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## **Ethnodrama as Rhizomatic Inquiry**

**Jamie Mcphie**

Research performs. It is not idle, passive or moulded to the will of 'the expert researcher' and it can never find 'the truth'. But it can co-create diverse rhizomatic pathways that hold the potential to aid social and environmental equity, depending on its potential as a performative inquiry (non-)method. Verbatim theatre and ethnodramas hold such possibilities and can serve as assistants to the performative inquiry process or become the inquiry itself. Thus, research can perform in a number of ways, from the printed page to the theatrical stage. In this way, research has agency and is always already (inorganically) alive. The (theatrical) performance of empirical materials can also increase epistemological accessibility, thereby flattening social barriers that may otherwise stand in the way of equitable development. If performed with a posthuman lens, it also holds the potential to flatten taxonomical hierarchies and bifurcations of nature. The possibilities are endless.

This presentation is an extract from a Brechtian play that was co-produced as part of a post-qualitative collaborative action inquiry into mental health and wellbeing. Interview data is presented in its raw state – to counter interpretosis – constantly interrupted by 3 narrators (positivist, constructivist and post-structuralist) and a host of scholarly voices – to counter rigourmortis. Members of the audience shall play the parts of each character – a diffractive and political process – as the performance itself becomes a new inquiry each time it is performed, highlighting a distributed agential performance shared between multiple players (human and other-than-human). This is not the death of the author and birth of the reader, it is the continual becoming of new 'data' that co-emerge as they are co-created by the shared event itself. Like all research, the 'findings' will be unique and contextual to the spatial and temporal environmental conditions of the conference itself.

**Keywords:** Post-qualitative rhizomatic inquiry; Brechtian play; Mental health and wellbeing; Agential performance; Ethnodrama

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