

Barbara Campbell: 1001 nights cast discussion

Barbara Campbell

with Adrian Heathfield, Sara Jane Bailes, Tony White and Lara Pawson

Friday 21 September 2007

Held at the Live Art Development Agency.

Preamble:

1001 nights cast is a durational performance by Australian artist, Barbara Campbell. Each night at sunset, Barbara performs a short text-based work as a live webcast. The performance texts are written for her each day in response to a prompt she draws from the morning's newspaper reports on the Middle East. The project will run for 1001 nights, ending on March 17 2008.

On 21 September 2007, Barbara Campbell and the Live Art Development Agency, co-hosted a gathering for the Europe-based **1001 nights cast** writers at the Agency's office in East London. As Barbara explains:

I webcast the first night of **1001 nights cast** on the summer solstice, 2005, from Paris. Since then, I have transported it between hemispheres and across time zones, along the way, collecting stories by writers from various parts of the world and diverse disciplines – artists, performance-makers, poets, playwrights, novelists, essayists, journalists, bloggers, screenwriters and academics. In July 2007 I brought the project to London for the second and final time, beginning with a writing workshop co-sponsored by the Live Art Development Agency for their **DIY 4** programme. Two months later, when I was due to leave London and take the project back to Australia for its home run, I invited all the Europe-based writers to attend a gathering. It seemed a good moment to meet some of the 'strangers' who had given me their stories to perform and to hear their reflections on and approaches to the experience of writing for the project.

The evening began with the live webcast of night 823 at 7.02pm local time. That night's story was written by Tim Etchells (Artistic Director of Forced Entertainment and writer for nights 449, 528, 628, 693, 753), who said in his online notebook, it was 'written on the move between Brussels and Graz, with a connection through Stuttgart. Pleased with the results, but not with the travel-sickness/nausea produced by trying to write in the van that picked us up from the airport.'

After the webcast, I welcomed the attendees and said a few words about the frame story for the project. Then we heard from four project contributors:

Adrian Heathfield: Writer, curator and creator of performance; Professor of Performance and Visual Culture, Roehampton University; editor of *Live: Art and Performance* (Tate Publishing, 2004) and *Small Acts: Performance, The Millennium and the Marking of Time* (Black Dog Publications, 2000).

Sara Jane Bailes: Writer, theatre-maker, curator; Senior Lecturer in Theatre and Performance, University of Sussex; member of The Special Guests theatre group and author of *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure* (forthcoming, Routledge, 2007).

Tony White: Author of novels including *Foxy-T* (Faber & Faber, 2003), the non-fiction *Another Fool in the Balkans* (Cadogan, 2006); co-editor of the short story collection *Croatian Nights* (Serpent's Tail, 2005); literary editor *the Idler* magazine; editor and publisher Piece of Paper Press.

Lara Pawson: Journalist, formerly reporting the wars in Angola and Ivory Coast for the BBC and Reuters; about to take up a writing fellowship at Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg.

The evening concluded with general discussion between the gathered writers. In attendance were:

Sara Jane Bailes, nights 692, 795

Nicholas Blincoe, nights 774, 822

Clara Brennan, nights 439, 504, 612, 678

Daniel Brine, Live Art Development Agency

Adrienne Gaha, artist, a London webcast host

Sheila Ghelani, nights 637, 821

Daniel Gosling, night 827

Adrian Heathfield, nights 688, 806

Helen Idle, nights 5, 23, 37, 86, 136, 365, 420, 482, 675, (DIY 4 workshop nights: 760, 761, 762), 787 and a London webcast host.

Narelle Jubelin, artist, audience stalwart, Madrid webcast host.

Joe Kelleher, night 816

Almir Koldzic, night 805

Branislava Kuburovic, nights 728, 788

Alisa Lebow, night 724

Clodagh Miskelly, friend/host of Folake Shoga

Cathy Naden, nights 575, 686, 765, 824

Mary Paterson, nights 583, 689, (DIY 4 workshop nights 760, 762), 777, 826

Lara Pawson, nights 729, 784

Simon Porter, (DIY 4 workshop nights 760, 761, 762)

Derville Quigley, nights 639, 707, (DIY 4 workshop nights 760, 761, 762), 781

Joseph Rabie, nights 22, 33, 54, 82, 133, 182, 238, 284, 362, 445, 526, 641, 703, 766, 828

Julian Richards, night 779

Edwin Rostron, nights 601, 676, 754, 818

Theron Schmidt, (DIY 4 workshop nights 760, 761, 762), 800

Folake Shoga, nights 549, 611, 674, 739, 797

Ingrid Wassenaar, nights 3, 15, 93, 128, 178, 241, 290, (Easter workshop '06 nights 299, 301), 332, 700, 820

Tony White, nights 701, 758, 815

Hannah Williams, French/English translator for Lina Saneh, night 718

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Barbara Campbell: Welcome everyone, thank you very much for coming, some of you from a hell of a long way away, Like Joe [Rabie] from Toulouse and Narelle [Jubelin] of course, from Madrid. I was expecting Tim [Wright] from Sydney, who just happens to be passing through London. He said he was coming but he's not here evidently. He probably got lost. Yes. Thank you for coming, but more especially thank you all for writing. Most of you have written and it's been, well more than a thrill, a deep honour and ... I get very teary when I think about it - how much you've given me. So thank you very much. It means a lot. So I thought I'd just say, first of all that I picked up a... the beginnings of a cold on Wednesday night seeing a show in Brussels, a Forced Entertainment... I just went there for one night and there was... I think the only spare seat in the theatre was right next to me, and then right at the end this man sat down and he had the most appalling cold and every time he sneezed I'd go [gasp] like that... and then the guy next to me on this side smelt, reeked of smoke and I'd go [gasp] ... So I was kind of having this full on sensory experience with Cathy [Naden] pointing at people in the audience, hexing them with these diseases that they would all die from...

Cathy Naden: It's quite a light-hearted show...

Barbara: So I thought you were going to pick him but it was me...

Cathy: Oh...

Barbara: Anyway, so, excuse me if I'm not on top form, and I maybe won't say very much because of that, and anyway, I, certainly have come to hear these other people talk about the project. But I thought I'd just say something about the meta-narrative which is something that I am always conscious of, I don't know if you are very conscious of it, but it's largely about the frame story that you see... I did ask Daniel to put it up here, the intro, but somehow there's a naked tattooed lady up here.

Daniel Brine: Just move the mouse.

Barbara: Ah, move the mouse, oh I see it's the screen saver.

And it used to be what people entered, but around night 500 I thought surely everyone's seen it by now and I changed it to the prompt page. But you know, it's a 53 word story that I wrote now over two years ago and it, as you can see, is written in the third person, and at the time I wrote it, I couldn't separate the 'I' from the 'she'. But as time has gone on, and I have been able to do that, more... and I only really realised that a couple of months ago when I first arrived in London courtesy of LADA and a project called **DIY 4** where there are a whole lot of workshops run at the same time, or over the summer. I ran one on writing for this project, and it was one of those rare opportunities where a group of writers could come together and work together on stories for me, but also to think about the meta-narrative, to sort of work with the idea of this character 'she' who has been on this journey and at that stage you know something like 740...60 maybe...760 nights... and it was a time to sort of pause and see where 'she' was in the bigger picture, and we had quite a lot of discussion about that. Several of the writers are here tonight.

And it was a way of thinking about a story that could go for the three nights that we were all together in the workshop. So we thought about lots of things and wrote on the blackboard... thankfully I took a photograph of the blackboard just to help me because there was no other sort of note taking. And the whole time I realised that I was able to talk about the 'she' and we talked about the 'strangers' who are named in this narrative – that 'every night she is greeted by a stranger who gives her a story', but we also talked about the final line 'She does so for 1001 nights.', because we didn't... we couldn't really decide, could we, whether she knew that that's how long she had to do this for, and all she had was her past which at that point was 760 or so nights. But it was quite an incredible past that had been built up by all of you writers around the world, and... you know, so there was some comfort to be gained in her past, and there was also a sense that she had a limited amount of trust in that day and in that night that she would get this story, but that that's all there was. That there was only one more night. And that she didn't really know that there was this prescription (which was how I had always thought of it) as a prescription rather than a sentence for survival. That it would just be one plus one plus one and I think that's as far as we got and we sort of decided that it was OK to leave it at that. So I think that's all I want to say. I'm going to keep it brief so that everyone else can talk and hopefully there'll be some discussion...

Adrian Heathfield: Well... thinking about this situation... I spent quite a bit of time last week trying to come to a very delicate explanation to my ten year old daughter of why it's important to know well the people that you arrange to meet on the internet, not wanting to cramp her sense of possibility in this space. And yet here I am with a bunch of strangers – here we all are – making that leap because we've been really brought into this virtual community of people by Barbara; into a set of temporary affinities, by the **1001 nights cast** project, so I think it's really great to be able to explore that connection and create another kind of social space to reflect on the project. And I just thought I'd start off with a few thoughts on that.

I think one of the main reasons why I was drawn to the project was that while it was an internet project it actually seemed to me to be using a very old technology, or a very old form of writing, which was the letter; that one would write something addressed to or for another. But then that one would subject that quite personal mode of address to its opposite, so the addressee would be pretty much unknown to you and the content would be made public. So I really liked that sort of tension between the personal and the impersonal that I think is really at the heart of the project. And I guess also the way that it suggests this duty to another person, or that writing for another, is really the deep structure of creativity itself. I was very drawn to that, and I also very much admired the way the project conceives this relation, so that this act of writing is connected to keeping someone from darkness. The whole idea that the performance of the writing takes place in this interval or this passage towards darkness, that it is to do with a certain kind of suspension, and keeping a person awake, keeping them alive, enabling them to endure. So I really appreciated that reminder that storytelling and narrative are about survival, that at its core, narrative has a virtual movement from one to another and that this movement is restorative, that it is full of life force.

And I guess the other thing that I wanted to say about 1001 was that I've been thinking recently about the models of temporality that we have for performance: how we think of the time of performance. We've become very focused on the idea that performance is a kind of shattering instant. That, as a form, it is predominantly about the moment and its disappearance and what has been great for me, really engaging with Barbara's project and experiencing it and also other durational works, is understanding the many ways in which performance endures. So, the ways in which performance is a kind of insistent impermanence, and so through this and other works of duration, I've become very interested in this insistence of performance. The way that performance can really make a kind of life test, which I know is basically what Barbara is doing – an extraordinary life test - of affinity and creative potential.

Sara Jane Bailes: OK, I mean I have this informal page of things that I want to say, and I don't think I can speak away from something that I've written because it just feels too terrifying. So I'm going to read from it and it's a bit of a mess, and I'm a bit of a mess because I got here late from Brighton, and I moved this week. I moved city, job, everything a few days ago and so I am literally in total disorientation, sort of chaotic mode, which makes me think of a way in to begin to talk about Barbara's project because something that I've really appreciated about writing for the project is the kind of pinhole acute focus that it demands from me. So weeks or months in advance I say to Barbara 'Yes on 24th of August I will be there in whatever shape or form or state I am in,' and so there's a pledge there and there's a commitment, there's a really beautiful sense of commitment. And then I love the paring down of the circumstances in which you write, contrasted to the vagaries of the day and the environment and the mood and the weather, and the place that you will end up writing in and all the things that you can't control. So that tension between those two things is for me one of the most extraordinary things about it. But then I think there's lots of different tensions that are really interesting that I want to talk about a little bit.

So in Barbara's **1001 nights cast** - is it called 1001 nights 'cast'?

Barbara: Yes.

Sara Jane: I always get confused by that because I just want to call it 1001 nights. So in the project, lots of categories by which we organise and think about performance in particular (but also things generally), get smudged into interesting collaboration and in productive ways. So we have truth mingling with fiction - we can think about 'truth' as documentary or news script - which elevates us or sort of catapults us into the fictive mode; freedom and restraint; east and west; writing for reading versus writing for performance, so that's writing to be heard versus writing to be seen; writing for one in order to write towards many through Barbara; writing to or from a specific—very specific geopolitical circumstance and, you know, an article that will try and frame that in some way—and writing beyond and away from such bounded territories, because as I'm sure you'll know we travel enormously - I do - in the way that I see the article and then the way that I end up writing from it. And then writing away from that bounded territory and the bounded circumstance into a sort of free-fall territory which is the mess of your own mind which Barbara helps you, through the restraints that she gives us, or the directives that she gives us, to organise in some way or to sieve in some way. So writing also in the realms of a tightly bound temporal framework, but then writing for ever-ness at the same time: writing for always, writing for an archive, writing for tomorrow. Writing singularly but writing always in order to build or to be part of or imagine a community of writers and readers across the world in the shadow (always) of the US and British invasion of Iraq; so, constantly writing in that shadow to move up from within it. In this project, the determinate and the indeterminate seem to be *very* cleverly orchestrated, but with a very very light touch, which is also what I enjoy about it being an academic and having usually to write in a way that doesn't have a very light touch to it and where the restraints there can feel so much more restrictive. So it's also both strict and relaxed and...there's a sentence now that I don't understand, so I'll just move to the next one which says: I love writing for **1001 nights cast** because (it does say that) - because it encourages a kind of writing or a textual practice that I don't know how to do under any other conditions. I love occupying that space that she gives me. And this betweenness of worlds the project encourages, where the entire conditions of the day—as I said, the mood, the place, the weather, the effect of Barbara's painted prompt popping into your in-box, the excitement and the trepidation, the brief terror of the performance you are about to enter as a writer-against-the-clock, the writing to, the writing for, the writing with Barbara in mind—these are all the things that I think have been special, (special?)—especially valuable for me as a writer and I think they are a set of conditions that are very extraordinary and unique to this project.

Speaking more personally about the writing process, I just want to say one or two more things. And that is, since I seemed to give up performing in 1997, in part by intention, but then also by accident, I haven't been able to 'voice' myself in quite the way I could then. The stringency and instrumental responsibility of academic prose can leave you very hungry. There's not enough room for lateral thinking or loose play and association. Each path followed needs an end, it needs a logic, it needs a purpose, it needs to be tied up in some way. So in writing stories for Barbara – I've only done two - but, I always, for example, enter my American self, which is the voice in my head that developed from almost seven years living in New York, complete with its geographies, its phraseologies, its intonations, its smells, specific diners, types of bread, sandwiches, modes of behaviour. It all comes back to me and I can inhabit it when I write for Barbara. I can inhabit fictional parts of myself that have themselves grown out of factual histories from my life. I'm sure that many of you experience that. I can take a walk without knowing where it will go. I can converse always *with* Barbara, rather than simply by myself trying to tell a story, because I know that she will be speaking me, us, them, later.

Tony White: OK. I'm Tony White and I thought I'd talk really specifically... I'm a writer normally. I'm not an academic – occasional critic – I write the odd review (rather than the occasional review). And I thought I'd just talk about how I engaged with the process of writing a couple of the stories, and focus down on it in that kind of way today – and actually, most people in the room have also written stories, so it takes the conversation out into those kinds of experiences.

Actually, when Barbara invited me to take part in the project there were sympathies between **1001 nights cast** and this kind of novel-shaped thing I'm writing at the moment. I think it's going to be a novel, but it's about half-way through and it's still very fragmented...but... it hasn't got a title – I don't know how it's even going to look really – but it's kind of novel-shaped, and I've got a working title for this which is also the pitch in a way, [it] probably won't survive until when the book's finished, but the working title is *Balkanising Bloomsbury*. That says something about what I'm doing, which is working with fragments of historical literature, particularly from the contested margins of the Bloomsbury group: Wyndham Lewis's pamphleteering, EM Forster's—I don't know which sounds better, juvenile erotica, I suppose it's not erotic juvenilia, because it just isn't erotic—but these secret stories that EM Forster was writing when he was quite young. He burnt most of them, but a few of them survived in which the object of desire is always a strapping Bosnian Gendarme, and there's this seam of quite sexually-loaded Balkanist stuff in a particular period of English literature and fiction which is quite interesting. So I've been taking fragments of some of these bits of materials as well as fragments of larger public, often web-based, text resources which are kind of connected in ways, like the transcripts of the tribunal at the Hague or the Eichmann trial transcripts, and just taking fragments from two or three of these sources, really in a small dilution – a couple of words – and just bumping them together, cutting them up – but in quite a small way, quite a controlled way – and seeing what kind of narratives emerge. So I thought, wow, God, great, I've got this sort of machine for writing stories, so actually there's trajectories and things in common with how I saw a dynamic in the **1001 nights cast**, not least because a lot of these stories are about switching the polarity of Orientalist tropes in literature I suppose. So I saw that as enough of an excuse that I could actually use this kind of method for the story here.

And... I love a deadline. I love writing short stories and I like that connection between pulp writing and automatic writing. There are continuities there. But, if you've got a deadline, there's nothing like an *objet trouvé*, so I thought actually the kind of gift of a found object in relation to **1001 nights cast** is the Richard Burton translation of **The Thousand Nights and One Night**, so when I knew that I was doing the 715th night I thought I'd better check and just see what happened on the 715th night in the Burton translation and then try and also see if I can include some kind of remembering of that or a retelling, not a kind of re-writing, but just some kind of memory of the story that's in the Burton translation.

Then of course there's the prompt and I was still thinking of the prompt in a way. I don't know if people are familiar with the poet and the artist Ian Hamilton Finley, some I guess, many people are, but he did some really brilliant books, which are actually books of one word poems—it's not entirely true, because there's the title and then there's the one word. I had to do a review of one of these books a few years ago and it struck me that the titles were like, almost like changing the gel on a light above a stage or something, just to flood the stage instantly with a particular colour, and I think of the prompts in that way as well though I do choose to use them absolutely verbatim... But I just thought it would be interesting to—because I've just done the 815th night—I don't know which night we're on now?

Barbara: 823

Tony: 823. I did the 815th. And I also thought, as well as looking at the 815th night of Burton, I looked for the 815th day of the Milosovic prosecution in the transcripts (and that probably went on for longer than the 1001 days), but on the 815th day there was an unscheduled adjournment because Milosovic had had to go to hospital with blood pressure condition and then, so I thought I'd better have a look at what happened the day before and... But already there's kind of 'blood pressure', so that's great and then something odd kept going on with the prosecuting counsel's microphone on the 814th day. That's right, so it kept going off and everyone's apologising for microphones not working and then there was also a big conversation about the son of one of Mladic's aids who'd wound up in Gorazde prison camp by mistake and everyone was very angry about that. And then in the meantime the 815th night of Burton was the culmination of a really long story that had gone on for days and days and days about two boys who were abducted by the queen of the genies and taken to the realm of the genies, but on the 815th night they were re-united with their father.

So, you know, there's a kind of story there! That was enough really, and then working through that and trying to find out who it is that talks and how to make those things actually be an engine of the story and not just the ambience of the story but actually the structure of the narrative and what kind of drives the narrative along. And the prompt, the prompt on that day was "Do you hear that?" which is great dramatic prompt. But I was also thinking, is that to do with the microphones not working? Can I use it in that way? But actually it was really good for a dramatic moment... So I like the way, particularly when you're writing under duress, that you can put these things in a line or down the page and just, you know, the way that the brain works...you start, you know, a narrative emerges. That emergent property of narrative is something that the project really brings into focus for me. So, yeah, I don't think there's any sort of concluding comments, but... yeah, I'll leave it there.

Lara Pawson: I feel a bit embarrassed because I've actually typed mine up, so I have gone to too much trouble. I thought there's no way I'm going to be able to speak to all these clever academics and artists without reading it, so, I'm reading it. But I'll just introduce myself first. I came to your project I think through Mike, (M. John Harrison), who told us about it, but I'm a journalist myself. I don't know if I was a journalist or I am a journalist, but I am a journalist. I've worked in war zones for BBC and Reuters and I've written for papers and I've worked in Africa basically, particularly in Angola where I was during the war. So, Barbara's project interested me on that level and actually in some ways as I said to you when I first met you, I'd love to do this kind of project for the wars in Africa that no one's very interested in.

Anyway, I think because of my frustration, I have a lot of frustration with the whole business of journalism and if it wasn't for that I probably wouldn't have even, I don't know, I probably wouldn't have even met Mike and I probably wouldn't have come across your project and I certainly wouldn't be sitting here tonight. You know I come to this from a perspective of trying to explain wars to people that nobody knows about. They are very often places...I mean Angola

is a country where people speak Portuguese or they speak the local languages, but there's no relationship between Britain and Angola more or less – there are big oil interests but in terms of historically and colonialism, British people don't have a relationship with Angola and it's very very hard, in fact impossible, to be in a country like that, and you have to write stories every hour on the hour for this sort of new 24 hours news culture. The amount of time that you have for each story has gone from two minutes to a minute and a half ten years ago...probably longer than that 40 years ago, well when I started 10 years ago to now...I mean I was in Angola for this year for three months, you have about 45 seconds to explain the attempted assassination of the opposition leader who's called Isaiás Samakuva who I'm sure very few people in this room would have heard of.

Most news is based on what someone – normally someone very powerful or someone who seeks to be - has said. Other than kind of events like people being blown up or stuff like that...and without a quote, today in the modern news era you don't have a story. I mean I worked for Reuters for a year in Angola (I gave it up in the end because I couldn't stand it any longer) where you're told that a good story is constructed of a quote and then an explanation paragraph which is about one or two sentences and then a quote and then another explanation paragraph for a couple of sentences – and the quotes are very short.

The BBC is slightly different, it has a slightly different format, but you are still very limited in terms of space and increasingly so. You used to be able to make half hour-hour long investigative programmes for the BBC World Service, mainly where I worked, now [some of these] programmes have been reduced to about eleven minutes. So if you're trying to explain a complicated story, and particularly when you have people who don't speak English, and you have to do voice-overs and explain the way that they're talking, it's very very difficult, and you end up, I believe, forced into a situation where you've reduced the truth so much, you've reduced the structure of the story to such an extent that you end up writing half-truths and sometimes non-truths, and you fall into a situation where you're almost writing a piece of fiction. And in fact – just very quickly, I didn't write this down – I'm worried about my time – stop me if I keep...if I don't stop talking, but a lot of journalists today remain in somewhere like London or Washington or New York, they don't live in the country, which is something I've always done, I feel very strongly that you should stay in the place and work there and live there seriously, but they stay in...I mean I looked at a lot of the people who have written stories for your news – where you pull your quotes from, I don't know the Middle East journalists, unfortunately, but a lot of them will be in London or New York they'll decide what the story they are going to write is about, they'll decide who they are going to interview, and then they'll go to the country and they'll find the people who are going to more or less fit into the story that they decide they want to write. So they create their own story. It is a narrative. They've decided what the structure is and then they put the voices in. In fact TV programmes now are...the scripts are written before they've even gone to somewhere like Mauritania and then they go in and they just get people to just fill in the script. They don't go and listen and discover.

So, Barbara's project really intrigues me. And in many ways 1001 nights follows the rules of a news story. There's a short almost nonsensical quote, a tight deadline. And it's similar to, you have a journalist who is or is not in the field (often these days they are not) who's gone and got his/her quotes... pieced them together into some kind of story – into a slightly peculiar and usually very loaded narrative – I haven't read all of the stories that you've picked, but I've read some of them, and I read them like a journalist – I can see where they're making stuff up – throwing rubbish in – and Barbara then pulls a quote from a quote, or a phrase, and publishes that. And the writer then picks up the prompt and creates a story, which then they must do to deadline. And then Barbara reads it out. In fact it's very similar to a BBC news process, where the editor tells you what story he wants you to write, then you write it, and then you send it back to London and you don't see your audience and then off it goes into you don't know where. And it interests me for that, because it's very similar to a news process.

The first time I wrote for Barbara – I've only done two pieces – it was very very scary, I mean, I've written hundreds of stories to deadline, but I was really petrified. And in both cases, oh no, sorry, yeah...the only difference with Barbara's that I really liked was that whenever I got stuck I thought, 'Heck, I can just make it up.' So I found it very easy the first time I wrote a story, which I thought was quite good, the first one, I found it very easy. I'm a complete purist. I thought I won't prepare anything, I'll just let the prompt hit me and I'll just see what happens. And it worked the first time. The second time it was close to disastrous. I had two hours left and I hadn't written a paragraph and I then resorted to very lazy journalistic methods of, I wanted to write about exile and I was thinking about Edward Said who I'm a big fan of, so I pulled a few quotes from him, and I turned him into the character and it was the story was...you were very generous... but I thought was a bit of a disaster.

But, I've really enjoyed writing stories for you, and I'd like to do more if possible, if you'll have me, but what I've really enjoyed about it is not having to write stories about... that have aspirations to objective truth. In contrast to a sort of journalist's mantra, about being objective or being truthful, which I don't even believe is possible. I like the fact that you don't have to maintain that sort of charade. So you can explore real ideas and real problems and real issues related, in my case, I'm really interested in conflict, but you've got a free rein in the way that you do it. As a journalist and a writer the quest to kind of be objective and truthful as a journalist is becoming for me harder and harder and I think it's going to be even harder now that I've worked a bit with you, because, my imagination is always getting the better of me as a journalist, and I find it very hard to know when I'm reporting whether I've seen something or I've really seen it and what is really true. And I just wanted to read a short story that I witnessed in Angola earlier this year, that I wanted to use as a story, but the BBC, there's no way I could have sold this story, so I'll just quickly read it to you.

This was in Luanda, in Angola. Angola was at war for 40 years until 2002 and is still in a very bad way.

So, one day I was sitting in Café del Mar, a fancy beach bar that looks out to the ocean. (It's a real bar this is a totally true story.) I was with friends, including a five year old child, called Okidi, who had asked me to draw a tattoo on his stomach – a dragon. This child is an Angolan-American child. So I drew this dragon. It had a long tail, and a long nose with big teeth. And about an hour after I'd done it, and he'd shown his tattoo off to various people on the beach, he came back to me and he said in his terrible Luso-American drawl.

'You forgot the wings.' So I began drawing two large feathery wings. And as I did so, I noticed on the beach in front of us, a face which made me remember guiltily, The Black and White Minstrel Show. A young, fit man, was kneeling in the sand, quite close to the water and a few metres in front of Okidi and me.

His arms were stretched out either side of him, so his body – formed a cross and his body was covered in sand. His mouth was wide open. Another man was standing at his side, holding one arm firmly. The kneeling man – who I call the sand-man – was wobbling a bit. He looked as if he was going to fall forward onto his face, were it not for his friend at his side holding his arm firmly. And then the sand-man vomited. Thick white, creamy bile dribbled out of his mouth and down his chin.

'What are you doing?' asked Okidi, who was the child who I was drawing this thing on. He was getting annoyed because I wasn't doing the tattoo and I was gazing at these guys, and I said you know, 'I'm just watching those guys down there Okidi.' And at that moment, the sand-man fell forward, face down, into the sand and didn't move. Two of his friends came over and helped pick him up from the ground. They dragged him the few feet towards the sea, where the waves were at their weakest. They were obviously going to clean him in the water because he'd

vomited. And I started to relax, I thought well that's OK they're looking after him, but just as I started to relax I watched the two friends drop sand-man face down into the sea, where he remained for several long seconds without moving. It was at this point that I started to wonder if he was in fact very sick? But his friends didn't seem stressed, or worried. They were moving slowly and gracefully.

Eventually they pulled him out of the water. His body was loose and heavy. The second, slightly larger friend, tried to pick him up and get him on to his shoulder. But he couldn't lift the body. So the other friend came to help and then another, and together they pulled and heaved the body on to the taller man's shoulder. And then the three of them walked up the beach, towards the main road.

As they passed us, (this is a very expensive cafe – I mean Luanda's incredibly expensive, it's a complete contrast to everyone's pre-conceived ideas of what Africa is like), as they passed us Okidi asked: 'Is he dead?'

'Oh no,' I said, 'he's probably just a bit sick.'

But Okidi and I knew that I wasn't being at all convincing.

'He looks dead,' said the five year old.

We watched them disappear, the body bouncing like a long piece of soft metal over the man's shoulder.

It struck me that I had just watched someone being murdered.

I noticed the Café del Mar music in the background. Inoffensive Brazilian tunes. The waiters came and went with trays of coffee. An angry Russian—because there's lots of Russians in Angola—wearing effeminate swimming trunks, walked past us muttering angrily to himself. As he came level, he looked at me: 'The water is very dangerous,' he grumbled, referring to a jelly fish sting on his leg. But no one, and the beach was packed, apart from Okidi and I, had noticed or been interested to notice what had just happened.

I don't know what really went on that day, but it rattled me and made me wonder how I can ever trust myself as a reporter, and whether any reporter can ever trust themselves. It made me think about the whole notion of truth, of what matters and what it is to report on a country – to be a foreign correspondent, particularly in a place with years of conflict. What it is we are supposed to tell the audience about this place... What the foreign minister says? What the UN says about the human development indicators? Or about what we see?

But I think that the beach story, and I've got hundreds of others, tells you so much about the place I know to be Luanda, and yet, although it would be a marvellous Barbara story, with a little bit of adjusting, I would never have sold that to the BBC – save, possibly, as a From Our Own Correspondent. But even then you can no longer sell stories to From Our Own Correspondent that are the slightest bit abstract or obtuse, they just won't have it. So increasingly I feel that writing a story for news is less about witnessing what is happening around you and increasingly about deciding what matters first, and then going to find the evidence to fit your preconceived script. So perhaps my beach story could have been used as evidence that Angolans, because of the war, are very violent and aggressive people: I'm sure that's what lots of correspondents would have done. Journalists presume connections and feed the audience with easily digestible bite-sized chunks. It is a long way from life. From real life, which is ironically what I'm interested in, despite my growing interest as a writer in making things up. And perhaps the greatest irony is that to write about what is really happening around us (I'm sorry this is so clichéd) we have to

pretend it's made up. Which is the point I've got to now where I'm writing a book about Angola, which is about a purge, and thousands of people were killed and maybe the only way I'm going to do that successfully is to pretend it's fiction, and also in doing that I save my sources – you know I protect my sources.

APPLAUSE

General Discussion:

Barbara: Let's check the time, yeah we've got time I think.

Adrian: Can I ask you a question then? About that?

Barbara: Yes, sure...

Adrian: Because I think one of the things that struck me about these immense durations is how on earth one perceives what the creative life inside the duration will be like as an artist before you do it, and I was thinking about this combination of documentary and fiction that's really in the heart of the project. I mean how, did you really know that that was going to be just a really generative fantastic drive for a piece? And what made you hook onto that as a process, because it could have been a creative project without a documentary dynamic in some way or another...

Barbara: You're talking about the journalism?

Adrian: Yeah, I'm talking about your sort of reading process and the kind of witnessing that goes on through that. The taking of these sources and then transforming them into a painting and then transforming them into other writing.

Barbara: Well when I was thinking about the newspaper material. I mean I've kind of had a long interest in journalism mainly because one of my very first jobs was typing the news for the ABC, for ABC radio. And I'd do it at 4 o'clock in the morning and it was a very strange experience because I could see the whole workings of the thing where this sense of authorship got sort of, levelled out, or because it went through so many hands: the reporters, the people back in the news room, the sub-editors, chiefs-of-staff and so on and it wasn't a style of writing that I really understood. I mean, where was the ownership of this material? So it's sort of been there all the time, but then just before I began the project, when the elements were still forming, they were just floating around and they hadn't quite come together, I did a writing course, actually that Ingrid was at, with me in Sydney in January, so only about six months before night 1, where we did an exercise, and it just struck me that what we were doing was something about Roland Barthes' idea of the punctum and the studium. That the studium in journalism was always there, that there was always going to be the subject of the Middle East, but what could transform any one particular piece of writing about that was the prick, the punctum and that that was the kind of the heart of the generative process, of the creative process, of the transformative process, that... that seemed to be the most powerful thing that we could do with this material that we all read every day. I mean I...I don't know about you, but reading the newspaper about something that, you know, have very little direct experience of is a very distancing process, it's very hard to really, really understand it and it's only through this transformation that you are all involved in, that something else becomes clear I think. And you're all to be congratulated on that. I think every one of you has done that. Have I kind of approached the question?

Barbara: Do you really think it should be done for another war?

Lara: Oh, what your project?

Barbara: Well yeah, because Branislava and I were talking about this and she was...

Branislava Kuburovic: I just... I didn't hear the question...

Barbara: Oh, Lara was saying early on about whether it should be addressed to another conflict.

Lara: I suppose there's two things I would say, I mean, I think your project's great, but, my only sadness about it which is my general criticism of the way that we view global politics is that the Middle East, which is clearly very important, is seen as kind of the only place where conflict matters...

Branislava: Wouldn't you see this as your own... we all have our [specific] truths about some horrible things that in some ways have filtered through Barbara's stories, but actually, the Middle East is the 1001 Nights, it is the story, it is the fiction...

Lara: Sure, sure.

Adrienne Gaha: Sorry I was just wondering, did you start with the idea of 1001 Nights? Or did you start with the Middle East?

Barbara: Hmmmm... I can't recall actually.

Sara Jane: They go together anyway...

Barbara: I don't know.

Adrienne: Well, I was thinking that 1001 Nights lent itself to the Middle East.

Barbara: Oh yeah.

Adrienne: And that is why you would use the Middle East...

Barbara: Yeah.

Adrienne: Or it just kind of happens.

Folake: There is a point that that war is perhaps one that we feel complicity in, in many ways. So as a site for that project...because that's another layer for our responses.

Barbara: Yeah.

Narelle Jubelin: But within the stories, the place shifts constantly, no? And that for me has been one of the most important things, it's not restricted to place, and you will have a story that completely takes you out of a war zone, or a conflict, there's another kind of story that breaks that sort of structure so it's not just dedicated to a critique of the Middle East, no?

Branislava: Perhaps, the process is not for us to expose further the horrors that we all have sometimes witnessed in one form or another – no matter whether it's an obvious war situation or a hospital or a death or any kind of experience that is very difficult to...[convey] to the other... but actually that this weaving of these completely different stories is what it's about and that these moments will come up and they won't come up in obvious ways, and they won't come up...you won't be thinking about the Middle East only because you are reading the news. Because we read the news from Africa we read the news from everywhere all the time...[and] you are aware of them as you read...or I at least I am [reading them] as Barbara has [sent you

the newspaper link] one day and you can choose to open it or not. That's an interesting thing, when do you dare to open the news bit? Or maybe not, just do the story ...

Barbara: Yeah.

Branislava: So I don't think we should get into this.... I think... we all have our pamphlets...this is my pamphlet at the moment so I'm trying to avoid it... but maybe it's not about what we witness, but about what we are kind of being with. Where we are being together in a situation, and I feel that this is what Barbara has done. I can't even say how, because it's such a small way... but she has been so generous in some very small way of how she's emailed back and how she's accepted... you were not actually frightened to give up a lot to this project so I think that's the magic of it, and I think that's the 'being with' which is of course easier when we are not here, being all flesh and... but we've survived!

Tony White: I just wanted to.... Just this point about you know writing for news and writing fiction, it just made me think about some of the work Nicholas [Blincoe] has been doing. Nicholas did the story yesterday, but... just the work you've been doing in Bethlehem with Layla with the sort of protest movement over there and writing journalism about that, trying to mobilise through journalism but then, writing your last novel *Burning Paris*, which also really looked at the siege of Bethlehem in a different way.

Nicholas Blincoe: Well there is a difference between writing fiction and doing something like activism, because in a sense when you're doing writing that looks like journalism but is in fact activism, you really are doing the same thing as the BBC, just pulling out quotes that illustrate the story that you want in order to get the story across. My wife runs a foundation in Bethlehem which both promotes Bethlehem – illustrates the situation there which has deteriorated dramatically since the wall has been built – so you've had a collapse in the population, a collapse of the industry which is tourism, but at the same time she's using Bethlehem as a window into Palestine because Bethlehem is a kind of cuddly place for the Christians. And by using Bethlehem as a window into Palestine people see there's a very very different place which no one ever sees, this kind of... there needs to be more lifestyle journalism about Palestine, so that people see that the school teachers are people, that there's restaurants – it's also a society that's worth preserving because I think people don't believe there's anything worth preserving in the Middle East.

Lara: I mean I think that's one of the things though that I think that's important, I think as you were saying, a lot of the stories that are written, aren't about... they don't have anything to do with the story, the news story. You know and that's, I think that's very inspiring and that's why I think it would be great if ... if something maybe not that's identical, but a project that's so creative and actually is very positive comes out of such a negative situation. But I think that another thing is that you know, one of my problems with war reporting and you know the sort of school of war correspondents is this idea that when you're in war you report on only kind of the military violence and the political, and the politics, because actually you know what's extraordinary in the war areas, certainly war areas that I've lived in is that most of war is just about people trying to carry on living their lives – normally – and their daily lives, so in a way your project touches on that because people keep taking out little you know little... They get the prompt and then they write something that...about some bizarre aspect, or some moment of their imagination so it doesn't just get bogged down in this very dull distancing as you said, process of what wars are supposed to be about..

Barbara: Yes.

Lara: ...People's imaginations...

Barbara: An interesting thing happened in July last year when the Lebanon war was in full flight and most of my writers at that point were still Australian and all of them – well not all of them – a lot of them sort of changed tack during that period, and felt compelled to write about Lebanon from extreme distance and... you know there is a big Lebanese population in Australia, as we all know, but their knowledge of Lebanon was very very far away, you know they'd gone to a Lebanese restaurant, that was about it. But they were all struggling so hard to make sense of this thing and they all felt compelled to narrow their focus in this way and eventually I just had to say, 'Stop! It's OK, you don't have to do this. You can keep writing about what is important to you and what you feel is part of you and how you do it, you don't have to do this... I mean it's...you have to trust that the project itself gives you the background hum for everything that you write under its umbrella.'

Ingrid Wassenaar: I have to say I've been sitting here feeling incredibly embarrassed and guilty, because I pretty much never look at the back story. I look at the prompt and go, oh it's inspired me, I'll go off and write something and I don't do any research, but in fact, I've been trying to think, I think all the stories I've done – although the prompt is very abstract usually, there is somehow a moral resonance in it, and pretty much all the stories I've ended up writing have been, I'm working through some sort of moral issue.

Barbara: Yeah.

Ingrid: So even if I don't do the proper research at all, and I've never written about the Middle East, there is still a sort of moral element which I suppose is what you're referring to as the punctum.

Barbara: Yes.

Ingrid: Some sort of puncturing.

Barbara: Yes.

Ingrid: Through which, whatever, imagination can flow...

Tony: It's... the second story that I did for you, the prompt was far from abstract.

Barbara: Yeah.

Tony: It was a real googly actually. It was 'Hyde Park'!

Barbara: I'd never done a place name...

Sara Jane: Just Hyde park?

Barbara: I'd never done a place name, and it was my first day in London and I thought, right, I'm here! Hyde Park is there. How incredible that any journalist could work a story about the Middle East, you know, could work Hyde Park into a story. How did that happen? And it was an amazing story. I don't know if you've read it.... Yes! Yours is amazing story too [Tony]. The original...

Tony: I did read it, it was the one about the people sitting by the lake wasn't it?

Barbara: No, it was about selling... it was about Iran, something about real estate that Iran wanted...there was a piece of British real estate in Iran that the British had had for years since the Shah, and they wanted to, they wanted to have it back! And if they didn't get it back then

they would claim Hyde Park, beautiful.... So I thought OK, Hyde Park, sorry Tony...

Tony: No, it's funny but actually about an hour before the deadline I had just fragments on the page, and I was a bit worried about that..

Barbara: And the other very new thing which I did just yesterday was for Nicholas which was 'in Arab hands', I had never directly referred to Arab...but I knew you could do it...

Daniel Gosling: Can I ask, I haven't written for it yet, I'm going to in a few days, and I was wondering, how many people here do read the back story? For the people who have written...so most of you read the back story...

Tony: After...

Unidentified A: Afterwards...

Daniel G: Oh right so you read it afterwards, because I just thought...

Unidentified B: Do you mean the news report?

Daniel G: Yes the news report...

Nicholas: It would never occur to me not to read it. I'm really amazed that people aren't reading it! I'm shocked.

Sara Jane: But can I say though in response, and to what you were saying when you said, 'I haven't done the proper research', I mean I think that's so redundant in the sense that's what's so amazing about the project is that it encourages us all to come at it obliquely, laterally, literally, head on, to place yourself in the middle of the story and view out from it, to place yourself outside of it on the edges, to be abstract, so I don't think there is a 'proper' in this at all, there is no way to do it or not do it...

Daniel G: It seems to me that it's a really fundamental choice that's going to affect your writing, if you read it and then write, obviously your writing is utterly different...

Unidentified C: I don't think you even need to decide that before the day.

Cathy Naden: But I think that what's really interesting about Barbara's role is that she's the only one who's ever going to have read all of the articles and also as a kind of filter to choosing...what phrases you choose. And it's kind of interesting that you say, the one and only time that you've had a place name, Hyde Park, or recently, the kind of, you know race is creeping in, whether that's something to do with the duration of it, because for me the durational aspect is really interesting – each story is a kind of a little part of the whole, and I'm kind of interested in what the whole thing is going to look like when it's finished, when it's a complete work.

Barbara: Yes, I did think a while back that if I looked at all those prompts or if they were all put together and formed a kind of sentence that, would they say everything about the Middle East in them, would it be the kind of the Lexicon, in the...

Daniel G: Fridge Magnets!

Lara: You should have one more story Barbara that should be only made out of prompts...

Alisa Lebow: It would be more than 1001 words though because each prompt is about three.

Barbara: Yes, that's right.

Adrienne: When you were choosing the stories, I mean how many would you get? I mean I know it must have varied...

Barbara: Choosing which stories? The newspaper stories?

Adrienne: It's up to anybody to respond to the prompt?

Barbara: Oh yeah. Well, in the beginning it was very loose and I...

Adrienne: Waited?

Barbara: I just hoped. I just put it out and hoped. And some days I had two, three, four, five, whatever, and then I'd have nothing and in each case it was a problem, because I had to tell people I couldn't use their story and sometimes they were fabulous and I wanted to, and I'd waste someone's day and you know it was terrible. And then I had the nothing, and I had to come up with something so I quickly developed 'the booking system' and it's worked much better, much, much better.

Adrienne: So like my question is whether by you reading all those stories, what informed your choice? Was it something about the initial texts that you read?

Barbara: Choice of the writer then? Because I've already chosen the writer...

Adrienne: No, no, now I see how it works, you've kind of got people lining up but in the beginning...so actually the questions redundant really!

Barbara: Well it is in that really people are not really saying mmm do I feel like writing today, oh yes I will... They're committed...

Narelle: But there is a thing where I've watched you choose, and there is a consciousness. You have a consciousness of the prompt suited to the writer...

Barbara: Yes, that's right. I do, I do.

Narelle: That's a part of your breakfast! That... there's a tailoring or there's another kind of discursive relationship with the prompt, the selection of reading and the subsequent writing...

Adrienne: And that's part of the curation too, you've got you know...it's quite cool!

Barbara: I mean there are lots of factors in choosing those prompts, there's the writer, there's whether I want to point the audience to a particular article that day, point them away from Iran to Iraq or some very strange quirky thing, or even if there's some weird, obscure Australian connection to this story that there shouldn't be. The words themselves, you know whether they're poetic or whether they're very particular – Hyde Park or – yeah, there are lots of factors. It's a great time of the day... Even though I'm tired and barely awake and haven't had breakfast or anything, and it can take a long time and what I will miss very much in five days when I have to return to Australia is all the newspapers that I can access disappear except for the Australian media.

Sara Jane: Do you read them as newspapers then rather than on-line?

Barbara: No, on-line, but because I have to use the newspaper of that day...

Sara Jane: Oh OK...

Barbara: Australia is so far ahead ... in time ... close to the international daytime, that nothing else has been published by the time I have to start. You know I can occasionally get something from Hong Kong, but you know even the Australian newspapers, they're reporting... you know it's absolutely stale...the news, even though it has that day's date stamp on it, it's the other end of the day, they've waited until the American Media's picked it up of whatever...

Tony: Is that the Express School of Journalism?

Sara Jane: So, when you go back to Australia, will you only have people on that side of the world writing for you? Or will you still be booking your Europeans and others...

Barbara: I only book the Europeans if they like night writing.

Sara Jane: Right. Because how would that work though?

Joe: If we cheat!

Sara Jane: Oh my God what would the time difference be then? How would it work? When would you be?

Barbara: Well for a month, for October, because of daylight saving, it's like midnight to 6am [in the UK].

Sara Jane: The writing would be midnight to 6am?

Barbara: Then it becomes 10pm to 6 or something like that.

Narelle: Because you do have a writer that writes and then she'll say 'insert the quote...'

Barbara: She's only done that once! Yes, People do come up with interesting strategies. Joe has been writing an epic!

Joe: Yes, and...since the story is already constructed the prompt sort of flavours it, but it doesn't direct the story, but my excuse is that the first prompt... when I came across your project. I think it was on the nettime list – if I remember correctly. I saw the prompt and then I saw that it was about the Middle East which is something that preoccupied me personally and it just fitted into something from my past, so the story was just there before me and I just saw it and I probably said, 'I've got lots of things to do today I mustn't do this now because I should be out there earning money which I'm not' and I said, 'no, but I can't not do it', so I wrote it and I sent it to you and that's how the whole thing started. And the problem though is that it was just written as an atmospheric piece but as an atmospheric piece which gradually evolved into a story over the two or three following episodes, and so subsequently the first atmospheric piece doesn't really fit in with what follows, and... which sort of creates a problem for me in a certain way... but it's quite interesting what was going on... First I was writing quite frequently and then it became less frequent and then I suddenly thought, 'I don't know where this is going to but some time near the beginning of 2008 it's going to have to come to a conclusion!' I sort of remember being quite anxious about it, it was like, 'Shit! How am I going to finish this story?' Because... I mean it's a story that didn't really have an ending, now it does have an end... and it will have an end when I finish it, but it will finish in a satisfactory or unsatisfactory manner.

Tony: Do you get friends to send you prompts every day?

Joe: Oh no no no no. Like I sort of hushly said, because the story... the story is...it was a sort of advancing framework and as a story it's written both as a narrative but it's written geographically because it's a journey...So it's actually the different stages of the journey that get written. I know that he's going to go there, and he's going to go there and he's going to go there and he's going to meet such and such a person and so on... but it's always a couple of steps ahead. I never knew, it was like the rest was uncertain, I finally reached the point where I had to say no, it has to in some way end ... and as I said I was very anxious and then I found the ending which I presume won't change and... so, since the story is written, and there's a lot of research in it. Lots of geographical research and political research and so on, so I can't rely on the prompt to create the story. The prompt becomes something... I actually write it, I generally write it before because it's become so structured and there's no real... the improvisation is when I sit down to write and that's when all the words.... I suppose it's like a spring. So you have waters bubbling out, and there's a stone in it, and then I'll get an email from Barbara which will say you know such and such a date can you write? And then I'll look and see if I can or I can't, and we'll decide on the date and then we'll gradually move the stone away and the water will start coming out, ideas will start forming, I'll start noting things down, and then I'll say, 'No don't think about that now, because you'll forget about it', and things like that, and then the day comes and it just gets put together and generally I mean, it's difficult to say, it depends whether I'm running behind schedule or not, if I write it the same day, after I get the prompt, but the prompt, like I say, the prompt adds a touch to it, it can't really influence the story as far as I can tell... I have to look at them. Sometimes when Barbara gets the prompt to me at eleven at night the story's already written...and there's another problem, that it has to be 1001 words and I always go beyond it... so then you have to start like pulling things out and I hate doing that. And then of course sometimes the prompt comes, and I've managed to get it back to 1001 words and I want to go to bed, or maybe there's something on TV and then the prompt arrives and you say oh I hope it's a prompt that you can just slip in and not have word problems. You know, when it creates a lot of disturbance, then I'm going to have to do a lot of cutting something else and you know it's midnight, and sometimes they come and just drop in and it's wonderful. It generally happens like that.

Barbara: I do think about you when I choose them.

Joe: Definitely!

Barbara: I think... oh.

Folake: I just wanted to ask... Is it OK, I just wanted to ask you something really quickly. Because you were talking about the meta-narrative and 'she', and I wanted to know is there like a tension between the story that you get, and what 'she' feels when she has to tell a particular story, is it ever a problem?

Barbara: Oh yeah.

Folake: Oh yeah? What do you do about it?

Barbara: Sometimes I can rehearse it enough that it... I can separate it, I can separate out from it and I'm OK, and I can tell it, that's usually the approach. Only once have I not read something because I couldn't.

Daniel G: Couldn't read it in what way sorry?

Barbara: It was too close to something, to an experience...

Ingrid: This might be a really obvious point, but because the lead story is set out in the third person, of course there's a narrator, there's always been a meta-narrator, there's always been a separation you said at the beginning I couldn't separate between the 'she' and the 'I', but in fact there always has been, because of the set up in the third person.

Barbara: Yeah.

Ingrid: So there is always this kind of narrator flying overhead there is in some sense...

Narelle: But not in your head.

Barbara: No, not necessarily.

Ingrid: And not in the 'she's' head, 'she' can't see the future, 'she' doesn't know that it's going to end at 1001.

Barbara: No, that's right.

Ingrid: 'She' only has the past and tonight.

Barbara: Yep.

Ingrid: But there is an entity isn't there? Call it a god, or call it you or... I don't know, but there is something that does know its end stopped. And something about the end stopping as well.

Barbara: Yeah...

Ingrid: I'm not really making a point but,

Barbara: Well, it's complex for me, as I think I said at the beginning, where the two overlap, when I can separate them out and when I can't.

Simon Porter: I think it would be less interesting if it was maybe clearer. I remember when we were talking about it in the workshop, it's like, not resolving it being the right thing to do somehow because that was what created the exciting bit or the stimulus to write from, the areas where those things rubbed off against each other or overlapped were the things that were interesting or gave you the space to write within or about, and I think that's what I enjoy about it really.

Theron Schmidt: I think that's the nature of performance as well. I mean I think that's what separates hearing someone speak in a performance from hearing someone speaking in a conversation from, because there's always that tension of the frame.

Barbara: Ummm. I think I'm going to have to wrap it because I'm hungry! We have a booking actually. So, thank you again very much, for your writing and for coming and I will rely on you to tell me if you are a night writer or if you are about to change time zones. So if you go to the States for any significant period of time for instance or Asia Pacific anywhere between sort of China and the West Coast, you have to tell me.

Sara Jane: Are you in Australia now until the end?

Barbara: Yes.

Adrian: But I think also we'd probably like to thank Barbara for creating an incredible opportunity

for us all and for sustaining us in a particular way through that. It's an amazing thing that you're doing and I feel incredibly grateful that it's in the world.

Everyone: Yes, thank you.

APPLAUSE

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