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# **Making *Invisible* Pathways Visible**

## **Case Studies of *Shadow Play* and *The Rainbow Dark***

**A thesis**

**submitted with creative work**

**in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree**

**of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**at**

**James Cook University**

**by**

**VICTORIA LEIGH CARLESS**

**B. Theatre (Hons)**

**School of Creative Arts**

**2008**

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## **STATEMENT ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHERS**

I, the author, would like to recognize that this thesis would not have been possible without the contribution of others.

This includes the stipend support of the Australian Postgraduate Award Scholarship from 2005 to 2008, in liaison with the Graduate Research School, and the intellectual contribution of my supervisory team: Associate Professor Michael Beresford, Professor Diana Davis and Dr Steven Campbell.

I would also like to acknowledge the editorial support of Katharine Fowler and the Infohelp team at James Cook University in Cairns.

Finally the creative outcome, the plays including the text development and realisations, would not have been possible without the contributions of several industry organizations and practitioners. This includes the key dramaturge Kathryn Kelly from Playlab, Fraser Corfeild and the team at Backbone Youth Arts, Michael Gow, Joe Mitchell and the team from Queensland Theatre Company, and Suellen Maunder, Kathryn Ash, Sue Rider and the team from Just Us Theatre Ensemble.

## DECLARATION ON ETHICS

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted within the guidelines for research ethics outlined in the *National Statement of Ethics Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999), the joint *NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* (1997), the *James Cook University Policy on Experimentation Ethics, Standard Practices and Guidelines* (2001), and the *James Cook University Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* (2001). The proposed research methodology received clearance from the James Cook University Experimentation Ethics Review Committee (approval number H2192).

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(Date)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my supervisors, Associate Professor Michael Beresford, Professor Diana Davis, and Dr Steven Campbell for their vision and guidance in the undertaking of this project.

I am indebted to Associate Professor Beresford who has been encouraging me along this path since I was 14 years old, and who has taught me about nuance and the power of the image in performance writing. I would also like to thank Professor Davis for her unfaltering mentorship, her ability to somehow always understand what I am trying to say – and challenge me to improve on it, and her kindness. Thanks to Doctor Campbell for the long haul support.

I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the support of the insightful Kathryn Kelly from Playlab whose belief, enthusiasm and expert eye helped me through many a play re-draft.

Thanks to Michael Gow, John Halpin, Joe Mitchell and the team at Queensland Theatre Company for their encouragement with the George Landen Dann Award and *The Works*. Also, a warm thank you to the director Nic Dorward, and the performers: Anthony Standish, Karen Crone, Bob Newman and the wonderful Carol Burns for realising *The Rainbow Dark* in its inaugural reading.

Finally, thanks to those at Backbone Youth Arts - Fraser Corfield, Helen Godfrey, Dimity Vowles and the design team: Genevieve Kelly, Rebekka Schafferius, Geoff Squires and Brett Collery for seeing the potential in my little work from early on. A very special thanks to the beautiful Kat Henry for all her insights and hard work, and to the charismatic actors: Kaye Stevenson, Jan Nary, Dirk Hout and Hugh Taylor for bringing my fancies so lovingly to life.



## ABSTRACT

This study seeks to articulate a particular type of theatre aesthetic, that which manifests as *invisible* in the performative mode. This *invisiblist* theatrical paradigm might comprise an *otherness* of form, character and/or language in both the written and performed text. The thesis navigates a writer's teasing out of aspects of the *Invisible* for performance, as well as ways in which to plot conditions conducive to an *invisiblist* theatrical experience.

The study also looks to a further aspect of *invisiblist* theatre: its *temporality* or *aliveness*, which essentially represents an engagement with the *immediate now* in performance. This sense of the *immediate now* is contextulised within the wider or *peripheral now* - the social/cultural/ political *status quo*. Aspects of the *peripheral now* are extrapolated in the context of the works of theorists and theatre practitioners, in order to reflect the values of this epoch, or acknowledge *contemporaneity* within a theatre piece.

The outcomes of the research are tested and utilised in the writing and staging of a play entitled *The Rainbow Dark* (2006). This process was informed by experimentation within a pilot study, implementing a text entitled *Shadow Play* (2005). *The Rainbow Dark* (2006) was realised in two different ways; as a reading with Queensland Theatre Company and in performative mode with Backbone Youth Arts; both these realisations took place in Brisbane in 2006.

*The Rainbow Dark* (2006) is a hybrid text with an *invisiblist* aesthetic. It borrows from the *peripheral now* with its specific political content, yet is able to avoid the effect of rhetoric in performance. Herein lies my potential model for *contemporaneity* in theatre writing.

The outcomes of this study also include an ongoing trajectory for the creative project of *The Rainbow Dark* (2006). The play is currently contracted for broadcast by ABC Radio National, and will also be realised as part of Just Us Theatre Ensemble's *Independent* season in Cairns, in November 2008.

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