

ETHNOTHEATRE

RESEARCH FROM PAGE TO STAGE



JOHNNY SALDAÑA

ETHNOTHEATRE

QUALITATIVE INQUIRY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Johnny Saldaña

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I don't care about realism—I care about reality.

—Augusto Boal

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An Introduction to Ethnotheatre and Ethnodrama

*What a verbatim play does is flash your research nakedly.
It's like cooking a meal but the meat is left raw. . . .*

—Max Stafford Clark¹

The following dramatic text is the beginning of a one-man play about competition in a high school band titled *Second Chair*. Notice how the italicized stage directions specify the actor's movements and describe the simple yet carefully chosen visual and aural elements of the theatrical presentation.

(setting: two metal folding chairs with metal music stands in front of each one; the music stands hold all necessary props for the production; first chair appears shiny and pristine; second chair appears worn, rusty, and beaten)

(pre-show music: various selections composed by W. Francis McBeth (The Feast of Trumpets, Praises, Caccia, Flourishes); lights rise; JOHNNY enters at the beginning of Flourishes, looks longingly at first chair, then sits in second chair and looks occasionally toward the empty first chair; music fades out; he speaks to the audience)

JOHNNY: In high school band, Tammi Jo thought she was *so* special. She played an ebony wood Selmer clarinet with a glass mouthpiece, while all I had was this cheap-ass plastic Bundy. Her family was typical middle-class and she was the only child, thus receiving all of the attention and all of the spoils. My family was transitioning from lower class to middle, but that was kind of hard with so many children to take care of.

In our junior year, I was second chair;

(looks at and scowls at the chair next to him)

and Tammi Jo was first chair.

(brief pause; to audience)

And I think you know where this story is going.

(adapted from Saldaña, 2008, p. 179)

This format is quite typical of the beginning of many one-person plays, but its content is quite different from fictional dramatic works. This is a true story. It was performed by the actual person who lived the experience. And everything that will be told to the audience really happened—though the names of others have been changed to maintain their anonymity. This is an example of a literary genre called *ethnodrama*. And its performance on stage in front of a live audience makes it *ethnotheatre*.

Ethnotheatre: Research from Page to Stage is a playwriting textbook for the *ethnodramatic* genre of literature. The content is geared toward a broad readership in fields such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, education, human communication, health care, theatre, media, and performance studies.

It is very difficult, even for full-time theatre practitioners, to stay current with the ethnodramatic and ethnotheatrical literature. Sometimes a new play script becomes known through word of mouth, and sometimes through systematic searches of online catalogs. At other times, an ethnodrama appears in a journal to which you just happen to subscribe, and at still other times you find one serendipitously through a nonrelated Internet search. It is difficult to document all that happens in this unique field because ethnotheatrical productions are sometimes local performances or *signature works* whose scripts never get published. I hope to provide in this book some guidance to accessible, published plays because you become a better playwright by reading exemplary scripts.

An individual also becomes a better playwright by writing monologues, scenes, and extended play scripts. Throughout this book is a series of playwriting exercises I strongly encourage you to explore. They will attune you to the craft and art of writing for the stage, especially when adapting qualitative data or empirical materials such as interview transcripts, field notes, and written documents for ethnodramatic work.

Terms and Definitions

I define two key terms as follows:

Ethnotheatre, a word joining *ethnography* and *theatre*, employs the traditional craft and artistic techniques of theatre or media production to mount for an audience a live or mediated performance event of research participants' experiences and/or the researcher's interpretations of data. The goal is to investigate a particular facet of the human condition for

purposes of adapting those observations and insights into a performance medium. This investigation is preparatory fieldwork for theatrical production work.

An *ethnodrama*, a word joining *ethnography* and *drama*, is a written play script consisting of dramatized, significant selections of narrative collected from interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journal entries, personal memories/experiences, and/or print and media artifacts such as diaries, blogs, e-mail correspondence, television broadcasts, newspaper articles, court proceedings, and historic documents. In some cases, production companies can work improvisationally and collaboratively to devise original and interpretive texts based on authentic sources. Simply put, this is dramatizing the data (adapted from Saldaña, 2005, pp. 1–2).

Ethnodrama is a specific genre of dramatic literary writing, yet its ethnotheatrical performance on stage or through media permits various artistic interpretations and styles.

Notice that this chapter's introductory quote included a related term: *verbatim play*. A specific definition exists for this form, but it depends on which text you read and which artist or scholar you're listening to. In my research about the genre, I've located approximately eighty unique terms (and I've developed a few on my own) that relate to ethnodrama or ethnotheatre, or suggest variations on the form. My goal is not to review each term's origin and its nuanced definition, but to make you aware that the literature contains an abundance of these which can be considered siblings or distant cousins of what this book is about. Filewod (2009) calls these "a rhizomorphic archive of procedures and perceptions rather than a genealogy of forms" (p. 62). In alphabetical order, these terms follow.

autodrama	ethnodramatics
autoperformance	ethnodramatology
commemorative drama	ethnographic drama
conversational dramatism	ethnographic performance text
conversational performance	ethnographic theatre
docudrama	ethno-mimesis
documentary theatre	ethnoperformance
docu-performance	ethnostorytelling
dramatic commentary on interview	ethnotainment
data	ethnotheatre
dramatized report	everyday life performance
embodied methodological praxis	everyday theatre
ethnodrama	factual theatre

generative autobiography	performing autobiography
heritage theatre	presentational theatre
historical drama	public voice ethnography
historical reenactment	reality theatre
informance	reflexive anthropology
interview theatre	reminiscence theatre
investigative theatre	research as performance
life review	research staging
life writing	research-based theatre
lifeworld theatre	scripted research
living newspaper	self-revelatory performance
living theatre verbal art	self-performance
memory theatre	semidocumentary play
metadrama	social drama
metatheater	stand-up storytelling
mystory	stand-up theory
narradrama	testimonial theatre
natural performance	theatre as representation
nonfiction playwriting	theatre of actuality
nonfiction storytelling	theatre of fact
oral history performance	theatre of re-enactment
performance anthropology	theatre of reportage
performance ethnography	theatrical documentary
performance science	theatrical research-based performance
performative inquiry	transcription theatre
performative social science	tribunal play
performative writing	verbatim theatre
performed ethnography	word-for-word theatre
performed theory	

The common thread that weaves through all of these terms is that the script or performance text is solidly rooted in nonfictional, researched reality—not realism, but *reality*. Be aware that if you conduct a literature review about this subject on a search engine, you may have quite a task ahead of you. I will presumptively label all plays I discuss in this book as ethnodramas, though their original playwrights may prefer other terms for their unique work.

I should also mention that the terms *drama* and *theatre* will each be used purposefully throughout this book, for there are distinct differences between the two. Theatre most often refers to the formal play

production process and performed product, while drama usually refers to dramatic literature and improvisational studio work. And for those who may be wondering about spelling differences, *theater* generally refers to a building or production company; *theatre* generally refers to the art form itself. These distinctions are generally preferred among the theatrical community but are not standardized in any way.

Why Ethnodrama and Ethnotheatre?

An ethnodramatic play script and its ethnotheatrical production are deliberately chosen as representational and presentational methods of ethnographic fieldwork or autoethnographic reflection because the researcher or artist has determined that these art forms are the most appropriate and effective modalities for communicating observations of cultural, social, or personal life.

You can find out what's happening in the world through several methods: printed newspapers with photographs, and their online editions; televised news programs with live coverage and video footage; radio broadcasts; Internet home pages; news-related websites; and simply word of mouth. But which one of these forms, or in what combination, is the "best" way to get world news? Many will say it depends on the story, the media format's capacities for delivering it, and the receiver's preferences for learning new information. But it ultimately comes down to the *people* initiating the reportage in the first place deciding which format(s) to adopt to spread the news. In most cases, that decision will be made for them if they work for an organization that requires particular methods and modes of communication.

Researchers face a comparable decision. With a variety of ways available to disseminate research, when is a play script and its performance—rather than a series monograph, academic journal article, book chapter, fifteen-minute conference session paper, or even a poem or visual art rendering, and so forth—the best way to communicate with others what you observed and learned about the human condition? Many audience members who attend an effective theatre production, even if the play is a fictional work, testify afterward that the live performance event made things seem more "real"—a paradox, if you think about it. Yet if the art form has this ability, this power, to heighten the representation and presentation of social life, and if our research goal with a particular fieldwork project is to capture and document the stark realities of the people we talked to and observed, then the medium of theatre seems the most compatible choice for sharing our findings and insights.

But we must not forget that theatre artists create theatre productions for their own reasons. You may hear quite lofty purposes for the art form such as “a mirror held up to human nature” or “a manifestation of our innate desire to make-believe.” What drives me as a playwright, director, actor, and designer is nothing more complex than a deep love for the art form itself. Theatre is my preferred field of study and creative medium of expression because I have been indoctrinated into its craft since young adulthood and find great personal satisfaction from my involvement and accomplishments. And when I fell in love with qualitative inquiry decades later and learned there had been others before me, like anthropologist Victor Turner, who shared those same two passions and created fascinating hybrids of *performance ethnography*, it seemed so sensible, so natural, to employ the medium of theatre to tell nonfictional stories about real people. “Both disciplines, after all, share a common goal: to create a unique, insightful, and engaging text about the human condition” (Saldaña, 2005, p. 29).

Several professional organizations have embraced and endorsed the arts as legitimate interests of their members who integrate traditional research with human participants and expressive forms of documentation and reportage. For example, the American Educational Research Association includes special interest groups such as Arts-Based Educational Research as well as Narrative Inquiry. One of the American Counseling Association’s recognized divisions is The Association for Creativity in Counseling, whose professional journal explores mental health treatment through “psychodrama, art, dance, music, theater, and other modalities.” And the American Anthropological Association includes sections such as the Society for Humanistic Anthropology and the Society for Visual Anthropology. Artists are involved not only within their own disciplines but within the social sciences, for not everyone who acts in a high school play production goes on to become a theatre major in college or pursue a professional acting career in Hollywood. Many of them are drawn to nontheatrical fields of study such as sociology, health care, and law. But many of those same people will testify that they have never forgotten the power of theatre and its potential for influencing others’ lives as much as it has their own (McCammon & Saldaña, 2011).

Approaches to Ethnodramatic Playwriting

Following are four distinct approaches to ethnodramatic playwriting to give an idea of the form and how it may differ from conventional, fictional dramatic literature.

Ethnodramatic Dramatization of Interview Transcripts

The opening narrator's monologue in Moisés Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project's 2001 production *The Laramie Project* explains that the sources for the play script included over two hundred interviews conducted by production company members, their own journal entries, and "other found texts" (p. 21). Interviews (and, to some degree, participant observation field notes) can become the primary source material for performance adaptation or *dramatization* by a playwright. Some choose to preserve the precise language of the interviewee from an audio recording or written transcript for the adaptation, thus maintaining a *verbatim* approach. Other playwrights will take the unedited material yet select portions of and rearrange the original text into a more aesthetically shaped *adaptation*. And still other playwrights may develop an *original* dramatic composition based on or inspired by raw interview materials. A *composite character* may be created when several interviews with different participants refer to similar themes or stories. Thus, the composite character is a fictional creation that nevertheless represents and speaks the collective realities of its original sources.

Though not the originator of ethnotheatre, Anna Deavere Smith is perhaps the field's first playwright-performer "superstar" who crystallized the genre and demonstrated its artistic possibilities and social impact for both the academic and commercial worlds. She burst onto the theatrical scene with two landmark productions: *Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities* (Smith, 1993, 1997) and *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Smith, 1994, 2003). Both play scripts use verbatim excerpts from her interviews with everyday citizens and major social and political figures. Smith's classical acting training focused her on the intricacies and nuances of language, and that knowledge transferred into her analyses of conversations with people and the performances of their words. Her social consciousness attuned her to the "character of America," and her cultural goal through theatre is to represent the spectrum of its diverse citizens on stage and to weave the fragments of its people for critical examination and audience dialogue.

Fires in the Mirror profiles various perspectives about the 1991 conflict and riots in Crown Heights between African Americans and Jews when an accidental death and retaliatory murder fueled ethnic tensions. Figures portrayed range from cultural icons such as Angela Davis and the Reverend Al Sharpton to Anonymous Young Man #1. *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* profiles citizens' perspectives about the city's riots following the acquittal of the police officers who beat Rodney King. The interviewee characters are Korean, Latino, white, and black, and range

from shop owners to trial jurors to Reginald Denny, the truck driver whose retaliatory beating during the riots was broadcast live nationally.

In her production notes for *Twilight*, Smith (2003) advises audience framing for the documentary theatre event by showing slides and videos of key news footage about the riots, and a special slide that reads: "This play is based on interviews conducted by Anna Deavere Smith soon after the race riots in Los Angeles of 1992. All words were spoken by real people and are verbatim from those interviews" (p. 4). Smith refers to the actors of this play's real people as "cultural workers" and encourages them to research the historic events and the specific people they portray, paying particular attention to the lines as written, including all "uh"s, incomplete sentences, and phrase repetitions: "The theory of the play is that an actor has the ability to walk in another person's 'words,' and therefore in their hearts" (p. 7). One example of verbatim text is from Smith's interview with Reginald Denny himself:

I mean,
 does anyone know
 what a riot looks like?
 I mean, I'm sure they do now.
 I didn't have a clue of what one looked like
 and
 I didn't know that the verdict had come down.
 I didn't pay any attention
 to that,
 because that
 was somebody else's problem
 I guess I thought
 at the time.
 It didn't have anything to do with me.
 I didn't usually pay too much attention of what was going on in
 California
 or in America or anything
 and, uh,
 I couldn't for the life of me figure out what was going on.²

(Smith, 1994, pp. 104–105)

Notice that Smith arranges the monologic form into a poetic-like structure. Part of this is her belief that people speak in "organic poems," but this technique also *parses* the interview text into distinct phrases of meaning where the briefest hint of a pause comes at the end of each line. Some ethnodramatists like Paul Brown (2001) attest that verbatim adap-

tation is not only more authentic, it also creates a sense of “character”: “It is indeed the repetitions, convolutions, pauses, malapropisms, idiom, vocabulary and non-word sounds that make each character’s voice as distinctive as a fingerprint” or a “voiceprint,” as Brown labels it (p. xiv).

Smith (2000) further documents her career and play development process in *Talk to Me: Listening Between the Lines*. She asserts that her audio tape recorder is her “camera” because *language is identity*. During her interviews she listens for those moments when language fails her participants, “in the very moment that they have to be more creative than they would have imagined in order to communicate. It’s the very moment when they have to dig deeper than the surface to find words, and at the same time, it’s a moment when they want to communicate very badly” (p. 53). These portions of an interview tend to be the richest and most significant, and thus find their way onto the page and onto the stage.

Smith’s productions are available on VHS and DVD, and selections from her work can be accessed on YouTube. An exceptional sample of her work can be accessed on the website TED: Ideas worth spreading at http://www.ted.com/talks/anna_deavere_smith_s_american_character.html.

Steve Cosson, artistic director of a professional New York City theatre company called The Civilians, produces occasional ethnotheatrical or “investigative theatre” work as part of the troupe’s repertoire. But unlike Anna Deavere Smith’s meticulous interview methods, The Civilians’ methods rely more on informal rather than documented fieldwork, as Cosson (2010) describes in the production notes for *Gone Missing*, a charming one-act ethnodrama about things people lose and find:

Over a period of several months, the members of the company gathered stories first hand in coffee shops, at bus stops, in retirement centers. Some of the subjects were relatives, some are friends, but most were complete strangers. . . . These interviews became the text for the show, and the actors of the company play the people they’ve interviewed. It’s important to mention that as part of this process we didn’t take notes or record anything during these interviews. Whatever’s spoken is committed to memory and written down later, and the words are inevitably altered somehow by the listener. So we don’t identify anyone by name, as the character is not exactly them. It is an impression of them interpreted by a performer, as accurate as possible but—like all perceptions—subjective. (p. 38)

Gone Missing consists not only of monologic stories (which have quite an authentic ring of truth to them) but also original songs composed by Michael Friedman. Whether selected lyric portions are extracted verbatim from various sources or freely adapted is unknown.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that even songs can be ethnodramatically-inspired, creating a hybrid form of Musical Ethnotheatre. Below is a sample of lyrics from the song "The Only Thing Missing," sung by the character identified as a Korean Deli Woman:

I'll admit I have a problem holding onto things
 A sock, a book, a clock, a look, a chance.
 And the moment that a fella
 Lends me his umbrella
 It's just another doomed romance.
 I've learned to never worry about losing things.
 A car, a pin, a star, some gin, a bet.
 But when you said that we were through
 And suddenly I knew
 There was one loss I'd regret.

(Cosson & Friedman, 2003, p. 46)

Ethnodramatic Adaptations of Documents and Published Accounts

Most of us are familiar with the phrase that prefaces a number of films and television specials: "based on a true story." But a critical perspective to the dramatization can make us skeptical about the "truth" of what we're watching and hearing. Some leeway and dramatic license are usually taken when autobiographical, biographical, official, and historic textual materials, whether primary or secondary sources, are adapted by a playwright. The actual words spoken by a historic person may not be documented, but his letters, diaries, and other handwritten documents give us more authentic insight into his ways of thinking. Sometimes, though, we do have access to rich historic documents as well as contemporary writings and, like interview transcript adaptation, the playwright must make decisions as to whether to adapt the material faithfully or with artistic interpretation.

Below is an excerpt from a narrative inquiry about homeless youth in pre-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans. Susan Finley and Macklin Finley (1999), mother and son and ethnographer and poet, respectively, collaborated to compose a research story based on her fieldwork and his lived experiences. Roach is a 19-year-old streetwise male who meets covertly with a drug dealer to work as his runner. This text was one source for its ethnodramatic play script adaptation, which follows.

Roach leaves the others listening and, waiting around the corner from the Bourbon Pub, he meets his dealer connection. For every hook-up he makes with a horse customer, he takes a \$10 cut, whatever size the sale. "Thas' OK. There's nobody lookin' to me for more than an evening's entertainment anyways," Roach agrees with the deal. The hook-up is a short, nervous Jamaican, about 30 and going bald, who keeps looking both ways down the alley where they talk. His nerves indicate that he uses what he sells and that it's about time for a fix. He gives Roach a telephone number for his scores already neatly written out on a corner of paper. Roach maintains his usual easy-going manner with the guy and, after they've settled business, the hook-up relaxes, pulls a tight little jib from his pocket and lights it. The jib passes to Roach who fixes on the little red glow of the end. He draws deeply, makes an effort not to cough.

"You use?" the hook-up asks him, taking his turn at the joint.

"No," Roach answers, but keeps talking, "Well, I have. I don't anymore, not now." He pauses, watching the Jamaican bogart the joint a little longer. "Tell you the truth, I'm back on that shit all the time." He speaks quietly, talking more to himself than to the Jamaican.

The Jamaican reaches inside his sport coat pocket and places a tiny vial in Roach's hand. He keeps the J that he's no longer passing lighted with an occasional deep drag, and tells Roach through a rising cough, "That one's on the house. Gift to newcomers from your Neighborhood Club." He laughs at his own joke as he flicks the roach of the jib down the alley way. "Meet me here tomorrow night. Same time. Same place. We'll settle accounts then." He turns on his heel and is gone without a reply from Roach.

Roach waits to be sure the guy is really gone, then surveys the ground of the alley around him, looking for the butt-end of the jib the guy threw off. He gives the search a minute or two and then shrugs it off, leaving the alley. (p. 330)

Dialogic exchanges within a prose narrative can easily be extracted and adapted into a two-character scene for the stage, with careful consideration as to whether some dialogue passages may be superfluous and thus unnecessary for the play script. Any passage that mentions something that was talked about might inspire a new spoken line. Physical and gestural action described in the narrative can be incorporated into italicized stage directions and thus movement on stage. In conjunction with these fundamental adaptation principles, additional sources and the playwright's or director's vision might enter the picture to create more evocative staging.

Macklin Finley's (2000) haunting poetic collection, *Street Rat*, chronicles in angry verse the harsh lives of the homeless youth he befriended. This additional literary source was perused along with the Finleys' joint narrative for dramatic adaptation. "Mack," the street poet, was incorporated into the ethnodrama as an omniscient narrator and critical commentator on the action unfolding around him. Poems that related to the characters' dilemmas were extracted from his anthology and woven throughout the play, as in the following scene entitled "Needles in Veins" from Saldaña, Finley, and Finley's (2005) *Street Rat*:

(lights up; as MACK recites, the DEALER, a short nervous Jamaican, about 30 and going bald, enters and waits nervously; ROACH enters; they meet covertly and mime talking to each other; Cajun music fades out)

MACK: Lobotomizing without tools,
tubes in noses,
paper on tongues—
Constant escape,
circular streets
around and down,
scraping gutters,
sleeping in abandoned homes
watchful of peripheral motion—
Always taking chances
With motions like
a train.

(the DEALER passes ROACH a baggie of heroin packets, a cell phone, and a piece of paper with phone numbers written on it and mimes talking the directions for hook-ups)

Needles in veins
Needles in veins
Needles in veins.
Pink blood, diluted
blood, blocking the
works blood, cramming the
artery blood. Metallic tastes
numb tongues, prickly eyes
watery walls—
unaware a thousand
tomorrows rusty machines
around like turnstile justice.

(the DEALER pulls out a joint from his pocket and lights it, drags, passes it to ROACH who also takes a hit)

Like a train rhythm—money
 burning—like a train rhythm—
 bondsmen and pushers
 bondsmen and pushers
 bondsmen and pushers—
 Insane on floors—
 Spinning—Hot hairy Middle-
 Aged hands—Gotta pay somehow—
 like a train rhythm:
 Shaking at dawn
 for another,
 another,
 another.

DEALER: *(keeps and continues to drag on the joint)* For every hook-up you make with a customer, you take a ten dollar cut, whatever size the sale.

ROACH: Thas' OK. There's nobody lookin' to me for more than an evening's entertainment anyways.

DEALER: You use?

ROACH: No. Well, I have. I don't anymore, not now. *(laughs)* Tell you the truth, I'm back on that shit all the time.

DEALER: *(reaches in his coat pocket, pulls out a packet of heroin and places it in ROACH's hand)* That one's on the house. Gift to newcomers from your Neighborhood Club. *(he laughs through his cough and flicks the joint down on the ground)* Meet me here tomorrow. Same time, same place. We'll settle accounts then. *(he turns and walks away briskly, exits)*

(. . . ROACH looks at the heroin, slips it in his pocket, picks up the joint the DEALER flicked to the ground, snuffs it out to save for later)

(pp. 152–154)

Qualitative inquiry sometimes employs a technique called *triangulation*, which relies on more than one information source or type to collect, compare, and corroborate information. Triangulation might also be employed by ethnodramatists to gain a broader spectrum of perspectives or

richer dimensions to the story. Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen (2004), in the trade book edition of the play script for *The Exonerated*, explain that their primary sources for monologue and dialogue originated not just from interviews but also from public records such as court transcripts, documentation stored on microfiche files, and hard copy documents such as affidavits, depositions, official letters, and police reports.

The Exonerated and *The Laramie Project* went through yet another iteration of adaptation when they were each transformed into teleplays for network made-for-television movies. The stage, television, and film art forms each have their own performance and presentation conventions, and film and television media obviously permit more visual scope and scale. But the television adaptation of *The Exonerated* maintained the reader's theatre simplicity of the off-Broadway stage work, while the television adaptation of *The Laramie Project* incorporated the magnitude of feature films. As availability permits, it is wise to read the acting edition play scripts for each of these works, then compare them to their mediated adaptations.

Original Autoethnodramatic Work

A third variant of ethnodramatic writing is the playwright's personal memories, experiences, and perceptions as sources for the dramatic text. The autobiographical—preferably performed by the writer himself or herself—now becomes *autoethnodramatic*. As audience members, we place our faith in the autoethnotheatrical performer that what he or she tells us will indeed be true. But the writer/performer also has an ethical responsibility to tell us nothing but the truth as an understood “contract” between the actor and the audience. Unlike the experience of fictional theatre, we are not as audiences “suspending disbelief”; in autoethnodrama, we are “assuming belief.”

In *Second Chair* (Saldaña, 2008), my one-man autoethnodrama about my high school band days (a commissioned performance for a Narrative Inquiry in Music Education conference), I describe my attempts to become first chair clarinetist. The play is primarily about competition but also about the marginalization and second-class status of being a lower class, overweight, gay person of color. In the excerpt below, Tammi Jo is first chair clarinetist and I am second chair; Mr. Garcia is the band director (their names are pseudonyms). Notice the stage directions' prompts for the actor to assume a different character voice when needed. One-person autoethnodramas sometime include the solo actor portraying multiple roles when significant characters enter the story.