Sharing Stories:
A transtextual investigation
of family history as performance hypertext

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Abstract

This study researches through practice how family history texts, including objects that have been passed through the generations, photographs, historical data, and family stories, can be brought into play to create performance hypertexts. In order to analyse different textual relationships within these hypertexts, I am adapting Gérard Genette's theory of transtextuality as a framework. For Genette, transtextuality meant all the relations between a written text and the textual elements from which it is composed. These textual elements might be source materials, genre or the paraphernalia of publication and the transtextual may be explicit or implicit; it may be intentional or accidental.[1] Adapting this theoretical framework to discuss performance brings additional textual elements into play, such as location, objects and performers. By defining performance as a form of hypertext - a site where textual elements intersect - it is possible to investigate the impact that these textual relations have on one another. Transtextuality indicates texts that are in a state of play and which reach beyond the physical confines of words on paper through their relations to other texts. Thus, I argue for the efficacy of using transtextuality to discuss family history performances, which are constructed through their relationships to other textual forms. Following the methodology, each chapter concentrates a separate practice experiment that investigates issues that arise from the study and sharing of family history. The first experiment considers the use of material culture, the second reflects on the use of personal, private writing, then, thirdly, the influence of memory is examined and, finally, I explore participatory family history storytelling. This practice-research thesis breaks new ground by drawing together scholarship from historical research and performance studies using the theory of transtextuality.

[1] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* trans by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), pp. 1-7.

Contents

Note: The first digit in the appendix and figure number refers to the chapter for which they are relevant. The second digit shows the order within the chapter. Thus, the first figure/appendix relevant to the introduction is 0.1, the second figure is 0.2, whilst Chapter One starts with 1.1…, etc.

List of Figures

Figures in appendices

Practice-research hyperlinks

This section includes hyperlinks for the practice-research referenced through the thesis.

Chapter Two: Presenting
The space in-between, 10 October 2016 https://youtu.be/9q-T_Qv4554 [Uploaded 31 December 2019]

Chapter Three: Questioning
Think Before You Speak, 25 September 2016 https://youtu.be/lykAfg4aYtQ [Uploaded 18 November 2019]

'Think Before You Speak' https://soundcloud.com/kib100-403858040/think-before-you-speak/s-EYjzM [Uploaded 13 November 2019]

Chapter Four: Remembering
Four Great Grandmothers, 20 April 2017 https://youtu.be/MteERmIv72A [Uploaded 18 December 2019]

Chapter Five: Participating

'Lines And Ladders' https://heardofcats.co.uk/lines-and-ladders/ [Accessed 18 February 2020]

'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary', from 20 July 2018 https://heardofcats.co.uk/blog/ [Accessed 12 May 2020]

Example Eventbrite page for games (Cakes and Ale Café, Carlisle, February 2019) https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lines-and-ladders-tickets-52900082571# [Accessed 1 April 2020]

@Kmsurgey, 'Lines And Ladders' https://pin.it/kktfjvy6bk6nsq [Accessed 19 February 2020]

'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 02: Edinburgh, I'm on my way!', 2 August 2018 http://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/08/02/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-02-edinburgh-im-on-my-way [Accessed 19 February 2020].

'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 03: The Genealogy of the Game', 6 August 2018 https://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/08/06/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-03-the-genealogy-of-the-game/ [Accessed 19 February 2020]

'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 04: Twisted Ladders', 11 August 2018 https://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/08/11/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-04-twisted-ladders/ [Accessed 19 February 2020]

'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 05: Privacy Matters', 19 August 2018 http://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/08/19/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-05-privacy-matters [Accessed 19 February 2020]

‘Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 08: Making Notes’, 27 August 2018 http://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/08/27/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-08-making-notes [Accessed 19 February 2020]

‘Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 11: Photographs’, 3 October 2018 https://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/10/03/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-11-photographs/ [Accessed 19 February 2020]

‘Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 13: Playing with family’, 31 October 2018 http://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/10/31/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-13-playing-with-family [Accessed 20 February 2020]

‘Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 14: How long does it take to play?’, 7 November 2018 https://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/11/07/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-14-how-long-does-it-take-to-play/ [Accessed 19 February 2020]

‘Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 17: Transtextuality’, 31 December 2018 https://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/12/31/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-17-transtextuality/ [Accessed 19 February 2020]

‘Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 18: A Cast of Storytellers’, 16 January 2019 https://heardofcats.co.uk/2019/01/16/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-18-a-cast-of-storytellers/ [Accessed 19 February 2020]

‘Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 19: Meeting people for the first time’, 30 January 2019 http://heardofcats.co.uk/2019/01/30/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-19-meeting-people-for-the-first-time [Accessed 6 March 2020]

‘Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 20: Place Matters’, 3 March 2019 https://heardofcats.co.uk/2019/03/03/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-20-place-matters/ [Accessed 20 February 2020]

‘Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 22: On the village green’, 30 April 2019 http://heardofcats.co.uk/2019/04/30/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-22-on-the-village-green [Accessed 20 February 2020]

‘Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 23: Endgame’, 7 May 2019 http://heardofcats.co.uk/2019/05/07/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-23-endgame [Accessed 19 February 2020]

‘Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 24: My thesis is performance’, 2 February 2020 http://heardofcats.co.uk/2020/02/02/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-24-my-thesis-is-performance [Accessed 20 February 2020]

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Declaration

Some of these ideas about play were developed in:

Kirsty Surgey, 'When Bobby Baker Works, she plays: a study of *Drawing on a Mother's Experience* and *Table Occasion No19', Studies in Theatre and Performance* (2020), <DOI:10.1080/14682761.2020.1757316> 1-15

Some thoughts of the performance of family history, in particular in relation to DNA, are published:

'Family history and performance studies', A contribution to 'Emerging questions in family history studies', edited by Tanya Evans, *International Public History,* 2:2 (2019), pp. 9-10, <DOI: 10.1515/iph-2019-0013> 1-12

I, Kirsty Surgey, the author, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

Introduction: Play, Transtextuality, Family History and Performance

Family history has always fascinated me: snippets of stories shared by grandparents; carefully drawn family trees that reveal relationships; visits to a place where an ancestor once lived; old photographs that resemble a descendant; the thrill of uncovering documents marking the milestones of an ancestor's life. In 2014, as part of my Master's Degree in Theatre and Performance at The University of Sheffield, I created a performance called *Museum Piece: Isabella.* This told the story of my paternal two-times-great grandmother, Isabella Nichol (née Lowry), and her sons, William and Thomas who were champion wrestlers. For this performance, I created a temporary museum using family photographs and wrestling memorabilia from the house where they had lived. Audience members were invited to examine this collection and I spoke to them about Isabella and her three sons. During this monologue, I shared the items that had that once belonged to Isabella and speculated what they could reveal, when considered in conjunction with the facts of her life as revealed in public records. Isabella had a third son, who had passed away at the age of seventeen, and during a demonstration of the backhold wrestling of the Cumberland and Westmorland Style in which Thomas and William excelled, I questioned how the third son had been lost from the family stories of my generation. As a practitioner-researcher, I explored the emotional affect of understanding the past through the lens of family history and of making that personal history public through performance. This foray into using a family archive for performance planted the seed for this practice-research doctoral project.

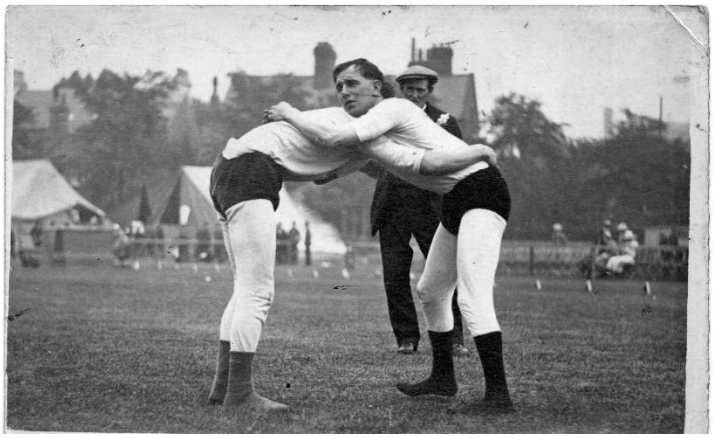

Figure 0.1
Left
My two-times-great uncle, Thomas Nichol, wrestling in the Cumberland and Westmorland Style

Figure 0.2
Right
A studio portrait photograph of my great-grandfather, William Nichol, wearing his wrestling costume and a champion's belt

This is a practice-research thesis; the findings are made through playful interventions with family history. I deliberately choose the term 'practice-research', as in the words of Rachel Hann, I want to 'move away from the micro-politics of practice as/through/based/led' and shift the focus onto how to 'share, apply and critique knowledge borne of practice'.[2] As a term 'practice-research' is able to incorporate different relationships between the practice and the research at different stages of the project. Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean offer useful examples of distinct types of research that are incorporated into creative practice research. They differentiate between practice-led research, research-led practice and academic research, but suggest that these methods operate reflexively. A brief summary of their definitions of these terms is that practice-led research is when the research discoveries are made in the practice, research-led practice is research undertaken that drives the practice, whilst academic research provides the theoretical or measurable framework.[3] Using these terms in this thesis, the research-led practice could be where practice arises from researching the family tree, the practice-led research would be where discoveries are made through the practice and the academic research is undertaken to turn these ideas into a thesis. 'Practice-research' is an over-arching term that encompasses these different relationships and enables a methodology constructed from experiments in which the relationship between practice and research varies. There has been plenty of debate justifying particular naming choices as the methods were being established,[4] but as Hann indicates, it is now time to move on from this debate and to focus on what can be discovered by undertaking this practice-research.

[2] Rachel Hann, 'Practice Matters: Arguments for a "Second Wave" of Practice Research', 28 July 2015 <https://futurepracticeresearch.org/2015/07/28/practice-matters-arguments-for-a-second-wave-of-practice-research/>, [Accessed 10 April 2020].

[3] Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, 'Introduction: *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice - Towards the Iterative Cyclic Web' in Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts,* ed. by Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 1-38 (pp. 7-8, 21).

[4] For examples see: Brad Haseman, 'Rupture and Recognition: Identifying the Performative Research Paradigm', in *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry,* ed. by Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 147-57 (pp. 147-48); Baz Kershaw and others, 'Practice as Research: Transdisciplinary Innovation in Action' in *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*, ed. by Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson, reprint edn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 63-85 (pp. 63-64); Robin Nelson, *Practice as research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) pp. 9-10; Smith and Dean, 'Introduction', pp. 5-8.

For this project, I have created a series of performances of family history and I propose that these are understood as transtextual experiences. As a performance studies practitioner-researcher, my method for investigating family history is play and I am using a methodology that adapts Gérard Genette's framework of transtextuality to analyse these playful encounters with family histories. Play as a method brings family history to the present, it facilitates experimentation and it allows contradiction. Transtextuality as a methodology provides an objective framework to analyse the subjective method and materials. The next few pages introduce the key elements of this thesis: play, transtextuality, and family history. Following those explanations, I propose a field of contemporary family history performances between 2015 and 2019; these performances, contemporary to this research project, form part of its transtextual web. The Introduction concludes with consideration of the ethics of using family history in a practice-research project and an explanation of the organisation of the thesis.

Qualities of play

A central tenet of this thesis is that performance is constructed from texts in play. As a performance maker and practitioner-researcher, I bring texts together to create a performance hypertext that is an investigation of issues in family history studies. The following paragraphs describe the qualities of play within this thesis, which are influenced by my professional experience in drama education and scholarship from a wide range of disciplines, including performance theory, child development and sociology.[5]

Play happens in the moment. Although it may include imagining the future or recalling past activity, as is the case in Chapter Two, it happens now. Play is about the experience as it happened, as Perry Else, educationalist, posited, 'play is … about the 'now' and how children become immersed in play to forget all other needs'.[6] The choices made may be repetitious or they may be made anew each time. This project analyses play that has finished and is now in the past, but the practice-research occurred as it was happening. In his influential work on the topic of play, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play element in*

[5] Some of these ideas about play have been published in Kirsty Surgey, 'When Bobby Baker Works, she plays: a study of *Drawing on a Mother's Experience* and *Table Occasion No19', Studies in Theatre and Performance* (2020), <DOI:10.1080/14682761.2020.1757316> 1-15 (pp. 1-2).

[6] Perry Else, *The Value of Play* (London and New York: Continuum, 2009; repr. 2010), p. 3.

culture, social historian Johan Huizinga described play as having 'no material interest, and no profit to be gained by it.'[7] Play may have a goal or an aim. There may be a way of winning the play; this will be seen in Chapter Five where a board game is played. However, when the game is won or completed, then the play is finished. Play in this thesis is about the process, rather than the achievement of the goal.

Play is activity, behaviour and attitude. When play is discussed, it is activity undertaken; it is not the play in the sense of a written playscript. Play is what I do and it is the way that I do it. This research method is shared with Carran Waterfield, performance maker, who described her process making the performance *The House* with her family history as:

> All I did was play and then formalise the playing. For me, playing is a method of performance-making. There's a hierarchy here isn't there, which we need to fight against, you know, between work and play. The academic research can be seen as the "proper work" driven by outputs, deliverables, evidence, and play as a waste of time. With *The House,* I was given permission to inhabit the materials and play with them.[8]

This thesis is the formalising of the play that I undertook in this practice-research. Waterfield is critical of the distinction made between play and work because her work, like mine, is play. Play in this thesis is a way of experimenting with ideas. It is a method for placing texts alongside each other and exploring the connections that emerge. These connections enable the production of narrative and the creation of performance; this is a way of finding a story to be shared from the materials available. Play is a method for trying an idea once, disregarding it and trying something different.

Play is recognized as play by those playing. Behavioural scientist, Gregory Bateson suggested that play operates within a 'play frame'.[9] This is established through

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[7] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture,* trans. by R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 13.
[8] Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield, 'Digging Deep: a dialogue on practice-based research', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* 37:1 (2017), 114-135 (p. 118).
[9] Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind,* with a new introduction by Mary Catherine Bateson (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2000), (first publ. 1972), p. 185.

'metacommunication', which allows the player recognise the difference between behaviour as play and behaviour in earnest, despite its absorption of the players' full attention.[10] The acknowledgement that play is occurring allows different activities, behaviours and attitudes to occur. For example, wearing a crown and pretending to be a king or a queen is accepted as play. It may be recognised by play by those observing, but not necessarily. An observer may assume that the person wearing a crown is royalty. This quality of play allows experimentation.

Play involves a balance between the freedom to choose and rules. For most of this thesis, I am the player, but in Chapters Three and Five, the audience are players too. The decision to play and the decision to stop must be freely made. Play is accepted in the knowledge that it can be ended at the player's discretion. Rules can facilitate creative play. Josephine Machon argues that this principle is exploited by those working in immersive theatre, as this practice uses 'clear codes and rules… in order to allow the experience to *feel* free and liberating and thus lead to creative agency'[11] (Emphasis in original). Within the play the player(s) must be able to make decisions and to take some control. These decisions may be taken within the rules set out at the beginning of play or they may change the form of the play entirely.

Play is fun and it entertains, but it can be challenging. Play should be enjoyed by those participating, but it is not necessarily easy. Challenge can increase the pleasure of the players; it may make the play more rewarding or it may provide space to confront difficult feelings comfortably within the frame of play.

When the work is described as 'playful', it is demonstrating the qualities described above and when I am 'playing', I am undertaking work according to these qualities. Bringing texts 'into play' or placing them 'in play' is putting them into the work and experimenting with them using playful methods. A family history performance is created when multiple texts are brought together 'in play'. The texts may include photographs and documents, as well as historical context and autobiographical content. By bringing these texts

[10] Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind,* p. 179.
[11] Josephine Machon, *Immersive theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Theatres* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 116.

together into a present moment, they are made active and perform in relation to one another. This play between texts has enabled me to investigate issues relating to the research of family history, including the presentation of personal materials to an audience and the questioning of ancestor's political attitudes. Through play, I have created four performance hypertexts using family history. The concept of the hypertext is introduced in the theoretical framework explained in the next section.

Transtextuality

This thesis will demonstrate that playing with family history generates a transtextual experience, which can be analysed using the framework of transtextuality described by Gérard Genette in his 1982 work: *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré* (*Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*). The manner in which these have been adapted for this thesis is explained in detail in 'Chapter One: Methodology'. Briefly, this is a summary of the terms as they are understood and used in this thesis:

- Transtextual: The generic term for any or all relations between and within texts. This is used to discuss textual relationships collectively.
- Hypertext: The core text under analysis, which is constructed through textual interactions. This is the performance that is created by bringing texts into play.
- Hypotext: A text that is transformed when it becomes part of the hypertext. For example, a personal story that is changed when it is told for an audience.
- Intertext: A text that is inserted unchanged into the hypertext. For example, a quotation is an intertext.
- Architexture: The relation of the hypertext to form, mode, theme and genre.
- Paratexts: The texts that surround the experience of the hypertext.
- Epitext: The part of the paratext that occurs in a different space to the hypertext. This might be an advertisement for a show.
- Peritext: The part of the paratext that occurs in the same space to the hypertext. This could be the venue for the show.
- Metatexts: The criticism and commentary that emerges from the hypertext.
- Extratext: An external, contextual historical, social and/or political text with which the hypertext intersects.

The term ‘text’ is understood very broadly as anything that can be interpreted and read as a part of the transtextual experience. When these are considered as part of the whole, they are described as ‘textual elements’. As an example, an object used in the performance/hypertext is an intertext; the object and the show are both types of text; the object/intertext are textual elements within the hypertext. In this practice-research, I experiment with hypotextual or intertextual material from family history research and extratextual historical study to create hypertexts. I draw on the work of other performance makers architextually. The space I play in becomes a paratext to my new hypertext, whilst performance practice enables the metatextual critique of issues in the discourse of family history research. The terms used here indicate the variety of relationships to be explored and the framework of transtextuality is introduced in detail in ‘Chapter One: Methodology’.

Throughout this thesis performance is understood as a hypertext composed of texts in play and the theory of transtextuality is applied to describe and to analyse the different textual relationships operating in the experience of the hypertext. Genette’s family of terms provides a framework to compare varied experiences generated by play. Through the adoption of this terminology, the construction of these performance texts can be analysed precisely. By considering the play generated through the research to be at the centre of a transtextual network, it is possible to interrogate its textual elements separately as well as in relation to one another. This means that an intertext can be investigated as a discrete text, alongside other intertexts, as distinct elements of the hypertext and in comparison to a hypotext.

By acknowledging the transtextual nature of family history performances, I am recognising the extended nature of the performance experience. For both the audience member and performance-maker, the experience of a performance is never only the hypertext, as this is always positioned in a peritext. Performances of family histories are necessarily composed of multiple texts. Material is used from research, such as stories told by an ancestor or material objects. This personal history is connected to a broader extratextual history and all of these texts are brought into play in a physical space in the company of an audience. Performances of family history are transtextual; identifying them as this provides a toolkit for analysis.

This research brings together family history, performance and transtextuality in a manner that has not happened before. Despite being a literary theory, transtextuality has previously been adapted to other media. I first encountered it in a chapter by Robert Stam proposing its usefulness to analyse film adaptations.[12] It has been used by two music scholars: Anne R. Richards has modified the theory to explore music employed in multimedia experiences[13] and, recently, Luís Bittencourt has used it as a tool to analyse his musical practice-research using the instrument of the waterphone. Bittencourt's analysis suggested that by playing familiar rhythms an unfamiliar musical instrument (the waterphone) that a new hypertext was created.[14] These modifications of the theory demonstrate its utility across different media. This thesis provides a more thorough application of the theory than is possible within a single chapter or article. Furthermore, by arguing that the framework of transtextuality can be an invaluable tool to analyse practice-research family history performances, I am pushing this theory into an entirely new field.

Family history

In this project the practice of play is a method for interrogating the practice of researching family history. The practice of researching my family history has included using online databases, exploring family owned archives, interviewing family members, and reading relevant published materials. The relationship between the practice of family history research and practice of play is reflexive. I have undertaken a series of transtextual investigations into my family history and I have made discoveries through playful experiments. These findings include revelations about my family history, about performing it publicly, and about the conceptualisation of performing family history. As the practitioner-researcher of this thesis, I have used my own family history as a model, but I am proposing that this method could be used to explore the nuances of any family history.

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[12] Robert Stam, 'Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Film Adaptation', in *Film Adaptation* (London: Althone, 2000), pp. 54-76 (pp. 65-66).

[13] Anne R. Richards, 'Music, Transtextuality, and the World Wide Web', *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 18:2, (2009) 188-209 <DOI: 10.1080/10572250802708337193-96> pp. 193-94.

[14] Luís Bittencourt, 'Memórias Líquidas para *Waterphone* solo e *Live Loops:* criação, performance e transtextualidade', *Revista Música Hodie,* 16:2 (2016), 116-132 <https://www.revistas.ufg.br/musica/article/view/45316/22433>, [Accessed 11 April 2020] p. 128.

Each practice-research experiment addresses particular concerns that emerge from this investigation into family history and specific details of the discoveries and processes will be explained as relevant in the body of the thesis. However, since the practice-research concentrates on my family history, I am briefly offering an overview here. Figure 0.3 is my family tree, which shows only the direct lines of ancestry; I was a Nichol until I married.[15] Date spans are included to give an indication of when my great and two-times-great grandparents were living. The family history that forms a part of this research starts with my grandparents and works backwards. My maternal grandparents were born in Ireland and my paternal grandparents in the north-west of England. I grew up in Cumbria, which is where my paternal grandfather's, Cyril (Nick) Nichol's, family roots are almost entirely planted. My paternal grandmother, Paddy Nichol (née Matthews), who has helped me as I developed material for this project, was born in Manchester and her mother was born in Liverpool, but her father was also born in what was then Cumberland; this county became Cumbria in 1974. My maternal grandmother, Georgina Harvey-Kelly (née Smyth), was born in County Down in the newly partitioned Northern Ireland, whilst my paternal grandfather, Justin Harvey-Kelly, was born in County Westmeath in the first decade of the Irish Free State. Thus, as a starting point, I identified the ancestral lines from my grandparents as northern English and Irish.

The continually expanding online databases make genealogy an accessible hobby, either from home or a local library. In 2015, Margot Finn and Kate Smith identified how these databases with international sources have pushed family historians to think 'of the global lives lived by the subjects of the research'.[16] This broadening of the available data meant that I was challenged in my regional assumptions by being able to access records for ancestors who spent significant portions of their lives in India: Constance Dunsterville, Harvey Hamilton Kelly and their son Charles Harvey-Kelly. This shifting geographic perspective impacts my emotional response to my family history as I reflect on their part

[15] Forenames given are those used during life where known (not always the first name). Harvey Hamilton Kelly had adopted the surname 'Harvey-Kelly' by the time that he married in 1876 and all his children used the family name 'Harvey-Kelly'.

[16] Margot Finn and Kate Smith, 'Introduction', in *New Paths to Public Histories,* ed. by Margot Finn and Kate Smith (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 1-21 (p. 8).

in the violence of colonial history and the potential of performance hypertexts to address this.

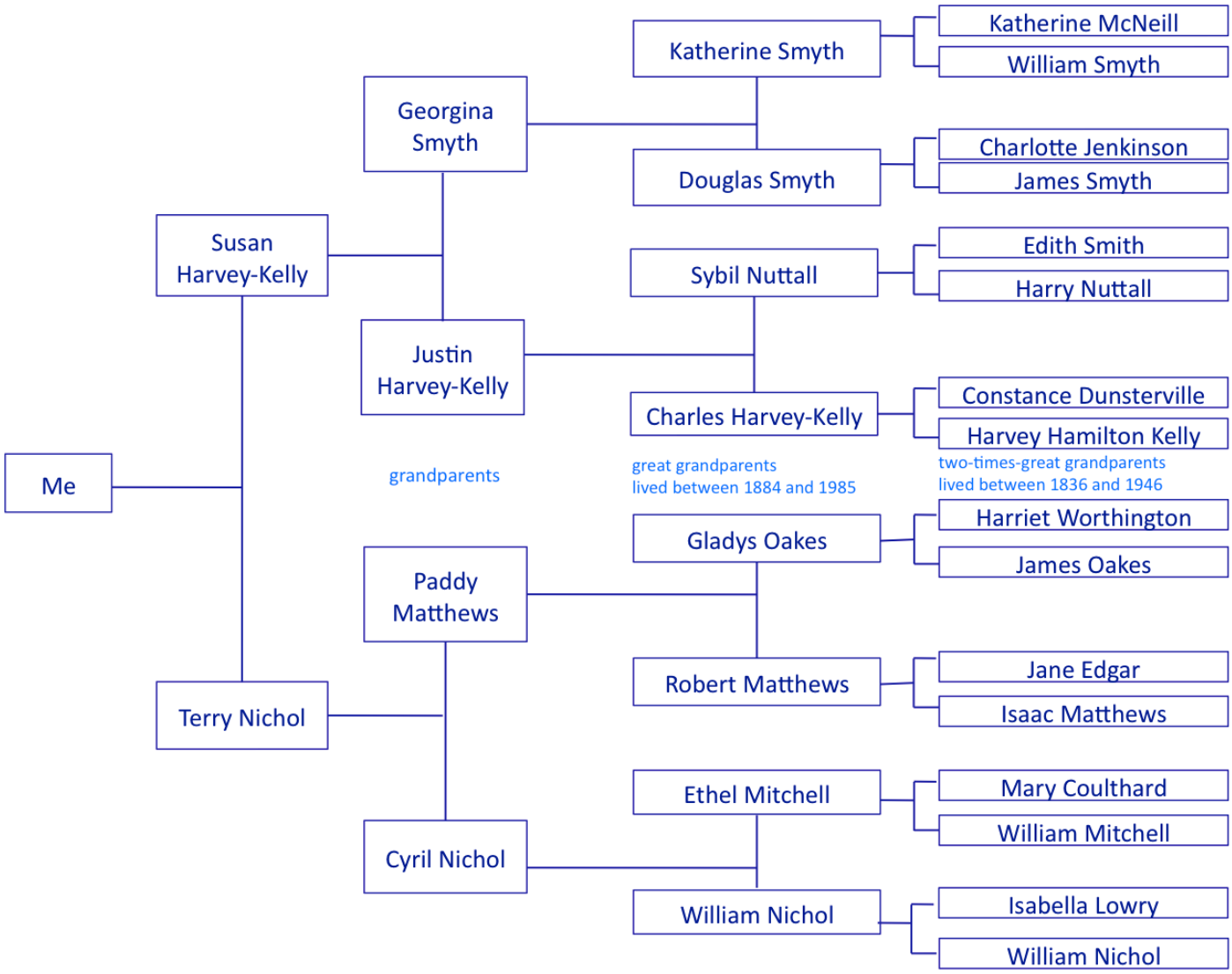

Figure 0.3

Kirsty Surgey family tree

Family history in this thesis is about personal heritage. The word heritage derives from inheritance; it is what is passed through the generations. My personal heritage is about my relationship with my ancestors: their lives, the places where they lived, their reputations and the objects that they left behind. Heritage is the *relationship* to these aspects of family history and should not be confused with being the material objects. Laurajane Smith argues that:

> There is … no such *thing* as heritage. Heritage is a cultural performance that occurs at, and with, heritage sites or museum exhibitions. It is a process of remembering

> and forgetting, and while particular 'things' or spaces may be used as tools in that remembering, it is not the things or places that are themselves 'heritage', it is the uses that these things are put to that makes them 'heritage'.
>
> ('The 'doing' of heritage: heritage as performance', p. 69; emphases in original)

Smith describes 'things' and 'places' becoming part of a heritage performance through their use, in the same way that I am suggesting that they become part of a transtextual experience through play. The performance of family history is a performance of heritage. Considering heritage as a process is to perceive it as a way of organising the past to make it something that can be experienced in the present moment. This is making use of history to create a hypertext – a transtextual experience that is experienced in the present and is constructed of historical and contemporary texts. Heritage is a way of looking back by bringing objects, memories, data and stories into play in the present moment.

When sharing family history the descendant is the end of the thread connecting their audience to the past. Family history has the potential to provide abundant fascinating stories. Each genealogical line splits and diverges offering multiple lines of inquiry. There are breaks in the lines, where people left no descendants. The line is an important motif in this research. Family histories are drawn with lines connecting ancestors to descendants, and siblings and cousins across generations. The concept of lineage is a way of visualising the passing on of heritage, whether genetic, tangible or intangible.

In Margaret Forster's *Hidden Lives: A Family Memoir* and Alison Light's *Common People: The History of an English Family,* these authors approached family history reflexively by integrating their voice as subject and practitioner into their historic investigation. Written about her heritage in Carlisle, the city where I was born, Margaret Forster's *Hidden Lives: A Family Memoir* has a geographic resonance for me. This book investigates her mother's and grandmother's lives from her own perspective as daughter and granddaughter.[17] The memoir is built from family memory, as well as archival research, and narrative threads are left unfinished. Ambitions to find answers are thwarted because the knowledge is sometimes unattainable. Similarly Alison Light's *Common People: The History of an English*

[17] Margaret Forster, *Hidden Lives: A Family Memoir* (London: Penguin 1996).

Family makes use of both forms of investigation, but also includes imaginative interludes at the start of every chapter.[18] She writes her heritage in four parts using each of her grandparents as a starting point, moving from the one she did not know at all to the one she knew best. In this book the genealogy provides context for a rich social history. Both Light and Forster are practitioners who transformed their family history into public history through the writing of books. As writers they create a narrative, which tells the family history and that explains their research-process. This reflexivity is an approach that I incorporate into my transtextual practice-research within this thesis.

Proposing a field

Whilst undertaking this practice-research between 2015 and 2019, I sought out performances of family histories in order to establish the field of research. Extended details about the form and content of these performances, the context in which I experienced them, and the availability of scripts are documented in the Journal of Performance Hypertexts in Appendix 0.1. The section that follows here explains the scope of these performance experiences and is followed by a brief survey of the form and content of these performances.

My practice-research is placed in the context of witnessing and experiencing these family history performances, but it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the field I describe. I am undertaking this research in the north of England and the performances I describe were all seen either there or in Edinburgh during the Festival Fringe. They are all shows that I have seen at least once live. The cost of tickets were all at the cheaper end of the spectrum for the theatre; the most expensive ticket that I bought was £16.50 for Mark Steel's *Who Do I Think I Am?*[19] These material limitations impacted the type of shows that I saw, which often had small casts, used simple stage technology, and featured English genealogies (although there were exceptions to all of these). I am not proposing that all family history performances share the particular qualities that I witnessed, but rather that I undertook my practice-research in the context of experiencing these performances, which are now part of the transtextual web of this project.

[18] Alison Light, *Common People: The History of an English Family* (London: Penguin, 2014).
[19] Mark Steel, *Who Do I Think I Am?* The Pomegranate Theatre, Chesterfield, 15 May 2016.

The timeline in Figure 0.4 indicates when I experienced performances alongside the practice that I was developing at the same time. The performances in boxes were ones that I experienced as an audience member. The number in parenthesis denotes if I saw a performance more than once. The arrows show the four practice-research experiments. These were being developed and performed during the time suggested by the length of the arrows. Some had clear start and end points, such as *Think Before You Speak,* which was contained within a performance-making course; others had a slower genesis, for example *Lines And Ladders,* which started as a kernel of an idea alongside others in the autumn of 2017. These performances all address issues of family history or ancestry, with the exceptions of *Inspiration Exchange*,[20] *One Hundred Homes*,[21] and *Faslane.*[22] These three performances use personal stories, which sometimes relate to family. When the ethics of making use of family relationships in performance is discussed in Chapter Three, *Faslane* provides an example of how one performance maker does this. *One Hundred Homes* and *Inspiration Exchange* are discussed in Chapters Four and Five with relation to form, as these both feature a sharing of stories told to performance makers.

[20] Third Angel, *The Inspiration Exchange,* devised and presented by Alexander Kelly, Wrought Festival, The Hide, Sheffield, 17 April 2016.
[21] Yinka Kuitenbrouwer, *One Hundred Homes,* Summerhall, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, 9 August 2016.
[22] Jenna Watt, *Faslane,* Red Lecture Theatre, Summerhall, Edinburgh, 8 August 2016 and at Barber Studio, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds, 7 April 2017.

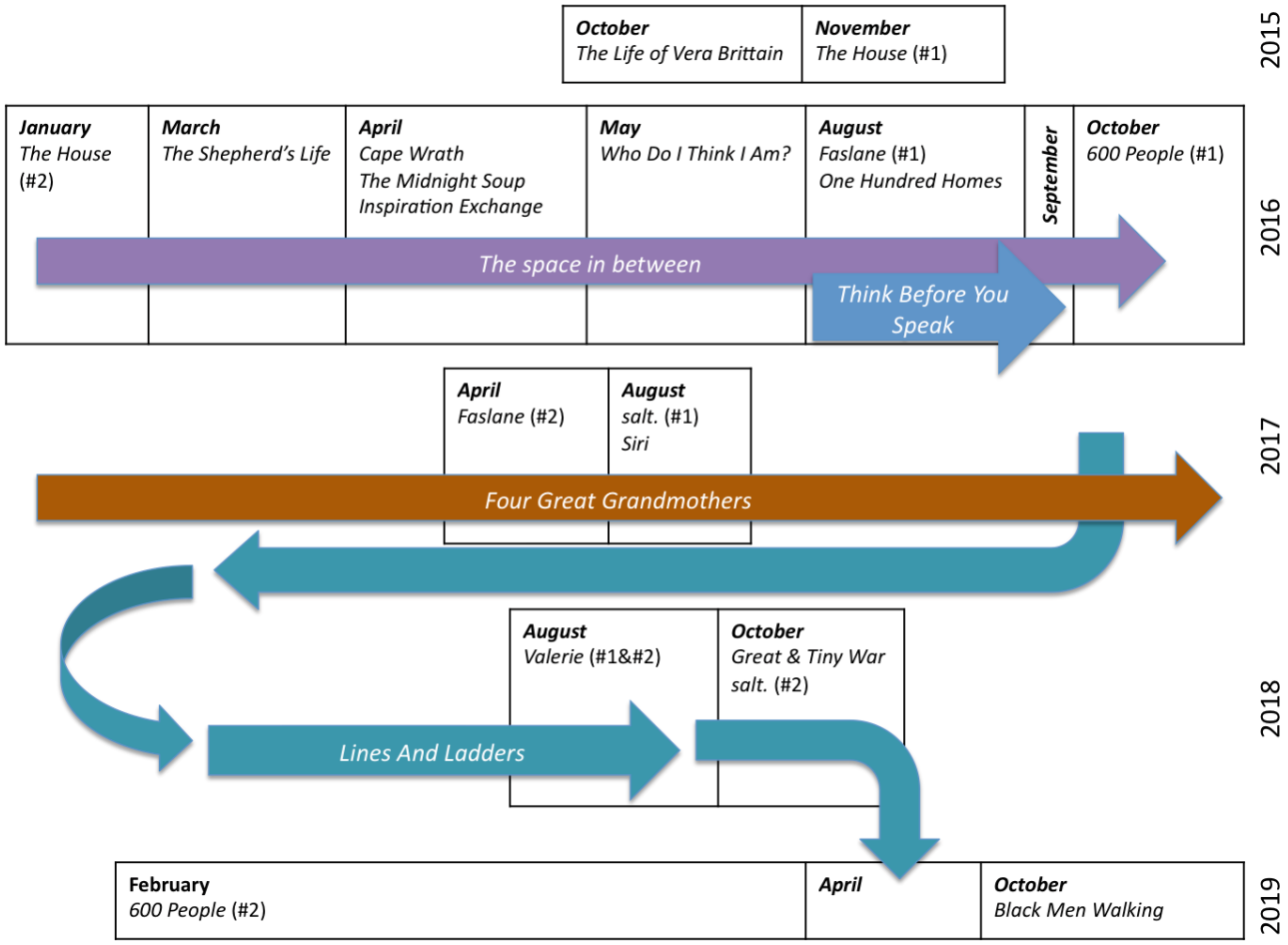

Figure 0.4

Timeline of performance hypertexts

The remaining performances on the timeline are all family history hypertexts. These range from lectures on ancestors' histories, for example, Shirley Williams' *A Life of Vera Brittain*,[23] through storytelling performances, such as Third Angel's *Cape Wrath,*[24] to plays that explore the question of ancestry: Eclipse Theatre's *Black Men Walking,*[25] La Messe Basse's *Siri*[26] and Selina Thompson's *salt.*[27] There are micro-audience experiences,

[23] Shirley Williams, *The Life of Vera Brittain,* Crucible Main Stage, Sheffield, 29 October 2015.
[24] Third Angel, *Cape Wrath,* written and performed by Alexander Kelly, dir. by Rachael Walton, Wrought Festival, Scotland Street, Sheffield, 16 April 2016.
[25] Eclipse Theatre Company, *Black Men Walking,* written by Testament, directed by Dawn Walton performed by Ben Onwukwe, Tonderai Munyevu, Patrick Regis and Dorcas Sebuyange, Crucible Studio, Sheffield, 15 October 2019.
[26] La Messe Basse, *Siri,* written by Laurence Dauphinais, Maxime Carbonneau and Siri, performed by Laurence Dauphinais, directed by Maxime Carbonneau, King's Hall, Canada Hub, Edinburgh, 08 August 2017.
[27] Selina Thompson, *salt.,* written and performed by Selina Thompson, directed by Dawn Walton, Northern Stage, Summerhall Edinburgh, 8 August 2017 and at The Pop-Up Theatre, Leeds Playhouse, 2 October 2018.

including Leo Burtin's *The Midnight Soup,*[28] in which eight guests were invited to prepare and eat the eponymous soup, and Bobby Baker's *Great & Tiny War,*[29] which was a guided tour of a terraced house that I experienced with two other audience members. There was one piece of stand-up comedy, Mark Steel's *Who Do I Think I Am?*[30] and one piece of gig theatre, Last Tapes Theatre Company's *Valerie.*[31] Some work combines features of different forms, like Carran Waterfield's *The House,* which commenced with a lecture followed by play with multi-roled characterisation.[32]

The topics that these family history hypertexts cover vary considerably. *The House* explores Waterfield's maternal ancestry in the context of institutionalised care with a particular emphasis on her grandmother, 'nana-in-hospital'.[33] *Great & Tiny War* dealt with family relationships past and present, but is particularly relevant here because of the history shared of Baker's grandfather during and after the First World War. *Cape Wrath, The Midnight Soup* and *Valerie* all told stories of grandparents shared from the perspectives of the performance maker's personal relationships with them. *Siri* and *Who Do I Think I Am?* told the quest of discovering unknown biological parents. *Black Men Walking* and *salt.* both dealt with the significance of ancestry to a sense of belonging. Both plays investigated shared ancestry, alongside stories of specific parent-child relationships; *Black Men Walking* had a chorus of Ancestors who introduced individual black people living in Britain throughout more than a thousand years of history connecting these to the characters walking in the twenty-first Peak District, whilst *salt.* exposed the difficulty faced by the African diaspora in knowing their ancestry.

Some performances addressed concerns specific to family history research, including *Siri* and Third Angel's *600 People,*[34] which both included a DNA test. *The House* and *Who Do I Think I Am?* both explored archival research methods. Jenna Watt's *Faslane* considered

[28] Leo Burtin, *The Midnight Soup,* Wrought Festival, Quaker Meeting House, Sheffield, 16 April 2016.
[29] Bobby Baker, *Great & Tiny War,* 133 Sidney Grove, Newcastle, 13 October 2018.
[30] Mark Steel, *Who Do I Think I Am?* The Pomegranate Theatre, Chesterfield, 15 May 2016.
[31] Last Tapes Theatre Company, *Valerie,* Cairns Lecture Theatre, Summerhall, Edinburgh, 10 August 2018 and 18 August 2018.
[32] Carran Waterfield, *The House,* John Thaw Studio, The University of Manchester, 3 November 2015 and Milburn House, The University of Warwick, 5 January 2016.
[33] Carran Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* 37:1 (March 2017), 6-94, (p. 22).
[34] Third Angel, *600 People,* written and performed by Alexander Kelly, dir. by Rachael Walton, Crucible Studio, Sheffield, 15 October 2016 and at Copper Auditorium, Square Chapel Arts Centre, 21 February 2019.

the impact of making political work when your family's views may be different to your own.[35] Often family history was used as a way to engage with a broader historical concern and/or a contemporary issue. For example, *Great & Tiny War* was made as a commemoration of the First World War, and, like *Valerie,* addressed mental health; *salt.* confronted the history of Transatlantic Slave Trade and tackled twenty-first century racism.

The form of the performance lecture was common for sharing family history, a few used material objects to tell their stories and some shared family photographs. Projection was frequently used, for example, in *The House* personal photographs and documents were shown, in *salt.* film clips were shared serving as cultural history, and in *The Shepherd's Life*[36] there were images of Cumbrian landscapes suggesting location. Performances that invited participation tended to be less conventional and occurred in a more intimate setting: *Cape Wrath* took place on a minibus, *The Midnight Soup* we were seated around a table in a Quaker Meeting House, and the *Great & Tiny War* transformed a terraced house into a series of artistic installations. Only a small number used characterisation to tell the stories and often this was coupled with autobiographical storytelling. Steel used a range of mimicked characters to add comedy to *Who Do I Think I Am?*, whilst Waterfield's characterisation of those seeking help and those offering it heightened the empathy and political impact of the histories that she told. The majority of these hypertexts were solo shows performed by the person whose ancestry or personal stories were shared. Notable exceptions were *The Shepherd's Life* and *Black Men Walking.* Both of these performances told stories with actors playing characters, fictional in *Black Men Walking* and biographic in *The Shepherd's Life,* and both emphasised the connection between place, ancestry and identity.

The work of Third Angel and Carran Waterfield both feature heavily in this research, as practitioners making, and writing about their processes of making, family history performances. Waterfield wrote a performance diary alongside the development of *The House.* This performance diary details the reflexive relationship between her family

[35] Jenna Watt, *Faslane,* Red Lecture Theatre, Summerhall, Edinburgh, 8 August 2016 and at Barber Studio, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds, 7 April 2017.
[36] Chris Monks, *The Shepherd's Life,* Theatre by the Lake, Keswick, 28 March 2016.

history investigations and her devising process. A special edition of *Studies in Theatre and Performance* focused on *The House* includes a dialogue with Waterfield and theatre researcher Jenny Hughes. The main thread of this dialogue is the collaboration between them as academic (Hughes) and practitioner (Waterfield) in this practice-research project aimed at 'examining the relationships between theatre, poverty and economic inequality'.[37] Family history is mentioned only briefly in this context, when Waterfield describes the pleasure that she gained from being given the opportunity to research her family history for the project and explains how this research process became incorporated into the performance through the role of the Data Protector/Accountant.[38] Hughes considers whether the relationship between them is unequal, as she is employed permanently by the university, whilst Waterfield's position is more precarious. One element of this imbalance is 'the potential exploitation of your family history in our research'.[39] Alexander Kelly has written about his use of family history in *Cape Wrath* and the earlier performance *The Lad Lit Project* (2005) in an chapter published in *Staging Loss: Performance as Commemoration.*[40] He reflects on his decision making process and his own emotional responses as he chose how to incorporate his grandfather's stories within these two performance pieces made at different points in his life.[41]

Ethics

When using family history in practice-research, it is necessary to be considerate of the feelings of others and the possible impact that the use of family history in this project may have on others. In this research the others concerned include family members, fellow descendants, and the departed ancestors, as well as non-related participants in the project: those who shared their family histories and those performance makers whom I have worked alongside. As required by the University of Sheffield, approval for researching with human participants has been sought, granted and the guidance followed for various elements of this practice-research project.

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[37] Jenny Hughes, 'Introduction', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* 37:1 (2017), 1-5 (p. 2).
[38] Hughes and Waterfield, 'Digging Deep', pp. 117, 129.
[39] Hughes and Waterfield, 'Digging Deep', p. 122.
[40] Alexander Kelly, 'Cheers Grandad! Third Angel's *Cape Wrath* and *The Lad Lit Project* as Acts of Remembrance', in *Staging Loss: Performance as Commemoration,* ed. by Michael Pinchbeck and Andrew Westerside (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 129-44.
[41] Kelly, 'Cheers Grandad!", pp. 138-39, 143.

When making this work, I have striven throughout to act respectfully of others with integrity and honesty. I have undertaken to do no harm through this practice-research and aim instead to create positive experiences to benefit those participating in the research. These ethical intentions are interdependent and needed to be considered in relation to one another. If something has been kept private or is considered personal, I had to consider the effect that sharing this information with an audience of strangers could have on others living and on the legacy of others deceased. This is not to say that this information should not be shared, but that I needed to consider my motivation for doing so. For example, sharing a distressing story may upset a fellow descendant, but is this worth doing if it is an important way to recognise and acknowledge historic wrongs? It is essential to recognise the complexity of making any decision on ethical grounds and the significance of the social and cultural context in which the play is experienced. To suggest that private and personal histories have no place in performance is to risk the exclusion of certain stories. Deirdre Heddon has commented that the use of family history in performance is a largely female occupation. She suggests that 'To tell these stories, to insist on their place within and as history, may well be a feminist praxis'.[42] Women's history is often associated with domesticity and the private sphere, but as the feminist slogan sought to highlight 'the personal is political'.[43] It is important to consider whether an attitude that a private, personal story should not be shared is a product of a culture that does not value a particular voice or if fear of offending prevents truths from being told.

Organisation of the thesis

'Chapter One: Methodology' explains the terminology used throughout the thesis and the rationale behind using transtextuality to investigate family history performance. It covers how Genette's framework is adapted within this thesis, how the concepts of play and text are understood, and how the practice-research is structured within this project.

Chapters Two to Five are organised chronologically and chart different practice-research experiments undertaken according to the methodology. Each of these chapters is given

[42] Deirdre Heddon, *Autobiography and Performance* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), p. 61.
[43] Michelene Wandor, 'The Personal is Political: Feminism and the theatre', in *Dreams and Deconstructions: Alternative theatre in Britain,* ed. by Sandy Craig (Derbyshire: Amber Lane Press, 1980), pp. 49-58 (p. 58).

the title of a gerund: 'Presenting', 'Questioning', 'Remembering' and 'Participating'. This identifies the particular purpose of putting family history texts in play for that section of the thesis. The choice of the gerund form of the verb emphasises the liveness of the practice generated through play.

As this is practice-research, the practice is integral. It needs to be experienced in order to fully understand the nuance of the argument. There are films of the practice in Chapters Two, Three and Four that the reader is required watch and there are hyperlinks at the best point to watch these in each chapter. There is no film of the practice in Chapter Five, for reasons that are detailed there. Instead this practice must be experienced through its documentation in an online performance diary and materials offered within the chapter. These are indicated at relevant points in the writing. This final piece of practice is a board game and where possible the reader should play it. This written element of the thesis is what Robin Nelson has called 'complementary writing'.[44] It extends and makes explicit the ideas articulated through the practice, but it can only be understood in relation to that practice.

The practice-research is composed of a series of experiments, which investigate different issues that I encountered whilst researching my family history. The practice focus of 'Chapter Two: Presenting' is called *The space in-between.* This is a slide show that I made using my great-grandmother, Ethel Nichol's (née Mitchell), holiday photographs. This chapter explores the presentation of objects, photographs and performers' bodies as intertexts and considers how these can be read in the context of genealogy.

'Chapter Three: Questioning' makes use of a diary written by my two-times-great grandmother, Edith Nuttall (née Smith). The practice that I created was an installation called *Think Before You Speak.* The chapter investigates how practice can be used to question the source material and historical knowledge. Through the transformation of the diary as a hypotext, I question changing social and political attitudes towards the reputation of an ancestor.

[44] Nelson, pp. 36-37.

For ‘Chapter Four: Remembering’ I put personal memory into play with memorised family history data using architexture shared in performances by Third Angel, La Messe Basse and Yinka Kuitenbrouwer. The practice is a spoken word performance titled *Four Great Grandmothers* and is based on the lives of these women: Ethel Nichol (née Mitchell), Sybil Harvey-Kelly (née Nuttall), Gladys Matthews (née Oakes) and Katherine Smyth. This practice-research experiments with remembrances of personal and public genealogical information.

The final chapter is the longest of the thesis and discusses the most substantial practice of the research journey. The focus of ‘Chapter Five: Participating’ is *Lines And Ladders,* which is a board game played with audience-participants in public spaces. *Lines And Ladders* draws on the full extent of my genealogical research and is the culmination of this practice-research project. In this final chapter the intentions of the previous three chapters are brought together to investigate through participation how an audience can draw on personal and public memories, can question and be questioned, and can present and be presented to, while sharing family histories. *Lines And Ladders* is the most literal response to the methodological approach, as it overtly brings texts into play using a game. ‘Chapter Five: Participating’ explores the multiple transtextual relationships at play in every iteration of the performance hypertext. This enables investigation into the stories that people share, the possibility of communicating a research process and manifold outcomes to an audience, and the operations of different textual elements within the hypertext.

Conclusion

Family history performances are transtextual. The chapters that follow seek to expose this transtextuality and reveal how this theory can enhance the performance making process. Family histories are about making connections. They provide routes into history and performance provides a method for broadening that connection to a wider audience. The hypertext is a creative space that exists in the present moment drawing on history. I have approached the materials and practices of family history through play and I conceptualise a new way of interrogating these materials and practices as transtextual. This theoretical approach recognises and analyses the significance of the breadth of texts experienced in performance making.

The ancestors whose stories are shared are mostly grandmothers, for which I offer no excuse or apology. I will be writing about my two-times great grandmother Edith, the great-grandmothers Ethel, Gladys, Katherine, and Sybil, and remembering my grandmother Georgie, who I miss every day. I feel privileged to write with the help and support of my grandmother Paddy. When I write of their lives, once they have been introduced with their full names, I call them by their first names. Practically, this enables family members with the same surname to be distinguished from one another, and, for me, it generates a sense of the person within that personal nomenclature. Through this informal naming my grandmothers are kept separate from the theorists and performance-makers quoted alongside them, as the women who, very literally, inspire this research. Transtextuality is a methodology that formalises a personal research topic, whilst always keeping sight of its subjective heart.

Chapter One: Methodology

Introduction

This is a practice-research thesis that investigates how transtextuality can be used as a tool for making, as well as reading. Family history texts are put in play with one another and with other texts becoming new hypertexts. This hypertext exists suspended by a web of textual relationships. These might include a source text re-told, a quotation re-used, a genre manipulated, or a commentary offered after the text's completion. Transtextuality is a functional theory that recognises that texts are constantly in a state of play with different elements of their composition. It is a method of interpreting texts that I propose can be usefully applied to performance texts.

This chapter details the methodology used in this practice-research. It starts with a description of the reflexive practice-research models that I have used to organise this project. This is followed by an explanation of the use of the term 'text' to refer to performance in this practice-research context. The next part of the chapter, and the most significant in length, concentrates on the terminology of transtextuality developed by Gérard Genette. I explain the framework that he created and my application of it to discuss family history performances. Genette devised his theory of transtextuality for the discussion of literature, so it has been necessary to adapt it for the analysis of practice-research. This chapter details how I have done this and offers a rationale for transferring this theory into a practice-research method investigating the field of family history performance.

Research process

This section outlines how this research has been undertaken. The result of this project was not a single piece of practice, but multiple practice-research experiments that I undertook in response to different challenges I identified when sharing of family histories. The model for this is Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean's 'iterative cyclic web'. This is a reflexive network connecting practice-research activities that they categorise as academic research, practice-led research and research-led practice, which can lead to

varied outputs including creative work, theories and publications.[45] In the 'iterative cyclic web' research may move between activities from the three modes in any direction. A project might start with practice-led research, move onto academic research and then research-led practice, before returning to academic research. This particular pathway is an example; the authors stress that the cycle can be started at any point of the web and it is then possible to move between the different modes of research in any order, including returning to methods that have already been used.[46] By describing this web as 'iterative', they emphasise the importance of repetition to creative research. Importantly, this is not the repetition of a science experiment designed to produce the same result every time, this re-iteration of parts of the process is to produce new ideas, to start again, but to start differently, or to start again, but with a different goal in sight.[47] This image of the iterative cyclic web is useful because it recognises the different roles that research and practice can take at different points in a project. It emphasises the fluid nature of a project of this type, which may revisit some activities multiple times and attempt others only once.

The reflexive nature of the web promotes the notion that the project may need many research methods, which will influence, support and have impact upon one another. Like the network of relations in the transtextual framework, through the image of a web, Smith and Dean emphasise the interconnections between these forms of research and the necessity of embracing multiple methods in order to research through creative practice. As this project developed, the experiments built on the growing textual experiences. These textual experiences included genealogical research, wider reading and performances made by others, as well as practice that I had already undertaken. The iterative cyclic web of this project is constructed from these transtextual experiences.

Estelle Barrett suggests that Michel Foucault's discourse theory can provide a useful model for the practitioner-researcher to write about their own work. She claims that writing about our own work can be a stumbling block because of a perceived need to analyse the quality or value of the work. Instead she proposes that we make use of

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[45] Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, 'Introduction: *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice - Towards the Iterative Cyclic Web' in Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts,* ed. by Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 1-38 (p. 20 Figure 1.1).
[46] Smith and Dean, 'Introduction', p. 21.
[47] Smith and Dean, 'Introduction', p. 19.

'Foucault's view of author as *function* rather than as individual consciousness' (Italics in original).[48] As an alternative to approaching our own practice as critics, we should 'focus on the forms the work takes and the institutional contexts that allow it to take such forms'.[49] The practice analysed here is the result of doctoral study, it takes form in relation to my family history and emerges from my experiences of other texts including literature, performance and theory; these contexts are significant. By considering the author/artist/researcher as an assembler of texts that emerge in relationship to others, Barrett argues that the researcher can cast an analytical eye over their own process and outcomes.[50] This proposition is a helpful bridge to applying Genette's transtextual theory to practice-as-research. Extending this idea to visualise the field of the research as a transtextual network, the focus can be on these relationships. The concept of transtextuality allows the textual relationships to be identified, and their functions and significance analysed.

Performance as text

The texts in this thesis are only sometimes experienced as words written on a page and are sometimes not verbal at all: sometimes they are poems, sometimes they are games, sometimes they are photographs, sometimes they are objects, sometimes they are gestures, sometimes they are places. I propose a fluid definition of text, which includes anything that has significance when it is integrated into the hypertext. This usage can be seen in the preface to Jerome de Groot's *Consuming Heritage,* when he describes a multitude of ways that the 'text or idea' of 'Anne Boleyn' might be re-inscribed, starting with 'television, in a parody Twitter account, in fan fiction'.[51] In this example, using Genette's terms, Anne Boleyn's story has been written and re-written so many times that it has become a hypotext, which is transformed hypertextually into different media.

Roland Barthes' definition of the text, in his influential essay 'From Work to Text', stresses its active, playful nature. 'The work' is the product, the thing that can sit on a shelf, whilst

[48] Estelle Barrett, 'Foucault's 'What is An Author': Towards a Critical Discourse of Practice as Research', in *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry,* ed. by Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 135-46 (p. 136).
[49] Barrett, 'Foucault's 'What is An Author', p. 137.
[50] Barrett, 'Foucault's 'What is An Author', p. 139.
[51] Jerome de Groot, *Consuming History: Histories and Heritage in Contemporary and Popular Culture,* 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), p. xvi.

'the Text' operates in connection to others; it '*is experienced only in an activity of production'* (capitalization and italicization in original).[52] The Text is something that defies containment, something that plays and is played. Barthes asserted that, 'The Text […] decants the work […] from its consumption and gathers it up as play, activity, production, practice'.[53] The work precedes the Text and is stable, but the Text was something to be experienced; it was something that must engage the reader/audience in action. Performance studies researcher, W. B. Worthen, described Barthes' description of the Text as 'self-consciously performative'.[54] He argued:

> What Barthes meant by *text* is in some sense more like what we usually mean by performance: a production of a specific state of the text in which a variety of intertextual possibilities are realized.
>
> ('Disciplines of the text/Sites of performance', p. 17)

This reading of Barthes theory shows its potential for application in performance studies. For Worthen, Barthes' text and performance are comparable as they both emerge from their relationships with other texts and are time-based experiences. Worthen and Barthes use 'intertextual' in the way that Genette and I use transtextual, as a term to describe the textual relations within any individual text.[55] Perceiving performance as one form of (hyper)text constructed from, and in relation to, others, emphasises its status as an active, productive, playful and hermeneutical form. In his critique of analogies used in social sciences, Clifford Geertz acknowledged the prevalence of the broad use of text, describing it as 'a dangerously unfocused term'.[56] The application of Genette's terms is a method for clarifying and distinguishing between different forms and function of text. I suggest that understanding performance, or Worthen's 'production of a specific state of the text', as the hypertext in the network of transtextuality provides a focus for analysing this

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[52] Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text,* selected and trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Flamingo, 1984), p. 156-57.
[53] Barthes, *Image Music Text*, p. 162.
[54] W. B. Worthen, 'Disciplines of the text/Sites of performance', *TDR,* 39:1 (Spring 1995), 13-28 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1146399> [Accessed 17 April 2019], p. 15.
[55] Barthes, *Image Music Text*, p. 160; Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* trans by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) (first publ. as *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1982), p. 1.
[56] Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology*, 2nd edn (USA: Basic Books, 2000), p. 30.

particular form of text. The 'text' is a part of Genette's framework, but as shall be seen in the next section of this chapter, by formulating a range of terms, he offers more precision.

Moving Barthes' active, open and productive version of the Text into Genette's theory of transtextuality makes it useful for the analysis of practice-research. Geertz claimed that an advantage of considering text to be 'beyond things written on paper or carved into stone' might be to bring notice onto the making of texts and the context in which this happens, alongside the interpretation of the end product.[57] However, he was disappointed that this did not often occur because, following Alton Becker, he observed 'a division between those who study individual texts […] and those who study the activity of creating texts'.[58] Practice-research brings together the making and interpreting of texts. I approach the text from a background of literature and performance studies, but throughout this thesis I apply analysis acquired from other disciplines, in particular historical studies. This cross-disciplinary approach is essential to understanding the construction of texts as transtextual. Since Geertz made his observations, Barrett has suggested that we can understand 'art practice as an interplay of meanings and signifiers operating within a complex system'.[59] Using transtextuality to interrogate performance making reveals this interplay, analyses the signification and observes the system in which this occurs. By investigating performance texts through their transtextual relations, I am emphasising the multiplicity of relations. The focus of this research is to investigate the production of the hypertext in relation to other textual experiences and this is achieved by locating the text generated through practice-research within the transtextual framework.

Gérard Genette's theory of transtextuality

Gérard Genette (1930-2018) was a French literary theorist with a structuralist approach. Genette developed his theory of transtextuality over time, which resulted in the same terms being defined differently in separate texts, as the conceptualisation progressed. In *The Architext: An introduction,* originally published in France in 1979, Genette used the term 'paratextuality' to mean what he would describe as 'hypertextuality' in *Palimpsests:*

[57] Geertz, *Local Knowledge,* p. 31.
[58] Geertz, *Local Knowledge,* p. 32.
[59] Barrett, 'Foucault's 'What is An Author', p. 136.

Literature in the second degree, first published in French in 1982.[60] The designations that were proposed in this later text are the ones that guide the usage here, although their use in *The Architext* and *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation,* published in France in 1987, is also referenced when it helps to provide a more nuanced definition. The next few pages are an attempt to clarify these terms as proposed by Genette and as adapted for this thesis to discuss performance. Whilst I have striven to delineate the meanings of these terms, they cannot always be separated and sometimes textual elements perform in more than one category. In order to have a framework to interpret practice-research insightfully, I will identify ambiguities and limitations before exploring how these can be resolved or whether these offer potential for making performance.

The theory of transtextuality enables the scrutiny of an individual performance as a text at the centre of a network of textual relationships and makes possible the investigation of the function and effect of these relationships. Genette explained that the term was a conflation of '*Textual transcendence*' (italicization in original) that incorporates 'everything that brings it [the text] into relation (manifest or hidden) with other texts.'[61] Transtextuality indicates texts that reach beyond the physical confines of words on paper through their relations to other texts. These relations are described through six different functions: hypotextual, intertextual, paratextual, architextual, metatextual and extratextual. The differentiation between these transtextual categories makes a rigorous tool for analysing making and performing. Using Genette's precise terms to discuss the relationships between textual elements of hypertexts helps to focus on the functions of these relationships and the significance of the textual elements individually and in conjunction with others. In theory the transtextual network is an objective web of relations, but in practice subjectivities emerge. The impact of each relationship may vary between performances. This collision of the subjective and objective makes this a useful tool for investigating family history performances, as the theoretical framework makes the emotional work of the research manageable. Figure 1.1 shows the hypertext at the centre of a network of textual intersection. The remaining pages of this chapter will reveal

[60] Gérard Genette, *The Architext: An Introduction,* trans by Jane E. Lewin (California: University of California Press, 1992) (first publ. as *Introduction à l'architexte*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1979), p. 82; Genette, *Palimpsests,* pp. 5-8.
[61] Genette, *The Architext,* p. 81.

the make up of each of these textual elements and explain how they fit together in play to form the hypertext.

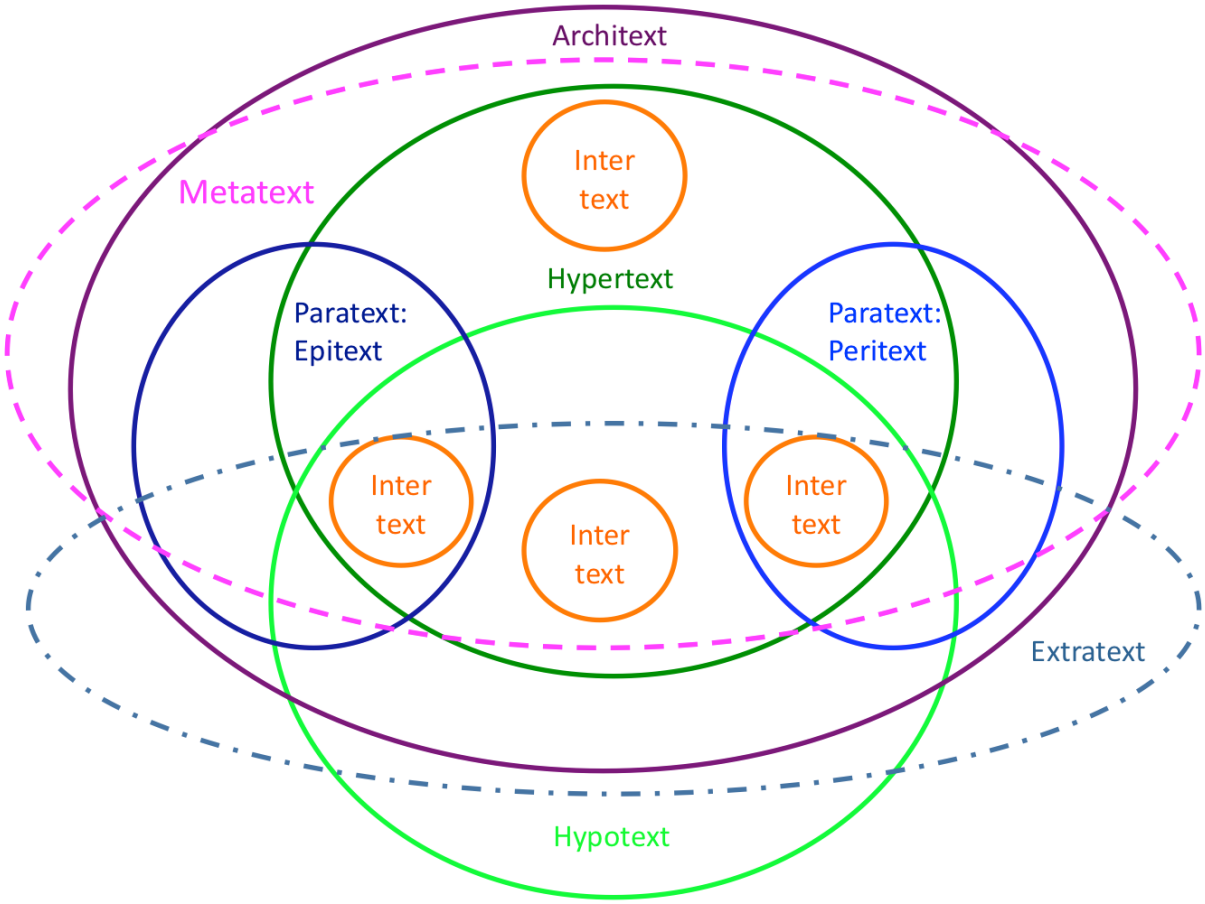

Figure 1.1

Diagram of the framework of transtextuality

Central to Genette's transtextual framework is the first function: hypertextuality. This is 'any relationship uniting a text B (…the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (…the *hypotext*)'.[62] For Genette, a hypertext can only exist in relation to hypotext, as it is a transformation of the hypotext. This transformation can be a story retold in a different form or using a different style. Alternatively, it can be the style and form that are copied and a different story is told.[63] In this thesis the performance at the centre of analysis is the hypertext, whilst the hypotexts are stories, histories and materials that are transformed to make the performance. As illustrated in Figure 1.2, the hypertext includes part of the hypotext, but

[62] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 5.
[63] Genette, *Palimpsests,* pp. 5-7.

is a separate text incorporating elements from other textual relationships. Genette stressed that whilst every text could be considered a hypertext, as every text to some extent references another, his analysis was of those hypo- and hypertexts where the relationship was explicit and sustained. To broaden this investigation would, in his opinion, become 'unmanageable'.[64] In order to adapt this theory into a practice-research strategy for this project, I have shifted the focus from those literary texts that concerned Genette. The limitation that I establish is that the hypertexts discussed in the writing that follows are all performances constructed transtextually from family history.

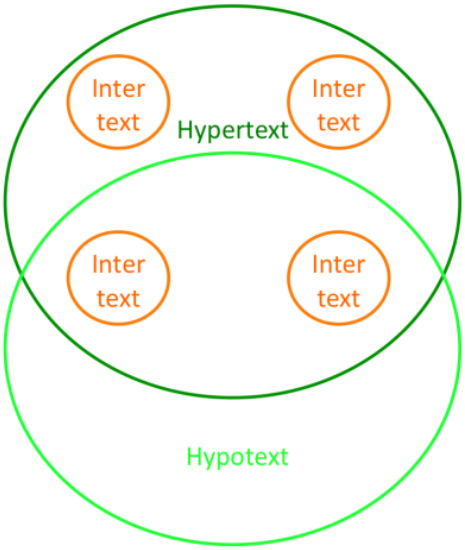

Figure 1.2

Diagram showing hypertextual, hypotextual and intertextual relations

Genette recognises that some hypertexts may not be based on a single hypotext, offering the example of several versions of *Elektra,* which modern playwrights can utilise.[65] The majority of family history performances considered in this research have multiple sources that may feature in only part of a production and few of which are available beforehand to the audience. Some are personal stories being shared with a public audience for the first time, as in the example of *Cape Wrath,* which told a previously private story of a grandfather. The hypertext may also make use of historical narratives that are familiar to a wider audience, such as was the case in Shirley Williams' *A Life of Vera Brittain,* which drew on both Brittain's autobiography and a broader history of the First World War.

[64] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 9.
[65] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 438 n. 4.

According to Genette, hypotexts need not exist as substantial texts outside of the hypertexts but may be implied.[66] It is important to distinguish between different types of hypotext and to consider their impact in the hypertext when applying this theory to practice-research. This can provide insight into the way that meaning is constructed in the hypertext, as can be seen in the following examples: Third Angel's *Cape Wrath* and Carran Waterfield's *The House.* Third Angel's performance is based on a journey that Alexander Kelly took to Cape Wrath, which he made to follow in his grandfather's footsteps. These two journeys provide a dual layered hypotext. Allowing for multiple hypotexts in a hypertext places a new emphasis on the interaction between the hypotexts. The audience member reflects on the differences between Kelly's journey and that of his grandfather, as well as being aware that this is both a first-person account and a third person narrative. In *Cape Wrath* the repeated journey does provide a structure for the piece, because the hypotext is layered. However, the significance of hypotext to the structure of the hypertext may be weakened, when shorter hypotexts are combined. This is the case in Carran Waterfield's *The House,* which uses hypotexts from different periods of her family history, as well as from contemporary accounts of interactions with systems of welfare support. These hypotexts used together allow for a commentary to emerge about how society treats those in need of support. The engagement between the different hypotexts becomes significant, but their impact on the structure of the overall piece is diminished, because their structure is not directly transferred into the hypertext.

Worthen challenged the notion that the texts/performances are 'stable vehicles for the reproduction of authorial intent' suggesting instead that they are 'complex sites where a variety of interpretative and representational activities take place.'[67] The hypertext exists in a state of play; the performance maker has ideas when bringing texts together, whilst audience members experience it differently. Worthen's discussion highlights the importance of investigating any hierarchy between textual elements where it exists. The hypertext is the primary focus of this research, as it is the site where texts intersect. In relation to the hypertext, one textual element may dominate the play, whilst another is subsumed entirely. Robert Stam showed how hypertextuality could be used to discuss

[66] Genette, *Palimpsests,* pp. 51-53.
[67] W. B. Worthen, 'Worthen Replies', *TDR,* 39:1 (Spring 1995), 41-44 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1146401> [Accessed 17 April 2019], p. 42.

film adaptation to emphasise transformation, not as a failure of fidelity, but as a relationship worthy of investigating between two texts.[68] The family history hypertext transforms the hypotext, this does not make either hypo- or hypertext more valuable, but the transformation provides fruitful ground for non-hierarchical research.

Semiotician Daniel Chandler argued for 'computer-based *hypertextuality*' to be included in Genette's categories, suggesting that following direct links on the Internet 'disrupts the conventional "linearity" of texts' (emphasis in original).[69] The use of hypertext in this sense is more firmly established than Genette's usage, but it is distinctly different from his interpretation. The experience of the Internet text is closer to Genette's concept of transtextuality than to hypertextuality, as transtextuality enables a multitude of different relations, whilst hypertextuality concentrates on one set of relations. However, it is possible to adapt some of the breadth implied by the Internet use of the term for performance. Rather than viewing the hypertext purely in relation to the hypotext, it is possible to understand the hypertext as the core text in the network of transtextuality. In this thesis, the hypertext is always a site of transformation, as well as the site of numerous textual relations, and it may incorporate multiple hypotexts.

The prefix of 'hyper' has been attached to different ideas by scholars of interest to this research. Historian Raphael Samuel described the phenomenon of the living museum as 'hyper-reality',[70] whilst performance researcher Freddie Rokem described the actor in a historical play as a 'hyper-historian'.[71] In both of these examples, the 'hyper' prefix indicates a situation in which there are two levels of understanding. We experience the performance of history in the play or the museum in the present moment as an event that is happening now; the past becomes the present. The audience are aware that this is fiction, but that it is attempting to represent a version of historical truth. This doubled understanding is relevant to the hypertext as proposed here. The hypertext is

[68] Robert Stam, 'Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Film Adaptation', in *Film Adaptation* (London: Althone, 2000), pp. 54-76 (pp. 68-69).
[69] Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The basics,* 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 206.
[70] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory, Volume 1: Past and present in contemporary culture (*London and New York: Verso, 1994), pp. 195-96.
[71] Freddie Rokem, *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000), p. 13.

experienced as a text of its own, but it is always known to relate transtextually to texts external to it.

Richard Schechner proposes that 'performance may be defined as ritualized behavior conditioned/permeated by play'.[72] He develops his argument, stating that 'Ritual has a seriousness to it, the hammerhead of authority. Play is looser, more permissive – forgiving in precisely those areas where ritual is enforcing, flexible where ritual is rigid.'[73] The theoretical framework proposed in this chapter is one that considers performance as hypertext 'permeated by play'. The transtextual relationships made visible in performance are 'conditioned […] by play'. Performance's transtextual behaviour is understood through its status of being in play, which is fluid, 'forgiving' and 'flexible'. The concept of the hypertext as being in a state of play is key to understanding it in this performance-research project. Genette described making of the hypertext as being a 'playful mode' of creating literature.[74] He suggested that:

> The hypertext at its best is an indeterminate compound, unpredictable in its specifics, of seriousness and playfulness (lucidity and ludicity), of intellectual achievement and entertainment.
>
> (*Palimpsests,* p. 400)

Genette is writing about the fun of transforming a literary text from one form to another; transforming playfully makes possible contrasting effects. The performance hypertext is defined through its relationships with the other textual functions and the edges between these elements are permeable. It exists in the moment of play as an 'indeterminate compound', which I strive throughout this thesis to identify, whilst recognising that this 'porosity' is necessary to bring it into being.[75] The hypertext's relationship to the hypotext(s) is playful and, as I move this theory from the analysis of the production of literature to the production of performance, this playfulness is a vital strategy.

[72] Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 89.
[73] Schechner, *Performance Studies,* p. 89.
[74] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 399.
[75] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 399.

When in play the hypertext exists in its own world absorbing the attention of the player, whether this is the performance maker or audience member. The hypertext is the focus. The rules governing the play of texts may be different to those that operate in the world outside of the text and bringing together of multiple texts in the making of the hypertext is the core play. Huizinga suggested that play 'proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner.'[76] The player accepts playing along with the world of the text. The creation of a world of the hypertext makes it possible for the player to accept more than one truth simultaneously. For example, that in a performance history is witnessed now and it has already past. Freddie Rokem argues that 'performing history' can have an effect:

> …connecting the past with the present through the creativity of the theatre, constantly 'quoting' from the past, but erasing the exact traces in order to gain full meaning in the present.
>
> (*Performing History,* p. xiii)

The hypertext is always selective and is an interpretation of the past through the lens of the contemporary moment. It is an individual encounter that is borne from social experience, the textual relations brought to a hypertext by an audience member or performance maker are unique, but also predicated by background, which may or may not be shared. These hypertexts change with every repetition; in play they are never fixed; each iteration offers new understanding and insight into how family history texts can be brought into play with one another to perform.

The second function of transtextual relations to be considered are the intertextual. Intertexts are texts placed inside the hypertext. This term has been widely adopted in popular culture to describe a variety of textual relations since its introduction by Julia Kristeva in 1969 to refer to the incorporation of vocal 'utterances' into the novel.[77] Genette described intertextuality as 'a relationship of copresence between two texts or

[76] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture,* trans. by R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 13.

[77] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992) (first publ. as Σημειωτική*: Recherches pour sémanalyse*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969), pp. 36-37.

among several texts'.[78] He felt that this was 'more restrictive' than Kristeva, offering as specific examples: '*quoting', 'plagiarism'* and '*allusion'* (italicisation in original).[79] Intertexts are instances when the original text is directly copied, openly in the case of quotation, covertly if plagiarised and briefly when there is allusion. Genette argues that the intertext's incorporation is 'limited' rather than influencing the 'structural whole'.[80] The defining factor of an intertext will be that it is not transformed; it is contained unchanged, though possibly limited, within the hypertext. This distinction will facilitate close analysis of the way that historical texts are incorporated into performance hypertexts.

Figure 1.2 shows the inclusion of intertexts within the hypertext. The positioning of these indicates that some intertexts may originate from hypotexts, whilst others do not. In a performance, the intertext may be a photograph or object used within the performance. One example from Third Angel's *Cape Wrath* would be the suit worn by Alexander Kelly, which belonged to his grandfather. This is an intertext that emerges from the hypotext. In contrast, maps of Cape Wrath that are handed out to the audience in this performance are new objects introduced from outside the hypotext. The context of its situation may affect its significance and signification, but the item itself is unchanged. A story retold in new words would be indicative of a hypotextual relationship, as a direct act of transformation has been undertaken, but even then it might incorporate phrases from another source as an intertext. In *The House* Carran Waterfield retells the story of her grandmother who lived in a psychiatric hospital all her life after having an illegitimate child. The story is the hypotext for the performance transformed to tell a wider story, but her naming of her grandmother through the familial term 'nana-in-hospital' is an intertext.

The third set of functions to be introduced here is the paratextual. These relations were the subject of Genette's third book on this topic, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation,* first published in French in 1987. The paratext exists alongside the central hypertext and can influence the readers' or audience members' approach and reaction to that text.[81] Genette divides the paratext into two areas: the *peritext*, which is directly connected to

[78] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 1.
[79] Genette, *Palimpsests,* pp. 1-2.
[80] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 3.
[81] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 3.

the hypertext and the *epitext,* which is external to it. Aspects of the peritext include the title, subtitles, prefaces and cover design, whilst, the epitext might be an advertisement for the text or an interview with the author.[82] In terms of performance, the peritext can include a programme with notes and photographs, which are received as part of the performance experience. It is also the space in which the performance takes place. For example, Scotland Street in Sheffield where Third Angel's minibus was parked for *Cape Wrath* became peritext for that performance.[83] The epitext may be similar to that described above for literature, but writing now, nearly forty years after *Palimpsests*, new forms must be considered. Alexander Kelly's Twitter and Instagram feed recording his journey to Cape Wrath was an epitext that preceded the hypertext and continued to exist as a Storify thread once the show had started touring.[84] The epitext is not necessarily experienced at the same time or in the same space as the hypertext, but they are intimately connected as shown in Figure 1.3.

In *Palimpsests,* Genette observed that the paratext 'probably is one of the privileged fields of operation' in relation to 'its impact upon the reader'.[85] The paratext may be both the first and last aspect of the text experienced by the audience. An advertisement may be the influencing factor that persuades an audience member to attend a performance and a programme may be the lasting memento that they take away with them. Although neither are integral to the performance hypertext experience, they are the remnants of the live experience that the audience member can hold. The paratext exists to serve the hypertext and, in *Paratexts,* Genette comments that 'the paratextual element is always subordinate to "its" text' (emphasis in original).[86] In the audience for *Cape Wrath* I watch Alexander Kelly perform; I am aware of the street, but it is not the focus of my attention. The inherent contradiction in the status of the paratext as both 'subordinate' and 'privileged' is explored in the analysis of this aspect of textual relations.

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[82] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation,* trans by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) (first publ. Editions du Seuil, 1987)*,* pp. 4-5.
[83] Third Angel, *Cape Wrath,* written and performed by Alexander Kelly, dir. by Rachael Walton, Wrought Festival, Scotland Street, Sheffield, 16 April 2016.
[84] Alexander Kelly, 'Cape Wrath', <https://web.archive.org/web/20160703045408/https://storify.com/alexanderkelly/cape-wrath> [Accessed 18 April 2020].
[85] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 3.
[86] Genette, *Paratexts,* p. 12.

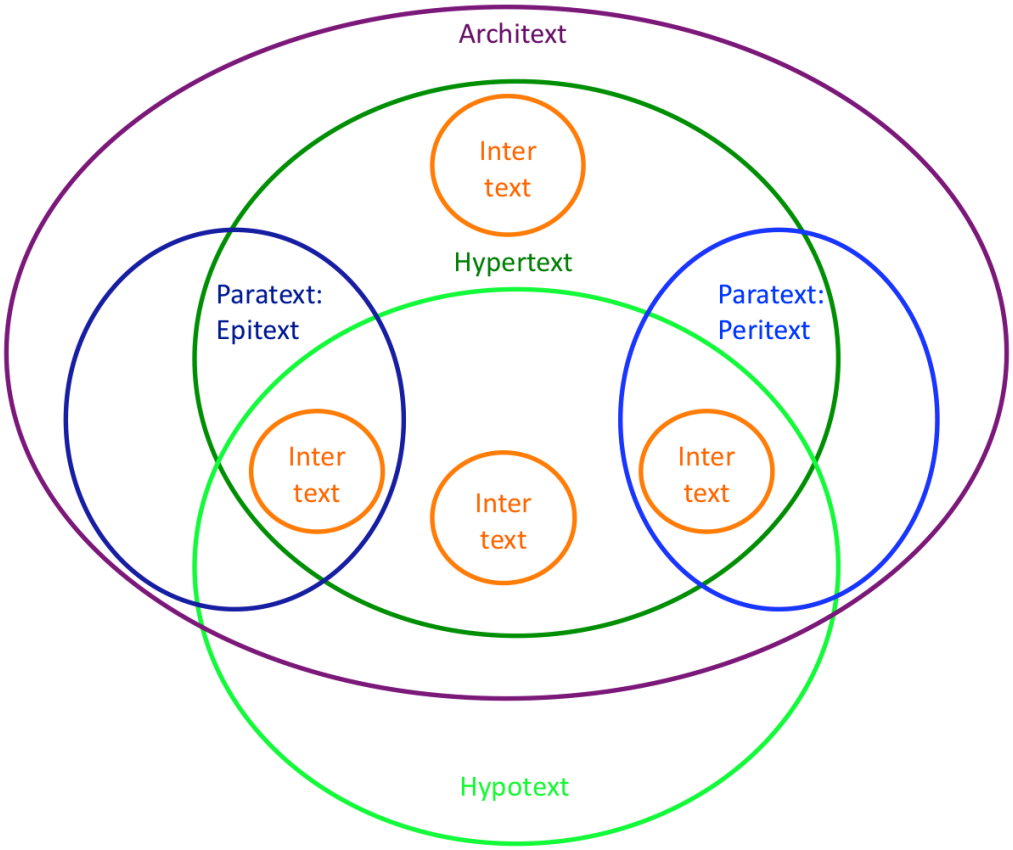

Figure 1.3

Diagram introducing the paratexts and architexture

In the analysis that follows, the structure of the hypertext is part of its architexture. This is the fifth set of functional relations and refers to the form, theme, mode and genre of the text. Each performance hypertext has its own architexture; although it may share elements of genre, mode, theme and form with other performances, the varying degrees to which these are incorporated can be articulated with more precision through architexture. To exploit its near homophone as a metaphor, architexture is architecture. It is a building constructed out of elements – stone, wood, brick, tiles etc., – that collectively form a whole. These rudiments are the words, grammatical units and literary devices that form a written text. A performance may be built of some of these same fundamentals, but they are used in conjunction with many others, such as movement, gesture, the number of performers, the manner of addressing the audience and the organisation of the performance space. These elements are combined in performance to create the shape of the whole, which like architecture, can be recognised by those familiar

with that particular form or genre. As an example, Mark Steel's show *Who Do I Think I Am?* makes use of the forms of stand up, a performance lecture and a slide show to create a show with an architexture constructed from these three forms. In the final section of the book *The Architext,* this summary is offered by Genette:

> The architext is, then, everywhere – above, beneath, around the text, which spins its web only by hooking it here and there onto that network of architexture.[87]

The architext is integral to – and yet separate from – the (hyper)text. By becoming a hypertext, the text resists being a bound, singular object and instead becomes a process suspended in a 'web' of architextual – and more broadly transtextual – relations. The quotation above indicates the sense of play in this conceptualisation of the text, which in this thesis is specified as the hypertext, following Genette's lead in *Palimpsests*.[88] The hypertext is intangible, suspended in this 'web' of relations experienced in the present moment. This intangibility and suspension in momentary experience is pertinent to conceptualising performance. Performance as a hypertext pulls on these textual relations, 'hooking' into different themes or genres, borrowing from other forms and modes.

In *Palimpsests,* Genette describes architexture as being 'a relationship that is completely silent, articulated at most by a paratextual mention'.[89] He gives examples of these subtitles as revealing the architexture of the hypertext: '*A Novel*, or *A Story* or *Poems*'.[90] The final piece of practice-research in this project has the subtitle: *A Game of Family Histories.* This subtitle indicates explicitly the form that will bring the texts into play (a game) and, thus, reveals the architexture. However, as Genette suggests for the most part this relationship is implicit, because it is either deemed to be self-evident or there is a desire to 'reject or elude any kind of classification'.[91] The architexture can be influenced by the paratext. For example, Carran Waterfield chose to open *The House* with a lecture about her family history, because it was played within a university paratext.[92] As Figure 1.3 shows, the architext encompasses the hypertext, intertexts and paratexts completely as an outer

[87] Genette, *Architext,* p. 83.
[88] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 5.
[89] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 4.
[90] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 4.
[91] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 4.
[92] Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield, Interview conducted by Kirsty Surgey, 11 April 2016.

shell. As the paratext serves to establish the architexture, both categories are fully within that outer ellipse. The hypotext may only be partially incorporated into the architexture.

The fifth category to be considered here is the metatext, which critiques and comments on the text. Genette introduced this in *The Architext* as the work of literary critics, which implies that it is something produced externally to the text.[93] A work such as the one you are reading now can therefore be considered as metatext, but similarly Mark Steel's show *Who Do I Think I Am?* has a metatextual relationship with the BBC television show *Who Do You Think You Are?* (2004) from which he adapted its title. During the show Steel directly compared the family history he uncovered and his research experience to that shown in the television show. During the show Steel described his scepticism about the frequent tears witnessed on the programme based on his own emotional response, this comparison provides an overt metatextual commentary within the hypertext critiquing an alternative presentation of family history research.

Later, writing in *Palimpsests*, Genette stated that the text need not be directly referenced.[94] The metatext is therefore not only critical texts where the references are explicit, but also critique embedded within the hypertext. *The House* used Waterfield's family's experience of institutionalised care in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to draw attention to the inadequacies of contemporary systems of welfare. The historic hypotexts placed in play with one another become a metatextual commentary. Recognising that the metatext can be incorporated within the hypertext makes it possible for the performance maker to offer alternative viewpoints and critique within their own play.

The metatext can be considered to be a reaction to a hypotext, rather than the transformation of it and may also feature through intertexts, paratexts and the architexture. Anne R. Richards used the notion of the metatext to explore how music can offer a critical commentary on the action within a film. She argued that whilst some music may seem to enhance a convention, other choices may subvert this message and reflected that 'Multimedia metatextuality/commentary is evident when one medium or mode

[93] Genette, *Architext,* p. 82.
[94] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 4.

seemingly remarks on another'.[95] Films have textual elements – visuals and sound – that are experienced by different senses within a single hypertext. Similarly, in the live performance that will be discussed here, the multi-sensory juxtaposition of textual elements – including the set, sound and lighting effects – may produce a metatextual commentary. The metatext is most useful if it is understood as a behaviour of the other categories of textual relations, as well as something that can be produced by their interactions. Figure 1.1 reveals this transtextual relationship with a dotted line to suggest that this is only created as a response to the textual categories. As a result of brushing alongside the hypertext, the paratext and architext can behave metatextually, which is why this dotted line passes through the paratexts. The intertexts are fully inside this elliptical shape, but not touching it, as they may sometimes act as metatexts.

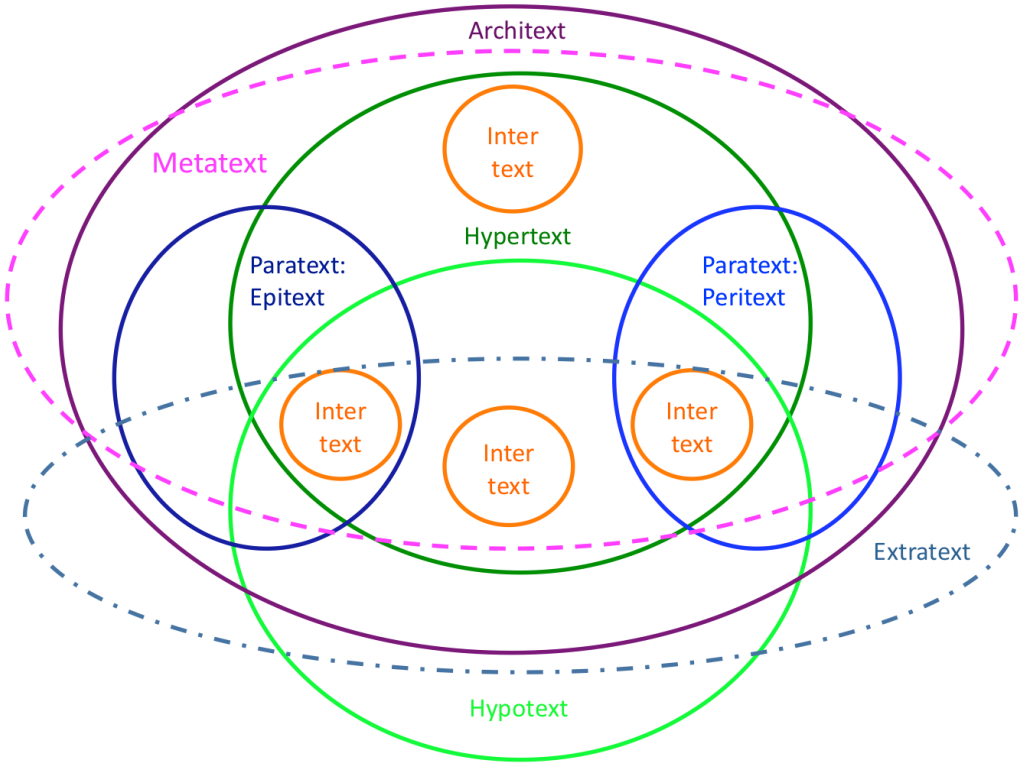

Figure 1.1 Diagram of the framework of transtextuality, repeated

In addition to these terms, Genette mentions the *extratext* as a digression. In a note in *Palimpsests* he comments that transtextuality 'does at least differ from that other transcendence which unites the text to extratextual reality, and which does not interest

[95] Anne R. Richards 'Music, Transtextuality, and the World Wide Web', *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 18:2, (2009) 188-209 <DOI: 10.1080/10572250802708337193-96> 193-94.

me (directly) for the moment'.[96] Kristeva used the prefix 'extra' when writing about the intertextual incorporation of spoken linguistic devices into the written novel; she suggested that this 'extra-novelistic textual set' had 'origins outside the novel'. Although the approach to the intertext is more specifically linguistic than Genette's approach, Kristeva's use of the prefix 'extra' to refer to the wider 'historical and social text' is useful for reading performances of family history performance.[97] Extratextual is a helpful concept for analysing how a wider historical narrative than the personal, familial history stories informs, influences and connects to the hypertext. As an example, Selina Thompson's *salt.* draws explicitly on the history of the transatlantic slave trade and connects this history into Thompson's experience as a black British woman across the first two decades of the twenty-first century. The extratextual history and contemporary social experience together provide material from which the performance is devised. This definition of extratext is referring to social, historical and political context. This is more general than the specific family history hypotext or intertexts that might start outside the hypertext. These are not considered extratexts for this research, although they may both draw on the extratext for their significance in the hypertext. This is the case when Thompson takes a journey following the route of the transatlantic slave trade. Her journey is the hypotext, which draws on a historical and political extratext. It is necessary to have the term extratext separated to discuss the incorporation of a wider historical narrative, sometimes within other textual relations. Figure 1.1 shows the extratext. As with the hypotext, this is not fully incorporated into the hypertext, but may be a feature in any and all of the other textual categories.

Conclusion

The aim of 'Sharing Stories' is to explore family histories transformed through play into performance hypertexts using transtextuality as a theoretical framework. Genette's family of terms provides a useful framework through which these performance texts can be analysed. Family history performances rely on personal material that is unknown to the audience prior to the experience and this practice-research is concerned with the construction of the hypertext from this material. The chapters that follow unpick these relationships exposing the process and revealing the discoveries made by the placing

[96] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 430 n. 11.
[97] Kristeva, *Desire in Language,* p. 37.

textual elements in play with one another. The performances in this thesis are analysed from the practitioner-researcher's perspective. Applying transtextuality as a tool at the point of making, rather than to interpret existing performance, means that the functions of these texts are reflected upon as they are selected and as the play occurs, not only on its completion.

The research methods employed during the project are many and varied: including storytelling, interviewing, game playing, archival investigation, but all always work towards the aim of understanding the transtextual relations at play in family history performance. In the *Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* Marvin Carlson has claimed that 'Everything in the theatre, the bodies, the materials utilized, the language, the space itself, is now and has always been haunted'.[98] His argument is that elements such as the play being performed and the actors performing it persistently evoke memories of earlier theatrical experiences.[99] Carlson acknowledged the role that 'intertextuality' (in the broad sense understood by Genette and myself as transtextuality) plays in theatrical haunting and suggested that of all textual forms the dramatic text is particular dependent on these relationships as it 'has always been centrally concerned […] with the retelling of stories already known to the public'.[100] However, for Carlson intertextuality does not offer enough scope for analysing these relationships.[101] I suggest that by looking beyond the singular concept of intertextuality to the multiple relations of Genette's transtextual framework, the scope for nuanced analysis of the construction of performance texts can be found.

The transtextual framework provides a structure to understand the textual relationships brought into play when experimenting with family history. This structure is permeable and open, whilst providing limitations and defining roles. It has the flexibility to explore texts constructed in variable forms from objective and subjective perspectives. Using this framework provides me with the scope to acknowledge these co-existent perspectives. The research activities undertaken for 'Sharing Stories' result in a series of performance

[98] Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine,* paperback edn (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 15.
[99] Carlson, *The Haunted Stage,* pp. 8-9.
[100] Carlson, *The Haunted Stage,* p. 17.
[101] Carlson, *The Haunted Stage,* p. 17.

hypertexts. Rather than defining my research methods according to their relationship to practice, this project uses each one to investigate the transtextual relationships that exist in the family history hypertext. The nature and form of each hypertext in the context of its transtextual relations will be described, discussed and analysed in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two: Presenting

Introduction

This practice-research journey starts with material culture. It starts with the objects and photographs contained in the family archive. I am interested in how these items can be used within performance. Do these intertexts illustrate family history when they are inserted into a hypertext or could their purpose be more complicated? Objects, documents and photographs are often a feature of family history performance: sometimes they are in their original form, on other occasions replicated; sometimes they are shown to the audience, whilst at other times they are handed to them; sometimes they are personal items, but not always. Used within a performance these are intertexts, as objects they are unchanged, but their meaning is not set and can change as the hypertext develops. This chapter investigates the intertextual relationships in performance hypertexts of family histories through the modified version of Gérard Genette's transtextual network. In the pages that follow, I consider how the presentation of the family archive, in particular photographs, changes their significance and status. I explore the effect that the positioning of intertexts and the manner in which they are used within the hypertext has on their signification, and I reflect on the impact that their use has on the hypertext as a whole.

The chapter starts by considering the concept of the family archive and the objects that are found there. The discussion then moves to interrogate the role that items from the family archive play in the first piece of practice that I made for this research project. This hypertext is called *The space in-between* and is a slide show of holiday photographs taken by my great-grandmother, Ethel Nichol. In this performance hypertext, I step into the role of Ethel and imagine what she might have said when she showed these photographs to her family. Writing about this practice-research, I explore the intertextual role of the slides that belonged to Ethel Nichol, the equipment required to share them, and my body within the performance. This involves scrutiny of my affective responses to the objects used to relate to my own family history. The chapter continues with analysis of two existing performances: Carran Waterfield's *The House* and Third Angel's *Cape Wrath.* In this section, I investigate how Waterfield used family photographs intertextually to provide a metatextual commentary within the performance. Finally, I explore how Third

Angel do not share personal photographs, but do use other objects, including a suit and a bottle of whisky, to communicate familial relationships to the audience.

The practice-research in this chapter incorporates ideas from historians, alongside theorists of material culture and photography to investigate the impact of intertexts in family history hypertexts. From this theoretical perspective, I reveal that the intertexts brought into play in this practice-research evoke an affective response. By examining the manner in which intertexts are presented to the audience, it becomes clear that within the family history hypertext the connection to the performance-maker affects their significance. In addition, I demonstrate how the wholeness of intertext, as presented within play, can cause rupture in attempts of fiction and the reputed authenticity of the intertext can lend an impression of historical truth to the narratives shared.

The family archive

This chapter concentrates on my paternal family history, in particular Ethel Nichol (née Mitchell, 1889-1968), who was my father's father's mother. In tracing this line of family history, I found that there were a lot of objects; it has been fairly easy for those ancestors to hold onto both substantial items and ephemera, as these lines have stayed for long periods in the same houses in corners of northern Cumberland (the boundaries were re-drawn and the county re-named Cumbria in 1974). This family archive includes the wrestling memorabilia mentioned in the Introduction and a mass of photographs with related paraphernalia. It is a set of photographic transparencies, also known as photographic slides, and the projector and screen required to show them that are the focus of the practice-research in this chapter.

Family historian, Martin Bashforth, suggested that 'the frequent inclusion of almost any item of material culture' is what distinguishes the familial, private archive from publicly available archives.[102] He discusses how, despite the limits of these archival objects to reveal a clear narrative or specific history, family historians feel drawn to make meanings, because of their emotional connection to the individual. This can be the case whether or not they were personally known to each other and Bashforth relates two separate

[102] Martin Bashforth, 'Absent Fathers, Present Histories', in *People and Their Pasts: Public History Today,* ed. by Paul Ashton and Hilda Kean (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 203-22 (p. 203).

experiences of this. In the first case, medals and First World War photographs 'possess an emotional resonance as a connection to a missing grandfather' and the stimulus to learn about his war time experience,[103] whilst in the second, a box hidden by Bashforth's father and discovered after his death challenges memories of his father.[104] In both cases, objects that have little monetary value and provide limited general historic interest, become significant to the researcher because of their connection to family history and to particular individuals in that history. Performance provides an opportunity for presenting objects from the family archive. The placement of items, such as family photographs, into a performance hypertext can be an opportunity to share something of value to the family historian and can inscribe them with a new significance.

The importance of the objects to their original ancestral owner may not always be knowable. The history that they prompt may be reliant upon research into the extratext or the invocation of imagination. These limitations can provide fruitful stimuli for the performance hypertext. Sherry Turkle, a prominent thinker in social science and psychology on the topic of relationships with objects, has reflected that a customary approach to the study of objects has been as either functional or attractive and suggested instead that 'the inseparability of thought and feeling in our relationship to things' ought to be investigated. According to Turkle, in most instances, this relationship is powerful because of the object's situation in the biography of the keeper.[105] The objects and other items that feature intertextually in the performance work are not necessarily valuable according to their functionality or appearance, but their role in a personal narrative leads to the decision to include them within the performance work studied. By sharing the family archive in public, the performance maker is suggesting that these objects may have a wider appeal.

What Turkle calls the 'intrinsically evocative' nature of some objects can also influence the decision to use them in performance.[106] This quality of objects might be ascribed to aesthetic charm, their ability to provide a direct link to the past or their potential to inspire. Historian Arlette Farge wrote about the appeal of working with original

[103] Bashforth, 'Absent Fathers, Present Histories', p. 207.
[104] Bashforth, 'Absent Fathers, Present Histories', pp. 212-14.
[105] Sherry Turkle, *Evocative Objects: Things we think with* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), p. 5.
[106] Turkle, *Evocative Objects,* p. 8.

documents in the archive, describing 'the surplus of life that floods the archive and provokes the reader, intensely and unconsciously. The archive is an excess of meaning, where the reader experiences beauty, amazement, and a certain affective tremor.'[107] This emotional link to archival material is not a result of a personal connection, though it is a physical one, rather for Farge the potential to uncover stories of moments in individual lives is critical.[108] One of the performances to be analysed later in this chapter, *The House* by Carran Waterfield, features a Bible that belonged to the artist's great-uncle, whom she never knew.[109] When interviewed, Waterfield commented that it was important to use this particular Bible, claiming that live performance offers a chance 'for you to witness for yourself those objects being reaffirmed or being re-used or given some beauty.'[110] This Bible is given a role by being used within the performance. It is made active in public, rather than sitting on a shelf in a private home.

Material culture in the family archive can resonate with public, as well as personal histories. Anthropologist Daniel Miller argues that objects are kept by individuals for their connections to both personal and public memories. He gives the example of 'a tin box' from World War I, which for its owner 'stood at one level for the specific ancestry of his grandparent, but at other levels it stood, first, for British history and then for history itself.'[111] For performance, this raises questions about the impact that items have when they are presented to the audience. To what extent are the objects interesting because they relate to a specific historical extratext or, rather, is it because they connect to the personal story being relayed by the performer who is sharing space with the audience? Each of the hypertexts considered in this chapter is performed solo in the same space as the audience. The performer tells a story that relates directly to their ancestry. In family history performance, is the performer also an intertext? By inserting ourselves into a hypertext relating to our family history, do we invite the audience to make comparisons between our bodies and those of our ancestors? These questions about the intertexts are

[107] Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives,* trans. by Thomas Scott-Raitton (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013) (first publ. as *Le Goût de l'archive,* Editions de Seuil, 1989), p. 31.
[108] Farge, *The Allure of the Archives,* pp. 11-15.
[109] Carran Waterfield, *The House,* Martin Harris Centre, The University of Manchester, 3 November 2015 and Milburn House, The University of Warwick, 5 January 2016.
[110] Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield, Interview conducted by Kirsty Surgey, 11 April 2016.
[111] Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), pp. 150-51.

answered in the analysis of *The space in-between, The House* and *Cape Wrath* in this chapter.

Hypertext: *The space in-between*

The starting point for this work was a trip into my paternal grandmother's attic to uncover two mid-twentieth century projectors of the type used to give slide shows of holiday photographs. I was given the Kodachrome branded box of slides pictured in Figure 2.1 to test the projectors.

Figure 2.1

The Kodachrome box containing Ethel's slides

The first projector had belonged to Robert Matthews, my grandmother's father, but unfortunately this was missing its slide carrier so could not be used. The second projector, which had belonged to Ethel Nichol (née Mitchell), my grandfather's mother, still works. The Kodachrome box contained a mixture of 35mm colour film transparencies developed at different times, including a couple of my father as a child. However, most of them belonged to a set labelled 'Granny Ethel Nichol took these pictures'. The coincidence that the collection of slides belonged to the owner of the working projector seemed serendipitous and prompted the formation of a narrative.

The space in-between is a solo performance of approximately eight minutes showing the set of Kodachrome slides that were taken by my great-grandmother. A version of the words spoken and images projected can be read in Appendix 2.1. It is necessary to watch a filmed version of the performance online in order to understand the discussion that

follows.[112] This film was made without an audience. It was shot with two stationary cameras in a single run, although for clarity some close ups of the projected images have been used. It is intended to give an impression of the performance, but it is inevitably different from experiencing it live. The filmed version is about a minute longer than a normal run, as the music, which normally keeps me to time in the live performance, was added to the film post-production.[113] The music was composed and performed by Shane Surgey, my partner. This forms the final part of a completed album that he offered to artists to use as a stimulus to create visual or performance works. The theme of looking back using vintage technology meant that the nostalgic electronica of 'Retrouvailles Part X' provided a helpful stimulus for devising and in performance it enhances the wistful quality of the imagined holiday. The focus of the analysis that follows will be the items used to create the slide show, although this musical track could also be considered an intertext that serves to structure the performance.

The space in-between has been shared with audiences at the universities of Sheffield, Leeds, York and Buckinghamshire at conference style events.[114] The positioning of the performance hypertext and intertexts into this paratext contributes to the work's transtextuality. This is work devised to fit into a university setting and engage with research discourses about history and its representation in performance. Alongside the performance, I delivered papers of between seven and fifteen minutes long, which have focused to differing degrees on the intention of the performance and the issues that have arisen from its development. These discussions form a hypotextual basis for the reflections that are extended in this chapter but were experienced as paratext for the original audiences.

Before continuing to read, it is necessary to watch the performance:
https://youtu.be/9q-T_Qv4554

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[112] Kirsty Surgey, *The space in-between,* 10 October 2016 <https://youtu.be/9q-T_Qv4554> [Uploaded 31 December 2019].
[113] Shane Surgey, 'Retrouvailles Part X' (Lost Robot Records, 2015) used with permission from the composer and performer <https://shanesurgey.bandcamp.com/track/retrouvailles-part-x> [Accessed 18 April 2020].
[114] *The space in-between* has been performed at the following events: PhD by Design Methodologies Symposium, School of Architecture, The University of Sheffield, 11 May 2016; Returning Ghosts – Performance and New Technologies WG Interim Event, Buckinghamshire New University, 24 May 2016; Consuming Heritage: Identity, Culture and Heritage Conference, The University of Leeds, 30 September 2016; WRoCAH conference, The University of York, 20 October 2016.

Intertexts: Holiday photographs

The slides in the set taken by Ethel Nichol are mostly landscapes and appear to have been taken over several days in different locations on a single trip abroad. This presented an extratextual concept that could be shared with audiences directly as a result of the intertextual objects – the colour film transparencies. Writing in the 1970s, not long after these slides were taken, Susan Sontag asserted 'Travel becomes a strategy for accumulating photographs.'[115] More than forty years later, people still take photographs to show where they have been. The incorporation of digital cameras into mobile phones, which are routinely carried by their users, means that everything and anything can be recorded. The technological advances that have resulted in the selfie mean that the one person can be easily both subject and photographer. Now that the photographer is not limited to the twelve, twenty-four or thirty-six exposures of film, there is less necessity to be selective. In contrast to the twelve slides from my great-grandmother's holiday in 1967, fifty years later my partner and I took one hundred and forty-four photographs and videos on our holiday in Spain. This was despite visiting the same place that we had visited several times before. These included multiple attempts at the same image, reference photographs and seventeen pictures of clouds. The photographs remain in a folder on my computer, I have not printed any of them and I have no intention of printing many of them. I considered sharing a few with friends and family using social media, but I never did. My large, indiscriminate collection of photographs contrasts greatly with my great-grandmother's carefully selected images. This changing attitude towards photography is one that I explore through the performance. Through the sharing of such a limited collection of holiday slides, the audience are invited to reflect on the role of photography in their own holiday memory making.

Holiday photographs form an important part of my childhood memories. Marianne Hirsch has written that 'Photographs, as the material traces of an irrevocable past, derive their power and their important cultural role from their embeddedness in the fundamental rites of family life.'[116] By taking the outdated, domestic form of the slide show into the professional arena of academia, I am drawing attention to a vanishing practice. I

[115] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), (First publ. USA and Canada, 1977), p. 9.
[116] Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, narrative and postmemory* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 5.

remember visiting my Cumbrian grandparents when they returned from travelling to be shown the holiday photographs, as prints, as a slideshow and in the 1990s via a then technologically advanced compact disc reader that could be plugged into the television set. My mother printed photographs and organised them chronologically into carefully labelled albums. These experiences impressed upon me the sentiment expressed by Sontag that holidays are preserved through photographs for consumption on one's return.[117] The earliest holidays that I undertook under my own volition are well documented in labelled photograph albums. These photographs were collated into albums with the intention of sharing them with my friends and family.

As suggested above, the event of sharing holiday photographs has changed. I no longer print my holiday photographs and I am most likely to experience my friends' and family's holiday photographs on social media. These photographs are observed alone at a desktop computer or on a handheld device. I can look at as many or as few as I want. There may be captions and I can add comments, but it is rare that I am in the physical presence of the photographer; they may still be on holiday. This is a very different experience from the slide shows that I remember attending and which is imagined in this performance, where the photographer gathers her family together on her return to share her photographs of her travels.

The photographic transparencies in the Kodachrome box would have been taken on holiday and developed on the return home to be displayed by the photographer – Ethel Nichol – who would have explained the significance of the subjects of the images. The time spent setting up the equipment, the organizing of the family into an audience and the need to be seated in darkness is comparable to preparing a theatrical experience. The slide show is a recognisable form and provided me with architexture for *The space in-between*, which was stimulated by the intertextual use of the slide projector and the set of slides. The setting up of the projector, often in front of the waiting audience, becomes part of my performance; it is a paratext, specifically peritext, that happens alongside the hypertext. This peritext provides a chance to question and to reminisce, as suggested by the image and text in Figure 2.2, tweeted in response to my setting up the Kodak projector and other

[117] Sontag, *On Photography,* pp. 9-10.

equipment for the performance in Leeds.[118] Conceptualising this as peritext emphasises its role as a part of the performance experience. *The space in-between* uses intertextual objects to connect to the extratext, by evoking particular, personal memories of sharing photographs that can connect to a more general, public history of holiday photography and this starts in the paratext.

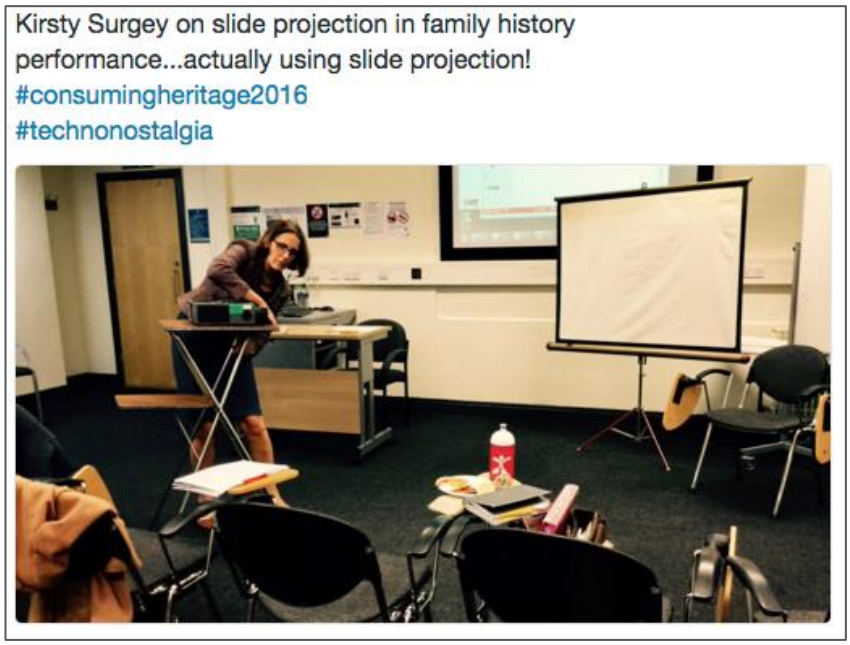

Figure 2.2

A tweet from @Leary1968 whilst I was setting up *A space in-between*

Photographs are potentially both personal and public artefacts. They are taken by individuals to be shared with others. Jon Newman has written about an exhibition that he curated of photographs by Howard Jacobs, a commercial portrait photographer.[119] From the 1950s until the 1990s, largely working for the local black community in Brixton, London, Jacobs had taken commissioned photographs of individuals and families.[120] Newman explained that among his concerns when preparing the exhibition was uneasiness about making the personal photographs public.[121] However, once the exhibition had opened, he realised that these photographs were already, in his words,

[118] @Leary1968, 30 September 2016, reprinted with permission by the author, Alan O'Leary.
[119] Jon Newman, 'Harry Jacobs: The studio photographer and the visual archive' in *Public History and Heritage Today: People and Their Pasts,* ed. by Paul Ashton and Hilda Kean (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 260-78 (p. 260).
[120] Newman, 'Harry Jacobs', p. 266.
[121] Newman, 'Harry Jacobs', pp. 268-69, 273.

'quasi-public', as they had been displayed for nearly half a century in Jacobs' shop.[122] Moreover, many photographs had been sent to family members in 'the Caribbean and West Africa, back a generation to adorn the mantelpieces of aunts, grandparents and siblings'.[123] Sent to distant places, the photographs signified relatives who might never meet – or see – one another in person again. When the exhibition opened, visitors to the gallery requested post-it notes and used these to identify friends and family members in the photographs. They added personal details, such as "Aunty Sonia Caballero, she is doing very well". This intervention, unplanned but encouraged by Newman, who supplied pads and pens, re-individualised the photographs.[124] Newman argued that this prevented them from being perceived as historical objects representing a particular period of time or group of people.[125] The interventions of friends and relatives changed the significance of these intertexts within the exhibition. These portraits, which had lost their identities over time in the photographic shop, regained names and stories when they were put to perform in the art gallery.

Through the sharing of Ethel's slides, I am making public photographic images that I did not take and that were not intended by their author to be used for this purpose. I sought through the performance to make my ignorance of the photographic subjects explicit and to emphasise the unknowable. The action of presenting these slides in public means that they become something different; the show becomes part of their 'biography' and they become a part of mine. The performance hypertext is not stable and each re-iteration changes my relationship the images and the absent woman that they evoke.

Ethel Nichol's slides have personal value for me and they have tangible, aesthetic charm as objects. As with Farge's enthusiastic delving into the archives for 'the feeling of reality',[126] these slides offer snap shots of moments lived. The pervasiveness of photography today can make it easy to take the process for granted and yet, as Sontag claimed, 'Surrealism lies at the very heart of the photographic enterprise: in the very creation of a duplicate world, of reality in the second degree, narrower but more dramatic

[122] Newman, 'Harry Jacobs', pp. 266, 271.
[123] Newman, 'Harry Jacobs', pp. 271-72.
[124] Newman, 'Harry Jacobs', p. 274.
[125] Newman, 'Harry Jacobs', p. 276.
[126] Farge, *The Allure of the Archives,* p. 10.

than the one perceived by natural vision.'[127] By capturing a slice of the landscape, the viewer has their experience limited. The expanse of space is controlled and contained by the edges of the photograph. The promise of realism is contradicted by the framing. The image shows a landscape that was real, but in its repetition as a photographic slide it becomes an object that can be held. This transparency that I hold in the performance and that I show to the audience was inside the camera that Ethel took on holiday. As an object I find it intriguing; it can be held between a finger and a thumb and must be held carefully to prevent damage. It contains an image that requires the correct technical equipment if it is to be displayed. The projected image has an aesthetic appeal of its own. The strong, particular Kodachrome colours projected with the rounded corners of the 35mm slide can evoke nostalgia, comparable to that identified by Raphael Samuel in his writing on the use of old photographs in film. Using several examples from twentieth century film, Samuel suggested that family photographs were increasingly prominent as 'a form of modern folk-art', establishing back stories and indicating historic content.[128] Ethel's slides as intertexts are a stimulus for reminiscence. They project old-fashioned images of a holiday. Viewing these slides in a sequence creates a nostalgic hypertext.

Alison Light has described family history as 'less a clear-cut channel through time than a space into which doors open and close'.[129] Light is suggesting that there are always unknowable elements in a family history: 'uncertainties and gaps'.[130] For me these slides are indicative of this unknowing. I can see the image in each one; I can imagine; I can deduce from the evidence that I have, but I can never know the intention of the photographer; I can never know why each image was chosen as precious enough for the limited, valuable film. Each slide opens onto a historical space, but the experience is restricted to the framing of the image. To extend Light's metaphor, in this performance practice I am opening the doors created by the intertexts (the slides) and exploring what I have found, and not found, in that space.

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[127] Sontag, *On Photography,* p. 52.
[128] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory, Volume 1: Past and present in contemporary culture (*London and New York: Verso, 1994), pp. 350-51.
[129] Alison Light, *Common People: The History of an English Family* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 164.
[130] Light, *Common People*, p. 164.

The transparencies are fragile and each time they are used they will degrade under the brightness of the projector bulb. In his thorough analysis of photographic longevity, Henry Wilhelm asserted that despite Kodachrome slides being renowned for long lasting colour stability, this is only the case for slides kept in dark storage, not those subjected to repeated projection.[131] His research indicated that Kodachrome lost more colour as a result of projection than any other slide available.[132] The limit for projecting these slides in their lifetime is one hour according to Wilhelm's investigation.[133] Each time the performance is repeated the slides deteriorate: a destruction resulting from their ontology. To follow Wilhelm's advice, which is to make duplicates to project and store the originals as master versions, would remove the only physical connection to Ethel Nichol from the performance. Continuing to use the slides that genuinely once belonged to my great-grandmother in this imagined narrative is an assertion of her presence, whilst acknowledging her absence. Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen noted in their survey of American attitudes to the past that people trusted museums and historic sites more than any other sources of history because of the direct connection that these places provide to artefacts, people and events in history.[134] For me, these slides are the immediate link to Ethel Nichol and her lost story. So I continue to use them, recalling Peggy Phelan's much quoted comment, that 'performance's being […] becomes itself through disappearance.'[135] These slides are vanishing through the action of the live performance, as the stories that once gave them context have already been lost. As slides they are made to be projected, to leave them in a box unwitnessed would be a contradiction to their existence and a different sort of vanishing. They were made to be a part of a show and whilst this may not have been the anticipated show, their use as intertexts in *The space in-between* re-purposes them and gives them an opportunity to perform.

In the performance the photographer is absent. She died before I, the performer, was born. In order to show her slides I need to step into her role as the projectionist, but I

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[131] Henry Wilhelm with contributing author Carol Brower, *The Permanence and Care of Color Photographs: Traditional and Digital Color Prints, Color Negatives, Slides, and Motion Pictures* (Iowa: Preservation Publishing Company, 1993) <http://www.wilhelm-research.com/book_toc.html> [Accessed 09 November 2016], p. 211.
[132] Wilhelm and Brower, *The Permanence and Care of Color Photographs,* p. 213.
[133] Wilhelm and Brower, *The Permanence and Care of Color Photographs,* p. 213.
[134] Roy Rosenzweig, and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 105-07.
[135] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: the Politics of Performance,* transferred to Digital Printing 2006 *(*London: Routledge, 1996), p. 146.

cannot become her. I am repeating what I imagine were the actions of my great-grandmother as she shared her holiday photographs with her family. Sontag stated that 'A photograph is both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence.'[136] Slides intensify these aspects of the photograph. The material object of the slide is small and transparent; bold shapes can be distinguished, but details are hidden. When they are placed in a projector, the image is enlarged and made clear; it is a picture of light separated from the material object of the slide. In comparison to a photograph this image is ephemeral and positioning my body in the space in-between the slide and the screen causes the picture to become obscured. When viewing a projection, there are two copies of the image present; the projection is an amplification of the slide. The transparency depends on empty space to become fully visible; the projection only exists in relation to the slide. This transparency reveals an absent, unknown landscape distant in time and space, whilst the two separated images assert doubly the landscape's 'pseudo-presence' in the room as part of the hypertext. As an intertext, the transparency contributes to the meaning of *The space in-between* through its ontological qualities. The space between the slide in the projector and the image on the screen represents the keenly felt gap in my knowledge. I can see these images as my great-grandmother did, but I do not know what they are showing me. As a performer, I can use the space in-between the projector and the screen. By placing myself in the beam of light I upset the translation of slide into image; I become a part of the disrupted picture and impose myself on the story.

Ethel Nichol's slides offer an opportunity for speculation. They are evidence of a holiday. The date stamp is June 1967 and the pictures appear to have been taken in late spring, possibly in Norway. The architecture, the range of landscapes and the receding snow line all offer clues. There is a recollection in the family that she took a holiday with a ladies' group to Norway. However, there remains uncertainty. Social historian, Raphael Samuel commented that 'We may think we are going to [photographs] for knowledge about the past, but it is the knowledge that we bring to them that makes them historically significant'.[137] The 'knowledge' that I bring to these transparencies makes them 'significant' in the context of my family history, but this knowledge is limited. However, with those present in the slides now all absent and their history mostly lost, there is still

[136] Sontag, *On Photography,* p. 16.
[137] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory,* p. 328.

the possibility of using the imagination. Bringing the material of family history into creative practice-research provides a different approach for interrogating it. These slides have lost their original meaning, but in a family history hypertext they have a new significance as intertexts that contribute to a story about the past in relation to the present. The uncertainty that I bring to them makes them as productive in creative practice-research as accuracy might in conventional historic research.

The language of the performance is structured to make explicit the speculative nature of the story, by the repetition of the statement 'I imagine'. When the image of the expanse of frozen water (Figure 2.3) is shown to the audience, the speculative nature of the narrative is broadened further.

Figure 2.3

Transparency from Ethel's collection projected onto a wall

Firstly the picture is described as a 'frozen lake', then a 'frozen river' and finally as a 'glacier'. These suggestions made one after the other are intended to underline the lack of knowledge, but also to prompt the audience to decide themselves. They can decide what they think the body of frozen water might be or they can recognise their own lack of knowledge. The audience are then offered two alternative versions of how Ethel might have felt on her return. She may have felt that it was 'much colder' or 'nowhere near as cold' as home in Cumberland. As with all the imagined words and actions, it is most likely

none of them were said or done. The provision of alternatives does not make it more likely that she said either of those things, but draws attention to the infinite unvoiced possibilities. Despite the persistent assertions of the fanciful nature of the narrative, as the hypertext shared with the audience, it develops status as a story.

Having organised the slides into a narrative, I noticed that each slide was very faintly numbered in the corner. I realised that these numbers, like those on 35mm negatives, would refer to the order in which they were taken. This was a different order to the narrative that I had already developed. In particular, the bright sunny picture of the harbour is slide three, so should be near the beginning rather than near the end 'after all that cold and grey'. As a creative work, this hypertext is completely fictional despite existing in the context of the family history extratext. The slides pass into the new performance as intertexts, as a result they now hold both the imagined fiction and the unknown truth. The hypertext offers a version of events different to those that my great-grandmother experienced. In order, the slides formed a hypotext, but out of order they operate as individual intertexts. They are snap shots rearranged to suit my devised hypertext.

Performances of historical events are never completely accurate, as they always exist in the present moment. In 2003 UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) included in their definition of intangible cultural heritage 'practices … that communities, groups and, in some cases individuals, recognise as part of their cultural heritage.'[138] The description can usefully be applied to the domestic slide show, as a formerly common practice. The repetition of the actions of the slide show are now performed as nostalgia, whereas it would have been a demonstration of modern technology. The slide show in *The space in-between* is one version of the practice using this architexture. Ethnographer Marilena Alivizatou argued against trying to fix intangible cultural heritage to particular repetitions, suggesting instead that 'viewing heritage as the creative re-appropriation of the past, informed by the challenges of the present, allows its

[138] UNESCO, 'Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,' (2003), Article 2.1 <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention> [Accessed 1 July 2020].

full dynamism to come into play'.[139] Attempting to cement a practice to one iteration is a failure to recognise the mutability of activity. I cannot perform the slide show exactly as Ethel would have done it, but I can play a 'creative re-appropriation' of it. The insistent repetition of 'I imagine' emphasises the distance between this slide show and Ethel's. This allows me to emphasis the limits of understanding the past from the contemporary perspective. The slides are used to create a dynamic hypertext that places them as family history intertexts relevant in the context of the present moment.

Intertexts: Projectors and screen

The slide projector that is used in the film of *The space in-between* is not the one that once belonged to my great-grandmother. Performing the slide show in public meant that the technology had to be reliable and although the projector works, it would not pass the Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) inspection. My first solution for this was to use a digital projector, as these were readily available in university spaces. I used photographs of the projected slides shown using Microsoft PowerPoint. The digital projector presented two significant issues, one was the manoeuvrability of equipment and the second was the loss of the heritage appeal of the vintage items. As has already been discussed, it was important that I was able to disrupt the light beam that created the image, by standing in it. Using the ceiling mounted classroom projector in one lecture theatre space proved problematic as the positioning of the projector and the screen meant that I could not get between them in order to have the desired effect. The symbolism of the replication of the image over the empty space disappeared.

In response to this problem of positioning, I tried using a digital projector and projector screen that were both portable. This meant that I had more control over the organisation of the space, however, this solution made the problem of reproduction apparent. The digital projection was unsatisfactory as the images were photographs of the original slides being projected and, in this translation, the quality of the images was degraded. Furthermore, the pleasure in the tactility of the Kodachrome slides in the projector was lost. The viewing of the image on the screen directly from the slide was, I realised, an

[139] Marilena Alivizatou, 'Intangible heritage and the performance of identity', in *Performing Heritage: Research, practice and innovation in museum theatre and live interpretation,* ed. by Anthony Jackson and Jenny Kidd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 82-93 (p. 85).

important aspect of the family history hypertext, because the film used to make the transparencies is the same film that was inside Ethel's camera. These transparencies were therefore present on the holiday with my great-grandmother; their use in the performance offers a direct link to the places pictured and that experience. The slides' significance as intertexts was lessened when they were replaced by digital reproductions.

Figure 2.4

Ethel's projector on the left, the projector borrowed from the University on the right

The compromise that I made was to borrow a Kodak slide projector from the Theatre Department of the University of Sheffield. Using this machine meant that I could still use the slides without the electrical risk associated with the older Aldis machine, as the Kodak machine had passed its PAT inspection. The Aldis was manufactured between 1950 and 1959, whilst this particular Kodak model was manufactured from 1979 until 1984, but it is still capable of evoking nostalgia as an object.[140] The Kodak has a carousel design that was in circulation from 1961 so would have been available when these slides were originally shown in 1967 and this has become an iconic design likely to be more familiar

[140] Science Museum Group, 'Aldisette projector', <https://collection.sciencemusemgroup.org.uk/objects/co8084675/adisette-projector-projector> [Accessed 2 July 2020]; McKeever, 'A Brief History of Slide Projectors' (Kodak, 2004) <http://www.kodak.com/eknec/documents/a6/0900688a807890a6/history.pdf> [Accessed 16 December 2016].

to the audience than the older Aldis design.[141] The two projectors are pictured in Figure 2.4 with the Aldis on the left and the Kodak on the right.

The experience of using the Kodak machine differs significantly from using the older machine. The full set of slides can be loaded into the carousel at the start of the performance and the remote can be used to move to the next slide, it is not necessary to keep returning to the projector to show the next image. This breaks the proximal relationship between the projector and the projectionist; it is possible to make more use of the space. It would have been possible to use the Kodak projector as though it is the Aldis, by loading the slides one at a time and using the button on the machine rather than the remote. However, I felt that the opportunities presented by the new projector to improve the flow of the performance were positive with regard to the audience experience. The Aldis projector was built into the performance through a verbal description, whilst all the slides were being loaded into the Kodak machine:

> Ethel's projector only takes two slides at any one time.
> You have to keep pushing the slide carrier across and back again to change them.
>
> (Appendix 2.1, p. 1)

The description of Ethel's projector was the only section that was spoken in the present tense and without the speculative phrase 'I imagine'. I did not need to imagine the projector because I knew what it looked like, what it sounded like and how it worked. This description enabled me to bring Ethel's projector into play, despite its physical absence and emphasised the differences between the two machines.

The projector screen that I used belonged to my great-grandfather. Like the projector and slides this was given to me by my grandmother, but it belonged to her father, Robert Matthews, rather than her mother-in-law, so it would not have featured in Ethel's slide show. Although I have not been able to specifically date this 'Starlight Tripod Projection Screen', Robert died in 1968, the same year as Ethel; the projector screen is likely to be from the 1950s/60s. The use of this screen with the Kodak projector evoked a mid-

[141] McKeever, 'A Brief History of Slide Projectors'.

twentieth century historic extratext. The screen works intertextually with the projector and slides to create the scenographic effect of the slide show, but they were never part of the same slide show before they became a part of this hypertext. No verbal reference is made to the screen in the performance; its impostor status within the family history narrative is not highlighted, because, unlike the projector, it is not replacing an object belonging to Ethel to which I had access. As an intertext, the screen adds to the impression of authenticity, and, by doing so reveals the ability of the intertext to deceive. The intertext as a historic object that is inserted whole into the hypertext implies authenticity. This value can be manipulated by the performance maker or used to create a specific effect, as it did in *The space in-between.*

Intertext: The body of the great-granddaughter

By moving the slide show from a domestic setting into a performance space, I shifted from the personal and private to the public and the professional. This performance could have been created using a set of slides of completely unknown origin purchased in a second hand shop, but the personal connection to the slides is vital for exploration of the family history hypertext. I engage in co-existent roles as the performer-researcher and as the great-granddaughter. One role is professional and the other is personal, but both are enacted in public. I am her descendant, I know people who knew her, I handle her slides, but I never knew her. I insist on using her actual slides, but I am happy to be pragmatic by substituting her projector. The negotiation of my professional and personal roles in this practice reflects a relationship that is both intimate and remote between myself and the subject of the performance – Ethel Nichol.

When Roland Barthes refuses to share the photograph of his mother in his seminal work *Camera Lucida,* he claims that it is because the reader will feel 'no wound' in studying the photograph.[142] Without knowing the subject, the meaning of the photograph has changed. It might be possible to view it with interest and compassion, but Barthes' particular experience is lost to us. My imagination can never truly fill the spaces that are opened through the viewing of these transparencies; they do not 'wound' like Barthes' picture because I never knew Ethel. Instead Ethel's photographs have the effect of exciting me as

[142] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* trans. by Richard Howard (London: Vintage, 1993), (this translation first publ. USA: Hill and Wang, 1981; first publ. France: Editions de Seuil, 1980), p. 73.

a descendant and whetting my curiosity to know more. These slides have lost their original context and are now situated in a performance hypertext drawing on the extratexts of holiday photography and family history in the paratextual environment of doctoral research. This transtextual framework brought into being through play has a distancing affect. Play is both serious and not serious; in Huizinga's words, play is 'being "not serious", but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly' (emphasis in original).[143] Bringing texts into play enables them to be treated simultaneously with opposing attitudes and, thus, positioning the transparencies as intertexts within this framework made it possible to experiment both dispassionately and passionately with their meaning and their significance to me, as a family historian and performance maker.

I do not play the character of Ethel. I imagine what she might have said, thought and done, but I avoid directly representing her. Nevertheless, through my interaction with the slides, my body occupies the space where I am imagining hers to be. The use of these objects within the performance changes their meaning. Daniel Miller has suggested an object can come to embody a deceased individual in the memory of the living, suggesting that 'The old clock or washing mangle essentially turn the deceased Gran into a kind of museum figure evocative as much of her period as of herself.' If this occurs, it can enable the projection of what appears to be a simpler human being, less complicated by human qualities, and one that is fixed to specific moments of time.[144] Ostensibly the slides provide a direct link to Ethel Nichol, but as intertexts they generate a simplistic representation of a single woman caught in a moment of time returning from a holiday. It is the introduction of my body as an additional intertext that complicates this representation. Reading the slides and my body as intertexts allows comparisons about the way that they behave in the hypertext. These slides could represent a generalised past, but her genetic connection to myself makes it a specific representation.

These photographic slides were taken more than fifty years ago by a woman who is not visible in the images, yet who retains a genetic presence in the performance. By performing the actions of the host of the slide show, which were once Ethel's actions, I

[143] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture,* trans. by R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 13.
[144] Miller, *Stuff,* p. 150.

suggest her presence. Commenting on the performance at Consuming Heritage Conference at the University of Leeds, Daniel Clarke described experiencing how 'the performer's voice, her inclination, her facial expressions, and even her posture morphed into a characterisation of the grandmother'.[145] Despite the monologue resolutely referencing the imagination, from the audience's perspective the roles of ancestor and descendant were blended. Through the language I chose to speak I was attempting to keep my play separate from Ethel's experience, but for Clarke, offering an audience member's perspective, my body became hers. To adapt Sontag's comment to performance, my presence performing my great-grandmother's actions became signifiers of *her* 'pseudo-presence and a token of [*her*] absence'.[146] A photograph is a static representation of a moment that has past; the picture looks like that moment, but it is not that moment. My body in this performance is a partial substitute for Ethel's and it is an acknowledgment that she cannot participate in this play.

The space in-between had a serendipitous genesis when I was gifted the slides and the projector that belonged to my great-grandmother. Fenella Cannell observes that 'serendipity' is frequently referenced in the research of family history where pure chance can seem to produce new discoveries and suggests that it could be compared to a spiritual or religious experience.[147] She interviewed family historians, and discovered that the motivation to find out about one's ancestors was not a 'selfish' urge, or 'particularly given to heavy fictionalizing, or idealization of the past'.[148] Instead she argued that 'one central aspect of the appeal of genealogy is the opportunity it offers to re-make kinship relations with the departed, and to care for the related dead.'[149] It is for this reason, she suggests, that the uncovering of a historical familial past can be emotional.[150] The serendipity that brought Ethel into the performance vanished when her projector was not suitable for use in public spaces. The attempt to 're-make kinship relations' was successful as it has raised Ethel Nichol in my consciousness, but it fails because this version of Ethel is imaginary.

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[145] Daniel Clarke, 'Consuming Heritage: Identity, Culture and Heritage, University of Leeds, 30 September 2016, A Conference Report', *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media,* 13 (Summer 2017), <http://www.alphavillejournal.com/Issue13/13_1Report_Clarke.pdf> [Accessed 2 January 2020] 180-84 (182).
[146] Sontag, *On Photography,* p. 52.
[147] Fenella Cannell, 'English ancestors: The moral possibilities of popular genealogy', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,* 17:3 (September 2011), 462–480 <DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9655.2011.01702.x>, 476.
[148] Cannell, 'English ancestors', 474.
[149] Cannell, 'English ancestors', 462.
[150] Cannell, 'English ancestors', 475.

Seeking not to impose a false, fictionalized or idealized history on a real person was my act of 'care for the related dead'; I strove to be explicit about my lack of knowledge through the anaphora of 'I imagine'. Yet this wholly invented version of Ethel became a facet of my relationship with her. Throughout this play I stated repeatedly, 'I imagine', and, because this is play, I do it, I imagine. I conjured an image in my head of my great-grandmother and that becomes my idea of her. The attempt to present an honest account of an unknowable holiday becomes an act of creation, as well as an acknowledgement of the absence of Ethel and her knowledge.

The final words of *The space in-between* moved from the generalised, fanciful ideas of possible holiday experiences to specific contemplation about Ethel Nichol's life when these transparencies were made:

> I imagine what it's like to be 77
> To be a widow
> To be on holiday
> To be on a coach trip
> In Norway
>
> In the spring of 1967
>
> (Appendix 2.1, p. 5)

These details relocate the story to a precise time and to a specific person. Any character that I have imagined through the fantasy holiday must now be re-aligned to fit with the facts about the real person who lived and took these photographs. For me, this was a moment to consider the life of my great-grandmother who was born around 1890 and grew up on a farm in Cumberland with ten siblings. Ethel's daughter was a nurse who died in Nigeria in 1945, whilst her son was a prisoner-of-war in Germany. Ethel's husband passed away in 1951, by which time her son had returned, married and had children. These extratextual details were not spoken; they were what I considered when I delivered these lines and when I showed the final slide without speaking. This is a life that I can only imagine; it is not possible to experience a life lived from 1889 or to go to Norway in 1967. The first two statements are possible: I may reach 77 and one day I may be a widow. This

is a moment of personal reflection on possible futures, as well as on my great-grandmother's life. Experimenting with these slides put me in a position to contemplate Ethel's lived experience and it gave me space to bring those experiences into my consciousness. The family history hypertext is shared with an audience, but the experience of the performance-maker whose body participates, is distinct from that of the audience. My body is perceived as an echo of my great-grandmother's, but as I play, I hold onto personal, affecting knowledge that is kept private from the audience.

Intertexts in Carran Waterfield's *The House*

This next section will examine how family history is incorporated into Carran Waterfield's performance, *The House,* in particular focusing on the use of a slide show.[151] This performance was developed as part of an Arts and Humanities Research Council project called 'Poor Theatres' led by Jenny Hughes and it examined historic institutions including the workhouse, alongside the demands of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) at the time the piece was made.[152] The drift in the performance between historic and contemporary characters, and the difficulty at times in distinguishing between them, makes parallels in attitudes evident. *The House* drew out comparisons between the systems and made an argument that each system demands displays of specific behaviours and attitudes. *The House* was structured in three parts. Firstly there was a slide show and lecture in which Waterfield's family history is introduced.[153] This was followed by a character-driven central section, which Waterfield called the 'Pauper Chorus'.[154] In this part of the performance, she plays a series of characters who are engaged in systems of welfare in different ways. These include characters who wield varying degrees of power, such as the Matron in charge of the workhouse, and those who are subject to the vacillations of that power, including three Paupers, who are residents of institutions that change name and function across time. The characters embodied are not individuals from her family history, but are, in her words, 'made up of a series of voices, personas, gestures,

[151] References to the performance of *The House* refer to Martin Harris Centre, The University of Manchester, 3 November 2015; quotations are taken from Carran Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* 37:1 (March 2017), 6-94.
[152] The University of Manchester, 'Poor Theatres: theatre, performance, poverty' <blog.poortheatres.manchester.ac.uk> [Accessed 19 February 2020].
[153] Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', pp. 8-27.
[154] Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', pp. 28-76; Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield, 'Sing For Your Supper: Pauperism, Performance, and Survival', *Lateral,* 5.2 (2016) <https://doi.org/10.25158/L5.2.2> section 8.

and postures that I encountered when physically exploring the word "poor."'[155] Through the performance of multiple roles, which sometimes 'blur' into one another, Waterfield reveals how people, particularly women, were historically and are still expected to perform in order to earn help.[156] The performance concludes with Waterfield sharing of personal and historical documents on a washing line, still shifting between the representation of different characters.[157] *The House* uses family history, introduced through the lecture and slide show at the start of the performance and the documents on the washing line at the end, to anchor the breadth of content explored in the central section. The concept of the line and lineage prove significant as tethering a complex mass of ideas together.

For Hughes, the inclusion of the family narrative and in particular what she identified as 'a female lineage, of engagement with different welfare regimes that goes back to the 1830s, 1840s' was an important aspect of the project.[158] She claimed that 'For me, the autobiographical stuff, and also the sense of [Waterfield] being present – as the person that [she is] on stage – talking to those people – the audience – felt really, really important and powerful.' The notion of this lineage helped Waterfield to appreciate the value of using her family history in the performance and Hughes asserted that it was the family history that provided 'the theatrical glue to the whole thing.'[159] Waterfield's presence provided a physical, genetic connection to the workhouses of the past and offered the audience a tangible entry point into a complex play that commented on two hundred years of welfare systems. *The House* was a solo performance, the audience witnessed one actor, who evoked a history that stretched beyond the lifetimes of anyone present. In the question and answer session following a keynote given by Hughes and Waterfield at Warwick University, Waterfield was asked about how it was possible to stage absences in the past and she responded 'this is my body full of my lineage'.[160] In her process of physical exploration she is drawing on her own lived experience, as well as a heritage of

[155] Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield, 'Sing For Your Supper: Pauperism, Performance, and Survival', *Lateral,* 5.2 (2016) < https://doi.org/10.25158/L5.2.2> section 8.
[156] Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', p. 92 n. 1.
[157] Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', pp. 76-84.
[158] Hughes and Waterfield Interview, 11 April 2016.
[159] Hughes and Waterfield Interview, 11 April 2016.
[160] Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield, 'Sing for your Supper: Pauperism, Performance and Survival', Keynote, Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance Conference, The University of Warwick, 5 January 2016.

familial experience. In this family history hypertext, Waterfield's body is an intertext that communicates both change and continuity. The body as an intertext through the performance of embodied lineage is one that occurred in *The space in-between,* when my body stood in for Ethel's and will be examined in the final section of this chapter on Third Angel's *Cape Wrath,* in which Alexander Kelly wears his grandfather's suit.

The House was performed in the Martin Harris Centre, which is a university studio theatre. The audience were on three sides of the performance space and a projector screen was positioned on the fourth boundary line of the stage. This screen was used to show photographs from Waterfield's family history during a lecture-style introduction. When interviewed, Waterfield explained that she decided to start the piece with a lecture because it was due to take place in a university as part of a conference.[161] As with *The space in-between* the paratext influenced the hypertext. However, whilst I chose to take a domestic slide show into a university setting, Waterfield chose a slide show as a pedagogical style of presentation because of the educational paratext. By delivering family history through this form at the start, it seemed initially to be kept distinct from the rest of the performance. As she delivered the lecture, Waterfield moved around the periphery of the stage. She did not cross over the threshold to make use of the full stage until the character-driven middle section of the performance began. This presented a physical separation between the family history research and the body of the performance.

In contrast with the analogue slide show employed in *The space in-between, The House* makes use of digital projection. The images are projected using a computer operated by Jenny Hughes, who is visible, though off-stage. Whilst the audience sit in the auditorium waiting for the performance to start, a studio portrait photograph from the 1920s or 1930s of a young woman was projected on the screen.[162] The photograph was unidentified until the performance started, when Waterfield indicated that this is her grandmother, Louisa Elsie Harvey.[163] This enigmatic photograph of Harvey, in which it is difficult to tell if she is showing concern or about to smile, is shown several times within the performance. The resemblance between her and the performer makes the embodied

[161] Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield Interview, 11 April 2016.
[162] This photograph can be seen here: Carran Waterfield, 'Figure 89', in '*The House:* an augmented script', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* 37:1 (March 2017), 6-94, (p. 87).
[163] Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', p. 20.

lineage perceptible. The positioning of the projector screen as though it is a fourth audience means that this portrait overlooks the action and suggests responsibility towards this audience, who are present only in photographs. This absent audience are represented physically in the performance and the presence of the photographs is a reminder not to forget the reality of this history. The presence of Louisa's photograph was an expression of Cannell's 'care for the related dead.'[164] It was a reminder of the historic truth that provided inspiration for the fictional characters that Waterfield performed. Projecting photographs throughout *The House* placed the imagined Pauper Chorus firmly in the context of the factual lived experience.

Before the lecture started, there was an audio recording of Waterfield and two people who worked in a psychiatric hospital from 1968 and 1970 talking about their experiences.[165] This concludes with discussion of 'The Mum Test', which means questioning whether you would be happy if your own mother was cared for in this manner.[166] The suggestion that care would be greater if we think of those accessing it as close family members is echoed in the language that Waterfield uses. She starts her lecture stating:

> In 1934, Louisa Elsie Harvey, a spinster aged 35 voluntarily admitted herself into Samford Union Workhouse, Tattingstone, Suffolk to give birth to my mum.
>
> ('*The House:* an augmented script', p. 20)

This quotation is indicative of the way that the language of the lecture moves between impersonal, professional historical facts and a familiar, informal tone that conveys the personal connection. Opening with the date and the full name implies that this is factual and verifiable information. The word 'spinster' was used on formal documents until the twenty-first century when it was replaced by 'single'. However, 'spinster' is not neutral and, unlike its male equivalent 'bachelor', it has largely derogatory connotations. 'Spinster' conjures images of a lonely, older woman, who has failed to fulfil the function that society has dictated to her of marrying and having children. The revelation by the end

[164] Cannell, 'English ancestors', 462.
[165] Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', p. 17.
[166] Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', p. 19.

of the sentence that this unmarried woman will be having a baby further compounds the implicit judgment. However, the final two words of the sentence, 'my mum', undermine the detached tone. The choice of the informal term, 'mum', as opposed to the more formal 'mother', indicates the intimate relationship between the performance maker and the people whose stories she will explore. Following the discussion of 'The Mum Test' immediately with a description of her own mother's birth in a workhouse indicates from the opening how the extratext will be interwoven with Waterfield's own personal hypotext. The use of the pedagogical form of the lecture establishes her family story as the emotional and historical core of *The House* and implies that the narrative is both subjective, as it is personal, and truthful, as she tells the audience facts.

Following the lecture, during the Pauper Chorus, photographs continue to be projected onto the screen. This shifting backdrop of images is a reminder throughout of the presence of the personal story and of the connection of the performer to the characters whose stories she explores. This means that photographs from different time periods and of different subjects can impact on any part of the performance. One of the characters that Waterfield plays is the Matron of the workhouse, who is 'an aspiring guardian'; the Boards of Guardians were in control of the organisation of workhouses. She reads from 'A Handybook for the Guardians', hesitating when she has to read derogatory words:

> It tells you how to check… if you're really a vagrant. It tells you how to check if you're really sick. It tells you how to check if you're really a wh… a whore. It tells you how to check if you're really a, a bb baaa a bastard, one parent – illegitimate.
>
> ('*The House:* an augmented script', pp. 47-48)

This text is adapted from George C. T. Bartley's *A Handy Book Guardians of the Poor* from 1876.[167] As this was read to the audience the projected images appeared to be recent photographs in black and white of a twentieth century housing estate including a concrete block of flats. The juxtaposition of the historic spoken text against the modern images, presented in an old-fashioned colourway, serve metatextually to suggest to the audience that such judgments are not restricted to the Victorian era; those who seek financial

[167] Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', p. 92, note 16.

support or look for help with their mental health are still subject to systems that seek to identify and classify their worthiness. Waterfield describes the cycling repetition of the images throughout the performance as a 'drone that supports the piece'.[168] The lineage of family history, in which one generation succeeds another, is replicated in this slide show drone. Unlike a musical drone, which stays constant throughout, these individual images frequently change. Their drone-like quality comes from their reduction to the same form as digital images on a screen. However large the original is, whenever it comes from and whatever its quality as a physical object, by projecting them as photographs that fill the screen, the original objects are made – for a moment – equivalent. The lineal quality emerges as each image obscures the previous one and makes it absent through a ceaseless transition. The brief crossfades used to move between images for a moment makes it possible to see the two images together, but this is never settled. In the examination of history in *The House* progress through time is marked by stasis as well as transformation. In the transition from the workhouses to current systems of welfare, there are elements that remain and elements that disappear; the language of categorising 'deserving' or 'undeserving' poor has changed, but the same judgments were being made when the DWP suspended benefits as sanctions.[169] The motif of a line that stretched continuously, but was constantly changing, was manifested in the slide show drone and connected the family history intertexts with the broader extratextual history.

Despite the personas embodied by Waterfield being imaginary, the continued presence intertextually of the slide show drone of family and historic photographs has the effect of eliding the gap between the fictional and historic characters. Roland Barthes argued:

> The Photograph is violent: not because it shows violent things, but because on each occasion *it fills the sight by force,* and because in it nothing can be refused or transformed.
>
> (*Camera Lucida,* p. 91; italicization and capitalization in original)

The violence of the photograph is mitigated in live performance, as the body of the performer provides an alternative representation. Nevertheless, as intertexts these

[168] Follow up to interview by email, 17 October 2016.
[169] Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', p. 52.

photographs inescapably provide individual, historic faces for the characters. In the same way that I was perceived to perform my great-grandmother's character despite explicitly employing imagination, so I, as an audience member collapsed Waterfield's characters into the ancestors that she introduced. The photographs filled a space in representation by providing an alternative the present face of the performer. When a photograph of Louisa Harvey holding a microphone and singing is shown during the slide show and repeated within the drone, it becomes associated with the Pauper Two/Fairy Godmother character who sings 'Nobody loves a fairy when she's forty'.[170] This was performed within the context of a charity event to raise money for the hospital and it was sung standing on a chair, at first with nervous energy. However, as Waterfield sang in role as Pauper Two/Fairy Godmother, the character became gradually more distressed until she panicked and desperately appealed to be allowed to stop. Pauper Two/Fairy Godmother sobbed that she needed to 'spend a penny' before crying 'I'm going' and stepping/falling from the chair.[171] This desperation was made even more distressing because of its contrast to the cheeriness moments earlier. This scene was imagined, the character is not Louisa Harvey, but the photograph repeated intertextually in the performance allows the metatextual association to be made by the audience.

As a thread running throughout the performance, the slide show is one representation of the lineages within the hypertext. Each image disappears but will be repeated. When repeated, the impact of the image will change because the action on stage is always different. Incorporating photographs as intertexts into this performance grounded it to the extratextual history. The slide show in *The House* provided an architexture that was overtly pedagogical at the opening and which then resonated as a historical lineage throughout the performance. The intertextual images helped to connect the stylised characters to an extratextual reality and informed the viewing of the performance hypertext. In the slide show the lineage is one of repeated obscurity, as the intertexts appear only to disappear, whilst the embodied lineage asserts a living presence. The photographs are signifiers of a past that has happened and therefore cannot be changed, but the active body of the descendant signifies the possibility of change in the present. To

[170] Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', pp. 72-73; the photograph can be seen: p. 25, Figure 24.
[171] Waterfield, '*The House:* an augmented script', p. 73.

read both the body and the slides as intertexts is not to read them as equal, but it is to recognise that they both contribute to the meaning of the piece.

Intertexts in Third Angel's *Cape Wrath*

In the final performance to be discussed in this chapter, Third Angel's *Cape Wrath*, Alexander Kelly tells the story of how he attempted to recreate a journey that his grandfather, Henry Radcliffe, had taken to the most north-westerly point of mainland Scotland – Cape Wrath.[172] As in *The space in-between, Cape Wrath* has a single journey by an ancestor as its hypotext. *Cape Wrath* uses items differently to *The House* and *The space in-between;* there is no projection and some of the objects used are handed to the audience. This style of presentation changes the impact of these intertexts creating more of a sense of community between the audience and performer when we are invited to participate, but holding us at a distance with regard to family history.

Cape Wrath did not use projection when I experienced it and made only limited use of photographs in the main performance hypertext. Earlier versions of the performance had made use of photographs taken by Alexander Kelly on his journey to Cape Wrath and many of these can be seen on the Storify paratext.[173] However, the version of *Cape Wrath* considered here is staged on a minibus, which was parked on Scotland Street in Sheffield on the 16 April 2016 when I attended.[174] The only photograph used within the hypertext is introduced as though it is Kelly's grandfather, Henry Radcliffe. Standing at the front of the bus Kelly unfolds a photograph of a man in full Scottish regalia including a kilt, sporran, kilt cap and holding a bird of prey.[175] Kelly holds the picture in front of himself, as he continues the story of his grandfather's life. Barthes claimed that photography

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[172] Third Angel, *Cape Wrath,* written and performed by Alexander Kelly, dir. by Rachael Walton, Wrought Festival, Scotland Street, Sheffield, 16 April 2016. All references to the performance of *Cape Wrath* refer to this performance.

[173] Jocelyn Cady Spence, 'Performative Experience Design: Theories and practices for intermedial autobiographical performance' (doctoral thesis, University of Surrey, 2015) pp. 81-83; Alexander Kelly, 'Cape Wrath', <https://web.archive.org/web/20160703045408/https://storify.com/alexanderkelly/cape-wrath> [Accessed 18 April 2020].

[174] Third Angel, *Cape Wrath,* written and performed by Alexander Kelly, dir. by Rachael Walton, Wrought Festival, Scotland Street, Sheffield, 16 April 2016.

[175] The photograph can be seen here: Ian Usher, 'Alexander Kelly – Third Angel – Cape Wrath – IU' <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ush/15077654725/> [Accessed 18 April 2020].

'actually blocks memory, quickly becomes a counter-memory'.[176] This picture obscures the audience's view; Kelly is replaced by the image of this archetypal Scottish man, whilst he explains that this is not actually his grandfather. By showing the audience an image that is not Henry Radcliffe, the audience are presented with a possibility that is then dismissed. Like that of Louisa Harvey, this photograph '*fills the sight by force*', but whereas her photograph connected *The House* to the extratextual history, in *Cape Wrath* the factual verity offered by photographic evidence is undermined. As with the options offered in *The space in-between,* the presentation of a false image implies multiple unseen possibilities. Barthes wrote expressively about his refusal to make public the photograph of his mother, as a desire to hold onto his own particularity. He stated:

> I could understand my generality; but having understood it, invincibly I escaped from it. In the Mother, there was a radiant, irreducible core: my mother.
>
> (*Camera Lucida,* p. 75; Capitalization in original)

Barthes has recognised that his experience may be comparable to that of others, but in order to retain his individuality he must keep the photograph private.[177] Kelly offers a picture to fill the audience's imaginations, but he excludes all actual photographs of his grandfather from this hypertext. The photograph is a postcard that Kelly says his grandfather used to send him regularly from his trips. As an object, a postcard stands in for an absent person and it is a very public form of communication. It is not sealed in an envelope so could be read by anyone when in transition and on arrival it is displayed to be perused by visitors. To use this publicly available image as an intertext keeps private some elements of the personal story. The omission in *Cape Wrath* of family photographs as intertexts means that, although the audience are shown an image for 'the Grandfather', Kelly's particular grandfather remains unseen.

Kelly's grandfather's absence was evoked more intensely through the intertextual use of his suit. From the outset of the performance it was evident that Kelly was wearing a suit that did not quite fit. It was an old suit and there was a rip in the leg. It almost fit him, but not quite. Towards the end of the performance, he explained that the suit was his

[176] Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* p. 91.
[177] Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* p. 73.

grandfather's. He said that when he first borrowed it as a teenager, he had to pad it out to make it fit. Yet, Kelly still could not quite fill his grandfather's suit. He pointed out that he had to turn up the legs because his grandfather was taller. Through his attempt to fit the suit, which could be interpreted as a desire to become more like his grandfather, the audience were presented with his failure to replicate his grandfather. By drawing attention to the physical changes that his body has made as he has grown older, he reveals how he is now more like his grandfather than he was before. As with the lineages discussed in relation to *The House,* Kelly's body in his grandfather's suit is only a partial replacement. Children are a continuation of their parents' genetic material. A son may grow to resemble a father, may outstrip him in height and girth or may never reach the same stature. Kelly described seeing his grandfather for the last time, and realising that, for the first time, Radcliffe was the smaller man. The description that Kelly offered the audience of his elderly, unwell grandfather was personal; its impact was amplified through his wearing of the suit. His body, which still not quite fit the suit, is an intertext that implies he makes an inadequate substitute. Recalling Barthes' attitude towards photography as dominant in one's vision, the lack of photographic representation prevents the individual from being pinned by a single image from an instant in time.[178] As in *The space in-between,* in which I resisted playing the character of Ethel, so Kelly never pretends to be his grandfather. However, again the interaction with intertexts suggested representation; in *Cape Wrath* by wearing Radcliffe's suit Kelly evokes his physical and genetic presence. Descendants take the place in the line of their ancestors, but they represent genealogical breaks as well as continuities. The closest that the audience get to seeing Henry Radcliffe is seeing his grandson wearing his suit, which will always be an imperfect representation. Kelly is not trying to be his grandfather or to play him as a character; he is presenting the audience with a grandchild's admiration for his grandfather. By wearing the suit that does not quite fit, he acknowledges the differences between them and makes his sense of loss more apparent.

At no point did Kelly pretend to be his grandfather and yet throughout the piece there was a theme of re-enactment. By wearing his grandfather's suit and by handing out squares of Bournville chocolate, he did things that his grandfather once did. By asking us to find

[178] Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* p. 91.

places on a map of Cape Wrath and to solve a quiz, we were re-enacting Kelly's actions. As an intertext, the map encourages participation from the audience and challenges the veracity of an oral intertext. Kelly tells the story, as he remembers his granddad telling it, of his journey to Cape Wrath. This is challenged by the introduction of physical intertexts – copies of the pink Ordnance Survey Landranger map for the Cape Wrath area, which were given to each row of the minibus. We unfolded our map. I was sat in the middle of the row, with one person to either side of me. We share the map between us. Kelly talks about his love of maps and, using co-ordinates, he invites us to find places with strange names and locations on the route to Cape Wrath. I peer at the map and use my finger to trace the points indicated, showing the others what we are invited to witness. Ultimately, Kelly points out that the road ends at Cape Wrath, which means that his grandfather's story cannot be true. The map is a moment of revelation, tinged with disappointment. The audience shares the moment of realisation as we study the map. We are placed in Kelly's position, examining the map and discovering for ourselves. Revealing the inaccuracy of this story could have been shown by projecting a single map onto a screen. The information shared would have been the same, but the experience would have been different. Holding the map slightly awkwardly between us and touching the contours and landmarks made this a personal, shared, visceral experience. The large maps separated each row from the next, creating a team within the larger community. The challenge of refolding the map correctly as a team led to small feeling of triumph and contributed to this sense of camaraderie. Historian Alison Light discusses the emotional impact of revelations in family history. She explains how she has often been cornered by people in archives, who feel an urgent need to impart their newly shared discovery, which to the unrelated listener can seem insignificant.[179] By enabling the audience to share the moment of discovery, it is made possible for us to share in the frisson of excitement familiar to the family historian. Light's own investigations reveal that her grandfather fabricated part of his ancestry and she states, 'I took no pleasure in cutting his tall stories down to size'.[180] Similarly, in *Cape Wrath* there is little sense of victory in the realisation, but neither is there despair. Kelly has written that his grandfather knew 'the value of a

[179] Light, Alison, *Common People: The History of an English Family* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 128.
[180] Light, *Common People,* p. 164.

couple of tweaks and a bit of editing in the service of good storytelling.'[181] The revelation of the end of the road provided evidence of a principle shared by Kelly and his grandfather.

Cape Wrath was a quest that started as an attempt by Kelly to reach Cape Wrath and share his grandfather's experiences, but as he achieved this, he realised that it was also, in his words, an 'act of remembrance'. On returning to Durness from Cape Wrath, he drank a measure of his grandfather's favourite whisky – Famous Grouse. He repeated this toast, this act of remembrance, within the performance hypertext. Firstly, asking the audience for their guidance in how much he should drink. One audience member suggests 'a finger', as an appropriate measure, which Kelly thought looked like a lot for a Saturday lunchtime. He talked about the fact that he does not like whisky, but that whilst performing this piece had learnt a lot about it from the audience. An example of his newly found knowledge includes that whisky aficionados were not impressed by his grandfather's choice, which is a blend rather than a single malt. The difference had been explained to him, he said, but he was still not sure about it. He raised the glass to his grandfather, took a swig and spluttered with the effect. By stressing his antipathy for whisky, he emphasised that this was not a drink he would choose for pleasure and by drinking alone, Kelly kept the act of remembrance intact. This was not a memorial to the audience's grandfathers; it was Kelly's memorial to his granddad. It was unlikely that the audience knew Henry Radcliffe and so could not remember him. Even if there were members of the audience that had known him, they would have known him differently. Their particular grandfather and grandson relationship was only ever their own. Although the story was being shared publicly and the audience might draw points of comparison with our own personal narratives, in moments such as this, it was preserved as a personal relationship. The audience shared in aspects of the hypertext but are excluded from others.

The notion of the text as palimpsest, which is the titular conceit of Genette's framework, is one of overwriting. The palimpsest is a surface written on once and then written over, whilst the original text, although obscured, remains present. In the case of the

[181] Alexander Kelly, 'Cheers Grandad! Third Angel's *Cape Wrath* and *The Lad Lit Project* as Acts of Remembrance', in *Staging Loss: Performance as Commemoration,* ed. by Michael Pinchbeck and Andrew Westerside (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 129-44 (p. 143).

performance hypertext, each iteration writes over the previous. Kelly's references to things that earlier audiences have said and done make it clear that the performance has developed through its run. The palimpsest image can be applied not only to the hypertext, but also to the performer's body. As individuals we contain genetic markers that have been inherited from our parents, from their parents and from ever further backwards. With each new child differences occur, but nevertheless the genes remain present. The individual is, therefore, a palimpsest, with previous generations written into them. Through the repetition of the actions and behaviours of one's ancestors in *Cape Wrath* and *The space in-between*, there is an attempt to bring them into visibility. However, this will always fail. Children are their parents' descendants; they are not their parents. Kelly failed to complete his grandfather's journey according to the story, he failed to fit into the suit and the postcard failed as a person substitute. The intertexts provided broken connections to an absent grandfather, whose story is central to the hypotext/hypertext relationship. Yet, as Sara Jane Bailes comments, 'strategies of failure in the realm of performance can be understood as generative, prolific even; failure *produces,*' (italicization in original).[182] The failure made apparent by the intertexts in *Cape Wrath* signified Kelly's loss and produced his 'act of remembrance', whilst in *The space in-between,* my failure to uncover the facts of historic journey from the intertexts resulted in the production of an imagined narrative and made the space to reflect on the life of my great-grandmother.

Conclusion

The photographs, documents, objects and clothing become something new when used intertextually within these performances of family histories. Their behaviour can be analysed in relation to other textual elements and concerning how they function in distinct hypertexts. Both *The space in-between* and *The House* project photographic images in a slide show, yet their intertextual function is different. In my practice the intertexts (the transparencies) provided the stimulus and architextual structure of the slide show, but in Waterfield's piece the photographic intertexts provided a contextual backdrop prompted by the peritextual situation of the university. Thus, although they are

[182] Sara Jane Bailes, *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 3.

integral elements in both works, they are the central focus for the first and occupy a continuous peripheral role in the second.

The use of personal items from the family archive within a performance, stimulates affective thought processes, as Sherry Turkle states, 'We think with the objects we love; we love the objects we think with'.[183] The objects and photographs may be near to valueless from a monetary perspective, but their power as intertexts put into play by the performance-maker is to generate meaning and through their presentation they can communicate personal stories to an audience of strangers. The items used in these performances are fairly ordinary; they are likely to be recognisable to the audience although they will be unaware of the relevance until it is revealed by the performance maker. A set of photographs without context is meaningless, as Raphael Samuel suggested,[184] by integrating them within the performance hypertext their significance is asserted and they are given a new function. Arlette Farge suggests that the initial excitement at '"touching the real"' (emphasis in original) in the archives is quickly 'succeeded by doubt mixed with the powerless feeling of not knowing what to do with it'.[185] In family histories objects can be kept, despite lacking in functional or aesthetic value, because they connect to a personal past. Performance can provide an opportunity to give these items new roles in the telling of a history. These may be predominantly personal, as was the case of *Cape Wrath* or incorporate public history, as in *The House.* The suit in *Cape Wrath* represents the changes of ageing, the family photographs and documentation in *The House* illuminate a social history and context, and the slides in *The space in-between* signify the unknowable experiences of another. As intertexts in performance hypertexts, they develop new significance as storytelling devices.

In the Introduction to this thesis, I proposed understanding family history as a personal heritage of relationships to people, places and objects from the past. This builds on Laurajane Smith's argument that it is not the objects, or places that signify heritage, but the way that they are brought together and invited to perform a particular version of history.[186] Although Smith is talking about heritage sites and practices, I argue that her

[183] Turkle, *Evocative Objects,* p. 5.
[184] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory,* p. 328.
[185] Farge, *The Allure of the Archives,* p. 11.
[186] Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 304.

borrowing from the discourse of performance is useful here. Whilst she claims that heritage sites perform, I am arguing that the items used in these performances are given a heritage status by the performance makers. It is not just the human who performs; the objects perform as intertexts. As with the performance hypertext, a heritage site is given meaning through transtextual relationships; it is understood in relation to other texts. The use of these personal items as intertexts in public performances imbues them with a new significance for the duration of the performance hypertext and potentially beyond it. All the performance makers here are positing that their own family history matters and that it is worth an audience's attention. We are using our material culture to present a particular relational heritage to the audience.

Importantly, throughout heritage performances, Smith identifies a 'seam of dissonance'.[187] This dissonance results from the impossibility of all agreeing on a particular perspective on history, instead she insists that 'all heritage is political and thus 'uncomfortable'' (emphasis in original).[188] There will never be a historical account that can satisfy completely, it will always be incomplete and driven by the motivations of those constructing the heritage performance. The performance hypertext, as explicitly constructed heritage text, is able to make this dissonance a feature, whether this is through the repeated assertion of the imaginative basis of *The space in-between,* the identification of alternative narratives in *Cape Wrath* or the linking of historic and current systems of welfare in *The House.* These perspectives recognise the use of the past in the production of histories and present their audiences with open-ended narratives that give them to reach their own conclusions. Political motivations when using family history in performance and dealing with discomfort with personal historic narratives will be explored in more detail in Chapter Three.

It is intertexts, that by their nature are texts inserted whole into the hypertext, which enable this dissonance to manifest. The object or photograph taken from the family archive implies authenticity. It connects the performance-maker and audience with a true story and a deceased ancestor. The intertext is placed within the hypertext, but it retains its integrity as a thing, whether this is a transparency, a photograph, or a suit. In *The space*

[187] Smith, *Uses of Heritage,* p. 306.
[188] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p. 307.

in-between this integrity meant that the character of the great-grandmother was perceived through the handling of the slides, despite the repeated insistence of this being an act of imagination. The use of the vintage projector screen aided this impression of faithful reproduction, despite its inauthentic origin. The photographs projected in *The House* served as remembrance of the reality of the injustices faced by those seeking support. Kelly's suit is physical evidence of the closeness of his relationship to his grandfather and their relationship's development over time. In each of these performances the use of the intertext is restricted by the performance maker. The audience are invited to make a personal connection, but the intertext is held at a distance within the public arena. In two of the performances, this is done through the introduction of fictional narratives to destabilise the potential of recognising the truth, thus in *The House* characters are created in response to the intertexts, whilst in *The space in-between* the narrative is entirely imagined. In *Cape Wrath* and *The space in-between* personal details are withheld, as neither included photographs of the ancestral subject. The photographs included in *The House* are shared through digital reproduction, which is a step away from an original print or slide transparency. The performance maker selects the items to introduce as intertexts and controls their use. As items incorporated intact in a family history hypertext, intertexts imply truthfulness and this inferred authenticity is played with by the performance maker.

Genette suggested that his concept of hypertextuality, whilst well suited to discussion of the theatrical adaptations of written texts, is less useful for the analysis of texts of a historical or autobiographical nature, because of their 'social or personal referentiality'.[189] These types of text do not have defined or accessible hypotexts to provide grounds for comparative analysis. However, in this transformation of Genette's theory the emphasis is shifted from the hypotext/hypertext relationship to explore the multiple textual relations involved in the construction of the family history hypertext. This chapter has concentrated on the function of the intertext in the hypertext and has shown that perceiving objects on stage as intertexts, rather than only as props in a performance, provides valuable conceptual insight. Through the use of items from familial archives these performances each bring an absent individual into the audience's consciousness,

[189] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 396.

yet all three resist representing them as characters. In these performances, I have revealed in this chapter, the intertexts are indicators of absence. The positioning of the projector screen in *The House* as an alternative audience serves as a reminder of those absent, who are unable to tell their stories directly. In *Cape Wrath* the combination of the replicated postcard, the distaste for whisky and the suit that does not quite fit emphasise the loss felt for the grandfather through the imperfect attempts to connect. The projection of the original 35mm slide transparencies in *The space in-between* recalls two unknown occasions – the original moment of the photograph and a possible later showing. By making use of these items as intertexts in the performance hypertexts and bringing them into the performance space with the audience, the protagonists place their own bodies in a lineage of performance moving from personal to public. The intertextual use of the performers' bodies evokes ancestors unknown to the audience prior to their experience of the hypertext. These grandmothers and grandfathers are present through their descendants' bodies, which make a tangible connection between the past and the present.

Chapter Three: Questioning

Introduction

The family history hypertext requires creative thinking. In order to take hypotextual material and transform it into a hypertext, I needed to make decisions about which ancestral line to trace and what I wanted to say. This chapter is about using this method to interrogate the materials of family history. In *Genealogy, Identity and Community,* Eviatar Zerubavel explores how family histories are understood and the potential impact of this. He stresses the choices that are made in imagining a family heritage. For example, when we visualise a tree, this suggests a rootedness and strong central trunk from where the family expands outwards, which emphasises connectedness from the roots between the multiple branches and separation from other trees.[190] Zerubavel identifies strategies that are used to create the narrative that we want to tell, for example 'stretching' to make connections that are only flimsily supported by evidence or 'clipping', which leaves some lines discarded.[191] One example of clipping that he gives is when family names are passed from parent to child, which preserves one line on the record;[192] in the UK, it is normally the male line that is continued through generational naming, but traditions vary across the world. Zerubavel writes:

> Not only are genealogies more than mere reflections of nature, they are more also than mere records of history. Rather than simply passively documenting who our ancestors were, they are the narratives we construct to *make* them our ancestors.
>
> (*Genealogy, Identity, and Community,* Chapter 1, loc. 202)

Using a genealogy as a hypotext is to use material that has already been edited, trimmed or expanded before it can be brought into play with other textual material. Family history is an active process, I choose which stories to research, to re-tell and share. This chapter explores the decisions that I made in selecting my two-times-great grandmother Edith Nuttall as the family history focus for a performance hypertext. Through play, I was searching for a way to explore my feelings towards this ancestor; this chapter details how I did this and the conclusions that I reached from this experiment.

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[190] Eviatar Zerubavel, *Genealogy, Identity, and Community,* Kindle eBook edn (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), Chapter 3, loc. 485-527.
[191] Zerubavel, *Genealogy, Identity, and Community,* Chapter 5, loc. 1179-1211, 1240-1267.
[192] Zerubavel, *Genealogy, Identity, and Community,* Chapter 5, loc. 1176-1267.

Edith Nuttall, née Smith (1858-1938) lived a life that I find fascinating, but which I also find disconcerting. She was a privileged woman whose family was involved in manufacturing in Manchester. Her wealth as a result of the labour of others sits uncomfortably with my politically socialist inclination. Edith kept a diary, which provides the hypotextual source material for this chapter. In family history terminology a diary is an ego document. This means that it is made by the ancestor and offers more personal information than public documents such as census returns. The very existence of an ego document indicates education, implies social status, and provides valuable potential for insight into her life and attitudes. Having chosen to use this diary for my research, I was challenged by how I could incorporate a personal and private document into a public performance and chose to use it as a hypotext, rather than an intertext, in this practice-research.

This chapter concentrates on one piece of practice created in August and September 2016, *Think Before You Speak,* and explains the textual relations at play in this work. The play was about showing off and stepping back; about making noise, whilst being quiet; about displaying and hiding. It was what Carran Waterfield, who as my mentor guided me through this process, would call a 'work-in-process'. It was finished and unfinished. *Think Before You Speak* was a very important part of breaking the way that I worked and the way that I thought about sharing family histories. This research project marks a professional departure for me from my vocation as a teacher to becoming a performance maker. In the play of this chapter, I sought to distance myself from a pedagogical style of the teacher relaying information, but ultimately came to realise the value of my background in education for experimenting with family history. Through the transtextual play of *Think before You Speak*, I responded to the research questions below and found a way of making work that resisted resolution.

Think Before You Speak was play generated in response to the following questions:

- How can a diary be used in performance?
- Should a private document be shared publicly in this way?
- Why should a wealthy and privileged woman (my great-great grandmother) have her story told?

- Why should I use my privilege as a funded university researcher to tell the story of another even more (because of her social standing), though also less (because of the time in which she lived), privileged woman?
- How can I avoid creating performance that is the solo performer talking at the audience using the hypotextual material from family history?
- How great is my ego that I choose to make a performance about my two-times-great-grandmother with me at its centre?
- Why should Edith Nuttall be silent?

Figure 3.1

Zine page that I made in response to *Think Before You Speak.*

The photograph of the stairs was taken before the performance. The old photographs are all from a collection that belonged to my Grandfather Nichol's cousins, Jim and Isobel Nichol. The subjects of the photographs are unknown.

This chapter starts by considering the political implications of researching and sharing family histories. I am acknowledging the privilege of my position and of the ancestor who forms the focus of this chapter. The ideas of sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel and social historians Alison Light and Mark Crail are considered in relation to the politicising of family history. Jenna Watt's play *Faslane* provides an example of how family and politics can be brought into a performance. The next section of the chapter introduces Edith Nuttall's diary and the context in which she wrote it. In this section I detail my decision to use this personal material in a public hypertext and consider another performance that uses a family member's diary, Leo Burtin's *The Midnight Soup.* Following this, I concentrate on one section of the diary, a letter that Edith titled 'To My Ego'. After introducing the letter, I explain how I brought it into play at Carran Waterfield's workshop in Heron Corn Mill to create *Think Before You Speak,* the title of which is a quotation taken

from the letter. Finally, I describe how, through my choice of costume and by dressing the space, I interpreted the hypertext non-verbally and reflect on this as an issue of gender read by the audience.

Extratext: Politics

Researching family history can have a political impetus. Eviatar Zerubavel has written that 'we tactically manipulate genealogies to accommodate both personal and collective agendas',[193] whilst Alison Light points to the selections that family historians make: 'Those ancestors we lay claim to tell us as much about ourselves and our own desires – or fears – as they do about any historical influence or connection'.[194] Ideologically family history can be motivated by right- or left-wing political principles. On the right, genealogy can be about preserving bloodlines. The families with the longest traceable lineages are those for whom kingdoms were at stake. The concept of the family can be used to reinforce nationalism and a sense of national identity. Zerubavel demonstrates with examples, such as '"patriotism," "motherland," "founding fathers," and "sons of the nation"', that the language of nationalism is often familial.[195] The family tree can be a way of showing who belongs and who does not; it can be exclusionary and a method of preserving privilege, as wealth passes through generations, but this perception that family history is about primogeniture and genealogical inheritance is only one way that it can be understood. Family history can also be advocated as social history with concern for research into the general populace. It is the work of family historians to uncover those ancestors who do not have their stories recorded in the history books. These are often the histories of the disenfranchised. As part of a recent series of articles on the work of family historians for *History Workshop Online,* Mark Crail suggests that the massive expansion of availability of records on the internet means that doors have been opened to people to research all their ancestors including those with less illustrious pasts.[196] Crail founded and manages a website that details the history of the Chartist Movement and hosts a database of 'Chartist Ancestors', which enables descendants to locate these individuals in that radical political movement.[197] Alison Light claimed that 'Family history worth its salt

[193] Zerubavel, *Genealogy, Identity, and Community,* Chapter 5, loc. 1176.
[194] Alison Light, *Common People: The History of an English Family* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 105.
[195] Zerubavel, *Genealogy, Identity, and Community*, Chapter 3, loc. 718.
[196] Mark Crail, 'Family History in the Digital Age', *History Workshop Journal* (2019) <http://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/family-history-in-the-digital-age/> [Accessed 6 March 2019].
[197] Mark Crail, 'Welcome to Chartist Ancestors' <www.chartistancestors.co.uk> [Accessed 11 May 2020].

asks these big questions about economic forces, political decisions, local government, urban history, social policy, as well as the character of individuals and the fate of their families.'[198] Her book *Common People: The History of an English Family* is an exemplar of how to take individual family histories and place them into their social, cultural and political context. In this book, she takes as a starting point her four grandparents and traces their heritage in four separate sections. She discovers separate histories of itinerant workers moving across and around England, which she places in the context of the society where they lived and worked.[199]

For this chapter, I chose to focus on a woman who had a reputation within the family for being political. In researching her life and politics, I hoped to find beliefs with which I could sympathise. Family history intended to uphold patriarchal lines of descent does not interest me; I would rather be exploring the lives, experiences and attitudes of the women in my family. Nevertheless, I am conscious that the reason that researching Edith's life has been so fruitful is because of her class privilege. It is this privilege that makes me question if there are other women in the family tree who lived less remarkable lives and should perhaps be given the space in this thesis. Ultimately, Edith's diary provided so much intriguing material that I found it impossible to resist. In particular, Edith was reported by my grandfather Justin Harvey-Kelly (her grandson) to be politically engaged and 'to the left of most of her children and grandchildren'.[200] I was curious to discover how this manifested, especially as my own politics are to the left of my late grandfather's. Reading her diary revealed a woman who was privileged but was nevertheless prevented from speaking her mind as she wished. I decided to use the diary to investigate the possibilities of family history material as hypotext, as I wanted to examine my own response to the material that I found.

The intricacies of involving family and politics in performance are explored in Jenna Watt's *Faslane.*[201] This play explored the politics of nuclear arms and nuclear disarmament. She approached this topic knowing that her family depends on the naval

[198] Light, *Common People*, pp. xxvii-xviii.
[199] Light, *Common People*, p. xxv.
[200] Justin Harvey-Kelly, 'Grandmère', in *The Diary of E. M. Nuttall from 1898 to 1936* (1997), p. 8.
[201] Jenna Watt, *Faslane,* Red Lecture Theatre, Summerhall, Edinburgh, 8 August 2016 and at Barber Studio, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds, 7 April 2017.

base Faslane for employment, but still questioning its existence. In the performance she described the process that she went through to develop *Faslane* including interviewing her family members. She changed their names to preserve their anonymity despite having their permission to use their real ones. When she talks to her cousin and her uncle separately, she states, 'I'm very protective of my family', staring menacingly at the audience as she says this.[202] This action implies that she is protecting them from us, as a curious audience, as much as from their employer or colleagues. She does not push her uncle to expose himself when she interviews him and seeks to save him if she thinks that he does, miming zipping her mouth as she states, 'Redacted.'[203] Watt recognises that others also act to look after their families, when she interviews an anti-nuclear activist, who says she supports the cause for her children. Rearranging her earlier sentiment, Watt states of the anti-nuclear activist: 'she's very protective of her family.'[204] The play recognises the difficulty of dealing with a controversial subject when family is involved. It is not always possible to say what we want to say, because we may wish to protect, or we may be influenced by, our family and our loyalties to them.

The presentation of this conflict on stage, between exploring a public, political issue, and telling a personal, family story is resolved by Watt's decision to make up her own mind. As she does her research, Watt realises about her family that, 'They want me to have my own opinion, even if it's different from theirs, we'll still be family'.[205] The play concludes with a description of the spectacular horror of a nuclear explosion and the mundanity of passing on a flyer. This moment of contrast signalling that Watt has taken on the campaign and stepped onto a path that will separate her from her family in this matter. She has been insistent throughout that she will look after her family but recognises that questioning them is not a betrayal. Acknowledging her emotional doubts and connection to the issue, strengthens her objective position when she reaches it, as it reveals her process and the subjective difficulty that she has had to overcome. As I read my two-times-great grandmother's diary, I discovered how far removed her experiences were from mine, uncovered much that caused me to speculate, and found a woman with whom I could empathise. Using family history to create a new hypertext required acknowledging my

[202] Jenna Watt, *Faslane* (London: Oberon, 2017), pp. 14, 47.
[203] Watt, *Faslane,* p. 47.
[204] Watt, *Faslane,* pp. 37-38.
[205] Watt, *Faslane,* p. 51.

subjective opinion of Edith Nuttall as the foundations for an objective perspective of her position as a politically engaged woman at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Hypotext: The diary

Central to *Think Before You Speak* was the diary of my two–times great grandmother, my mother's father's mother's mother: Edith Nuttall. In 1997, my grandfather, James Justin Harvey-Kelly and his sister, Catherine Jackson, transcribed their maternal grandmother's diary. They had it printed and distributed copies to the family in 1998. This includes useful additional information, such as family trees and an introduction written by my grandfather. I have a copy of this, but I have never seen the original and have had no success tracking it down. Both my great aunt and grandfather passed away in the first decade of the twenty-first century, so I cannot ask them directly to look at the original. It was not until July 2016 that I sat down to read the printed version properly from start to finish. Before this I had only ever flicked through it and picked entries to read at random. I think I may have been put off by the self-aggrandizing tone of both the early diary entries and my grandfather's introduction. Sitting down to read it, nearly a year into my doctoral research, I discovered that the diary was a gift to my investigations and was the holder of several surprises. These included that Edith and her children, like myself and most of my English family, were born in the north-west of England. These northern roots intrude upon my memories of my Irish grandfather; this knowledge of his mother's origin has the power to make a closer connection, but because I never knew it when he was alive actually increases a sense of distance from him.

My two-times-great grandmother, the writer of the diary, was born Edith Smith in Bolton in 1858. She married Harry Nuttall in the 1880s; he was a manufacturer and importer in Manchester. He later became a Liberal politician and was Member of Parliament for Stretford in Lancashire from 1906 until 1918. Harry and Edith had four children between 1887 and 1894: Harry (known by his second name Norbury), Rosamond, Sybil (my great-grandmother) and Raymond. Edith died when visiting Sybil and her family in Ireland in 1938. She was apparently forthright in her opinions, among which was that she should be cremated on her death. As this was not legal in Ireland in 1938, her body had to be

returned to England much to the disgruntlement of her son-in-law.[206] Throughout the diary there are shifts in tone between: a glowing enthusiasm for her children; simple records of travels and visitors; a fervent desire to see a better world; and earnest attempts to improve herself through philosophising. Increasingly, as the diary progresses, it offers a more personal insight into her thoughts and feelings.

Edith wrote this diary irregularly between 1898 and 1936, although this is assuming that it was transcribed in full. Without seeing the original, I cannot be certain that this happened. The typed version is thirty-seven A5 pages. The diary starts with gusto. Edith grandly titled her writing: '*Diary of Our Four Children, setting forth the faults and virtues that make their characters. To be kept faithfully and truthfully by their mother.'* The first entry is a long account detailing, as promised, the faults and virtues of her children; my great-grandmother, at the age of seven, is described as 'Our mouse and yet our volcano!' (15 March 1898). There is a sense especially in the early sections of the diary that she is writing for an audience, probably her children when they have grown up. As her children grow older, there is very little written about their faults, instead she is excited by what she sees as their potential and imagines the great lives that they will live. Her character and values are revealed through her comments about her children's actions. She is very pleased when her eldest son aged eleven buys sweets for his friends but keeps his promise to the family and does not eat any himself, stating, 'What precious incidents these are to us, trifling as they seem. It is truly out of these trifles great characters are built' (27 September 1898). Edith witnesses and admires the generosity of her son spending his own money of his friends, his integrity in keeping his word and his determination to resist eating the treat. She perceives in this event, the type of man she hopes her son will become and hopes that he will have influence as a 'great' man. Family legend recalls her as an opinionated woman; the voice in the diary shows her great love for her children alongside strongly held views.

Textually the diary sits at the centre of its own relational web as a hypertext. I am interested in Edith's diary as a hypotext; it matters that it is a hypertext in its own right, but that is not the focus of this inquiry. I read it on a quest for hypotextual material for my

[206] Reported by Justin Harvey-Kelly in his introduction to the diary 'Grandmère', in *The Diary of E. M. Nuttall from 1898 to 1936* (1997), p. 3.

doctoral research. Whilst I was working on it, there had been recent centenaries for events in both the suffrage movement and World War One. I bring to my reading the mythology of the woman who wrote it and the era in which it was written. I question this copy's fidelity as a hypertext to its own hypotext: the original diary. These threads stretch beyond my reach and I find it difficult to know when to stop tugging on them. Even as I write this, I keep being pulled into online databases of original records in an attempt to shed more light on the diary. The hypertext that I make is not a retelling of history, rather through bringing together this material I raise questions about Edith's life and the significance of her story today.

There seem to be temporal gaps in the diary, raising the question of whether she edited this before her death, was a very sporadic diary writer or if her descendants edited it at some point. There is no mention of her views on the suffrage movement, despite her interest in politics and the fact that she was living in Didsbury near Manchester close to where much suffrage action occurred. In a list written in December 1909 of illustrious visitors from the preceding twenty years, she does record a visit by Susan B. Anthony, although Edith does not mention that Anthony was a leading American suffrage activist. Looking beyond the diary I found a newspaper account of Edith attending a garden party at the Didsbury home of Margaret Ashton, in support of the North of England Society for Women's Suffrage. At this garden party a resolution was passed unanimously to push the government to give women the vote in the current parliament.[207] This shows her interest and commitment to the idea, but it was apparently not worth discussing in her diary. Other omissions include details about her extensive travels. She mentions trips to different parts of Europe and to India, where her oldest daughter and her sister are married, but gives only scant details of any of these expeditions. Although I can locate the rest of the family in the 1901 census, Edith is missing, which may mean she is travelling abroad, but there is no record of this in the diary. As with the photographic slides in 'Chapter Two: Presenting', the space in-between the diary entries invites questions and imagination, and its status as a secondary version complicates this. I cannot truly know its completeness. I do not know if it was one book or many. As a hypotext for a

[207] 'Women and Votes: Garden Party at Didsbury', *Manchester Courier,* 24 July 1906, p. 12 <www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000206/19060724/146/0012> [Accessed 4 May 2020], p. 12.

performance hypertext it seems to be offering a great deal, but it is limited by a sense that there may be a fuller answer available, if I could find the original diary.

On first reading I was saddened by the diary. It took me less than two hours to read and this reduction of a life to such occasional entries felt unbearable. An image was projected of a positive young mother through to a despairing widow, disappointed by her life's trajectory, especially following the deaths of her two sons for whom she had such hope. Despite my initial sadness, I realise that the diary is a wonderful treasure. Reading Edith's own words offers insight into her life and her attitudes, which I do not have for any of my other great or great-great grandmothers. Its ability to engender an emotional response is why it is precious. I empathise with Edith in a more personal way because I have read her diary. When I started to experiment with the diary, I was uncertain about how I should bring this hypotext to which I had had such a visceral response into play.

In *The Midnight Soup*[208] Leo Burtin uses his grandmother's diary as an intertext. His relationship to this diary is different to the one discussed in this chapter. Burtin knew his grandmother, whilst I did not know my two-times-great grandmother; the relationship explored in his performance is much closer and more personal. He has the original diary and knows that there were others, one for every year.[209] Burtin read the diary for us; it was kept safe in his hands. Performing for an English-speaking audience in Sheffield, he could keep the original French text at a distance from us through his translation choices. Using his grandmother's diary to talk about her life and her death brought us, as an audience, closer to her and to him. Having the unique object held, read and translated by Burtin meant that he kept control over what he shared. *The Midnight Soup* was a performance about his grandmother's death by suicide and he emphasised that this was his 'choice', stating 'I chose to invite you, and I chose to have this conversation'.[210] He chose to make this performance 'to have a conversation about a collection of complex thoughts I have had'.[211] Deciding to use Edith Nuttall's diary is a much less affecting choice for me, but having decided to use the diary in this way it was important for me to retain autonomy what to share. I made the decision to use the diary as a hypotext, rather than

[208] Leo Burtin, *The Midnight Soup,* Wrought Festival, Quaker Meeting House, Sheffield, 16 April 2016
[209] Burtin, *The Midnight Soup* (Homemade, 2016), p. 29.
[210] Burtin, *The Midnight Soup,* p. 34.
[211] Burtin, *The Midnight Soup,* p. 1.

an intertext, as this gave me the power to transform it. Instead of using the diary to tell Edith's life story, I chose to use it to question her reputation within the family and the political context of that legacy.

Hypotext: 'To My Ego'

Throughout this research, I considered carefully what and how I was happy to share publicly from the personal, private histories of my ancestors. The play I was undertaking for *Think Before You Speak* removed specific details and attempted to show the themes non-verbally. Nevertheless, I still had ethical concerns about using personal documents in public performance. Making use of the diary could be perceived as the ultimate betrayal of my two-times-great grandmother's privacy and I was wary about how I could use it. However, I am reassured by the bold tone and self-assured style of the diary that suggests she expected it to be read by others. She definitely expected it to be read by her children as she mentions that she hopes her daughter Rosamond 'when she reads these lines, she will be thankful' for being sent to school in London away from her sister, despite the suffering it caused at the time (28 March, 1903). This is supported by the fact that it has been printed and shared by her grandchildren with her family. It was already a shared hypotext when I read it. As a historical source it is only partly made public in this thesis and for *Think Before You Speak* it provided stimulus rather than content. I have chosen to concentrate on the section that I felt was Edith's most creative writing, which is a letter addressed 'To My Ego' and which can be read in Appendix 3.1.

In 1921 there are four entries in the diary. The first three are short and report trips to Southport, Biarritz, Madrid and Grenada, a prospective strike, and that she had adapted Disraeli's novel *Tancred* for the stage. The last entry of that year is written as a letter 'To My Ego', which she instructs to be silent. This entry follows straight on from one dated 'October', which conveys her excitement that her play has been accepted for production in London. 'To My Ego' is undated so may have been written at the same time as the *Tancred* entry. 'To My Ego' is the last entry before the one in which she describes her second son's death. On 1 January 1922, Raymond died of pneumonia, aged twenty-six, when staying in the Pyrenees.

The letter is 204 words long and addressed directly to her own 'ego'. The ego is one part of Sigmund Freud's tripartite theory of the mind. According to this theory, the mind is split between id, which is base motivation, the superego, which is the internalization of societal standards, and the ego is the expression of the self, which moderates the other two aspects. At the time that Edith was writing, psychoanalysis was a relatively new science that was beginning to have an impact of the literature of the period.[212] Edith tells her ego to be quiet because she is boring others, then lists the faults of others, concluding that her own fault – verbosity – is worse than anyone else's. In the third paragraph, she gives physical instructions on how to be quiet, advising 'tighten your teeth'. Finally, she adapts passages from the Bible to suggest that the tongue is a cause of damnation. Her decision to write to her ego suggests a willingness to explore new ideas; she is experimenting with the idea of her self being divided and although the purpose of the letter is to implore her ego to be silent, her tone is confident. The ego emerges as a character within the letter, an element of herself separate from herself; there is an element of performance to this writing. It felt like a gift to my research. Ninety-five years before I was questioning the ego that was driving my work, my two-times-great grandmother had instructed her own ego to be silent. The social constraints that restricted her voice as a woman in the 1920s should no longer exist and, yet, I was still anxious about using the voice in this practice-research. I realised that this was an opportunity to demonstrate the family historian's 'care for the dead'[213] as discussed in 'Chapter Two: Presenting', by using this letter to acknowledge the pressure that Edith felt to keep silent. In this letter, Edith is criticizing herself, but this criticism of herself as a woman talking too much has a wider social extratext. Her character was reported through generations as an assertive, even overbearing, woman. This letter suggests that she was aware of this reputation, although by listing the faults of others she partly diminishes her own. Moreover, even within this self-critical reflection she includes 'a fairly good memory' as a point of pride. Bringing this text into play helped to bring the issues into the light, enabled questioning, sharing and opened discussions about attitudes to women's speech.

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[212] Matt Ffytche, 'The Modernist Road to the Unconscious', in *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms,* ed. by Peter Brooker, Andrzej Gąsiorek, Deborah Longworth and Andrew Thacker, online edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) <DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199545445.013.00024> pp. 411-428 (p. 427).

[213] Fenella Cannell, 'English ancestors: The moral possibilities of popular genealogy', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,* 17:3, (September 2011) 462–480 <DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9655.2011.01702.x>, p. 472.

Hypertext: *Think Before You Speak*

I took this letter to a performance making course that I attended at Heron Corn Mill run by Carran Waterfield. Heron Corn Mill is a restored to working, heritage flourmill in Beetham, south Cumbria. Prior to the 1974 re-drawing of county boundaries, it was in Westmorland, not Cumberland where my ancestors lived. I mention this in order to clarify that it is not a significant paratext for me from a family history perspective, despite being in the modern county where I was born. The industrial space is important as one that would have been significant in Edith's life, as she grew up in a mill town and both her father and husband ran manufacturing businesses. On the mill grounds there is a converted barn, which is used to host art events, including the series of performance making courses that I attended between August 2016 and April 2018. These courses were run by performance and theatre maker Carran Waterfield, whose performance *The House* was introduced in the performance survey in the Introduction and discussed in 'Chapter Two: Presenting'. The course offered participants the opportunity to 'explore the artistic space, the individual body and the group body within time, space and story.'[214] Sessions consisted of collective improvisational movement and vocal exercises, as well as time to develop our own work, to share with others and receive one-to-one mentoring. Waterfield's experience of using family history in performance was my initial motivation for attending this course and her understanding of many of the issues that I was facing by using my own family history in this research project was invaluable. This positioning of the research within the university adds pressure to make sure that I tell the important stories, the histories that matter, however the word 'important' raises the question, for whom? And when the histories that 'matter' are considered, I wonder by what scale their significance is measured? These were the thoughts that framed my thinking when I arrived for the first time at Heron Corn Mill. Waterfield's course and the supportive fellow students provided a perfect space for experimenting and questioning.

Waterfield invited me to choose a space in the mill grounds to create a performance and the result was *Think Before You Speak*.[215] This was participatory play that took place in

[214] Carran Waterfield, 'Devising your own creative work', flyer (2016).
[215] Kirsty Surgey, *Think Before You Speak,* 25 September 2016 <https://youtu.be/lykAfg4aYtQ> [Uploaded 18 November 2019].

September 2016 and edited film clips that give an impression of this practice need to be watched before proceeding with this chapter: https://youtu.be/lykAfg4aYtQ

As a space for the installation, I chose a metal staircase that connected three floors of the mill. The staircase was entered from the ground floor of the mill, which was in the middle of the squared helix of steps. From ground level it was possible to go up to a loft and down to the lower ground floor. I chose this space as paratext for two qualities. Firstly, the staircase offered the possibility of moving upwards and downwards. The shaping of a family is categorised through lines of descent and the staircase offered opportunities to explore these lines of descent. Secondly, it had the potential to be a very noisy space. The three floors each contain working parts of the machinery of the corn mill and the millstream rushes past outside. These external noises travelled onto the staircase and movement on the staircase generated additional noise. Hitting, stamping or dropping things onto the steps could all be used to make sounds that would resonate through the space. In Edith's letter, she implores her ego to 'Listen and take a turn at being silent'. One of my initial reactions was that rather than choosing to be silent, she chose to tell herself to be silent. This is a decision to be active, rather than passive, and yet to invoke passivity. By choosing the staircase, I was able to explore Edith's decision by choosing a space that could be noisy, but the noise was not necessarily verbal and not necessarily created by me.

I wanted to avoid the direct address architexture that I had used in *The space in-between* and started improvising with the text. Waterfield suggested looking for the physicality in the words, by experimenting with different ways of speaking them. By trying to speak whilst I 'tighten [my] teeth' and 'stretch [my] nostrils', helped me to consider ways of physically restricting speech through enacting Edith's instructions. In a paired improvisation, I found that using movement to perform the words in the letter made me behave passively and shut down my ability to control to action, whereas speaking the words gave me power to control another's behaviour because of the prevalence of command words. I considered how her text might be about the way that women were expected to behave, rather than how she genuinely felt she should behave. The writing feels constructed in a way that lets it be read as creative, as well as autobiography.

Prior to *Think Before You Speak* starting, I directed the audience to join me on the staircase in the mill and I gave them only one instruction, which was that they could not break the performance. The intention of this instruction was that they should feel confident playing in the space as they chose, as I felt that in a previous playful experiment on the course they had been overly cautious about imposing their interpretation on the play. I did not speak or engage with the audience once the play had started. The audience was mostly made up of people who had also been studying Waterfield's course at Heron Corn Mill and had worked with me exploring this text over the previous four weekends. In addition, my mother and husband came to experience the work that I had been making.

Edith's letter is instructional and uses imperative verbs throughout – silence, try, do, stop, listen, remember, think, speak, walk, close. I wrote these verbs and others relevant to this research project on black card using chalk, which I placed on the floor, the steps, the windowsills and anywhere that they could be read. Chalk sticks were placed near these boards. I continued writing new instructions and adding these when the audience had entered the staircase. These were an invitation to the audience to interact, which they did both by commenting orally on the cards and by using the chalk to edit them. They added extra words and changed the verbs into nouns. 'Descend' became 'Descendants'; 'play' became 'playskool'; 'explore' was questioned 'eh?'; 'Think' was turned into 'don't Think'; 'Listen' into 'now Listen here'.

The black chalked cards are reminiscent of schoolroom black boards and shifted the control away from me, as the teacher at the front, to the participants, as students interacting. In classrooms today individual whiteboards are often used as a more democratic way of answering questions. Every student can give an answer and share it on their own whiteboard, rather than individuals answering questions orally. Without intending it, I had moved from one pedagogical method to another. The cards were individual blackboards, which invited the audience's interaction. The audience changed the words and questioned them. They annotated one another's comments. They drew pictures on the cards. The commands were corrupted and challenged. The blackboards became messy and smudged as the audience interacted with them. Edith's letter was a focused instruction to be silent; using the mini blackboards the audience questioned the authority of those commands. If I were re-running this exercise, I would only include

command words from the letter on the blackboards. This would give more clarity to their influence in the hypertext and enable the audience to respond directly to Edith's language.

I wondered what had prompted Edith to write this letter. Was she responding to a specific incident when she felt she had said too much? Had she been told by someone else to speak less? This woman who feels that she should be silent does not entirely fit with the family legend of Edith. It was important to me to question why she was reported to be a domineering woman who pushed her husband into politics. In his introduction, my grandfather wrote 'She was a political animal when women had no political rights'.[216] Yet, there were women of her generation and from the same region who gained political rights by fighting for political representation. Margaret Ashton was two years older than Edith and took her seat on Manchester City Council in 1908.[217] In 1910 Edith's husband as a Member of Parliament in Manchester supported Ashton at a demonstration regarding the Women's Suffrage Conciliation Bill.[218] This was an era when women were starting to have their voices heard politically and Edith was in a comfortable position to make something from this. Her only attempt to speak out publicly seems to have been by adapting Disraeli's novel *Tancred* for the London stage, which she did using a pseudonym. Otherwise, from what I have found, she did not make use of the avenues available to voice her politics publicly. Regardless, she has been mythologized within the family as a political force. This influenced, as a metatext, the way that I read the diary, as I looked for signs of her politics, and more significantly raised the question as to why this story had been passed on through oral testimony. Was her political interest mistaken for political ambition or has this ambition been written out of documented accounts, only to survive in the remembrances of those who once knew her? Did she restrain herself from writing about her own political activity in her diary? Was this reputation exaggerated because she was a woman? Is this emphasis rooted in admiration or disdain?

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[216] James Justin Harvey-Kelly, 'Grandmère', in *The Diary of E. M. Nuttall from 1898 to 1936* (1997), p. 4.
[217] Peter D. Mohr, 'Ashton, Margaret (1856–1937), local politician and philanthropist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-38511> [Accessed 12 November 2019].
[218] 'Demonstrations in support of the Bill', *Votes for Women,* 24 June 1910, p. 626 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002187/19100624/008/0002>, [Accessed 11 November 2019], p. 626.

The letter 'To My Ego' suggests that she was aware of criticism and that she may have believed herself to be too vocal. However, it feels like a writing exercise, an experiment. As though she is playing with a critical opinion, as I am now playing with the letter. Whilst she is instructing her ego, to be silent, she is enjoying using words to do so. I believe the fact that this letter follows immediately after her fledgling success as a playwright to be an indicator that this may have been as much of a creative writing exercise as a true expression of sentiment. Perhaps she is starting to perceive herself as a writer and is indulging in experimentation by exploring the fashionable concept of the ego. It is impossible to know whether the letter 'To My Ego' was intended to be ironic, comical or a serious rebuke. Bringing this text into creative practice-research was an opportunity to experiment with these possible intentions.

When developing ideas, I tried speaking the letter on the stairs experimenting with different tones and expression. As a whole intertext, whatever tone I used, this play fell back into lecture mode architextually, so I started fragmenting the text. By picking sections and repeating phrases, I could break the role of the performer as expert relaying information. This experimentation led me to make an audio recording of myself reading the letter in full and in fragments. I layered and copied these audio tracks to create a new audio intertext that I could insert into the performance. It is possible to listen to this recording online.[219] The letter as a hypotext was transformed into a complete intertext. This intertext included all the words from the letter but made the hypotext unrecognisable. Some of the vocal tracks are the letter spoken in full, but these are persistently interrupted by other vocal lines, which repeat individual words or phrases. The layered recording is chaotic and creates the effect of being chastised by many voices. The repetition emphasises the impression of rebuke in the letter. By recording all the vocal lines myself, I was pushing into the idea of the ego. Despite not speaking to the audience during *Think Before You Speak,* I had potentially magnified my own voice. However, when I played the audio recording on a loop from speakers at the bottom of the stairwell, these were not powerful enough and the sound was lost, drowned out by the noise of the participants. This letter as hypotext was central to the thinking behind this

[219] Kirsty Surgey, 'Think Before You Speak' <https://soundcloud.com/kib100-403858040/think-before-you-speak/s-EYjzM> [Uploaded 13 November 2019].

hypertext, but as an intertext the audio interpretation had little impact on *Think before You Speak*.

Making *Think Before You Speak*, I was concerned about my ego driving this research to create public performances of my family history and as a result created a piece in which both my own and Edith's egos were subsumed in the play of the audience. This was unsatisfactory as a way of conveying the hypotext but pleasing in the way that it broke my need to talk directly to the audience and enabled me to relinquish some control. It was personally very satisfactory as a way of exploring the themes of the hypotext of being told how to behave and of not speaking one's own thoughts as a woman. The audience were able to respond to these ideas because they had been part of the process of making. Those who had not been part of the process felt less able to engage with the material, even though as family members they were more closely connected genealogically to it.

Dressing the paratext

Loosely, into short tubes of pink fabric, I had sewed buttons so that they could generate noise. During *Think Before You Speak*, I tied these to the stair rails. Using long pieces of different coloured fabric I dressed the stairs, by tying the fabric to the rails and dropping them through the stairwell so that they draped through the space. The audience untied and reorganised these. Sometimes wearing them as clothes, sometimes pulling and twisting them in different directions. As the performance drew to a close, I untied the fabric and let these all fall to the bottom of the stairwell.

The intention of using the fabric to dress the space was to transform it temporarily by softening the metal structure and creating a more feminized space, before returning it to a harder, more masculine space. Edith and her diary were out-of-place in industrial space, despite being connected to such spaces as the source of her prosperity. By dressing the staircase in the fabric, I attempted to make Edith's diary fit in this place, before acknowledging their incongruity and removing them. Dropping the fabric to the floor created a spectacle that shouted without requiring words; it was an attempt to make their disappearance striking. The temporary installation of the fabric was a response to the fleeting nature of speech. 'To My Ego' is a text that emphasises being verbally silent, of

stopping 'monkey chatter' and 'interminable details', whilst this play with fabric was a way of making a statement without words.

This work with fabric had started in an exercise led by Waterfield on the performance-making course in which we had to make ourselves disappear, in order to make other elements of the performance become more visible. I made a rose out of gold fabric, I sat nearby and watched the rose arranged on the floor. When I tried to pass this rose to other people it disappeared, as it unravelled into nothing. This idea of the performance as something that changes in the hands of the audience was useful for considering what happens to family history when shared in performance. Through this research I was seeking to share my stories and to be the storyteller, but I worried about losing control of the story. The many pieces of fabric suggested the many stories of family history, whilst leaving the content of those stories unknown. The spectacle of the fabric showed the potential of those stories to be passed between people and its disappearance suggested their transience.

Waterfield commented on the gendering of the colours I had picked and wondered about the significance. The rattling button ribbons were pink, whilst I had tied a blue ribbon around my waist. The strips of pink fabric containing buttons created intrigue, with one audience participant exclaiming that they contained bones and trying to show this to others. The noise that they made was minimal, but audience members sought to make more noise from them by pulling them through the rails. To hear their noise, it was necessary to pay attention. The pink ribbons were removed by the audience who played with them and made them part of their own playful story worlds by turning them into headwear and tying them together. I wore the blue ribbon and I was responsible for the experience of everyone involved in this hypertext. A symbolic reading could be that the feminine colour was manipulated by the audience, whilst the masculine colour was kept separate and was worn by the overseer of the project. The interpretation of the colours as symbolic by the audience means that the ribbons were understood as intertexts contributing meaning to *Think Before You Speak*. In the diary, Edith writes to herself, hoping her family will read it later, but the social context of the patriarchal society means that she is expected to listen rather than contribute. The attempt to make noise with the pink ribbons is thwarted by the noise of the space and the audience. I did not pick these

particular colours as gendered, simply as bright colours, but it was an important reminder that every decision can be viewed textually by the audience.

Wearing bright red lipstick in *Think Before You Speak*, I drew attention to my non-speaking mouth. The stiletto heels tapped on the metal steps. Both were out-of-place in the space of the industrial mill stairs. There is a picture of Edith in Roy Jenkins' autobiography of Herbert Asquith. She is standing in Whitehall next to Lloyd George wearing a hat with a magnificent ostrich feather and what appears to be two fox furs. The photograph is included here as Figure 3.2. She is not named in the caption in Jenkins' book, which states simply, 'Lloyd George watches the scene'.[220] This is the attire of a woman who likes to be noticed, but whose name is not recorded for posterity with the photograph. This woman, who had influential friends and who was concerned she was speaking too much, is not acknowledged as existing in this photograph. This work was about reclaiming a space for Edith in a historical hypertext, so I have re-captioned the photograph for its inclusion here.

[220] Roy Jenkins, *Asquith* (London: Collins, 1964), opposite p. 160; identified and location given by J. J. Harvey-Kelly, 1997.

Figure 3.2

Edith Nuttall watches the scene

Photograph by W.G. Phillips via Getty Images

Edith was writing from a position of privilege, but her letter indicates that was still finding herself to be shut down. I wanted her to be a feminist and a radical. Instead I found a woman who wanted her sons to be great statesmen (24 October, 1903) and who trusts her daughters 'will always be on the true woman's side, a side which ever stands up for righteousness and unselfish dealing' (1 June, 1902). So, perhaps, my perception of a lack of politics is my fault for hoping to find one kind of politics, when there is another, less dramatic and more conventional, here to discover. Bringing the diary into play within the paratext of Heron Corn Mill and Waterfield's course helped me to find a family history that revealed Edith's uncertainty and anxiety. This challenged the one-dimensional mythology of a woman determined to have a political role and raised questions about the attitudes held by and towards women in the period when the diary was written. 'To My Ego' indicated the complexity of her political and personal attitudes, as a woman who did speak, who wanted to speak out, but also felt that she spoke too much. By using it as a hypotext, I was able to reflect on it in the light of her reputation within the family, critique how unjust this representation might be, whilst experimenting with an alternative reading of the letter that might reveal it to have been written ironically.

Conclusion

The list of questions at the start of this chapter helped me to break open the diary and discover the complexity of the woman who wrote it within her historical context. The breadth of these, which covered the contents of the diary, my own working methods, and the ethics of this work, and ranged from generic questions about the use of diaries to specific ones about Edith and myself, meant that I addressed my own uncertainty at this stage of the project, within the overarching thesis question of how a family history performance can be understood transtextually. *Think Before You Speak* became an open-ended experiment distinct from the more architextually formal practice of the other chapters, which enabled me to interrogate my own personal response, as well as the politics of family history and the attitudes of Edith Nuttall.

Experimenting with Edith's diary as a hypotext, rather than using it as intertext enabled me to dig into the words and the context on a personal level. The hypotext must be transformed in its relationship with the hypertext; in *Think Before You Speak* this transformation took the form of deconstructing and re-making the ideas of the hypotext.

I conflated the conflict of my own ego alongside Edith's and explored how our worries might be comparable as well as different. Perhaps there are more valuable stories to tell than Edith's, but it is her story that I have in my family history, her writing that can be analysed and which reveals interesting social history. By dismantling the diary as a hypotext, I had more freedom to play with what it could tell me about my family history. It did not offer the authenticity that the objects as intertexts did when 'presented' in *The space in-between*, instead it became a source from which play could be generated leading to the formulation of a response.

Familiarity with the European historical extratext made it difficult to read the diary without being aware of what was coming in the second decade of the twentieth century, especially when Edith expresses her ambition and excitement about what might become of her sons. Both of her sons fought in the First World War and although her youngest did return, her eldest, Norbury, was killed at Poperinge in Belgium in 1917. This loss is a familiar story to people researching British and northern European family histories, but the war also affected the career of Edith's daughter. Medical schools took on increasing numbers of female students to provide revenue whilst the men were away at war[221] and Sybil trained to be a doctor, qualifying in 1920. This story of women's education is a less familiar extratext than the soldier's experience of war, although the progress of the women's suffrage after the First World War is often related to the new roles and responsibilities that women took in those years. Sybil's father, Harry, as a Member of Parliament, seconded an amendment that would put pressure on the universities of Oxford and Cambridge to grant degrees to women by limiting their role as voting constituencies until they would offer women the same qualifications as men.[222] This suggests that he valued women's voices and their education. Harry's public actions were complemented by personal comments that Edith makes about her daughter. She praised Sybil's cleverness several times in the diary and in 1919 described her as being 'splendid in her work of medical student'. Reading Edith's diary in search of her support for the extratext of the fight for female suffrage, I failed. Instead I found a more intimate story of

[221] Neil McIntyre, *How British Women Became Doctors: The Story of the Royal Free Hospital and its Medical School* (UK: Wenrowave Press, 2014), pp. 210-11, 213.
[222] House of Commons, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: The Official Report* (29 November 1917, vol. 99, cols 2411-12) < https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1917/nov/29/redistribution-of-seats#S5CV0099P0_19171129_HOC_873> [accessed 12 November 2019].

women's history than the public narrative of women being either campaigners for, or passively against, women's suffrage. Edith was clearly taking pride in her daughters' education and showed a relentless desire to continue her own learning. Although I have not traced her schooling, she hints that she was separated from her sisters for education, implying that they were sent away to school (28 March 1903). Edith's diary reveals that she read widely; she offers quotations from her reading frequently. In addition, she continues with self-directed educational projects, including translating a Welsh hymn (November 1909). In 'To My Ego', whilst listing her faults she admits (with slight pride I feel) the useful skill for acquiring knowledge having 'a fairly good memory'.[223] Despite this self-improving endeavour, 'To My Ego' demonstrates the difficulty of speaking out and speaking up at this time even for an educated, well-connected woman. It shows how a woman who may have been outspoken in her family felt constrained by society.

I did not have the original diary to use as an intertext and I chose not to use the printed copy in this manner. Instead I sought to transform 'To My Ego' from hypotext to hypertext and to make new intertexts from this hypotext. I tried to ask questions about the voice of the woman who wrote the words, but whose speech is lost. *Think Before You Speak* did not tell Edith's story, but it explored the resonances and dissonances between Edith's diary, her letter 'To My Ego', her reputation in the family and my expectations for a politically active woman of this period. Through the audience's playful critique of the commands, they challenged the authority that sought to contain their actions or Edith's voice. The noise of the participants, which drowned out the intertext made from the letter, asserted their power to speak as they wished. In *Think Before You Speak*, the audience pushed at the edges of the piece and tried to find their own meaning within it, by appropriating the fabric and re-writing the cards. I found that by facilitating the audience's activity in such an open manner the story was subsumed and other interpretations were introduced. I needed this interaction from the audience to make the piece and as they challenged the stimulus, I was continuing to question the hypotext; their participation helped me to find the responses to the questions that I have written about in this chapter. As a hypotext its structure and form was transformed beyond recognition

[223] Appendix 3.1.

in this hypertext, but its ideas and my response to the themes of family history permeated the experience.

Chapter Four: Remembering

Introduction

My great-grandmothers' generation lived within my memory but stretches back more than one hundred years. This chapter examines a performance hypertext that I made in 2017 by playing with different types of information and memory relating to my great-grandmothers. It is titled *Four Great Grandmothers* and it presented the lives of these women through data and my recollection. Alison Light describes how family historians can be 'speed freaks' who 'work backwards, accelerating wildly across generations'.[224] Using online databases and websites enables me to sit at my desk skipping easily from life to life. The data accrued in this way is predominantly public records of births, marriages and deaths. It offers only limited context in the form of locations and names. Presented with this hypotextual material, I was struggling to find interesting ways to communicate it to an audience. Alongside the database browsing, I was interviewing my grandmother and learning about her childhood and her memories of family. The stories that she shared were often supported by props including photographs and old textbooks; one story flows into another. The conversation is unrestrained, like the database chase, and the memories that I heard were rarely what I expected. Memories and database trawls could both turn up unexpected results and they provided very different hypotextual material; the challenge that I set myself for this chapter was to bring these into play with one another.

In the hypertext *Four Great Grandmothers* I explore my personal memory of the only great-grandparent that I met and the data that I have been able to extract from archives of the lives of all four of my great-grandmothers. The textual element that forms the central analysis in this chapter is the architext, which, as understood in this project, is built from elements of form, such as narrative strategies and performance devices. Whereas the concept of form is general, the architext is specific to each piece. The analysis of my own practice is undertaken alongside performances with which it shares elements of form and content. Genette suggested that, 'the study of transformations implies the examination, and thus the taking into account, of continuities'.[225] The process of practice-research from family history means that there are new creative performances being

[224] Alison Light, *Common People: The History of an English Family* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 17.
[225] Gérard Genette, *The Architext: An Introduction,* trans by Jane E. Lewin (California: University of California Press, 1992) (first publ. as *Introduction à l'architexte*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1979), p. 79.

made, but these make use of existing forms and materials, the inquiry in this chapter is into how these architextual elements are re-assembled in order to reveal how different types of memory can form parts of family histories.

This chapter concentrates on the process of remembering and is informed by researchers in the field of memory studies, in particular Aleida Assmann, who has proposed 'two modes of memory': 'storage memory' and 'functional memory'.[226] Whilst functional memory is active, 'highly selective' and contingent in the present, storage memory is hidden and archival.[227] Functional memory draws from storage memory, which 'can form a stabilizing or corrective framework for these functional operations'.[228] She argued that these modes of memory are reflexive: 'Functional memory cut off from the historical archive degenerates into fantasy, whereas the archive cut off from practical use and interest remains a mass of meaningless information.'[229] The practice of this chapter brings these two forms of memory into play with one another, by drawing on my personal memory of one great grandmother and the archival memories of all four of my great grandmothers. This play places these threads of memory in parallel and by doing so makes them both 'functional'. Assmann described storage memory as 'the "amorphous mass" of unused and unincorporated memories that surround the functional memory like a halo.'[230] (Emphasis in original). *Four Great Grandmothers* was an attempt to contain and control some of that 'amorphous mass', by connecting it to a single experiential memory.

This chapter starts by examining how I brought a personal narrative into my play with family history, reflecting on the impact of repeating memories for performance, keeping the memories in play, and exploring the concept of family memory as understood by Astrid Erll, following Maurice Halbwachs, Deirdre Heddon and Lemn Sissay and spatial memory from Gaston Bachelard. In this first section, I consider the way that the architexture of autobiography is incorporated into performance work ostensibly about other topics: new technology in La Messe Basse's *Siri,* and a grandfather's journey in Third Angel's *Cape Wrath.* The second section of the chapter discusses the use of lists in Yinka

[226] Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives,* Reprint edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 123-24.
[227] Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization,* p. 125.
[228] Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization,* p. 126.
[229] Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization,* p. 132.
[230] Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization,* p. 125.

Kuitenbrouwer's performance *One Hundred Homes* and how I adapted this strategy into the architexture of *Four Great Grandmothers.* This section considers how this transference of storage memory into a functional mode produces connections and, alongside Erll and Assmann, draws on the research of Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen. The final section of the chapter explores the way that the two strands within the performance impact upon one another and the construction of auto/biographies using these methods is considered in the light of theories proposed by Norman K. Denzin, Jerome de Groot and Deirdre Heddon.

Architexture: Bringing in the personal narrative

At this point in the practice-research process, I chose to play with autobiographical narrative alongside my family history research and, thus, *Four Great Grandmothers* combines data-driven biographies with my personal recollection. The intention is to make clear my personal connection to this past. The performance makers Laurence Dauphinais and Maxime Carbonneau of La Messe Basse made a similar decision for their piece *Siri.*[231] When I interviewed Dauphinais, she explained that the family history narrative was included alongside the exploration of the machine learning capabilities of the Apple iPhone's virtual assistant Siri, because early audiences found it difficult to connect without a personal narrative. She described how in the initial versions of the performance, she and Carbonneau had focused on her interaction with Siri. The audience reacted to this by saying, in Dauphinais' words, 'We ended up knowing Siri quite well, but then everyone was like well what about you?' The audience were interested in the technology, but they wanted to know more about the human protagonist. As a result of this response to *Siri*, they incorporated the story about Dauphinais' DNA test. This enabled them to explore the 'programming' of Siri in relation to the role that DNA plays in our, and specifically Dauphinais', 'programming'.[232] The coexistence of these two narrative hypotexts means that the audience can connect to the performer and gain insight into her perspective. By threading my personal memory of one great-grandmother through *Four Great Grandmothers*, I was seeking to contain my research about the four great-grandmothers and communicate it in relation to myself. The audience are given the life histories of four

[231] La Messe Basse, *Siri,* written by Laurence Dauphinais, Maxime Carbonneau and Siri, performed by Laurence Dauphinais, directed by Maxime Carbonneau, King's Hall, Canada Hub, Edinburgh, 08 August 2017.
[232] Interview with Laurence Dauphinais, conducted by Kirsty Surgey via Skype, 19 March 2019.

women who are distant in both space and time, but personal storytelling is used to link directly to myself as performer embracing the potential of the live performance experience.

Four Great Grandmothers was a spoken word hypertext using direct address. I performed *Four Great Grandmothers* at a 'Show & Tell' practice-as-research event at the University of Sheffield in April 2017 and in a shorter form as a 'Turbo talk' at the Memory Studies Association Conference in Copenhagen in December 2017.[233] The script of *Four Great Grandmothers* can be read in Appendix 4.1 and, before continuing to read, this short film documenting the performance in Sheffield needs to be watched:
https://youtu.be/MteERmIv72A

The autobiographical thread in *Four Great Grandmothers* is reminiscence about visiting my great-grandmother in her house in northern Cumbria. In Appendix 4.1, it is indicated in blue text. The text of this personal memory is imprecise. As I delivered it, I embellished and I forgot. In play the exact words for the personal memory in *Four Great Grandmothers* were never fixed. Details are added or taken away with each iteration, but the structure of three things provided memory pegs for the text. Firstly, there is a memory of being very small in a house with lots of adults, secondly there is the wooden snowman and thirdly I recall my great-grandmother's staircase. I had practised and had an idea of what I would say, but I deliberately avoided fixing the words. This offered a contrast to the rigid structure of the fact-driven lists that interrupted this personal narrative and was intended to make the personal memory more natural and conversational. It served to make the memory more tangible, as coming up with the words newly every time required me to visualise what I was saying. In a shortened version of this performance for the Memory Studies Association Conference in 2017, due to time constraints, I could only include one part of the memory.[234] In an attempt to retain the playfulness, I did not select beforehand which part this would be, but instead I decided when I reached that moment in the presentation; I chose the staircase. This meant that the act of recollection in the performance was more active, than the recall of the dates, names and places. Where I

[233] Kirsty Surgey, *Four Great Grandmothers,* 20 April 2017 <https://youtu.be/MteERmIv72A> [Uploaded 18 December 2019].
[234] Kirsty Surgey, 'Negotiating personal memories in public: Performing family histories', turbo talk, Memory Studies Association Conference, University of Copenhagen, 16 December 2017.

learnt the lines by rote, they were less emotionally affective; this is partly because of the content, but partly a result of the method of presentation. The memory of the visit to my great-grandmother's house became more concrete through the play of inconsistent repetition.

Astrid Erll identifies the significance of the family to Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory, which he developed in the 1920s and 30s.[235] In contrast to the popular psychoanalytical theories of the time, which emphasized the memory as individual and inward-looking, Halbwachs suggested that memory was generated through shared experiences and communication.[236] He described *cadres sociaux*, translated by Erll as 'social frameworks', which help us to remember and understand our memories.[237] Erll suggests that families are a central social framework, especially for very early, formative childhood memories; she quotes Halbwachs saying, '"Our kin communicate to us our first notions about people and things"'.[238] It is through the people who nurture us that we gain a perspective of the world. The personal memory that I am recalling here is of my great grandmother, who was born at the end of the nineteenth century. She was the oldest family member that I met. I reach for my memory of her, which stretches my experience across three centuries. When I talk about four great grandmothers, two of them are abstract, I never met them or visited their homes. The remaining two are associated with places, which gives them a more concrete weighting in my memory. One is associated with her garden, which I visited after her death, and the other with her staircase. The places have more resonance in my memory than the women; the women are fixed through photographs that I have seen subsequently, whilst the house and garden impress as experiences. When I treat my memory as hypotext, it necessarily formalises it; the fleeting ideas of a house, of people, of a wooden staircase and a snowman that I had before I started working this into a hypertext have been held down and made solid.

Gaston Bachelard suggests that 'the more securely [memories] are fixed in space, the sounder they are'.[239] These memories of things, thoughts and actions are as close to my

[235] Astrid Erll, 'Locating Family in Cultural Memory Studies', *Journal of Comparative Studies,* 42:3 (May/June 2011) 303-318 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41604447> [Accessed 04 July 2017], pp. 304-06.
[236] Erll, 'Locating Family in Cultural Memory Studies', p. 304.
[237] Erll, 'Locating Family in Cultural Memory Studies', p. 305.
[238] Erll, 'Locating Family in Cultural Memory Studies', p. 305.
[239] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas, 2nd edn (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1994), p. 9.

great-grandmother as I can reach. It is by locating them in my great-grandmother's house and specifically on her stairs that this memory has been formed. The stepladder was important for invoking the memory of my great-grandmother's staircase. It was also a continuation of the ideas about ascending and descending initiated in *Think Before You Speak.* Like the staircase that I recall from my childhood at my great grandmother's house and the one at Heron Corn Mill, this ladder has individual suspended steps with gaps between each one. It provided a visual connection with the most visceral memory in my hypotext. Writing about staircases in houses, Bachelard observes that we associate particular staircases with specific ideas. The cellar staircase is always about descent, the attic staircases, ascent, whilst those in between can be either.[240] The staircase in Heron Corn Mill, which was accessible from the middle offered the options of either ascent or descent. The staircase in the bungalow is associated for me with a fear of climbing upwards. The slightly wobbly ladder echoes this. There is little risk of injury from falling, as there was little risk of falling through the staircase, but there is an evocation of it. Ladders, like the staircase to the attic, I believe are associated with ideas of climbing rather than descending. In climbing, I am reaching for the family archives hidden away in attics and for further branches of the family tree.

The poet Lemn Sissay describes family as 'a set of disputed memories between one group of people over a lifetime'.[241] This misremembering strengthens the collective, by finding common ground that separates the family from the rest of the world through its uniquely 'disputed' vantage point. The time taken to share and argue about these memories is time spent consolidating relationships. This definition, which places dissent centrally within family life, reveals the value of being able to question and challenge one another comfortably. Deirdre Heddon proposes perceiving memory as 'one of genealogy's documents'.[242] Following Michel Foucault, she suggests that the imprecision of these family memories and its associated 'forgetting' can be 'productive' for performance makers.[243] Memories are valuable as resources for the family historian and one of the first steps in researching family history is to talk to older members of the family. They provide

[240] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, pp. 25-26.
[241] Lemn Sissay, 'Art saves lives' <https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/news/art-saves-lives-says-lemn-sissay>, 26 August 2019 [Accessed 9 December 2019].
[242] Deirdre Heddon, *Autobiography and Performance* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), p. 62.
[243] Heddon, *Autobiography and Performance,* pp. 62-63.

perspective, they have the potential to provide richness of description and, as Heddon suggests, memory can have an unsettling effect on an extratext that is presumed to be stable.[244] It is perspective and rich description that may affect the accuracy of a family history. The perspective is always that of the individual and the detail of the description may muddle different events or be embellished to help with storytelling.

This question of the accuracy of family memory is raised by Alexander Kelly, writing about *Cape Wrath.* He describes the 'Family myth-making' that has settled on a particular version of his grandfather's journey to Cape Wrath.[245] Kelly's mother tells the same story – it is the one that they both remember being told – but they realise that this particular journey is not possible. Kelly suggests that his grandfather 'understood […] the value of a couple of tweaks and a bit of editing in the service of good storytelling. After all, this is the version I remembered'.[246] Kelly's grandfather's story has been honed in familial retellings, but this functional family memory was challenged when research into storage memory began to create the new hypertext of *Cape Wrath*. The thinking required to shape a memory for public consumption meant that axioms were challenged. Looking at the map, Kelly realises that the story his grandfather told of being left by the postman and picked up on his return is not practical, as there is nowhere for the postman to go beyond Cape Wrath. Reading his grandfather's diary, he finds a more accurate account of the journey. As a story passes through the generations, the exaggeration may become greater, but re-purposing as a hypotext for public consumption provides an opportunity for the layers of myth to be peeled back. *Cape Wrath* puts these different hypotexts – the remembered story and the diary version – into play and enables a commentary on the relative values of good storytelling, accuracy and being truthful. The audience share the pleasure of the remembered story and the discovery of the truth because both are shared as hypotexts. In *Cape Wrath* the architext of biography is complemented by autobiography, which reveals, and takes pleasure in, the instability of both forms.

[244] Heddon, *Autobiography and Performance,* p. 62.
[245] Alexander Kelly, 'Cheers Grandad! Third Angel's *Cape Wrath* and *The Lad Lit Project* as Acts of Remembrance', in *Staging Loss: Performance as Commemoration,* ed. by Michael Pinchbeck and Andrew Westerside (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 129-44 (pp. 140-41).
[246] Kelly, 'Cheers Grandad!', p. 143.

Following Halbwachs, Erll suggests that family memory is often 'condensed', as memories are shared repeatedly and refined through retelling, in order to support a particular familial identity.[247] Making use of my memory for *Four Great Grandmothers* involved several retellings: retelling in the family social framework, to ask for clarifications and seek further details; retelling alone with a voice recorder in preparation for the public retelling in order to structure the narrative; finally, the public hypertext is a retelling in a different social framework consisting of friends and university colleagues. Erll's 'condensing' is intensified through performance. The memory that I retell as part of the performance becomes refined, details included are part memory, part imagination in order to engage the audience. I remember being the smallest person there, but the image of seeing a lot of knees was something that I added to convey this visually. Now that it is added, I picture this as part of the memory, I find it difficult to extricate and have partially convinced myself that I remember this. The truthfulness of the memory has been compromised by embellishments made for the purposes of storytelling.

There is detail in my personal memory that is uncertain. The second part of this recounted memory was playing with a wooden snowman. However, the integrity of this memory is compromised by the fact that I now own the snowman in question. Assmann describes memory as having a 'foreground/background structure' in which functional memory draws from storage memory.[248] The storage memory that I have utilised for this image is multiple. I remember playing with this at my great-grandmother's house, I also recall it being an ornament upstairs at my grandmother's house and, right now, I can picture it sitting on a bookshelf in my home. The memory of playing with the snowman as a small child at my great-grandmother's house is enhanced with detailed description of the ornament from more recent and contiguous memory. When describing the snowman, it was impossible for me to distinguish the distant memory from the recent memory. Like family memory, the distinctiveness of the snowman is unreliable and enhanced because it is formed over time.

My memory in *Four Great Grandmothers* is my own, but when I researched my great-grandmother's life and realised that she had passed away when I was three, I was able to

[247] Erll, 'Locating Family in Cultural Memory Studies', pp. 306-07.
[248] Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization,* p. 126.

start making sense of the story differently. This provided me with a precise vantage point. In addition, I was able to clarify the memory by speaking to my grandmother in order to reassure myself that the house I knew to be a bungalow had stairs.[249] Erll explains that the family is just one of Halbwachs' social frameworks and that his theory recognises that memory is individual, as well as collective, as everyone has a unique combination of social networks through which memory is understood.[250] Thus, collective memories are tailored by our unique familial and social experiences. This memory that I have chosen as a hypotext has become a more solid entity through its incorporation into the hypertext. As in *Cape Wrath,* despite the inconsistency of the memory, the retelling of the story has honed it into a structured shape to be shared and, although it is unreliable in terms of truth, the architext of autobiography provides a personal connection to the family history recounted.

Architexture: Lists to share storage memory

Researching family histories can provide an ever expanding source of material. The image of the line is ubiquitous in family history, but the line is constantly dividing and breaking. Every individual on that tree has the potential to provide information that can be incorporated into the hypertext, but to include them all would overwhelm. I was still wrestling with the problem of which lines to follow and on which ancestors to focus, when I saw Yinka Kuitenbrouwer's *One Hundred Homes* in Edinburgh in 2016. Kuitenbrouwer explains, in a short film about this performance, that, having moved from the Netherlands to Belgium initially to study, she found that she felt more at home in Belgium. This led her to investigate what the concept of home means to a wide variety of people. She talked to people living in more than one hundred different homes and catalogued the discussions that she had, which she then shares in the performance.[251] Using various devices, including lists, a timer, cards and photographs indexed in a box, Kuitenbrouwer structured and controlled the numerous stories and ideas that might otherwise have become unwieldy. At the start of *One Hundred Homes,* Kuitenbrouwer was seated at a table facing the audience and set a timer for forty-five minutes. The performance opened with a recital of a list of the first names of all the people that she had visited. The

[249] Interview with Paddy Nichol, 12 March 2017.
[250] Erll, 'Locating Family in Cultural Memory Studies', pp. 305-06.
[251] Arts News, 'Yinka Kuitenbrouwer: One Hundred Homes', August 2016 <https://vimeo.com/178343008> [Accessed 18 December 2019].

organisation of this material using lists was one that Kuitenbrouwer returned to throughout the performance. She states in the promotional film that the people she interviewed were 'very different, but in the end they all come together and they all have things in common so to show that I made lists'.[252] These lists included details about the food that she was fed, for example the number of cooked meals, as well as information about the types of building, such as the number of houses and the number of apartments. The long inventories were delivered at a fast pace without pauses, which created moments of tension, as we, in the audience, waited to see if she would succeed in this act of recall. The stories became data, which when shared together in a list reduced differences and revealed commonalities. By quantifying her experiences in this way, she formalised the personal narratives so that they became part of a collective. I felt that these lists had potential to contain and control my mass of family history material for performance and so I decided to experiment with this technique alongside the autobiographical narrative to build the architexture of the hypertext that became *Four Great Grandmothers*.

By titling this hypertext *Four Great Grandmothers,* as Kuitenbrouwer did with *One Hundred Homes,* I drew attention to the quantifiable thread of the information shared. The alternative title idea was 'My great grandmothers'. This paratextual change would emphasise the personal narrative. The substitution of the possessive pronoun for the number would have drawn attention to my story over the concept of a measurable family history. As mentioned in 'Chapter One: Methodology', paratextual elements can have a disproportionate impact, as they guide the audience's initial and enduring responses.[253] A title has a heavier weighting than other individual lines of text and steers the interpretation of the hypertext as a whole. Nevertheless, the paratextual generality is undercut by the opening line, which is the statement: 'One of my earliest memories is of visiting my great grandmother.'[254] This is an indicator that the hypertext is a personal story, as well as family history.

[252] Arts News, 'Yinka Kuitenbrouwer: One Hundred Homes', August 2016 <https://vimeo.com/178343008> [Accessed 18 December 2019].
[253] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 3.
[254] Appendix 4.1.

As I am concentrating on only four women, my great-grandmothers, the lists are much shorter than those of *One Hundred Homes.* They contain the type of details available to family historians from documentary archives: the facts of births, marriages and deaths. This thread is indicated in orange in Appendix 4.1. The four women are grouped together as a collective, although they did not all meet one another, and are only related to each other now through my brother and myself. Restricting the data to the four great grandmothers, rather than trying to include all the ancestors about whom I have information, enables generational correspondence to become clear. They lived their lives in imperfect parallels of one another and this is revealed through the inventory technique which is similar, though much more compact, to that used by Kuitenbrouwer. They were 'born in 1890, 1891, 1893 and 1902' and married in '1915, 1922, 1925 and 1926'. These lists of dates place these women in a historical timeline. No specific details are connected to individual women except at the very start and the end when Gladys Matthews is linked into the alternative, personal narrative as the great-grandmother that I met. When I did not know a detail about one great-grandmother, I chose not to include this fact for any of them. For example, I know the work that three of my great-grandmothers undertook, but I do not know if Ethel Nichol was ever employed in paid labour. Therefore, work is not mentioned. Information about work or their leisure time would have started to give a more rounded sense of character and might have suggested something about their personalities. The decision to restrict the information to facts verifiable using the publicly available documents resulted in a very generalised, virtually anonymous, picture of the four women.

In the United States in the early 1990s, historians Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen undertook a survey of Americans' attitudes towards the past. They reached the conclusion that, 'Almost every American deeply engages the past, and the past that engages them most deeply is that of their family.'[255] This observation places family history at the centre of this sample's concept of the past and what Rosenzweig and Thelen call 'popular historymaking'.[256] This term is used by the researchers to describe the processes through which people gain their understanding of the past and emphasises the activity involved

[255] Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 22.
[256] Rosenzweig and Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 3.

in those processes. By bringing these dates from storage memory into the performance hypertext, I was turning them into functional memory and associating myself through my family with particular moments in history. If the audience are engaged in 'popular historymaking' then they might connect these dates to their own family history or the wider historical extratext. In their survey Rosenzweig and Thelen found that when asked about an event or period that had most affected them, nearly forty percent gave 'a purely personal' example and most of those that selected a national event picked one with a family connection.[257] If this is true of the twenty-first century audience, then they are likely to be looking for connections to their own history within the scope of my great grandmothers' lives.

As I gathered data about these women, I became conscious of their having lived through a tumultuous period of twentieth century British and Irish history. These were women born towards the end of the Victorian era (except for one just after it) and married in the shadow of the First World War (in one case during it). Their children were becoming adults around the time of the Second World War. In text that I devised, I deliberately avoided referring to historical events, although I have located them geographically, which points to a particular record of history in England and Ireland. The performances of this hypertext took place in 2017, amidst an ongoing series of events to commemorate centenaries of events in the First World War, which may have made connections to these events more obvious and more likely to resonate in the hypertext.

However, this is a limited view of history. The suggestion that the audience might think of the First World War and the Victorian era draws attention to aspects that may not have been the most meaningful to my great grandmothers' lives; the Irish War of Independence and subsequent establishment of the Irish Free State is likely to have had at least as much impact on the two women who lived in Ireland. For me, these events did not immediately resonate with the data-driven hypotext. Having brought this storage memory into functional mode, I found this absence in my family memory unnerving and I realised how little I knew about my great grandmothers' lives. For example, I had not considered that my great-grandmother, born in Manchester and trained to be a doctor in London, moved,

[257] Rosenzweig and Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 22.

sometime between the birth of her first son in 1924 in London and 1927 when my grandfather was born, to the newly established Irish Free State. This must have been a frightening time to make this move and, as the wife of an Irish Major in the British Indian Army serving in Afghanistan, the risk she was taking with her young family would have been magnified. However, I do not recall this ever being discussed when my grandfather talked about family history. Playing with family history provided me with the impetus for exploring a less familiar extratext. Adapting the strategy of listing into the architexture of *Four Great Grandmothers* directly transferred storage memory into a functional mode, emphasising its potential to draw out comparisons and distinctions.

Architexture: Playing with functional and storage modes of memory

Dauphinais suggested that telling her autobiographical story of a donor conception together with Siri's genesis led to an audience perception that, in her words, 'I am looking for an unknown father. That I'm trying to fill the void, which is not true, but it can be an interpretation and I totally understand that. We play with that as well.'[258] Dauphinais accepts this as a possible interpretation and sees it as an opportunity, something to 'play with'. She understands that by bringing different texts together in performance the audience may see connections that she does not and that this has potential that they can exploit as performance makers. This juxtaposition affects the way that the stories are understood. In a similar way, in the short text of *Four Great Grandmothers* I have placed two hypotexts together in order to allow them to play against one another.

Four Great Grandmothers marked a shift in my practice-research as it shared a story about my personal experience alongside my family history. Following Kuitenbrouwer's architexture that placed her own experience at the centre of the storytelling experience, I chose to place my memory as a core hypotext shared alongside the secondary hypotext of data-driven family history. My personal reaction to Edith Nuttall's diary was important in the making of *Think Before You Speak,* but it was displaced from the audience experience. The first-person narrative of *The space in-between* was an imagined experience, rather than memory. Even in performance, where I share space with the audience, the 'me' of the story is another me. It is an imagined version of a childhood me. Norman K. Denzin

[258] Interview with Laurence Dauphinais, 19 March 2019.

suggests that the person at the centre of the autobiography or biography is always absent.[259] He argues that, when researchers analyse these as texts, their construction needs to be part of the analysis.[260] Biography is an artistic form and, as such, is the result of creative choices. Deirdre Heddon emphasises that autobiographical performances are always '*productions*', suggesting that 'the binary between fictional/real is notoriously unstable in all autobiographical performances'.[261] Despite, or even because of this, she argues that this storytelling has an impact on identity construction.[262] I chose the family history to share publicly, I chose the memory to share, I chose what to leave out and as a result I proposed a particular mythologized identity. Denzin explains that ideology and narrative conventions give form to biography and autobiography; he suggests that we cannot avoid this, but should interrogate it.[263] The stories that I chose emphasise my identity as a northern English woman with some Irish heritage. If I had chosen to go a generation further back the geographic spread would have widened significantly to include the United States and India. My discomfort at my ancestors' colonial histories persuaded me to focus on the more local layer of the tree.

By using *One Hundred Homes* as an architext, I have adopted an overt explorative strategy. I have deliberately attempted to squeeze these four women's lives into reductive lists. The starting point for *Four Great Grandmothers* was the family history research that I had done and the sense of ever increasing lists of dates, names and places that stretched back four hundred years with little contextual information to flesh out these facts. Having already worked on the photographic slides of a great-grandmother and the diary of a two-times-great grandmother, I felt that I was running out of time in this research project to create hypertexts that covered a wider breadth of family history. Jerome de Groot has suggested that the family historian is the 'controlling principle' for genealogical narratives.[264] He writes that 'Genealogical research both strives for control […] whilst recognising, surely, the grandeur and sheer terrifying scale of the information that represents the 'past''[265]

[259] Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretive Biography,* Qualitative Research Methods Series, XVII (California: Sage Publications, 1989), p. 45.
[260] Denzin, *Interpretative Biography,* p. 29.
[261] Heddon, *Autobiography and Performance,* p. 10.
[262] Heddon, *Autobiography and Performance,* p. 10.
[263] Denzin, *Interpretative Biography,* p. 62.
[264] Jerome de Groot, *Consuming History: Histories and Heritage in Contemporary and Popular Culture,* 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 79.
[265] De Groot, *Consuming History,* p. 79.

(emphasis in original). Family history can be a way of asserting control, but it can also become unwieldy, as the lists extend back over generations. In Kuitenbrouwer's hypertext, she is the 'controlling principle'. She is the connection between all the stories. Adapting de Groot's phrases, as the 'controlling principle' in *Four Great Grandmothers,* I am able to contain the 'sheer terrifying scale' of history by focusing on family, and to contain the ever-extending family tree by concentrating on one half of one layer – the great-grandmothers.

Figure 4.1

Gladys Matthews playing golf at Brampton, Cumberland. The photograph was taken by her friend, Jim Watson. He told Gladys that he was taking a picture of someone else and caught her off guard. Gladys did not like this photograph, but her daughter, my grandmother, does like it.

The four great-grandmothers are not named until the very end of the text. Withholding their names emphasises the similarities between them rather than the differences. This technique of naming at the end of the performance is used by Third Angel in *Cape Wrath.*[266] Alexander Kelly explains how in an earlier show – *The Lad Lit Project* – he had used one of his grandfather's stories, without naming him or acknowledging their relationship. Following his grandfather's death, Kelly felt it was important to make a show specifically about him; *Cape Wrath* was an opportunity to assert his relationship in public and to share his grandfather's story with acknowledgement.[267] Kelly recounted a routine

[266] Third Angel, *Cape Wrath,* written and performed by Alexander Kelly, dir. by Rachael Walton, Wrought Festival, Scotland Street, Sheffield, 16 April 2016.
[267] Kelly, 'Cheers Grandad!', p. 143.

on his journey in which he meets people, they talk and, as they part, they exchange names, thus naming became associated with leaving.[268] By naming his grandfather in this performance, after he has passed away, Kelly is performing a personal and public 'act of remembrance'.[269] The action of naming that happens at the end of *Four Great Grandmothers* brings the performance to a conclusion and, as in *Cape Wrath,* it could be an act of individualising. However, as this information is still presented in list form, it is still comparative. Arguably their names produce a final link between them by evoking a collective image of old-fashioned English ladies. Naming Gladys May Matthews in full does separate her from the others and emphasizes the personal link to me through our shared middle name. Again, this draws attention away from the family history data towards the personal memory. Enhancing this effect, I include a photograph of Gladys alone here in Figure 4.1. Despite distinguishing Gladys, the line 'it is her staircase that I can remember', is ambiguous. It implies either that I remember her, because I remember her stairs, or that I remember her stairs, not the woman herself. This is an imperfect act of remembrance, distinctly different to Kelly's personal commemoration.

I did not know my great-grandmother well enough to grieve her, although I know people who still miss her and mourn her passing. Kelly describes visiting his grandfather for the last time and his 'two and a half year old daughter is delighted by the fact he lives in a bungalow'. Kelly wonders whether this memory will last for his daughter and what her first memory might be.[270] I wonder whether this was me twenty-three years earlier and two hundred miles further north. The familiarity of my memory echoes in Kelly's telling from the perspective of parent rather than child. The ability to separate this memory as my earliest is because my great-grandmother passed away, but I was too young to appreciate the loss. Using the strategies of personal narrative in parallel with lists created an architexture in which I could play with two different modes of memory and these could impact on each other. Playing with the text of *Four Great Grandmothers* formalised the personal memory of visiting Gladys Matthews and through listing data has made the storage memory functional within my personal family memory. This architextual form

[268] Kelly, 'Cheers Grandad!', p. 143.
[269] Kelly, 'Cheers Grandad!', p. 141.
[270] Kelly, 'Cheers Grandad!', p. 138.

helped me to reflect on the lives of my great-grandmothers across the twentieth century in contrast to my limited personal impression of them as a child in the 1980s.

Conclusion

This chapter has drawn attention to the architextual construction of a hypertext. The overarching theme of remembering was brought into play using explorative strategies experienced in performance work that considered similar themes to my practice-research. Reading my own work through the lens of the decisions made by Third Angel, La Messe Basse and Kuitenbrouwer enabled the close analysis offered in this chapter. To make *Four Great Grandmothers,* I experimented with theatrical strategies that I had experienced in other works: the lists of *One Hundred Homes,* naming at the end from *Cape Wrath* and the introduction of autobiography, which was introduced through discussion of *Siri* and is a feature of all three of these performances*.* These strategies gave form to the hypertext and playing with them enabled the interrogation of the topic of memory within family history. Nowhere in this hypertext is there a clear image of any great-grandmother. The historical record was sparse and reliant on data, whilst the personal narrative was unreliable and subjective. In both the individual was missing, even in the personal memory it was the place and things that are remembered not the person. Building an architexture that places these modes of memory beside each other reveals their potential, as well as their shortcomings.

For *Four Great Grandmothers,* I practised both the functional and storage memories as lines in a show. They became part of the act. My relationship with them shifted. As I made them public, they grow to be distinct and precise. The imperfect parallels of these four women's lives and my childhood recollection were brought into connection. The inherent limitations of both data and memory find unsatisfactory completion within the performance hypertext. This hypertext is presented as a finished piece, in which there is much more that could be said if it could be discovered. Writing about the BBC television show *Who Do You Think You Are?,* Jerome de Groot describes it as 'often uncharacteristically melancholic as historical documentary.'[271] Episodes frequently conclude with unresolved narratives and missing data, whilst the subject muses on what

[271] De Groot, *Consuming History,* p. 198.

they have or have not learnt.[272] It is the individual, as anchor to historical narratives, who mourns the failure of knowledge. In *Four Great Grandmothers* it is my personal connection to this story that engages emotionally and it is the audience's connection to me in the live experience that can engage them with the history shared. The hypertext exists in the present moment; the performance hypertext is shared between audience and performer.

The memory of my visit to Gladys Matthews tells the audience more about myself as the storyteller than it does about my great grandmother. The lists are informative but reveal nothing about the women's characters. Denzin identifies the constructed nature of biography and autobiography; he suggests perceiving 'autobiography as fiction and […] a literary and sociological form that creates particular images of subjects in particular historical moments.'[273] In *Four Great Grandmothers* I am using verifiable facts, to construct four brief biographies and my own memory to create a short autobiography. The intention of the first is to draw out the similarities and distinctions between these four women living through the twentieth century, whilst the second is intended to forge a personal connection. Both are limited, but by presenting them alongside one another, neither dominates. Denzin is not suggesting the fiction of biography excludes the truth, but he is highlighting that when we create a biography of any type we are creating a new text that is separate to the person on whom it is based, which is therefore a type of fiction.[274] Denzin proposes that biography commodifies lives; it takes all the complexity of a human and converts it into 'a concrete object; an object that can be purchased, held and read about'.[275] The hypertext is not solid, however my desire to contain the lives of these women through these architextual experiments is reductive. Biography is always a partial account of a life and only one perspective on that life, but *Four Great Grandmothers,* based on records of births, deaths and marriages, is a particularly limited standpoint. These records are significant as the life events deemed necessary to record by the state. They provide markers against which the lives of those born in the United Kingdom can be measured and made comparable.

[272] De Groot, *Consuming History,* p. 198.
[273] Denzin, *Interpretative Biography,* p. 35.
[274] Denzin, *Interpretative Biography,* p. 21.
[275] Denzin, *Interpretative Biography,* p. 30.

Memory theorist Paul Ricoeur challenged the hierarchy that suggested the objective, impersonal report was more legitimate as a record than the personal, subjective account. He suggested that to perceive an opposition between 'a younger tradition of objectivity to the ancient tradition of reflexivity' was misplaced, arguing instead that they 'occupy universes of discourse that have become estranged from each other.'[276] Assmann is clear in her argument that storage memory is not objective, because subjective choices are made about what is stored and what is selected.[277] Pulling data into a performance hypertext from institutional storage memory makes it possible to question the presumption of hierarchy. Performing this information together with explicitly subjective memory in *Four Great Grandmothers* highlighted the difference between the public data hypotext and the personal memory hypotext. Ricoeur argued that whilst imagination may be integral to memory and may limit the success of its 'truthful ambition', this should not be exclusively perceived as weakness.[278] In *Four Great Grandmothers* memory and imagination played together, as a way of experimenting with a critical dialogue between data led family history research and personal remembrance.

[276] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,* trans. by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 95.
[277] Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization,* p. 130.
[278] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,* pp. 7, 21.

Chapter Five: Participating

Introduction

The research-practice discussed in this final chapter is a board game played in public spaces that facilitates the sharing of family histories. The game is called *Lines And Ladders* and was played from July 2018 until April 2019 in cafés and other similar public spaces in England and Scotland. This game provided a site and opportunity for transtextual interactions. As a hypertext, it used play to facilitate storytelling and provided a model for sharing stories that could create satellite performances, as audience members were given a paper copy of the board to take away with them after playing. Built from the architexture of board games, specifically the hypotext of *Snakes and Ladders,* this hypertext was created anew every time it was played through the intertextual incorporation of the players' stories and the relationship to the peritext of location. Landing on a question cell on the board prompted the telling of family histories. The stories of the audience were unique in every game, but the architextual framing device of the board game structured the interactions to maintain consistency between performances; the hypertext of *Lines And Ladders* existed when the game was played and stories were told. Beyond the playing of the game, the experience was extended epitextually into an online performance diary and it took this practice-research outside the peritext of the academic institution. Although it was still served paratextually by its connection to the university, this functioned differently to the earlier hypertexts performed in campus spaces. The different cities and cafés where the game was played had an impact and the significance of the peritext, alongside the other transtextual relations, is examined in this chapter. *Lines And Ladders* is the culmination of this research project and exemplifies the creation of a hypertext using the transtextual methodology.

Originally, I planned that the final practice-research hypertext of this research project would involve a solo presentation and wrestled with ways of incorporating audience participation that did not involve inviting individuals onto a stage. I felt that this could be difficult to manage: people might not wish to share personal stories in public; the audience might have no knowledge of family history to share; participants might regret sharing a story on stage without preparation; they might be uninteresting storytellers and talk for longer than required; audience members not given an opportunity to share might feel disengaged. I decided instead to develop a micro-audience performance game, which

would provide a supportive structure for limited story sharing. Micro-audience performances have fewer than twenty audience members, as defined by Erin Revell and Moe Shoji, co-producers of Wrought Festival of One-to-One and Micro-Audience Performance in 2016.[279] Third Angel's *Cape Wrath* and Leo Burtin's *The Midnight Soup* were examples of this that I experienced at Wrought Festival.[280] My own piece for this festival, *The Museum Full Of Things,* was a micro-audience tour of remembered museum exhibits, which, like *Lines And Ladders,* could be experienced as an improvised performance by one, two or three audience members.[281] The architexture of the micro-audience performance relieved the anxieties listed above and provided an opportunity to bring into play the threads of the previous chapters – presenting, questioning and remembering – through audience participation.

No one watched *Lines And Ladders* being played, but as there were always people around, they might observe what is happening and listen to the conversation. The people who played the game were the main audience. To describe this audience, I use the terms audience-participant and audience-player. When I am writing about them as participants in the research project they are audience-participants and when I am writing about them as taking part in the game they are audience-players. On occasion, they are described as audience-player-participants to reflect the multiple roles being undertaken. The term 'audience-participant' was used by Adrian Howells to describe the people who took part in his one-to-one performances (performances with one performer and one audience member).[282] This hyphenated term recognises the duality of the role in which the audience are placed; they are observers and they are called upon to participate and play. In an extension of this, my role is facilitator-player, since I facilitate the experience of the audience-players, by playing with them. When I refer simply to 'players' of the game, I am including myself as facilitator-player alongside the audience-players.

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[279] Erin Revell and Moe Shoji, 'Wrought: A performance Festival', Scotland Street, Sheffield, 15-17 April 2016 <https://wroughtsheffield.wordpress.com/> [Accessed 21 August 2020].

[280] Third Angel, *Cape Wrath,* written and performed by Alexander Kelly, dir. by Rachael Walton, Wrought Festival, Scotland Street, Sheffield, 16 April 2016 and Leo Burtin, *The Midnight Soup,* Wrought Festival, Quaker Meeting House, Sheffield, 16 April 2016.

[281] Kirsty Surgey, 'The Museum Full Of Things', Wrought Festival, Scotland Street, Sheffield, 15-17 April 2016 <https://heardofcats.co.uk/home/the-museum-full-of-things/> [Accessed 21 August 2020].

[282] Deirdre Heddon and Adrian Howells, 'From Talking to Silence: A Confessional Journey', *PAJ,* 97 (2011), 1-12 <https://www-jstor-org.sheffield.idm.oclc.org/stable/41309685> [Accessed 30 July 2020].

Participation was discussed in 'Chapter Three: Questioning' with regard to *Think Before You Speak,* as that work gave the audience freedom to respond however they chose to the stimulus I presented. That performance did not provide a structured space for the audience to share their family histories. *Think Before You Speak* was a conscious attempt to move away from my background in teaching; it was an effort to avoid standing at the front lecturing, but as was discussed in 'Chapter Three: Questioning', the pedagogical tool of mini-blackboards still contributed to the architexture of the piece. By the time I reached this final part of the project, I was more confident in drawing on my experience and skill as an educator by creating a performance that has some of the hallmarks of a learning experience. Whilst the self-reflexive analysis of my practical performance work in the previous chapters has mostly been concerned with performances that focus on my family history, the practice discussed in this chapter makes space for the audience to become storytellers and explore the relationship between personal and public histories for themselves. This is made possible by facilitating a situation in which audience-participants feel comfortable and encouraged to tell aspects of their family history.

The family history focus for this chapter is the process of genealogical research undertaken. The prompts on the *Lines And Ladders* board are about research experiences, rather than pointing to specific generations or ancestors. As facilitator-player I strove to engage audience-players at their level of experience of family history research, which meant explaining the prompts and giving examples to encourage participation. One area of research that provided fruitful material for this piece of creative practice-research was the growth of DNA testing as a form of genealogical investigation. This is discussed with regard to the design of the game in relation to the hypotext of *Snakes And Ladders* and in relation to the contribution of intertextual stories towards the end of the chapter. *Lines And Ladders* brought together my experiences of researching family history across the doctoral project, enabled me to articulate the research process to the audience-participants and provided space for audience-players to contribute their own family history experiences to the hypertext.

By perceiving *Lines And Ladders* as at the centre of a transtextual web, it becomes an archival hub for the individual, bringing into the presence of the audience a wealth of familiar and unfamiliar textual relations. Historically *Snakes And Ladders* had different

local names, but one of the earliest from northern India is *gyān bāzī,* which can be translated as the 'Game of Knowledge', which suggests a heritage that is about an exchange of information.[283] The purpose of *Lines And Ladders* is the sharing of stories; it is a micro transmission of the personal archive. Rebecca Schneider challenges the notion that performance cannot be satisfactorily archived by suggesting that this is because of a limited conception of the archive.[284] The conventional European archive is made of material objects and performance does not fit easily into this, yet further afield, and pedagogically, the transfer of knowledge through person-to-person transmission is valued. Schneider questioned 'Does the logic of the archive rather *demand that performance disappear* in favour of discrete remains […]?' (Emphasis in original)[285] and argued that 'this is a cultural equation, arguably foreign to those who claim orature, storytelling, visitation, improvisation, or embodied ritual practice as history'.[286] By turning performance into something material that can be stored in a physical archive, the possibility of live performance as a way of enacting knowledge and of being the archive is ignored. *Lines And Ladders* has no exemplar performance, as I have resisted filming the game. Watching a film of people playing the game would not replicate the experience, however playing the game will. I encourage the reader, after reading this chapter, to use the copy of the board in Appendix 5.1 to play *Lines And Ladders.* The game is an experience of transtextual relations that can be re-enacted. There have been many iterations of the game: each one followed the same structure, each one containing original family histories and every one has been a chapter of this practice-research thesis as an exploration of how the research of family history can become a storytelling experience.

The analysis in this chapter is based on my experience of playing *Lines And Ladders* and on the written feedback given by audience-participants after playing each game. These were reported initially as an online performance diary, which documented my thoughts at different moments in the playing process and is discussed as an epitext later in the chapter. Some sections are referenced as relevant within the writing that follows and the performance diary is available to read in full here: https://heardofcats.co.uk/blog/

[283] Andrew Topsfield, 'Snakes and Ladders in India: Some further discoveries', *Artibus Asiae,* 66:1 (2006), 143-79 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25261845>, [Accessed 9 February 2018], p. 143.
[284] Rebecca Schneider, 'Performance Remains', *Performance Research,* 6:2 (2001), 100-08 <DOI: 10.1080/13528165.2001.10871792>, pp. 101-02.
[285] Schneider, 'Performance Remains', p. 102.
[286] Schneider, 'Performance Remains', p. 102.

This chapter considers how the different transtextual relations operate when they are brought into play to create the hypertext and is organised by the different elements of the transtextual network. This starts with an explanation of how the hypertext was played and is followed by discussion of the prologue incorporated into the hypertext, which explained the process of research to the audience. The next section considers how the architexture of a board game enabled confident participation, whilst the section that follows reflects on the hypotext and specifically the impact of researching the history of *Snakes And Ladders* on the design and production of *Lines And Ladders.* After this, the discussion moves to the elements of the paratext: the epitextual and the peritextual. The epitextual is discussed in relation to the performance diary, which I consider to be extending the hypertext through its documentation of the process and the peritextual is considered in relation to the locations where the game is played and the effect that these had on the performance experience. Finally, I explore how the integration of oral stories as intertexts made it possible to create to a new hypertext every time that the game was played. Each of these sections is explored in the context of relevant research and theory from the fields of history and performance studies

Hypertext

How *Lines And Ladders* was played

As mentioned in the introduction, *Lines And Ladders* worked on a similar principle to the game of *Snakes and Ladders*. I played the game with between one and three audience-players. There was one exception when I facilitated the play of six-audience players and did not play myself; this led to long waits between players' turns, so I chose not to repeat this experiment. Players moved counters according to the number indicated by a dice roll across the board from the bottom left 'START' to the top right 'END?' The game was played with one or two dice and the counters that I used to play were small, square Lego bricks. These Lego bricks prompted the first story, as they were remnants from my own wedding. At our wedding reception we placed boxes of Lego on the tables for a spaceship building competition and these bricks were from those boxes. This story broke the ice, as it offers an immediately personal intertext, and demonstrated that family history could be recent as well as archival.

Figure 5.1

The final design of the board played between November 2018 and April 2019

Bricks were moved upward from hexagon to hexagon unless they landed on a chevron. These were positioned either at the top of orange ladders to send the player backwards, or at the bottom of yellow ladders, which would advance the player. Each chevron was a storytelling opportunity. Upward ladders were positive advances in the research process. For example, if they landed in cell thirty-one, players were invited to talk about any photographs of ancestors that they had seen. The downward ladders represented setbacks, including the prompt on cell twenty-three to consider times when the player had found photographs featuring unidentified subjects. In October 2018, I made some

adjustments to the design and organisation of the board. This updated version is shown in Figure 5.1 and it was played from November 2018 until April 2019.

There were three green and three red hexagons. If a player landed on a green hexagon, they got an extra turn and a chance to tell a story about a new shoot in their family tree. This might be something that they had discovered about the past or something that had happened recently, such as a birth. If they landed on a red hexagon, they missed a turn. This was a brick wall, which is a term used by family historians to describe difficulties in their research where they have been unable to discover what happened to an individual in their tree or cannot trace a line any further back. The winner was the first person to reach the 'END?" In some games, players needed to get an exact number; in others, any number that got the player past this point won. This was agreed between all the players, normally during the game. Play usually stopped when the game had been won, but could continue until all had reached the 'END?' The question mark was placed deliberately to indicate that the research journey is incomplete.

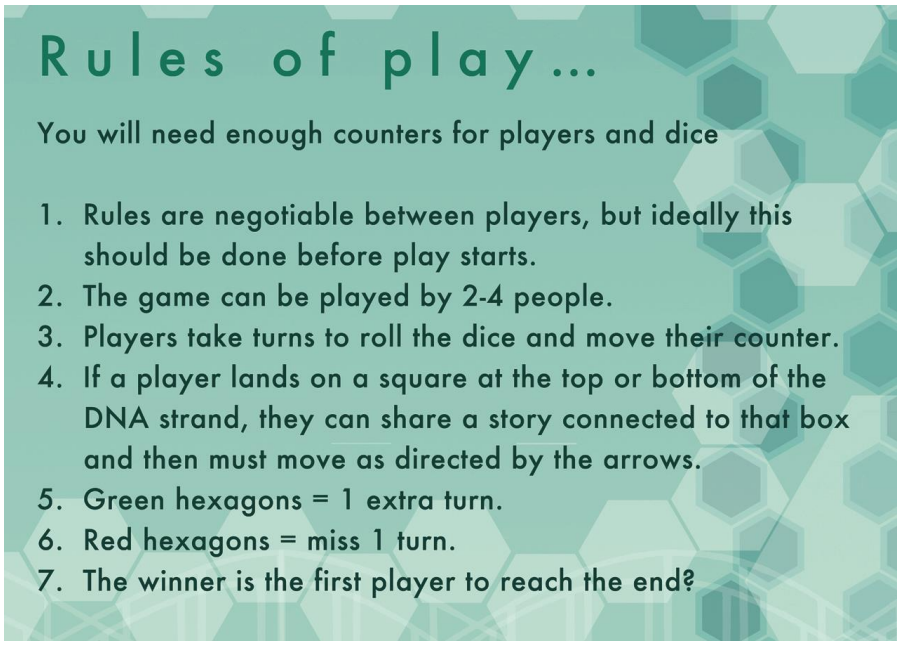

Figure 5.2
Rules for playing *Lines And Ladders*. Detail from the reverse of the paper copies.

Although there were set guidelines for playing, as shown in Figure 5.2, some rules were negotiated at the start of the game or during the play. An extra turn was normally given to a player rolling a six when playing with one die or a double when playing with two; this was agreed with all players in the game either at the start or when it first occurred. If an

individual kept getting extra turns consecutively, players normally agreed to limit it. This gave a small element of control to the audience. The hypertext was tightly structured by the architexture of the board game, but it was dependent on the interactions of the audience. Alice O'Grady has suggested that to make interesting interactive performance, it is necessary to embrace some 'unpredictability, uncertainty and movement' within the structure presented by the artist.[287] *Lines And Ladders* had plenty of space for digression within storytelling and for shifting the scope of the stories shared. By enabling participants to make decisions about rules, their role as co-collaborators in their iteration of the hypertext was made evident, but the choices available were limited, which helped to maintain the integrity of every performance. In addition, this sometimes served as an additional storytelling prompt, as participants shared memories of game playing and the rules that they had followed previously in similar board games.

In his foreword to *The Midnight Soup*, Leo Burtin stresses the balance between controlling the performance 'rigorously' and 'loosely' repeating variations of these words three times. He claims that 'The performance follows a rigorous structure, in which I loosely navigate a number of roles' whilst 'The conversation follows a loose structure, in which I commit myself to rigorously listening.'[288] This combination between holding the hypertext together, whilst allowing the conversation to follow an engaging path is important in *Lines And Ladders*. The game and its rules provided the 'rigour', but these have enough 'looseness' to be adapted by the players.

Once playing was completed, audience-participants were given a paper copy of the game and a postcard that they could send to a friend or family member who they thought might enjoy the game. Figure 5.3 shows the version of the game that was played in August and September 2018; this was the printed version of the game given to audience-players from August 2018 until April 2019. Players were invited to give written feedback and, whilst they completed the form (Appendix 5.2), I made my own notes reflecting on this particular game. In the blogpost, 'Making Notes', I reflected on my frustration at myself for choosing this method of recording the games, despite deliberately selecting it in order to maintain

[287] Alice O'Grady, 'Interactivity: Functions and risks', in *Performance Perspectives: A Critical Introduction,* ed. by Jonathan Pitches and Sita Popat (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 165-73 (p. 172).
[288] Leo Burtin, *The Midnight Soup* (Homemade, 2016), p. 1.

the immediacy of each game, which might have been affected by the introduction of a film camera or audio recording device.[289] It was important for the practice-research aims of this project, and alleviated my frustration, to remind myself of the necessity of retaining focus when note-taking on the performance element of storytelling, rather than the historical detail.

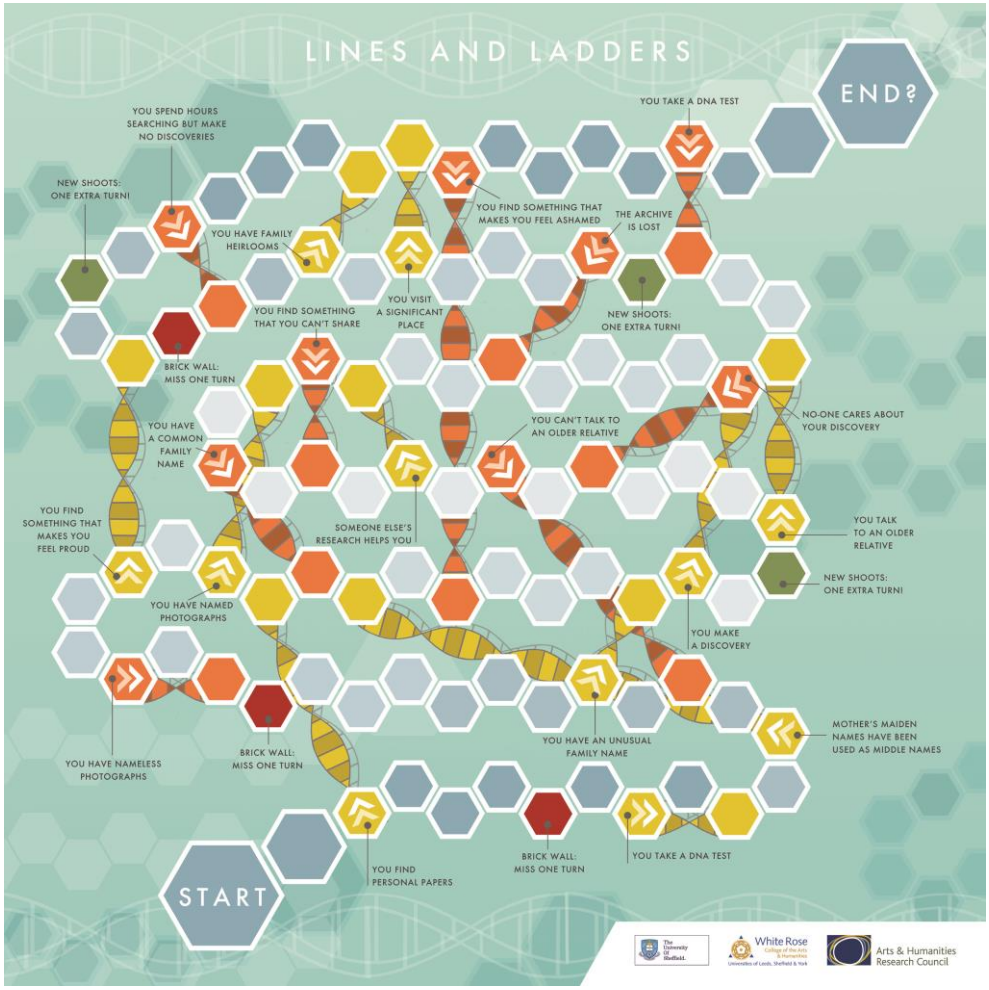

Figure 5.3: The design of the board played in August and September 2018 and printed on paper for the audience-participants to take away

Fifty-six audience-participants played thirty-four games of *Lines And Ladders* for this research project. Twenty-seven audience-players arranged to play eighteen games in advance. Nineteen of these audience-players were either friends or family, whilst the

[289] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 08: Making Notes', 27 August 2018 <http://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/08/27/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-08-making-notes> [Accessed 19 February 2020].

remaining eight were unknown to me prior to playing and booked using an Eventbrite ticketing page.[290] The remaining games were played when I sat in a venue and attempted to engage people in a conversation about the game and my research. This invitation to play was accepted by twenty-nine players, who collectively played sixteen games. The audience-players were self-selecting, supporting my research as friends and family, or showing a willingness to talk to a stranger. They did not represent anything other than an interest in games, family history and/or performance. They do not offer a specific breadth of experience and I have refrained from asking for the sort of personal details that might enable categorisation, except as pertinent to family history stories.

An introduction within the hypertext: The paperwork prologue

Before playing each game, there is a section that I have called the 'paperwork prologue'. In this part of the performance experience, I explained the research aspect of the performance in order to ensure that audience-participants knew that this was research, as well as creative practice, and understood how their data would be used in the project. This procedure was approved by University of Sheffield ethics reviewers and was designed from the outset as an introduction to the game. It was clear from my earlier experiences that *Lines And Ladders* would require extensive paperwork; this was the seventh time that I had applied for ethics approval for this research-project, as a result of using so many different methods of investigation. I felt it was important for the performance experience to integrate these forms, as a method of articulating the practice-research process within the University of Sheffield. As part of the prologue, I specifically draw the audience-player's attention to the fact that this is a requirement of the university and that bringing family history, performance and play into the academy necessitated paperwork. The prologue gave audience-participants time and space to withdraw if they wished, and also gave the experience status. The paratextual connection to the university denotes institutional support, which could be significant to people who chose to become players, because they had a connection to the university or because they trusted the university.

[290] Eventbrite page for games in Cakes and Ale Café, Carlisle, February 2019 <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lines-and-ladders-tickets-52900082571#> [Accessed 1 April 2020].

Figure 5.4

Prompt card for the Paperwork Prologue.

The paperwork given to audience-participants in this prologue consisted of an information sheet, which detailed what participation would entail and how the materials generated through playing would be used and shared (Appendix 5.3), and a form that audience-participants were required to sign to declare that they consented to participating in this project (Appendix 5.4). The information sheet could also be read on the website and pre-bookers were encouraged to read prior to attending.[291] As a prop to the prologue, I used prompt cards with the words 'Important Things To Say' written on the back of them. These guided me through the spoken introduction in which I covered the details on the information sheet. Children who played *Lines And Ladders* had to be accompanied by a participating adult who had the authority to consent to their participation and signed a form on their behalf (Appendix 5.5). In addition, audience-participants were given a yellow card, which was the size of a business card. This had contact details for myself and my PhD supervisor on it, as well as links to the online information sheet and performance diary (Appendix 5.6). In earlier parts of the project, when I had issued only A4 information sheets, people often did not take these away. The card was easily put in a pocket or wallet straightaway to be referenced later and, thus, was a more reliable method of ensuring that participants could make contact or access information about the project after playing.

[291] The online information sheet can be read here: Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders' <https://heardofcats.co.uk/lines-and-ladders/> [Accessed 18 February 2020].

Figure 5.5

Collection of photographs of people playing *Lines And Ladders* as displayed on a poster made for a WRoCAH Colloquium in June 2019.

On the consent form, audience-participants indicated if they wished to be anonymous and whether they were happy to be photographed for documentation purposes.[292] Whilst the preference for university research is usually to anonymise participants, because this is creative practice-research in which audience-players collaborated in making a hypertext about their family history, I felt it was critical to give audience-players the choice about whether or not they wished to be named. True anonymity is difficult to achieve in this research, because both the creative and historical contributions of the audience were personal and every player was warned that they might be identifiable in published descriptions of the game and their family history, or from photographs. The details that audience-players shared related to their family history and their own research and I felt strongly that they should decide whether to claim those stories and that work as their own. Some *Lines And Ladders* audience-participants chose not to be named, but the majority (75%) wished to remain associated with their stories and responses. In the performance diary entry, 'Privacy Matters', I discussed how audience-participants often wanted to have their part in the game acknowledged. Family historians often benefit from sharing data, whether this is family trees online or the growing DNA databases, so it is

[292] Some of the issues regarding photography are discussed in this blogpost: Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 11: Photographs', 3 October 2018 <https://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/10/03/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-11-photographs/> [Accessed 19 February 2020].

perhaps unsurprising that audience-participants preferred to assert their role in this research.[293] Later in the blog, I discussed the issue of crediting the creative contribution made by audience-players in the post 'A Cast of Storytellers'. In this post, I explained that each player was not only a research-participant, but also a performer in the hypertext.[294] In every game, audience-players and I created a new hypertext; this is artistic research and we were making a performance together.

Stephen Bottoms observed, when writing about his own practice-research piece *Multi-Story Water*, that he was initially concerned by the ethics of a piece that could be perceived as using 'a housing estate as a 'stage set'' and retold the stories of those living there. However, following their interventions, they 'received many expressions of thanks from estate residents for our efforts to share its stories and not a single expression of concern about our brief, theatrical intrusions', which led Bottoms to the conclusion that 'People like their stories to be told'.[295] The intention of anonymity is to protect the participants from harm, and when they felt that they would benefit from being named, it seemed correct that this should be offered.

According to Genette's categorisations, what I have decided to call the paperwork prologue might be considered a preface, as it instructs the player how the game should be played. Genette claimed that the literary preface 'has as its chief function *to ensure that the text is read properly*'.[296] As a preface it would be firmly placed in Genette's categorisation of the paratext, as something separate to the main text, but which helps to establish the purpose of the performance and the behaviour required by the audience-player. The paperwork prologue is distinctly separate from the experience of playing the game and, in the performance diary, I have referred to the paperwork prologue as part of

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[293] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 05: Privacy Matters', 19 August 2018 <http://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/08/19/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-05-privacy-matters> [Accessed 19 February 2020].

[294] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 18: A Cast of Storytellers', 16 January 2019 <https://heardofcats.co.uk/2019/01/16/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-18-a-cast-of-storytellers/> [Accessed 19 February 2020].

[295] Stephen Bottoms, 'The Agency of Environment: Artificial Hells and *Multi-Story Water',* in *Performance and Participation: Practices, Audiences, Politics,* ed. by Anna Harpin and Helen Nicholson (London: Palgrave, 2017), pp. 167-88 (p. 181).

[296] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation,* trans by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 197.

the peritext.[297] However, as the game cannot be played for this project without it, I realise it is part of the hypertext experience. By calling it a prologue, rather than preface, it is included in the experience of the hypertext. The architexture of *Lines And Ladders* is not simply that of a game, but of a game played in a research context and, thus, the elements required for research form part of the hypertext.

Game playing

Architexture: Board games

Board games are associated with childhood and with family play. They provide therefore a particularly appropriate architexture to use to share family histories. Playing with Josephine Scales, a friend that I have known since we were children, prompted discussion about the games we used to play together and Juliet Rowcroft commented that *Lines And Ladders,* 'was relaxing and fun, and brought back childhood memories of *Snakes and Ladders'*. Board games are often a method for passing time, keeping players occupied and entertained; this architexture proved to be a significant reminiscence tool for adults who made the commitment to play.

Richard Schechner includes 'a special ordering of time', as one of the 'basic qualities' of performance activities.[298] He identifies three types of time that exist in play as performance: firstly, there is 'event time', an open-ended period of time in which play is completed; secondly, 'set time' is a fixed amount of time that the play will last and finally, 'symbolic time' is time as it is represented in play.[299] Although *Lines And Ladders* drew upon 'symbolic time', by reaching into history for storytelling purposes, it most closely fits into Schechner's category of 'event time', as it was played until someone had reached the final cell on the board. Generally a game of *Lines And Ladders* took approximately one hour but the longest game, played with Josephine Scales, lasted two hours and ten minutes. As described in the performance diary entry, 'How long does it take to play?', when a 'set time' was imposed by me because I felt that the audience-players were short

[297] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 17: Transtextuality', 31 December 2018 <https://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/12/31/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-17-transtextuality/> [Accessed 19 February 2020].
[298] Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory,* revised and expanded edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 8.
[299] Schechner, *Performance Theory,* p. 8.

on time, it disrupted the energy of the game.[300] One player, Nicola Dexter, explained in her feedback that she although she enjoyed a very short game of thirty-five minutes, 'the roll of the dice meant that I didn't get the opportunity to share much as I got to the end quickly'. After this experience, I realised the importance of letting play be governed by event time. The commitment to play could be broken whenever the players chose or the game stopped being playful, nevertheless play required dedication for its duration. By making use of event time, the audience-participant was provided with a clear frame for the performance hypertext and the opportunity to commit their time to tell their family history stories. Schechner proposed that for performance 'a special world is created where people can make the rules, rearrange time, assign value to things, and work for pleasure'.[301] As a hypertext *Lines And Ladders* made 'a special world', which created a structure to contain family history stories and offered an opportunity to players to find pleasure in telling their stories.

In *Consuming History: Histories and Heritage in Contemporary and Popular Culture,* Jerome de Groot writes about the playful consumption of history in computer games, tabletop strategy games and quizzes.[302] He explains that for these games, 'Historical knowledge is both concrete – the 'right' answer – and something that can be played with, manipulated. It is something performed, either through an avatar, through gaming interfaces or deployed in a performative way in quizzes and online knowledge games'.[303] *Lines And Ladders* fell into the second category. The historical research extratext was 'manipulated' into a story and 'deployed' by the player. I often prefaced the game by saying that players did not have to tell any stories if they did not wish, but if they did not want to tell theirs, then they would hear a lot of mine. Through my modelling of stories near the start, players were encouraged to tell their own family history. There was an emphasis in this hypertext on stories as remembered in the moment. There was no fact checking. Players moved up or down the ladder that they had landed on regardless of whether they told a story or not. In a quiz or knowledge-based game, as de Groot indicates, the answer will be revealed and

[300] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 14: How long does it take to play?', 7 November 2018 <https://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/11/07/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-14-how-long-does-it-take-to-play/> [Accessed 19 February 2020].
[301] Schechner, *Performance Theory,* p. 13.
[302] Jerome de Groot, 'History Games', in *Consuming History: Histories and Heritage in Contemporary and Popular Culture,* 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 152-163.
[303] De Groot, *Consuming History*, p. 162.

correct responses rewarded.[304] However, in *Lines And Ladders* the personal nature of the history means that it was never wrong. Players shared their personal histories in order to become more actively involved in the game, which generated a more successful family history hypertext.

In the examples analysed by de Groot, the historical extratext provides the setting, a problem that needs solving or material that can be proved true or false. Whilst he notes that these games '[throw] history into a complex set of interactions', the history itself tends to be fairly straightforward and play a fixed role.[305] As an extratext it provides subject matter, but to increase its complexity could render a game unplayable. In *Lines And Ladders,* the historical extratext was more flexible, because progression was not dependent on the story, rather it was in response to the dice roll*;* the intention was to give participants confidence to perform their stories. The use of dice led to a random outcome and took control from the player. *Lines And Ladders* was a skill-less game of chance in terms of progression and this was important to the game's potential as a family history hypertext for two reasons. Firstly, as discussed in 'Chapter Three: Questioning', although we can choose which stories to tell, we cannot choose our heritage. Movement controlled using dice symbolised the arbitrary nature of family history and the lack of control that we have over the actions of our ancestors. Secondly, it was the storytelling that required effort from the players. The use of dice released the players from divining strategies to help them to advance up the board, so that they could enjoy telling their family history stories.

Lines And Ladders was most successful as a family history hypertext when players told stories, not when players were driven primarily by the competition of winning. Writing about political performances that use conversation, Grant H. Kester gives an example where facilitation results in 'creating an open space where individuals can break free from pre-existing roles and obligations, reacting and interacting in new and unforeseeable ways'.[306] He claims that, where conversation is an essential aspect of the performance, it

[304] De Groot, *Consuming Heritage,* p. 162.
[305] De Groot, *Consuming Heritage,* pp. 161-62.
[306] Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley and LA: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 6, 8.

can be 'an active, generative process'.[307] As a performance hypertext, *Lines And Ladders* was driven by the content of the intertextual stories introduced by the players. The playing of the game gave participants a defined role and restricted the topic of conversation for the duration of the game; this stimulated the storytelling. One anonymous participant who played an impromptu game described how they 'welcomed the conversation and opportunity to engage with a journey that was unexpected'; Zoe King claimed 'It was great to have an excuse to think about and discuss family history'; Graham Dalton explained that he enjoyed 'An opportunity to speak about my family history – which (at my age) defines 'me''; Arwen Heaton stated that she enjoyed that 'this experience gave me some 'me' time!'; Kath Hunt recognised the significance of random storytelling prompted by the dice roll, commenting that 'It made you think of your own recollections of stories told in your family throughout the generations'; Moe Shoji found it 'nice and reassuring' that the storytelling 'is always reciprocated by the artist'; whilst Elizabeth Lloyd claimed it 'opened up a variety of ideas, opinions and relevant discussions' and was 'a very sociable game'. These snapshots of responses by players illustrate the value of the game in making time for adults to have guided, focused conversations. Both the design of the game and my role as player-facilitator are crucial in providing an architexture that enables the player-participants to feel comfortable chatting about their family history.

Hypotext: *Snakes And Ladders*

Whilst the concept of the board game provides architexture, the hypotext is the specific game, *Snakes And Ladders.* The section that follows explains how researching the history of this game guided the form of the finished hypertext, *Lines And Ladders.* I documented some of this process in the performance diary entry 'The Genealogy of the Game'.[308] This included working with my partner to develop a design, some of the history of the game, and a visit to the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford to examine a nineteenth century version of the game.

[307] Kester, *Conversation Pieces,* p. 8.

[308] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 03: The Genealogy of the Game', 6 August 2018 <https://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/08/06/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-03-the-genealogy-of-the-game/> [Accessed 19 February 2020].

There are many variations in the design of *Snakes And Ladders*. In the version in the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology most of the snakes were in the bottom right corner, but there were two very long snakes that stretched right across the board to opposite corners. The ladders were nearly all in the top half of the board but turned round corners and curved as greatly as the snakes. Both snakes and ladders varied considerably in length and it included text in both Persian and English.[309] Modern adaptations do not usually incorporate storytelling, but early versions of the game were pedagogical tools that may have included discussion. Andrew Topsfield has researched the Indian origins of *Snakes And Ladders* and described how it was designed as a 'Pilgrim's Progress'[310] (capitalization in original) showing potential paths from birth to salvation.[311] These early versions are labelled with the specific acts that might lead the player towards or away from spiritual liberation. For example, showing 'mercy' or gaining knowledge might lead you up a ladder, whilst keeping 'bad company' or 'drunkenness' could send you sliding downwards.[312] These provocations could encourage storytelling, in a similar way to the family history prompts in *Lines And Ladders.* In the historic versions of the *Snakes And Ladders* discussed by Andrew Topsfield positive steps were sometimes symbolised by ladders, but sometimes by different coloured snakes, which lead the player upwards.[313] Although the impediments were nearly always snakes, there is some variation here as well. One version from the eighteenth century incorporates 'long, makara-headed, finny fish', which Topsfield suggests may indicate that it originated from an area close to the ocean.[314] These early games were hand drawn meaning that they could be adapted by artists to be relevant to the local audience's interests and needs. This long heritage of adaptation made the game an appropriate hypotext for this performance; rather than adapting according to locale, I adapted the game to fit the topic of family history. However, my discomfort at my own colonial ancestry, which includes at least three generations of English and Irish ancestors born in nineteenth century India, meant that I knew it was important to acknowledge the game's history within the performance hypertext. I

[309] 'Board for a Sufi Muslim version of Gyan Chaupar (Snakes and Ladders), ink and watercolour on paper, with inscriptions in Persian and English. Delhi or Ajmer, c. 1815' (Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology: Oxford), EA2007.2 [Visited 31 March 2018]; also, this board is described by Topsfield (2006), p. 153.
[310] Andrew Topsfield, 'The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders', *Artibus Asiae,* 46:3 (1985), 203-26 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/32502037>, [Accessed 9 February 2018], p. 203.
[311] Topsfield (2006), p. 143.
[312] Topsfield (2006), pp. 147-48.
[313] Topsfield (2006), pp. 148, 149, 157, fig. 2, 158, fig. 3, 159, fig. 4.
[314] Topsfield (2006), p. 151.

ensured that in every game I gave an account of the Indian heritage of *Snakes And Ladders*. By doing this, I hoped to educate the players of the game and increase understanding in a small way about how British culture has been influenced over many centuries, and continues to be, by Indian culture. Only one player – Tony Addison – volunteered significant knowledge about the history of *Snakes and Ladders*, so playing the game has provided the other players with new information.

The historical hypotext of *Snakes And Ladders* impacted on the visual design of the game. The image of the ladder adapted with efficacy into the hypertext design, as steps and stepladders had already featured significantly in the practice-research pieces *Think Before You Speak* (Chapter Three: Questioning) and *Four Great Grandmothers* (Chapter Four: Remembering). However, the image of the snake was more problematic. I was aware of the biblical symbolism of snakes that associates them with evil and specifically connects that evil with Eve and by extension all women. This connotation was not one that I wanted to use in the game, so I needed to find an alternative. The discovery, mentioned above, that some versions of *Snakes And Ladders* used different coloured snakes prompted me use the image of the twisted ladder of DNA double helix for both upward and downward movement. DNA testing is an increasingly significant element of genealogical research that can help to break down brick walls in the research but has limitations and there are potential risks associated with taking a DNA test. Therefore DNA was well placed as a symbol to both help and hinder the research journey, as I discussed in the performance diary entry 'Twisted Ladders'.[315] Since playing the game, it has been observed that the upward ladders are perceived as gold, symbolising wealth and prosperity, whilst the downward ladders are seen to be red, suggesting danger, although this was not intended.

[315] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 04: Twisted Ladders', 11 August 2018 <https://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/08/11/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-04-twisted-ladders/> [Accessed 19 February 2020].

Figure 5.6
Image of DNA Double Helix, as drawn in *Lines And Ladders.*

My partner, as designer, asked for some examples of artwork in the style that I wanted for the game. I created an online Pinterest board that we could both use as an architextual reference.[316] The pop art style covers of a German science journal, *Naturwissenschaft und Medizin,* from the 1960s and 1970s designed by Erwin Poell feature heavily in this Pinterest board. My parents both painted in this style when they studied at art college in that same time period, so it felt connected to my own family history. The style of scientific illustration contributes to the architexture, but also has acted metatextually by opening debate regarding this method of family history research.

The hypotext of *Snakes And Ladders* also influenced the game materially, as the early versions that Andrew Topsfield writes about were hand drawn or painted onto fabric.[317] This would have made them easily transportable and, as I planned to play the game in public spaces, I needed a game that was equally portable. The first version of *Lines And Ladders* was printed on a very lightweight material, which could be folded up very neatly to fit into my bag. Unfortunately, I had not considered that this would absorb any liquid – an immediate hazard in any café. On the first outing, the game was stained and starting to look grubby. Topsfield partly attributes the fragility of the materials used for ancient versions of *Snakes And Ladders* as the reason why the earliest surviving examples of the game are from the eighteenth century, despite his conjecture that the game is actually much older.[318] In the twenty-first century, I had many more options to explore. I replaced the lightweight fabric with a wax cloth version that was ordered quickly to continue the

[316] @Kmsurgey, 'Lines And Ladders' <https://pin.it/kktfjvy6bk6nsq> [Accessed 19 February 2020].
[317] Topsfield (1985), p. 203.
[318] Topsfield (2006), pp. 150, 177.

run. This could still be folded into a small space and had the advantage that it could be wiped clean. This was much more practical, but unfortunately the colours were not as vibrant. Moreover, through folding it started to mark. Returning from Edinburgh with plans to amend some aspects of the game based on the playing experience, I investigated other possible fabric print versions. As a result, the game is now printed on vegan leatherette. This has true colour matching and accurate detail representation to the original design. It is easily cleaned and is hard wearing. Although it is quite bulky, it can be rolled up to be carried and this has proved the most successful material. Studying these versions of *Snakes And Ladders* provided hypotextual sources that aided the development of the form, the design and material of *Lines And Ladders.* Starting with a defined structural hypotext that has had many iterations proved fruitful for the creation of a new hypertext, as it revealed the potential of this particular board game.

Paratext

Epitext: Extending *Lines And Ladders* using an online performance diary

The paratext plays a role in extending the hypertext, whether this is the epitext encountered separately to the hypertext or the peritext, which is experienced in the same time and space as the hypertext.[319] This section will consider the operations of the epitext and is followed by a discussion of the peritext. The epitextual focus for the discussion that follows is the *Lines And Ladders* performance diary, which provides documentation of the game's development and my experiences of playing it, whilst the location in which the game was played is analysed as peritextual. Both peritext and epitext differ for individual performance experiences: the location changes and the diary develops.

The performance diary operates as a metatextual epitext; this document sometimes offers an account of individual games, but more often focuses on thoughts and reflections connected by a topic. Each entry is around five hundred words long and is intended to be read by a lay audience, which means that it is suited to short, self-contained reflections. The diary traces ideas that emerged as interesting to me. It is shared as part of the thinking process and was the first place that audience members could see my thoughts after playing. As a model I drew on Carran Waterfield's performance diary on the development

[319] Genette, *Paratexts,* p. 5.

of *The House.*[320] Her writing deals with different elements of the process of making and performing in a way that I hope to emulate. In particular, her voice comes through clearly in her posts, which engages me as a reader to feel closer to the development of her family history performance project.

In her attempt to clarify a definition, Megan Vaughan describes 'theatre bloggers as those who self-publish personal, informal posts, primarily about theatre, in an online space that they control'.[321] Whilst the *Lines And Ladders* blogposts are about performance-making, rather than audience experiences of the theatre, the definition here is otherwise useful. The tone and language of the performance diary is more relaxed than the writing in this thesis. The paragraphs are short, sometimes just one sentence, occasionally just a single word. Duška Radosavljević suggests that blogging is closer to speech than literature in its form.[322] She argues that, 'in the digital world we have been freed to revert to more personal, more creative and more conversational means of expression'.[323] The *Lines And Ladders* performance diary invites a more intimate engagement with the reader than the thesis through my use of an informal style, and colloquial tone and language.

Family historians made use of the potential of the Internet to share information as early as the 1980s. Jerome de Groot suggests that from its inception it enabled a 'much more collaborative genealogy'.[324] He stresses that family historians use the Internet actively 'to "create" and "curate" their online performative selves'[325] (emphasis in original). Blogging is a popular way for family historians to share their discoveries and methods. For example, Natalie Pithers is a genealogist who played *Lines And Ladders* with me in London and she posts a regular online blog that features advice for people researching their family history, stories from her own research and some general history.[326] These posts support others undertaking research, serve as motivation to discover our own histories and provide specific social historical contexts. In the same way that the blogosphere has made

[320] Carran Waterfield 'Working diary – The House', 9 September 2014 – 10 November 2016 <http://blog.poortheatres.manchester.ac.uk/category/carrans-working-diary/> [Accessed 11 May 2020].
[321] Megan Vaughan, *Theatre Blogging: The emergence of a critical culture* (London: Methuen, 2020), p. 9.
[322] Duška Radosavljević, 'Theatre Criticism: Changing Landscapes' in *Theatre Criticism: Changing Landscapes,* ed. by Duška Radosavljević (London: Bloomsbury, 2016) p. 17.
[323] Radosavljević, 'Theatre Criticism', p. 18.
[324] De Groot, *Consuming Heritage,* p. 75.
[325] De Groot, *Consuming Heritage,* p. 78.
[326] Natalie Pithers, 'Blog' <www.genealogystories.co.uk/blog-2/> [Accessed 6 March 2020].

it possible for people to connect their real-time commentaries on theatre, so its self-publishing form enables family historians to share their expertise and personal interest histories with other enthusiasts. Thus, through the combination of family history and performance studies, as an online epitext the *Lines And Ladders* performance diary brought together two existing plains in the blogosphere.

As an epitext, the performance diary's main purpose was to document *Lines And Ladders*. Using this online diary, I reflected in a relaxed, informal and public way on the research as it developed. This served to extend the experience of the hypertext for me as the performance maker, as much as for anyone who chooses to read it. Posting as the research developed meant that the performance diary is an unfinished, cumulative record, rather than a complete, comprehensive epitext, as this thesis attempts to be. Re-reading the performance diary enables me to recall the experience of playing, especially as I get further away from the games that I am writing about; it becomes an archive of the experience that I had playing the game. Eleanor Collins proposes that 'The blog can become a live archive and constantly evolving'.[327] The capability of the form to produce short responses and to reveal changes in thinking make it comparable to the live experience of playing *Lines And Ladders.* The game is different every time it is played, despite following the same board and rules; each game produces a new living archive of intertextual stories.

The links to the performance diary that are referenced throughout this chapter indicate how the archive of online material has driven the content of this thesis. Collins recognises that theatre reviews can have a disproportionate impact on the legacy of a performance, because they are the text that can be studied, once the show ceases to be performed.[328] This is also true of the *Lines And Ladders* performance diary, which continues to exist now that the game is no longer being played. As was noted in 'Chapter Four: Remembering' and 'Chapter One: Methodology', this contradictory status is a quality of the paratext, and in particular the epitext, which remains beyond the experience of playing. The performance diary can be read by anyone online: before, after or without playing the

[327] Eleanor Collins, 'Theatre reviewing in post-consensus society: Performance, print and the blogosphere', *Shakespeare,* 6:3 (2010), 330-336 <DOI.10.1080/17540918.2010.497855> (334).
[328] Collins, 'Theatre reviewing in post-consensus society', 333-34.

game. For some readers this may be their only experience of *Lines And Ladders;* others may play the game but never seek out the performance diary. The epitext is an additional extra to the experience of the hypertext, but to those that seek it out it provides a reflective extension to the game.

The performance diary gave me the space to explore different ways of expressing ideas. For example, I have made two attempts at explaining transtextuality, as I tried to make this theory more comprehensible. The first was in response to Genette passing away in 2018[329] and the second, written in 2019, responds to the release of the Marvel franchise film *Endgame.*[330] Writing these posts helped me to talk and write more confidently about the theory. However, generally, I have avoided discussing the theoretical underpinning of the thesis in the performance diary, because it is too complex and dependent on specific terminology to explain in every short blog post. Radosavljević has suggested that blogging 'has the potential to demystify and popularize the intellectual commons of academia'.[331] The performance diary provides space to communicate the research, but its format and audience limit the depth of that communication. This means that as an epitext, the performance diary provides an alternative, more fragmented, method of sharing ideas than the thesis. Nevertheless, it has value as it offers succinct, meditations on different aspects of the research that can be read by a time-restricted, interested, but not expert, audience.

Peritext: Locating *Lines And Ladders*

There have been twelve different venues for playing the game, and although some locations had more impact on some audience members than others, the environment in which the game was played always extended the game as a peritextual setting. *Lines And Ladders* was deliberately flexible, as it could be played in any space with a table and enough chairs for participants. Board games keep the players static; this meant that for a performance of storytelling it provided a fixed space as peritext. When I played, the

[329] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 17: Transtextuality', 31 December 2018 <http://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/12/31/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-17-transtextuality> [Accessed 19 February 2020].
[330] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 23: Endgame', 7 May 2019 <http://heardofcats.co.uk/2019/05/07/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-23-endgame> [Accessed 19 February 2020].
[331] Radosavljević, 'Theatre Criticism', p. 26.

peritext was always a publicly accessible place. It was important that the play happened in the open, where people sitting nearby might overhear as a non-participating audience. The writing that follows discusses the influence of the location of the game within specific venues, the venues themselves and the broader geographic and temporal situation on the players' experience of the hypertext. I reflect on the presence of the external audience in these public spaces and the variable impact of the peritext from my own perspective as facilitator-player and taking account of audience-participants' feedback.

The game was played in the following venues: Interval Bar and Café, Sheffield (July and September 2018); The Forest Café, Edinburgh (August 2018); Well Café, Edinburgh (August 2018); Miller's Sandwich Bar, Edinburgh (August 2018); The Little Shop of Memory, Edinburgh (August 2018); H-Art Café, Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall, Herefordshire (September 2018); Nexus Art Café, Manchester (November 2018); Manchester Central Library (November 2018); Tree House Board Game Café, Sheffield (November 2018); Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester (January 2019); Cakes & Ale Café, Carlisle (February 2019); Alexandra Palace, London (April 2019).

I propose understanding the peritext as having multiple layers: the immediate surroundings are the micro-peritext; the next layer is the meso-peritext, this is the café or other venue; overarching both of these is the macro-peritext of the city or county where *Lines And Ladders* was played. For example, Edinburgh at the time of the International and Fringe Festivals provided a macro-peritext, The Forest Café was one meso-peritext, and the specific location of the table where I played the game within the venue (near the counter or far from the speaker system) operated as a micro-peritext. Genette described the paratext as 'an edge' and I believe that, when considered alongside performance researcher Baz Kershaw's application of 'edge effects', it is a useful term for exploring the relationship between the micro-peritext and the meso-peritext.[332] Kershaw proposed the term 'ecotone' for the border space between audiences and performers. This term, borrowed from ecology, indicates a space of friction, where 'distinctive ecosystems rub up against each other' and which can be particularly unstable, as well as producing what

[332] Genette, *Paratexts,* p. 2; Baz Kershaw, *Theatre Ecology: Environments and Performance Events* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 185.

he refers to as 'edge effects'.[333] Kershaw suggests that the ecotone is 'actor-audience or performer-spectator interactions'.[334] When performance is taken outside of a clearly demarcated theatre space, this edge has different qualities and is subject to different conventions. Making this hypertext in public spaces with a present, unaware audience utilised the edge effect of the peritext. The performance can be considered to have two ecotones: the first is within the hypertext between myself as player-facilitator and the player-audience-participant; the second is between us as players participating in the hypertext in the micro-peritext and those nearby in the meso-peritextual space.

Despite our roles in the game being distinct as facilitator and audience, as far as feasible, I wanted to be playing together as equals, thus I attempted to reduce the edge effects of the first ecotone. *Lines And Ladders* was always played in managed spaces that have accepted conventions of behaviour, which I hoped reassured the audience-participants about the extent of performance that would be required from them. Although I might have been more familiar with the location having selected it and possibly having played games there before, we were both visitors. This placed us on a more even footing within the hypertext, but ultimately I was still responsible for the success of the game in each particular space; this maintained the ecotone within the performance and prevented it from being diminished completely. The only possible exceptions to this were when I played with family and childhood friends with whom I did not have to work to gain their trust. In these instances, I relaxed and made less attempts to control the game, which helped to break down the ecotone between audience and facilitator. Our relationship moderated the edge effects.

The use of cafés and similar communal spaces aided the sense of ease and self-assurance about telling stories in public spaces according to audience-participant feedback. Thirteen participants made comments that indicated that the particular public spaces were beneficial as it helped them to feel relaxed, comfortable and/or gave a tone of informality to the proceedings. This suggests that the edge between facilitator-player and audience-player was partly mitigated by the micro- and meso-peritexts. Furthermore, three players

[333] Baz Kershaw, *Theatre Ecology: Environments and Performance Events* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 185.
[334] Kershaw, *Theatre Ecology,* p. 185.

suggested that playing in a private space would have felt too much like an interview. Evelyn Whitfield liked the public space because players did 'not feel hemmed in or threatened/pressurised in any way, as they could get up and leave'. By enabling an atmosphere of ease and comfort that I maintained through my facilitation, the peritext supported confident storytelling from the audience-players.

The second edge is integral to *Line And Ladders*. The impact of the peritext on the hypertext was an element that I wanted to emphasise by taking this performance into public spaces. External to the audience-participants, there is an audience who might be listening in or might overhear part of our conversation. They are an unknowing audience. Writing about museum theatre, Anthony Jackson observed 'three tiers of engagement'.[335] The first tier is fully engaged and committed to the performance; they are ready and waiting for it to start. The second tier arrive just as the performance is starting and watch from the periphery staying until the end, but always ready to leave should they choose. The third tier drop in midway and leave before the end.[336] This is a useful framework when thinking about the audiences for *Lines And Ladders*.

Players of the game fit into Jackson's first tier of audience as fully engaged throughout. In the second tier are those who very occasionally ask what we are doing, although unlike Jackson's second tier these audience members only observe for a short period, as it is not a show intended to sustain the interest of either the second or third tier. The third tier makes up the largest group who either ignore us entirely or show an inclination to listen curiously for a short while without venturing to question us. Playing in the meso-peritext of cafés meant that the second and third tier of audience was often relatively stationary, as they were usually the people seated at the next table and the staff in the venue. Mostly they were engaged in their own conversations or activity and we would provide a brief distraction. The meso-peritext in which the second and third tiers of audience were least apparent was the Tree House Board Game Café in Sheffield. This was a different experience to any of the other games, because in this venue the playing of a board game was ordinary and expected, so that playing generated very little observable interest and

[335] Anthony Jackson, 'Engaging the audience: negotiating performance in the museum', in *Performing Heritage: Research, practice and innovation in museum theatre and live interpretation,* ed. by Anthony Jackson and Jenny Kidd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 11-25 (p. 13).
[336] Jackson, 'Engaging the audience', p. 14.

part of the performance element of playing was lost. The main variation on the static audience was in places where I positioned myself close to the queue to the café's counter; this happened in Miller's Sandwich Bar, the Well Café and Cakes And Ale Café. This queue would provide a temporary audience, who were interested as they were waiting. In the Little Shop of Memory where people were looking at the various objects on display, this third tier showed more confidence in watching us play, because this was a meso-peritext that encouraged curiosity.

The secondary and tertiary audience did not need to be listening, but their presence could modify the storytelling of the audience-player. Audience-participants knew that they were bringing their stories into a public space when they played the game and during the prologue I drew attention to the fact that anyone might be listening. On the feedback form audience-participants were asked: 'The game is played in a public space. Did that affect your participation? How?'[337] In their responses to these questions, only nine people considered how sharing in front of an unofficial audience affected their own storytelling. Carolyn Appelbe had done a substantial amount of family history research and explained that she would always be wary of sharing family history particulars: 'Situations and stories, yes, but not names', whilst J. Smith did not feel it had affected his storytelling, but thought that others might not want to share in public. Four people suggested that they did not feel overheard despite being in a public space. Three people commented on being aware of the interest of others watching the play, but only Edward Nichol (my brother) commented that this had changed our play, as we had lowered our voices to talk about what we considered to be very private, uncomfortable shared history.

In general audience-participants considered public space as something that could intrude on their experience by being a distraction or interrupting play, but largely felt that it did not do this. Forty-eight audience-participants responded to the question about playing in a public space; thirty-one of these responses stated that the public space had no effect on them, whilst seventeen indicated that it had some impact. Twelve of those respondents who said the public space did not affect them offered no further detail. The remaining nineteen made comments that indicated that playing in a public space was primarily seen

[337] Second question on feedback form, which can be read in Appendix 5.2.

as having potential for distraction but that this did not occur. For example, six participants indicated that noise was not an issue for them when playing, whilst four commented that they were so engaged in the game that the environment did not distract them. This perception of space as something that could impact negatively was shared by those who felt that the space had affected the game, for example, four players commented on background noise as an issue. These responses suggest that that the edge effect was something to work against from the perspective of many audience members. Although when Frances Scales played in Cakes And Ale Café she noted 'There were a couple beside us and they were obviously intrigued. I quite enjoyed that side of it. It only added to the fun for me.' The edge between the hypertext and the peritext could be productive, because it was a space where we, as storytellers, needed to assert our commitment to playing in a world seeking to distract us.

The peritext could impose its character on the playing of *Lines And Ladders* and this was most often observable with regard to noise. This was the case at The Forest Café in Edinburgh, which was run by volunteers, decorated in a bright street art style, and had a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. Usually there was very loud music, which was sometimes an asset, as it helped people to be more confident in their storytelling; it was necessary to speak up simply to be heard and there was less risk of being overheard when in competition with music. However, it could also make playing difficult and this happened when *Lines And Ladders* took place during the weekly 'Techno Brunch'. Our small gathering of people interested in talking about family history were amused by this and, although, it helped to break the ice on my nervous first day with two players who I did not know and who did not know one another, we struggled to hear one another's stories over loud techno music. Although the staff did turn the volume down for me on this and other occasions in order to make playing possible, I wanted *Lines And Ladders* to be affected by the peritext, and not to have to change the tenor of the venue.

As a meso-peritext, The Little Shop of Memory contributed to the experience of the hypertext, without needing to be changed in order to enable play. This is the home of the Living Memory Association, which is a charity that encourages people to get together and share reminiscences. The shop is in the Ocean Terminal Shopping Centre in Leith, Edinburgh, and is crammed full of old things intended to prompt memories and

storytelling; absolutely nothing was for sale. At the back of the shop there was an area with armchairs and a low coffee table. This was outside the macro-peritext of the festival, as it was located far from other performance events at the edge of the city and it provided a different type of meso- and micro-peritext to the other Edinburgh venues as well. This was a venue designed for storytelling, rather than eating and drinking. It was a space intended to make people think and spend time talking about the past. As a result, people were enthusiastic about participating and over two and a half days in The Living Memory Shop, I played six games with fourteen people.

Only two players commented specifically on the surroundings positively stimulating storytelling. These were both in locations that had a heritage aesthetic. In the Little Shop of Memory, Evelyn Whitfield commented that 'This public place is already one in which people look at and handle old everyday objects so I naturally associate it with reminiscence'. Playing in Cakes And Ale Café in Carlisle, which hosts a museum to the State Management Scheme (under which all public houses in Carlisle were brought under state ownership during the First World War), Arwen Heaton commented that, 'There is memorabilia on the walls and in the décor which aided concentration on the past'. The other place that I felt changed the storytelling because of the meso-peritext was the Museum of Science and Industry. This game was played as part of a 'Platform for Investigation' into DNA history. I was surrounded by DNA specialists from multiple disciplines, so I was able to direct participants to the relevant expert when there were questions that I could not answer. The conversation in this environment was led by the DNA design on the board and what can be learnt from DNA with regards to family history. When I tried to replicate this storytelling structure in Cakes And Ale Café, it fell flat. In Manchester, audience-players were bringing their experience of the peritext to their storytelling, which gave us both more confidence in making use of this scientific extratext.

The final location where *Lines And Ladders* was played was the Alexandra Palace in London at Family Tree Live. An initial response to playing *Lines And Ladders* at this event is recorded in the performance diary 'On the village green'.[338] This was a two-day event

[338] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 22: On the village green', 30 April 2019 <http://heardofcats.co.uk/2019/04/30/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-22-on-the-village-green> [Accessed 20 February 2020].

bringing together family historians and genealogical organisations from across the country. I played *Lines And Ladders* there on the second day of the event in the village green area. This was set with a model tree, picnic tables and a green carpet. Family Tree Live was particularly tempting as a meso-peritext because it was an opportunity to play the game with more people who are committed to researching their family history. Most players of the game before this had been interested in their family history, but few had spent a significant time researching it. I expected people to be interested in *Lines And Ladders* but too busy to stop, however, in the end, I spent a full day playing four games with five people. Audience-participants knew their family histories and were keen to share.

The macro-peritext could also impact the hypertext. I was keen when planning this final part of the research project to play *Lines And Ladders* in Edinburgh and to be a part of the festival that sweeps through that city every August. I attempted to capture the way that I was feeling in the performance diary entry 'Edinburgh, I'm on my way!', writing,

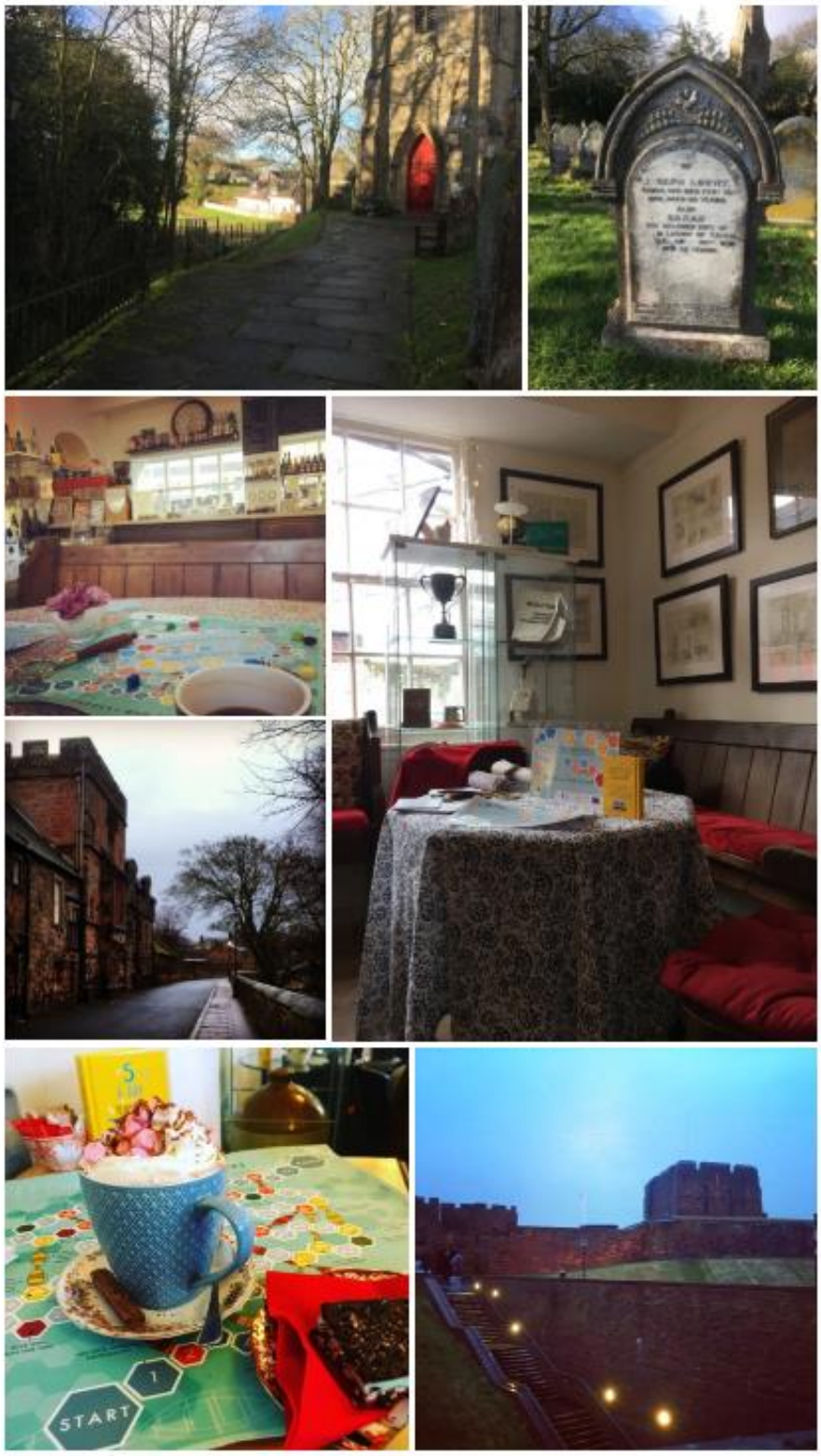
> So whatever happens in Edinburgh – and I will publish this before I go so that I can't deny this feeling later – I am going to remember that this is part of burning the plan. That when I got stuck, I tried something new. *Lines And Ladders* is all about a different way of doing family history and it's a new direction for me. Maybe in a week I'll feel jaded, but I'm going to enjoy it for as long as I can!
>
> ('Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 02: Edinburgh, I'm on my way!', 2 August 2018)

This was my first experience of being a performance maker in Edinburgh and I was excited about taking the game there. In Edinburgh in August performance was frequently found in unusual places and people were not surprised to be offered a storytelling experience at a café table. This gave me lots of opportunities to play and to hone my pitch. Overall, half of the games that I played were in Edinburgh (seventeen in total). This macro-peritext was an ideal playground for this practice-research, which offered audiences a chance to become performers through their participation.

It was important to me that I played the game within the macro-peritexts of Manchester and Carlisle where many of my familial roots lie. In Carlisle, I played in Cakes and Ale Café, which is attached to Bookends Bookshop in Carlisle. This was a significant meso-peritext for me playing *Lines And Ladders,* as I grew up in Carlisle and can trace my family history back at least two hundred fifty years in that city. Moreover, I worked for Bookends as teenager, although it has since moved location and the café has only opened in recent years. I played in Cakes and Ale Café every afternoon for a week and spent some time during the week indulging in family history research. Playing in my home city encouraged me to visit significant local places, including graves of ancestors at Rockcliffe Church.[339] Despite locating the game in the personally significant macro-peritext of Carlisle, the stories shared did not particularly feature north Cumbria, either when told by me or the audience-participants. In Manchester, I played three games in three different venues and the stories that I told were more connected to that city. Those stories are shorter and more varied, so lent themselves better to fitting whichever prompt is reached.

The situating of *Lines And Ladders* in public spaces meant that the peritext was not controlled, as it might have been in a theatre space. The need for the players to play within the expectations of the venue could provide reassurance for those unsure about being in a participatory performance and helped to put many audience-participants at ease. At micro-, meso- or macro levels some peritexts impacted the stories told, but often it was simply the understanding that the game could be interrupted because it took place in public that generated the greatest sense of the 'edge'.

[339] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 20: Place Matters', 3 March 2019 <https://heardofcats.co.uk/2019/03/03/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-20-place-matters/> [Accessed 20 February 2020].



Clockwise from top left: Rockcliffe Church; Gravestone of Joseph and Sarah Lowry and their grandson Joseph Edward Lowry at Rockcliffe Church, Joseph and Sarah are my 3 x great grandparents; *Lines And Ladders* in Cakes & Ale; Carlisle Castle; Hot chocolate and traybake in Cakes & Ale; West Walls in Carlisle; Cakes & Ale.

Figure 5.7

Photographs from the performance diary entry, 'Place Matters', which is about playing the game in Carlisle.

Intertexts

Stories shared through play

The *Lines And Ladders* board with its twenty prompts opened many conversations about family history and generated opportunities for all players to tell stories from multiple genealogical lines. These stories I am categorising as intertexts, as they are inserted as complete entities into the hypertext. Genette described intertextuality as 'a relationship of copresence between two texts', and led with the example of '*quoting*'.[340] The stories that players chose to share are quotations from our family histories placed alongside one another in the order dictated by the dice roll. Although certain themes and ancestors sometimes featured on more than one occasion, the structure of the game stimulates a deliberately disrupted narrative. This section of this chapter is written from my own notes and the audience responses to playing the game. It considers how playing the game generated different combinations of intertexts, the relationship between myself and audience-players, the topics covered in discussion, and the impact that playing had on audience-participants' ideas of family history.

For some audience-players, *Lines And Ladders* encouraged them to think about different ways of making and sharing family histories. Tanya Saunders suggested that the game had changed the way she thought about family history 'in the sense of drawing the links between family history and the present day more clearly, and reflecting on this. Also in thinking about the stories we tell and those that hold our attention – or don't.' The success of the game in 'prompting conversations and sharing stories' was noted by Natalie Pithers and Arwen Heaton also commented that it provided 'starting points and made me aware of the stories and the storytellers.' Moe Shoji commented that 'playing this game made me feel that collecting personal – and subjective – anecdotes itself can be an art of making sense of family history.' This is the performance of the archive; the sharing of stories is the art of the hypertext and an attempt to contain the complexity of family history. Matthew Stallard suggested that the game made him 'think about the performative aspect of memory – "collective", "community", "social", "family" memory – memory/history only exist in the present – constantly being re-imagined.' As a hypertext *Lines And Ladders* had

[340] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* trans by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) (first publ. as *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1982), pp. 1-2.

the breadth to be able to spark conversations and provoke audience-players to think about the issues that have been considered throughout this thesis of material culture, changing attitudes and forms of memory.

Lines And Ladders was intended to be inclusive. If players were not familiar with family history or the process of research, this game became more about personal history or a way of explaining family history research methods. I tailored the stories that I told, as the player-facilitator, according to the players' levels of engagement with family history, as garnered during the paperwork prologue and initial play. This was particularly striking when playing with a reminiscence group at The Living Memory Association. These players recalled their own younger lives, sometimes stretching into stories of grandparents, but not particularly referencing formal family history research. The varying degrees of experience in family history that every player brought to *Lines And Ladders* were incorporated intertextually into the hypertext. Individuals who had done substantial research into their family history expressed pleasure at finding a space to share their research. Margaret Milner explained 'It was good to share my findings with someone. It is quite frustrating at times how few people are interested in the information that I have found.' The space to share stories was generally enjoyed by the audience-players. The hypotextual adaptation and the architextual form created a flexible vehicle for sharing family stories and research experiences as intertexts.

Each time *Lines And Ladders* was played, there were decisions made that affected the progress of play. If we played with one dice, the game took longer and there was an increased likelihood of landing on prompts. When we landed on a prompt, sometimes only the player who has landed on the prompt tells a story, other times all players will tell a story. In a game that I played with Lorna Frost and Amy Russell, I adapted so that we were all able to share more stories. I knew Amy as our mothers went to school together, but neither of us had met Lorna before. In this performance of the game we all told a story, no matter who had landed on the ladder; this led to a particularly wide breadth of stories looking back historically and across the world geographically. Intertextually this led to more comparative storytelling, for example, when we landed on the cell 'You find something that makes you feel proud', all three of us talked about female ancestors. I talked about Sybil Nuttall who became a medical doctor in 1920 and they both described

women who had struggled against hardship and survived. After the game both audience-players made similar comments, Lorna stated 'I enjoyed the stories of the other players and to see their enthusiasm to share their stories', whilst Amy wrote that it was a 'relaxed, engaging way to reconnect with my own family history and hear others' stories (which was lovely!)'. Both expressed an intention to explore their own family histories further. The decision in this iteration of *Lines And Ladders* for all players to tell a story every time increased the breadth of intertexts and affected the structure by providing extended storytelling experiences for all three players, in which each prompt was built upon in response to the others' stories.

There is a spread of eleven positive and nine negative ladders of different lengths across the *Lines And Ladders* board. This organisation is intended to facilitate regular storytelling opportunities about the progress, or lack of progress, in the players' family history research. The higher number of upward ladders made it slightly more likely that players would land on a positive story than a negative, although one of the positives leads directly to a negative, which means that its benefit is muted. This is 'You make a discovery' (forward twenty-seven places), which lands the player on 'No-one cares about your discovery' (back twenty places) meaning that the total moved forward is only seven in the end. This is a prompt that needs particular explaining, as the language is a little callous, although it is intended to be light-hearted. As the facilitator-player, I was able to introduce it in a tone that suggested this, but it proved awkward to explain to those who had little experience researching their family history. The ladders relate to the experience of the family historian who becomes engrossed in their own research and wishes to share it, but those nearby are not interested. This is a familiar experience to those undertaking family history research. Alison Light recounts being cornered by another researcher and having to 'listen, slightly glazed, to yet another astonishing revelation that meant so much to the teller and next to nothing to me'.[341] The positioning of these ladders always required an explanation of this experience as a family history researcher.

The tone of the hypertext could be affected by the combination of ladders landed upon. In one game we never landed on a downward ladder, which made the hypertext an

[341] Alison Light, *Common People: The History of an English Family* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 128.

unremittingly positive experience. In another game, one player, Elaine Wilkie, never landed on a single prompt. At the end, I gave her the opportunity to choose one to which she would like to respond. She told a story of a coat that she inherited from her mother, as she told the story of her mother going out wearing this coat, she prompted memories for Sheila Webb who was also playing. Together they reminisced about nights out in Edinburgh, continuing the storytelling experience of the game with the intertexts spilling over the end of the board game experience. Similarly, when James Halstead examined the board before playing, he mentioned a particular wish to respond to one prompt. When he had won the game, but had not landed on this cell, I gave him a chance to tell the story he wanted to share. He chose 'You find something that you cannot share' and shared a cautionary tale about discussing family stories with branches of the family that you do not know well. He warned that stories familiar to one branch may be unknown to another.[342] There was, therefore, a limited invitation for players to take control of the playing experience and make it fit the stories that they wanted to tell. The choices that players made about the stories that they wished to tell and the random effect of the dice roll led to differing intertextual experiences in every game. The inclusion of family histories as intertexts meant that play could be adapted to accommodate varied stories. The intertexts quality as a separate, finite text enabled this adaptability.

Approximately one third of audience-players were friends or family and the experience of playing *Lines And Ladders* provided a structure to our conversations that would not normally exist. When I played with family it was a chance to share my research about shared ancestry; I include more specific details than when I play with friends or strangers.[343] In these games, I contributed intertexts that were then questioned by my family and my family were able to provide their own insight and perspective onto these stories. Inviting friends and family to contribute family history to make a storytelling performance formalised the time that we spent talking together. With friends that I have known since childhood, I often know their families, but with friends that I have met more recently I know very little about their family stories. With all friends, *Lines And Ladders*

[342] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 24: My thesis is performance', 2 February 2020 <http://heardofcats.co.uk/2020/02/02/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-24-my-thesis-is-performance> [Accessed 20 February 2020].
[343] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 13: Playing with family', 31 December 2018 <http://heardofcats.co.uk/2018/10/31/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-13-playing-with-family> [Accessed 20 February 2020].

gave us a chance to dig a little deeper into one another's own personal stories and family histories prompted by questions that we might not usually ask one another. The remaining two thirds of people who have played *Lines And Ladders* have been people that I have met for the first time when they agreed to participate. Playing enabled much more personal questions than would normally be the case in a first conversation. For some, a choice to be anonymous made them happy to speak freely, despite speaking to a stranger, but most chose to be named. The conversation that *Lines And Ladders* prompted meant that by the end of the game we knew a significant amount about one another and I experienced many deep and rich conversations with people that I have met for the first time when playing *Lines And Ladders.*[344] The game structure, which encouraged short intertextual contributions, provided an impetus for a precise, focused and personal conversation whether played with family, friends or strangers.

Lines And Ladders was partly created as a method of moving away from using intertextual historical objects in the performance of family histories, by placing an emphasis on oral storytelling. However, there have been two occasions when people have brought items to the performance. One participant brought a family tree that had been created by an ancestor, a locket containing a photograph of her grandmother and a photograph album. We discussed these before the game started, as an additional peritextual preface and these three different items provided specific stimulus for the conversation that might not otherwise have occurred. In particular, the family tree provided a prompt for discussion about the way that we record family histories and how reliable the histories recorded by others might be. *Lines And Ladders* was designed to be a hypertext independent of intertextual material culture, but this experience demonstrated how such contributions could enhance the playing experience.

The second person to bring an object was Arwen Heaton, a friend and former colleague, who played the game with me on the first day in Cakes and Ale Café. When playing this game, we landed on the space 'You have family heirlooms'. This prompted Arwen to consider an item of jewellery that had been entrusted to her to pass to her daughter, Kelda

[344] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 19: Meeting people for the first time', 30 January 2019 <http://heardofcats.co.uk/2019/01/30/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-19-meeting-people-for-the-first-time> [Accessed 6 March 2020].

Heaton. She returned later in the week with Kelda (age 10) having decided that playing *Lines And Ladders* would be a good way to introduce her to family history. Having played the game once, Arwen knew what to expect and she was able to facilitate Kelda's participation through specific questioning. The 'heirlooms' cell on the board is near the end of the game and increasingly it seemed unlikely that anyone would land there. However, eventually Kelda did. Arwen was pleased and expressed relief that this had happened. She produced the wooden box containing the piece of jewellery. She showed this to Kelda, who was excited and wanted to wear the delicate necklace immediately. Arwen helped to fasten it and explained that the item would have to go back into the box after the game for safekeeping. Between the two games, Arwen had sought out the story of the necklace, which had been given to Kelda's paternal great-grandmother on her wedding day by her soon-to-be-husband, and now she shared this story with Kelda and myself.

The planning that Arwen had done was only possible because of her familiarity with the hypertextual experience gained from the experience of playing earlier in the week. The first game that Arwen and I had played together had been long and expansive, moving between family histories, world history and our personal experiences of learning about history. Many of the issues prompted by the board were discussed during this performance, including DNA testing, the confusion of records, the stories that families tell and the potential for shocks and revelations. We both hinted at stories that we might share early in the game, building suspense for the other player. Arwen commented in her feedback that 'I have quite a chatty relationship with Kirsty anyway, so it felt very relaxed as if we had met up for a coffee'. The public place provided an informal setting for the performance that enabled intimate conversation guided by the prompts. If we had met for a coffee without the game our conversation would have been different, family history might have been discussed, but only to explain what I had been doing recently. It is highly unlikely that I would have questioned Arwen about her family history to the extent that I did in *Lines And Ladders.* The second game, played with Kelda, was very different; Arwen and I became co-facilitating players for Kelda's game, whereas in most games I have undertaken this role alone. In our professional work together we had created many performances with young people and this relationship may have helped me to feel particularly comfortable sharing the facilitation role with Arwen. In every game,

audience-participants were asked to tell stories about their family history and their research experiences, but they were not given the prompts in advance in order to prepare. Colin Rowcroft suggested that it might have been preferable to have the prompts before playing in order to 'have more time to think back and recollect memories'. The game described above with Arwen, who played it twice, illustrates how prior knowledge can affect the experience of the hypertext.

Lines And Ladders was not a method for recording stories; it was a way of sharing them. The stories were told in the moment and, although there are some specific details recorded here and in the blog, it was the bringing together of intertexts at the time of the performance that made the hypertext. This could have a positive effect on the players as storytellers, as one audience-participant suggested 'sharing stories makes them more lasting (other people know them as well as you/your family).' For this audience-player, the hypertext served its purpose of bringing the intertexts into a shared space where there were enthusiastic listeners. Rose Gibson described how when playing *Lines And Ladders* with five other audience-players, 'one encourages the other and sparks discussion and participation'. The game Rose described is the only one that I did not play, as there were six players, I facilitated without playing. I still shared some stories to model responses, but as Rose suggested many of the stories were prompted by listening to other players. Playing the game with fifty-six different audience-participants, I have felt privileged that people are so willing to share. I have enjoyed listening to people's histories; I have learnt more about my friends' families and had the pleasure of getting to know people through their ancestry.

This hypertext was designed as a way of incorporating many different stories from my own research, whilst inviting participation from the audience through the sharing of their family history experiences. The decision of which intertexts to introduce into the hypertext was made in the moment of playing. However, I adapted some of the questions as a result of the experience of playing. The most severe ladder in the game will send players fifty-eight places backwards and in the version played in Edinburgh had the prompt: 'You find something that makes you feel ashamed'. The notion of shame in relation to family history is being challenged by current research. Tanya Evans of Macquarie University in Sydney delivered a keynote presentation at an event organised

by the University of Leeds in July 2018. This keynote discussed a survey of family historians that Evans was undertaking, which included questions about the emotional impact of their genealogical research. In the keynote Evans explained that her findings were showing that very few of the respondents felt shame about uncovering family history secrets, although some shame was expressed with regard to incidents of mental illness. Evans concluded that rather than provoking feelings of shame, the research into difficult histories tended to result in greater empathy for those suffering in a contemporary context.[345] When playing the game in Edinburgh, I started to ask people if there was anything that made them feel uncomfortable, rather than ashamed and when amending the game for a reprint after Edinburgh I changed the wording of this prompt to 'You find something that makes you feel uncomfortable'. The word 'uncomfortable' felt less personally invasive than 'ashamed'. 'Ashamed' implied that the player should feel responsible for their ancestor's actions or behaviour, whilst 'uncomfortable' suggests a personal reaction centred in the present moment and may be something that makes an individual feel shame, but does not necessarily do so. This enabled more open, less intrusive questioning and allowed participants more agency in their response.

The intention of *Lines And Ladders* was to create a hypertextual space that brought into play intertexts about research into family history. The prompts on the board relate to methods for uncovering information, for example, through archives, material objects, or conversations with family members. The prominence of DNA in the artwork and the positioning of the prompt 'You take a DNA test' on the board twice meant that it was nearly always discussed at some point, as a method for genealogical research. Near the beginning 'You take a DNA test' moves you forward, but near the end it sends you backwards. At both it prompted a mixed reaction when playing. I usually responded to someone landing on this cell by asking if any of the players had taken a test. This closed question often led to an opinion volunteered by the audience-players – sometimes this was positive, sometimes it was negative, but mostly it was curious. *Lines And Ladders* provided a space to raise some concerns about the control of this data, as well as to ask questions about the expectations of these tests and their potential uses.

[345] Tanya Evans, 'The value of collaborating and co-creating knowledge on the history of fractured families with family historians', soundcloud <https://livingwithdying.leeds.ac.uk/family-history-collaboration/> [Accessed 3 January 2019], approx. 17-19 minutes.

DNA tests have two main outcomes for family historians. Firstly, they can provide ethnicity estimates, which will give percentage estimates of a test subject's origins and secondly they may connect the test subject to unknown first, second, third or fourth cousins, enabling them to identify the most recent common ancestor and potentially fill in gaps and uncertainty. However, this can also provide surprising information, such as illegitimacy, which unsettles previously unquestioned family history. When Tanya Saunders joined me to play, this was one of the topics we discussed: how the science of DNA testing could challenge stories that had been handed down. I have not taken a DNA test and, although DNA test taking was discussed in most games, only a small number of audience-players talked about their own experience of taking a test. Several people had been given the tests as presents and were interested in the ethnicity estimate results. When we played the game in Carlisle, Colin Rowcroft had taken a test and his wife, Juliet, had one waiting; both tests had been given as a gift by a family member who had done a significant amount of their own research. Colin and Juliet were interested in the results and especially in supporting the research of the gift giver. James Alasdair McKay had taken two genetic tests with two different companies. The results of these two tests had partly contradicted one another, but James seemed sanguine about this. He had undertaken a substantial amount of paper based genealogical research and recognised the limitations of these tests. The approach towards DNA testing armed with knowledge and understanding of its limitations seemed positive and, as I played the game, I have become less sceptical of DNA testing. When I played at the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry alongside experts in DNA genealogy and other forms of DNA, this helped me to understand more of its potential, whilst still recognising that this is the very beginning of understanding what this science can do and how it can be used. *Lines And Ladders* offered a space to discuss the possibilities and limitations of DNA testing through the sharing of personal experiences and attitudes as intertexts, alongside other forms of family history research. The finite nature of intertexts and their prominence within this hypertext as the only content meant that multiple methods could be discussed within a single hypertext.

In feedback following *Lines And Ladders,* thirty of the forty-eight respondents felt that it had changed the way that they thought about family history. They described multiple effects, which revealed that bringing together intertexts using this game increased many

audience-participants' enthusiasm for researching their family history, although they were considering varying courses of action. Three participants suggested it made them want to research more;[346] a different three said that it reminded them of how much they enjoyed family history;[347] another three commented on the importance of making written records;[348] four people wrote about the importance of talking to family about their history and sharing these stories.[349] Offering feedback four months after playing, Cheryl Evans explained how she had spent time talking with family and sharing family history and photographs via a Facebook group, claiming that 'The game has definitely inspired me to dig around and learn more'. The influence of the discussion about the research process is clear in this outcome. These responses show that audience-players saw value in the discussion stimulated by *Lines And Ladders* and suggest that they felt encouraged to continue it beyond playing the game.

In conclusion, playing *Lines And Ladders* was a successful way of bringing different people's family histories into the same hypertext. Introducing multiple family histories through individual intertexts kept the stories compact and made it possible for one contribution to prompt another. The desire to be inclusive and supportive meant that the intertext choices were not always strictly about family history research. The prompts on the board guided the discussion in that direction, whilst my interventions could aid those who felt less secure talking about their own research. As I became more experienced in creating this hypertext, I was able to adapt and amend my questioning to increase the engagement of the audience-players. The composition of the hypertext varied because the content was entirely constructed from intertexts that changed in each iteration of the game. *Lines And Ladders* enabled a chance sequencing of intertexts that were contributed by all players and through this play a response to the stimulus of family history research was generated.

Conclusion

The game of *Lines And Ladders* provided an effective participatory frame for the performance of family histories in public spaces. The board created a space where

[346] Feedback from Nicola Dexter, Kath Hunt and Frances Scales.
[347] Feedback from Amy Russell, Margaret Milner, and Arwen Heaton.
[348] Feedback from Lorna Frost, Carolyn Appelbe, and Colin Rowcroft.
[349] Feedback from Mary Smith, Cheryl Evans, Josephine Scales, and Margaret Maguire.

transtextual relations could intersect, as described in this chapter. Taking part in a micro-audience performance of family history storytelling could be daunting if the expectations for participation were vague, but using board game architexture provided a recognizable form with clear rules and expectations for behaviour. This helped observably to increase the confidence of audience-participants when playing. Adapting the hypotext of *Snakes And Ladders* with reference to its heritage supported decisions that I made in the design and devising process, in relation to artwork, materials, content and organisation. The final design enabled every hypertext to be structured and controlled in the same way, whilst always being constructed from a new set of intertexts told in a variable order. The hypertext moved easily between different peritexts and these impacted upon the performance experiences, predominantly by increasing the sense of comfort that the players felt, as well as affecting the stories that were told. *Lines And Ladders* provided both consistency and flexibility of experience, which made it possible to incorporate the many family histories of players into a live performance hypertext. The performance diary, as epitext, is metatextual documentation of *Lines And Ladders* and its always unfinished status offers space to continue to develop ideas as time progresses.

Lines And Ladders created the space to ask audience-participants the family history issues that this thesis has raised within a single performance hypertext: the way that we present family histories through photographs and documents; the difficulty of understanding our ancestors' motivations; what family history means to us, today, in the moment of playing; what makes something valuable in our family stories; the difficulty of sharing information with friends, family and strangers; the advantages and disadvantages of different research methods. Every hypertext did not address all these issues, but each game could and had the possibility of following additional lines of inquiry, as prompted by audience-players. As a hypertext, it provided space for thinking, explaining, sharing and questioning. *Lines And Ladders* was about making time to talk about family history and the issues involved in genealogical research. The central premise of this thesis that family history performance brings multiple textual forms into transtextual play with one another is made evident in this particular hypertext. The playing of the game stimulated the production of intertexts, but because the prompts were about the research process there was often a metatextual element to the intertexts: a reflection on what the story means to the teller and to their relationship to family history.

As practice-research the argument of this thesis is made in both this written exegesis and during the performances that I shared with audiences. The architexture of a game made playing with family history research more inclusive in this part of the project than the earlier experiments and enabled the shared articulation of family histories. I wrote in the performance diary entry, 'My thesis is performance' that each game was a chapter of this practice-research thesis, as every time that I played, it was an opportunity to share the thinking about family histories that has gone into these written chapters.[350] *Lines And Ladders* generated discussion about the presentation of old photographs, the questioning of ancestors' beliefs and the value of remembered family histories. The breadth of possibilities in the game meant that all aspects of this research project could be covered in a single iteration, but the arbitrary nature of the game's progression coupled with the clear end point meant that selection always occurred. The transmission of knowledge happened at an interpersonal level and created a live, archival hypertext composed from intertextual family history contributions.

Lines And Ladders is the culmination of this practice-research project. It was developed as a result of the earlier investigations detailed in Chapters Two, Three and Four and shows how this methodology of applying Genette's theory to performance making can provide insight into the construction of a performance hypertext. Genette offered a definition of transtextuality as '"all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts."' (Speech marks in original).[351] Using transtextuality as a tool for family history performance-making meant interrogating the qualities of those relationships and making them apparent in order to understand how they impacted on the experience of the hypertext. This chapter has shown how each of these relational categories contributed to making the hypertext of *Lines And Ladders* discursive, enjoyable, coherent and unpredictable.

[350] Kirsty Surgey, 'Lines And Ladders Performance Diary 24: My thesis is performance', 2 February 2020 <http://heardofcats.co.uk/2020/02/02/lines-and-ladders-performance-diary-24-my-thesis-is-performance> [Accessed 20 February 2020].
[351] Genette, *Palimpsests,* p. 1.

Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis proposed that performance could be used to share family histories, and that in doing this, those family histories are transformed. By uprooting Gérard Genette's theory from the field of literature and applying it to performance-making with family histories, I have done something that has not been previously attempted. Applying the transtextual framework to performances made from family history focuses on functional aspects of the textual elements that are brought into play. This methodology engages with performance as an extended experience that incorporates story, space, objects, people, history, genre and reaches out to texts beyond the time-bound event. Using the term hypertext is recognition that performing with these texts turns them into something new. The hypertext is a mass of textual relations in play for the duration of the experience and this methodology recognises performance as a multi-form experience.

In this conclusion, I draw together the knowledge that has been generated through these practice-research experiments. This starts with reflections on the use of transtextual play as creative practice to explore family history and continues with consideration of the potential of performance as a medium for sharing family history. This is followed by explanation of affective distancing and the efficacy of applying Genette's terminological framework of transtextuality to family history performance-making.

Using creative methods to investigate family history

This is a creative practice-research project that investigated the potential of sharing family histories through play. Undertaking creative practice-research did not mean fictionalising the past, rather it meant interrogating it using methods different to those that a historian might use. The findings of this practice-research project are conceptual, meaning, as defined by Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, that they are concerned 'with argument, analysis and the application of theoretical ideas'.[352] I have proposed a new way of thinking about making performances from family history and have discovered this through creative practice-research. Being creative involved experimenting with the

[352] Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, 'Introduction: *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice - Towards the Iterative Cyclic Web' in Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts,* ed. by Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 1-38 (p. 4).

materials of family history, being imaginative when interpreting historic texts and producing new textual experiences from existing textual resources. This thesis shows that transtextuality is an innovative methodology for creative practice, where new performance texts are built from existing material transtextuality provides a framework for understanding the relationships between texts incorporated in the process of making.

One aspect of this creativity is being able to draw upon research being undertaken in multiple other fields. Integrating research, practice and critical thinking from genealogical, historical and archival studies with that of performance studies produced new analysis. Imagining what my great-grandmother might have said when she showed her holiday slides for *The space in-between* was an overt imposition of my fiction onto the intertexts; she remained an enigma, but her slides became an investigation into the limitation of photographs without contextual knowledge and a meditation on the passing of the cultural experience of shared holiday slide show. The conclusions drawn in this chapter built on photographic and material culture theory, which was explored through performance practice. In order to make *Think Before You Speak,* I had to try to make sense of Edith Nuttall's diary, as the reputation that she had within the family did not entirely match with what I read. To improve my understanding, I used conventional historical research methods of close and wider reading combined with performance practice methods. This included deconstructing the letter 'To My Ego' with vocal experimentation, through action, and by extracting certain words to chalk onto cards. By experimenting with the text of 'To My Ego' in this manner, I was able to interrogate its content. Considered in the light of political ideologies that can motivate family historians, as explored by Alison Light and Eviatar Zerubavel, this playful approach helped me to reflect on my own attitude to the material as well as what it revealed about the attitudes of my two-times-great grandmother. These discoveries were the result of applying performance methods to historical theory.

Using play to explore family history enables contradictions to be expressed. *Think Before You Speak* helped me to explore the inconsistencies in Edith Nuttall's legacy. She was a woman who wrote to tell herself to be quieter, whilst putting on a play in London's West End. The practical investigation of the hypotext in the context of the extratext made it possible to develop a more nuanced understanding of the historic period and recognise

Edith Nuttall as a politically engaged woman at the start of the twentieth century who behaved differently to the publicly mythologized women of that period.

The action of play affected the relationship between the player and the historical source material. For myself, for *Four Great Grandmothers,* attempting to make a performance from my personal memory meant that I had to distil it into a series of images and memorise the archival data in order to learn the dates, places and numbers significant to my great-grandmother's lives. This made me reflect on the limitations of both forms of memory – personal and archival – in creating successful biography in isolation, whilst allowing them to play against one another created a more dynamic hypertext. For *Lines And Ladders* it was necessary for me to have many available stories to fit each game. These needed to be deployed whenever a story point was reached and I might vary these depending on evident interests of other players or I might attempt to tell stories connected to particular locations. Retelling these stories within the game helped me to hone their telling, as it was necessary to reduce complex family history into small manageable chunks and certain stories were repeated more than others, as their telling proved successful. Whilst the repeated playing of *Lines And Ladders* was my experience, this hypertext encouraged all players to think differently about their own family history, by providing a space to articulate it to the listening audience of other players. Through this articulation, players reflected on details and we found pleasure in sharing our stories. Applying a playful approach to historical material, encourages active interpretation and critical thinking.

This practice-research has shown how playful methods could be used to interrogate family history research. By approaching the material as a hypotext to be transformed into performance, I was accepting from the start that this was a form that would favour interpretation and interrogation. The hypertext is a creative space. As a performance maker, I was engaging with the past through multiple methods. As a practice-researcher, I was discovering ways of decentring family history research in order to share it in a way that engaged, yet resisted closure. Play, which always happens in the present moment, enables the exploration of potentially infinite avenues because it is always created anew; this can generate creative and analytical responses. Play can be useful not only for performance makers using historical material, but also for any historian or person

interested in family history in order to help them to challenge the way that they have thought about historical resources and about their ancestors. Using these practice-research methods makes it possible to investigate the content and intention of paper-based research and examine reflexively the attitude of the researcher.

Performing family history: space, time and body

In order to consider the efficacy of using performance to interrogate and communicate genealogical research, it is worthwhile returning to Alison Light's description of family history as 'less a clear-cut channel through time than a space into which doors open and close.'[353] Light was recognising the combination of revelations and of dead ends that can characterise this type of research and suggesting that these can be effectively visualized spatially. This concept of family history is particularly useful when reflecting on performance as a palimpsestic site of transtextual relations. Light's metaphor, which imagines family history as spatial, is theatrical. In an extension of this metaphor, the intertexts in these performance hypertexts made in this practice-research project operate as access points to different moments of history. Arguably performance space is also not 'a clear-cut channel through time', as a creative work it has – among other powers – the capability to manipulate time, as Richard Schechner's theory of performance time showed.[354] The way that performance can present multiple times discontinuously can be seen clearly in the practice-research of Chapters Two and Five. In *The space in-between* the slides revealed a moment experienced by my great-grandmother in 1967, there was the imagined time of the family slide show and there was the present moment in which the hypertext manifested. The imagined slide show, as a response to the intertexts, created a bridge between the historic moment visible in the slides and that of the performance present. In this, and the next example, Schechner's 'symbolic time' was contained by 'event time'.[355] In *Lines And Ladders* stories from across history were mixed up in any order bringing different pasts into the present. Through storytelling, moments of history were brought into play with one another; these were performance manifestations of Light's image: each story opening a door onto a new space in history. Borrowing one phrase from Schechner and then one from Light, the 'creative distortions'

[353] Alison Light, *Common People: The History of an English Family* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 164.
[354] Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory,* revised and expanded edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 8.
[355] Schechner, *Performance Theory,* p. 8.

of time enabled by performance are compatible with family history's 'stops and starts, its uncertainties and gaps'.[356] Transitioning family history from paper-based communication into the time-based medium of performance reflects its ontology.

I have resisted playing the character of my ancestors. This practice-research has generated autobiographical pieces that focus on my ancestry and has interrogated the issues of researching and sharing family history, as well as telling specific histories. Withholding characterisation was important, as the perspective in this work is that of family historian and performance-maker. *The space in-between* was the closest that I came to playing an ancestor through the repetition of gesture during the slide show, but my inclusion of the repeated refrain of 'I imagine' was an assertion that I was not pretending to be my great-grandmother. The photographs that I showed did not feature her, as she was the photographer, but this absence was filled by my presence. Experimenting with positioning my body, as her descendant, in relation to the slides, as objects from the family archive, revealed the significance of that body in communicating this research to an audience. The relationship between the performer, as descendant, and their ancestor is important in the live hypertext, as it provides a direct connection to the history being shared.

This practice-research has foregrounded the significance of the role of the family historian in communicating the family history. As performance maker and as family historian, I am necessarily central to the experience of sharing this research. The body of the performer, the objects from the family archive, the family history research, and the repertoire of personal and public memory, are all intertexts within the performance hypertext and as such their connection to the past is asserted. The significance of the objects and the oral histories is mediated to the audience via the body of the descendant, which makes it relevant to those in the shared performance space. Through this intertextual presence, the audience are by extension connected to the same past. Family history is pertinent to an audience when it is told from the perspective of the researcher. History might attempt to be objective, but family history is necessarily, explicitly subjective.

[356] Schechner, *Performance Theory,* p. 8; Light, *Common People,* p. 164.

Affective distancing

This thesis makes a significant contribution to knowledge by bringing the study of family history and performance together with the framework of transtextuality. This innovative method for examining this process of performance-making is effective because it enables affective distancing. Researching family history is an emotional endeavour. Discoveries can be personally affecting, whether upsetting, exhilarating or somewhere in-between. Using these family histories to make autobiographical performance takes this emotive research a step further on the pathway of personal subjectivity. The theory of transtextuality imposed a necessary rigour and objectivity onto this research. The application of the transtextual framework to playing with family history offered a disciplined and technical perspective for analysis. The framework enabled me to distance myself from the affective material. By applying this functional framework to the making of family history performances, I was able to formalise the process. To apply this framework to performance-making is to assert the subjectivity of the practitioner-researcher, because it is necessary to recognise their singular perspective in response to the network of textual relations, whilst providing a systematic tool to analyse the bringing into play of family histories.

Appropriating this theory for the analysis of making hypertexts, rather than interpreting completed ones, places an emphasis on the decisions made to bring texts into play. Using transtextuality as a tool to understand making enables the interpretation of separate elements used in the construction of the hypertext. Reading the construction of performance hypertexts in this way means that they are understood as extended textual experiences created through a full network of internal and external relations. This project has shown that the framework provides an incisive tool that can separate a performance hypertext into its constituent relationships. This cutting apart of the hypertext experience enables precise analysis of the functions, impact and effect of these textual elements.

The application of Gérard Genette's theory of transtextuality

This methodology enables the explicit study of a performance hypertext as it is built from other textual relations. The visualisation of the transtextual network with the hypertext at the centre of numerous intersections with other textual forms is ideal for the analysis of live performance. The complexity and variety of live forms available to be analysed,

including those made for this practice-research, can be made comparable through the application of this framework. By identifying equivalent textual elements of different performances, it is possible to reflect on their relative functions. This project concentrates on performances made through play from family history, which is therefore the focus of this conclusion, but Genette's framework has the potential for much wider application. The methodology of using transtextuality to explore making family history hypertext through play provided a framework to compare elements within the same hypertext as it developed. The different projectors used in *The space in-between* could be read as separate intertexts and their relative impact on the hypertext was analysed. The influence of the paratext on the participant's experience of *Lines And Ladders* was investigated. The framework proposed here, as introduced by Genette, makes precise analysis and comparisons possible.

The hypertext provides a finite concept with manifold possible textual relations. The direct address in *The space in-between* and *Four Great Grandmothers,* the installation in *Think Before You Speak* and the game, *Lines And Ladders,* can be studied in relation to one another as hypertexts despite their different forms. The performance maker is able to build from existing texts, whether these are stories, histories, photographs, locations, or performance devices. In the new hypertext, the existing texts remain and their operation can be the focus for analysis. The audience were able to engage with performances through familiarity with the intertexts that they were shown in Chapter Two, through recognition of aspects of the architexture and understanding of the paratext in Chapter Five. Identifying the hypertext enables a frame to be drawn that indicates the full extent of the performance experience, whilst acknowledging the breadth of its relationships with other texts.

Reading objects, histories and bodies as intertexts opened up analysis of their significance within the performance hypertext and within the historical narrative. Intertexts were interrogated as symbolic, literal and functional. The slide transparencies in *The space in-between* were once inside the camera that my great-grandmother took on holiday. They provided a literal connection to the past and they were symbolic, representing nostalgia for holiday photography and mourning for the absence of the photographer. Functionally they served to structure the narrative and, as with the stories in *Lines And Ladders,* they

drove the content of the performance hypertext. In every iteration of *The space in-between* this content was unchanged, but the opposite is true of *Lines And Ladders.* The architexture of the slide show provided constancy and a singular narrative perspective, whilst that of the game enabled flexibility and variety. The layered vocal recording in *Think Before You Speak* was also an intertext inserted whole into the performance hypertext, despite being a newly created piece that borrowed from family archive material. Whereas the intertexts in the other performances were dominant and led the narrative, the audio was obscured and lost. This could have been improved with the use of better audio playing equipment. The impact of intertexts was controlled by me as the performance maker. Their successful use in *The space in-between* and *Lines And Ladders* is contrasted with the disappointing effect in *Think Before You Speak.* Focus on these textual contributions as intertexts enables this evaluation of their function, as well as analysis of their symbolic and literal relationships to heritage.

The action of making public these personal histories as practice-research made an interrogation of hypotextual and intertextual material necessary. I needed to understand the history and the potential of this material, as well as my own attitude towards it, in order to share this with an audience. In contrast to the unchanged intertexts, the hypotext provides opportunities for transformation. This transformation could mean that the direct link to the past was broken and enable questioning from my subjective perspective.

The image of architexture provides an invaluable tool for reading across performances, because it offers a concept beyond the restrictions of form and genre. It is constructed through the incorporation of individual elements of form and is unique to every performance hypertext. By being able to identify an element of a hypertext as an architextual building block, this can be adapted into the making of a new performance hypertext. This enables a more incisive reading of form that compares specific elements and enables the building of relations between performances regardless of differences. For example, *Four Great Grandmothers* was constructed from elements shared with *One Hundred Homes, Cape Wrath* and *Siri* despite their different theatrical approaches. It also incorporated elements from the earlier practice: *Think Before You Speak.* This focus on architexture is a method to identify a performance hypertext's specific antecedents and analyse the mode of construction.

The concept of the paratext is beneficial for comparing conventional and unconventional performances. By considering the location of the performance as a form of peritext, it is possible to compare the impact of the space whether it is a studio theatre (*Four Great Grandmothers*), a staircase in a mill (*Think Before You Speak*), a lecture hall in a university (*The space in-between*) or a café (*Lines And Ladders*). The paratext is a way of acknowledging that the performance experience is not restricted to the hypertext; the situation of it, and the materials generated in response to it, are all part of the performance experience. The paratext can extend the experience of the performance for both maker and audience.

Lines And Ladders showed that bringing of texts into play could help to engage audiences in the issues arising from family history and in the methods used for telling these stories. It was a different way of sharing family history and of sharing the research that went into this project. The format enabled a metatext of conversation about the research process as well as about the findings. Making use of the familiar architexture of playing a game, whilst evoking the potentially anxiety-inducing architexture of performance, meant that players felt happy about becoming storytellers. We as players were audience; I shared my findings and the audience-participants shared theirs. This was a form that gave pleasure and confidence to the players. It was a successful mode that could convey all aspects of the research of this project, although no single iteration covered all elements. This game was the culmination of the research project and is an exemplar for the way that constructing a hypertext through its relationships with others can make effective and affective performance.

Conclusion: Autumn 2020

This thesis is the first to bring together the research areas of performance studies, transtextuality and family history. This creative practice-research revealed through play new ways of exploring historical texts and demonstrated the suitability of performance as a method for family historians to share their research. Using this methodology enables a precise, forensic interrogation of the construction of performance texts and analysis of the relationships between these. This technical framework can impose affective distancing on personal and subjective practice-research. The application of the terminology offered by Genette to family history performance-making has the potential

to change the way that we write and think about the construction of performances that make use of personal, historical material.

As I reach the conclusion of this project, COVID-19 has changed public life in the UK. There is a gradual reopening of public spaces where people can meet, but these are limited and subject to swift changes in regulation as the spread of infection changes. The principle of *Lines And Ladders* of sitting in a public space playing a game overlooked by strangers became suddenly, surprisingly, out of reach. Enforced social distancing, which was not even considered twelve months ago, made the playing of *Lines And Ladders* impossible. This time of limited person to person contact has brought a new appreciation for being able to spend time in the same space discussing ideas. A transtextual meeting in a café is a luxury that may have to wait, but the potential of the interpersonal knowledge exchange has never seemed so vital.

Glossary of transtextuality as used in this thesis

- Transtextual: The generic term for any or all relations between and within texts. This is used to discuss textual relationships collectively.
- Hypertext: The core text under analysis, which is constructed through textual interactions.
- Hypotext: A text that is transformed when it becomes part of the hypertext.
- Intertext: A text that is inserted unchanged into the hypertext.
- Architexture: The relation of the hypertext to form, mode, theme and genre.
- Paratexts: The texts that surround the experience of the hypertext.
- Epitext: The part of the paratext that occurs in a different space to the hypertext.
- Peritext: The part of the paratext that occurs in the same space to the hypertext.
- Metatexts: The criticism and commentary that emerges from the hypertext.
- Extratext: An external, contextual historical, social and/or political text with which the hypertext intersects.

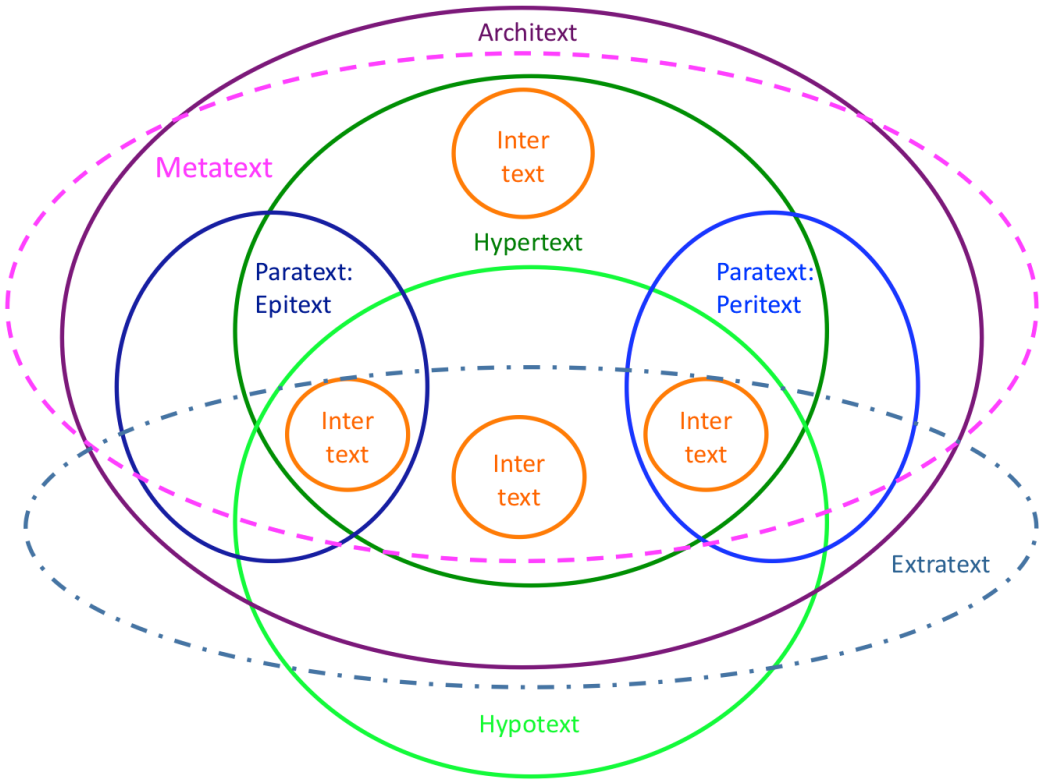


Figure 1.1: Diagram of the framework of transtextuality

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Appendix 0.1

Journal of performance hypertexts

During the course of this research, I have experienced many performances that share family history stories. These were often about grandparents, although sometimes they were specifically about parent/child relationships and occasionally further back. Some of the performances discussed over the next few pages did not address any aspect of family history but offered something useful in term of form and structure that has contributed to the research journey. Over the next few pages, I will briefly introduce the performances that are relevant to the thesis including details about where I saw them and other relevant contextual details. As each one is introduced its particular contributions of themes, forms and ideas are explained. Where a script or other text by the performance maker is available this is indicated.

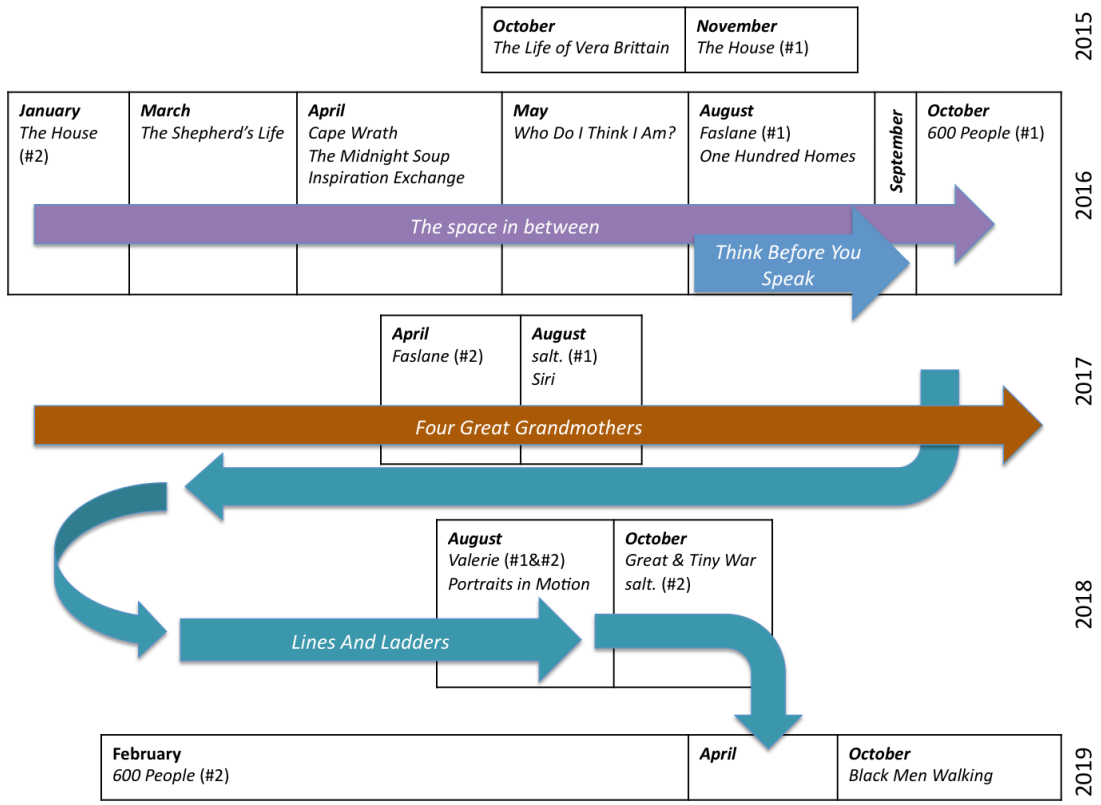


Figure 0.4: Timeline of performance hypertexts

The Life of Vera Brittain

Not long after starting the research for my doctoral thesis, I saw Shirley Williams talk about her mother as part of the annual Off The Shelf Festival of Words in Sheffield. *The*

Life of Vera Brittain took place in the evening of 29 October 2015 on the main stage of the Crucible Theatre.[357] This was a talk supported by projected photographs followed by a question and answer session. It was notable for setting up some of the tropes of family history performance, including using a slide show and positioning family history in relation to national history. In this performance, the international history dominated. This was a history of the First World War and the information shared was largely already in the public domain because of the publication in 1933 of Brittain's memoir *A Testament of Youth.* This talk felt like a public way of telling a public story; it did not feel like it offered any new insight into her personal history.

The House

Less than a week later on 3 November 2015, I saw Carran Waterfield's performance *The House* for the first time at the John Shaw Studio at the University of Manchester.[358] I watched this again two months later on 5 January 2016 in another studio theatre at Milburn House, the University of Warwick.[359] The script of this performance is available, alongside commentaries, in a special edition of *Studies in Theatre and Performance*.[360] In Manchester, this was the first performance of the finished version and was followed by a question and answer session*. The House* was a solo theatrical performance devised by the Waterfield and developed in conjunction with Jenny Hughes at the University of Manchester as practice-based research. Waterfield is a founder and artistic director of Triangle Theatre. This was a company that devised performances using historical material and Waterfield had previously created performances related to her father and grandfather's histories. *The House* was one part of the Poor Theatres AHRC project, which was led by Hughes investigating the use of theatre to engage with the topic of 'poverty and economic inequality'.[361] I interviewed Hughes and Waterfield about *The House* on 11 April 2016. In this interview, Hughes described asking Waterfield to participate in the project because she already knew something of her family history and 'was really

[357] Shirley Williams, *The Life of Vera Brittain,* Crucible Main Stage, Sheffield, 29 October 2015.
[358] Carran Waterfield, *The House,* John Thaw Studio, The University of Manchester, 3 November 2015.
[359] Carran Waterfield, *The House,* Milburn House, The University of Warwick, 5 January 2016.
[360] Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield, '*The House:* A Curated Portfolio in Five Parts', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* 37:1 (March 2017), 1-138.
[361] The University of Manchester, 'Poor Theatres: theatre, performance, poverty' <blog.poortheatres.manchester.ac.uk> [Accessed 19 February 2020].

interested in trying to stretch the research project historically'.[362] The second performance was part of a two day conference titled 'Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance' jointly organised by the University of Warwick and Jawaharlal Nehru University. At this conference Waterfield and Hughes gave one of the Keynote Presentations.

The House was an exploration of institutions of care and welfare through family history. Waterfield investigated her family history, tracing stories of ancestors who had experienced care from the state and shared these alongside her own experiences and those of contemporary benefit claimants. The performance was structured into three sections: a lecture supported by projected images, an exploration through characterisation of experiences of those in the care of welfare systems and finally the display of documents relating to personal and family history on a washing line. The use of photographs and familial objects in *The House* is discussed further in 'Chapter Two: Presenting'.

In addition, I participated in a series of performance-making courses run by Waterfield, where I explored ideas for Chapters Three, Four and Five of this thesis. As a performance maker, Waterfield was important in challenging and supporting my practice. Her understanding of the possibilities and difficulties of experimenting with our own family histories was critical to the development of my research.

The Shepherd's Life

The Shepherd's Life was adapted by Chris Monks from James Rebanks' autobiography about his life as a sheep farmer in the Lake District.[363] This incorporated some elements of family history, by telling the story of how they had come to their family farm and showing the relationships between generations working together. I saw this is the main auditorium at Theatre by the Lake in Keswick on 28 March 2016. The simple set suggested a Lake District landscape with blocks built like the contour lines on a map and a silhouette of a mountain range at the back. Screens for projection were used above the arch and were

[362] Waterfield and Hughes Interview, p. 6.
[363] Chris Monks, *The Shepherd's Life,* Theatre by the Lake, Keswick, 28 March 2016.

flown in from wings when required. The photographs projected were landscapes and animals, but occasionally were family photographs.

This show was acted by a combination of professionals and a community cast; it is one of the few shows where family history is told without the presence of the descendant. In the play James Rebanks was played by a succession of actors with consistent actors in the roles of his father and grandfather. Whilst Rebanks' character grew up, his elders remained the same age. The generations of this family were closely entwined because of their work on the land; the Rebanks' character claimed that his grandfather 'lives in me' as the 'thread that goes to the future'. The final line 'This is my life; I want no other' in the context of the family history emphasising that as things change, nevertheless things stay the same.

Cape Wrath

On the 16 April 2016, I experienced two performances that shared stories of the performance makers' grandparents. Both performances were part of Wrought Festival of one-to-one and micro-audience performance work in Sheffield. At lunchtime, I was sat on the back row of a minibus for Third Angel's *Cape Wrath.*[364] This was parked on Scotland Street near to the main festival venue. This performance was written and performed by Alexander Kelly and directed by Rachael Walton. Kelly recounted a journey that he took to Cape Wrath, the most north-westerly point of the mainland Britain. His trip was a re-creation of one that his grandfather had made. This was a performance that made use of a close personal relationship between Kelly and his grandfather and he described it as 'an act of remembrance'.[365] This was a storytelling performance, in which Kelly told us about his journey and his relationship with his grandfather.

The performance used props in an interesting way that is discussed as intertextual in 'Chapter Two: Presenting'. Some of these items were directly connected to Kelly's grandfather, such as his suit, which Kelly wore during the show, but there were other

[364] Third Angel, *Cape Wrath,* written and performed by Alexander Kelly, dir. by Rachael Walton, Wrought Festival, Scotland Street, Sheffield, 16 April 2016.

[365] Alexander Kelly, 'Cheers Grandad! Third Angel's *Cape Wrath* and *The Lad Lit Project* as Acts of Remembrance', in *Staging Loss: Performance as Commemoration,* ed. by Michael Pinchbeck and Andrew Westerside (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 129-44, (p. 141).

more generic items, such as a puzzle that enabled audience participation. The performance does not use projections; this was trialled in early versions, but when the decision was made to locate the performance on a minibus this was dropped.[366] As the audience departed the performance, Kelly handed each person a programme printed on yellow card titled 'Your ticket to the edge of the island'. Each ticket has an individual number stamped on it and this intertext, which becomes an epitext, feels like an invitation to undertake a new journey. Through its tactile quality and unusual appearance the programme is suggestive of the personal spirit of the performance, although it is ultimately a statement of professional roles. *Cape Wrath* is an exploration of the way that we tell personal stories to our families and to a public audience. Kelly has reflected on the performance in an article: 'Cheers Grandad! Third Angel's *Cape Wrath* and *The Lad Lit Project* as Acts of Remembrance'.[367] This article aids the architextual discussion in 'Chapter Four: Remembering'.

The Midnight Soup

In the early evening of the same day, I went to the Quaker Meeting House, which was a short walk from the main festival venue and I took part in Leo Burtin's performance *The Midnight Soup.*[368] A written record of *The Midnight Soup* was published by Homemade in 2016.[369] This performance centres around the action of making the soup of the title. The audience were sat around a long table, with Burtin at the head. The audience were invited to talk about experiences of shared meals and to join in with the preparations for the soup. At the end of the performance we shared the soup. Like Kelly, Burtin describes his performance as being 'about remembering'.[370] Burtin tells us about his French grandmother, her life, her diary and her death by suicide in 2012. He has his grandmother's diary from 2006, which he reads from during the performance, sometimes selecting sections for himself and at other times asking the audience to pick dates. This is a diary written six years before her death and Burtin tells us it is full of ordinary details, 'a record of banal histories' with 'a lot of intimacy missing'.[371] As with *Cape Wrath,* this is

[366] Jocelyn Spence, 'Performative Experience Design: Theories and practices for intermedial autobiographical performance' (doctoral thesis, University of Surrey, 2015), p. 87.
[367] Kelly, 'Cheers Grandad!", pp. 129—44.
[368] Leo Burtin, *The Midnight Soup,* Wrought Festival, Quaker Meeting House, Sheffield, 16 April 2016.
[369] Leo Burtin, *The Midnight Soup* (Homemade, 2016).
[370] Burtin, *The Midnight Soup,* p. 3.
[371] Burtin, *The Midnight Soup,* p. 28-29.

a sharing of a close personal story, but he also uses the performance to educate the audience about the frequency of suicides of elderly women. This is an intimate, welcoming and distressing performance.

I found this performance particularly difficult, for reasons that were beyond the control of the performance maker, but because I brought my own personal circumstances to the hypertext. On 13 April 2006, my divorced maternal grandparents both passed away. I experienced *The Midnight Soup* almost exactly ten years after this very personal loss and because the diary was from that year, its resonance was even more deeply felt. When Burtin invited us to ask for particular dates to be read, I asked immediately for the 13 April without explaining why. The entry was mostly about gardening and Burtin did not translate it all, as he said it was in technical language. As with most of the diary entries, it was a record of ordinary activity. In the summer of 2018, Burtin took *The Midnight Soup* to the Summerhall in Edinburgh, I bought a ticket to see it. However, on the day I found that I was unable to face the performance again.

The Inspiration Exchange

Over the weekend of Wrought Festival, Third Angel were also presenting *The Inspiration Exchange.*[372] This was in the open meeting space of the main festival building: The Hide on Scotland Street. People were invited to participate whenever they could. I took part in this towards the end of the last day of the festival, 17 April 2016. Alexander Kelly was seated a table with about thirty cards on it; each card has a title on it, I picked a card and Kelly told the story related to that title. In return, Kelly asked for a story from me, which was given a title and can be picked by a future audience-participant. I stayed for a little while and listened to the exchanges between Kelly and other audience-participants. At the end of the day, Kelly offered a brief summary of the stories to an assembled audience. This simple structure created and contained the opportunity for story sharing. The audience-participant could ask for and share one story. The temptation of intriguing titles meant that as soon as I had heard the story that I had asked for, I wanted a different one. This encouraged me to stay and listen when my role as participant had passed. This

[372] Third Angel, *The Inspiration Exchange,* devised and presented by Alexander Kelly, Wrought Festival, The Hide, Sheffield, 17 April 2016.

structured invitation to share stories in a public space helped me to develop my ideas for 'Chapter Five: Participating'.

Who Do I Think I Am?

Mark Steel's *Who Do I Think I Am?* combined stand-up comedy with the unravelling of the story of Steel's biological parents. I saw this on a proscenium arch stage at The Pomegranate Theatre, Chesterfield on 13 May 2016.[373] Steel was adopted as a baby; he never knew his biological parents, but he always knew he was adopted. He explains in the show that there was never any fuss about this. In the first half, the narrative arc was established as an investigation into whether nature or nurture has more impact on an individual's identity. This made space for jokes and the performance of characters for comedy connected quite broadly to this theme that could then be related to the family history discoveries.

The second half was more specifically focused on the investigation that he undertook to discover his birth parents. Throughout the show, Steel used a projector positioned upstage on which he showed photographs and documents to aid the storytelling. The slideshow acted as a prompt and kept the narrative on track; when a photograph appeared out of sequence, he had to back track to that part of the story. These were often used for revelations, such as, when he discovered the photograph of himself as a child in the hand of a stranger (a biological aunt). This photograph had been projected at the start of the show as one from the wall of his childhood home and was revealed again with this discovery. This performance shares some formal elements with *The House,* despite a completely different genre of performance. Again, this is a performance using projection to illustrate the narrative of family history research, alongside multi-roled characterisation. However, the outcome is distinctly different with *The House* adopting these methods for political impact, whilst the primary purpose of them in *Who Do I Think I Am?* is comedy.

[373] Mark Steel, *Who Do I Think I Am?* The Pomegranate Theatre, Chesterfield, 15 May 2016.

Practice-Research: *The space in-between* and *Think Before You Speak*

During the spring and summer of 2016 I developed *The space in between*, which is the practice focus for 'Chapter Two: Presenting'. This was performed at several university events: PhD by Design Methodologies Symposium, School of Architecture, The University of Sheffield, 11 May 2016; Returning Ghosts, Performance and New Technologies Working Group Interim Event, Buckinghamshire New University, 24 May 2016; Consuming Heritage: Identity, Culture and Heritage Conference, The University of Leeds, 30 September 2016; WRoCAH conference, The University of York, 20 October 2016. At the same time, I was working on the installation *Think Before You Speak,* which was shared in September 2016 at Heron Corn Mill in Beetham. *Think Before You Speak* is the focus of 'Chapter Three: Questioning'.

Faslane

The next relevant performance that I saw was Jenna Watt's *Faslane.* I have seen this play twice and the script was published by Oberon Modern Plays in 2017.[374] The first time that I saw the play was the 8 August 2016 in Edinburgh as part of the Fringe Festival at the Summerhall and the second time eight months later, on the 7 April 2017, was in Leeds at the West Yorkshire Playhouse (since renamed the Leeds Playhouse).[375] In *Faslane* Jenna Watt tells the story of her investigations into nuclear defences and in particular the situating of nuclear submarines at the eponymous naval base in western Scotland. It is relevant to the research here because it deals with Watt's conflicting emotions regarding the nuclear deterrent and her family's involvement in its upkeep. She approaches the topic of Trident as one that she has not considered before, despite her family working on it all her life. She describes it as 'like a distant cousin that I'd heard of but hadn't yet met, an estranged member of the family, but with the capability to destroy mankind'.[376] The familial simile indicates her emotional closeness to this story, whilst the extremity of the final clause is melancholy humour. This juxtaposition sets the tone for the performance, which is a story of personal experiences set against a backdrop of political controversy. Both times that I saw it, the audience were arranged in straight rows in front of an open stage space. A section of the floor was covered in a collection of stones, bricks and bits of

[374] Jenna Watt, *Faslane* (London: Oberon, 2017).
[375] Jenna Watt, *Faslane,* Red Lecture Theatre, Summerhall, Edinburgh, 8 August 2016 and at Barber Studio, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds, 7 April 2017.
[376] Watt, *Faslane,* p. 13.

concrete; these were organised with the most complete bricks upstage and became gradually rockier moving downstage, indicating perhaps a movement towards destruction. Watt stepped on these awkwardly and uncomfortably sometimes; they gave a sense of her vulnerability. This difficulty and the ethics of dealing with family experiences in public is explored in 'Chapter Three: Questioning', although the issue is different when dealing with family history in a less recent past.

One Hundred Homes

A day after seeing *Faslane* at the Summerhall, on 9 August 2016, I experienced *One Hundred Homes* performed and written by Yinka Kuitenbrouwer.[377] This show did not deal with family history, but with personal histories connected to the idea of home. It is relevant to this thesis because of the methods that Kuitenbrouwer used to share those stories. This performance is central to the discussion in 'Chapter Four: Remembering'. Kuitenbrouwer had interviewed people in their homes, about the idea of home and was continuing to do so whilst performing the show in Edinburgh; the performance programme describes this as 'an ongoing performance'.[378] She collected their stories and shared them us with a small of audience of about twenty in a purpose built cabin in the courtyard at the Summerhall. This was a storytelling performance, which incorporated a series of short stories and used photographs of people in their homes as props. The audience were made to feel comfortable in the temporary space of the cabin; we were offered rugs for our knees, milky tea and home baked biscuits. Having visited so many people in their homes, the attempt to make the audience feel comfortable in her temporary home are significant. Kuitenbrouwer sits at a desk in a corner of the hut in front of the audience. At the start of the performance a timer was set, indicating the amount of time that we would have to enjoy this cosy space and these intimate stories. These strategies helped to put the audience at ease and to contain the numerous stories that she had to tell; it provides a useful model for making a performance that shares personal stories.

[377] Yinka Kuitenbrouwer, *One Hundred Homes,* The Street, Summerhall, Edinburgh, 9 August 2016.
[378] Yinka Kuitenbrouwer, DRIFT, Big in Belgium, Richard Jordan Productions and Theatre Royal Plymouth in association with Summerhall, *One Hundred Homes,* Programme, 9 August 2016.

Ironically, the use of an impermanent space for *One Hundred Homes* enabled a sense of constancy with the performance experience. Most Edinburgh shows operate on a treadmill with audience and performers getting in and out of spaces within the hour. However, because this was the only performance happening in this space, it felt as though we were being invited into a more personal space. Within the context of a performance festival the temporary nature of the structure seemed exciting, like the tent that a child puts up to camp in the garden. To be invited into this small informal space, which only housed this performance, felt like a special occasion, as though we were visiting a friend in their home. Yet, the fragility of the idea of home was a theme throughout the piece. Whilst some of the people that Kuitenbrouwer visited have lived for a long time in the same place, many were witness to the impermanence of modern living. She interviewed individuals without permanent residence and those who had fled their 'homeland'. The performance finished with a story of an Iraqi man, who returning to Europe after a trip 'home', realised that he now felt his homecoming was to Europe, not Iraq. Thus, the excitement of the impermanent venue for the theatre-going audience serves as a gentle invocation of an extratext of the struggles that many people face in finding a home.

600 People

The final Third Angel show to make an appearance in this thesis is *600 People.*[379] I first saw this at the Crucible Studio in Sheffield on 15 October 2016 and went again to watch it at the Square Chapel Arts Centre in Halifax on 21 February 2019. This was a performance lecture written and performed by Alexander Kelly and directed by Rachael Walton. The performance was devised from conversations that Kelly had with Dr Simon Goodwin, an astrophysicist at the University of Sheffield. The performance dealt with a wide range of scientific topics including the origins of humanity, events of mass extinction, and the possibility of aliens. It is relevant to this research because it incorporated a direct to consumer DNA test of the type taken to test ancestry.

The stage was set up as a teaching space. There was a desk where Kelly sat to recall the conversations between himself and Dr Goodwin, a slide show that he moved through with a remote clicker and four brightly coloured expanding plastic balls that he used to

[379] Third Angel, *600 People,* written and performed by Alexander Kelly, dir. by Rachael Walton, Crucible Studio, Sheffield, 15 October 2016 and at Copper Auditorium, Square Chapel Arts Centre, 21 February 2019.

illustrate the scientific knowledge, including when talking about DNA. This show used projected cartoon style line drawings as illustrations to the topics discussed. One of the conclusions from the performance lecture is that it is our species' ability to imagine possibilities beyond the immediate context and to tell stories about this that led to our survival and dominance. Kelly's determination to tell the better story, even with the scientist's caveat, demonstrated the value of the artistic approach. When Kelly explained that fossilized spider's legs have been found that indicate the existence of human sized spiders, he stated that Goodwin asked him to clarify that these may in fact be a spider crab's legs. The scientist was seeking accuracy, Kelly conceded to this after telling the story in his own way, suggesting that his account is a better story.

This performance lecture revealed humorously the limitations of the ethnicity estimates of direct to consumer (DTC) DNA testing.[380] As a part of their investigations into the origins of life, Alexander Kelly and Dr Simon Goodwin both sent a sample to be tested by a DTC genealogical DNA testing company. Kelly conveyed the excitement and anticipation of opening the envelope; they waited until they were together, meeting in a Sheffield pub to discover what revelations were contained within their results. On opening the envelope, they were underwhelmed by the results. Kelly's revealed a largely northern European ethnicity estimate, which he found unsurprising. He reflected that perhaps his expectations were too high given the cost of the test and the simplicity of the sampling procedure. The science here had not provided the answers desired, but it was recognised that these are the limits of the system rather than the science. There was the promise of a good story, but the test did not deliver.

Practice-Research: *Four Great Grandmothers*

In the autumn of 2016 and the spring of 2017, I was working on *Four Great Grandmothers,* which I performed at a 'Show & Tell' event that I helped to organise at the University of Sheffield in April 2017. A shortened version of this was shared as a three minute turbo talk at the Memory Studies Association Conference at the University of Copenhagen in December 2017. *Four Great Grandmothers* is the focus of 'Chapter Four: Remembering'.

[380] Third Angel, *600 People,* written and performed by Alexander Kelly, dir. by Rachael Walton, Crucible Studio, Sheffield, 15 October 2016 and at Copper Auditorium, Square Chapel Arts Centre, 21 February 2019.

salt.

On the two occasions that I saw *salt.*, it was performed with the playwright Selina Thompson in the role of The Woman; firstly at the Northern Stage at the Summerhall on 8 August 2017 and, secondly, on 2 October 2018 in The Pop-Up Theatre at Leeds Playhouse, during that venue's refurbishment.[381] The play has subsequently been performed at Royal Court Theatre with Rochelle Rose taking the role of The Woman. This change in casting, which turns the family history from autobiography into biography, is unique among these plays. The script of this show was published by Faber and Faber in 2018.[382] Both performances of *salt.* that I watched took place in theatre spaces with the audience sat in rows. At Summerhall it was a long narrow auditorium, whilst at Leeds Playhouse it was a much wider stage and auditorium. The front few rows had safety goggles that they had to wear whenever The Woman wore hers; this was to protect their eyes from shards of the salt rock that The Woman broke up with a sledgehammer. There was a screen, which was used for projecting a clip from the television show *Desmond's* and another from the film, *The Harder They Come.*[383] In this instance, the projections were cultural history rather than the presentation of personal photographs. The performance was structured as a ritual, with a table set as an altar with incense and libations offered. This invoked the imagery of a priestess talking to us, rather than the lecturer role of other family history performances.

In part *salt.* was about the identity that results from ancestry. Thompson played the character of The Woman, but this was a first-person narration based on personal experience. In the opening scene, The Woman explained the internalised rage that she feels when questioned where she is 'really from'.[384] This questioning about her origins is a challenge to her British identity; it is an indicator that the questioner does not accept her Britishness. The importance of family was central to the narrative. The Woman recounted conversations with her father, as she travelled across the world, revealing his protective scepticism regarding the stories she tells. The story that she told was not one in which she sought to unravel her own personal ancestry, but one in which she attempted

[381] Selina Thompson, *salt.,* written and performed by Selina Thompson, directed by Dawn Walton, Northern Stage, Summerhall Edinburgh, 8 August 2017 and at The Pop-Up Theatre, Leeds Playhouse, 2 October 2018.
[382] Selina Thompson, *salt.* (London: Faber & Faber, 2018).
[383] Thompson, *salt.* pp. 42, 46.
[384] Thompson, *salt.,* p. 15.

to explore a collective ancestry of the African diaspora. She retraced the route of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, travelling on a cargo ship from Europe to Ghana then continuing to Jamaica. Whilst in Ghana she visited the castle at Elmina, where people were taken before they were transported as slaves. The day that she went there was the day of her grandmother's funeral. Her emotions were confused by this juxtaposition. The immense collective 'mourning for strangers that it feels impossible to mourn' was complicated by the personal grief of losing her grandmother, whilst being so far away from her family.[385] The grief that she described is detached, the collective grief overwhelms to the extent it cannot be comprehended and the separation from her family meant that she clutched at her own personal grief to 'Hoard it, store it, I'm greedy with it'.[386] The personal, local family history and the collective, global ancestral history both cut into and slice away from one another.

The questions that she faced in Ghana and Jamaica were different to those that she faced in the UK, but they still sought to identify her origins and to place her. She found that she could not give answers that satisfy and commented that 'being part of the diaspora is seeking home. | In places where you can't belong and in people that you can't belong.'[387] The brutal severing of families through slavery means that family history is curtailed; the specifics of personal genealogy are denied to those people whose families went through this trauma. *salt.* shows how this impacts on the life of The Woman through the questioning of her ancestral identity.

Siri

Having seen *salt.* for the first time, I went for a coffee with friends in Miller's Sandwich Bar, which is a venue for *Lines And Ladders* that will feature in 'Chapter Five: Participating'. We then went around the corner to the Summerhall's sister venue, King's Hall, to see La Messe Basse's show: *Siri.*[388] This was performed as part of the Canada Hub: a showcase of works from Canada marking the 150th anniversary of the forming of that nation as a confederation. *Siri* is a one woman show written and performed by actor,

[385] Thompson, *salt.* p. 36.
[386] Thompson, *salt.* p. 36.
[387] Thompson, *salt.* p. 46.
[388] La Messe Basse, *Siri,* written by Laurence Dauphinais, Maxime Carbonneau and Siri, performed by Laurence Dauphinais, directed by Maxime Carbonneau, King's Hall, Canada Hub, Edinburgh, 08 August 2017.

Laurence Dauphinais, in collaboration with writer and director, Maxime Carbonneau, and the iPhone's speaking software, Siri. In *Siri* Dauphinais described using a DNA testing service to identify her heritage. She was born as the result of technological intervention, as one of the first babies born through artificial insemination in Canada. She discussed this in relation to the development of Siri, which was initially designed by Dag Kittlaus, before being bought by Steve Jobs for Apple's iPhone. Through the performance Dauphinais drew out connections between her own conception and that of Siri, as the product of scientific endeavour. *Siri* explored the boundary between technology and humanity.

The performance took place within a wooden frame placed centrally on the large King's Hall stage. This large square frame was split in half vertically and in the rectangle stage left was a screen. The interface of Dauphinais's iPhone was projected on to this. For most of the performance Dauphinais positioned herself in the empty half of the frame stage right. This mirroring within frames presented the artist and the computer as equivalent of one another, emphasising their connections. Since seeing this production, I have interviewed Dauphinais on 19 March 2019 using Skype and she has shared the working script with me. This was a show with elements of improvisation, especially in relation to the responses of Siri, so the script could only ever be partial. Dauphinais' reflections on her own work influence the discussion in 'Chapter Four: Remembering'.

The show *Siri* highlighted some of the concerns about DNA testing, but also identified the potential of technology to inform and to improve life for individuals.[389] Laurence Dauphinais was gifted a DNA test kit by a friend, who knew that she had always been curious about her origins. She expected to receive a broad ethnicity estimate and was surprised when confronted with a 29% match. This level of matching was suggested to be a grandmother, but turned out to be a half-sister, who treated her as family. Dauphinais questioned the extent to which this biological family was actually family; she had a family, which she was not seeking to replace.

[389] La Messe Basse, *Siri,* written by Laurence Dauphinais, Maxime Carbonneau and Siri, performed by Laurence Dauphinais, directed by Maxime Carbonneau, King's Hall, Canada Hub, Edinburgh, 08 August 2017.

The donor father is angry and will not meet her. His role as a sperm donor was supposed to be anonymous. The technology has out-stepped the promises made in 1983. This highlighted the need to question the promises that are made about technology. When Dauphinais's biological father was promised that his contribution to her existence would be untraceable, the industry of DNA testing did not exist; now that it does, he was easily exposed. Through this revelation, Dauphinais questioned how Siri might develop, by reminding us, as audience members, that we cannot fully comprehend the impact and implications of new technologies. In interview Dauphinais expressed concern that the impact of these tests will mean that men will no longer donate. She explained:

> It's so tricky. I'm very divided at this point when it comes to DNA tests. Because, of course, it was a wonderful experience at first, but then I have to live with the consequences of knowing that the donor feels highly disrespected. And now more donor base children are getting in contact with me. There are other half siblings, basically, that want to get to know me. I'm just like, '*wow*,' this was not what I was looking for at all when I did the test. Of course, meeting with [half-sister] was very special but now I just feel like there's something wrong with all of this. How come that these people that were promised complete anonymity by giving are now completely exposed?[390]

The implications of this new technology are not yet fully understood and *Siri* illustrates both potential positives and negatives through the telling of a powerful personal story.

Practice-Research: *Lines And Ladders*

Throughout the autumn of 2017, spring and early summer of 2018, I worked on the final piece of performance practice: *Lines And Ladders.* This is the practice focus of 'Chapter Five: Participating'. This was a performance game that I played firstly in Sheffield in July 2018, then in Edinburgh throughout August 2018 and subsequently in Carlisle, Manchester, Herefordshire and London. I played the last game for the thesis in London in April 2019.

[390] Interview with Laurence Dauphinais, conducted by Kirsty Surgey via Skype, 19 March 2019.

Portraits in Motion

Whilst in Edinburgh for *Lines And Ladders* on 5 August 2018, back in the same lecture theatre in Edinburgh that I had first seen *Faslane* two years earlier, I saw *Portraits in Motion* written and performed by Volker Gerling.[391] Gerling has travelled across Germany on foot making and sharing flipbooks, like an old-fashioned itinerant showman. Brought to Edinburgh by the agency Aurora Nova, he stands at a small table on which he has organised his flipbooks and displayed the camera that he had used to make them. These flipbooks are made of thirty-six black and white photographs taken in quick succession over twelve seconds to create a short moving picture. He uses a camera to live stream these to a screen upstage. There is a microphone that captures the noise of the pages flipping emphasising the tactility of this animation. He handled each flipbook with a gentle tenderness and its delicacy was transferred to fill the much larger screen where it could be seen by the whole audience.

Gerling showed us most of the flipbooks three times, building up the story as we watched the animated images again. These were the stories of people in the photographs framed by the story of his journey and the creation of these flipbooks. The repetition of the animations gave the audience an opportunity to look again and to become familiar with the images. Our attention was drawn to something that we might have missed the first time. As the show progressed the stories became more personal as he shared photographs of people close to him. At the end, the audience were invited to go up to his table on the stage to look closely at the flipbooks and, if they wanted, to buy duplicates. Although this show did not tell family history, I am including it here as an example of intimate storytelling with projected photographs. One of the striking features was the way that he re-told other people's stories in a way that made them his own, whilst still belonging the subject of the photograph. We were reading the photographs from the first viewing, but the story that he built around the photograph, sometimes changed the interpretation. The pacing of the flipbooks was flexible and the gaps between the shots were more evident than in a conventional film. This method of sharing seemed to give the photographs breath and revealed the subject with honesty. I saw this show as I was starting the research practice for 'Chapter Five: Participating' and this helped me to think about how my

[391] Volker Gerling, *Portraits in Motion,* Red Lecture Theatre, Summerhall, Edinburgh, 5 August 2018.

practice would be an opportunity to bring different family stories together into a single, shifting performance. It also challenged me to think about how these stories could be re-told in future performances, whilst preserving the integrity of the original storyteller.

Valerie

A few days later, on the 10 August 2018, I returned to the Summerhall on the recommendation of a friend to see *Valerie.* On 18 August 2018, I went back to watch it again. This is a piece of gig theatre by Last Tapes Theatre Company from New Zealand.[392] Unlike most of the other performances discussed so far, which were solo works, this had three performers: Robin Kelly, Cherie Moore and Tom Broome. The show consisted of songs sung and played live, interspersed with autobiographical storytelling, character performance, scientific explanation and other spoken word forms. The stage was set up as if for a gig with three microphones spread across downstage, drums and a laptop upstage left and a keyboard upstage right.

Valerie explored the impact of genetics on mental health through the telling of the story of Valerie and her husband, Graeme, who are Robin Kelly's grandparents. Moore drew a family tree onto Broome's back pointing at it with a drumstick to illustrate the genealogy and adding her own connection as Kelly's partner. Valerie and Graeme lived unpredictable, sometimes exciting, sometimes volatile, lives, partly resulting from Graeme's mental illness. One of the stories shared was of Graeme's impulse purchase of a farm called Kismet, which means fate. The performance questioned how much of our mental health is fated because of our genetic disposition, or our familial experiences; it was suggested during *Valerie* that 'nature loads the gun and nurture pulls the trigger'. Coincidentally, Kismet is also another name for the game *Snakes And Ladders* emphasising the fate involved in the playing of the game; this lack of control over the outcome of this game is relevant in 'Chapter Five: Participating'.

In the role of Valerie, Moore, describes meeting Graeme at a Gatsby-esque party where he was the energetic core. The science of DNA was explained by Kelly, who, as well as being a performance maker, is a molecular biologist. He spoke directly to the audience to explain

[392] Last Tapes Theatre Company, *Valerie,* Cairns Lecture Theatre, Summerhall, Edinburgh, 10 August 2018 and 18 August 2018.

the process of inheriting DNA and how this may result in mental illness, specifically schizophrenia, being passed through generations. Scientific images were projected across the stage; there was no screen so these were caught on the bodies of the actors, especially Kelly. As he speaks, the microphone was moved away from him. He moved to speak into it. The microphone was moved again. Later, sound cables were placed around his neck weighing him down. The difficulty of living with the genes that are passed on to us was shown, whilst the science was explained. The scientific content was lyrically delivered and it was impersonal. The story was personal. The genes being discussed were those passed from Kelly's grandfather to himself and the performance combined an objective scientific account with subjective reflections about intergenerational mental health.

Kelly talked about interviewing Valerie in order to make the performance. He spoke about his own mental illness and connected this to that of his grandfather, Graeme. Valerie drew a clear distinction between the two. Kelly may have inherited some of his grandfather's genetic traits, but he is himself. DNA in *Valerie* provided a link for Kelly to his grandfather, but it did not provide the answers. A photograph of Valerie was shared with the audience towards the end of the performance. This was projected onto Kelly's back; he inherited genes from his grandfather and his grandmother; this decision to reveal her on his skin was intimate and emphasised their closeness.

Great & Tiny War

On 13 October 2018, I travelled up to Newcastle to experience Bobby Baker's *Great & Tiny War.*[393] This was an installation in a terraced house, 133 Sidney Grove, made as part of the 14-18 Now WW1 Centenary Art Commissions.[394] Each room of 133 Sidney Grove considered the impact of the First World War on domestic life from a different angle.

The rooms that were of particular interest to this thesis were rooms two and three upstairs because of their exploration of family. In Room Two, there were two artworks; both of which had religious connotations. One was a wall-mounted display of biscuit tins painted with gold inflection as if they were religious icons and the second was a motorised

[393] Bobby Baker, *Great & Tiny War,* 133 Sidney Grove, Newcastle, 13 October 2018.
[394] 14-18 Now, 'Bobby Baker's *Great & Tiny War',* <https://www.1418now.org.uk/commissions/great-tiny-war/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

mechanical sculpture made of iron lit up with tea lights, reminiscent of the candles in a church that the congregation light for remembrance. There are pictures of both of these on the 14-18 Now website.[395] There was a museum/art gallery style information board in this room, which informed us that Baker had been thinking about how people would have communicated in the First World War by sending letters and parcels. Baker's adult son, Charlie, living in Brussels, had made the tea light sculpture; one hundred years earlier he might have been in Belgium fighting. There were three names embossed in the sculpture, which our hosts told us were Baker's grandchildren. One row of the paintings on the biscuit tins featured Baker's children and their father, her ex-husband, as individual portraits, another row was food being shared and at the very top there was a single tin showing a baby being fed by a blue bird. For me, the overwhelming sense in this room was of a place of worship. The sense of a connection between the sacred and family.

Room Three continued the theme of family with a discussion of emotional responsibility to family history. This room was laid out as an art gallery with photographs from Baker's family archive on the walls. The photographs had short, informal captions underneath. This room had an audio guide recorded by Baker and, on the right, as we entered the room, was an information board. These are elements of architexture borrowed from museums or art galleries. Baker explained her family connection to Newcastle as shown in these photographs. Her great-grandfather had been the vicar of Byker and her grandfather had grown up in this area. There were pictures of him as a child and then as a young man working to create giant guns during the First World War. Baker talked about how this work had led to depression later in his life, which was not talked about until even later still. This room seemed to be quite an ordinary introduction to family history displayed in a conventional way until the window opened and a giant inflatable barrel of a gun exploded/extended into the room. It was shocking, surprising, uncomfortably huge, slightly frightening, slightly funny, phallic, like an elephant's trunk and it filled the room from one end to the other, stranding an audience member on the other side; it then started to deflate. It represented the thing that you cannot avoid, but is not always visible. This room dealt with the continued presence of mental illness within families, as well as the complexity of attitudes towards war veterans in the family. To what extent are we proud

[395] 14-18 Now, 'Bobby Baker's *Great & Tiny War',* <https://www.1418now.org.uk/commissions/great-tiny-war/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

of the role our ancestors played and to what extent do we find it disturbing? Baker dealt with a complex and distressing subject in a way that involved the audience in discussion by prompting conversation, but in which I did not feel exposed or vulnerable. By offering only a spectral presence Baker had to some extent released her stories; we had freedom to discuss our responses. She cannot check our understanding from this distance.

The experience concluded in the kitchen, where there were information boards on the walls detailing more of Baker's family history and her local connections. This room in the house was the only one that had the sense of a lived-in house. Despite locating this installation in a terraced house, the presentation resisted domesticity. The closed doors were reminiscent of a student house rather than a family home, where independent lives are privately lived. This was not a living museum showing what war might have been like in this house, but a woman's response to provocations on the theme of war. The two rooms that I have discussed here specifically approached the idea of family, whilst the remaining rooms offered different perspectives, including the food of war and the icon of Britannia.

Baker was a ghostly presence in 133 Sidney Grove. The audio had been recorded in the house and as she welcomed us via the headphones we could hear her walking down the stairs. Her weight was in her tread, but there was no physicality to this. As she led us up the stairs, she commented on details that we could see. This absent presence was eerie and this was compounded in room one, which used a projection comparable to a Pepper's Ghost illusion. Baker appeared in the darkened room composed of flickering light. This was a silent film that could be a new *Table Occasion* and concluded with Baker dressed as Britannia using a tablecloth, a trifle, a tray and a broom. This echoed her earlier work, including *Table Occasion* with the feast laid out and *Kitchen Show* in which she ends posed as a statue on a pedestal.[396] The personal stories of most of the performances discussed in this review have relied on the presence of the performance maker; the ghostliness of her disembodied voice and image highlights the distance in time between now and the history being explored.

[396] Bobby Baker, *Table Occasion No 19* (London: Daily Life Ltd, 2007), [on DVD] and *Daily Life Series: 1, Kitchen Show* (London: Daily Life Ltd, 2007).

Black Men Walking

The final performance that has formed part of this research journey is *Black Men Walking* written by Testament. It was a fictional play inspired by the experiences of the Sheffield 100 Black Men Walk for Health group. The play was not autobiographic or biographic, but it explored the idea that ancestry connects people to place, which is its relevance here. I saw this when it returned to Sheffield Theatre's Crucible Studio on 15 October 2019, having played there on its first tour in 2017.[397] The stage is set to suggest the Peak District; it has two sweeps of green staging at different levels with a pile of rocks or millstones stage left. There is a backdrop made of multiple colours on a black and brown spectrum, which was lit up during the spirit sections. The script is available, published by Oberon Modern Plays in 2018.[398]

In *Black Men Walking* Thomas, Matthew and Richard meet at Grindleford to walk on a day when the weather conditions are unpromising. These characters were played by Ben Onwukwe, Patrick Regis and Tonderai Munyevu when I saw it. On their walk they met a young woman, Ayeesha, who was played by Dorcas Sebuyange. The character of Thomas was a keen historian and had spent his life investigating the black history of Britain. At the start of the play, in a soliloquy he recounted telling his father about 'John Blanke and Catherine of Aragon'.[399] This walk on this day was for Thomas a mission to follow in the ancestors' footsteps: 'We walk the line of our ancestors! We walk our history!'[400] Throughout the play, there was a sense of mysticism in Thomas's motivation; he was listening out for the ancestors calling to him; calls which grew in intensity in Act Three. He told Ayeesha of the long history of black people in Yorkshire; he talked of the African Roman Emperor travelling through Yorkshire: 'his son made Eboracum – York, capital of the North of England. … it was an African that put the York in Yorkshire!'[401] For the character of Thomas, this walk was in the presence of the black ancestors who have lived and walked across Britain for millennia. The act of walking within *Black Men Walking* was

[397] Eclipse Theatre Company, *Black Men Walking,* written by Testament, directed by Dawn Walton performed by Ben Onwukwe, Tonderai Munyevu, Patrick Regis and Dorcas Sebuyange, Crucible Studio, Sheffield, 15 October 2019.
[398] Testament, *Black Men Walking* (London: Oberon, 2018).
[399] Testament, *Black Men Walking,* p. 4.
[400] Testament, *Black Men Walking,* p. 36.
[401] Testament, *Black Men Walking,* p. 72.

political; it was an assertion of a right to be in this place: the countryside; the Peak District; Britain.[402] This right was asserted through history and ancestry.

The ancestors were a recurring presence in *Black Men Walking* played by the actors speaking chorally using vocal drones, and the percussive beating of hands, chests and with a wooden staff. This was how the play opened and there were six further choruses across the play, including one that concluded it. The chorus started with 'We walk' and each one introduced different stories from black British history. These were poems that use short lines and repetition. This stepping out of role into a different mode of performance emphasised the other-worldliness of the Ancestors; they were the history, whilst the dialogue of the characters in the action of the play revealed current concerns. This play was not concerned with the specific tracing of an individual's genealogy but used the concept of collective ancestry to assert the character's identity and belonging.

[402] Testament, *Black Men Walking,* p. 49.

Appendix 2.1
The space in-between

I imagine Ethel Nichol
going on holiday
I imagine her
bringing home these photographs
and inviting her family to see them
I imagine them going into the drawing room, where Ethel had set up her projector.

I imagine that her son and his wife sit poised on armchairs,
I imagine their teenage children lounging on the floor
And their youngest squeezes in next to his mother on the chair.

Ethel's projector is older than this one.
It looks like a small silver tank.
When you turn it on there's a mechanical fan in the bottom that whirrs. It's much noisier than this one.
I would have brought it today, but fifty year old electrics can be risky to play with.

Ethel's projector only takes two slides at any one time.
You have to keep pushing the slide carrier across and back again to change them.

My great-grandmother turns off the lights
And recounts her adventure

That day they drove up that mountain pass

Figure 2.5:

Bridge. Transparency from Ethel Nichol's collection projected onto a wall. Photograph.

I took this, I imagine her saying, I took this one
from a road higher up
we were looking down
at this footbridge and I thought that looks like home

Figure 2.6:

Waterfall. Transparency from Ethel Nichol's collection projected onto a wall. Photograph.

There were lots of waterfalls like this one. Fjords. I imagine her saying.

I could have taken photographs of nothing else.

They were all spectacular. I imagine that she thought.

Figure 2.7:

Lake. Transparency from Ethel Nichol's collection projected onto a wall. Photograph.

They stopped at this lake and they had a picnic
I imagine
They'd been given it at the hotel that morning
There was very crusty bread
And cheese and ham
It was very messy

I imagine

Figure 2.8:

Road. Transparency from Ethel Nichol's collection projected onto a wall. Photograph.

I imagine that she got back on the coach.
That she was sat somewhere in the middle.
That she gazed out of the windows as they drove up into the mountains.
I imagine that the others exclaimed when they saw pockets of snow at the side of the road.
That they turned to each other and they pointed.

Figure 2.9:

Ice. Transparency from Ethel Nichol's collection projected onto a wall. Photograph.

I can imagine her looking at this frozen lake.
Frozen river.
At this glacier.
I can imagine her looking at this and thinking of winters at home
I can imagine her comparing it
as she shows her friends and family these photographs
I can imagine her saying, it was much colder than it gets here
I can imagine her saying,
Of course it was nowhere near as cold as a winter is here

I imagine her standing and shivering at the edge
With her arms wrapped around her body
And her teeth chattering

Figure 2.10:

Group. Transparency from Ethel Nichol's collection projected onto a wall. Photograph.

I imagine that this is the coach trip
I wonder how far they have travelled together

I imagine that they've all got off the coach
And Ethel decides to take a photograph

I imagine her telling them what to do
I imagine her telling them where to stand
I imagine her taking the photograph
Holding the camera up to her face
Peering through the viewfinder

I imagine her disappointment
Later that year
When the photograph's developed and she sees it's out of focus

Figure 2.11:

Harbour. Transparency from Ethel Nichol's collection projected onto a wall. Photograph.

I picture her reaching this place
With a smile on her face and explaining that this day was a lovely day
That they ate fish by the harbour
That this day was warmer than the previous days

I imagine that she enjoyed the warmth
the moment of sun
after the grey

Figure 2.12:

Houses. Transparency from Ethel Nichol's collection projected onto a wall. Photograph.

It's funny how
she doesn't ask them to pose
but still includes them in the photograph
Perhaps she just wants a picture of the road winding up the mountain.
Perhaps it's a mistake.
Perhaps she's afraid to ask.

I imagine what it's like to be 77
To be a widow
To be on holiday
To be on a coach trip
In Norway

In the spring of 1967

Figure 2.13:

Lighthouse. Transparency from Ethel Nichol's collection

Appendix 3.1

To My Ego, by Edith Nuttall

1921

To My Ego,

Silence!

You are becoming (if not already past reform) a Bore! Try to stop it by controlling your monkey chatter. Do for God's sake stop it! It is a mixture of conceit, ignorance, dull perceptions, false energy and vanity. You are full of interminable details, often right off the line altogether. It is only a fairly good memory that keeps you from appearing a damned fool. *Listen,* and take a turn at being *Silent.*

Remember Henriette's tales, G's excited talk of ill health, Mrs S's nonsense, T's terrible scrabble, Mr M's ignorance and simpleness, H's re-iterated stories, Gladys Behren's insane stuff, Alfred B's speciousness, Mrs Robinson's mad flights, Ada's sister's laughable fooling. But my own is worse than any of these. Now – what to do?

Think before you speak. Speak and walk more slowly. The more tempted you are to monkey chatter, the more shall you tighten your teeth. Close down your mouth to stretch your nostrils saying:

> *Set thou a match before the door of my lips, that I offend not with my tongue.*
>
> *The tongue is a little member, but it is set in the fire of Hell.*
>
> *What shall I do unto Thee, oh! thou false tongue?*
>
> *SILENCE!!*

Appendix 4.1

Four Great Grandmothers

One of my earliest memories is of visiting my great grandmother.

I had 4 great grandmothers. They were born in 1890, 1891, 1893 and 1902. Two of them had passed away before I was born. And of the two who were still living, I only met one.

She was my father's, mother's mother and she lived about half an hour away from where I grew up in Cumbria.

Three of my great-grandmothers had grown up in the north-west of England and the fourth in Ireland. My four great-grandmothers had 10 sisters and 12 brothers between them, although 10 of these brothers and sisters belonged to just one great grandmother. Three of my great grandmothers were the second youngest in their families and these three all had one younger brother.

I remember three things about going to visit my great grandmother. Firstly, there was a lot of people. A lot of grown ups. I can't have been more than three years old at the time. I was playing on a wooden floor. There were a lot of knees.

My great grandmothers all got married once. They were married in 1915, 1922, 1925 and 1926 in Manchester, Banbridge, Cumberland and Surrey to William, Robert, Charles and James (known as Douglas). Two of them were older than their husbands and three of them outlived their husbands by more than 15 years. One of these by 25 years.

Secondly, I remember playing with a wooden snowman on skis. The wooden snowman was definitely an ornament not a toy, but I was allowed to play with him. And in this house full of adults I explored the most suitable surfaces for snowman to ski down.

Between them my great grandmothers had 9 children. They had 4 daughters – that's one daughter each and 5 sons, although only 2 of my great grandmothers had any sons. The oldest child was born in 1917 and the youngest two (twins) in 1932.

What I really remember about visiting my great-grandmother is her staircase. She had one of those ranch style staircases that were fashionable in the 1960s and 70s. There were suspended wooden steps with nothing between one. I was terrified of these staircases, including this one in my great-grandmother's house. I used to climb up it on my knees, hanging fearfully onto each step. I thought I might slip and fall through the gap. Or something might reach through from underneath, grab my ankles and pull me through.

My great grandmothers were Katherine, Sybil, Ethel and Gladys May Matthews. I share a middle name with Gladys, who was my father's mother's mother, and it's her staircase that I can remember.

Appendix 5.1

A copy of *Lines And Ladders*

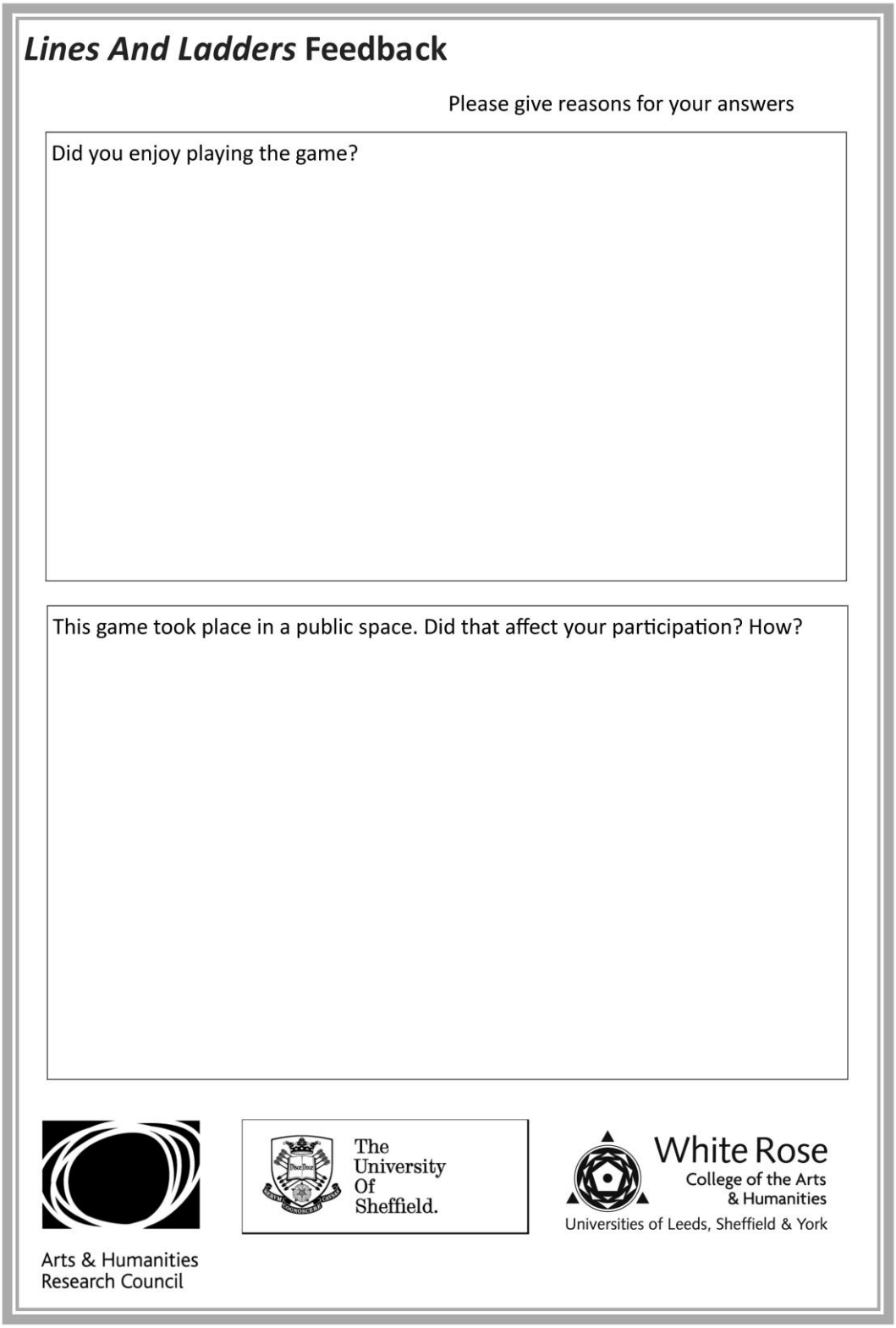
Game board supplied separately in roll, printed on vegan leatherette.

Please play!

Appendix 5.2

Feedback Form.

Three pages originally printed to full size on A4:



***Lines And Ladders* Feedback**

Please give reasons for your answers

Did you enjoy playing the game?

This game took place in a public space. Did that affect your participation? How?

Arts & Humanities Research Council

The University Of Sheffield.

White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities

Universities of Leeds, Sheffield & York

Have you researched your family history?

Does playing change the way that you think about family history?

Do you think that you will play the game again?

Arts & Humanities
Research Council

The
University
Of
Sheffield.

White Rose
College of the Arts
& Humanities
Universities of Leeds, Sheffield & York

Would you be happy participate in a follow up interview? Contact would be made by email or phone call. It would be an informal interview, which could be conducted by email, in person, over the phone or by skype and may take place up to 4 months after today's date.

Would you be happy to be contacted for this purpose?

Yes/No

You only need to leave contact details if you have answered 'Yes' above.

Name:

Email:

Phone number:

This is part of *Sharing Stories*, a research project led by Kirsty Surgey
at the University of Sheffield.
It is funded by the White Rose College of Arts and Humanities.

Thank you for being a part of it!

Arts & Humanities Research Council

The University Of Sheffield.

White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities
Universities of Leeds, Sheffield & York

Appendix 5.3

Information sheet

Originally printed on two sides of A4:

Lines And Ladders

Hello!

You are invited to play ***Lines And Ladders*** with Kirsty Surgey, a PhD researcher from the University of Sheffield.

A game of family histories - a chance to share stories - a genealogical journey of excitement and disappointment that takes place at a table in a café...

Lines And Ladders is being played at:
(Venue, date, time)

This is part of a PhD research project investigating the sharing of personal stories in public spaces. During the game, Kirsty will be sharing some stories about her adventures in family history and you will be given opportunities to share your own stories.

Following the game Kirsty will be writing notes about her experience of playing the game with you as part of a performance diary documenting this research and you will be asked to complete a short feedback form describing your responses. You will be able to state if you wish your contributions to the research to be anonymised, but please be aware that you may still be identifiable from the details that you choose to share.

There may be photographs taken during the performance; you will be given an opportunity to indicate if you are happy to be included in these.

Every week a summary of Kirsty's working journal and photographs will be published at https://heardofcats.co.uk/blog/

Material created by playing the game will be used in Kirsty's PhD thesis and available online as an ethesis; it may also be used online, in research papers, publications and public presentations given by Kirsty. Unpublished materials generated by *Lines And Ladders* will be destroyed within 5 years of the project's completion.

Contact details and name will be kept confidentially and shared only with the venue in order to manage the performance. These will be stored for as long as they are required for participation in the project.

Personal information will be stored securely and digital records will be maintained on a password protected computer.

If any sensitive data emerges within the performance this will be treated additional care and will only be used within analysis and documentation with the explicit permission of the participant.

Before the game starts, you will be asked to sign a consent form. The game can be played by people aged 6 and above, but if you are under 16 you will only be allowed to play with a parent or carer, who must sign a consent form for you.

You are free to withdraw at any point during the game and until the publication of the thesis. You can contact me via the form at www.heardofcats.co.uk/contact or email me kmsurgey1@sheffield.ac.uk if you wish to withdraw.

PhD supervisor: Dr Carmen Levick, c.levick@sheffield.ac.uk – 0114 2220212 - The University of Sheffield, Room 2.20, Jessop West, Sheffield, S3 7RA

For more information about Kirsty Surgey's PhD visit:

https://heardofcats.co.uk/home/sharing-stories-phd-research/

This study has received ethical approval from the University of Sheffield, School of English Ethics Committee.

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

In order to collect and use your personal information as part of this research project, we must have a basis in law to do so. The basis that we are using is that the research is 'a task in the public interest'.

Further information, including details about how and why the University processes your personal information, how we keep your information secure, and your legal rights (including how to complain if you feel that your personal information has not been handled correctly), can be found in the University's Privacy Notice https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general

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Universities of Leeds, Sheffield & York

Appendix 5.4

Consent form 1

For adult audience-participants. Originally printed full size on A4:

Lines And Ladders

Hello!
Thank you for volunteering to play ***Lines And Ladders***

This is part of a University of Sheffield PhD research project investigating the sharing of personal stories in public spaces. You are invited to play a game with Kirsty Surgey, the researcher. During the game, Kirsty will be sharing some stories about her adventures in family history and you will be given opportunities to share your own stories.

Following the game Kirsty will be writing notes about her experience of playing the game with you as part of a performance diary documenting this research and you will be asked to complete a short feedback form describing your responses. Please indicate below whether you wish your contributions to the research to be anonymised, but please be aware that you may still be identifiable from the details that you choose to share.

For more information about this project visit:
https://heardofcats.co.uk/lines-and-ladders/

Declaration:

I am over 18 and I understand that by playing ***Lines And Ladders*** I am consenting to be a part of Kirsty Surgey's PhD research project. I understand that the material created may be used online, in research papers, publications and public presentations, as well as the PhD thesis, which will be available online as an ethesis.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my permission at any point during the game and afterwards until publication.

I am happy to be included in photographs: **Yes/No**

I wish to be anonymous: **Yes/No**

Name:

Signature: Date:

Please use the yellow card contact details if you wish to withdraw after the performance.

Arts & Humanities Research Council

The University Of Sheffield.

White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities
Universities of Leeds, Sheffield & York

Appendix 5.5

Consent form 2

For audience-participants who are parent/carers with children. Originally printed full size on A4:

Lines And Ladders

Hello!

Thank you for volunteering to play ***Lines And Ladders.***

This is part of a University of Sheffield PhD research project investigating the sharing of personal stories in public spaces. You and your child are invited to play a game with Kirsty Surgey, the researcher. During the game, Kirsty will be sharing some stories about her adventures in family history and you and your child(ren) will be given opportunities to share your own stories.

Following the game Kirsty will be writing notes about her experience of playing the game with you and your child(ren) as part of a performance diary documenting this research and you will be asked to complete a short feedback form describing your responses. Please indicate below whether you wish your own and your child(ren)'s contributions to the research to be anonymised, but please be aware that you may still be identifiable from the details that you choose to share.

For more information about this project visit:
https://heardofcats.co.uk/lines-and-ladders/

Declaration:

I am parent/carer of _____who is years old.

I am over 18 and I understand that by playing ***Lines And Ladders*** with my child(ren), I am consenting to myself and my child(ren) being a part of Kirsty Surgey's PhD research project. I understand that the material created may be used online, in research papers, publications and public presentations, as well as the PhD thesis, which will be available online as an ethesis.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my permission at any point during the game and afterwards until publication.

I am happy for myself and my child to be included in photographs: **Yes/No**

I wish for my child and I to be anonymous: **Yes/No**

Name:

Signature: Date:

Please use the yellow card contact details if you wish to withdraw after the performance.

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Appendix 5.6

Yellow Card

Yellow card with contact details and link to the online information sheet. Originally printed approximately size shown below. Dr Carmen Levick's room changed to 4.04c from September 2018, so this was amended by hand for games from that time.

Front:

Reverse: