highlights the subordinate role the subfield of CCD and its members have within the field of arts. Lastly, members of the subfield of CCD’s desires to further their ‘self-interests’ and ‘interest’ in others, combined with their frequent misrecognition of ‘self-interest’ in other members of the subfield of CCD and fields of arts and power, limits the reach of their practices as they invest time in negotiating the tensions between their own and others’ personal and economic advancement.
This examination has highlighted several other points: that, whatever else one might say about UTP/DDT’s practice, the company has provided some individual artists with opportunities to get ‘ahead’ in the restricted subfield of CCD in particular, and the field of arts in general; that memberships and positions within the subfield of CCD are not as straightforward as they might seem; that the subfield of CCD has a very restricted autonomy; that the ‘game’ being played within the subfield is primarily a ‘game’ between artists and bureaucrats; and there are complex and changing positions and actions within the subfield of CCD rather than permanent and enduring positions and actions.

Lastly, this discussion has revealed that, though the majority of members of the field of CCD are, first and foremost, artists seeking advancement in the broader field of arts, they have a habitus that leads them to want to engage with people from ‘marginal communities’ and leads them to gravitate towards those areas of cultural production where the social value of the arts is at least still being vigorously debated, not pre-defined according to arbitrary notions of taste. However, because of the context within which members of the subfield of CCD operate—as dependent on the field of arts, and ultimately on the field of power—CCD practitioners’ strategic actions, consciously or not, work towards managing ‘marginal communities’ and the social risks they experience in a way that is favourable to those in positions of power. I explore this point in further detail in the last two chapters.
CHAPTER 7 – Managing social risks

7.1 Introduction

In 1993, in her review of CCD practices, Hawkins asked: “Is community arts a cultural program whose moment has passed?” (1993, p. xxv). Fifteen years later, her question is even more pertinent. The recent restructuring of the Australia Council has dramatically affected the funding of CCD practices, resulting in a significant reduction in the number of CCD projects and programs, poor infrastructure and an increased risk that potential entrants to the subfield will be discouraged. This is noteworthy because this goes against earlier moves towards the professionalisation of the subfield (Mills, 2006). Despite this decline, it is clear that some CCD practices will continue to be funded.

Under the Australia Council Act 1975, the Australian Government became legally bound to provide advice and funds for arts practitioners and their practices that deal with issues of ‘access’ and ‘participation’ at a ‘community’ level, such as CCD practitioners promise to provide. Though, as discussed earlier, the concepts of ‘community access’ and ‘participation’ are flexible enough to mean a whole range of things, they have always been part of the Australia Council charter. As Lionel Bowen, the then Special Minister of State and Minister assisting the Prime Minister, stated during the second reading of the bill:

_It will be the first task of the Council to promote excellence in the arts. Next, we want it to provide opportunities for people to practise the arts and for the public to appreciate and enjoy them. We want to promote the general application of the arts in the community and foster the expression of a national identity by means of the arts. We want to uphold the right of everyone to freedom of artistic expression. We want to promote a knowledge and appreciation of Australian arts in other countries. We want to promote incentives for, and recognition of, achievement in the arts. Finally, we want the new Council to encourage the support of the arts by the states, local governing bodies and other persons and organisations_ (Bowen, 1974, p. 1).

Today, however, even though the subfield of CCD helps the Australia Council fulfil some of its main functions, the ongoing support of CCD practitioners and their practices is contested. Despite this contestation the Australia Council Act has not been
amended to remove those obligations and all levels of government in Australia continue to provide funding for CCD practitioners and their practices. What then are some of the reasons for the ongoing provision of funds to the subfield of CCD by the Australian Government?

In what follows, I argue that the main reason for this is the interest some people in positions of power have in supporting CCD practitioners and their practices for their efficacious and aesthetic outcomes as a way of addressing issues pertaining to the management of social risks\(^\text{65}\) at a society-wide level. Though this interest might be seen as a common interest for people in positions of power, it has taken different, though also at times complementary, forms. One way of addressing social risks is to attempt to contain them, including potentially subversive practitioners and community members, through the devolution of their management to the people most exposed to them, members of ‘marginal communities’. Another way of addressing social risks is to attempt to mitigate them through democratic reforms and by supporting positive change for, and in, ‘marginal communities’, the sort of change that helps lessen the impact of those risks or better cope with the repercussions of higher instances of poverty. Though I have already touched on some of these points in the previous chapter, in this chapter I develop the argument further and conclude that though CCD practitioners and their practices are potentially efficacious in bringing about a certain level and kind of change, because of their ritual-like aspect, they are also limited because participation in CCD activities also serves to contain and limit the extent of those potential changes.

### 7.2 Containing social risks

In such a conservative political environment as it was under Prime Minister John Howard’s leadership (and as it is likely to be under Kevin Rudd’s leadership),\(^\text{66}\) one reason for the ongoing funding of CCD practitioners and their practices is the need for

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\(^\text{65}\) These social risks are related to general indices of poverty, such as unemployment, low levels of qualifications/formal education, poor health, substance and domestic abuse, and so on.

\(^\text{66}\) Kevin Rudd was elected Prime Minister of Australia on 24 November 2007.
some members of the field of power to manage social risks by containing them within the spheres where they occur the most: ‘marginal communities’. These social risks include those associated with poverty, but also risks associated with people who carry out activities that are potentially destabilising of the established social order, including CCD practitioners, their practices and participants in their projects and programs.

In what follows, I discuss some of the mechanisms and structures in place and the ways in which they contain CCD practitioners, their practices and participants in time, place, space and form, and turn CCD practitioners into ‘containing agents’. I argue that these mechanisms and structures ultimately help reinforce and validate the tastes and social and cultural norms which members of the field of power value the most because this containment often works towards devaluing and re-inverting any ‘inversions’ of the social order represented in alternative arts practices (Handelman, 1990, pp. 9–15; Lewis, 2006, pp. 18–24; Schechner, 1993, p. 48).

As discussed in Chapter 6, the subfield of CCD is part of the field of arts, directly under the bureaucratic control of the Australia Council, and indirectly (but ultimately) under the control of the field of power. This bureaucratic control has provided advantages to some members of the subfield of CCD (the creation of the subfield, the provision of funds, etc.) but has also created some limitations, such as the containment of CCD activities to one-off, spatially and culturally marginal projects and programs and their use in the delivery of social welfare programs (not necessarily in accordance with practitioners’ primary goals) to ‘marginal communities’ on behalf of the government.

Some of the advantages of the Australia Council’s bureaucratic control have been, by and large, to provide in effect a licence for CCD practitioners to carry out, to some extent, their activities; to be remunerated and sometimes trained; to become advisors and mentors within the subfield; and to allow the emergence of some small, dedicated CCD companies. But this is a double-edged sword. Accepting this support and authority to practice under these institutionalised conditions has resulted in most practitioners entering into an ‘economy of debt’ (Bourdieu, 2000, pp. 337–342) with
some bureaucrats and politicians. The dependence on financial support from
government bodies has placed CCD practitioners in a position where they implicitly
contribute to the delivery and implementation of social programs designed by the
bureaucrats and politicians who provide their funding.

Having said that, and as briefly discussed in Chapter 6, the distinction between CCD
bureaucrats and practitioners, members of the subfield of CCD, and the balance in the
establishment of the ‘economy of debt’ between CCD bureaucrats and practitioners,
has not always been as clear-cut as Bourdieu’s analysis of French society suggests.
Not that Bourdieu has to bear the responsibility for this, but this means that in this
instance relationships within the subfield of CCD are less binary and permanent than
one might think.

Though the relationship between CCD bureaucrats and practitioners is a dialogical,
mutually dependent and changing relationship (where, on the one hand, local
organisations are used to deliver government welfare programs and, on the other, the
institutionalisation of CCD practices creates some form, however small, of
recognition for practitioners and their practices) it is essentially, as discussed in
Chapters 4 and 6, an unequal relationship that often benefits one party over the other;
a relationship that benefits members of the dominant fields over members of the
subfield of CCD (Bourdieu, 2000, pp. 448–461; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 23–
26). In this case, members of the field of arts, and, ultimately, of the field of power,
gain more from the relationship than practitioners (let alone participants) in capital
and the validation of their dominant values and norms.

Another disadvantage, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, is that the funding of CCD
practitioners and their practices has helped turn the organisations that implement such
projects and programs into agents in the delivery of social welfare programs which
had, in the more recent past, been the responsibility of governments. This form of
devolution of responsibility and management of social risks from the federal level of
government onto the state and ultimately onto local governments and NGOs,
individual people and their communities is not unique to Australia. Rather, it is a
global trend of dilution of the social into collective and then personal responsibility,
which capitalist societies have been following since the twentieth century to allow the
disengagement of people in positions of power from local affairs (Aram, 1997, p.
967).

As Bauman argues, this process of disengagement “has replaced engagement as the
paramount technique of power” (2001, p. 4). This has allowed people in positions of
power to shift their focus from the regulation of social life to a focus on economic
development, the corporatisation of government bodies and the globalisation of
capital. Disengagement is the shift of focus of members of the field of power from the
local spaces to transnational and global activities and transactions. This shift leads to
a shift in the management of the local, including the risks in times of peace as well as
in times of war, to ‘ordinary’ people (Bauman, 2001, pp. 2–6) or individual people
within communities exposed to higher instances of social risks.

This shift in the management of social risk and responsibilities helps people in
positions of power, especially senior bureaucrats and politicians, to be seen to be
addressing the social needs of ‘marginal communities’ while at the same time
integrating or neutralising expressions of opposition (Hoffie, 1991). This devolution
also leads to the containment of social risks and creates a sort of internal surveillance
of the margins (Bentham & Foucault cited in Bauman, 2001, p. 4). In this sense, this
disengagement helps people in positions of power, on the one hand, further their grip
and control on the local without needing to be physically present at the ‘margins’. On
the other hand, it gives people in positions of power a greater capacity to concentrate
on the nation’s economic management and their own personal and economic
advancement (Everingham, 2003, pp. 95–103).

These processes of engagement and disengagement are evident within the subfield of
CCD. As discussed in Chapter 2, since the 1970s in Australia, government bodies,
including the Australia Council, have increasingly been incorporating community-
based development work, including CCD practices, into their policies and programs.
But from late 1980s, the Australia Council has been disengaging from the ‘local’, as
evidenced by its support and promotion of the CANs, state-based CCD advisory
bodies, and cultural officer positions at local council level (Hawkins, 1993, pp. 68–
The more recent withdrawal of support of CCD practitioners and their practices at federal and state levels (as evidenced by Queensland Community Arts Network’s funding cuts that have led to the dismantling of the organisation in December 2007 (Sorensen, 2007)) is a further example of disengagement that has resulted in reducing the number of such activities, while also containing potentially subversive activities.

The presence of these processes in the subfield of CCD, and around TLN, then raises the question: Did TLN also serve to keep The Parks Housing Trust tenants occupied while projects for their relocation and the selling off and reduction of housing estates were under way? This is a difficult question to answer. Though Alicia made an attempt to address some of the issues around the Westwood (Parks) Urban Renewal Project, a lack of interest on the part of those local residents involved in TLN meant that this issue was only mentioned in passing in The Longest Night. Thus, while TLN did keep some local residents occupied while members of the Renewal Project started to inform local Housing Trust tenants of their imminent relocation, this is not to suggest that UTP were coercive agents in this redevelopment scheme, distracting or pacifying local residents, nor were they then, or are they now, believers in involving participants in creative activities that promote a ‘technical mind’. But this is not to say that over the years UTP hasn’t had to compromise their practice. As touched on in Chapter 6, on the one hand, UTP can be seen as taking part in a broad conservative agenda of containment while, on the other hand, it can be seen as active in its opposition to dominant social and aesthetic values and norms. UTP can be seen as embodying the ongoing contradiction expressed in the Australia Council’s core aims between ‘participation’ and ‘excellence’, or between aesthetic and technical complexity and egalitarian functions and principles.

Due to CCD practitioners’ dependency on government funding, most practitioners have had to compromise their practice. Though some CCD practitioners enjoy the benefits of being remunerated for their practices, they have had to rely on one-off project funding leading to extreme competition over limited pools of funding. This situation, combined with the fact that a great majority are women and/or from non-English speaking backgrounds, has meant that, though they are often formally trained, most CCD practitioners are also often underpaid. This situation has forced many
practitioners to seek and hold multiple paid positions (Throsby cited in Mills, 2006, pp. 68–69).

This reliance on one-off project funding and low rates of pay has meant that some practitioners need to work under other constraints, such as the need for most small companies dedicated to CCD to also cater in part for ‘mainstream’ arts and cultural needs (Fotheringham, 1992, pp. 19–20) and the need for most practitioners to implement sporadic and short-lived CCD projects and programs, leading some practitioners to feel like their work is “to go into a room full of straw and turn it into a room full of gold, overnight” (Price in Centre for Popular Education, 2001a). Further constraining factors include the need to reduce the depth and extent of engagement and participation in devising processes, often resulting in CCD practitioners predetermining not only project and program goals and themes, but also their outcomes. This then often results in CCD practitioners imposing projects and directions on particular targeted people and ‘communities’, as opposed to having enough time and money to determine these aspects of a project or program in consultation with an existing self-defined ‘community’.

This type of containment, resulting from funding constraints, was evident in UTP’s residency. As discussed in Chapter 5, though TLN was the second project in a trilogy of projects, the relationship between the projects and their communities was at a global rather than at a local level. Though the project’s structure and themes were repeated with communities from similar social conditions, they were repeated with a different community each time, in a different geographical location. Though funding was secured to work on TLN as the sequel to The Cement Garage project, funding was secured to work mostly with other people and ‘communities’, rather than solely

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67 I say ‘mostly’ because, as stated in a footnote in Chapter 3, UTP secured some funding from Parramatta City Council and NSW Ministry for the Arts’ Western Sydney funding scheme to carry out four weeks of rehearsal at HSYHS, the devising site of The Cement Garage, to carry out some consultation sessions with young people attending HSYHS, and to carry out a performance season of TLN only in Granville, western Sydney, following the Adelaide Festival season. Though these sessions took place in the physical location of the ‘community’ of The Cement Garage project and attracted a few participants who took part in the devising processes of the performance, The Cement Garage, there was little evidence of the benefits of repetition as the processes used this
with those people and ‘communities’ which had been previously engaged in The Cement Garage project. This was also the case with the Back Home project, the sequel to TLN. This had the effect of turning these three projects into isolated one-off projects and reducing the potential efficacy obtained from repetition of these practices within a given community. Similar evidence that supports this point was gathered during the study of ‘The Torch’. Though the project was funded over several years to occur throughout regional Victoria, each ‘edition’ of the project was funded through a variety of sources (rarely recurring funds) specifically because it was carried out in different towns and parts of the region each time.

Whatever the ideals to which CCD practitioners broadly aspire, they are often aware of having to make compromises. As one of the experienced practitioners working on TLN project remarked:

... it’s an improvisational process with a pretty predetermined situation, which is actually always really useful, because it’s a constraint, but at the same time I was wondering well, how will the consultation process mesh with the pre-existing story, how would those two things go together, and how does the integrity kind of run through it, ... given that there’s already a direction (Newton-Broad, Interview, 2002).

Though this statement highlights the tension between community and artistic development aspects of CCD practices, it also, more significantly for this discussion, highlights compromises to the ideals of consultation and a bottom-up approach to CCD practices.

Another consequence of this economic dependency is the high levels of competition between CCD practitioners. By maintaining these high levels of competition, members of the field of power have virtually locked most practitioners into a battle

time round were much more isolated in time and depth. It should be noted though that, however significant, the analysis of the effects of the repetition of participation in a sequel CCD project on The Cement Garage ‘community’ isn’t the object of my study.

68 It is also interesting to note that after the Back Home project, Alicia Talbot and UTP explored opportunities to work in a similar manner with a ‘marginal community’ in Toronto, Canada.
against their peers and/or forced some practitioners into strategic alliances that are often temporary. As discussed previously, this has meant that some practitioners seeking funds from sources outside the subfield of CCD and the field of arts enter into relationships with members, including bureaucrats, from other fields/subfields. This has also often meant having to embrace another set of discourses and constraints, or, as some CCD practitioners have understood, having to meet other parties’ needs in order to pursue their aims of making art with a social conscience.

Though these temporary strategic alliances reflect practitioners’ entrepreneurship and flexibility as well as the malleability of the values associated with CCD practices, they have also, however, proved to be a further limitation of CCD practitioners’ autonomy and their practices’ legitimacy. These temporary strategic alliances have also had the potential of distracting CCD practitioners from paying attention to the fact that their internal competition undermines their practices and their subfield’s existence. They have also had the potential of distracting some practitioners from paying attention to the structures within which they operate, such as the institutionalisation of their subfield and the tendency their work has of reasserting mechanisms and structures of reproduction of culture, thus keeping practitioners, their practices and the subfield in subordinate positions in relation to the field of power. Indeed, as Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 23–26) would suggest, in competing against each other for those limited resources, CCD practitioners legitimise structures of power and reproduce social hierarchies and structures of domination that maintain their subordinate positions.

A second type of containment that is evident in CCD projects and programs, linked to the institutionalisation of CCD practices, is also a type of containment that is, ironically, linked to CCD practitioners’ core practice of working with ‘marginal communities’ and their cultures. To some extent, this works against CCD practitioners by containing CCD practitioners and their practices at the spatial and cultural margins of society. In effect, it serves to isolate CCD practitioners and their potentially subversive practices from spheres of influence.
A third type of containment is a containment in form related to the aesthetic choices CCD practices have come to be associated with and which CCD practitioners often make. As discussed in Chapter 2, these aesthetic choices include an emphasis on the production and consumption of ‘marginal’, ‘popular’ and/or alternative cultural forms rather than on the production and consumption of dominant or mainstream cultural forms. These choices also include the use of aesthetic devices of inversion, contradiction and the expression of doubt and conflicts in order to critique elements of dominant culture and the hierarchies, legitimacy and validity of the existing social order. In other words, by inverting (rather than mimic or reproduce) the aesthetic values of the legitimised products generated by the field of arts, CCD aesthetic products can be seen as a critique of the disassociation of the arts from their function, or a rejection of the misrecognition of the economic and political role of the arts as a tool for social distinction, social advancement, and/or of ‘symbolic violence’ (Swartz, 1997, pp. 65–94). However, these aesthetic choices also limit CCD practitioners and their practices’ capacity to be efficacious because potentially subversive elements, such as elements of inversion or expressions of conflict present in the aesthetic product generated and in CCD practices and the subfield, are typically re-inverted or neutralised (Lewis, 2006, pp. 18–24) and rarely extend outside of the ‘accepted’ expressions of doubt and conflict (Handelman, 1990, pp. 109–112). This happens for several reasons.

For one thing, the aesthetic values in CCD products are often ‘re-inverted’ because of the lack of distinction (Bourdieu, 1979a), or the lack of perceived legitimacy or value placed by members of the field of power on CCD aesthetic products and notions of ‘access’ and ‘participation’. As discussed in Chapter 6, this is especially the case when they don’t serve to further accepted notions of ‘nation’ and ‘excellence’. These aesthetic products are accepted only when they represent counter-references to ‘nation’ and ‘excellence’, contained in place and space where, in comparison, notions and products embodying ‘nation’ and ‘excellence’ can shine. This ‘neutralisation’ and ‘re-inversion’ of elements of inversion, contradiction and conflict can be seen as a type of containment in form of CCD practices. It can be seen as the containment of
CCD practices to ‘non-legitimate’ forms of cultural expressions, such as the production and consumption of ‘marginal’, popular and/or alternative art and culture.

Another reason for the re-inversion of these inversions can be linked to the fact these productions, often of a more ‘popular’ and/or ‘representational’ aesthetic (often a naturalistic aesthetic which lacks ‘professional polish’), will tend to reinforce the idea that the less powerful people are in reality less capable or sophisticated than people with a sense of taste and distinction that has been inherited mostly from the UK. This ‘inversion of inversion’ thus helps to control cultural production and consumption at all levels, by creating a division between CCD practitioners and artists. It also creates a boundary within the field of arts, which defines the subfield of CCD, and contains and limits its members and their practices as potentially subversive, potential social risks or threats to the established social order. Further, the more ‘popular’ aesthetic products (the hip-hop performances and the like) often end up mimicking and reproducing themselves, at the risk of falling into tacit habits of practice rather than a relevant and/or genuine engagement with a given ‘marginal community’s’ cultural forms and wider social and moral issues.

In the case of the TLN (project and event), an attempt was made to deal with the potential re-inversion of the inversions of some of the legitimised aesthetic values and social order. For instance, the TLN event offered propositions and counter-propositions regarding the nature of the social order or social realities. It refracted multiple visions of a social order through its use of inversions and contradictions, expressing doubt about the legitimacy and validity of this social order. One such example can be found in the ways in which some spectators saw the performance of The Longest Night as promoting the “naturalisation of destructive behaviour” and “glamouris[ing] the dope” (various spectators, Audience Survey, 2002). Their reading of the performance as glorifying drug-use and violence was the result of what they saw as a lack of ‘message’ about the negative effects of the abusive behaviour portrayed on ‘stage’, as one spectator queried: “Did it give an anti-drug message?” (spectator, Audience Survey, 2002).
Another example of inversion and expressions of conflict over social rules in TLN could be found in the devising and collaborative processes used. There was an inversion in discourses, and to some extent in practice, of status, between practitioners (usually the expert or ‘teacher’ but in this instance the medium for participants’ vision) and participants (usually the amateur or the ‘learner’ but in this instance the expert). This inversion was also related to an inversion of ‘others’. As discussed in Chapter 5, the TLN event inverted the representation of ‘other’ by making them visible to outsiders (the cosmopolitan theatre-goer of the Adelaide Festival) and by turning them into performers and active producers of legitimised expressions of culture, no longer perpetrators of crime. This inversion of ‘others’ was further enhanced by the inversion of the space where they lived: the ‘margins’. The TLN event inverted the representation of the ‘margins’ from wasteland to a cultural hub. By working with ‘marginal communities’ and processes that produce local cultural expressions, the TLN event questioned the pigeonholing and reduction of the ‘other’ of multiple differences into ‘sameness’, a common occurrence that serves to ensure the reproduction of the values and position of members of the field of power (Barthes, 1957).

One way in which UTP attempted to avoid the re-inversion of the inversions offered was by combining professional and amateur performances: using local participants in the first two performances of the event, and professional artists in the third. This had the potential of averting the ‘inversion of inversion’ in the TLN event. It is not clear, though, in the end, whether this device actually did prevent such re-inversion or whether it constituted, in itself, a kind of ‘inversion of inversion’ of the value of artistic production and consumption. Indeed, while the use of professional performers might have signalled the importance placed on conveying and presenting local stories and issues, it might also have signalled the lack of local knowledge and education in the legitimised techniques of theatrical performance. The use of non-local professional performers also raised issues of lack of, or limited control over, representation, which some CCD practices attempt to work against.

Another way of avoiding the potential re-inversion or neutralisation of the aesthetic values promoted by The Longest Night and of the critique of the more ‘dominant’
forms of cultural expression the event carried with it was to bypass the national spheres of influence. By taking a locally devised performance like the TLN event and performing it in the global context of an arts festival, with legitimate value in terms of production and consumption of arts at an international level, it might have been hoped that the TLN event would be judged according to international artistic standards perceived as unbound by social and historical contexts. If successful in acquiring legitimacy at an international level, the TLN event might then also attract legitimacy at a national level. Indeed, however arbitrary these international artistic standards might be, they are often seen by members of the broader field of arts as natural (only concerned with ‘pure’ aesthetic values) and not dependent on hierarchies and power struggles that exist within a field or society at large (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 208).

However, taking specific elements of cultural expressions out of the local where they were produced, or having a locally produced aesthetic product consumed by non-local spectators, was also a way in which some elements of cultural and social inversion, conflict and contradictions present in the TLN (project and event) were ‘re-inverted’ and/or ‘neutralised’. Though these inversions and expressions of conflict might have led some participants to critique social hierarchies, violence, gender roles and their location in spatial and cultural margins of society, as well as help them make sense of their world by fostering the production of new knowledge about their place in that world, these inversions and expressions of conflict were ‘re-inverted’ and ‘neutralised’ because of the TLN event’s mediation through and containment in performance as well as its integration in mainstream forms of consumption of cultural expression, such as the Adelaide Festival. Further, the renegotiation of local boundaries and the valorisation of aspects of local culture didn’t change the social risks, but enabled the re-coding of participants as ‘affiliates’ (active and functional citizens, entrepreneurial) rather than ‘abjected’ people (of marginal status, victims and perpetrators of violence considered a threat to legitimised social order) (Rose, 1996, pp. 345–347). This new identity, though more positive and valued by dominant social and cultural norms was, nevertheless, another kind of consensual subordinate identity; a generic identity that most people already have as well as an identity which contains people in yet another set of legitimised and confining roles, that ultimately reinforce
the dominant social, economic and political norms, thereby serving to neutralise the alternative visions offered.

A fourth type of containment apparent around TLN was a form of political containment implied by the forced resignation of Peter Sellars by members of the Board of Directors of the Adelaide Festival. This forced resignation signalled the lack of legitimacy and value Sellars’s directorial and artistic choices had in the eyes of members of the field of power (such as Telstra)69 with a vested interest in maintaining the Adelaide Festival as a cultural marker of ‘excellence’ and ‘nation’, and a major festival on the international arts scene (competing for recognition with the other major Australian international arts festivals, such as Sydney and Perth). This might have resulted, by association, in reducing the legitimacy of UTP’s work and the aesthetic value of the TLN event as well as further containing the impact of the project. This didn’t, however, occur, as evidenced by the subsequent inclusion of UTP’s community collaborative works in other international arts festivals such as the 2007 and 2008 Sydney Festivals.

In any case, the forced resignation of Sellars can be seen as the containment of ‘a bad’ decision by Adelaide Festival Board members: the appointment of Sellars as Director of the festival based on his reputation as Artistic Director on major international opera projects, despite, or because of their lack of awareness of, his reputation for being a ‘brash’ theatre and opera director with an iconoclastic approach to work (Moritz, 1986, pp. 513–516). In addition, Sellars’s resignation can also be seen as the containment of what board members of the Adelaide Festival thought might turn out to be a culturally and economically unsuccessful festival.

69 Telstra was initially the Adelaide Festival’s major sponsor. They withdrew their financial support following Sellars’s decision to use the image of Adolf Hitler in a television advertisement for the festival. This, combined with the Adelaide Festival Board members’ outrage against Sellars for offending and causing the loss of their main sponsor, led to Sellars’s resignation. Telstra did resume part of their sponsorship once the advertisement was removed and Sellars had resigned.
What is significant about the containment of potentially subversive CCD practitioners and their practices in time, spaces, places and form is its effect on participants of CCD projects and programs and their communities. In addition to the limitations linked to people’s habitus discussed in the previous chapter, this containment further limits participants’ capacity to establish long lasting and far reaching change because the already limited changes that occur for them (as opposed to the performers and staff of local partner organisations) occur within a sphere of bound territory of everyday life, out of reach of the global or ‘unbound territory’ of members of the field of power and social, economic and political influence (Bauman, 2001, pp. 6–7, 11). As facilitators of events and activities that are authorised and contained, CCD practitioners and participants in their projects and programs lack the influence to convert elements of subversion and potential efficacy they produce into the realisation of permanent alternative structural changes that might replace the current dominant Australian worldview, because the practices they engage with are contained in time, place, space and form. In this sense, participation in CCD practices can be seen as contributing to the ongoing marginalisation of those participants and their communities.

Though participation in TLN helped some participants gain some limited forms of cultural and social capital, and very marginally some forms of symbolic and economic capital, it didn’t help them develop a ‘critical consciousness’ (Freire, 1972) and it didn’t help them mobilise politically (around their forced relocation out of The Parks, for instance). The inversions offered didn’t extend outside of the existing framework of accepted and authorised expression of conflict, because ultimately they weren’t a challenge to social or moral order as they remained squarely located in the ritual-like spaces and time of performance (Handelman, 1990, pp. 103–109).

To conclude this section, the subfield’s and CCD practitioners’ capacity to be efficacious is limited because, though their practices might generate potentially subversive aesthetic products, the mechanisms and structures of containment in place within the broader field of arts in particular and society in general work towards isolating these practices, mostly of cultural development, from other areas and forms of development. Indeed, as Cruse (1967) argues, in the context of the American civil rights movement, for social and political change to happen, there is a need for a ‘triple
front approach’, which combines political mobilisation and organising with cultural development and economic development. Therefore CCD practitioners’ one front, isolated and contained approach is not enough to induce long lasting and far reaching change in participants in CCD projects and programs, let alone trigger a spiralling effect of change from the individual to the collective.

These mechanisms and structures of containment also work towards setting most CCD practices up to be a “permissible rupture of hegemony, a contained popular blow-off as disturbing and relatively ineffectual as a revolutionary work of art” (Eagleton cited in Stallybrass & White, 1997, p. 296). Ultimately, then, these mechanisms and structures within which CCD practitioners tend to lead them and their practices to work towards the restatement of the legitimised social order (Handelman, 1990, p. 107–112).

This last point is interesting because it suggests a reading of CCD practices as carnivalesque, “a cultural practice characterised by excess, immersion and the elimination of distance between subject and object” (Kershaw, 1999, p. 52), or as a ‘carnival of the weak’, a form of resistance-like protest (Kershaw, 2003, p. 595). Just as carnivals celebrate and challenge aspects of community and culture, and mock and critique social constructs (Bakhtin, 1968), the subfield of CCD, as a series of special events in space, time and place, serves to make social and political change seem possible. But, as carnivals, whatever ideas and/or elements of change are triggered by participating in CCD projects and programs, they end up being contained and starved of resources. Although, through the provision of small and competitive funding, the creation of the subfield of CCD made it possible for potentially subversive voices to be heard and activities implemented, it has also limited the extent to which these voices can be heard and activities can be seen outside of the ‘marginal communities’ or the subfield of CCD where they mostly take place.

Having said this, this containment of voices and activities within those communities is not all bad. Though it means an increased burden on those communities, especially in the management of their affairs and risks, which is often a direct consequence of mechanisms and structures of reproduction of dominance that benefit those in
positions of power, it also means an increased level of control, however limited, over their social sphere. This means, to some extent, a complementary division of spheres of influence where people in positions of power control some aspects of the global and local spheres while communities control others. This division of spheres of influence provides a chance for ‘marginal communities’ to create a space, outside of the realm of influence of members of the field of power and structures and mechanisms of reproduction of dominant culture and power (Lull, 2000, pp. 275–271) where the production and consumption of ‘marginal’ culture, when contained within those spheres, is relatively more autonomous and legitimate than in spheres closer to the field of power.

7.3 Mitigating social risks

In this section I argue that another reason (at times complementary) for the support of CCD practitioners and their practices is based on a need some people in positions of power have to implement democratic reforms by increasing ‘access’ and ‘participation’ in the arts. For some of these people this need is motivated by an interest in and an understanding of the potential participation in these practices has for bringing about positive types of changes. These changes include increased levels of interest in participating in social life and increased levels of hope for a better future, that can help people from ‘marginal communities’, or those most exposed to instances of poverty, not so much prevent social risks, but lessen the impact or help them cope better with their circumstances.

As discussed in Chapter 2, over the years, the subfield of CCD has drawn support from various members of the field of power because of the usefulness practitioners and practices like CCD have in enabling these people to do or be seen to be doing something towards a fairer society. In this context, CCD practices have been and are still seen as a tool for democratic reforms. As one of the characteristics of CCD practices is practitioners’ explicit social change agenda, the funding of their practices helps redress, or at least allows some government agencies to be seen to be helping to redress, issues of social inequity.
The support of CCD practitioners and their practice as part of a wave of democratic reforms highlights the belief that participation in CCD projects and programs fulfils a function that, on some levels, transcends the experiences of those directly involved. It signals to the wider society that there exist ideas about performance and its worth beyond ideas of ‘excellence’ and, by degrees, validates the inclusion of less conventional ‘players’. It also signals to the wider society that aesthetic democracy is a desirable thing, if not aesthetically then certainly politically and ethically, and that the input of ‘marginal’ cultural producers is of value to wider society. This was very apparent during the 2002 Adelaide Festival, with Sellars’s vision for a participatory and community-based festival.

This support of CCD practitioners also reveals a belief in the capacity to foster positive changes for ‘marginal communities’ through participation in such practices. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 5, participation in CCD projects and programs has a variety of effects on those who take part. At best, participation in CCD projects and programs provides a ‘moment of realisation’. In other words, participation in CCD projects and programs enables some participants to order and make sense of their everyday lives and to reflect on their circumstances from a social and political point of view and at a particular point in time in order to have new perspectives or choices for their future and/or to (re)gain hope for their future. Also, at best, participation in CCD projects and programs offers some participants the possibility of improving their everyday life by acquiring some forms of capital, such as social or marketable skills. At worst, though, participants’ lives are negatively affected as depression and a sense of hopelessness ensue as a result of disappointed hopes for change generated by the project.

However sustainable the range of changes are for participants in CCD projects and programs in general and for participants in TLN in particular, insofar as they involve ritual-like activities, there is at least a powerful sense of the possibility of change which occurs for participants on a deep phenomenological level. In a project like TLN, participation in the project contributed to small-scale changes such as engendering hope and giving meaning to participants’ social order that resulted in
improving the quality of life of those who took part, even if only for a short while. As this Parks staff member stated:

... at The Parks it didn’t become sustainable with that project, with those kids, but it continues to move people. A lot of people have moved on from The Longest Night. For young people it gave them trust to be involved with an organisation (Health Service staff member B, 2004).

Though there is a variety of types of rituals, ranging from formal (such as solemnities or planned, centralised and hierarchical events with a subject and an audience) to informal (such as spontaneous, fragmented, decentralised, disordered and non-hierarchical festivities and events that are the property of all), it can be said that they are cultural, historical and logical practices, or actions, such as enactments and/or performances (Handelman, 1990, pp. 10–16), that transform aspects of the everyday life into a special event (DaMatta, 1991, pp. 28–30) defined by a particular intentionality (a logic, design and structure): presenting particular aspects of the lived-in world in order to communicate a coherent message and foster reflection in participants that will help them make sense of the often incoherent flow of everyday life (Handelman, 1990, pp. 10–16). In that sense, through a combination of action and reflection on everyday life situations and their alternatives, CCD practices, as rituals, can be seen as devices of praxis that have the potential to create new meaning and order (Handelman, 1990, p. 16).

As Handelman reminds us, though, there are only very few ritual-like activities that can be labelled ‘events-that-model’, or events capable of bringing about sustainable collective positive social and political changes (Handelman, 1990, pp. 23–40), because participating in such events only rarely leads to a challenge of the established social or moral order. Most ritual-like activities (including CCD practices) can be labelled ‘events-that-present’ or events-that-re-present’. As discussed in Chapter 3, ‘events-that-present’ are events that hold up “a mirror to social order, selectively reflecting versions of the latter that largely are known, if in a more dispersed and fragmented fashion” (Handelman, 1990, p. 48). ‘Events-that-re-present’ are events that offer propositions and counter propositions of the nature of social order or social realities (Handelman, 1990, pp. 49–57); therefore, they are events that, ultimately,
provide a restatement of dominant value, because of the containment of any expression of conflict and doubt through the event. This then means that, though participation in CCD activities can be oppositional and lead to change, participation in these projects and programs is mostly integrative of the established social order (Handelman, 1990, pp. 9–15; Schechner, 1993, p. 48). Therefore participation in CCD practices ultimately serves the interests of the few in maintaining their control over ‘official culture’ (Stallybrass & White, 1997, p. 296).

In this chapter the examination of the reasons for the ongoing funding of CCD practitioners and their practices has highlighted the creation of this subfield for progressive political and administrative reasons, such as the belief in mitigating the impact of instances of higher exposure to social risk for ‘marginal communities’ as well as conservative political and administrative reasons, including the need to be seen to be implementing social and democratic reforms. Finally, though this examination has highlighted the ways in which (in a perverse way) participation in CCD projects and programs tends to serve the interests of people in positions of power by providing a restatement of their valued norms and tastes, it has also revealed CCD practitioners’ and their practices’ potential as a means of increasing, at least to some extent, participants’ levels of hope and interest in investing in social life.
CHAPTER 8 – Concluding remarks

Since the conference on Arts in Society in August 2006, the dismantling of the CCDB (and the funding program they used to manage) has been completed.\textsuperscript{70} CCD practitioners’ assumptions and expectations about the ways in which they can carry out their practices have been destabilised. Because of these changes, would the comments I made then be more welcomed now? Will the analysis I carry out in this thesis be more readily heard?

My aim with this thesis (as it was with my comments at the conference) has been to apply a sort of Bourdieuan reflexive sociology to my analysis of the subfield of CCD, in order to develop a better understanding of the social and political role CCD practitioners and their practices play in Australia and in order to develop a more critical approach to the ‘profession’. My aim has been to carry out an historical, contextualised and situated analysis of the state of struggles in the subfield of CCD at the eve of major changes, rather than to carry out a universal study of the arts and/or CCD. Further to this, while highlighting the constraints within which CCD practitioners operate, my aim hasn’t been to suggest that CCD practitioners are to blame for the state of affairs of the subfield or the limited change-outcomes for participants in their projects and programs. It is, therefore, my hope that this study should be seen as a work in progress, or one of the stages in the development of a critical debate. Research is an ongoing intellectual process, the result of which is a set of methodologies and ideas intended to answer the questions of one or a small group of people. These ideas are periodically exposed to a public of peers or wider audience. These ideas are not final, but gain from the feedback exposure offers. It is in this spirit that with the publication of this thesis I also hope to generate debate within the subfield of CCD and within related academic fields. Because, after all is said and done, I remain an advocate of the possibilities elements of these practices offer participants, even if, as my analysis has highlighted, participation in CCD projects and programs doesn’t foster long-lasting or sustainable positive changes for ‘marginal

\textsuperscript{70} The CCDB was dismantled in July 2005. Its funding program was maintained and managed by a temporary committee and later by the Community Partnerships Section until July 2007 (Australia Council, 2005b, p. 5).
communities’ and tends to lead to the restatement of legitimised social norms and values.

In this concluding chapter, first, I draw out some of the major implications of my analysis of the subfield of CCD in relation to the ways in which participation in CCD practices can limit or enable changes for those who take part in such projects and programs. Then, I examine what might happen next for this subfield and suggest some directions in which to expand the critical debate that needs to happen within the subfield if CCD practitioners are to learn from historical events, remain a ‘profession’ and gain greater autonomy and legitimacy.

8.1 Legitimising the social order

I embarked on this study on the premise that some members within the subfield of CCD uphold discourses suggesting that CCD practices attempt to redress the balance of inequity. Evidence gathered in the study of TLN project have, however, showed that the discourses and practices that take place in the subfield of CCD have not fulfilled their promise of social and political efficacy. In order to understand some of the reasons for this I undertook an analysis of the structures, trajectories, dispositions and relationships that define the Australian subfield of CCD. This analysis has revealed that CCD practitioners’ social and political role is limited. Though CCD practitioners and their practices are funded by government agencies to address issues of social inequity, their level of funding has increasingly been reduced and whatever is provided is mostly afforded because senior government bureaucrats and politicians have been able to use CCD practitioners and their practices as a tool for containing instances of social risks at the ‘margins’. Further, though CCD practitioners have stated goals of social and political efficacy, their capacity to realise these goals are often disappointed for several reasons. Efficacious outcomes are often unfulfilled because the habitus of CCD practitioners and participants tends to limit the kind and level of changes and the ways in which they seek advancement in particular social fields. These limitations exist because (sub)fields are not isolated social spaces. The meaning of a (sub)field’s discourses and practices are hierarchically related to other fields. Also, hopes of change are often unfulfilled because the mechanisms and
structures in place within a (sub)field contain practitioners, their practices and, in the case of the subfield of CCD, the participants who take part in their projects and programs. Therefore, without changes occurring outside of the (sub)field to help significant changes within, the choices that people make are constrained by their habitus and the (sub)field’s structures within which they operate.

It can therefore be said that CCD practitioners and their practices have benefited, to some extent, from the subfield’s institutionalisation, but it is also clear that their relationship with senior bureaucrats and politicians has been more to the latter party’s advantage more than to theirs. As Bourdieu (1984, pp. 107–120; Swartz, 1997, pp. 117–142) argues, fields are historically formed and continually evolving to provide their members with further means to strive for social distinction in the form of the acquisition of symbolic and material gains. These symbolic and material gains, while arbitrary, are naturalised and rendered meaningful, recognised and legitimised through socialisation processes. Members’ struggles over these gains further serves to reproduce, reinforce and legitimise the values of those symbolic and material goods, services and norms recognised and prized by people in positions of power. Thus, within the subfield of CCD, despite discourses and practices of consultation and collaboration, the global locus of control is out of the hands of most practitioners in the subfield (and the participants in their projects and programs), and is ultimately in the hands of members of the field of power.

Having said that, the reproduction of culture and structures is not systematic and domination is not fixed or irreversible. Indeed, domination is the result of successful historical and strategic processes of naturalisation of one vision, amongst many other rival visions. This means that the positions of domination are complex and fragile positions that need constant attention and maintenance and can, therefore, be overturned. Further, this is not to say that the reproduction of social norms is a negative thing. For instance, in the case of TLN, it meant advocating for changes for those participants whose lives were centred around habits of self-harm and self-medication to seek greater participation in the broader social life and spheres beyond friends and family. This also meant encouraging an understanding of and active
participation in cultural production and the arts. Therefore, though in their current form the subfield, CCD practitioners and their practices are not a threat to the structures of domination and people in positions of power, they are still an aid to some individuals to help them improve some aspects of their everyday life.

8.2 Increasing ‘social hope’

If efficacy is defined as the newly gained means to exercise power that reduces the dependency on or unequal power relation between ‘marginal communities’ and the field of power, then participation in CCD projects and programs can be seen as lacking efficacy. In that context, then, I too conclude, as Matarasso argues, “[e]mpowerment may be over-claimed in the community arts world” (1997, pp. 45–46) and, as Merli (2002, p. 114) concludes in her critique of Matarasso’s work, CCD practices don’t change social conditions, they only help people accept them.

However, Matarasso also goes on to write that “practitioners should reconsider either the place they give to empowerment, or the ways in which they are trying to achieve it” (1997, pp. 45–46). I would tend to agree with him. CCD practitioners need to reassess their position and practices because, though their practices contribute to the ongoing marginalisation of participants and their ‘communities’, they also offer some opportunities for change, such as increased levels of hope and interest in participating in social life, and the authority, however temporary, to represent oneself.

Though there is limited evidence that participation in CCD projects and programs achieves intended changes of social and political efficacy, CCD practitioners and their practices have an important social and political role to play in Australia. Though the elements of culture produced and consumed within the subfield of CCD ultimately legitimise notions and values of ‘nation’ and ‘excellence’ through a focus on ‘access’ and ‘participation’, the creation and maintenance of the subfield of CCD has provided a space within the rigours of the market for ‘access’ and ‘participation’ in the arts. Furthermore, there is some evidence that participation in CCD projects and programs can increase levels of hope and interest in participating in social life. This is not negligible because there is value in practices that create a space where the production of a performance embodies, however temporarily, the potential of or ideals for a
better life, that creates a space where participants can experience a ‘moment of realisation’ that change is possible.

8.3 Further studies

If ‘positive’ changes for participants are not impossible or doomed, then ‘positive’ changes for the subfield are also possible. Now more than ever, with the dismantling of the Australia Council’s CCDB, there is a need to critically debate CCD practitioners’ position within the broader field of arts and their relationships to other members. There is also a need to debate some of the practical and theoretical ideas about the limitations and possibilities associated with participation in CCD projects and programs. This is not an impossible task. Mills’s (2006) recent survey of the subfield found that CCD practitioners were eager to increase the level of discussion within the subfield. This is promising. After all, if this kind of work is about facilitating a process of change for participants based on the development of a critical mind, this same process should be applied to critique people in positions of power’s, including funding bodies, and practitioners’ actions and interests in participating in the subfield of CCD and/or the broader field of arts as well as questioning their assumptions about the key concepts they mobilise, and their position and relationships with other members of the subfield of CCD and/or field of arts.

By engaging in critical debate about their ‘profession’, CCD practitioners might realise that their energies are being misplaced in seeking to define and rationalise their practices, outcomes and impacts in terms valued by members of the field of power, for two reasons. Firstly, because, as institutionalised practices, these decisions about definitions are made on their behalf by people in positions of power within the field of arts and the field of power. Secondly, in doing so, they are increasing their dependency on the field of power.

If CCD practitioners are to increase the value of their practices and the aesthetic products generated, as well as increase their autonomy from the dominant tastes and forms of distinction valued by members of the fields of arts and/or power, they need to embrace and value their specific aesthetic products. Of course, this comes at a risk of losing out on some funding opportunities, but since this reduction in funding has
already started, CCD practitioners have in fact little to lose. This is then potentially an opportune time for practitioners to establish a more independent field of practice. Though the Australia Council’s new alignment of CCD practices with audience development, youth, education and regional development (Mills, 2006) and the devolution of the management of funding of CCD practitioners and their practices to the Community Partnership Committee, within a Community Partnerships and Market Development Section, mark a step back in time and announce difficult times ahead, it could also be an opportunity for the renewed investment of key practitioners in the subfield.

Already the announcement of the restructuring of the Australia Council and its decision to axe its CCDB in December 2004 has given rise to the creation of the National Arts and Culture Association (NACA) by a group of well-established CCD practitioners, to lobby Australia Council bureaucrats on behalf of all practitioners of the subfield. It has also given rise to a certain level of debate between practitioners and bureaucrats and amongst practitioners themselves. Within that debate questions should be asked about what practitioners have to gain from the control of the subfield by the Australia Council; questions about how much of the material and non-material conditions of members of ‘marginal communities’ can be improved by participating in government-funded CCD projects and programs endorsed by national cultural policies.

With these statements and questions, I am not seeking to add ammunition to senior bureaucrats’ and politicians’ decisions to have dissolved the CCDB, or to underestimate the situation. The situation is serious, as the recent funding cuts to the Queensland Community Arts Network indicate (Sorensen, 2007). I am trying to be positive and hopeful about the future of the subfield and the profession; a future where critical debate leads to and is fuelled by further studies about, on the one hand, the complex relationship between CCD processes, aesthetic products generated and changes in the wider context of social interactions, and on the other, about the delicate position of CCD practitioners within the field of arts.
Though this study of TLN was useful in understanding the complex relationships between change, everyday life and an arts-based set of practices, it also only constitutes a small contribution to the pool of knowledge in this area. This study needs to be followed by a greater number of examinations of the mid- to long-term impact on participants of CCD projects and programs, the nature and significance of the aesthetic product generated by these projects and programs as well as studies that might suggest ways of reducing the gap between discourses of efficacy and actual changes through a close examination of CCD practitioners’ social capital and dispositions and the relationship between change, participants’ position within their own field of practice and their level and extent of activity within the subfield of CCD and the field of power.

This is not to say that there isn’t already some interest in this kind of research (see, for instance, Alan Filewod, David Watt, Gay Hawkins, Graham Pitts and Ian Maxwell’s work). The desire to undertake research about the theory and practices of CCD has grown over the years. But researching CCD practices, their products and impact presents challenges (exciting challenges) because it lies at the nexus between critiquing art and researching social change. If one accepts that a participatory and creative process of making and presenting art is central to CCD practices, then any research of it should seek to understand the relationship between processes, products and social change.
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Appendices
Appendix 1: Arts of Engagement’s Talking Circle list of recommendations and actions

This list was generated by conference delegates attending the Arts of Engagement’s Talking Circle at the 1st International Conference on the Arts in Society.

“Point A: Inclusivity

• This should be a prime motivation aided by rigorous outreach and education, and should start at school level. Beware the “chalk, and talk” pressure to achieve.

• The inter-disciplinary nature of creativity should be stressed – eg., the “Creative Campus” and link the arts to technology.

• Practitioners should de-bunk the myths of art practice. All can be involved (and on many levels). This realizations in linked to awareness or a lack thereof.

• But not all moves to inclusivity are positive and a greater measure of negotiation is required. Along with commonality comes the pressure to conform.

• The question was raised, ‘can one automatically be ‘included?’ There is also a question of individual rights.

• In considering how to reach groups the ‘hub’ or ‘key’ person/persons in a community should be contacted first.
• Measuring inclusivity or success in the arts is not achieved by stats alone and re-configuring audiences does not imply inclusivity.

Point B: A Tool for Healing

• The arts can contribute to wellness and to the well-being of people. This occurs through involvement in a creative process on an active level but can also be a passive appreciation of space and design.

• Engagement with the arts gives access to creative energy and offers a return to whole-ness. Crafts, hobbies are all part of coping with and actively constructing one’s environment.

• There is no single “big” moment of creativity, rather the realization that one is evolving something from nothing in our own abstract world.

• But this ability of art as a positive influence can as readily become a negative – one should always be mindful of that.

• The question, “Where do I start?” can be seen as the first spark in the creative process.

Point C: An Agent for Change

• The arts are able to comment in abstract, ironic and pertinent ways and add to the free-flow of thought.

• This powerful voice is sometimes feared, as artists are the initiators of change.
• Again, the warning that one need not always go with change and indeed the
ability and strength of the arts can be mis-used – e.g., role-play improvisation
around the World Trade Centre attack. Also the abuse of the arts in
advertising…

• But the ability of the arts to initiate transformation and be an important agent
for change – good or bad – must be recognized” (Talking Circle, 2006)
Appendix 2: Speech by Jennifer Bott

CEO, Australia Council at the IQPC Corporate Governance Conference, Swissotel, Sydney, Wednesday 22 September 2004. Reproduced with the Australia Council’s permission.

Raising the Credibility and Profile of your Corporate Governance Framework through Ethics, Leadership and Social Responsibility

Thirty years ago, the Chairman of the newly restructured Australian Council for the Arts, the redoubttable Dr ‘Nugget’ Coombs, addressed the Council’s first meeting in Sydney, on 16 February 1973. That interim Council replaced an earlier body, created in 1968 as a division of the Prime Minister’s Department. The new Council took on board further arts-related government functions, including the Commonwealth Literary Fund, which had supported writers since 1908, and the Commonwealth Arts Advisory Board, set up in 1912 to develop a national art collection and offer advice on the visual arts.

Outlining his grand strategy, ‘Nugget’ Coombs called on the Council to ‘seek to insure that, while the best is encouraged and those who produce it are given the greatest opportunity to achieve the highest quality of which they are capable, influences are (also) encouraged which run counter to the Establishment; that the new and experimental get effective opportunities.’

To many, these were lofty and even dangerous ideals, but ‘Nugget’ Coombs rarely stated objectives he couldn’t turn into a reality. His faith in Australia, and its artists, was boundless. As it happened, his formula of quality, diversity and innovation set the pattern for the Council’s next thirty years. It was also an invitation, if not quite to embrace controversy, then certainly not to shy away from new ways of thinking.

Diversity may at first seem diametrically opposed to the strictures of compliance and good governance, but I would argue that diversity of opinion and background – and even of gender – make for better governance in a society that is rapidly changing, and where greater accountability, transparency and social responsibility are all demanded.
Diversity is everywhere in the arts, where there is an infinite number of ways of getting from A to B, or approaching a blank canvas. Creativity demands that artists don’t do things strictly by the book; while of course governments usually insist that we do. Hence the old joke about bureaucrats. How do you drive a bureaucrat completely insane? You tie him to a chair, stand in front of him and fold up a road map the wrong way.

So today I want to survey this complex issue – between the desire of publicly funded artists to be allowed to create with artistic freedom, and the need for publicly funded managers to run organisations such as the Australia Council efficiently, with high degrees of accountability and transparency, and according to current rules of good governance – which are growing more sophisticated every year. All this is a great challenge, and one that we at the Council negotiate virtually every day.

To start with, what exactly is the Australia Council?

The interim Council that ‘Nugget’ Coombs launched in 1973 became a Federal statutory authority under the Australia Council Act 1975, which granted the new Australia Council considerably expanded functions and greater independence from government in policy-making and funding roles than any of its predecessors. In a nutshell, its role was – still is – to enrich our nation by supporting the practice and enjoyment of the arts.

The Council’s governing body – led by a Chair appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Minister for the Arts – has expertise not only in arts but also in law, corporate governance, administration, finance and business management. I should note that our current Chair, David Gonski, has a wealth of experience in all those areas. He was an Australia Council Chair waiting to happen! Some of you may be aware not only of David’s passion for the arts – he’s chair too of the New South Wales Art Gallery and NIDA – but also of his interest and leadership in corporate governance. David is the chair of Coca-Cola Amatil and of the Investec Group in Australia; he is also a director of Westfield Holdings, John Fairfax Holdings, and other major Australian companies. One of David’s first initiatives at the Council was
to establish a Nominations and Governance Committee to inform, and liaise more effectively with, the office of the Minister for Arts regarding new members’ appointments to the Council, to its Boards and various committees.

The Council provides nearly 1800 grants each year to artists and arts organisations. Australia’s major performing arts companies are supported through funding partnerships with the Australia Council and state governments. The Council also supports strategies to develop new audiences and markets for the arts, both in Australia and internationally. And it conducts arts research and policy development, and advises governments and industry on issues affecting artists, such as taxation and insurance. The nine Boards of the Australia Council are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts
- Community Cultural Development
- Dance
- Literature
- Major Performing Arts
- Music
- New Media Arts
- Theatre
- Visual Arts and Craft.

The Boards administer the Council’s arts funding role and are the Council’s main source of advice on the development of arts policy and grant programs.

In 2004-05, the Australia Council has a budget of $147.5 million and employs 144 full-time equivalent staff. As statutory authorities go, clearly we’re not huge, we’re about half the size of SBS for example, and a fifth as big as the ABC, but we do punch well above our weight?
In 2002-03, there were 12 million readers, audience members and attendances of Australia Council-supported arts programs – everything from novels to contemporary dance, to Indigenous arts groups, to theatre, to community arts – and people world-wide who saw the Australian artists we funded to tour overseas. We received more than 5,000 applications for funding; from those we made nearly 1,900 grants. They went to young, emerging, developing and established artists in all the artforms, and to arts and non-arts organisations to help support and present artists’ work. Forty thousand art works were exhibited, performed or written with Australia Council support, including over 7,800 new Australian works. Our Major Performing Arts Board was the principal funder of 29 key companies, from Opera Australia to the Australian Ballet to the Bangarra Dance Theatre to Australia’s symphony orchestras. We continued to encourage Indigenous arts. We supported 330 Australian artistic works for international presentation, and we conducted vital research and helped shape new policies across many fields. In year 2002-03, all this cost each Australian the grand sum of $6.98.

The Council’s governing body meets five times a year, and because we’re based in Sydney, we make sure that four of those meetings happen in other capitals and in regional centres. The Council can consist of up to fifteen people – including the Chair and Deputy-Chair; the Chairs of the nine Boards listed earlier; three community interest representatives; myself as CEO; and a staff representative as an observer. It’s ultimately up to this governing body to ensure that the Council is efficiently managed in line with its charter, and that its activities are accountable, transparent and in accordance with the rules of good governance.

Most of the Council’s Boards have seven members including a Chair, and these members are appointed by the Minister, usually for three-year terms. As with the Council, the Act specifies that Board members must practice or have practiced the arts, or be associated with the arts – for example as arts teachers, arts critics, arts administrators, board members.

That’s our ‘governance landscape’, so to speak.
But governance is not only about systems and procedures. It’s also about relationships, and it’s ultimately about people, the players who inhabit our zone of activity. Our stakeholders at the Australia Council are many, and growing. There are the obvious ones: our clients, that is, the artists and arts organisations we fund; the taxpayers who fund us to fund them; the government, whose broad cultural policies guide the Council’s work at the arts ‘coalface’; and the arts sector, our cultural ‘partners’ if you like.

But add to this an ever-expanding list of more specific stakeholders, largely – and willingly – brought upon ourselves. For instance, we have championed arts in education, so Australia’s teachers are stakeholders in the arts; we champion the arts as a major social and economic driver in Indigenous communities; arts tourism nationally and internationally; philanthropic donors and commercial partners for arts projects; we’re driving the concept of creative towns and cities, arguing that inserting arts into communities can revitalize economies and enhance sustainability, so now economists and local councillors are stakeholders. As you see, we’re collecting new stakeholders at a frightening rate!

I mentioned tourism: recently the Australian Tourist Commission launched its new international promotion of Australia as a destination, and the arts figured prominently. Who would have thought that avuncular poet Les Murray would have become a drawcard for big-spending foreign visitors?

So the arts are making inroads into the broader Australian scene, and that builds a national grid of stakeholders whose needs must be considered. And, of course, there’s our internal constituency too: the Council’s staff, to whom the Council – or Ozco, as it’s affectionately known – represents many things.

A place of employment, but also the repository of many skills and talents in arts administration and in cultural pursuits. Many of our staff have not only a passionate interest in the arts, but also professional experience as creators and performers.

Last year Council staff developed their own values statement as a point of reference for action and decision-making. It lists six key values – collaboration, respect,
integrity, service, diversity and leadership – and these align with the Council’s mission, its vision, goals and policies.

Each of our many stakeholder groups naturally has expectations from the Australia Council, and not all of their expectations line up neatly. But that’s a given in the arts – one size most definitely doesn’t fit all! Accountability takes on new meaning when you’re dealing with such a large range of stakeholders, including the government of the day, and when you’re dealing with taxpayers’ money.

As a statutory body, of course, our job is not to work for the Government but to work with the Government, to act as a bridge between government and the arts sector, to interpret government policy on the arts through our day-to-day, ‘in-the-field’ experience of the arts sector; and to listen closely to the arts sector and to communicate their views and needs back to the Government, to help inform the Government’s policy-making role. In a sense, we act as honest brokers in a two-way traffic flow between the Government and the sector.

Fine in theory, you say – but how do you keep the Council independent from the Government when the Government is paying the Council’s bills? There is a healthy skepticism that questions whether public funding of the arts can be separated from government patronage. I believe it can. Certainly nobody in the arts that I know wants a system where those in favour with the government of the day get the money, and those out of favour don’t. And while most Ministers I know would like to hand the cheque to the successful grant recipient, they would prefer to avoid dealing with the two thirds of constituents who don’t get the outcome they want!

Which is why the Australia Council was set up as a statutory authority. Our task is to take government money – the taxpayers’ money – and distribute it as fairly as possible to those who can potentially create the best results from it.

To do this, the Australia Council employs two key principles, a ‘double insurance policy’ if you like. These are: the arm’s length principle, and the peer assessment principle.
Put simply, the arm’s length principle defines our relationship with government, and the peer assessment principle defines our relationship with the arts sector. Together these two principles underlie the Council’s its decision-making processes and its overall governance. They are our rock and our cornerstone.

Firstly, the Council operates at arm’s length from government.

Once it receives its allocation of funds, it’s up to the Council, not the government, to decide who will get their share.

Secondly, the Council decides ‘who gets how much’ through a rigorous system of peer assessment. Arts practitioners, those who work in the arts, those with experience in the arts and arts management – they constitute the Boards of the Australia Council, and they make the decisions on grants.

Let’s look first at ‘arm’s length’ and how it empowers us.

Within the obligations defined under the Australia Council Act, arm’s length gives us the authority to shape and control our operations, policies and funding programs, and to make grant decisions without interference from the government of the day. This is, or should be, a fundamental tenet in any healthy democracy: that if we want to encourage a challenging and intellectually rigorous arts sector, and we want to support it with public funding, then we need to accept that the results might be critical and challenging, and at times even awkward for the government of the day.

That’s not something we shy away from; indeed, it’s something the Australia Council and, I might say, all major political parties in Australia embrace. The alternative is not only undesirable, it would be a step closer to Orwell’s 1984 – Big Brother running the arts. Australia is not unique in using an arm’s length system; it defines relationships between government and publicly funded agencies in many democratic countries. When the Canadian Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent proposed the formation of the Canada Council back in 1951, an organisation quite similar to the Australia Council, he cited the importance of the arm’s length principle: ‘Government should support the cultural development of the nation,’ he said, ‘but not control it’.
Apart from the obvious issue of independence, arm’s length funding has another spin-off. It not only protects culture from the state, in the broadest sense of both words, it also means that the Council, not the government of the day, is responsible for its own actions. We have to report to the Parliament via the Minister with an annual report, with finances properly-audited against the fixed triennial funding that we receive, and the Council can be – and regularly is – called before Senate Committees to answer questions about its activities.

So arm’s length is one of our guiding principles. The other is peer assessment: using artists and professionals working in the arts to evaluate the comparative merits of grant applications. We’ll look at the ‘assessment’ part of peer assessment in a moment, but who exactly are ‘the peers’?

They’re people whose knowledge, judgment and experience in the arts enables them to make fair and informed assessments about the merits of competing grant applications, decide on a priority order, and recommend on that basis the grants to be allocated. They are, importantly, people who are committed to their artistic specialty and to expanding boundaries in that art form. They need to be articulate, accommodating of different points of view, and willing to embrace change. They need to know the critical debates going on in their own discipline, and in the wider arts, and have a feel for diversity in the arts sphere. They need to state their views strongly while respecting the judging process, and raise any concerns about its integrity.

Professionally, peers can be creators, directors, critics, administrators, publishers, educators, and so on. We also aim for a good spread geographically, from the various states and territories, and a mix of gender, age, and cultural diversity, including Indigenous arts professionals.

Our peers are not only the Board members, but experts drawn from our Register of Peers, who can offer advice on the merits of applications but cannot be part of deciding who does or doesn’t receive funding. These peers provide expertise, and another layer of accountability.
Now let’s turn to the ‘assessment’ itself.

Assessment of grant applications has always been both the heart and Achilles heel of publicly funded arts organisations. It’s a core activity, assessing which of the thousands of applicants for Australian taxpayers’ money should be entitled to receive a sizeable grant that will allow them to focus on developing their creativity. How hard is this? Well, on the one hand you have fixed amounts of money, totally measurable in objective terms – all you need is a calculator – and on the other you have concepts and dreams and visions which no computer can measure. That task is left to human beings, each with their own idea and experience of what constitutes art.

Every year we receive about 5,000 applications for grants, and we give out roughly eighteen hundred grants. Each application is unique, and each involves people, money and art. And artists’ careers. A New Work grant of several thousand dollars can be the incentive for a kitchen assistant to take that giant leap, to write his first novel; a grant of ten, fifteen, or twenty thousand dollars for one year can keep an established sculptor in a studio long enough to expand her skills and vision and create a breakthrough work. Remember: this is not about art as a hobby, or art as entertainment; it’s about art that shapes lives, and communities, and our identity as Australians.

Hence our processes must be scrupulous, and transparent.

In 1996, we instigated a review of the whole assessment process, and decided to make the criteria central to the selection process. What happens now is this: applications are still read at home by Board members, and are scored there against a very tight set of criteria. Scoring is one-to-ten (and in some cases, one-to-seven) and all criteria are given equal weight. Those scores are submitted by all members before the Board meets, and Council staff add up the numbers, ranking applications from highest score to the lowest, placing the value of grants against these, and entering them into a computer. When Board members arrive at the Council for their assessment meeting, they view the computer projection of these results, from top to bottom, and a line across the page that indicates where the available funds for that category run out.
Only then can the debate begin. And it has to focus on the criteria. Even if the way others have scored rankles against your gut feeling – either too high or too low – it’s hard to move beyond those criteria under this system. What is does is give everyone an equal voice, which is where all good debates should begin and end. And, needless to say, conflicts of interest involving an applicant and assessor must be declared, and the members or advisers concerned must leave during that discussion.

Peer assessment enables the Council to make, with great confidence, critical judgments on funding decisions based on comparative artistic merit, which remains the guiding criterion in deciding who should get a grant and who should miss out. That in turns allows us to make the best possible use of our precious resources – with peer assessment, we can be more confident that we’re rewarding the most promising talents, the most significant projects and the arts organisations most capable of using the grant money to maximum effect, with the greatest impact. Applicants for Australian Council grants also need to feel that their application is judged as professionally, and objectively, as is humanly possible.

The Council is committed to peer assessment.

It is not infallible – no system is – but like the jury system, or democracy itself, it is by far the ‘least worst’ way of choosing an outcome. In fact it works very well. Peer assessment is not confined to the arts: it is commonly used in allocating taxpayer funds in the sciences and humanities, and in judging all sorts of awards – from the local flower show to the Nobel Prize. It works where black-and-white quickly turns to grey, in situations where decisions cannot be entirely objective, or based on hard facts; and in the arts, that’s nearly always the case.

I should mention that our conflict of interest procedures are rigorous – covering both real and perceived conflicts. And that the Major Performing Arts Board works on a different system – a governance to governance system – where funding agreements are made according to Board approval of a company’s three year business plan.

So – assume we’ve handed over taxpayers’ money using the best and fairest system we can manage. Then we face the next governance hurdle, perhaps the trickiest: when
it comes to the arts, just how do you measure performance? Let’s say you give a grant of $10,000 for one year to an emerging artist. How do we measure the impact of that grant, either in work produced or in furthering a career? Was it a raging success, a total waste of taxpayer’s money, or something in between?

Who is going to make those assessments?

Critical judgment is, of course, something the arts knows all about. They say every taxi driver has two occupations: his own, and writing the Great Australian Novel, or doing those squiggly lines better than Picasso, or what’s wrong with Russell Crowe’s latest movie! Make that every Australian full stop. Surely art isn’t that hard? As Auguste Rodin said when someone asked how he made his extraordinary sculptures, ‘I choose a block of marble and chop off whatever I don’t need...’ Who hasn’t got an opinion about art? Everyone’s an artist, everyone’s an expert. It’s what makes us all human. It’s also what makes our job as arts administrators at times rather stressful.

And what happens when the work itself becomes, usually through the media, the focus of considerable public concern? Is the Australia Council’s job to defend the art, or merely to fund it? Should we have public impact criteria tagged to our grants? Grants are awarded on the condition that the resulting activities or works do not break any Australian State or Federal laws. That includes the laws on racial vilification, religious persecution, slander, trespass and so on. We’re clear and unbending on that. We also have a clause that requires that the funded activity or work will not bring the Council into disrepute. These are fairly normal conditions that would apply to many contracts in our society.

Can we insist that artists don’t go upsetting people and offending good taste? Clearly not. Art has a long and healthy tradition of causing trouble. One of the strengths of art is its ability to challenge us with provocative views – controversy and art go together. Shakespeare caused trouble, the Impressionists created mayhem – and we’re certainly not sorry they did. So causing trouble with art is not a hanging offence.
But can we request that artists don’t speak to the media? No, not unless we’re willing to throw out all the rights that underpin our democracy. We’re certainly not in the business of gagging artists, or inhibiting free speech. So, again: definitely no.

The reality is that artists do what artists do.

It’s not up to artists to change. It’s really up to us as arts administrators to determine the best balance between creative freedom on the one hand, and governance and accountability on the other. In an environment that’s extremely fluid, such as the arts, that balance can’t be squeezed into an Excel spreadsheet. You are dealing with people and ideas, not bridges or office chairs. In the end, it’s really about ethics, and leadership.

The Council recognises its leadership role in the arts. We are heavily involved in initiatives around the country, aimed at arts advocacy; putting arts into education; using the arts as a tool to develop healthy, sustainable communities; developing support for Indigenous arts; developing audiences and national and international markets; and – in the context of today’s discussion – in bringing professionalism to arts management. Last year we developed and coordinated a strategic business development program for medium size performing arts companies on behalf of the Cultural Ministers’ Council – and a similar project in the visual arts and craft sector. In the current financial year we’ll put close to one-million-dollars into business development initiatives in all arts sectors outside the Major Performing Arts Board. Critically, this will help the companies increase and sustain income – from their activities; from donations; and where they can, from sponsorship; and allow them to hire specialist staff. We’re also working to help companies handle their admin requirements more effectively – and I might add, we’re also working to streamline our own administrative complexity!

As for ethics, you may have heard that ethics is the ‘new’ business mantra. But ethics have been around an awful long time, before Plato and the Pharaohs, and they’ll be around when we’re dust. If you start off with a good ethical position in almost any activity, you’re far less likely to come unstuck down the line. And I think that’s
especially so in the arts, which is – ultimately – a quest for truth, for honesty and authenticity. At the Council we make our judgments and we stand by them, because we believe in them, because they conform with our ethical stance.

As I said before, governance and artistic creation may be odd bedfellows, but we can hardly walk up to the powers-that-be and say, ‘Our governance is all over the place because we’re dealing with artists.’ If anything, it’s the opposite: because we’re dealing with something as subjective as artistic creation, the other side of the equation – our governance procedures – have to be spot on. That’s the foundation on which the arts can flourish. And it relies on those two qualities: leadership and ethics. The ethics is critical, because we can’t always get leadership 100-percent right, but we can get the ethics right.

How ethical our operations appear to stakeholders – and the wider public – depends heavily on how well we manage those twin principles of arm’s length funding and peer assessment. Operationally there is always room for improvements, of course, but as our Chair David Gonski remarked at a forum in Adelaide this year, ‘The imperfections are worth it for the objectivity and care we seek and are able to bring to what we do.’ And I would endorse that. We may get frustrated, we may get annoyed with the imperfections, with our inability to get things 100 per cent right, but we’re realists and we can live with that – so long as everything we do is ethically well-framed.

As I said at the outset, governance is a moveable feast, and every organisation has to determine its own path. Ethically, the Council was blessed early with the highest standards and I think that’s a great tribute to its promoters – ‘Nugget’ Coombs and Jean Battersby – who set the tone and the standard and virtually wrote the Australia Council Act. That allowed the Council to do things in imaginative ways for the thirty-odd years since. And our first Chair, Donald Horne, set the tone for independence and authority, and it’s a tribute to those pioneers of the postwar arts that the Australia Council has held its independence so well, under changing circumstances and under governments of varying persuasions.
Another reason the Council has retained its independence so well is because the calibre of Board requirements offers greater protection. Nine members of the Council, those who chair the artform Boards, have almost by definition to be leaders in their artform in Australia. That’s a major plus for us: it’s much harder to argue with an organisation when those making the decisions are acknowledged experts in their chosen field.

It’s also true that we have a more defined constituency than a generalist authority such as the ABC. The arts sector tends to be passionate about its causes, and the one most strongly held and defended is artistic freedom and independence. That means that the Council’s independence is staunchly supported by the arts sector, even when it doesn’t agree with what we do – which is sometimes the case. Well, the arts is a very broad church!

As for our relations with government, in recent years our dialogue with Canberra has expanded considerably, just as we’ve broadened our activities towards whole-of-government perspectives, focused harder on outcomes, and drawn in a greater range of players and sectors, from corporates to health to education. We’ve learned, and we’ve taught others, how to speak the language of the non-arts world, because in future that’s where our energies will need to focus.

Greater relevance and greater buy-in: major victories in a crowded marketplace, and much of it can be attributed to better standards of governance, which after all is a reflection of greater professionalism. So – is the Australia Council spending its $140 million a year to the best advantage? Despite the occasional criticisms, despite our own frustrations at not always getting it right, despite always wanting to deliver more and better arts to more Australians, despite all that, I believe we can say: yes, the taxpayers’ money spent on the Australia Council, the money in turn spent by the Australia Council, is money well spent.

Our critics are still there, of course, as always.

In 1979, one well-known critic voiced opposition to funding Australia’s ‘new wave’ of fiction writers, for example. ‘It is,’ he pronounced, ‘a calculated gamble on a
satisfying lifestyle of ego-tripping. No writer writes to enlarge the spiritual horizons of the surrounding culture.’ More recently, another critic claimed the Australia Council ‘should be kept on a short leash for the rest of its statutory life’. Well, he’s entitled to his view, but that’s contrary to the whole principle of arm’s length funding, and the independence of statutory authorities. Fortunately, our view has been supported by all national governments since the Council was formed back in the early 1970s.

As it happens, what bothers most of our critics is much less about the money and more about what one observer called ‘the cultural consensus’ enforced by ‘the machinery of cultural government’ – which sounds, and is meant to sound, like 1984 – Big Brother running the arts. Against that rather stale charge sits the vibrancy, diversity and success of the Australian arts, which the Australia Council – sticking firmly to its charter of independence – has helped to grow and prosper.

I would doubt there is a person in this room whose view of Australia and our place in the world wasn’t shared by our creative life – our images, our stories and sounds.

That’s endorsement, too, of ‘Nugget’ Coombs’ vision: of a publicly funded body that would bring arts to all Australians, uphold artistic freedoms, support artists, and encourage creative breakthroughs.

In 2004, they are goals still worth pursuing.

Thank you.
Appendix 3: Interview questions

Parks services workers, UTP and festival staff’s first interview questions

Tell me about yourself
What is your background?
What is your position title?

Tell me about your organisation
What does it do?
What is the vision of the organisation?

Tell me about The Longest Night project
How would you describe TLN?
How does it fit within your organisation?
What do you see it achieving?
What are your hopes for it?
Have you got any concerns about its effect/impact or lack of impact?

Parks services workers, UTP and festival staff’s follow-up interview questions
How would you describe TLN?
How did it fit within your organisation (core activities, focus group, vision, etc.)?
What did it achieve? What were the highlights?
What were your initial concerns about? How did that compare with the reality?
What were the lows?
What are some of the lessons learnt from such a project?
What now? Future directions?
Other comments?

Thank you for time and contributions to TLN

Young people/participants’ first interview questions

Tell me about yourself
What is your (nick)name and age (optional)?
Where do you come from? Where do you live?
What keeps you busy?
What are your dreams? Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

Tell me about The Longest Night
How did you find out about TLN?
How would you describe it to a friend?
What do you think you will get out of this project?
Would you recommend it to a friend?

Tell me about the process
What do you think about the consultation/workshops? How many have you been to?
How different is it to the activities on offer at The Parks Community Centre?
How different is it from an arts class at school?
Do you think it will change the way you do things? How will you know?
Can I contact you later on in the year for a follow up? Ph:

Thank you... ... [Refer to Parks services if need be.]

Young people/participants’ follow-up interview questions
(Nick)name
Has your routine changed after TLN? What keeps you busy now?

Have your dreams changed? Where do you see yourself in ten years time?

How many consultations did you go to?

How important was the tour?

How many performances did you attend?

What did you think of the performance?

What were high points?

What were low points?

What do you think you will got out of this project? What did you learn?

Any recommendations for the future?

Thank you… [Refer to The Parks services if need be.]
Appendix 4: Example of interview data

Transcription of an interview with a key informant carried out at The Parks on the 22nd of June 2005.

Note that words in between [ ] indicate uncertain words for the transcriber. Words in between ( ) indicate my own comments. XXX indicates that a name has been removed to maintain their anonymity. Also note that ‘ums’, repeated words and so fourth have been deleted from this transcript for greater ease of reading.

Thinking back to March 2002 what did that period feel like overall?

The overall feeling was definitely, is definitely really positive still today… Certainly the sense of partnership that we had at that time with so many different players… that sense of community was really wonderful at that time… we watched the video last night and saw the youth performances, you know. You very much that objective point of view can see, you know, so many years later can see when there are really significant outcomes just really show in the in your face there. And, you know, seeing just seeing some of the young people and the way they’re interacting with one another and just the, you know, the significance of I think what it was able to achieve is sort of really evident. And that’s really good. And certainly seeing the play again for a second time was really interesting to sort of think back about what we were trying to achieve and what the messages were and how I think realistic it depicted young people’s lives… The goals that we were setting out to achieve with Urban Theatre Projects I think were achieved. You know, the stuff about yeah having the young people having a voice and being heard through the script editing process was certainly I think achieved. And, you know, through conversation I had with the young people after that time they were really happy and could see that [everyone’s words] were in the play. And so and I can see that the reflections were being really really realistic. So I think that was certainly achieved. And the stuff about bringing the community together and how much energy and how many people wanted to be involved especially, you know, the younger ones. And that that was just sort of [more] on us and so we wanted to respond somehow. And so the outcomes, you know, with that were huge as well… Although that was kind of a difficulty, you know, it was a lot to
manage, all the transport issues, there was still really wonderful things that we got out of that, you know, the really good relationships with the young people and we all seemed to have different relationships with different young people because, you know, we were all transporting a particular group of young people home in the bus every night… Any one young person they did have a connection to someone within the project… It was a huge investment. And I think, you know, as much as work is work,… there was a that sense of a personal investment as well as and emotional investment and it was incredibly draining…

**What attracted you to the project?**

That it had a focus of working with young people and that there was, you know, a theatre troupe coming down. So at that point… I was really interested in doing more work around community arts and community cultural development and although my work had had little opportunities to be involved with the arts, at times, this seemed really exciting and really different and really new… I don’t think I had any idea what I was getting myself into… I wasn’t prepared in the sense of the amount of time and commitment that it would require you know, I think some of my previous work experience had prepared me for it but I don’t think necessarily I knew the level of commitment that it was going to require. I think initially I was think sort of one, two days a week working on it. And towards, you know, when it was all in full swing and even the three months perhaps prior to it all taking off it was more or less, you know, my full time job and I just had to drop things and yeah go with it. Which was, you know, wonderful at the time…

**How has it been integrated into your work today?**

… I think it’s the experience of working so intensively around a community arts project has I guess informed my work in that I can see the real usefulness of that CCD practice and the, you know, the significant outcomes that you can achieve through that, through using those arts mediums. And so that’s certainly something I think I’ve integrated into my work practice. And I think that in terms of working at the Parks and continuing my work after The Longest Night the relationships and the
experiences that we shared with the community I guess sort of strengthen my ability to engage with community on different issues and, you know, continue the work that the Health service will be setting out to do in a really effective way. So I think it I guess well positioned me to continue my work and certainly utilise the community arts approach… The Health Services always used community arts and… historically there has been a lot of community arts happen[ing] here. But I think for me personally and my work practice it certainly has encouraged that work.

… [We got] $8,000 or something from Department of Health, our overarching body, and they, you know, wanted us to explore more consultation around sort of community arts and what the Adelaide, the impact of the Adelaide Festival have and how we could continue working in a community arts way. And I guess my initial hopes was that that would then attract us further the money to be able to continue working in this way. I don’t think that’s happened in a kind of tangible way that we would have liked. So for example one of my hopes was that we would have someone who could be like a community artists who could actually be employed by our organisation and work alongside of the whole multidisciplinary team here. but there’s certainly been other funding opportunities through Arts SA and particularly through XXX (a staff member of the Arts Complex) involvement for the Parks community…

After the Adelaide Festival we and decided to sort of try a few different arts projects and, you know, evaluate them and record them and [one word] how they informs our work and how cause the arts and health stuff sits alongside one another. And I worked with a group of African young men around a music project and that was really exciting when it sort of took off, but very challenging. You know, it was a very different experience I guess to something like The Longest Night [which] involved a huge amount of people. This was like sort of five young men and a community and an artist, a musician. And there were certainly intentions for it to something which could involved a lot much larger group of the community, but unfortunately, you know, things sort of as they progressed, you know, perhaps the young people weren’t all sharing the same sort of direction and I think the community artist as well was perhaps not the right person for those young people to be working with. So it sort of highlighted for me the I guess the complexities of community arts and how, you
know, if things work together and if things yeah it can be magic but, you know, the processes that you follow are actually really really important to make things that effective and that positive. So since then I’ve sort of adopted the approach of whenever working with groups in the community around community arts that the group actually interview artists and have them make the decision about who they want to work with. So that that’s not something I end up getting left with: “we don’t want to work with that artist any more”… But I certainly know that those young men are continuing their musical interest. So they’re still off, you know, in their own communities doing their own thing. And I think it gave them an opportunity to see how, you know, different people work and learn some basic skills about putting musical stuff together. So it certainly had some outcomes. it was really interesting to compare I guess mark those two experiences within sort of a year of one another… I was the link to the to the Parks community but she (Alicia) was the link to the arts industry for me and so she had all of that knowledge about how the industry works as well as all the skills of negotiating with artists and the festival and, you know, all those parties that were in that more of an arts scene. And, you know, that were skills I didn’t have or experiences that I didn’t have so that relationship and co-working with her in that way was really beneficial. So I guess thinking about translating that back to The Parks with Urban Theatre Projects gone that is something that is missing and that I don’t have and that although we’ve worked with community artists and we, you know, have relationships with artists that are useful that type of having someone who’s really experienced and really knowledgeable about arts and working really closely with us we don’t have that… Is not just, you know, the usefulness of Alicia’s role in The Longest Night or the usefulness of a community artist but very much having relationships with arts organisations in Adelaide… So the arts stuff is still really challenging I think to be able to, you know, have, you know, spontaneous ideas with the community, be able to run with things when you don’t have those immediate contacts… My work has continued in a similar way to [be] what I was doing in The Longest Night …

Traditionally a lot of the arts theatre based stuff in Adelaide is very much, you know, “if you’re interested, rock up, get yourself home”, you know, be a part of something that doesn’t necessarily have that I guess sort of one-on-one support stuff… Similar
stuff that we’ve seen with the sport stuff. It’s about those young people making a transition from, you know, being supported by us one-on-one and doing the work we’re doing with them to making that transition to mainstream stuff… and have their families support that… That type of work is ongoing and similar to before …

Since then has money been easier to come by?

No. I didn’t see any such change… For me it’s still really a challenge to find money and make things happen… In terms of health [a] lot [of] state government are going through changes where they’ve amalgamated lots of health organisations in Adelaide. And we’re now under this even bigger umbrella and like amalgamated with all the hospitals. And so they’re also giving us, they’re saying they want us to work in primary health care capacity which is what we do, but I think, you know, the way hospitals see primary health care is very different to the way community health services department sees it so that’s causing lots of challenges… There’s certainly talk about us addressing chronic illness and stuff that, you know, that the community don’t necessarily see as important issues for them… In terms of prevention and promotion and health promotion the stuff that’s important for the community and what the community see as important issues to address are stuff about inequalities and mental health and drug and alcohol issues and all of those more complex social health issues…

Ferrydon Park is completely redone. … There are similar issues to this area, you know, out north and it’s certainly, you know, in terms of the local community here, you know, apart from the disenfranchising and the community never wanted to go in the first place, the concern for me is that it really just spreads, it hides the poverty. And so people are spread out and not necessarily in areas where there is a place like this, where services are accessible, where transport’s accessible, all those things. And that will cause isolation and can be very problematic… We don’t know whether we’ll end up staying here in terms of once this redevelopment is finished… At this point in time we’re thinking about how we can find people that are moving to relatively close areas, that are still within the western region and we’re hearing that there’s people going to particular suburbs… So we’re just starting conversations with them (port
Adelaide health services) about how we are going to better service the people that are moving from this immediate area into a bit more spread… We’re really aware that those people are being isolated and don’t have access …

**Community building, strengthening…?**

… The issues that we’re seeing around poverty and social isolation and stuff are actually compounded at the moment… The suburbs are very high transient, have a high transiency… but what we think is happening is because people are moving, you know, out of those other suburbs where the houses going up that people that are moving and the people that are coming in to short-term accommodation are actually new people that have never lived here that have high needs and bring crisis… The issues are even more complex and it’s not people that have traditionally lived with one another for years and generations it’s people who are all new and trying to work with one another. So there’s lots of issues about neighbourhood conflict and violence and crime and stuff that we are seeing and it seems to be sort of heightened for some reason because of what’s happening with redevelopment… People are really unhappy. And we’ve certainly found that as a community development team that it’s harder to engage people around “let’s do some community action together” or “what issues are important to you?” There’s certainly issues but they’re not necessarily the energy that people want to commit to actually working with us on a project that might take twelve months because they don’t know if they’re going to be here… Even if they’ve been here a while the community that they’ve lived is being, you know, dismantled, so, you know, whey would they want to put energy into a community that, you know, they might not be a part of and that they don’t they don’t think is the same community that they they used to be a part of…

I think there certainly is still some of that capacity that was developed during The Longest Night and I think certainly particularly individuals and support networks that were established at that time still exist and, you know, particularly individuals I think have come a long way and the involvement in The Longest Night was really
significant for them in their lives and making, you know, positive changes and transitions for themselves. But I certainly think that yeah people are moving up further away and it is harder to be a part of something like The Parks community when you are outside of that… The redevelopment does really impact on people’s ability to be a strong community and to be empowered, to be a community… When I first started in here, and it’s certainly even time before I was here, the work was very much about, you know, how do we support people to feel a part of The Parks community so there’s still isolated people in The Parks community, but how do we make it a stronger community as a whole. And I think that philosophy and stuff it just has to change because people don’t necessarily associate with as The Parks… Stuff about arts and culture and things that bring people together are really crucial for us in terms of that because people aren’t necessarily wanting to be involved in, you know, a community action project about the redevelopment because it’s, you know, it’s just all in full swing and a lot of the issues I think people feel very disempowered about. But certainly if we take the opposite aim of that, and I suppose that’s what The Longest Night was as well was “this is a really, you know, there’s something really positive happening at [The] Parks community centre and how do we get people involved and feel a part of that?”… So I guess we do have to sort of be different in the way we approach things and I think the arts and cultural development are a great means, tools that feed into doing that …
Appendix 5: Audience survey

The Longest Night Audience Survey

The Centre for Popular Education, University of Technology, Sydney, is researching and evaluating the long-term value of The Longest Night. Your comments are very valuable and will assist us greatly in this project. Your participation in this research is voluntary and totally confidential. The research data gathered from this project may be published in a form that will not identify you in any way. You can contact Celina McEwen with any concerns you have about the research on (02) 9514 3847. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with Ms McEwen, you may contact Ms Susanna Davis, Research Ethics Officer, UTS Ethics Committee, on (02) 9514 1279 or email susanna.davis@uts.edu.au. Any complaint is treated in confidence and investigated fully. You will then be advised of the outcome.

Please place your completed questionnaire in the box at the front desk. Alternatively, you can fax it on (02) 9514 3939, email it to celina.mcewen@uts.edu.au or post it to Celina McEwen, Centre for Popular Education, UTS, PO Box 123, Broadway NSW 2007

Please tick the following boxes that best describe you:

- ☐ Female ☐ Male
- ☐ 14 and under ☐ between 15 & 24 ☐ between 25 & 34 ☐ 35 and over
- Resident of:
  - ☐ The Parks (Angle, Regent, etc.) ☐ Adelaide other than the Parks
  - ☐ SA other than Adelaide. ☐ Interstate ☐ Overseas
- Regular to Adelaide Festival: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Attend live performances regularly: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- How did you find out about The Longest Night?
- Is this the 1st time you see The Longest Night?
- Overall how would you describe your experience of tonight’s performance?
- What did you like about tonight’s performance?
- What did you not like about tonight’s performance?
- Would you recommend this play to a friend? Why?
- Did you know that The Longest Night was devised with young people from the Parks area? Does this fact change the way you looked at the performance? Why and how?
- Other comments
Appendix 6: The Longest Night script and segmentation

Script transcribed by Celina McEwen in 2006 based on Urban Theatre Projects’ *The Longest Night* directed by Alicia Talbot, performed by Bernadette Regan, Charles Russell, Morgan Lewis, Shannon Williams and Lucia Mastrantone at the Parks on 2 March 2002 during the Adelaide Festival.

Note: Text in capital letters describes staged actions, while text in sentence-case represents characters’ dialogue. Sentence case words in between [ ] indicate uncertain words for the transcriber. Bold sentences or text followed by timed minutes in brackets represent the title of a segment of the play. Also, bold letters at the beginning of paragraphs, preceding dialogue, represent the name of the character, whereby B: denotes Bernie, O: Ollie, W: FAYS Worker, C: Carlos, S: Shannon, M: Morgan, and L: Lucia.

*Bernie’s everyday life (15 min).*

BERNIE IS PLAYING WITH HER SON, OLLIE, AND A BALLOON. THERE IS A HAPPY BIRTHDAY BANNER ON ONE WALL. BERNIE IS HOLDING A SPARKLER IN ONE HAND AND A LIGHTER IN THE OTHER. MUSIC BOX TYPE OF NURSERY MUSIC PLAYING SOFTLY.

O: AAah


B: The door. Shall we get the door?

O: Yeah.
B: Hang on, wait, I’ll just put this sparkler out [in the inaudible].

EIGHT KNOCKS ON THE FRONT DOOR.

W: Hello! Bernie! [FEMALE VOICE FROM OUTSIDE].

BERNIE GOES TO THE FRONT DOOR AND OPENS IT.

W: Hello Bernie. How are you? How’re you? Hey, hello Oliver, how are you? Oh my goodness you’ve been having a party.

B: Yes.

W: Hey, you’ve got a balloon. Yeah.

BERNIE QUICKLY WALKS AWAY FROM THE DOOR AND STARTS TIDYING UP OLLIE’S TOYS. OLLIE POINTS TO BANNER.

W: Happy Birthday [READING BANNER]. Hey Bernie, um, we need to get going, Are you almost ready?

B: No, I haven’t even started packing his bag yet.

W: Ok. It’s almost 6. We need to get going. Yeah? We need to get going? [TO OLLIE] I can do that for you if you like.

W: If you want to get his gear ready. Yep. [STARTS TIDYING UP THE TOYS WHILE BERNIE IS PACKING CLOTHES FOR OLLIE.] We’re going to pack up so you can go. [TO OLLIE] Box?

O: Yeah.

W: Yeah? How’s his behaviour been this afternoon Bernie?

B: He’s been really good.
W: Yeah?

B: Yep, he’s been really good with me. Yep.

W: What about you? How’d you go?

B: [Yeah, I’m very well].

O: I want to go.

W: You want to go?

O: Yeah.

W: Yeah ok. I just wait a second. Um. Hey, look, about his birthday. Do you want to try and ring him on his birthday? I can try and organise that, you know.

B: I can’t make calls on my phone. It’s barred.

W: Right.

B: You can call me maybe.

W: Um, look I’ve got to actually organise it, back at the office, and make sure it’s ok. Yeah. So what I’ll do is, um, I can’t give you a ring, so I’ll pop it down and I’ll try and do it.

O: Where’s dada?

W: Yes we’re going to go right now. Yeah, ok, all right. All right Oliver. Time to go. Yeah.

B: Have a good party.

O: [What’s that?]

W: It’s a balloon. Yeah? You want to take it?
O: Yeah.

W: You want to take it? Ok.

O: Dada, dada.


O: Yeah!

OLLIE DROPS THE BALLOON.

W: Oh ho. Bernie would you mind? [BERNIE PICKS THE BALLOON UP] Thanks. Look I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll try and organise Friday. Do you want to say goodbye to mum? Do you want to give her a kiss?

TALKING IN THE DOOR FRAME WITH OLLIE IN ARMS.

W: So listen Bernie, what I’ll try and do, I’ll try and organise Friday and look I’ll either give you a call or just drop around. All right? Ok? See you later.

WORKER LEAVES WITHOUT CLOSING THE DOOR.

BERNIE IS ALONE WANDERING WHAT TO DO. GOES TO CUPBOARD TO MAKE A CUP OF TEA. THEN CHANGES HER MIND. GOES TO OTHER CUPBOARD FOR A STRONG DRINK. SLAMS CUPBOARD DOORS, THROWS UTENSILS. LOOKS AT BANNER.

LIVE UKULELE AND SOFT SINGING “SOMEONE TO RESCUE ME…” I can be sitting for hours just thinking now what is at stake. I be [stopping] for hours that promises me promises which way to take. Someone will come to me, someone will come to comfort me. Someone will rescue me. Someone will rescue, will find me. Will find me, will find me, will find me. Will find me, will find me, will find me. Will find me, will find me, will find me. Will find me. Hey, yeah, hey. Hey, yeah, hey.
Hey, yeah, hey. Hey, yeah, hey. Someone will come to me, someone will come to comfort me. Someone will rescue me. Someone will rescue, will find me. Will find me, will find me, will find me. Will find me, will find me, will find me. Will find me, will find me, will find me. Will find me.

MEANWHILE BERNIE GOES OVER TO OLLIE’S TOYS, SMELLS BEDSPREAD, LOOKS AT PHOTOS.

CARLOS ENTERS WITHOUT KNOCKING.

C: Bernie can I come in? Got some tools. What’s wrong?

B: Nothing.

C: Make you a cup a tea. Yeah?

B: [Use] that cup.

C: No milk.

B: Sorry, no.

C: Don’t mind if you don’t….

C: Those arseholes fixed the dunny yet?

B: No. Would you….

C: Do you want me to have a look? Yeah.

CARLOS GOES TO THE BATHROOM.

B: Yeah… A bit smelly.

C: Could’ve turned the fan on.

B: How bad is it? You reckon it’s bad.
C: Yeah.

B: Well can you fix it?

C: No.

CARLOS’S MOBILE PHONE RINGS, LATIN RINGTONE. CONVERSATION ON THE PHONE.

C: Yeah ok, I’m here. Yeah, yeah. Grab the stuff and split all right? Yeah. Cool….

HANGS UP. COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM. LOW VOLUME AIRY MUSIC LIKE WIND

C: Don’t sit on it until tomorrow. Got it dry.

B: I won’t get to see Ollie on his birthday.

C: Why not?

B: I don’t get him on Fridays.

C: It’s fucked.

B: Yeah, it’s fucked.

C: I’ll clean up, hey.

CARLOS GOES BACK TO THE BATHROOM.

B: Carlos. Thanks for coming around.

C: It’s all right.

Awkward arrival (15 min).

S: Um, Carlos’s here?
MUSIC STOPS. SHANNON ENTERS THE FRONT DOOR KNOCKING ON THE OPEN FLYSCREEN DOOR FOLLOWED BY MORGAN AND LUCIA.

M: We’re looking for Carlos. Bernie?!

L: Bernie?!

M: This’ your place?

L: Yous guys together?

M: Haven’t seen you for ages.

L: Shit yeah. How you been babe? Hey, girlfriend. [CROSSES THE ROOM TO BERNIE] Are you good mate? How you been? Um… Oh, this is um…

LOW VOLUME AIRY MUSIC LIKE WIND STARTS AGAIN

M: Oh, Shannon.

L: A mate of Morgan.

M: Bernie.

L: I’ve only just met him.

C: Hey Shannon. How you’re going?

S: Hey Carlos.

C: What are you two doing here?

L: [Hey that’s all right] Thank you very much.

M: Haven’t seen you for a while Carlos.

C: No.
SHANNON WALKS ACROSS THE ROOM.

S: How you’re going Bernie?

SHANNON ENTERS THE BATHROOM WITH CARLOS.

L: So babe, your place?

B: Yeah.

L: It’s fantastic.

B: Ta.

L: When d’you get it?

B: Three months ago.

L: Yeah?

B: Yeah.

L: You’ve done it really nice.

B: Ta.

L: It’s like you really settled in. It’s good. It’s nice.

M: Dragon ball Z, hey. [POINTING TO A POSTER ON THE WALL] It’s sick.


M: Baby photos hey. [JOINING LUCIA NEAR THE BED]

L: The little [inaudible]. He’s just like.
MORGAN STEPS ON THE BED.

L: The bed you dick head. He’s a cutie. Check him out.

M: He’s fat isn’t he.

L: Urgh, he’s a baby. He’s supposed to be.

M: She didn’t [inaudible].

L: Shut up. Um, how old is he now Berns? [MOVING BACK CLOSER TO BERNIE]

B: He’ll be two next Friday.

L: Fuck! Two.

M: Check it out. [POINTING TO HAPPY BIRTHDAY BANNER ON THE WALL] Happy Birthday!

L: Oh right.

M: Right.

L: Um, Ollie! Where’s Ollie?

M: Where’s Wally?

L: Shut up. Where is he babe?

C: [inaudible] Yeah, yeah no problem.

S: Thanks for that mate.

C: Yeah, yeah.

S: Good deal.
SHANNON AND CARLOS COME OUT OF THE BATHROOM. MUSIC CHANGES TO LOW VOLUME TECHNO BEAT

BERNIE GOES IN THE BATHROOM AND SLAMS THE DOOR.

M: What d’you do that for Luce?

L: What d’I say?!

C: I fixed the dunny.

L: What d’I say?!

C: Don’t sit on it.

L: What the fuck! Carlos.

C: Yeah.

L: Where’s, um, um Ollie?

C: Why don’t you ask Bernie?

L: I just did ask Bernie.

LUCIA SWITCHES THE TV ON. LOUD WHITE NOISE. TALKING ON TOP OF EACH OTHER.

L: [inaudible] a mum I haven’t fucking seen her for nearly two years.

MORGAN IS GOING THROUGH THE CUPBOARDS, SLAMMING DOORS

S: Hey, Carlos put some water in hey mate. [HOLDING A BONG UP]

C: What? You want a bong now?

L: [inaudible mumbling].
S: Yeah, fucking oath.

L: [inaudible mumbling].

S: Morgan you’ve got a bowl mate there?

M: Yeah, how’s that? [THROWING HIM A BALL HE GOT OUT OF BERNIE’S CUPBOARD]

S: Sweet.

MORGAN PUTS A TIN FROM BERNIE’S CUPBOARD IN HIS BACKPACK

L: [mumbling].

BERNIE COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM. LOWER WHITE NOISE AND TECHNO BEAT

S: [inaudible]. Fucking oath.

M: Yeah.

S: Come and have a look.

M: [inaudible].

SHANNON PREPARES A BONG ON LOW TABLE IN THE LIVING AREA. LUCIA SWITCHES THE TELEVISION OFF. TECHNO BEAT WITH AIRY WIND-LIKE HIGH PITCH MUSIC

L: Does this work.

C: Bloody good mate.

M: Yeah.

S: Mad yarny.
C: [Have a flip].

M: Mad yarny. Where d’you get that?

C: Ozzie mix.

M: Ozzie mix’s got good shit eh.

C: Yeah.

S: [inaudible].

L: Fuck, what happened in here Berns?

S: Got a cigarette there Luce?

L: No.

MORGAN PULLS MAGAZINE OUT OF HIS BACKPACK

S: Don’t be sneaky about it.

L: I’ve got only three left. Buy your own.

M: Hey Carlos. Check out this G4, eh. [SHOWING PICTURE OF G4\(^{71}\) IN A MAGAZINE]

C: Yeah. What’s that for?

M: That’s the shit computer they made the Matrix on it.

C: You’re still in that film shit.

\(^{71}\) Powerful Apple MAC computer designed to handle sophisticated graphics software and other visual-based applications.
L: Babe, are you all right?

S: Can I borrow your lighter please Bernie?

B: Luce. It goes back on the telly all right?

L: Bernie?

S: Down periscope. [ABOUT TO LIGHT THE BONG]

C: [inaudible].

M: [inaudible].

B: Carlos? [POINTING TO THE BONG]

C: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, the bathroom mate. [TO SHANNON]

L: Actually.

S: Don’t you, fucking telling me…

L: Ladies first actually.

S: Shut up Luce.

L: Go on. [TO BERNIE]

S: It’s my fucking gear. Shut up.

L: It’s her fucking house.

M: Hey!

L: Go on babe.

S: My fucking gear.
M: Hey Shannon.

L: Bernie! Go!


S: Shut up man. [Go away].

L: Bernie! Go!

S: It’s mine man. [inaudible].

C: Shannon! Who got you the dope mate?

L: Thank you! [TO CARLOS]

S: Good point Carlos.

L: Go Babe.

S: Bernie. [PASSING THE BONG TO BERNIE]

B: No. That’s ok. I don’t [inaudible].

S: [Sick and] fuck you then.

SHANNON ENTERS THE BATHROOM. MUSIC STOPS


B: You guys can have a bong and um you’ve got to go.

C: Yeah, fair enough.

B: One bong and go.
C: Yeah.

B: And Luce, the bathroom, it’s not for whacking up, all right?

LOW AIRY WINDY MUSIC STARTS

L: Yeah.

SHANNON COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM.

M: Next one’s for you Berns.

L: Go babe.

C: Yeah, yeah.


C: A good one.

L: Looks like you really need to have a bit of a you know.

M: You know, relax.

L: [This one is to] relax you babe. Go on.

C: Bernie, the bong is packed.

L: You’re serious? Just one bong babe.

M: Come on.

_Bernie’s first bong (10 min)._ 

BERNIE GOES IN THE BATHROOM. TALKING OVER EACH OTHER. CARLOS TO SHANNON AND LUCIA TO MORGAN.
C: Hey, don’t don’t fucking do that again. All right? It’s her place. All right?

L: Let’s go now. [TO MORGAN] [inaudible]. Fuck. Fuck.

S: You’re right, you’re right. I’m sorry about that [inaudible].

M: Hey. It’s her place ok. I’ll have a bong and we’ll go. All right?

L: Have a bong outside!

M: We’re hanging out, I’m beaming. What’s your prob, hey?

L: Mmmmm! [WHACKS MORGAN ON THE ARM WITH HER WATER BOTTLE]

M: Come on.

BERNIE COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM. LOW MUSIC, MIXTURE BETWEEN MOBILE RINGTONE AND INDUSTRIAL SOUNDS

C: Here’s our host Bernie Berns!

L: Hey. Crack a smile for us. That’s nice. Is it?

M: You look funny Berns.

CARLOS ENTERS THE BATHROOM.

M: I’m next.

B: Hey, Luce, you’re right?

L: I’m good. I’m really good at the moment. Much better. I’m excellent. I’ve been. I’ve been getting on track lately. I just think that’s sort of, you know, a bit weird you, but um. Well you know. How are you? Yeah, good.

B: And how’s, um, what um and what’s his name?
L: Can we listen to some music or something like?

B: No. You need eight batteries. I’ve got six.

L: What?

M: Hey Berns?

B: I’ve got six batteries. You need eight.

L: Well get fucking eight.

SHANNON STARTS PLAYING BALL AGAINST THE BACK WALL

M: Can I, um, heat up these baked beans I brought in your microwave here? [HOLDING THE CAN HE GOT OUT OF BERNIE’S CUPBOARD]

B: You can try Morgan. It doesn’t work. Some one dropped it off and it never worked.

M: What’s that?

B: It never worked!

M: Fuck.

L: Well can we just like tune the telly. I think, I think it could work. It just, it just needs to be tuned or something. It, it goes in and out. Morgan can you fix the telly but! [mumbling].

MICROWAVE BEEPS, WHITE NOISE FROM THE TV

B: There’s no aerial, that’s why it doesn’t work.

L: What?

M: There’s no fucking aerial.
L: Urgh.

M: How’s that? [STICKS ONE FINGER IN THE TELLY AND THE OTHER ARM UP IN THE AIR]

L: Oh, that’s so much better babe.

M: How’s that?

L: Yeah, that’s excellent.

CARLOS COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM.

L: Hurry up. [TO MORGAN]

C: So do you want this shit or not?

M: Pucker up Shan.

L: Hurry up Morgan!


S: Ok bros.

M: Sweet.

MORGAN ENTERS THE BATHROOM.

L: Hey, Berns can I have a cup of tea?

B: Yep, if you like. It’s just there.

L: Yep.

CARLOS IS LOOKING IN THE FRIDGE AND TAKES A CAN OUT
S: D’you want another bong already? Yeah?

B: Yeah.

C: Hey, Berns it’s all right if I have this beer.

B: Sure. Hey Luce, the cups are in that long cupboard.

L: Oh yeah? Thank you very much.

MORGAN COMES OUT OF BATHROOM.

M: That toilet’s, um, seen better days. The whole things um…

L: Excuse me [BRUSHING PAST MORGAN ON HER WAY TO THE BATHROOM]

S: [inaudible].

M: It’s cracked. The whole thing’s cracked.

C: Did you sit on it?

M: It’s leaking, it’s leaking.

C: Don’t sit on the dunny.

M: A little like that dam in that movie you know. The one with the five people on a boat and, um, they’re out on the ocean and um…

B: Gilligan’s Island. Gilligan’s Island. People on the boat…

M: No. It’s a film. It’s a film Berns. You’ve got to get out more.

S: What about that other one bro? The five army men and they’re walking through the valley and they sort of got there, you know.
C: That’s every fucking movie.

M: Not that fucking movie.

S: What about the other one, with the five people driving in the car and they knew where they were going, but in the end they never really got there.

M: That’s the one!

S: Is that it?

M: Fuck.

L: [inaudible].

SHANNON AND MORGAN START THROWING A BALL AT EACH OTHER AND LAUGHING

B: Hurry up.

_Bernie’s second bong (5 min)._ 

LUCIA COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM. BERNIE ENTERS THE BATHROOM.

L: [Laughing] _[inaudible]_. It’s a swimming pool in there. It’s like a pond. She’s got a fish pond in her bathroom.

C: Take it easy fellows.

M: Luce.

L: Eh?

C: Did you sit on it?

L: What?
C: The dunny.

L: I didn’t sit on it.

C: You fucking sat on it.

L: I didn’t sit on it! Carlos the plumber, can you fix it? Nah.

S: Carlos the builder, can you fix it?

C: Yes I fucking can!

M: How about this fucking microwave then eh? Can you fix that Carlos? Hey? [MICROWAVE BEEPS] I don’t know. Change the format. Change it to, um, I don’t know, a bit of heavy metal. Shannon, what do you think about that?

*The rap (10 min).*

S: What do I think about that? Check that. [RAPPING] Well as a matter of fact, I might take this broom and I put it back on its rack, after we’ve swept up a bit of this crap.

M: Well, um, I spy with my little eye some dirty dishes.

S: Oh yeah.

M: It’s not too hard to imagine what Bernie wishes.

BERNIE COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM.

L: [Look] at your eyes.

S: Check this out. Are you ready? [RAPPING] Ala kazame, ala kazou, watch me and some wipers what I’m about to do.

M: Wooo. Well let me lend you a hand or maybe some rubber gloves.
S: Oh yeah.

M: A clean house, isn’t that what everybody loves?

S: Oh yeah. Thanks for the protection in this house of resurrection. Here I’m going to get in this freestyle injection. Well they call me MC Shannon and I’m doing the best that I can. Here I go on I’m giving it to the next man.

M: Well let me [inaudible] the mic with the master plan. MC Morganics.

M & S: Rocking with the MC Shan.

M: Bern, Luce and Carlos in the mad place.

M & S: We’re kicking mad rhymes and we’re smashed off our face.

L: BEATBOXING, MIXING/DJ-ing THE TV.

M: Yeah!

S & L: BEATBOXING.

M: All right, all right, all right. [Numically] innovate or [automatically] innovate. [inaudible] ever. See this couch once was made of cloth now is made of feather.

L: Oh Yeah!

M: Take these utensils. [Turn around]. Once was plastic, I turn it into silver. Like titanium, we’d be entertaining him. Check out the nursery turn it to a mad playground.

L: [TALKING] Like.

M: [RAPPING] turn the whole place inside out like [argh]!

L: [TALKING] That mansion. The one, the one.

B: [TALKING] The one in [Swordfish].
L: [TALKING] It’s the bong [inaudible].

M: Ahah.

S: [RAPPING] Well here comes through the streets [right] with his razor. Here is the man and they call him.

S & M: Hell razor.

S: [inaudible] mother nature, biting babies’ heads off.

S & M: See you later.

M: Next [window in the picture] can you figure this. The man with the sunglasses, Morpheus, the man from the Matrix, [from] the Matrix. [SHANNON PUTS SUNGLASSES ON] Like Tom Foo Wu Chu Wu Tang. [SHANNON AND CARLOS DO A FEW KUNG FU MOVES. SHANNON TAKES THE SUNGLASSES OFF] What you’re gonna do? Check out the next chick up on the wall got red spikes in her hair like [POINTING TO BERNIE].

M & S: Darphmore.

S: Well hanging off the wall, that cliff-hanger, like [inaudible] she…

S & M: Will bang ya.

S: Or maybe Tom Cruise in M I 2 showing no mercy [when] she’s coming through. Boy what you’re gonna do?

S & M: Boy what you’re gonna do?

M: Check the next chick in the flick coming up top, things stuffed up her top like Lara Croft. [TURNING TO LUCIA]

M & S: She’s going off.
LUCIA RUNS TO THE COUCH WITH OLLIE’S TOY GUN AND JUMPS ON THE ARM REST

L: [TALKING] Come and get me motherfuckers! JUMPING OFF THE COUCH

S: Yeahhhh!

First action sequence (5 min).

HEAVY TECHNO BEATS, GUNSHOT SOUNDS AND FEMALE SIGHGS. SLOW MOTION FANTASY OF A LARA CROFT/KUNG FU MOVIE. LOUD MUSIC. MAIN LIGHTS DIMMED AND FLASHING LIGHTS. BERNIE CLIMBS THE WALL WITH HER HARNESS. SHANNON HOLDS A FLAME [CAN AND LIGHTER] TO LUCIA’S GUN. MORGAN IS SCREAMING AND RUNNING UP THE BACK WALL. CARLOS AND SHANNON ARE CRAWLING ON THE FLOOR. MORGAN IS PLAYING WITH OLLIE’S STROLLER AND HANGING IT OFF THE CEILING. LUCIA IS SCREAMING AND PRETENDING TO APPLY WAR PAINT ON HER CHEEKS. CARLOS IS BEHIND THE COUCH PLAYING WITH A TOY. SHANNON IS CLIMBING THE WALL. MORGAN IS USING THE PHONE AS A SLOWMOTION MISSILE. MUSIC CHANGES TO INDUSTRIAL SOUNDS, GUNSHOTS AND SCREECHING/SCREAMING LIKE SOUNDS. FAST CIRCULAR MARTIAL ARTS-LIKE KICKS BETWEEN SHANNON AND MORGAN. LUCIA WITH TWO TOY GUNS SHOOTING IN ALL DIRECTIONS. CARLOS GOING FROM ONE END OF THE ROOM TO THE OTHER THROWING THINGS AS MISSILES. DARK STAGE WITH FLASHING LIGHTS. FIGHT SCENE BETWEEN LUCIA AND SHANNON GRABBING EACH OTHER AND THROWING CUSHIONS AT EACH OTHER. BERNIE COMES BACK DOWN THE WALL RUNNING ABOUT THE ROOM.

Get out [10 min].

B: [inaudible screaming].

L: Stop [fucking inaudible].
**B:** Lucia can you hear me?!... Can everyone just get out! Can everyone just get out [now]!

**L:** Everyone just get out!

**B:** All right, just every one get out!

**L:** Every one get out!

**B:** I want you to just get out!

**L:** We’re just fucking around, sorry Berns.

**B:** Just get out! Just get out!

**L:** All right Bernie.

**MORGAN AND CARLOS EXIT BY THE FRONT DOOR.**

**C:** Hey.

**S:** What?

**L:** Just mucking, just mucking around babe.

**S:** But I didn’t do nothing.

**B:** Just get out. [PUSHING SHANNON WITH BOTH HANDS. LOW AIRY WINDY MUSIC STARTS]

**S:** Fucking don’t do that! [PUSHING BERNIE BACK WITH HIS WHOLE BODY. THREATENING HER WITH HIS FIST]

**L:** [Carlos]!

**S:** Don’t you fucking touch me! Right? [PINNING BERNIE TO THE WALL. MUSIC GETTING LOUDER ]
L: She said get the fuck out! [TRYING TO MOVE IN BETWEEN SHANNON AND BERNIE]

S: You fucking listen here!

L: She said get the fuck out!

S: Shut your fucking mouth! [TURNING IN A THREATENING WAY TO LUCIA]

L: She said get out!

S: Fuck you right! Don’t ever fucking touch me... I’m going, you fuck.

SHANNON LEAVES VIA THE FRONT DOOR. MUSIC GOES OFF KEY ALTERNATING BETWEEN LOUD AND LOW]

**Bernie & Lucia confrontation (15 min).**

L: I’m sorry. We were just mucking around, like.

B: This is bullshit. This is bullshit. This is fucking bullshit Lucia! This is fucking bullshit.

L [inaudible] like old time, babe.

B: This is not the way it’s supposed to be.

L: Sorry.

B: This is not the way it’s supposed to [inaudible].

L: I said sorry! Look at me! Look at me. You haven’t looked at me since I walked in here. Treating me like a stranger.

B: Yes, because you are a stranger! I don’t even know you any more!
L: You’ve changed!

B: I don’t know who you are.

L: [I see it in your face]!

B: Yes, I’ve had a baby, do you remember!

L: Yes!

B: I haven’t seen you in two years! Where the fuck have you been? With my baby, my little boy. I don’t even have him any more. They took him away from me Lucia.

L: I know.

B: They took him away from me. And how the hell am I going to get him back with you arseholes fucking it up for me? I’m never going to get Ollie back if they see the house like this. This is fucked. This is fucked! … I need time.

LUCIA STARTS TO TIDY OLLIE’S TOYS UP.

B: Don’t touch Ollie’s stuff. Don’t touch Ollie. How dare you!

L: Yep. Ok. You’re right, we’re losers. That’s fine. No worries babe. Got ya. Now [you’ll] never see me again. Just tell them all. We can all get out of your life. We’re losers, I understand that babe. Yep, kid’s first. No worries babe. That’s it. [As I said] we can all piss off. Just don’t you trust Carlos. He’s the one who told Shannon to come here. He’s dealing from your house babe. Yeah, don’t wake up Luce. Don’t wake up. You’ve got him in your house. No worries. Fucking no worries….

LUCIA MOVES TO THE FRONT DOOR AS IF TO LEAVE BUT THEN MOVES BACK TO THE CENTRE OF THE STAGE.

L: Babe. I can help you out you know. It’s nice here, it’s great. I mean I’ll look after Ollie. I can look after. I’ll clean up. I’ll look after the place. I can get money. I can pay some rent, you know. I can pay the bills. I get cash like that. You know that hey. I
just need a place for, like, you know, a couple of days or something. Just to, just to get my head a bit together. So…

B: I’ve got to go to court in a couple of weeks.

L: Yep.

B: Would you come with me?

L: In a couple of weeks?

B: In a couple of weeks.

L: Yep, sure. What, what um, so I can stay for a couple of weeks or…

B: Yeah.

L: Yeah, yeah. No worries.

B: Not the other guys.

L: No.

B: Just you ok?

L: Fucking you’re right. Tell them they can all piss off. Get out of here and… [GOES BACK TO THE DOOR, LOOKS OUTSIDE] They’re gone hey.

B: What? [PICKING UP THE BONG]

L: Yeah, they’re gone. Puck up babe. Go on, mull up. They’re not here. Go on. You love that stuff. You used to. Go for it.

B: Look Luce [POINTING TO THE FALLEN BANNER].

L: Yeah I know. His birthday’s in a couple of weeks, hey?
B: Next Friday. D’you want a bong?

L: Fuck that shit. Makes you sleep. Hey babe, do you want anything else? [BERNIE LOOKS AT LUCIA AND THEN TURNS AROUND]

B: Have you seen my pixie photo.

BERNIE IS HALF IN THE BATHROOM, SMOKING A BONG.

L: No, haven’t seen your pixie photo.

B: Yeah. Just over there.

L: Right. Bernie… Where was this one done babe?

B: Arndale.

L: Fuck, he’s a cutie. Little blondy like you, but he’s a spunk like his dad too hey.

B: [inaudible] cunt.


Boys are back.

MUSIC STOPS. BOYS SLOWLY WALK IN THE FRONT DOOR WITHOUT KNOCKING. STOP NEAR THE FRONT DOOR.

C: Came to say sorry Berns. I’m really sorry, it’s embarrassing. How fucked up. [inaudible] fucked up. Really sorry. Just came to clean up, to clean up. I got some more dope.

L: Yeah, well just leave it on the fridge and then piss off.

M: Is that a good place for it Berns? Seriously Berns, um, I just want to say, look, we don’t want to stuff things up for you and Ollie, hey. Seriously.
C: Won’t happen again.

M: I’m sorry… [MOTIONING SHANNON FORWARD] It’s Shannon’s…

C: Idea.

S: Berns. I know I shouldn’t carry on like that before. [SHANNON MOVES ACROSS THE ROOM TO BERNIE NEAR THE BATHROOM] But I do apologise. I did buy this for you. It’s [two AA] [BATTERIES FOR THE RADIO] It’s all right if I put them in for you? Yeah? [SHANNON GOES TO THE BED, PICKS UP THE RADIO AND PUTS THE BATTERIES IN IT]

M: Hey Berns? I was just wondering if you might like a drink? [MOVING ACROSS THE ROOM TO BERNIE AND PULLING A CAN OUT OF HIS BACKPACK]

B: Oh yeah.

M: Woodstock hey.

B: I’d love one [inaudible] again.

M: Great big woody\textsuperscript{72}.

B: Yeah.

M: Got one for Carlos too, yeah. [PULLING ANOTHER ONE OUT]

C: Cool.

M: And, um, Shan. [AND ANOTHER]

S: Cool.

\textsuperscript{72} Short for Woodstock, a Bourbon and Cola beverage sold in a can.
M: And Luce.

L: Yes.

M: You can have a sip of mine! [AND ANOTHER] Up your bum! [OPENS HIS CAN AND SPILLS SOME ON THE FLOOR. ALL FOUR DRINK]

L: Pass it. Don’t hog it. [TAKES THE CAN AWAY FROM MORGAN AND STARTS DRINKING]

M: There’s [inaudible] in there.

SHANNON SWITCHES THE RADIO ON.

M: What are you? You’re going to drink it all, are you? You drink the whole thing.

L: Come on, we can share. Yeah, we can share.

BERNIE AND SHANNON ARE DANCING TO THE MUSIC. CARLOS ENTERS THE BATHROOM FOR A BONG.

M: We can share, we can share, hey?

L: Thank you very much Morgan.

SHANNON FOLLOWS IN THE BATHROOM. MORGAN FLICKING LUCIA WITH HIS HAND. BERNIE TURNS THE RADIO DOWN

L: Don’t. [TO MORGAN]

M: Ow. [Language] [inaudible] or you will get burned.

Dreams.

M: Hey Berns?

B: Yep. Hey do you want a sip?
BERNIE IS STACKING UP OLLIE’S TOYS.

M: Hey, this guy’s sick. [PICKING ONE OF OLLIE’S TOYS] Check him out. Wow [LAUGHS] Oh, man he’s pretty cool too, eh. [POINTING TO ANOTHER] What you’re doing?

B: I’m practising, eh.

M: What for?

B: I’m going to go for a job as a night packer at Arndale. Bi-Lo, they’re recruiting at the moment.

L: I can look after Ollie. [NO ONE HEARS HER]

M: Sick. That, that’s good money, hey Berns.

B: Yeah, seventeen fifty an hour.

M: Mmmm.

B: It’s good money. I reckon if I can do three shifts a week that’s heaps of money.

L: I could look after Ollie babe. [NO ONE HEARS HER]

M: That’s heaps. Fuck. What are you going to do with all that?

B: I’m going to save up.

M: Good on you.

B: I’m going to buy Ollie and me a house.

M: Yeah?

B: Yeah.
M: Fuck. You buy, what sort of house?

B: Well maybe like a new one. Not like this shit hole. Something new. Something where everything works, yeah.

M: You’d get one of those fancy fucking Westwood ones down the road, with the flags and yuppy kithome shit.

B: No. No, just something that they’re not going to demolish for [inaudible] years. You know. Just something. I’ll get Foxtel sort of thing.

M: Oh yeah, Foxtel’s sick. I got, I got…

B: Something with a yard.

M: With a yard. Ok look, I got this idea Berns, right. I got this, it’ll be on Foxtel eventually. Seventy mill, seventy million dollars. Australian, budget. [Finishing] a fucking film!

L: [inaudible mumbling].

B: Oh, cool, you [inaudible].

M: I met Keanu Reeves in Sydney. Didn’t I. [TURNING TO LUCIA]

L: Ah! You’re full of shit, full of crap Morgan.

M: Nah, she’s just jealous. [BACK TO BERNIE] Nah, nah I did, I did. After I met him I had this idea, Berns. I thought, fuck I’ll write a script for him.

B: Yeah.


B: Yeah.
M: That’s… I can do that didn’t I. I can fucking do that.

B: [I know what you can do]. Ok, ok I’ve got an idea for you right.

M: Yeah.

B: There’s like a hill yeah. Grass and stuff.

M: Ok, yeah, ok.

B: There’s Keanu.

M: Yeah.

B: He’s on a motorbike. And he goes shhhh off the edge of the hill. I don’t know what happens from there, but [inaudible] motorbike, eh.

M: That’s fucking incredible. Fuck! Have you got a pen. I’ve got to write that down. I’ll forget it.

B: Oh, just the whiteboard. [POINTING TO WHITEBOARD ON THE BACK WALL] That’s all.

M: Oh, cool. All right. [GOES TO THE WHITEBOARD AND STARTS WRITING]

L: Oh, I could look after Ollie you know if you’re like needing me to look after him and stuff.

B: Hey, what’s that?

L: I could look after Ollie! You know, like when you’re doing the night packing thing, the job. I could look after him ‘cause I’m really good with kids, ‘cause you know like, they you know they end up talking more and usually tell me to shut up, you know.

B: Yeah.
L: You know what I mean.


L: Hey Berns?

B: Yeah.

L: Do you think I could get a job?

B: Yeah, if you turned up.

L: I’d fucking turn up. If they were good and like paid you good.

B: Yep, then I reckon you could probably do it.

L: Hey babe, do you reckon I, I could just come and watch you in an interview just to see how you do it, cause I’ve never, I’ve never done it before.

M: That’s the first shot, the door. [TO HIMSELF, FRAMING THE DOOR WITH HIS HANDS]

L: It could be just a good thing for me to learn. You know what I mean Bern? Berns? I’m not talking about taking your job. I’m talking about like just come, just to… What the fuck had I said?

B: Yeah, that’s good, that’s fine. You probably need clothes or something like that.

L: I don’t need any clothes. I just need you to, um, to, I don’t need clothes. What did I fucking say?

M: Hey do you reckon crane shots are like corny, you know, like overused, [inaudible]. [TO LUCIA AND BERNIE STANDING ON THE STOOL WITH A TOY IN HIS HAND IN PLACE OF A CAMERA]

L: I reckon you're corny.
**Bernie’s third Bong (15 min).**

**B:** Where’s the dope.

**L:** One guess. [POINTING TO THE BATHROOM DOOR WITH OLLIE’S TOY GUN]

**B:** How long have these guys been in here do you reckon? [MOVING TOWARDS THE BATHROOM]

**M:** And that’s when Keanu knocks on the door, right.

BERNIE KNOCKS ON THE BATHROOM DOOR. CARLOS OPENS THE DOOR. LIVE UKULELE MUSIC.

**B:** What you’re doing there Carlos?

**C:** Just go for it, the dope’s in there.

SHANNON AND CARLOS COME OUT OF THE BATHROOM.

**C:** Go for it.

BERNIE ENTERS FOR HER THRD BONG.

**C:** Fixed the dunny again.

**M:** This is when Keanu enters.

SOFT LIVE SONG: “WILL YOU COUNT ON ME…”: Will you count on me. Will you count the days that you have needed me. Will you count on me. Will you take this day to see. BERNIE COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM. I [work a lot and sense up] to me.

**L:** Show me your eyes. Show me your eyes.
SOFT LIVE SONG: Count on me. [Inaudible] all of our possibilities, yeah.

M: Sick, eh [TO SHANNON].

L: Hey Berns? Give me your clothes [POINTING OLLIE’S TOY GUN AT BERNIE] Come on. Where are they?

B: In the back room.

SOFT LIVE SONG: [Inaudible]

L: It’s all right if I just.

B: Yeah, there’s those big bags in the back room.

L: Yep, ok.

S: [inaudible] [TO MORGAN BALANCING A BROOM ON HIS FINGER].

B: There’s a skirt if you want for you.

L: A skirt? Fuck the skirt. I hate skirts.

S: [inaudible] [TO MORGAN].

LUCIA ENTERS THE BACK ROOM.

M: Fuck that’s pretty cool eh [inaudible] [TO SHANNON] Oh the woody [KICKS AN OPEN CAN OF WOODY NEAR THE COUCH THAT SPILLS ON THE CARPET AND PUTS HIS BAG ON THE WET PATCH].

S: Oh, fuck.

MORGAN PICKS THE CAN UP AND SPREADS THE SPILL UNDER THE COUCH

C: Hey Bernie. You need some one to go to court with?
B: Yeah, would you come?

C: I’m not lying for you.

B: Just have to be there. Don’t say anything, just have to be there. And if you’re there with me then they might think that you’re the dad. Would you come?

C: Maybe. When is it?

B: Two weeks.

*Action film (15 min).*

SOFT LIVE SONG: I wish [inaudible] and wonder who is here for me. Count on me. [Count] the days I really need you to stay. Are we here alone waiting for [inaudible]. I wish [inaudible] and wonder who is here for me. Count on me. [Count] the days I really need you to stay. Ah ah… [ETC.]

AT THE SAME TIME AS DIALOGUE BETWEEN SHANNON + MORGAN AND LUCIA + BERNIE

M: [inaudible] like Kung fu. Like a stick right. Like if I was Keanu. Right? [inaudible] like that ok all right. Keanu comes out. Sha sha,…fu fu fu ….. Sha [SOUNDS ACCOMPANIED BY KUNG FU MOVES].

B: No, try the other one on. Not that one [NEAR THE BACK ROOM DOOR. TALKING TO LUCIA].

S: It’s fucking sick bro [TO MORGAN].

L: [inaudible]. [TO BERNIE]

M: Yeah, pretty cool eh.

M: [inaudible] the camera, the camera.

B: [inaudible].

S: You go from [inaudible] direction. I’ll [inaudible]. All right?

L: No I don’t want to [inaudible].

S: [inaudible].

L: [inaudible] smelly socks.

S: Action.

SHANNON WITH PRETEND CAMERA AND MORGAN AS KEANU REEVES AS KUNG FU ACTION HERO.

B: [inaudible].

L: [inaudible].

S: [inaudible].

B: You’re feral.

S: Has a double [inaudible] to his right.

B: [inaudible].

L: [inaudible].

S: And here we go. Here’s the big, the money shot, the big evil man at the end, here he is looking [inaudible]. Action!

B: Now why don’t you try the blue one on instead of that one. The blue one’s good.

L: No.
MOSTLY INAUDIBLE DIALOGUE CONTINUES BETWEEN SHANNON + MORGAN AND LUCIA + BERNIE FOR 30 SECONDS

S: Wesley Snipes.

M: Blade! Blade!

S: Blade. Fucking good choice.

MORGAN CLIMBS ON THE FRIDGE. SHANNON EXITS VIA THE FRONT DOOR.

B: Hey Luce why don’t you let your hair down?

L: No.

MOSTLY INAUDIBLE DIALOGUE CONTINUES BETWEEN SHANNON + MORGAN AND LUCIA + BERNIE FOR 30 SECONDS

MORGAN DROPS HIS BROOM/SWORD

M: Action!

M: Wesley Snipe enters the room. [SHANNON ENTERS] He surveys the room. [SHANNON SURVEYS THE ROOM] Off to his right kick punches. [SHANNON KICKS AND PUNCHES TO THE RIGHT]

INTERACTION BETWEEN SHANNON AND MORGAN CONTINUES THUS FOR APPROXIMATELY 30 SECONDS WHILE THE EXCHANGE BETWEEN BERNIE AND LUCIA CONTINUES IN THE BACK ROOM.

*The checkout chick (15 min).*

LUCIA COMES OUT, HAIR DOWN, WEARING A SKIRT.

S: Fuck, boys! Look who’s this spunk, man. [LOOKING AT LUCIA]
M: What you’re all dressed up for?

SOFT SONG: Count on me. Count the days you are thinking to stay [SINGING STOPS]

L: Shut up. Do you think it looks all right?

B: I reckon she looks all right.

M: What the fuck’s wrong with you two. She’s fucking hot, man. Look at her.

C: Carlos, what do you think?

C: What?

L: About my outfit.

C: It’s all right.

B: Hey Luce. I reckon you’d get the job anyway. Even if you couldn’t do the job very well. They’d just give it to you ‘cause you look good.

LIVE MUSIC STOPS

L: Yeah, well, what’s it take. You’re a checkout chick. You just stand there and go “yeah, thanks you very much, see you, have a nice day… cunts” I reckon, pretty easy you know.

S: Luce what kind of shit is that? What the fuck is that? “have a nice day, see you Cunts” That’s a nice way to say thing to say to someone that’s paying for their groceries with their money.

L: I’m joking. It’s a funny thing.

S: You don’t joke about that sort of stuff.
L: It’s a joke. Ah ah.

S: Oh good on you man. Anyway what happens anyway [now] at LiquorLand, I was checking out the checkout chick, right.

L: Ooooh!

S: Anyway, like I was checking her out right. And she does three simple steps. That easy. I’m telling you. Even you can do it Bernie. That easy. And what she does, she grabs the customer’s item. [MIMING]

L: Ah.

S: She swipes it. She types it up. She gives him the docket. “Have a nice day” [MIMING]

L: What’d she do?

S: Again, hey Berns. She does. She grabs the customer’s item. [MIMING]

L: Slowly.

S: Ok. She grabs the customer’s item. She swipes. She types. She grabs the docket. “Have a nice day.” [MIMING] Too easy.

B: Right.

L: That’s excellent.

B: All right, you’re in training.

L: I’m in training.

B: Yeah, hold that [HANDING A CAN OF WOODY TO LUCIA. TURNING TO SHANNON]. Ok, you’re Luce at LiquorLand.
S: [Ok, just for you Luce].

L: Ok.

B: Right, here’s your counter and there’s your thingy thingy. [SPATIALLY LOCATING THOSE NON-EXISTENT PROPS AND DÉCOR ELEMENTS]

S: Yeah, yeah.

B: All right. And, um, you’re, you be a customer [TO LUCIA].

L: I’m a customer.

B: [inaudible] LiquorLand.

L: At LiquorLand. I grab my items. “G’day princess” [WITH A DEEPER VOICE].

S: “G’day there sir” [WITH A HIGH PITCH VOICE].

L: “How much for my Woodstock, babe?” [HANDING THE CAN TO SHANNON]

S: “Um, barcode.” [TAKING THE CAN. PRETENDING TO PLACE IN FRONT OF A BARCODE READER] Beep. “Um that’s a dollar 80 thanks” [HANDING THE CAN BACK TO LUCIA]

L: “Thank you princess. What are you doing later?” [TAKING THE CAN BACK]

S: “Um, actually I’m on stocktake with the girls”

L: Ah.

S: Sorry.

L: [Laughs]

B: “Oh, yeah and a case of Coopers thanks love” [WITH A DEEP VOICE. MIMING TO DROP A BOX OF BEER FROM HER SHOULDER TO THE COUNTER].
L: [inaudible] isn’t she? [TO MORGAN].

B: “And um some Marlboro red [inaudible]. [POINTING TO SOME IMAGINARY CIGARETTES BEHIND AND ABOVE SHANNON]

L: Get off the fridge. [TO MORGAN WHO STAYS ON]

S: Do you just want to help me swipe that. I just want to get it over the, swipe that.

B: Oh, yeah, sure. [MIMING TO MOVE THE BOX OVER THE COUNTER TO THE PRETEND BARCODE READER]

S: Great. Thank you, Malboro the strongest ones, yep. [MIMING GETTING CIGARETTES BEHIND HIM ON AN IMAGINARY TOP SHELF]

B: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Red ones. Nice Kahunas.73

S: You have a nice day sir. [MIMING HANDING OVER A PACK OF CIGARETTES]

B: Oh, yeah you too little lady. That’ll be, um, be seeing you later. All righty.

S: Yeah good.

B: All right. See ya.

M: That’s the kind of guy you’d like to have pick you up, eh Berns.

B: Oh, fuck off Morg.

L: Shit, what’s your type, babe?

B: A little bit muscley. Long hair. Loads of long hair. I love that.

73 Breasts.
C: Who’s this guy? [CARLOS IS BOLD]

L: Bernie’s type.

C: What type?

M: Muscley.

L: Lots of hair.

C: You don’t like guys like this. You don’t like guys like that do you. Do you?

CARLOS GOES TO THE BACK OF THE ROOM

L: Oh tits! Tits! Tits.

MORGAN COMES OFF THE FRIDGE

S: What?

L: Well if you’re going to be a chick. You’ve…

L & B: gotta have tits!

CARLOS STARTS TO DO PUSH UPS

L: Go on. I’m just mucking around… What’s that? [LOOKING AT SOMETHING INSIDE SHANNON’S SHIRT WHICH SHE’S PULLED WIDE OPEN AT THE NECK.]

S: Oh, it’s my son’s name [inaudible].

L: Wow. How old is he? It’s a beautiful tat. [QUICKLY STUFFS TOWELS IN SHANNON’S SHIRT IN PLACE OF BREASTS]

S: Oh, you’re fucking so sly. I swear.
L: Go on. Oh, look, it’s nice. Tuck in your top. Tuck it in. It looks nice.

C: Is that your new look Shannon?

S: Fucking get stuffed Carlos.

C: Ah, no, no, no. You look great.

S: Oh, yeah. Right.

C: [Oh, you look good] as a sheila, mate.

L: No, no, no. Great [TO BERNIE].

S: Fucking weirdo.

CARLOS PLACES A TWISTED TOWEL ON SHANNON’S BALD HEAD IN PLACE OF HAIR.

C: Now you are [inaudible].


C: Ah no that’s right [TO SHANNON].

B: No.

L: Ah come on. Guys come on. He’s doing, he’s doing it.

C: [inaudible] forward. Yeah.

S: [Oh, so you’re forward].

L: You need a dick. [TO BERNIE]

C: No, no, no. You look beautiful.
L: Ok here’s a dick [HOLDING A NAPPY].

B: No! I’m not having that for a dick.

C: You are the chick.

L: Come on.

C: Bernie’s the guy.

B: Something more dick-like. Something harder.

C: All right. [Relax. Relax].

B: [You get that]. [POINTING TO ONE OF OLLIE’S TOYS ON THE FLOOR]

L: This thing? [HOLDING A CONSTRUCTION TOY] That’ll be hard [HANDING IT TO BERNIE].

B: [inaudible] comes off like…

L: Ok, come on. It’s a romance. Oh, she’s beautiful [TO SHANNON].

BERNIE STUFFS THE TOY DOWN HER PANTS TO FORM A PENIS.


L: You’re checking out the checkout chick.

C: You lock eyes.

ROMANTIC MUSIC STARTS

L: You go up to her and you go “Princess”

C: Yeah, no, no. Look [TO SHANNON].
L: “What are you doing later?”

B: “What are you doing later?” [WITH A DEEP VOICE].

M: Camera zooms in.

C: Say um.

S: “Not much really” [WITH A HIGH PITCH VOICE].

C: Louder.

S: “Not much really”

M: Yeah, yeah, great. Boom mic, boom mic [HANDING THE BROOM STICK TO CARLOS].

L: “How about a meal?”

B: “How about a meal?” [WITH FORCE].

L: Nicely, nicely.

B: “How about a meal?” [SOFTER].

C: “I really love eating”

S: “I really love eating”

L: “Fuck the meal”

M: Don’t say fuck. Say Forget.

L: “Forget the meal. Let’s go for a walk”

B: “Forget the meal. Let’s go for a walk”
C: “I love walking”

S: “I love walking”

L: And then you get in a bit closer.

BERNIE AND SHANNON ARE SLOWLY MOVING CLOSER TO EACH OTHER. MUSIC GETS LOUDER, MINOR CHORD AND VIOLINS

L: And you accidentally touch each other.

C: Yeah, yeah. It’s the first time…

L: And um.

C: You ever touched.

L: You want to, like, kiss, but, but you don’t…

M: Extreme close up.

L: Because it means something, so you pull away.

C: Hands off the [boobs].

L: And you want a get to know each other.

SHANNON AND BERNIE KISS. MUSIC GOES OFF KEY

C: You don’t kiss.

M: Zooming out. We’re pulling out.

L: [inaudible].

C: You don’t kiss!
L: [inaudible].

C: Cut! Cut!

L: Cut! [ROUSING BERNIE BY TOUCHING HER ON THE SHOULDER].

MORGAN CLIMBS ON THE FRIDGE.

BERNIE AND SHANNON LET GO OF EACH OTHER. MUSIC STOPS

M: Excellent camera work.

To the shops (5 min).

CARLOS SITS ON THE COUCH. SHANNON GOES TO THE BATHROOM, LUCIA GOES TO THE BACK ROOM. BERNIE STARTS TO TIDY UP. LUCIA COMES OUT OF THE BACK ROOM WITH HER BAG

L: I’m going up the shop. I’m going to get some more booze.

B: It won’t be opened.

L: I want to go up the road thanks. Come on Berns. Let’s go up the road babe.

B: It won’t be opened.


M: It’s too late.

L: Come on babe. I want to go up the road [TO MORGAN]. Come on Morgan. You cashed up?

SHANNON COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM.

S: It’s all right.
B: [Do you want to…] Go with her Morgan.

S: Luce, I’ll go with you.

L: Oh.

S: Yeah, I’ll come with ya. Sweet.

L: Ah. Um, you’ve got any cash?

SHANNON SHOWS HER SOME CASH.

L: Yep. All right.

S: After you. [HOLDING THE FRONT DOOR OPEN FOR LUCIA TO WALK OUT FIRST]

L: Oh.

S: Sweet.

L: Thanks.

S: See you soon Bernie. See you soon bros. [TO MORGAN]

LUCIA AND SHANNON EXIT VIA THE FRONT DOOR.

C: Cut means cut, Bernie!… Get off the fridge, Morgan!

MORGAN CLIMBS DOWN THE FRIDGE.

C: No, you’re meant to stop. That’s how films work, eh.

M: Pocahontas. Now that’s a good film. [TO HIMSELF, PICKING UP ONE OF OLLIE’S BOOKS]

B: It didn’t mean anything Carlos.
C: When are you finding a place on your own Morgan?

M: Soon. I’m on the list. Six years or I get high priority housing in two years if they think I’m insane.

C: Well I do.

B: You can always get pregnant.

M: You want to get me preggers Berns? How about you Carlos? You’ve got a place yet?

C: Yeah.

M: Where?

C: Down the road.

M: What’s it like?

C: It’s all right. Not as good as this. Better than nothing.

M: [PUTS THE BOOK DOWN AND RUBS HIS FACE] I’m getting tired. I’m getting bored.

C: Yeah, why don’t you go then? What’re you fucking going to do mate?

M: I’ve got a plan.

C: What plan?

M: Fucking good one.

C: What!

M: It’s on the fucking board! [POINTING TO THE WHITEBOARD ON THE BACK WALL] Look, Keanu Reeves on a motorbike in medieval times.
C: That’s bullshit.

M: That is research.

C: Fucking [idiot].


SHANNON RUNS IN THE FRONT DOOR. MUSIC GOES SLIGHTLY OFF KEY

Back from the shops (10 min).

M: Now the audience is thinking what’s he running from. Now you see that’s what keeps it interesting.

B: Hey, where’s Luce?

S: Yeah. She’s coming Bernie.

C: What are they interested in?

M: That’s the question Carlos. [That’s what] I’m asking. Berns you’ve got mad ideas. You help us with this?

B: Yes. Yeah, right. Yeah.

M: Sick. Ok, now the question is what is Keanu running from Carlos?

C: Running from his past!

B: A dragon.
M: Sick! A dragon! With Sean Connery’s voice.

S: Fucking sick, bro. Write that down.

C: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

M: Keanu Reeves, Sean Connery. We need someone else Shan.

S: How about someone young, young and hip.

M: Someone now, now, now, now.

S: A muso.

M: Music.

S: Um “Cause I’m Slim Shady. Yeah, I’m the Real Shady” [RAPPPING]

M & C: Yeah!

S: Eminem!

M: Eminem. Ok. [Now] we need a bad guy, bad guy.

S: Um, Christopher Walken, bro.

B: Well what about a bad girl?

M: Who?

B: Nicole Kidman.

M: Come on, Nicole Kidman can’t play a bad girl.

B: Yes, she can. I’ve seen her.

M: She plays the good girl.
LUCIA SLAMS THE FRONT DOOR ENTERING DISHEVELLED AND CRYING. MUSIC CHANGES FROM LOW TO INCREASINGLY ‘SHARP’ AND HIGH PITCH SOUND.

L: You left me [POINTING TO SHANNON]. You just fucking left me. You prick.

S: [inaudible].

C: Fuck [what d’you do]?

L: Look at me. [WALKING OVER THE FRONT OF THE STAGE. SITS DOWN. BERNIE FOLLOWS HER]

S: She fucking [scared] me.

L: You look at me.

S: Fuck, she’s lost it.

B: [You’re all right?].

L: No I’m not all right.

S: She’s fucking lost it.

C: What d’you fucking do?

B: Hey mate.

S: She’s lost her fucking marbles boys.

L: I’m covered in shit. I’m sorry about the skirt babe.

BERNIE GOES TO GET A CLOTH IN THE CUPBOARD AND COMES BACK

M: What happened?
S: She’s fucked man. She can’t control her fucking actions bro. She tried to kiss me mate.

L: In your dreams! In your dreams.

S: Oh, fucking whatever, Luce mate. Your fucking dreams mate.

L: I swear to God. He… You’re full of crap!

S: Fuck man.

L: He tried to hit on me.

B: What? Was he touching you up?

L: Yes!

M: You tried cracking onto her?!

S: No. I’m telling you the truth bro! Seriously.

M: Look, which one of you two shits is lying!?

L: [He’s the liar].

S: No, seriously I’m telling you the truth man! Fuck. We’re suppose to be fucking boys, you know. Fucking going way back. [Toweys] man. Fucking friends [inaudible].

C: Yeah, she’s a bit of a [slut]. Yeah, no guys she is.

F: Fuck you! In your dreams.

TECHNO BEATS ADDED TO SHARP NOTE
**S:** Settle down. I don’t want to go there with you. Then what happened next. She puts her arm around me and tried to fucking kiss me. Fuck man, I said “Fuck off!” [TO MORGAN]

**L:** [SPEAKING AT THE SAME TIME AS CARLOS, AND SHANNON] [inaudible] would I? And the, he put his arms around me and tried to kiss me [inaudible] [TO BERNIE].

**C:** [inaudible] [TO MORGAN AND SHANNON].

**L:** And he fucking left me. [inaudible].

**S:** Morgan. Oi!

MORGAN GOES TO LUCIA TO CHECK HER INJURIES AND BERNIE GOES TO SHANNON.

**B:** You touch her? [inaudible] better.

**S:** No. I never touched her. No, I told you there’s someone else I’m interested in.

**S:** [inaudible] [TO BERNIE]

**L:** [SPEAKING AT THE SAME TIME AS CARLOS, AND MORGAN] [inaudible] [TO MORGAN].

**C:** Do you want a lying slut living in your house? [TO BERNIE].

**M:** You watch your fucking mouth Carlos.

**S, B & C:** [Inaudible] [SPEAKING AT THE SAME TIME WHILE TECHNO BEAT ONLY, MUSIC GETTING LOUDER]

**L:** [inaudible] [TO MORGAN].

**L:** Got to get out of this shit hole! [TO HERSELF]
B: You get out of my shit hole then! Get out of my fucking shit hole! Fuck off! Fuck off lucia!

BERNIE ENTERS THE BATHROOM. SLAMS THE DOOR.

L: There’s someone else is there? [TO SHANNON] Someone else. What? Am I not good enough?!

S: I didn’t say that Luce.

L: I’m not pretty enough?!

M, L & S: [inaudible] [SHOUTING AT EACH OTHER].

M: [Don’t you fuck with him] [TO LUCIA PUSHING HER AWAY FROM SHANNON].

LUCIA ENTERS THE BACK ROOM. SLAMS THE DOOR.

M: [inaudible shouts] [TO SHANNON].

C: [inaudible] the fucking bitch [inaudible]!

M: Luce, open the fucking door!

L: [inaudible shouts]

M: Luce!

L: What’s wrong with me?

BERNIE COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM.

B: Carlos why did you bring them here for? Why the fuck did you bring them here for?

B & C: [SPEAKING AT THE SAME TIME] [inaudible]
M& S: [SPEAKING AT THE SAME TIME] [inaudible].

M: There’s nothing wrong with you? [TO LUCIA THROUGH THE DOOR].

B & C: [SPEAKING AT THE SAME TIME] [inaudible]

M& S: [SPEAKING AT THE SAME TIME] [inaudible].

LUCIA COMES OUT OF THE BACK ROOM, THROWING A BOX AT MORGAN. BERNIE RE-ENTERS THE BATHROOM.

M, L & S: [inaudible].

SHANNON TRIES TO ATTACK LUCIA. MORGAN PUSHES HIM BACK AND ATTACKS HIM. SHANNON AND MORGAN FIGHT SCENE. LOUD TECHNO MUSIC “LET ME HEAR THE BEAT!” CARLOS GOES TO A CORNER OF THE ROOM AND MOVES SLOWLY ABOUT. SHANNON WALKS IN CIRCLES. LUCIA RE-ENTERS THE BACK ROOM. BERNIE COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM, SLUMPS ON HER BED. SHANNON SHADOW BOXING. MORGAN LOUDLY OPENING AND CLOSING FRIDGE AND CUPBOARD DOORS. BERNIE GOES BACK TO THE BATHROOM. LUCIA COMES OUT OF THE BACK ROOM WITH HER OLD SET OF CLOTHES LOOKING FOR SOMETHING UNDER CUSHIONS ETC. BERNIE COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM SLUMPS ON HER BED. CARLOS ENTERS THE BACK ROOM.

L: Have you guys been in my bag? Berns?

M: Where’s the milk? [TO BERNIE]

L: Has any one been in my bag? [TO ANY ONE WHO WILL LISTEN]

BERNIE RE-ENTERS THE BATHROOM RUNNING AWAY FROM MORGAN AND LUCIA. SLAMS THE DOOR.

L: Urgh!
M: Hey! [SLAPPING THE BATHROOM DOOR].

CARLOS COMES OUT OF THE BACK ROOM.

M: I want a cup of tea. Is that too much to fucking ask?

BERNIE COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM.

M: You’ve got some milk? Got some dry milk? [FOLLOWING BERNIE AROUND]

BERNIE JUMPS ON HER, FEET ON THE WALL, ROLLING AS IN PAIN.

M: Got some? You’ve got a baby in the house. You’ve got no milk! Oh! Oh! Big mama, eh!

L: [inaudible] [TO CARLOS].

CARLOS RE-ENTERS THE BACK ROOM.

M: In my house, we had nothing else [inaudible].

L: You’ve been in my bag? [TO SHANNON] You’ve been in my bag?

CARLOS COMES OUT OF THE BACK ROOM AND PICKS UP A STOOL.

M: [inaudible] you’ve got a baby here, and you’ve got no fucking milk.

L: [inaudible] [TO HERSELF].

M: What kind of fucking mother are you? Hey!

L: All right babe, let’s go! [TO MORGAN].

M: Get that shit out of your head! That shit out of your head!

L: Let’s go.
TECHNO MUSIC LOUDER STILL. SHANNON HAS STOPPED SHADOW BOXING, TAKES HIS T-SHIRT OFF AND IS NOW PUNCHING AND KICKING THE BATHROOM WALL WHILE REPEATEDLY SCREAMING “FUCK!” CARLOS HAS Jammed HIS HEAD BETWEEN THE LEGS OF THE STOOL AGAINST THE WALL BETWEEN THE BATHROOM AND BACK ROOM DOORS. MORGAN IS SPINNING ON HIS ARM AND KICKING A MIXTURE OF MARTIAL ARTS AND BREAKDANCING. BERNIE HAS MOVED OFF HER BED AND IS REPEATEDLY SLOWLY DROPPING TO THE FLOOR. LUCIA IS CLIMBING ON THE FRIDGE TO THE TOP OF THE TALL CUPBOARD ON THE BACK WALL. SITTING ON THE CUPBOARD REPEATEDLY SLAMMING THE DOOR AND SCREAMING. MOVEMENTS SLOW DOWN. MORGAN JOINS BERNIE IN HER SLOW-MOTION FREE FALL. SHANNON IS WALKING AT A NORMAL SPEED BACK AND FORTH FROM ONE SIDE OF THE ROOM TO THE OTHER. LUCIA IS STANDING ON TOP OF THE CUPBOARD. CARLOS IS TAPEING HIS FACE. BERNIE SLOWLY WALKS TO HER BED. MORGAN AND SHANNON DO CROUCHING BACK-FLIPS AROUND THE ROOM. LUCIA IS SITTING ON TOP OF THE CUPBOARD. CARLOS POURS BOILING WATER FROM THE KETTLE ONTO HIS TAPEF FACE. MORGAN PUTS HIS BEANIE ON. SHANNON IS ON THE FLOOR. BERNIE HAS MOVED TO THE COUCH, FEET ON THE BACK, HEAD ON THE SEAT.

M & L: [inaudible] [TALKING TO EACH OTHER].

MUSIC CHANGES TO SLOW BEAT OFF KEY. CARLOS IS NOW CRAWLING ON THE FLOOR WITH HIS TAPEF FACE. SHANNON IS RESTING ON THE BATHROOM WALL, WIPING HIMSELF WITH HIS T-SHIRT. BERNIE IS MOVING ON HER BACK IN SLOW MOTION ON THE BACK OF THE COUCH. LUCIA COMES DOWN THE CUPBOARD. BERNIE IS ASLEEP ON THE COUCH. SHANNON IS SITTING ON THE FLOOR NEAR THE BATHROOM DOOR. CARLOS IS STILL CRAWLING. MORGAN IS STROKING LUCIA’S HAIR. BOTH ARE CROUCHED BETWEEN THE FRONT DOOR AND THE TALL CUPBOARD. SONG “FEEL THE BEAT! FEEL THE BEAT! FEEL THE
BEAT!” CARLOS IS PULLING THE TAPE OFF HIS FACE AND STANDS UP. MUSIC STOPS

*Sun is coming up (5 min).*

*M:* Sun’s coming up [LOOKING OUT THE FRONT DOOR].

*C:* Going for a walk.

*M:* Carlos, get some milk, eh.

*C:* See you tomorrow Bernie.

CARLOS WALKS OUT THE FRONT DOOR. MORGAN MAKES A CUP OF TEA. SHANNON PUTS HIS T-SHIRT BACK ON. LUCIA GOES TO THE BED AND FALLS ASLEEP. BERNIE GETS UP FROM THE COUCH AND GOES TO THE BED. SITS NEXT TO LUCIA AND STARTS PUTTING CLOTHES IN A BIG BAG. GOES TO THE BACK ROOM.

*M:* What’re we gonna do bro?

*S:* Going back to Brisy hey. Remember?

*M:* Hey?


*M:* Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah get back into it in Brisy, eh.

*S:* Fuck. Don’t forget our fucking plan.

*M:* No, no, no, no. I just, um, yeah I’ll go. I’m coming, I’m straight. Do you want a cuppa?

*S:* Yeah.
M: Coming straight up. I’ve just got to, um, drop Luce off on the way. Ok? Got to drop her off in Sydney.

S: What?

M: Um… You know, chill out at the beach a little bit. Then, we just go via Sydney straight up to Brisy. Yeah? Straight up. Ok? Cheers. [TOUCHING CUPS]

S: Cheers.

MORGAN GOES TO THE BATHROOM.

M: Where the fuck you’re going man?

M: What?

S: Where you’re going? What about the job tonight?

M: Yeah?


M: No, I know, I know, I know. Easy one. Eh?

S: It’s a fucking, it’s set up man. It’s sweet.

M: What’s that?

S: We set the fucker up. Hey, [how’re] you going to tell me [what] to say?

M: Ok, [ok]. Um, ok, look, I’ll just take a crap. And have a think about it. Ok? Just, um, hold on a tick.

S: Yeah, sweet.

MORGAN ENTERS THE BATHROOM. LIVE UKULELE MUSIC STARTS. SHANNON IS TIDYING UP A LITTLE AND COVERS LUCIA ASLEEP ON THE
BED. PICKS UP HIS BAG AND LEAVES. MORGAN COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM. LOOKS FOR SHANNON AROUND THE ROOM AND IN THE BACK ROOM. BERNIE COMES OUT OF THE BACK ROOM. MORGAN PICKS UP HIS BAG AND WAKES LUCIA UP.

M: Sorry about the mess, Berns.

BERNIE GIVES LUCIA A BAG OF CLOTHES.

L: Oh, babe. I can’t take this.

B: Take them.

L: You’re sure?

B: Don’t wear them any more.

L: Um, yeah, yep.

M: Yep, say bye to Ollie for me, eh.

MORGAN GOES OUT THE FRONT DOOR.

L: Um… You’ll be all right in court, hey?

B: Yep.

L: Ok. See you.

LUCIA GOES OUT THE FRONT DOOR.

B: See you.

BERNIE LOOKS ABOUT THE HOUSE. CLOSES THE FRONT DOOR AND THE BACK ROOM DOOR. TIDIES UP A BIT. PICKS UP A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH
OF OLLIE NEXT TO HER BED. LOOKS AT IT. LIES ON HER BED LOOKING AT THE PHOTOGRAPH. LIGHTS OFF AND MUSIC STOPS.
Appendix 7: Summary of audience survey data

Two hundred and thirty-one questionnaires, corresponding to a 31% response rate, were collected from spectators attending one of six performances of the TLN event held during the 2002 Adelaide Festival. Of those, 67% were women, 30% men and 3% unspecified. Forty percent of respondents were in the 15 to 24 age group, 35% in the 35 and over, 20% in the 24 to 35, 2% in the 14 or under and 3% unknown. Most of those who completed the questionnaire were from Adelaide non-Parks (43%) and interstate (35%); the rest were from South Australia, other than Adelaide (14%), the Parks (5%), overseas (1%) and unknown (2%).

Of the spectators who took part in this survey, more than half regularly attended live performances (54%). Also, spectators who completed the questionnaire stated that they mainly found out about the performance through the festival advertisements in the press or the free print-based program (61%). The rest came through word of mouth (from staff, performers, participants, other audience members) (25%) or because they knew a young person or Parks worker involved in the project (4%). Interestingly, a small percentage of respondents attended the performance more than once (4%).

Even though some comments suggested that The Longest Night was in parts too long and that the Tour varied in quality, overall comments suggested that spectators enjoyed the play and its realism. Eighty-four percent of spectators who completed the survey gave positive feedback about the TLN event, including over a third who found it good or very good (36%). What these spectators enjoyed most about the performance included the realism (32%), the acting or level of energy (15%), the kind of theatre created (15%) (especially the humour, the issues dealt with and the live music) and the community participation (9%). Quotes included:

- “Getting local kids involved, getting our families involved. PARTICIPATION”
- “Having the local kids performing before hand, it seemed real and placed it somewhere it could happen”
• “I loved the young people’s acts/tour and the main performance. It was great to see them so proud and connected to the Parks. And the show itself. It is great to see these stories on stage”
• “Takes ‘theatre’ out of the institutions into everyday lives”
• “Tackling real issues and situations without judging, nothing is black and white”
• “The actors were well cast and true to life. The scenes were an accurate portrayal of life in the Parks (and indeed most similar areas)”
• “I felt a part of it”

More significantly perhaps, across positive and negative feedbacks, about a third who completed the survey stated that the performance was challenging (32%). More specifically, they found it challenging because:

• “It was a realistic depiction of life and issues that people have to face”
• “Punchy and confronting, energetic, takes you outside the boundary of cosiness”
• “Raw and uninhibited”
• “I was engaged by the performance all the way through and it has had a lasting effect as I am still thinking about it the following day”

For those who had neutral or negative responses about the performance (16%), a majority disliked the realism, the violence and the swearing, while others mentioned the acting, the direction choices and the “disruptions in the audience”. Some quotes included:

• “Did it give an anti-drug message or glamourise the dope?”
• “Naturalisation of destructive behaviour”
• “As a survivor of same violence and community, was troubled that children were present. I hope there is some respite/reflection in terms of some other debrief?”

Sixty-seven percent of spectators knew the performance was based on a collaborative process with local residents from the Parks. They stated that having grounded the performance in these processes made it more real because it acknowledged local people’s lives and experiences. Most respondents stated that knowing that the play was devised in collaboration with local community members didn’t change the way they viewed the performance, some stating that they had judged the performance
according to its artistic merits (10%). For those who didn’t know or said it changed the way they viewed it, an overwhelming majority found that it added realism (94%), that it gave them a greater appreciation of the work (19%) and/or that it lowered their expectations of the quality of the performance (18%).