PN
2304
.K56
2006

CANADIAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY-BASED THEATRE

by

Mia Grace Kim

BA, Queen's University, 1999, BEd, Queen's University, 2000

A Major Research Paper
presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in the Program of
Immigration and Settlement Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2006

© Mia Grace Kim 2006

PROPERTY OF
RYERSON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

UMI Number: EC53596

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI Microform EC53596
Copyright 2009 by ProQuest LLC
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Author's Declaration Page

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this major research paper.

I authorize Ryerson University to lend this paper to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Signature _____

I further authorize Ryerson University to reproduce this paper by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Signature _____

CANADIAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY-BASED THEATRE

© Mia Grace Kim, 2006

Master of Arts
Immigration and Settlement Studies
Ryerson University

ABSTRACT

This study explores the potential of Canadian immigrant community-based theatre as a means of promoting empowerment among newcomers. Alongside an integrated literature review, the paper centres on a case study of a group of five Canadian immigrant women and their coordinator who participated in a community-based theatre project in Toronto called *Tomorrow's Time*, funded by the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation and facilitated by Working Women Community Centre. The development of the group and the play, the actors' involvement, the roles of the funder, facilitators, and directors are described and discussed. The paper concludes that the processes involved in community-based theatre contributed to the participants' personal and social empowerment in terms of developing confidence, acting skills, integration within communities, and involvement in peer education. Additionally, findings support the critical necessity of a sensitive director, equitable compensation of participants' contributions, and inclusion of participants' narratives as characteristics of successful community-based theatre.

Key words:

Community-based theatre; empowerment; immigrant women

Acknowledgements

Foremost, thank you, to Yoseline Aparicico, Linda Dias, Lucy Frankel, Christine Hall, Marjeiry Robinson and Vanita Sabharwal for generously sharing stories of joy and courage. Thank you, Hyacinth Simpson, for providing enduring support and faith and for modeling academic excellence and rigour. Thank you, Myer Siemiatycki, for exceptional kindness and wisdom. Thank you, Elias Chu, professors and classmates for goodwill during the journey. Thank you, Yuka Nakamura, for sharing expertise and equipment. And thank you, family and friends, for your love.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Tomorrow's Time as Community-Based Theatre	8
The Literature: Definitions and Terms	10
Chapter Three: Practice, Problems, Potential	11
Practice	11
Problems	19
Potential	29
Chapter Four: Discussion, Analysis, and Recommendations	39
Chapter Five: Post/script	43
Works Cited	45
Appendix A	49
Appendix B	52

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Chapter One: Introduction

“Empowerment,” says the Cornell University Empowerment Group, is “an intentional ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources” (2). Locating his understanding of the strength of communities in their abilities to generate their own narratives, Zimmerman contends that “the ability to tell one’s story and to have access to and influence over collective stories is a powerful resource” (802). Theatre is arguably the art form most conducive to generating the kinds of collective stories Zimmerman talks about and enabling the “critical reflection, caring and group participation” that is central to the process of empowerment and the state of being empowered. But theatre, at least as most people in mainstream Canadian culture perceive or have experienced it, does not often appear to have much to do with local communities; or, more to the point, encouraging the participation of “people lacking an equal share of valued resources [so they can] gain greater access to and control over those resources.”

In our current socio-political environment where racial and ethnic discourses still have the power to create social hierarchies that result in differential access to resources and opportunities among the various members of our society, those “people lacking an equal share” are very often found within immigrant communities, particularly immigrant communities of colour. A survey of mainstream stages across the nation indicates that a similar problem of access, empowerment, and in/visibility experienced by visible minority immigrant groups is also reproduced in formal theatrical spaces, as evident in

the general absence of immigrants of colour in these sites, both in terms of the actors who command the stages and the texts that are given life there. But although the past decade or so has witnessed a rise in the number of theatre groups and plays run by visible minority immigrants* who have control over the various aspects of theatre and performance, these stage productions cannot be accurately described as community-based endeavours—although their subject matter often draws substance from the lives of the communities from which theatre personnel come. While such groups exist, their impact (in terms of bringing their subject matter to a larger audience and making minority subjects more visible on the public stage) on the wider society is limited—not only because theatre, for the most part, is the “preoccupation of an intellectual or artistic elite” (Hood 30), but also because the marginal positioning of the theatre in contemporary culture is “compounded by the marginalization to which ethnic communities are subject” (Hood 23).

Still, there is evidence of a theatre practice across Canada (and specifically in Toronto) that is oriented toward helping underrepresented and marginal/ized communities empower themselves through telling their own stories. This practice is less typically the domain of mainstream theatre companies with a set season consisting of anywhere from two to ten strategically-selected, subscriber-friendly productions and more usually the undertaking of a single production by community and social service groups, community activists, and similarly invested individuals and parties, often in

* bCurrent, Fu-Gen Asian Canadian Theatre Company, Native Earth Theatre Company, and Obsidian Theatre Company are examples of ethnoracially-specific Canadian theatre companies. The self-proclaimed “national institution” and world-famous *Stratford Festival* has been in existence since 1953, but the 2006 season marked its first staging of a play written by an African-Canadian playwright, the acclaimed *Harlem Duet* by Djanet Sears.

collaboration with agencies and institutions that have an interest in the outcomes of the theatrical undertaking and can provide support (financial or otherwise) for the production.

This kind of theatre, differentiated from other forms of theatre in the specificity of its orientation, practice and theory, is known as community-based theatre. Immigrant community-based theatre, one manifestation or type of community-based theatre, is the focus of this paper. *Tomorrow's Time*, a production staged a number of times between November 2004 and October 2006 across Ontario specifically for immigrant women of colour and featuring as actors immigrant women of colour recruited through the Working Women Community Centre in Toronto is the example of immigrant community-based theatre which is at the centre of the analysis in this paper. Through a discussion of *Tomorrow's Time* within the context of the literature on community-based theatre and in reference to other examples of immigrant community-based theatre in Canada—including *Sisters/Strangers*, staged in Victoria and *The Body Politic: Common Conversations on Gender and the Nation*, staged in Montreal – the paper will pursue a cataloguing of the characteristics of a “best practice” where the goal is to determine the extent to which immigrant community-based theatre can empower its main participants: the actors.

Tomorrow's Time is a Toronto-based breast cancer awareness project for immigrant and refugee women, which had its beginnings in the fall of 2003. It was funded by the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation (CBCF), Ontario Chapter, and facilitated by the Working Women Community Centre (WWCC). *Tomorrow's Time* developed in response to research which revealed that immigrant women are the least likely among various groupings of women to access breast cancer services because of the

many barriers—cultural, sociological, and linguistic, which are compounded by stigmatization, isolation, lack of information, and discrimination— that they encounter. The CBCF and the WWCC believe that theatre can act as a powerful vehicle to raise awareness about breast cancer and communicate the importance of early detection in a way that is accessible and innovative to newcomers (Working Women Community Centre 1). According to Lucy Frankel, the coordinator of the project, the long-term objectives of the CBCF and WWCC with *Tomorrow's Time* were “to develop an effective model for promoting breast cancer education and early detection in newcomer communities; to increase knowledge of breast cancer and early detection among newcomer women; and to provide women with a broader understanding and ownership for improved breast health and breast cancer detection through a mirrored forum of women’s own experiences” (Tomorrow’s Time 1). The short-term objectives were “to develop and deliver clear language theatre vignettes on breast cancer and breast screening that [is] accessible to newcomer women; to provide an interactive forum for immigrant women to comfortably address issues of breast cancer; and to provide newcomer women with breast cancer educational materials and referral resources that facilitate access to breast screening service” (Frankel Tomorrow’s Time 2).

In addition to long-term and short-term objectives, the WWCC also had process objectives for *Tomorrow's Time*; they were to “consult with and collect information from stakeholder communities that [would] form the basis for the creation and development of educational vignettes; secure active participation of immigrant women and breast cancer survivors at all stages of the project; implement script development and theatre rehearsals; perform theatre vignettes, combined with interactive discussion sessions, to

audiences of newcomer women; collect and deliver educational materials on breast cancer, including referral materials for breast screening; and evaluate the project's execution and effectiveness" (Frankel Tomorrow's Time 1).

In keeping with the paper's focus on participant empowerment, the assessment of *Tomorrow's Time* foregrounds the participants' accounts of their experiences preparing and staging the play as well as their insights into the production's goals, process, and outcomes. Hence, the voices of Yoseline Aparicico, Linda Dias, Christine Hall, Marjeiry Robinson, and Vanita Sabharwal, and their coordinator, Lucy Frankel, are heard repeatedly throughout this paper in excerpts from interviews conducted by the author. It is important to note early on in this study that the central participants in *Tomorrow's Time* (the exception being Frankel who is a Caucasian immigrant from Britain) are all immigrant women of colour. In deliberately apportioning the participants' voices unusually substantial weight in this discussion, the intent is to demonstrate that while the perspectives of immigrant women are generally not as readily available, they are indisputably valuable. Indeed, to avoid reproducing the silencing of racialized immigrant women that occurs both blatantly and subtly (which happened with the production of *Tomorrow's Time* as is discussed later on), this paper intentionally creates a significant space for the actors to articulate their lived experiences and speak in tandem with critical experts in response to a series of questions regarding the potential of community-based theatre to initiate a process that leads to improved access (in this case to health services) and social participation for Canadian immigrants.

A number of questions inform the ensuing analysis: Can theatre, and particularly community-based theatre, in fact be considered a catalyst for making formerly invisible

presences visible, literally and metaphorically, on the stage and in society? Equally, if not more importantly, can the medium of theatre introduce Canadian immigrant women to the public sphere? In what ways can participation in immigrant community theatre, characterized by the “process of activities and experiences which focus on the personal and group experience of doing dramatic activity rather than on a culminating performance” (Prentki and Selman 13) empower immigrant communities in Canada by underscoring their significance and contributions to society? What specific benefits does community-based theatre provide for marginalized immigrant participants? What are some of the assumptions, practices, and exclusions that can erode the benefits of community-based theatre? What elements must be present and what others absent to ensure that community-based theatre reaches its promise as a catalyst for empowerment?

As *Tomorrow's Time* is a production about breast health and is targeted at women, the paper's analytical framework takes into account contemporary feminist perspectives and discourses that help make clear the ways in which gender intersects with other identity markers such as race, class, nationality and language group to produce experiences of marginalization. Postcolonial feminist thought has been particularly helpful in illuminating the intersecting and multiple forms of oppression experienced by marginalized women and advocating for speaking into the silences and gaps that constitute their experience. Theatrical productions that showcase immigrant female actors and/or focus on issues affecting them is one way of speaking into the silences and gaps. This can come in the form of overtly political scripts such as *Speak Legal* which Company of Sirens, a Toronto professional theatre company, produced to speak to the racial and gender biases with the legal system at the behest of the Coordinator of the

Justices of the Peace and the Attorney General's office; or in the form of less overtly politicized plays which, because marginalized/immigrant women are an integral aspect of the productions, inevitably – if not intentionally – address the particular challenges faced by such women.

Tomorrow's Time falls into the second category and, even though actual performances of the play shy away from dealing with how race, nationality and the politicized status of being an “immigrant” impact on women's breast health (the play limits its engagement with the subject to simply drawing actors from “newcomer” groups and glossing the less problematic aspects of language differences in one vignette), the production *process* is itself very revealing in terms of these issues. Thobani and Bannerji decry the state's positioning of Canadian immigrant women of colour as outsiders, burdens and threats to the nation and the cause of economic and political ills that are wholly extraneous to them (279-312; “On the Dark Side”103-128). In mainstream media, “minority women and men continue to be (mis)represented in terms of invisibility, stereotyped, treated as problem people, white-washed or reduced to decorative props” (Fleras and Elliott 137). In response to this racialization, this paper explores whether community-based theatre enables immigrant women the opportunity to “to negotiate ... the invisibility of [their] cultural experience and the visibility of stereotypes of colour and gender” in Canada (MacMillan 63). Can the stages of immigrant community-based theatre be considered as public incarnations of Homi Bhabha's “third space” where immigrants can “articulate their lived experience in order to create the meaning of their multiple and contingent identities” (Sajnani 33)?

Augusto Boal, considered the parent of Theatre of the Oppressed, contends that the origin of all theatre is very closely related to what is now considered community-based theatre:

‘Theatre’ was the people singing freely in the open air; the theatrical performance was created by and for the people. It was a celebration in which all could participate freely. Then came the aristocracy and established divisions: some people will go to the stage and only they will be able to act; the rest will remain seated, receptive, passive – these will be the spectators, the masses, the people. And in order that the spectacle may efficiently reflect the dominant ideology, the aristocracy established another division: some actors will be protagonists (aristocrats) and the rest will be the chorus – symbolizing, in one way or another, the mass. (ix)

According to Boal, then, at its birth, power had no place in theatre; or if it did, was distributed equitably and so created community, rather than factions. The marginalization of specific communities, in this case the Canadian immigrant female community from Canadian mainstream theatre, suggests that instead of evolving, theatre has, in a meaningful sense, degenerated. However, community-based theatre may offer what may be determined as a return route to theatre as it was and ought to be: a creative refuge and place of promise where everyone has a voice. The underlying aspiration of this paper is to examine the transformative and empowering results that manifest themselves in participating immigrant Canadians’ lives when theatre returns to the characteristics it bore at its inception and isolate what aspects facilitate these occurrences such that a best practice, or a theatrical template, can be developed for future practitioners of immigrant community-based theatre.

Chapter Two: Tomorrow's Time as Community-Based Theatre

Although my interviews with the participants and facilitator of *Tomorrow's Time* inform much of the discussion in this paper, to preface the discussion that is to follow, it is important to note, at the outset, that the ownership and control of *Tomorrow's Time* began and has remained with the funding body, CBCF—with this ownership facilitated by the WWCC. This designation of power determines that *Tomorrow's Time* is an example of educational community-based theatre, rather than popular theatre, as defined by Prentki and Selman.

While no one source can be considered to be authoritative, *Popular Theatre in Political Culture* provides several essential definitions for the purposes of this particular inquiry. According to Prentki and Selman, “‘community-based theatre’ refers to the broadest spectrum of theatre which embraces community, education and social concerns and which is located within ‘community’, be it a community of interest or one of geography” (Prentki and Selman 13). They assert that “while ‘popular theatre’ is part of community-based theatre, the term implies community involvement and ownership of the process and content of the theatre” (Prentki and Selman 13) while social or educational theatre involves “the agenda being set from outside the community” (Prentki and Selman 13). To illustrate this distinction, Prentki and Selman suggest that “theatre where the content, messages and goals are defined by a health agency comes up beside popular theatre, but is better described as ‘social’ or ‘educational’ theatre” (13), thereby clearly positioning *Tomorrow's Time* as educational theatre and thus within the confines of community-based theatre, but outside those of popular theatre. Although Prentki and Selman have created these clear distinctions between community-based theatre and the

more exclusive popular theatre, an examination of *Tomorrow's Time* suggests a more fluid spectrum where community-based educative theatre adopts traits of popular theatre and vice versa, where actual delineations of power, on occasion, deviate from official ones. It is with this observation that applicable literature addressing popular theatre is included in this paper.

The Literature: Definitions and Terms

Epskamp deepens our understanding of educational community-based theatre:

Educative theatre [distinguishes] itself from other types of theatre because of the fact that it [aims] primarily at the process of raising awareness among their audience, to which the medium of theatre [is] subordinate. First of all, educative theatre [is] meant to change the view which the target groups [have] of reality: to have them consider things in a different way than they [are] used to. Secondly, educative theatre [is] designed to provide as many means as possible for the target group to realize the desired interventions of their reality. [Educative theatre focuses] on problem raising productions for a very consciously chosen target group. (48)

When applied to *Tomorrow's Time*, the target group is the immigrant women in the audience and the awareness they are led to in the play is the importance of taking care of their health in general and, more particularly, to be able to detect breast cancer early through self-examination and taking regular mammograms.

Support for these definitions can be found across the border in Cohen-Cruz's *Local Acts: Community-Based Performance in the United States*. Cohen-Cruz suggests that community-based performance is "usually a response to a collectively significant issue or circumstance. It is a collaboration between an artist or ensemble and a 'community' in that the latter is a primary source of the text, possibly of performers as well, and definitely a goodly portion of the audience" (2). In *Tomorrow's Time*, then, the specific community is Canadian immigrant women of colour, as represented on stage

and in the audience, and the collectively significant issue is breast cancer awareness and prevention.

According to Prentki and Selman:

Theatre makes concepts concrete and real for people. It involves its audience both intellectually and emotionally, it sensitizes audiences to issues, ideas and people portrayed, and it engenders a personal connection with the events and characters watched on stage. Community based theatre goes a step further; when a play is directly relevant to audience members' lives and concerns, a process begins which can lead to deeper understanding and change. Observers recognize the character(s) and their dilemmas and identify with the people portrayed. And because they can watch rather than live the experience, they also objectify the problems, and in so doing begin to be able to think about possible solutions or alternative actions. The combining of empathetic involvement with the opportunity to observe, analyse and form opinions regarding the characters' actions creates a condition where an audience both wants to think and has the opportunity to problem solve in a safe but vital environment. (8)

Although much of the literature concerned with Canadian community-based theatre, particularly of the educational variety, focuses on the experiences of the facilitator or the intended outcomes for the audience, there is room for documentation of the experiences of those who participate as the actors. One objective of this paper is to fill that gap and to shed light on the transformational aspects of community-based theatrical involvement for Canadian immigrant women.

Chapter Three: Practice, Problems, Potential

Practice

After securing funding from the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, *Tomorrow's Time* launched in its most preliminary stages in September 2003 as an initiative of the WWCC. From September 2003 to September 2004, the WWCC began the scriptwriting process with an information gathering phase. Aida Jordao, a popular

theatre practitioner, was hired to facilitate *Tomorrow's Time* throughout its development as drama into theatre. Thirteen theatre workshops were led by Aida, with approximately fifteen women, which included breast cancer survivors, immigrants with a particular interest in women's health, cancer survivors, and newcomers who had family members with breast cancer acting as participants. The objective of these workshops was two-fold: to solicit stories about women's breast screening and breast cancer experiences and to begin the training of non-professional actors. Additionally, eight one-on-one interviews were conducted with immigrant breast cancer survivors to record their personal experiences with diagnosis and treatment and to identify the barriers that prevented women from accessing equal breast health care. Aside from the interviews and workshops, questionnaires were completed by a health promoter, nurse, registered nurse, oncologist, public health nurse, adult educator/therapist, counsellor, social worker, program coordinator/breast health educator, and a community access coordinator addressing what they believed to be the barriers that immigrant women face with regard to breast cancer awareness and insights into how these barriers might be overcome. Finally, consultation meetings were held with key breast cancer agencies to discuss barriers and to obtain and ensure the accuracy of information about breast cancer, prevention strategies, and the key educational messages that should be delivered in the play (Frankel Tomorrow's Time 2).

Following the information gathering phase, the script of *Tomorrow's Time* went through various stages of development. Using the information gathered from the workshops, the initial draft was created by Aida Jordao. After reading this draft, Falia Damianakis, the facilitator, was concerned that Aida's vision for the play was

incompatible with the WWCC's and, eventually, Aida resigned from the project. Lucy, the current coordinator of *Tomorrow's Time*, suggests that Aida was accustomed to working in community-based pure popular theatre rather than community-based educational theatre. Perhaps because of her background, Aida felt strongly that the play's messages should come from the ground up—from the people whose lives were being dramatized – and she had serious reservations about the ownership of this project not being in the hands of the participants but resting instead with the WWCC and the CBCF (Frankel). From the perspective of the CBCF and the WWCC, while innovation and inclusiveness were desirable, it was imperative that *Tomorrow's Time* deliver very specific messages about breast cancer in an accessible manner for a specific audience of newcomers with limited English, and thus the production “couldn't just be fabulous and creative and obscure” (Frankel), which suggests that Aida's version was more concerned with experimenting with form, voice, and content, rather than simply delivering a message.

Consequently, Aida was replaced by a script development consultant who consolidated Aida's script with the information from the interviews and consultations. This working draft of *Tomorrow's Time* was then reviewed by a panel of key agencies that work with immigrant populations as well as health professionals and project participants. Their feedback was incorporated into the script through several drafts, moving back and forth between the consultant and the panel until a draft acceptable to all parties was completed. Initially, the consultant was to assume the role of the director for the duration of the production, but she departed and another director, who will be referred to as Cindy because of the circumstances around her employment and

termination of employment, was hired in September 2004 by the WWCC to assume the role.

Along with Cindy, the WWCC hired five volunteers to act in the play. Linda Dias and Marjeiry Robinson, breast cancer survivors, and Christine Hall, whose sister was battling breast cancer in Trinidad, had participated in the theatre workshops facilitated by Aida and opted to continue on as actors in *Tomorrow's Time*, while Yoseline Aparicico and Vanita Sabharwal, who rounded out the cast, responded to ads circulated by the WWCC.

Yoseline Aparicico, a mother of two, is in her thirties and immigrated to Canada from Venezuela in 1993. Prior to her involvement in *Tomorrow's Time*, Yoseline was a volunteer workshop leader for the WWCC and spoke across Toronto about violence against women. Yoseline plays the role of Isabel, who encourages her best friend, Carmen to go for testing for the lump in her breast. Yoseline had no acting experience before playing Isabel.

Linda Dias is in her forties and identifies as a black woman, African-Indian in origin. Linda was born in Kuwait and immigrated to Canada in the late 1980s. In addition to being a breast cancer survivor, Linda is an advocate for quality healthcare for all marginalized communities. Linda plays the role of Sarita, the daughter of Mrs. Parma, who encourages her reluctant mother to go for a routine mammogram. Prior to acting in *Tomorrow's Time*, Linda had not attempted theatre since she had dabbled in it while she was in boarding school.

Christine Hall, also in her forties, immigrated to Canada from Trinidad in 1989. Christine became involved with *Tomorrow's Time* in response to her sister's battle with

breast cancer. In the fall of 2004 when Christine's sister died of the disease at the age of forty-one, Christine flew to Trinidad to be by her side. Christine plays the role of Carmen, a young wife and mother who finds a lump in her breast. Initially, Carmen refuses to go to the doctor to be tested because she is too busy taking care of her family and is acutely apprehensive about the possible results. Her best friend, Isabel, successfully convinces her to have a mammogram and the result is negative. According to Christine, "When [she] was a little girl, [she] was very animated; [she] would do a beauty contest and make [her] sisters watch it" (Hall). Aside from her childhood living room performances, Christine had done no acting.

Marjeiry Robinson is in her fifties and immigrated to Canada from Guyana in 1987. Marjeiry is a breast cancer survivor, a wife and a mother of three daughters. She works at St. Michael's Hospital and, in addition to participating in *Tomorrow's Time*, is a peer volunteer with the CBCF, providing one-on-one support to women who are diagnosed with breast cancer. She plays the role of Maysa, a wife and mother who is diagnosed with breast cancer, and courageously undergoes successful treatment whilst receiving support from a breast cancer survivor; she becomes a breast cancer prevention and treatment advocate at the conclusion of the play.

Vanita Sabharwal emigrated from India to Canada in 1998. She is in her sixties and is a wife, mother and grandmother who began volunteering in her community one month after her arrival to Toronto and has continued to do so ever since. For the last five years, Vanita has volunteered as a breast cancer educator at the South Asian Women's Centre and books appointments and accompanies elderly South Asian women to their annual mammograms. Vanita says that "[she] loved to do dramas and kavalis

and plays from childhood” and participated in productions in school and university, but never acted in a professional capacity. In *Tomorrow’s Time*, Vanita is Mrs. Parma, who reluctantly goes for a mammogram to appease her daughter, Sarita, and then encourages Sarita herself to make better lifestyle choices for her health.

Lucy Frankel, the current coordinator of *Tomorrow’s Time*, was part of the initial workshops conducted by Aida, as she had lost an aunt and a great aunt to breast cancer. Lucy entered Canada in 1999 as a visitor from England, married a Canadian and remained as an immigrant. Because the CBCF and the WWCC had decided that *Tomorrow’s Time* was primarily intended for an audience of immigrant women of colour who deserved to see themselves reflected in the actors, Lucy was not given a role in the play, but was hired as the stage manager for the production. In England, Lucy had participated in theatre in university and had used drama as a tool for assertiveness training in her role as a community worker.

From September to mid-November 2004, the script was workshopped with the actors and changes were incorporated in constant consultation with Falia and the panel of health professionals. The five participants volunteered over one thousand hours over three months in practices and received very small honourariums over the period. Although rehearsals were intended to be held Tuesday and Thursday evenings from four o’clock to seven o’clock, they often extended to eleven o’clock and, on Saturdays, the participants rehearsed for seven hours. In November, the participants gave a review performance with the audience consisting of those who had been involved in the script development process. The feedback forms the audience completed were analyzed by Cindy, Falia and the panel and the script was modified accordingly to create a final

version for touring. For reasons that will be discussed in the next section of this paper, Cindy was asked to leave her position before performances began and a replacement was not hired. Instead, Lucy acted as director of the play for the final three rehearsals.

From November 2004 to February 2005, the period for which funding was available, and in partnership with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), *Tomorrow's Time* was presented to adult ESL learners, male and female, at TDSB sites across the GTA along with Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada classes and community centres. Additionally, a partnership with Toronto Public Health ensured a Toronto Public Health nurse co-facilitated the Q & A discussion session at the end of each performance. Volunteers who had participated in the early development phase were also trained to co-facilitate this session. Breast cancer educational materials were also distributed at this time. During these four months, *Tomorrow's Time* was performed to over twelve thousand newcomers.

The WWCC successfully applied for a renewal in funding for *Tomorrow's Time* and a second phase began in November 2005 which included several changes. At this stage, Falia, who felt she had accomplished her goals as coordinator with the development and launch of the production, resigned as coordinator and Lucy was hired to replace her. Furthermore, after one of the participants fell ill and missed a performance during the previous run, with Lucy filling in for her using a script onstage, the WWCC decided that understudies were necessary since it was not feasible to cancel performances for audiences of one hundred ESL students who had been transported to one location. Due to time constraints, Lucy hired professional immigrant actors to fill the understudy positions. Also at this point, an increase in funding allowed for the WWCC and the

participants to sign a contract that ensured payment for the performances for both the actors and the understudies.

Although the executive director of the WWCC believed that Lucy could act as director for the production, Lucy herself felt that a professional director with a popular theatre background would be better suited to helping the women develop their acting skills in the interim period before they began a new series of performances in March 2006. After detailed interviews, Lucy hired Tamara in January 2006 and while she did not make any fundamental changes to the production to avoid taking the participants out of the comfort zone they had established, Tamara was able to equip the women with new acting tools as well as a simplified script that felt more organic to the participants. As before, this newest version required and was given approval by the CBCF.

From March 2006 to the present, *Tomorrow's Time* reconvened its performances for ESL students and other immigrant audiences. After a summer hiatus, the women will stage the play for several final performances in October in honour of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Because of the significant amount of resources necessary to tour the production, the desire to make *Tomorrow's Time* more mobile and in recognition that not all immigrant women attend ESL classes, for the next phase of *Tomorrow's Time*, Lucy has designed a Breast Cancer Peer Education Workshop that will begin in fall 2006 and run in diverse communities for eighteen sessions until January 2007. Immigrant women from Toronto will be hired to lead workshops at health centres and community health centres, each with ten participants, in hopes that a more intimate environment will facilitate more opportunity for discussion and interaction. The workshops will include

the viewing of a DVD of a performance of *Tomorrow's Time* and interviews with the participants, followed by a breast health workshop. They will be delivered in English by bilingual leaders who will be able to translate or give further explanation in a second language. Each participant will be given a free copy of the DVD and a facilitator's guide with the hope that they will be able to run their own workshop. Ideally, the initial eighteen workshops have the possibility of giving birth to one hundred and eighty future workshops. A further 250 DVDs will be distributed to Ontario Breast Cancer Screening sites across Ontario with the aim of reaching immigrant women in smaller communities.

The anticipated final stage of *Tomorrow's Time* is an adaptation of the production that would assist in creating a dialogue with healthcare workers about cultural sensitivity and the barriers immigrant women face in accessing breast cancer services and developing awareness around this problem. Lucy intends to run workshops with healthcare professionals to explore how the project can be used to educate healthcare workers. Because of her awareness that those who are already working in the healthcare field have scant time for professional development, Lucy believes that the ideal target population for this stage of *Tomorrow's Time* might be healthcare students, particularly nurses and doctors.

Problems

When evaluating community-based theatre, Cohen-Cruz provides a clear guideline:

Criticism of community-based performance should not be based on traditional aesthetic models. Instead, community-based performance criticism necessarily involves an evaluation of "what takes place in the stages leading up to and following such a performance" because the process-oriented character and broader social goals of these events are indispensable to their meaning and significance. (11)

The discussion here heeds this counsel and the focus will be mainly on the participants' experiences preparing for the staging of *Tomorrow's Time*. Given that *Tomorrow's Time* is the WWCC's first attempt at facilitating community-based theatre, a learning curve is to be expected. It is imperative to note that an understanding of specific areas of weakness in *Tomorrow's Time* as an example of immigrant community-based theatre will serve to strengthen future projects developed in the same spirit.

Perhaps the most unsavoury aspect in the development of *Tomorrow's Time* was the leadership of the first director, Cindy. Several of the women describe her as a threatening figure. Hall is diplomatic in her reservations about Cindy:

We had one director [who] was not nice at all. I think she was an ... older woman, my age ... I would think she was an immigrant. There [were] no communication skills. She was very nice; I could see a nice person inside; but there [were] no communication skills. She couldn't really communicate as a director should communicate with actors. I think everybody realized that. Management should have addressed it and [hired] a new person. It was, at that point, Lucy started off originally [as] stage manager – I think nobody wanted to rock the boat. I think mentally [Cindy] really affected a lot of people. There were a lot of conflicts.

Lucy speaks more frankly about Cindy's mistreatment of the women and illustrates the disconnection between Cindy's personal motivations and the mandate of the project to develop the skills of non-professional actors:

Cindy told [the women] to do things a certain way [that] didn't come from within. [She] drilled into them.... Cindy claimed she had done [a lot] of work in the community – [including] issue based theatre, and had a lot of experience, [but she was a] bully, [who] bullied the actors. [She was] only interested in her product – hierarchical in the way she treated people; [it was] not a healthy environment for the actors to be in. (Frankel)

Linda, perhaps, is the participant who suffered the most due to Cindy's inappropriate attitude and approaches. The conflict that arose between the two provides an

unfortunate example of the risks involved and functions as a warning about the potential for inflicting a great deal of harm on participants of community-based theatre:

The WWCC hired someone who turned out to be a tyrant—who bullied us, was so oppressive and abusive that finally I put my foot down and I wrote an email to the executive director of WWCC and I said, “You know what, you protect your volunteers, your staff from harassment at the workplace, we should be getting the same protection,” so they fired her ass. Near the main performance, we had to let her go. She yelled a lot [at] us and talked down to us ... For example, I was struggling with some of my medications at one point in time and experienced a lot of fatigue and muscle stiffness and joint pain with the drugs I [was] on and I think it was in-between one of the meds and I wasn’t feeling too well and she was downright nasty about that. And at one point she said to me, “You know I can get rid of you,” and I said to her, “Well just do it and let’s see if I give a shit.” I went to the coordinator and I said, “This is what happened and you know what? I can just walk away from this and I don’t need this in my life.” But because we cared about the coordinator, Lucy and Falia, and we cared about the project, a lot of us put up with shit, and we cared about the play and we did what we did until [the executive director] stepped in and got rid of the Cindy ... As a survivor, [Cindy] had totally no context in terms of [what it was like for a] survivor. She expected us to be actors doing the actor thing, never figured out that some of us were in treatment, so that to me was the toughest part. (Dias)

Linda’s experiences as a survivor of breast cancer make her a significant and particular asset to this project which Cindy subverted into a weakness. It is unconscionable that Cindy had no knowledge of or sensitivity towards Linda’s health when she was directing her in a play about breast cancer. As the facilitator of *Tomorrow’s Time*, responsibility for Cindy’s abuse of her position lies with the WWCC. According to Lucy, the WWCC administration, while having the best interests of the participants at heart, does not have a theatre background and, therefore, didn’t necessarily understand what it entailed and hired and trusted Cindy (Frankel). When the role of the director, especially in community-based theatre (where the actors have little or no theatrical experience and are thus particularly vulnerable and presumably representing marginalized communities and therefore doubly so), is such a profoundly powerful one, the organization or people

responsible for hiring her cannot underestimate the critical importance of exercising the utmost discretion. The ability for immigrant community-based theatre to facilitate empowerment for its participants is entirely undermined by the presence of an intimidating director. Boon and Plastow suggest that the most sensitive and appropriate directors of community-based theatre “have been forced to question their sense of their *own* expertise or authority – in that sense, willingly to disempower themselves – in favour of more open-ended, democratic and meaningful learning practices” (3-4). De Guevera, herself a theatre professional, speaks to the adjustments that must be made when someone shifts from working in professional theatre to community-based theatre.

Theatre professionals, though, must prepare themselves to work in the environment that community plays require. Actors are sometimes trained to survive in a very harsh and competitive world, and the attitudes that are necessary in that world are different from the ones required to truly collaborate with a community. (31)

Self-reflection, a sensitivity that encompasses humility, even, may be crucial traits in a director of community-based theatre. When the WWCC hired its second director, they made it a priority to replace Cindy with someone who would treat the participants with respect (Frankel). “A gruelling interview process” (Frankel) involving three interviewers, including Lucy, who had the final veto, resulted in the hiring of Tamara. Linda, who had experienced significant trauma with Cindy, responded to Tamara positively:

[With] [t]his new director, we had to have a few sessions about how we were feeling and our discomfort ... we were able to have a dialogue with her and she was aware of what had happened and was sensitive to that. It took me a while—I hadn’t really processed the feelings of fear and terror I had experienced with [Cindy]. (Dias)

However, in her interview, Linda also expressed her preference for a particular kind of director: “I would have wanted to see what it would be like to have a director of colour” (Dias). Rebecca Knowles, part of the celebrated Sistren Theatre Collective in Jamaica, supports Linda’s assertion regarding the importance of having a director who is *of* the community: “To make a group work, I think you have to be living in the community—day to day, hour to hour—then the group will keep together. If you’re not living in the community, people don’t know enough about you to make it work” (Di Cenzo and Bennett 92). And, as demonstrated by the unacceptably high cost of Cindy’s ignorance of Linda’s health issues, the level of knowledge and understanding between a director and a participant in community-based theatre must not only be significant, but also reciprocal.

Compensation is a second area of concern where Lucy and the participants feel the necessity for improvement. Lucy suggested that the women were overworked and thus, made their compensation a priority in the second grant application:

Women received a very small honorarium while rehearsing on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 4pm sometimes to 11pm and [on] Saturday, all day, a 7 hour day. [When applying for the second grant] we asked for a big amount so that the women could be paid properly. (Frankel)

The women, who worked during the day and have families waiting at home, made a tremendous commitment to the development of the project. Christine believes there should be greater than a token recognition of their hard work:

Initially, we volunteered ... but it was a lot of time commitment and we didn’t get paid ... and sometimes it would even be 4.30 in the evening after work, I’d be hustling it downtown and ... we had that not-so-nice director [who] would keep us in late and there’d be shouting. And we just [weren’t] getting paid. And then some of us, Marjeiry and Linda had voiced it and so on. [WWCC] didn’t have funding, [eventually] funding was negotiated and we did get paid honourariums. [D]uring the workshops we did get an

honourarium, but it was nothing, just for gas or taxi or something. \$20 or something. I would definitely say at the beginning have everything very clearly marked out even though you're volunteering. It's great, they provide refreshments, for a time, but not for this, the third year? This round, when we perform, we are getting paid. There's a formal contract that they developed ... I consider it an honourarium, not a lot. For a performance, it's \$60. It's better than \$20. A lot of times we would have a rehearsal from 4.30 to 7.30 and you [didn't] get compensated for extra hours. (Hall)

Linda expresses frustration that the honourarium that they do receive is shared with the professional understudies, perhaps because it sends a message, in part, that the participants' work is undervalued:

On one level we thought that [their] money should come to us because [although] we know we got an honourarium, we would have liked to have their money, too. They came in after the fact and we couldn't really bond with them and they were actors and it was kind of like that feeling of we were not up to par with them and their skills and we were pissed that they were getting paid for nothing. (Dias)

The service that the participants of *Tomorrow's Time* provide by educating their peers about breast cancer prevention and the countless hours they have spent in rehearsals and performance demand that they receive a reasonable, yet appropriate compensation.

Although WWCC may not have been able to anticipate the participants' considerable investment of time when applying for funding from the CBCF due to their inexperience, in future, any organization that seeks to develop a similar project must include honourariums, at the very least, as a fixed budget line in their grant proposals. Not only would this provide the women with monetary compensation for their contributions, but a tangible recognition of their dedication and passion. Considering the success and reach of *Tomorrow's Time*, it is unfortunate that Linda has any cause to question the CBCF and WWCC's appreciation of the role of the participants. Furthermore, with productions that are as ambitious as *Tomorrow's Time*, a contract established at the outset of the

process would serve to ensure the protection of the participants. The women who participated in *Sisters/Strangers* “were never told that attendance was mandatory. Participation in the project had to be totally voluntary. [They] knew that immigrant women, for the most part, had a deep need to express their feelings and they would attend if at all possible” (De Guevera 29). Canadian immigrant women’s passion for performance cannot be taken for granted and must never be exploited. It would be a shame if immigrant community-based theatre, instead of operating as a site of affirmation and possibility, becomes yet another example of Canadian immigrant women being treated inequitably.

As aforementioned, the development of the script of *Tomorrow’s Time* was tightly controlled from the commencement of the project and throughout by the CBCF. Although this denotes *Tomorrow’s Time* as educational, community-based theatre rather than popular theatre, it is significant that three of the participants in the production, Christine, Linda, and Marjeiry, also took part in the initial information gathering workshops from which the script originated and renders relevant a discussion of the scripting process. All five of the participants note that the general feedback they offered about their roles was taken into account by the scriptwriters and directors throughout the script development process. For example, their requested changes regarding the naturalness of the wording or accessibility of the language for ESL audiences or more action for the characters were always incorporated (Hall, Sabharwal, Aparicico, Dias, Robinson). A prompting to consider the overall messages of the play delivered interesting responses. While *Tomorrow’s Time* promotes breast cancer prevention by advocating immigrant women’s accessing of the healthcare system, it does not openly

address, let alone problematize, the systemic inequities that immigrant women face when they attempt to do so. When this aspect was mentioned to the participants, Christine, Vanita and Yoseline supported the inclusion of the darker realities of immigrant women healthcare in Canada (Hall, Sabharwal, and Aparicico); however, it is Marjeiry and Linda, the two breast cancer survivors in *Tomorrow's Time*, who provide the strongest, and interestingly, contrasting opinions about the scripting process and final product. Marjeiry, whose canoeing anecdote was included in the play, feels satisfied with the editing process:

When I saw the video, I found it boring for a lay person to watch; it was not boring for me, [as] a breast cancer survivor. I wanted it to be aimed at all women. I found that I needed more action, rather than just sitting there ... If English is their second language, I didn't want them just sitting there, listening to me rattling on because I wasn't sure how much [they'd] understand and how [long] their concentration span [was] because it was meant for a certain level of class ... I could glance as I [was] talking and you know, there'd be fidgeting. I wanted more action in my area, the part where I'm talking and I think the others did too. That part I wanted changed and Tamara, the new director, changed it ... And I like how it changed and I really like how it evolved, the part with the drowning—I didn't know how to swim and I was doing dragonboat paddling ... in New Zealand ... and I had just learned to swim one end of the pool to the other end of the pool because I had to sign a waiver saying I could swim. [T]he boat in the South Pacific turned because we were kneeling and paddling and there were high waves and I could see the boat turning over and I'm holding onto this edge and [then the] boat turned right over. I'm under the water and I'm saying, 'Don't panic, you've got to live, you've been through a lot, you've come this far, and you're not going to get drowned in South Pacific,' and I held onto the boat for dear life. I started to think of my family back home in Canada; all sorts of things went through my mind ... That part they wanted in the play. All of this we talked [about] in the workshop and the director chose what she wanted to include, but I liked that ... [There was] not really anything missing from the script, because I think we moved forward in the play. We didn't want the negative part of it to come out. We wanted to portray that this is available. We [didn't] want them to know that it wasn't available and now it's available—it's a waste of time ... I didn't think the obstacles were important. The play had a limited time, so we had to prioritize what was more important to be in the play. The group of professionals [from the] WWWC and CBCF decided what was in the play because they funded it and they had to approve everything that was in it

... Not getting the support when I was diagnosed, that was not in the play, but to me, [that is a] negativity to the play. I didn't care whether they put it in the play or not. (Robinson)

The participants in *Sisters/Strangers* share Marjeiry's desire to stage a production with a positive perspective, whatever the challenging realities of their lives may be:

During the preliminary readings of the script, the women had made quite clear that they wanted *Sisters/Strangers* to be a celebration of their achievements, of the way they had coped with the different challenges they had encountered as immigrants. As a woman put it, 'we do not want to feel down, stuck in all the problems.' So we purposefully looked for stories with a positive ending. (De Guevera 30)

Linda, however, is reluctant to edit content and feels dismayed that some parts of her story were absent from the production. She feels that the critical anecdotes about her experiences as young woman with cancer and as a woman of colour with cancer were left out against her will.

[They] forgot the young women's piece, the navigating piece. [The] impact on fertility and loss of fertility is massive. I was chemically induced to menopause; It wasn't like I had x number of years to wait until menopause, it was like, next week it's going to happen ... We had to have certain messages ... in the play. [It was the] CBCF mandate. [They had] final editorial say ... I wasn't comfortable—other stuff which we workshoped and wanted, that couldn't get in. Part of it was [due to] time constraints and staying on message. I wasn't pleased with that. I would have liked for us to really write the script, but they got somebody else—and in fact it was a white woman and I was just so not happy with that. I would have [had] a lot of our experiences in the script—anecdotal stuff. (Dias)

Catherine Graham advocates the approach of Théâtre Parminou, based in Victoriaville, Quebec in allowing the participants to shape the script in community-based popular theatre:

Maureen Martineau, the company's Co-Artistic Director, explained to me that the Parminou takes a flexible approach to workshops because the company wants to hear how people tell their own stories: 'We don't know in advance what people are going to tell us,' she said, 'but we do know that we are looking for emotion, lived experiences, testimonials, and also a set of images

that is linked to the theme and to the culture of the people who are telling the stories. That's very important to us, but we don't really care if we use our own exercises to get there.' By using a workshop model designed to elicit everyday performance practices of the community group ... the Parminou gathers not only 'facts' but standpoints and ways of performing those standpoints. This process allows the Parminou's facilitators to gain insight into the cultures of various groups and to use this insight to structure performance texts. (106)

Graham illuminates the weaknesses of Headlines Theatre, based in Vancouver, where "[t]he choice of activities is largely determined by the facilitators' presuppositions about what is blocking broad social participation in particular areas" (102). According to Graham, this approach leads to "participants complaining that they don't feel they are in control of how their story is told" (104).

Although Graham's findings relate directly to pure popular theatre, they are relevant to *Tomorrow's Time* in that the first director Christine, Linda, and Marjeiry encountered was Aida, a popular theatre practitioner. When WWCC hired Aida, they, perhaps unintentionally, signalled to the participants that their voices would figure significantly in the script, justifying Linda's dismay about the exclusion of her contributions. Lucy emphasizes the importance of full disclosure of intention at the stage of information gathering:

It was difficult when Aida left; they didn't really understand. Because of the way the workshops were run, [they] thought that a lot of what they had done in their improvisations would be put into the script ... Some of it [was] used; a lot of it [was] not used ... [There needs to be a] balance. [We] want to give participants ownership, but at the same time, they need to understand that this project serves a very specific purpose. [We] can't always [use what they share] because it's not necessarily relevant. Some of them had written monologues, but they weren't relevant to what we needed to do ... Ultimately, they understood, but if [a project like *Tomorrow's Time* is] done again, there needs to be [an explanation of] ... how it's going to work [that we] may use some things and not other things. (Frankel)

Julie Salverson, one of the most prominent practitioners of popular theatre in Canada, stresses the sacredness of sharing on the part of the participants. Although she refers to a production where individuals testified about experiences of violence, arguably, her comments are applicable to those who have suffered a life-threatening illness, such as breast cancer:

And what is the cost to the speaker? Taking responsibility should extend beyond an ongoing inventory of who we are as individuals to an understanding that there are stakes for those with whom we work--stakes that exist, but are never more than partially knowable. Thoughtlessly soliciting autobiography may reproduce a form of cultural colonialism that is at the very least voyeuristic. This is particularly true when the voice of the artist or educator herself goes unexamined; or, when the choices students or project participants make for speech are privileged over choices made for silence, neglecting the highly complex negotiations that are involved in the politics of knowing and being known. (184)

If this paper advocates the telling of stories of immigrant Canadians on the stage, then it must be on the condition that while mistakes in implementing community-based theatre are understandable, even, at times, unavoidable, every possible effort must be made to create as safe a space as possible for those who are vulnerable, but yet generous and brave enough to share their stories.

Potential

Boon and Plastow hold that “empowerment is challenging, difficult to quantify, and an ongoing process affecting facilitators, participants and audiences to varying degrees at various times” (Boon and Plastow 7-8). This becomes apparent when indexing the transformative elements of *Tomorrow's Time* for the diverse women involved. Although it is indeed difficult to quantify the subtle ways in which this production empowered the participants, there are some broader, common themes that

arose during the interviews. They include the building of confidence, the ignition of a love for acting, the facilitation of community, and the joy of educating peers.

For several of the women involved in *Tomorrow's Time*, learning lines and acting in the production created a profound sense of accomplishment and a surge in confidence levels. Christine, who is a self-described “shy person” found a public space to be visible and derives great confidence from the experience:

It asks [for] a lot of effort—I’m a very shy person. It makes me feel I’ve as though I’ve accomplished something when I go onstage and do my performance ... My objective, in addition to helping and educating, was actually breaking through my own personal inadequacies [and] personal growth development. ... The most important thing for me is the sense of satisfaction for having the courage to go up on stage in front of two hundred people and performing and everybody thinking I’m so confident [when] behind that I’m shaking. That’s the biggest achievement and ... I always feel with having a son, [I have to] lead by example ... I think it’s important for me to do what my heart [tells] me to do and show my son that I can set goals and objectives and once I work hard towards them, I can accomplish [them]... I’ve just kind of set up little goals and one of the goals was to perform and go out there and perform the play. (Hall)

Community-based theatre offers individuals opportunities to make salient those talents and abilities that might otherwise remain dormant. Marjeiry was astounded by her ability to prepare for the role with the greatest number of lines:

It was one of the things I didn’t think I could have done ... I said, “No no no, I can’t do that,” and then I amazed myself. I saw the script and they said, “Which role would you like to play?” and I said, “Carmen,” and [Aida] said, “Oh no, we made Maysa just for you.” And I said, “That’s a lot of lines to learn,” and she said, “You can do it.” I was dreading memorizing lines. I didn’t dread the performing of it ... It was the learning of the lines at my age ... I work 8-4, I dragonboat paddle, I run, I hike, how am I going to find time to learn these lines? I went home and told my husband and he said, “We’ll get you a tape recorder.” And I did the lines in the tape recorder one night and I did it on the subway and I was amazed at how I remembered. (Robinson)

When asked how participating in *Tomorrow's Time* has affected her life in general, Vanita simply states: "I become more confident, now I can do anything, anytime, anywhere" (Sabharwal). Lucy, too, describes this experience as confidence-building, as she was given more and more responsibility, having moved from participant to stage manager to temporary director to coordinator in the course of the project. Although *Tomorrow's Time* was a challenge for the women involved, the success resulted in a new understanding of their strengths and abilities.

Because the women were not professional actors, their participation in *Tomorrow's Time* initiated them into a new creative realm and, for two, served as a catalyst for considering a professional career in acting. This is no insignificant achievement, considering the difficulties of connecting immigrants with opportunities to pursue the arts, as De Guevera articulates:

[M]ost immigrant women, especially when newcomers, are very focused on solving the practical problems of adapting to their new lives and recreating their homes. There's little time to pursue artistic self-expression, even for those who had a background in the arts in their countries of origin. (29)

While none of the women in *Tomorrow's Time* consider themselves newcomers, none had seriously acted before this project. Previously, Linda felt it was not available to her as a woman of colour: "I thought of it as a white thing and when I was in university (at York), I tried to take a drama course and then when I went it was all white folks and I just quit. I was just like, 'I can't do this'" (Dias). And although initially, Cindy had terrified her, Linda found herself exploring her identity as an actor under Tamara's tutelage:

I enjoyed the development of skills in a whole other area. This year with the new director, we learned new things. [Tamara] brought in a voice coach and we tried out different things we had not done before ... Had we had the

experience we had this year, we think it would have been very different last year. Last year was very controlled, very limiting; it was what [Cindy] wanted the way she wanted. This year was different ... we explored our characters a little bit more so it felt like we were actually acting and that was a whole other skill. (Dias)

Vanita and Yoseline are the two participants who have “caught the acting bug” in a serious way. *Tomorrow’s Time* provided Yoseline, who had long fostered a desire to pursue acting with the opportunity to gain experience and make an informed decision about developing a career in the field:

I earned more confidence. I was always afraid of saying, ‘I want to be an actor’. Culturally, my mother was against it. I opened up and accepted [that] this is what I love doing. I’m willing to take the good and the bad. *Tomorrow’s Time* has given me that strength. (Aparicico)

Vanita, in the course of the interview, asked the interviewer to notify her of any acting opportunities that might be available for her. This love for acting and the courage that accompanies it is heartening, especially in light of the challenges Yoseline and Vanita may face as immigrant female actors as indicated in the following observation from a theatre practitioner:

On two occasions, former actresses whom we interviewed decided against participating in the project because they felt that their language skills were not adequate enough to allow them to feel comfortable performing in public. To me, this reluctance indicated how hard it is for immigrant women to incorporate themselves into the artistic life of their new country, especially into theatre. (De Guevera 29)

Huynhee Seo, a theatre artist in South Korea who came to Canada in 1977 intending to pursue theatre, and who, in 2004, had yet to act on a stage put it this way: “I have spent many years learning English and working at jobs in a factory and restaurant. It’s difficult for immigrants. I have not been able to do theatre” (Grant 24). Since

Tomorrow's Time, Yoseline has appeared in two television commercials and continues to pursue acting projects.

The relevance and power of community for any individual cannot be underestimated. Both Sajnani and De Guevera emphasize the importance of the sense of community their productions fostered. Sajnani says: "The time we spent as a group had created a generous space in which my experiences ... could exist along side the diversity of experiences shared by my collaborators ... I began to envision this project as one of community building that could extend beyond platitudes about interracial harmony into mutual respect" (35). A participant in *Sisters/Strangers* reveals, "'For six years I have lived alone here, feeling like a crazy woman. Now I feel healthy again'" (De Guevera 31). What is unique to the type of community that *Tomorrow's Time* enabled is its uncommonness. That five immigrant women of colour from various cultures, countries of origin and age brackets meet at all is rare, that they collaborate in a significant, artistic sphere, whilst concurrently building tender and enduring personal bonds is almost unimaginable, but one of the finest possibilities of the grand experiment of Canada, at its best, can offer. *Tomorrow's Time* provides Christine with mentorship in the form of Marjeiry:

Marjeiry is very verbal and Linda is very verbal. Marjeiry I really admire; she's almost 60 and she's really a fighter. I think it's what they've gone through but actually, I think it's their personality. They're ... advocates - real, true advocates ... [Marjeiry] actually gives me motivation, makes me feel as though there's hope. She just an amazing person ... They're all great people and I'm thankful for all of them. (Hall)

For marginalized women who are isolated, community-based theatre has the potential to create a network of support that can sustain individuals, particularly those facing hardship.

Linda found in the participants of *Tomorrow's Time* the understanding that she could not locate elsewhere:

I appreciate the sense of community with the women—the actors ... When I went to Wellspring for support it totally sucked on two levels. One, ... I [was] sitting with a bunch of post-menopausal women who didn't understand my issues around fertility and dating and sexuality ... and they were all white women and I [didn't] feel comfortable ... These [*Tomorrow's Time* participants] were women of colour that I saw on a regular basis and [they were] the main area of support in my life because I didn't have that elsewhere in my life and I didn't have any family support. So there was that sense of connection and it gave me a sense of hope, because if it wasn't there, I think I would have been really, really struggling and vulnerable. It was like a family ... And a couple of times, both Marjeiry and I might have been nervous about things that were going on with us and having to be vigilant about our health and there was a place to show our fears and feel safe about that. And of course, Christina's sister dying affected all of us ... It has been healthy for me in terms of my health, with my treatment. I've been struggling with depression as one of the side-effects. [It was good] just being at a place where I could chill and ... be supported. (Dias)

Marjeiry illustrates that the unlikely camaraderie that was forged during the practices and performances extended into their real lives, suggesting the potential for an enduring and meaningful outcome for participants of community-based theatre:

I was looking for someone who could empathize. When I went to chemo once I was so down and they usually say, "How are you?" and [I said,] "I'm really not feeling good today." I explained to her how I was feeling so depressed and I [was] at home and usually ... watching television; it wasn't interesting. Soap operas [were] worse, talk shows [were] so bad and reading, I got so tired and sleepy after one or two pages. And she said, "You know what? You need a support group. This is the number for you to call." ... The women involved are a wonderful support. We're like a family. Every one of us [has] been very, very caring about each other. That has been ... very important to me - the unit.

When they were asking for understudies, we were very negative to[wards] it because we have been so close, we didn't want to perform with another person. We wanted to perform with each other, because we understood each other. We helped each other a lot ... We were very withdrawn to the understudies when they first joined us ... In the end, you have to see the point of view of the WWCC and the CBCF because anything could happen to me and the play has to go on. Fortunately, nothing happened and a couple of times some of the girls couldn't make it, but for the

real performances, we were all there. The original crew [was] there. I think that was a special effort we made because we were very possessive and selfish. The empathy and understanding about our personal lives was important.

Two of us are like two little mother figures, me and the other girl, Vanita, and then the little ones ... came under our wings like children ... We helped each other along ... Everyone of us understood each other very well and we could tell -- they could tell if something was wrong with me. I could tell if something was wrong with them. [When] one of the girls worried about her child at school, babysitting, we knew exactly. One of them, her sister was dying in Trinidad. We knew when something was wrong to actually stop with the play [to] don't begin yet but ... be there for each other. We [would] talk about ourselves. We would begin [with asking], "How was your day? Was anything bothering you? Do you want to share? Do you want to talk about it? Have you had a bad day? What's happened?" At any point in time, they would say, "Marjeiry, if in the middle of the night you can't sleep, call us." We would never [have met] these women otherwise. We would never have been friends. We sincerely hug and cry and grieve with each other. It's something that is hard to explain and we try to meet at much as possible [in] each other's homes if we [can] and have a little party and get together ... It's a precious friendship ... When something is wrong with one of us, everybody worries. Lucy and Tamara, too. (Robinson)

Vanita and Yoseline, while offering comparatively brief comments about the other participants, echo the sentiments of Christine, Linda and Marjeiry about the unusually strong and poignant bonds they have formed:

We became friends. We love each other very much—we can't live without each other. We had a very good team ... We are lucky to have each other. We hug ... everybody. (Sabharwal)

I learned a lot of strength from the partners. I call them breast cancer warriors. They are more than survivors because of the strength they had pulling themselves together—how much they fought, how much better they got. (Aparicico)

Lucy emphasizes the importance of the support that Linda and Marjeiry, as racialized immigrant breast cancers survivors, found in the group and the difficulty they had finding that kind of support elsewhere:

For the survivors, it was part of the healing process. They became really important, a family. They get support and do something that [is] really

valuable, educating other women. Marjeiry and Linda went to breast cancer support groups, but the resources were aimed at white middle-class women and there was a big gap. (Frankel)

In Wayson Choy's *Jade Peony* and Dionne Brand's *What We All Long For*, there are fictional representations of Canadians from diverse backgrounds forging meaningful and unlikely communities. The community that is the participants of *Tomorrow's Time* goes one step further in that it is real.

Where *Tomorrow's Time* separates itself from *Sisters/Strangers* and *The Body Politic: Common Conversations on Gender and the Nation* is in its educational element. Paradoxically, it is what labels this production as community-based theatre and not popular theatre that is most precious to the participants and thus, conceivably, what empowers them to the greatest degree. Because of its sponsorship by the CBCF and the partnered facilitation by the WWCC, *Tomorrow's Time* gives its participants the chance to be peer educators. The women testify fervently to the importance of informing fellow immigrant women about breast cancer prevention. Christine, who experienced isolation when she first joined her student husband in Canada, (Hall) understands the importance of empathetic community for newcomers:

I thought it was a good opportunity to understand more of cancer, give back, help and also for me to be brave onstage. Just having a platform ... for newcomers to feel comfortable and ... interact or relate [to] what they see. People just like [to see] themselves on stage ... in certain situations ... going through the same things as they may be going through. [There is need for] outreach [for] the immigrant population that may not be exposed to or be able to access resources. After the performance, there's normally a Q & A, a couple of people have actually cried. They ask questions: where should they go for a mammogram ... Most definitely some of the messages have been picked up by the audience. (Hall)

For more politicized, activist participants, community-based theatre provides a venue to actualize their beliefs. Linda, who considers herself an activist for equal access to

health care for minority Canadians, views her participation in *Tomorrow's Time* as a demonstration of her commitment to this struggle:

What was really wonderful to see was that even men were asking questions. But what was really important was to ask them after seeing this, "Do you think you will make time?" And [once] an audience member said, "Yes, we will make time," which is ... a line in our play, so that was very encouraging. Even if a handful of women go and have a mammogram, it's good enough for me. The empowerment of women and early detection through self-examination and mammograms, to demystify the myths and struggles around breast cancer is the most important thing ... White women are a lot more comfortable with their bodies than women of colour, especially communities from the Middle East, certain African countries, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. [They feel] discomfort around the body, [and] undressing in public. The play tried to talk about how if they felt uncomfortable in front of a doctor, [they are] free to get another doctor – it tried to say that. During the Q & A period after the play, [we tried] to tell them what you can do, from our own experience—how Marjeiry and I navigated the experience. My question to everyone is, "When you are doing advocacy, who exactly are you advocating for?" Because if you're advocating for one ... you have to advocate for all ... You have to make sure you're advocating for quality care for all and access to care for all—for marginalized communities.

And it was important to interact with the people who came to the play, answering questions that they had and empowering them further by saying, 'Take control of your health, we did it,' and also telling them that there's life after breast cancer. I think the second time around ... I felt a little more powerful as a character in the play in terms of getting a message out. I felt a little more powerful having an impact in the community. Having people respond to the message and seeing it as important was good enough for me. It made me feel that I had to do my advocacy even more and do it even ... better. It meant that wherever I went, I [would] continue to advocate for women of colour and marginalized communities and [that] I had this to fall back on, because it's ... something to say, "Look, you know we have this project and this impact on the community and this is what's happened." Because if you don't have something, then people think ... no one gives a damn about minority health, so to [be able to] say that was something to stand on. (Dias)

Although Yoseline attributes her experiences in *Tomorrow's Time* for her new commitment to acting, it is the educational aspect of the project that has had the most profound impact on her:

In the audience, there was a preteen. She was twelve or thirteen, and was bothering her grandma for the mammogram: "Grandma, you have to go have a mammogram." My friends made appointments. It's very fulfilling. That's what I loved about it—taking it beyond acting. (Aparicico)

When Marjeiry was diagnosed with cancer, she could not find support from other immigrant woman of colour who shared her experiences. She is determined that other immigrant women do not have to suffer from the same isolation. Community-based theatre may facilitate the transference of newfound empowerment from one marginalized individual to another:

I thought it was excellent information to go out there to an immigrant woman who didn't [want to touch her breast]. Because of the cultural barriers, some women don't want to touch [their] breasts. When I saw how it was put, I thought it was an excellent medium for them to understand that this is important. That you should know your body. Forget about what your culture [says]: "I can't touch my breast," or "This is taboo," or "I shouldn't be doing this." My achievement was the woman should look after her body as one of her number one goals and she must find the time to do this. Women like to put things off. Washing the dishes or going shopping is more important than finding time to make an appointment to go to the doctor.

When I was diagnosed ... I think it was a comfort zone too. I [don't] think I was feeling comfortable talking to someone who was not an immigrant or say, white. I felt more at home to say, "So what do you eat?" I didn't want them to tell me I eat spaghetti and meatballs or whatever. [I wanted to hear] "You know eggplant, and you know dahl? I found that when my mouth didn't have taste, I found that that worked." Because ... I needed them to say exactly what worked for them to get back their taste buds, when they were nauseous, what did they eat what did they do and when they felt down, what worked for them. Whereas sometimes I'm talking to someone who's Canadian and white and they do yoga and to me, what the hell is yoga? ... That lifestyle didn't suit me. I have to go find money to go do yoga. But it was a comfort zone feeling comfortable with another immigrant who would say, "Okay, try this," you know? We prayed a lot. After I was diagnosed and got better, [I thought] I shouldn't let this happen and I joined a support group. Now I'm a peer volunteer with the CCF. Now I can support other women and make sure how I felt, they don't feel. I'm out there as an immigrant woman willing to do anything and [in] our group in Durham, we made sure our the CCF pamphlets for support group ... [is] at the hospital, so women can get it in their package when they have their surgery in the doctor's offices in the surgeon's offices. We made sure that they're there, so [they] won't feel alone. For me, I feel as if I've achieved. I feel if I [could] get

two women in the audience from every performance that I did to actually find the time to go to the doctor and learn how to examine my breasts ... I've achieved my goal; that's two lives saved. And we did approximately fifteen performances; that's thirty women's lives I've saved, I feel damn good about that. (Robinson)

Vanita, who is an active and passionate volunteer in the Toronto South Asian community, considers her acting in *Tomorrow's Time* to be an extension of her service for isolated South Asian women:

My community [when they see] me on stage feels good. I act and I [take] the women to the hospital. First I contact ... them, then I say to them, 'You have to go to [get a] mammogram. When I go to [the] park, I meet so many South Asian women. [They say], "How [can] we go? We don't know the hospitals, we can't speak English." Then I say, "Don't worry, I will do [it]. Don't worry about this." I take [their] information and ... make appointments in [the] hospital and take [the] women [to the] hospital and take them back to [their] homes. [I]do this every two years. (Sabharwal)

While the participants have benefited from the experiences of being who educate actors, it is important to remember that the audience stands to benefit enormously by seeing themselves reflected on the stage:

It's important that we're helping and doing something worthwhile. There are regular people's experiences reflected in the play. The play acknowledges some of the difficulties of being an immigrant – [it] can be a stressful experience. [The play] makes information more accessible to people. People are more likely to remember the play and the information [because it is] done by people who can understand [their] experience and not just ... a bunch of white people on stage. (Frankel)

According to Boon and Plastow, in the process of creating theatre, "by enabling people to discover and value their own humanity, both individually and in relation to others, [practitioners of community-based theatre] seek to empower those involved to claim the status of creative, thinking beings who have agency over shaping their lives and those of their families and communities" (8). In participating in *Tomorrow's Time*, Marjeiry, Vanita, Linda, Yoseline, and Christine not only shape their own lives by developing

confidence, discovering their acting abilities, creating a community, but they empower other immigrant women to view their respective lives as precious and worthy of care. The participants' recognition of the importance of this privilege signals the possibility of immigrant community-based theatre to have an exponentially empowering effect when the element of education is integrated.

Chapter Four: Discussion, Analysis, and Recommendations

Salverson states: "It is the intention that is important. There is no universal method of how to do community theatre. What is helpful for some individuals may be harmful for other individuals, but it is an entirely worthwhile endeavour, a potentially transformative, powerful experience" (181). *Tomorrow's Time* proves Salverson's argument on several levels. Although just five women serve as the core participants in the production, the range and diversity of their perspectives, interests, and experiences intimate that it would be ill-conceived or counterproductive to imagine a fixed practice or theatrical template for immigrant community-based theatre. Just as there exists no single version of the Canadian immigrant woman, correspondingly, there can be no single, infallible method of facilitating immigrant community-based theatre. That having been established, there are valuable lessons to be learned from the dynamic example that *Tomorrow's Time* affords us.

Returning to Salverson, purity of intent will lend credence to any attempt at immigrant community-based theatre. The testimonials by the participants in *Tomorrow's Time* prove that, at least in their case, empowerment was not contingent on the participants' complete ownership of the project:

The level of impact on development, the kind and level of analysis imbedded in the theatre piece, and the ongoing programming [is] highly influenced by the partner agencies. This theme continues throughout the story of popular theatre. One of the critical questions in evaluation of popular theatre remains the level and kind of analysis brought to bear by the facilitators, the funders, community programmers and artists, as well as by the 'community.' (Prentki and Selman 75)

Insofar as the intentions of the CBCF and the WWCC, as outlined in the first chapter of this paper were pure, the problems that arose during the course of the project were recognized and addressed. The destructive facilitator was dismissed and a reasonable, if not necessarily lucrative, contract was established between the WWCC and the participants. There is no facile resolution to the participants' role in the development of the script as evidenced in *Tomorrow's Time*: a level of involvement that worked for Marjeiry was shallow for Linda. Whatever the influence participants may have over the content and style of the final script, it is imperative that it is established and conveyed before the stories of participants are solicited. An awareness of how far their experiences may travel will enable participants to make informed choices about what they are willing and able to share.

It is impossible to ignore that the willingness on the part of the participants of *Tomorrow's Time* to share their stories was met with the CBCF's suppression and silencing of these stories, and by extension, invalidating these women's experiences as "anecdotal," and "irrelevant" to the message. Returning to the question of intent, the CBCF's editorial choices, specifically their omission of the narratives of the women in the final script as discussed by Lucy and Linda, suggests an unexamined, pervasive and systemic silencing of women of colour. When the CBCF decided that Lucy, who is the most recent arrival among those involved in *Tomorrow's Time*, and who, unlike Vanita

and Yoseline, has relatives who died of breast cancer, should not have a place on the stage because her whiteness would disconnect her with the audience of colour, the CBCF was buying into commonly held and problematic assumptions that racialize immigrants. Conversely, they were also signalling a need to address the uniqueness of the experiences of immigrants of colour, but this was contradicted by the script's absence of the complex details of how those racialized experiences affected the women's access to health care, which in turn limited the kind of connection and interaction that could have been achieved between the actors and their audience. What was deemed superfluous may indeed have been essential. Sajnani's observations about the significant benefits that result from the staging of unedited testimonies of the experiences of immigrant women, both for the participants themselves and for the audience suggest that the CBCF erred grievously in omitting the details that they deemed unnecessary:

Our collective collaboration in attending to the stories we had chosen to tell brought about a deeper awareness of self and self in society. The act of engaging in a public presentation of self opened our experiences to being witnessed and legitimized ... [I]t was also a redressive experience for the audience, who spoke of having gained access to their own stories of identity and agency and to questions of belonging, authority, community and citizenship. (36)

Rather than advocating for the inclusion of "'authentic' cultural narratives" (Sajnani 35) that "feed into the very cultural taxonomy" (35) that must be dismantled, "critically reflective and complex images" of the racialized participants of *Tomorrow's Time* are what ought to have been present in the script of *Tomorrow's Time*. Putting racialized immigrants on stage is limited to being a hollow gesture towards equity if their actions and speech are informed by a script that is written from the perspective of dominant groups. Linda should not be left questioning, "What happened to the sheets we wrote

our [experiences] on?” (Dias) Chaudhuri argues that “the performer’s body [is] a potent site of resistance to the global commercial order” (47); perhaps it can, if enabled, dually function as a potent site of resistance locally.

If one of the lingering lessons of *Tomorrow’s Time* is that those whose stories become the substance of the message of immigrant community-based theatre themselves must have the chance to negotiate the message of the production without having their voices constrained by top-down decision making about what should and should not be included, then this suggests a shared ownership of the production that responds to the reality that many theatre initiatives that come out of communities do not get produced because they do not have the financial resources to produce them. Hence, in an ideal community-based theatre model, there is an equal partnership between the community and their institutional collaborators.

The actors in *Tomorrow’s Time* experienced empowerment on several levels due to their participation in the project. Interestingly, none considered themselves newcomers. Since those who have most recently arrived are often the most vulnerable, it would be entirely worthwhile and interesting to discover whether a project that was sensitive to the needs, particularly an accommodation of potential language barriers, and considerable financial compensation, would provide the same benefits that *Tomorrow’s Time* afforded its participants. A well-designed and carefully implemented opportunity for newcomer immigrant women in Canada to gain confidence, explore artistic talent, find community and empower others might prove to be an effective strategy for enabling successful settlement. After surveying global examples of community drama, Boon and

Plastow testify that “[they] were repeatedly struck by the power of *joy* as an agent of transformation” (11).

Chapter Five: Post/script

“Deena Metzger says that gathering information about ourselves, recalling memories, and putting together a life story are activities that change us. It is in the act of storytelling that we remember and re-member those parts of our selves that have been alienated” (qtd. in Sajnani 35). In October, Yoseline, Marjeiry, Linda, Vanita and Christine will perform *Tomorrow’s Time* for the last time. An awareness of the impact this project has had on their lives leads to the question: What next? De Guevera and Sajnani may provide answers:

To start training the women for their participation in the play, we conducted workshops on different theatrical topics: music, movement, story-telling, visual arts, mask making, banner making and acting. Some of these workshops (such as the mask and banner making) served to spark on-going activities and eventually were incorporated in the play. The story-telling workshop was so successful that, in the future, I will use this sort of workshop as a basis for other projects. (De Guevera 29)

In a liberal democracy the cultivation of a public voice is a necessary and urgent project. This form of performance praxis offers individuals and communities the space to realize themselves as cultural producers, able to (re)author and frame their individual and collective histories, as well produce critically reflective images of themselves. (Sajnani 37).

Nightwood Theatre, Canada’s foremost feminist theatre company offers two nascent playwriting programs annually, *Busting Out* for teenaged women and *Write from the Hip* for women in their twenties. The writer of this paper was fortunate to have been a participant in *Write from the Hip* in 2004 and found it to be a tremendous experience that has led to a commitment to pursue further studies in writing. If the mandate of

Tomorrow's Time, while accomplishing other important achievements, did not allow for some of the women to share the entirety of their stories, then perhaps a third playwriting program, opened to immigrant women over thirty, might give the talented and passionate participants of *Tomorrow's Time* that opportunity and the rest of us, the privilege of hearing them. I have begun dialogue with my facilitator during *Write from the Hip*, celebrated playwright and actor, Lisa Codrington, about working collaboratively to create such a program.

Works Cited

- Aparicico, Yoseline. Personal interview. 31 July 2006
- Bannerji, Himani. "On the Dark Side of the Nation: Politics of Multiculturalism and the State of 'Canada'." Journal of Canadian Studies 31.3 (1996): 103.
- . "The Paradox of Diversity: The Construction of a Multicultural Canada and 'Women of Color.'" Women's Studies International Forum 23.5 (2000): 537.
- Boal, Augusto. Theatre of the Oppressed. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1985, 1979.
- Boehm, Amnon, and Esther Boehm. "Community Theatre as a Means of Empowerment in Social Work: A Case Study of Women's Community Theatre." Journal of Social Work 3.3 (2003): 283-300.
- Boon, Richard and Jane Plastow. Theatre and Empowerment: Community Drama on the World Stage. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Brand, Dionne. What We All Long For. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2005.
- Chaudhuri, Una. "Beyond a 'Taxonomic Theatre': Interculturalism after Postcolonialism and Globalization." Theatre Journal. 32.1 (2002): 33-47.
- Choy, Wayson. The Jade Peony: A Novel. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1995.
- Cohen-Cruz, Jan. Local Acts: Community-Based Performance in The United States. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005.
- Cornell Empowerment Group. "Empowerment and Family Support." Networking Bulletin 1.2 (1989): 1-23.
- Curtis, Liane, Dipti Gupta, and Will Straw. "Culture and Identity: Ideas and Overviews." 2001. Department of Canadian Heritage for the Ethnoracial, Racial, Religious,

and Linguistic Diversity and Identity Seminar. 10 July 2006

<http://canada.metropolis.net/EVENTS/ethnocultural/publications/cult_ident_e.pdf>.

De Guevara, Lina. "Sisters/Strangers." Canadian Theatre Review 90 (1997): 28.

Dias, Linda. Personal Interview. 31 July 2006

Di Cenzo, Maria and Susan Bennett. "Women, popular theatre, and social action: interviews with Cynthia Grant and the Sistren Theatre Collective." Ariel 23.1 (1992): 72-94.

Epskamp, Kees P. Theatre in Search of Social Change: The Relative Significance of Different Theatrical Approaches. The Hague, Netherlands: Centre for the Study of Education in Developing Countries, 1989.

Filewod, Alan D. Collective Encounters: Documentary Theatre in English Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.

Fleras, Augie. Unequal Relations: An Introduction to Race and Ethnic Dynamics in Canada. Ed. Jean Leonard Elliott and Augie Fleras. 4th ed. ed. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Frankel, Lucy. Personal interview. 8 Aug. 2006

Frankel, Lucy. Tomorrow's Time. Toronto: Working Women Community Centre, 2005.

Graham, Catherine "Performing Community in English Canada and Quebec." Theatre Topics 10.2 (2000): 101-11.

Grant, Cynthia. "Can an Immigrant South Korean Theatre Artist Be Heard in Canada?" Canadian Theatre Review 117 (2004): 22-4.

Hall, Christine. Personal Interview. 10 Aug. 2006

- Hood, Sarah. "No Place to Go...Black Theatre in Canada" Canadian Theatre Review.56 (1988): 23-4.
- James, Sheila. "Excerpt from a Canadian Monsoon." Canadian Theatre Review 94 (1998): 51.
- . "South Asian Women: Creating Theatre of Resilience and Resistance." Canadian Theatre Review 94 (1998): 45.
- Jordao, Aida. "Playwriting in Canadian Popular Theatre: Developing Plays with Actors and Non-Actors." Canadian Theatre Review 115 (2003): 62.
- Little, Edward. "Towards a Poetics of Popular Theatre." Canadian Theatre Review 117 (2004): 29-32.
- MacMillan, Michael. "'What happened to you today that reminded you that you are a black man?' The process of exploring black masculinities in performance, Great Britain." Theatre and Empowerment: Community Drama on the World Stage. Ed. Richard Boon and Jane Plastow. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 60-93.
- Martineau, Maureen. "The Théâtre Parminou: Thirty Years of History." Canadian Theatre Review 117 (2004): 5-9.
- Milson, Frederick William. Introduction to Community Work. Boston: Routledge and London: Kegan Paul, 1974.
- O'Connor, Jennifer. "Still Acting Out After 25 Years." Herizons 18.2 (2004): 9.
- Prentki, Tim. Popular Theatre in Political Culture: Britain and Canada in Focus. Ed. Jan Selman and Inc NetLibrary. Bristol: Intellect, 2000.
- Robinson, Marjeiry. Personal Interview. 4 July 2006

Sabharwal, Vanita. Personal Interview. 11 July 2006

Sajnani, Nisha. "Strategic Narratives: The Embodiment of Minority Discourses in
.Biographical Performance." Canadian Theatre Review 117 (2004): 33-7.

Salverson, Julie. "Performing Emergency: Witnessing, Popular Theatre, and the Lie of
the Literal" Theatre Topics 6.2 (1996): 181-191.

Thobani, Sunera. "Nationalizing Canadians: Bordering Immigrant Women in the Late
Twentieth Century." Canadian Journal of Women & the Law 12.2 (2000): 279-
312.

Working Women Community Centre. The Breast Cancer Education Project for
Immigrant & Refugee Women. Toronto: Working Women Community Centre,
2006.

Zimmerman, Marc A. "Empowerment Theory, Research, and Application." American
Journal of Community Psychology 23.5 (1995): 569.

Appendix A

Consent Agreement

Canadian Immigrant Community Theatre

Overview: You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to be a volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure that you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigator: The Principal Investigator on this study is Mia Kim. She is a Masters student in Immigration and Settlement Studies at Ryerson.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of immigrants involved in community theatre. I am reviewing literature, but I also want to speak to those involved in immigrant community theatre. Through the interviews I conduct, I hope that, if present, I will be able to identify what, if any, specific processes in the community immigrant theatre empower participants when they face actual and specific challenging circumstances during the process of settling into their lives in Canada. Once these specific processes are made obvious, they may then serve as best practice guidelines for others who would use immigrant community theatre as an artistic resource for successful settlement for newcomers to Canada.

Description: I am asking you to participate in an interview that will last between 30 and 45 minutes. The interview will be tape recorded to facilitate transcription, although if you prefer to have the tape turned off at any point I will do so. In that case, I will directly transcribe what you have to say. Tapes will be retained until the end of September 2006 or until transcription is complete and verified, whichever comes first. Transcriptions will be securely retained by the principal investigator for a period of 18 months and then destroyed. Beyond indicating that you are either a facilitator or actor, no other personally identifying information about you will be included in the transcription, unless you wish to be identified.

Experimental Procedures: None of the question or procedures used in this study is experimental in nature. The only “experimental” aspect of this study is the gathering of information for the purpose of analysis.

Risk: There is minimal risk or discomfort associated with this study.

Benefits: The areas of potential benefit of the study are in identifying the transformative aspects of immigrant community theatre and documenting a best practice.

Confidentiality: As noted above, you have the choice not be personally identified. If you choose anonymity, any identifying information on the tape will be removed when transcription occurs. The tapes themselves will be destroyed no later than the end of September 2006 after transcriptions have been completed and verified. Transcriptions

will be securely retained by the Principal Investigator for up to 18 months to allow analysis and review. Transcription of the tapes will be done by the Principal Investigator. No one else will have access to the audiotapes. Please select one of the following options:

- ☐ I do not wish to be personally identified
- ☐ I wish to be personally identified

Compensation: You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with the Working Women Community Centre or with Ryerson University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits. At any point in the study you may refuse to answer any particular question or stop participation altogether.

The topics we will discuss are sensitive in nature. If, at anytime during or following the interview, you feel you would like to seek counseling, the following are suggested available resources:

Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre:	416-324-8677
Shout Clinic	416-927-8553
Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre	416-593-7655
	416-593-1815
Working Women's Community Centre	416-532-2824

Consent for audio taping of the interview: As noted above, the interview will be audio taped to facilitate transcription. Consent for audio taping may be considered as separate from consent to take part in the interview. If your consent includes audio taping, please indicate by signing your initials here _____.

As noted previously, you may also request that audio taping be stopped at any point during the interview, either for the balance of the interview or occasionally during the interview.

Use of results: The findings of this study may be used for publication and conference purposes.

Your access to results: A copy of the report of the results will be made available to you at the end of the study. You may either contact the Principal Investigator or add your email address to the end of this consent form.

Questions: If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research you may contact the Principal Investigator, Mia Kim, at 647.885.0374 or by email at m22kim@ryerson.ca. Additionally, you may contact my supervisor, Hyacinth Simpson at 416.979.5000 ext. 6148 hsimpson@arts.ryerson.ca.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study you may contact the Ryerson Research Ethics Board c/o the Office of Research Services at Ryerson University, 350 Victoria Street, Toronto, ON M5B 2K3, 416.979.5042.

Agreement: Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and that you have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this agreement.

You have been told that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Name of Participant (Please Print)
report

Email (optional) for copy of

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator or Interviewer

Date

Appendix B

Interview Guide

1. How did you get involved in Tomorrow's Time?
2. What were the responsibilities of different parties?
 - Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation
 - Working Women's Centre
 - participants
3. What were the intended outcomes?
 - Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation
 - Working Women's Centre
 - participants
4. What did the process involve? Were there any challenges/conflicts? Would you change anything?
5. What were the best benefits?
6. Did you have any prior experiences with drama?
7. Did you witness any transformations in the participants/yourself through the development of Tomorrow's Time?
8. Have you applied anything you learned from Tomorrow's Time in your own life?
9. What do you think are the most important aspects of Tomorrow's Time?
10. What are the future plans with Tomorrow's Time? Are there plans to complement with other aspects of community education?
11. What was the scripting process of Tomorrow's Time? What was kept and what was edited?

12. How did the story connected with you and others you know?

13. Do you think of yourself as a newcomer to Canada? When did you immigrate to Canada?