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2-16-2018

## "The Habits of History": A Research-Based Play Script

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### Recommended APA Citation

Morrissey, D. (2018). "The Habits of History": A Research-Based Play Script. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(2), 403-421. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.2459>

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## "The Habits of History": A Research-Based Play Script

### Abstract

In this article, derived from her doctoral dissertation, the author (a teacher educator in drama in Ireland) presents her students' initial responses to her performance of a one-woman play, "Goldilocks's Testimony." The play, written by the author, concerns the marginalisation of women in workplaces. In the play, women's "real" experiences of workplace marginalisation are transposed to Fairyland. In this article, the author represents her postgraduate student teachers' responses to her performance in play script format. In this play script, "The Habits of History" (Olsen, 2003), the students' responses are also transposed to Fairyland.

### Keywords

Narrative, Gender, Initial Teacher Education, Research Based Play Script

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## **“The Habits of History”: A Research-Based Play Script**

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*In this article, derived from her doctoral dissertation, the author (a teacher educator in drama in Ireland) presents her students' initial responses to her performance of a one-woman play, “Goldilocks’s Testimony.” The play, written by the author, concerns the marginalisation of women in workplaces. In the play, women’s “real” experiences of workplace marginalisation are transposed to Fairyland. In this article, the author represents her postgraduate student teachers’ responses to her performance in play script format. In this play script, “The Habits of History” (Olsen, 2003), the students’ responses are also transposed to Fairyland. Keywords: Narrative, Gender, Initial Teacher Education, Research Based Play Script*

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### **“Goldilocks’s Testimony”**

The play script below, “The Habits of History,” represents the initial responses of a cohort of postgraduate student teachers (primary) to my performance of a one-woman play: “Goldilocks’s Testimony” (Morrissey, 2012). In “Goldilocks’s Testimony” the narratives of experience of three professional women (me included) of workplace marginalisation are combined in a composite narrative told by a composite protagonist (Goldilocks) and transposed to the fictional world of the literary fairy tale, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Goldilocks works for Three Bears’ Quality Control Incorporated, a company run by three male bears. First, she works in porridge testing, then in chair testing, and finally, in bed testing. In porridge testing and in chair testing, she is marginalised but remains silent. As she matures, she becomes more confident. Eventually, she acquires a seat on the board of directors. One day, at a meeting of the board, she dares to call for a vote. The chairman (Great, Huge Bear) tells her that “this board normally works by consensus” (Morrissey, 2012, p. 130), making her feel like “a BOLD, BOLD girl” (p. 131). She is subsequently accused by the bears of “trespassing and wanton destruction” (p. 131). When the story appears in the *Fairyland Express* (Fairyland’s newspaper), Goldilocks takes a case against the bears. In “Goldilocks’s Testimony,” she presents her testimony in court, claiming that she has been framed.

### **Responding to “Goldilocks’s Testimony”**

Audience responses to my previous performances of “Goldilocks’s Testimony” at academic conferences and in my postgraduate teacher education classroom revealed a reluctance, by women and men, to speak publicly about their experiences of (workplace) marginalisation. Even though both women and men publicly admitted to identifying with the play’s marginalised protagonist, Goldilocks, they did so in general rather than specific terms. Any personal revelations of workplace marginalisation were confined to private post-performance conversations (Morrissey, 2012). The public muting or silencing of these personal narratives highlights the extent to which the effects of dominant gender narratives remain silenced in public discourse; the extent to which masculine privilege continues “to remain unspoken and therefore perpetuated” (Mazzei, 2007, p. 49). Confined to private conversations, personal stories of marginalisation cannot be subjected to public scrutiny. However, like Greene (1995), I believe that it is only “once we can see our givens as contingencies, then we may have an opportunity to posit alternative ways of living and valuing and to make choices”

(Greene, 1995, p. 23). Furthermore, I see teachers as important agents of social change (Cammack & Philips, 2002; Greene, 1995). I believe, therefore, that it is imperative that student teachers collaboratively (or publicly) scrutinise and interrogate their taken-for-granted gender narratives so as to be freed to imagine alternative constructions of gender, alternatives that may influence their work as future teachers and agents of social change. Towards this end, I decided to centre a 10-week postgraduate drama education course on my performance of “Goldilocks’s Testimony.” Throughout the course I employed a pedagogical tool designed specifically to inquire into works of art: the Lincoln Center Institute (LCI; Lincoln Center Institute, 2008) approach to aesthetic education. (In this instance the art work under investigation was my performance of “Goldilocks’s Testimony.”) The LCI approach, underpinned by Greene’s (1995, 2001) philosophical work, involves engaging students in experiential activities and dialogue prior to, and after, viewing an art work. The activities are designed to enable students to notice what there is to be noticed in the work of art under investigation and to make connections between the work and their own lives. Setting up my 10-week drama education course, as an inquiry into “Goldilocks’s Testimony,” I sought to evoke the students’ own narratives of (workplace) experiences and to subject those narratives to collaborative scrutiny. In this way, I sought to open spaces for the students to imagine alternative constructions of gender; alternatives that could influence their work as future teachers and agents of social change. “The Habits of History” (below) represents the narratives of experience revealed by the students in week 5 (the week of the performance) as well as snippets of the conversations that occurred the following week (week 6).

### **Research Site and Research Participants**

The 10-week drama education course itself was located in the first semester of a 3-semester postgraduate initial teacher education programme in Ireland. There were 70 students on the programme: 54 women and 16 men. The students were required to attend all drama education classes. Before commencing the project, I sought and obtained ethical approval from the research ethics committee of the College where I work as a teacher educator. On the first day of the course, I outlined the project to the students, verbally and in writing. I explained that my role would be that of teacher/researcher, that the topic under investigation would be gender and that we would be engaging in dialogue and drama prior to and after viewing “Goldilocks’s Testimony.” I explained too that, as a teacher/researcher, I would have both a pedagogical focus and a research/inquiry one; I would be interrogating the students’ taken-for-granted notions of gender, while simultaneously teaching them about drama education. I assured the students that their participation in the research dimension of the course would be entirely voluntary and that they would have the right to withdraw at any time and without consequence. I clarified that I would not use data from anyone who did not consent to participate, or who might later withdraw. Such students would, nonetheless, continue to participate in the drama education classes, as per programme requirements. I explained that data would be collected via course documents, photographs, video recordings of classes, students’ written reflections and course assignments (which would be graded by a colleague and made available to me on completion of the grade appeals process), my field notes, and my course journal. I assured the students that any personal identification would be omitted from the data collected and that individuals would remain anonymous in any research text produced. I also explained that I was not certain what form such texts might take, citing narrative and fictional accounts as possibilities. All students consented (in writing) to participate in the research dimension of the course. They also consented, in writing, to the publishing of any research texts that might emerge from that process. The student cohort was divided into two classes with 35 students in each. Each class was scheduled for 1 hour per week for the 10-week period.

## **Research Methodology/Pedagogical Approach**

As a teacher/researcher of the course, my pedagogical approach and my research methodology became inextricably intertwined. As a teacher/researcher, I positioned myself alongside the students with a view to intervening in and inquiring into their taken-for-granted gender narratives. Employing the LCI approach, my role as a teacher was to bring students, in the context of their own particular narratives of experience, “to watch and to listen with heightened attentiveness and care” (Greene, 2001, p. 28); to create “dialogical situations, in which persons, caring for another, able to look through another’s eyes, talk about what they are discovering together about themselves, about the world, about what is and what might be” (p. 108). This approach is underpinned by the notion that we make sense of our experiences and shape our identities through “shaping our own stories and, at the same time, opening ourselves to other stories in all their variety” (Greene, 1995, p. 186). The research methodology I employed, narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Huber, Steeves, & Li, 2011) is aligned with this approach in that it too is guided by the notion that we make sense of our experiences and shape our identities through storytelling. Clandinin et al. (2011) write that narrative inquiry is

grounded in relationships that offer both researcher and participants a narrative space for telling and retelling stories they have lived and are living. As stories are retold, that is, inquired into, possibilities emerge for reliving in more thoughtful and responsive ways in the future. (p. 34)

Given the centrality of storytelling in making meaning and, concomitantly, in shaping identity to both the LCI approach and narrative inquiry, it is perhaps unsurprising that the distinctions between my pedagogical approach and my research methodology became indistinguishable. Throughout the course, my teaching/research tools evolved in response to the evolving teaching/research environment. I did, however, plan a focus for each of the 10 one-hour classes in advance.

### **Week 1**

- Presentation of research project to students (in written and verbal forms)
- Written agreement by students to participate

### **Week 2**

- Workshop introducing Maxine Greene’s ideas and raising questions about taken-for-granted notions of gender

### **Weeks 3-4**

- Experiential drama-based workshops, employing students’ own gender narratives, designed to lead the students into my performance of *Goldilocks’s Testimony*

### **Week 5**

- Performance of “Goldilocks’s Testimony”
- Initial responses to the performance

### **Weeks 6-8**

- Experiential drama-based activities designed to deepen students’ engagement with the play and to evoke, represent, and interrogate their own gender narratives and create alternatives

### **Week 9**

- Explication of the LCI methodology

### **Week 10**

- Preparation for teaching practice placement

Aside from the outline presented above and the fact that I knew I would be using drama and narrative practices to make meaning, represent meaning and generate data/stories, I did not predetermine the precise methods I would use. My teaching/inquiry methods were evolutionary, “custom-built from other drafters’ cast-offs which, while providing a general guidance, were not made *for this particular job*” (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012, p. 33). I wrote field notes after each class and I engaged in ongoing autobiographical and journal writing throughout the teaching/inquiry process. I drew on this writing as well as on students’ written reflections, video recordings of the classes, and course documents to generate interim field texts throughout and beyond the course. With these field texts, I engaged in ongoing analysis of the stories being told (and not told), enacted (and not) in the classroom. My ongoing analysis was informed by the theory I was thinking with; by post-structural feminist theory (Butler, 1999, 2005, 2007; Davies, Browne, Gannon, Honan, & Somerville, 2005), performance studies (Pineau, 2005; Schechner, 2013; Spry, 2011) and Greene’s (1995, 2001) philosophical writings. For the remainder of this article, I will focus specifically on weeks 5 and 6 of the course.

### Evoking Students’ Responses to “Goldilocks’s Testimony”

I performed “Goldilocks’s Testimony” as planned, in week 5. In my performance, I sought to embody the taken-for-granted practices by which women are made (and make themselves) “docile bodies in workplaces” (Davies et al., 2005, p. 346). Repeating familiar workplace behaviours (as Goldilocks and as Great Huge Bear) in the unfamiliar context of the classroom, I sought to make these behaviours strange. I also sought, in role as Goldilocks, to “talk back” at the systems of power that hold such behaviours and practices in place. In the play, I addressed the (courtroom) audience directly, positioning the students “as a collective witness” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 65) to Goldilocks’s story. Immediately post-performance, I wanted the students to focus on what that story evoked, to “witness” it again by retelling it (Morrissey, 2012). Towards this end, I used narrative methods and, the students wrote individual responses to the following questions adapted from White (2005):

- What struck a chord with you?
- What does that suggest about people’s values and beliefs?
- What from your own experience resonates with the play?
- Where did the play take you that you might not otherwise have gone?

After that, they shared their responses in small groups and in whole class dialogue. The students’ telling and retelling of their narratives of experience were video recorded and after each class, I recorded my own observations in field notes.

The following week (week 6), I used drama methods to enable the students to tell and retell their gender narratives. The students interviewed me in role; as Great, Huge Bear (Chairman of the Board of Directors of Three Bears Quality Control Incorporated) and as Goldilocks. In role as Great, Huge Bear and as Goldilocks, I aimed to create believable characters who would reiterate the gender subtext inscribed in organisational structures and work practices (Acker, 2006; Benschop & Doorewaard, 2012): the internalised “belief in the legitimacy of bureaucratic structures and rules” (Acker, 2006, p. 454) and in “male and white privilege” (p. 454); the taken-for-granted organising relations between managers and staff; the control exerted by the taken-for-granted belief “that there is no point in challenging the fundamental gender, race, and class nature of things” (Acker, 2006, p. 454). So, in role as Great, Huge Bear, I reiterated the necessity of making decisions by consensus, in the best interests of

the company (of course!). I invoked my 20-year tenure as chief executive; insinuating (but not stating) that Goldilocks should have known better than to call for a vote. In role as Goldilocks, I relayed that I neither expected nor received support for that call. For, as Benschop and Doorewaard (2012) contend, the internalised gender subtext urges “consent with the dominant organizational discourse and the acceptance of organizational practices, despite the disadvantages of those practices for those involved” (p. 228). The students asked questions and responded to my replies and to each other’s. These classes, like the previous ones, were video recorded and after each class, I recorded my observations in field notes. In all of this I was, as a teacher educator, also conscious of modelling teacher-in-role as a drama strategy that students could use in their own drama classes. In “The Habits of History,” I represent the narratives of experience revealed by the students in weeks 5 and 6 in play script format. Video recordings of the classes provide the primary data sources for the analysis contained in the play script, which is also informed by data from the students’ initial written responses to “Goldilocks’s Testimony” in week 5 and my field notes.

### **From Data Analysis to Research Representation**

Inevitably, the analysis I present in “The Habits of History” of the students’ embodied narratives, the classroom, and the wider social context, is informed by my preoccupations, beliefs, values, and perspectives. It is informed too by the many theories I have been thinking (and continue to think) with, as well as by those theories I was explicitly thinking with throughout the analytic process, namely post-structural feminist theory (Butler, 1999, 2005, 2007; Davies et al., 2005; Spry, 2011) and performance studies (Schechner, 2013; Spry, 2011). I do not, however, see theory as being confined to academic theory, but as extending to any source (including fairy tales and fairy tale theory) that help me to “think hard” (St. Pierre, 2009, p. 231) about my data and how to represent it.

In post-structuralism and performance studies, (gender) identity is understood in terms of performance; as composed of repeatable utterances (Butler, 2007) and behaviours (Schechner, 2013) that people train for and rehearse. Butler (2007) maintains that these utterances and behaviours are held in place by repetition and regulation; by performativity. She contends, moreover, that the “highly rigid regulatory frame” (Butler, 2007, p. 45) within which these “acts” are repeated renders gender (and the power structures that produce “women,” “men,” and gender inequities) invisible. In this way, gender is produced as natural, taken-for-granted, and placed beyond question, even for people who are disadvantaged by its effects. Masculine privilege thus remains, as Mazzei (2007) asserts, “unspoken and therefore perpetuated” (p. 49). The effects, moreover, of dominant gender narratives are rendered silent (silenced) in public discourse.

As I viewed and re-viewed, the video recordings of the classes in weeks 5 and 6 through the lens of post-structuralism/performance studies, I attended to the ways in which culturally dominant gender narratives (Bourdieu, 2001; Olsen, 2003; Rich, 1979) foreclosed the students’ (and my) utterances and behaviours in the classroom (Mazzei & Jackson, 2012). I set about transcribing as many such utterances (sometimes involving long exchanges) as I could find. In the transcription process, I sought to “capture” the rhythm and quality of these utterances (the repetitions, the silences, and the breaths) as well as the words spoken. So I turned to the techniques of poetry, to poetry’s line breaks and elisions and to its mode of organising text into blocks or stanzas of varying lengths (Richardson, 2002). I recorded who the speakers were, using pseudonyms as (gender) identifiers and in my annotations, I recorded the students’ (and my) accompanying classroom behaviours. I observed that many of the female students did not speak, even though they outnumbered the male students by about 10-1. I noted too, that while the male students spoke about their marginalisation as *young men* in workplaces, the female

students tended to articulate their stories indirectly or silently; in knowing smiles, in refusals of eye contact, in constricted postures and gestures, in hints, as fragments, as gaps, in incomplete sentences, and almost always in the third person. The foreclosing of the female students' utterances—an effect, in post-structural terms, of culturally dominant gender narratives that dismiss and devalue women's public speech (Beard, 2017; Bourdieu, 2001; Olsen, 2003; Rich, 1979)—was brought into sharp focus by the poetic format, in its line breaks and elisions. In this way, the mode of transcription itself functioned as a form of analysis.

The template provided (by dominant gender narratives) for the public silencing of women was repeated in the female students' refusal to "talk back" at their institutionalised oppression in public. Although they acknowledged the inequities experienced by Goldilocks, and by women more generally, they could not (or would not) claim agency for themselves in the public forum of the classroom. The female students also tended to avoid overt displays of anger, aggression, or even assertiveness and presented themselves as "friendly, attentive, submissive, demure, restrained, [and] self-effacing" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 66). Here too, the students' utterances and behaviours are foreclosed by dominant narratives of femininity which dictate that women exist for and through their attractiveness to (and success in attracting) men, and so learn to behave in ways that indulge men's "real" or assumed expectations (Bourdieu, 2001; Olsen, 2003). Thinking about my own utterances and behaviours through the lens of post-structural theory, I uncovered the effects of dominant gender narratives in my reticence to "speak into difficulties" (Spry, 2011, p. 59), into the behaviours and silences I observed in the classroom, my role, despite, my efforts to the contrary in maintaining dominant gender narratives (Mazzei, 2007; Spry, 2011). In accordance with "masculine privilege" (Mazzei, 2007, p. 49), one male student, however, took it on himself to "stand up for men." Nonetheless, "masculine privilege," though its effects were evident, remained unuttered in the classroom.

Since the 1980s much of my thinking about gender has centred on the dominant narratives of gender represented in literary fairy tales. The persistent popularity of these tales (derived in the main from those of Perrault (1969) in late 17<sup>th</sup> century France and the Grimm brothers, 1982) in early 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany) has led to their occurrence, and that of the gender and bourgeois ideologies they contain, as normal or natural (Bacchilega, 1997; Zipes, 2009, 2012). In the tales, normative femininity is aligned with being attractive to (and attracting) men, patience, submissiveness, deference, and silently enduring one's lot and normative masculinity is aligned with independence, power, and agency. The tales' gender norms are thus aligned with those described by Beard (2017), Bourdieu (2001), Olsen, (2003) and Rich (1979) as culturally dominant. Indeed, Zipes (2009, 2012) and Bacchilega (1997) contend that fairy tales have played a historically significant role in the Western civilising process and, hence, a "privileged" role in the normalisation of gender. When it came to representing the students' embodied narratives in textual form, I wanted to do so in way that would reveal them, and the classroom context in which they occurred, as nested within broader cultural and historical systems of power. So, given the genre's historical significance in the normalisation of gender and my own preoccupation with it, I turned to the literary fairy tale to achieve this. Juxtaposing the "real" and the "fictional" I sought, moreover, to corroborate Olsen's (2003) claim that, when it comes to gender, the habits of history are, indeed, difficult to break. In my appropriations of literary fairy tales, I affiliate myself with many other feminist writers and artists who have (since the 1970s) also been troubling gender from within a genre that has contributed to its normalisation.

Having decided to represent the students' embodied narratives within the fictional form of the fairy tale, I also wanted to do so in a textual format that would reveal the effects of dominant gender narratives in a way that was vivid, credible and engaging (Saldaña, 2003, 2008); one that would reconstruct a sense of the students' "actual" interactions with each other and with me (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010). To achieve this, I turned to the format of the written



play script. Since play scripts are usually written to be displayed or performed rather than relayed or read, they tend to contain only the salient details. They also use italicised stage directions to guide the reader to imagine these details in physical, visual, and aural form. Thinking with post-structural/performance studies theory and familiar fairy tales, I reviewed my transcripts of the video recordings of the classes in weeks 5 and 6. In what was a complicated cognitive and intuitive process, I searched for alignments between familiar fairy tale characters and the students' (and my) utterances and behaviours, before deciding on the fairy tale characters to cast (see below). I then considered what utterances and behaviours to assign to whom. Since our classroom utterances were already arranged into a poetic like structure, I decided not to change this. I did, however, rearrange "stanzas" to create a sense of narrative, "drama," and character. I also invented (and omitted) some words, phrases, and details. The stage directions too were derived from the transcripts (from the annotations), though to a much lesser extent so as to enable the establishment of setting, characters, and relationships (rooted both in familiar fairy tales and the "actualities" of the classroom). So, in "The Habits of History" (below) I transpose the students (and myself) to Fairyland; representing them (and me) as—sometimes composite—fairy tale characters in whom aspects of characters derived from both the familiar tales and the classroom are retained. Unlike "Goldilocks's Testimony," this play script is not written to be performed but to be read. Saldaña (2011) insists that a play script should speak for itself, that it should not include "any footnotes or citations of the related literature" (p. 36). "The Habits of History," though informed by performance studies and feminist post structural theory does not refer explicitly to these theoretical constructs.

The representation of the embodied narratives others in textual form is, as Madison (2012), writes, "always . . . a complicated and contentious undertaking" (p. 4). Our embodied narratives are not fixed or stable; they are multiple, contradictory, co-created with others, and embedded in "obvious, obtuse and invisible systems of power" (Spry, 2011, p. 55). Any attempt to represent them is, therefore, but partial and provisional. Moreover, as Butler (2005) writes, "There is no 'I' that can stand apart from the social condition of its emergence" (p. 7). So, my account in "The Habits of History" of the students' (and my) embodied narratives in weeks 5 and 6 cannot but be idiosyncratic and incomplete. I am, nonetheless, as its author, responsible for the version of "reality" it represents, the stories it tells, and those it leaves untold (some of which may be hidden from my view; Butler, 2005).

### **Setting the Scene for "The Habits of History"**

In the play script, "The Habits of History," I represent the students' responses to my performance in week 5 and snippets from the conversations that occurred between them and me (in role) in week 6. In "The Habits of History," the students' are represented by familiar fairy tale characters: Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Cinderella (the tales' "ideal" women); Prince (the "ideal" man); Gretel (who although she acts to save herself and her brother from their captor, the witch, does not pose any threat to the tales' gender norms); and Huntsman (who "saves" Snow White from death). The classroom setting is transposed to Fairyland, specifically to a coffee shop outside the courtroom in which Goldilocks has just given her testimony. I chose the coffee shop as a convenient location in which the characters might gather before returning to the courtroom for the next stage of the proceedings. In "The Habits of History" "I" am represented by Goldilocks (as per the play in week 5 and my interactions, in role, with the students in week 6), by Great, Huge Bear (as per the play in week 5 and my interactions with the students, in role, the following week) and by Hag (one of the literary fairy tale's stock characters, an older (uglier) woman who acts outside of approved limits and is punished as a result). My representation of myself as Hag in "The Habits of History" also refers

to the earliest written version of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” in which Goldilocks is a “malevolent” old woman (Mure, 1967). Since I do not assume the reader’s familiarity with fairy tale lore, “The Habits of History” begins with a short *résumé* of each of the (reworked) fairy tale characters.

### *The Habits of History*

#### **Characters**

**Cinderella**, aged twenty five. Faced stiff competition from her two “ugly” sisters for the prince to whom she is now engaged to be married.

**Prince**, aged twenty five. Engaged to be married to Cinderella.

**Huntsman**, aged thirty. Ordered by Snow White’s jealous stepmother to kill her and bring back her heart; killed a deer instead.

**Snow White**, aged twenty one. Disguised as a student and recognisable only to her friend Sleeping Beauty; in hiding from her stepmother, she lives with (and keeps house for) seven male dwarves.

**Gretel**, aged twenty eight. Saved herself and her brother Hansel from being devoured by a witch; they both emigrated to Nursery Rhyme Land; she returned home; lives with her father and teaches in Fairyland Primary School.

**Great, Huge Bear**, aged fifty nine. Chairman of the board of directors of Three Bears Quality Control Inc.

**Goldilocks**, aged forty eight. Has just testified against her employers (the bears), accusing them of consistently undermining her and of framing her in a story in the Fairyland Express.

**Sleeping Beauty**, aged twenty one (not counting her hundred year sleep).

**Hag**, aged fifty five. First published incarnation of Goldilocks; just released from the house of correction where she spent five years for trespassing on the bears’ property; not known to the others.

#### **Setting**

A coffee shop located beside the Fairyland courtroom in which Goldilocks has just presented her testimony. **Cinderella, Prince, Huntsman, Gretel, Snow White, and Sleeping Beauty** sit in a semi-circle around a large table just right of centre. There are tea/coffee mugs and sandwiches/cakes on the table. There is an empty chair downstage left. **Hag** sits alone at a smaller table up left of centre.

**Cinderella** stares pensively ahead. **Prince** eats his sandwich with relish. **Huntsman**, clearly agitated, alternately scratches his head, rubs his face and sips his drink. **Gretel** business like, passes milk and sugar around. **Snow White** looks around the coffee shop (furtively). **Sleeping Beauty** stares over at Hag. **Hag** who is sitting back in her chair looking at the others catches her eye. They hold each other’s gaze for a moment. **Sleeping Beauty** turns away and concentrates on her sandwich. **Hag** picks up her mug and looks intently at the others.

**Cinderella** (smiling at **Prince**) My “princely prize.”

**Prince** That’s me Cinders.

All laugh

Silence

**Sleeping Beauty** It’s like

you know

kind o’

there was two sides to the story.

But we never heard  
 Goldilocks's experience or  
 her version of the story.  
 We were given one version in the "Fairyland Express." We . . .  
 we never thought about her version,  
 we never got her version of the story  
 whereas the three bears  
 the males  
 always got the say.

**Gretel** Yeah, Sleeping Beauty.

She gave us her side  
 for a change.

Another perspective.

She was very strong  
 and confident.

It really came across.

Like, she wasn't highly emotional,

she was very

kind of

I don't know . . .

**Sleeping Beauty** She was very  
 matter of fact.

**Huntsman** Like, I'm telling you the truth!

**Gretel** Yeah.

This is what it is.

This is what I want!

**Huntsman** (*clearly angry but trying not to show it*) I thought it was . . .

Sorry, I want to stand up for men here for a second . . .

*All laugh, Hag smiles and leans forward*

Not that she was biased like . . .

Fair is fair, it's a gender problem

and it's you know

it's the right point of view

but don't tar them all with the same brush you know . . .

*Smiling and laughter from others*

There are plenty of CEOs who are sexist towards females,  
 who are women.

*More laughter; Hag leans further forward*

**Snow White** Yeah (*quietly; nodding her head, she looks directly at Huntsman who holds her gaze; he doesn't recognise her*). Sometimes it's better to go along with the way things are rather than to challenge them.

*Silence*

**Snow White** *takes a small mirror and some lipstick out of her bag. Puts on lipstick.*

**Prince** It seemed to me that she was going along

she was almost conforming

and even though she was

they still screwed her over

*Laughter*

**Sleeping Beauty** As in she was playing the game  
 she was wearing the heels

she was conforming  
but they still screwed her.

**Huntsman** She did what was expected.

She was forced to be like that  
to win the approval  
of a male dominated society.

**Snow White** (*putting mirror and lipstick away*) But in the same way as women are expected  
to wear heels

men are expected to wear suits.

If a man walked into an office in heels . . .

*Laughter*

**Huntsman** (*to Gretel*) That's the dream!

**Snow White** Women get their maternity leaves and that's terrible because  
sometimes they may not get their promotions

and they have difficulties with say maternity leaves  
and things like that

but then men don't get maternity leaves

you know that kind of . . .

works two ways . . . three ways . . .

I suppose it's more

there's a difference. . .

**Gretel** But she's still struggling to get through a system

that's male dominated

even like, like . . . (*raising left arm*)

the higher up the scale she goes

the harder it is to

kind of you know

bashing your head against a wall.

How did she even get on the board of directors?

They seemed to want her expertise

but not her opinion . . .

*Laughter*

**Prince** I think she was put on the board

to show there's a woman on the board.

But they didn't really want her opinion

or her voice.

'twas for show.

**Gretel** I suppose when I lived in Nursery Rhyme Land,

I was there for three years.

I was the only foreign female teacher in the school

and everyone else was from Nursery Rhyme Land,

and the majority of teachers in my department were men.

And I was just out of college so

I had to deal with the customs

but I was a foreign female

so they didn't think my opinion

was worth anything either.

I was just there to turn on, press play,

say my bit and

whatever you're learning about

turn it off and . . .

rest of the day in the office.

**Snow White** Ok now it happened to me

how I'd be shouted at

and even though you kind of go "crap"

I wouldn't say anything like

say I was a girl

or anything like that like . . .

And in a way like . . . am . . .

a lot of the time

if you're in a workplace and you challenge

and you're given challenges

and they don't work out

or you do complain about . . .

and these things happen.

Maybe you know . . .

Goldilocks didn't kind of . . . am . . .

Goldilocks is very stubborn.

She's a very stubborn woman.

She didn't maybe always

look at things from the other perspective as well.

She didn't actually think about how

things were done, usually.

I don't know really,

there's a lot of, a lot of

how she communicated seemed to be kind of (*raises arms and brings them down in front of her body*)

one way

and not open

to how other people were thinking as well.

**Cinderella** But I think that

I think that

even it's so instilled in women

that I actually think to even say it,

to say that you had maybe felt overlooked or overruled

is actually almost,

it's not taboo to say it,

but you would actually,

you wouldn't really

want to

want to say it.

**Hag** Yeah (*nods; the others look in her direction*).

**Cinderella** (*speaking quietly and deliberately and looking directly at Hag*). Well I don't know.

I kind of feel like that.

**Hag** Yeah. As do a lot of people here (*indicating with outstretched arms to the other women*).

**Huntsman** (*addressing Cinderella directly*) Do you mean to say you'd be overruled

because you're a woman,

like is that what you're saying?

**Cinderella** Yeah.

**Huntsman** Oh. All right.

*Short silence*

**Cinderella** (*looking directly at Huntsman*) Or that like what I would say would be diminished in someone's in someone's mind because . . . a place where I've worked . . . you know, I have kind of felt like that, I mean not excessively and it wouldn't be a major issue but I do think that you kind of it's, you don't notice it. And that when you really think about it that it does happen.

**Hag** (*standing up and moving forward to sit the on empty chair*)

Yeah (*quietly*)

And, why don't we notice it?

Or why won't we say it?

**Sleeping Beauty** You see it on TV, on movies, on TV shows

It's kind of all around us,

you know what I mean.

**Hag** (*nods*) Yeah.

**Cinderella** And it's always something

like unattractive,

well it's portrayed as unattractive to be . . .

really . . .

kind of

you know . . .

**Hag** . . . interesting.

**Huntsman** I don't know.

There's seven of us here and five of us are women.

There's no woman here I'd say that would back down if someone was arguing with them.

I wouldn't . . .

(*laughter*)

It's not that . . .

It's not that . . .

Like . . .

I think it's a difference.

I think it's an issue that's getting less and less important

(*laughter*)

. . . because women are more and more now (*hesitates*)

**Hag** Go on . . . (*looking at Huntsman*)

**Cinderella** But I think it's more subtle than that.

*Laughter*

**Cinderella** (*looking directly at Huntsman*) I mightn't be intimidated by *you* like

*Laughter*

I'm not intimidated by men. It's not that.  
It's just that it's almost under the surface . . .  
I think . . .

again I do not have an issue with men.

**Huntsman** Sure.

**Cinderella** Men are whatever, but like  
it's almost  
it's just so underlying that we don't notice it.  
It's not really like  
that I can't say that because I'm a woman.  
It's more . . .

I do think women are . . .

**Gretel** It's more like in the way you say it  
and you have to go around it a certain way to make it acceptable.  
You can challenge things but you have to say it a certain way for it to be accepted . . .

**Hag** Or you perceive that you have.

**Gretel** Yeah.

*Silence*

*All look at Hag, wondering who she is.*

**Huntsman** You from around here?

**Hag** I'm Hag.

Just out of the house of correction.

Spent five years there  
for trespassing on their property . . .  
. . . the bears'

*Goldilocks enters centre left and all turn towards her; she sits in the chair vacated earlier by Hag. Seeing Cinderella and Snow White (both of whom she has referred to in her testimony as "good girls") she smiles. Snow White shifts uneasily in her chair.*

**Cinderella** Hi.

**Goldilocks** (taking them all in) Hi.

**Cinderella** Will you join us?

**Goldilocks** Okay (pulls her chair down left of Hag's)

**Hag** Well done.

*A chorus of "well done" etc. from the others*

*Silence*

**Hag** How do you think 'twill go?

**Goldilocks** (shrugs) Don't know.

**Gretel** offers a sandwich and **Goldilocks** takes one

*Silence*

**Cinderella** Have you got much support from other women in the company?

**Goldilocks** Not overtly.

Some support me.

Some don't. (shrugs).

**Snow White** (sarcastically, under her breath) Why would they?

(**Gretel** looks at **Snow White** and shrugs)

**Gretel** Tea or coffee?

**Goldilocks** Tea please.

**Gretel** Milk? Sugar?

**Goldilocks** Just milk. Thanks.

**Gretel** goes to get tea for **Goldilocks**

**Huntsman** Fair dues to you.

I'm just wondering  
were there any other women on the board of directors?

**Goldilocks** Yeah. One.

**Huntsman** Did she support you?

**Goldilocks** No.

**Huntsman** What did she say when you asked her to?

**Goldilocks** I didn't ask her.

**Huntsman** Why not?

If you expect change from everyone else  
surely you'd expect change from the highest positioned women as well!

**Goldilocks** There's no point. She won't go against the bears.

**Huntsman** Won't go against them.

**Gretel** *returns with tea.*

*Silence*

**Sleeping Beauty** Do you ever just go along with them?

**Goldilocks** Yeah.

Most of the time.

It's much harder not to.

It's not much fun fighting and losing  
all the time (*smiles*).

**Gretel** Is all this affecting your personal life?

**Goldilocks** (*nods*) Yeah.

But mostly I don't let it.

**Huntsman** Why did you take the case?

What do you want from this?

I mean

you haven't lost your job or anything

so what do you want?

**Goldilocks** I want to set the record straight.

I want to tell *my* story

*Our story (looks directly at each of the other women; all nod except Snow White.)*

**Huntsman** (*nodding*) Sure.

**Cinderella** I mean

I don't know how to say this,

but do you think the bears

get your perspective at all?

I mean

they don't have a problem

making decisions by consensus

they seem ok with Great, Huge Bear getting his way.

But you do

you have a problem

**Goldilocks** I think Middle-Sized Bear gets it . . .

. . . sometimes . . . a bit . . .

but he plays the game.

He'd never go against Great Huge Bear either

no matter what he thinks himself.

He just wouldn't.

There's an agreement



not explicit . . .  
 but the bottom line is  
 none of them  
 want their cosy little world to be disturbed (*looks at her watch*).

Hey . . .

Thanks for the support.

I'll head back inside.

**Goldilocks** *stands and exits downstage left.*

*Silence*

**Prince** When I worked in a corporation

all of the main players

or the people in power

were all male.

In big businesses, the workers

are expected to work hard.

And when I started, my opinion

wasn't really valued.

One of my workmates

he told me after I got the job

that myself and another girl went for it

and he interviewed both of us

and when he was reporting back to the department head afterwards

he said "they're both pretty much the same."

But then I was chosen because I was a . . . a . . . male.

And I didn't feel too bad about that.

So I didn't kick up a fuss or anything.

**Hag** Of course you didn't.

**Gretel** When did he tell you about it?

**Prince** Afterwards, when I got friendly with him.

**Gretel** So there was a policy . . . ?

**Prince** Yeah. But not an explicit one.

**Hag** (*nods*) Not explicit.

**Snow White** I've worked in a sports shop

and they tend to employ women over men now

because they think that . . . em . . .

male customers tend to buy

from female assistants

and there's a majority of women

in the shops I've been in.

**Hag** Makes sense! (*laughs, stands up*)

See you later. (*Exits down stage left*)

**Snow White** Women as managers as well.

**Gretel** But are they in the board room? (*checks her mobile phone*)

**Sleeping Beauty and Snow White** *stand up, followed by Gretel and Prince.*

**Sleeping Beauty** See you later.

**Snow White** Bye.

**Gretel** Yeah. Bye.

*All exit downstage left. Sleeping Beauty and Snow White are followed by Gretel dialling her mobile phone. Prince picks up another sandwich and follows them.*

**Prince** See you inside (*addressing Cinderella directly*).

**Cinderella** *nods at Prince.*

**Huntsman** Yeah.

See you inside.

**Cinderella** *is lost in thought.* **Huntsman** *looks after Snow White.*

*Silence*

**Huntsman** Do I . . .

Do you . . .

know Sleeping Beauty's friend?

She looks familiar . . .

. . . a bit like Snow White.

**Cinderella** I thought so too.

No . . .

I can't say I know her . . .

Look who's coming now.

**Great, Huge Bear** *enters down stage left.*

**Cinderella** Goldilocks says

he constantly picks on her

constantly criticises her

that she's always having to explain herself

always having to fight her case

like you know . . .

**Great, Huge Bear** *(overhears and stops downstage left of Cinderella and Huntsman)* No she isn't . . .

**Cinderella and Huntsman** *look over at him.*

I give constructive feedback to all my employees . . .

**Huntsman** So you think she's being overly sensitive?

**Great, Huge Bear** You'd have to ask *her*.

**Huntsman** Do you encourage female employees to take a place on the board?

**Great, Huge Bear** It's up to them.

**Huntsman** Would you like to see a fair representation of male and female on the board?

**Great, Huge Bear** Our policy is an equal opportunities one.

**Huntsman** Are your policies borne through in your behaviour?

**Great, Huge Bear** Of course.

**Cinderella** Sorry.

Are you saying everything Goldilocks says is false?

**Great, Huge Bear** She has her point of view . . .

**Cinderella** I see *(nods her head, stands up and looks at Huntsman who also stands up).*

**Great, Huge Bear** *walks across front of the stage and exits stage right.*

**Huntsman** I suppose it's kind o', it's kind o'

like when you read a story in a newspaper

like about somebody

you're never going to look at the other side

you know, it's just it's an accepted point of view.

**Cinderella** Yeah.

**Cinderella and Huntsman** *exit downstage left.*

## Conclusion

At the heart of my teaching/research process is a commitment to (a) dialogue; and (b) intervening in taken-for-granted gender narratives (Madison, 2012). "The Habits of History"

is an attempt to embrace both in the research representation process as well. In terms of the latter, I seek in “The Habits of History” to give witness to the embodied understories of gender hegemony, so as to “invoke a response to its consequences” (Madison, 2012, p. 98). The written play script provides a textual format in which to represent (partially at least) the dynamism of the narratives embodied by the students (and me) in the classroom. In this way, it provides a format within which to trouble dominant modes of knowing that privilege the written text over the body and the objective over the relational; modes of knowing in which gender is embedded and which dominate the representation of research in qualitative reports. The textual format of the written play script thus provides an alternative of mode of representing (and thereby of understanding) research in a qualitative report (Morrissey, 2016). As such, it provides a format within which to extend my interventions in dominant gender narratives beyond my classroom into the research text itself. The textual format and the content of “The Habits of History” (which shows the effects of gender hegemony) are thus combined to invoke the reader to respond to the consequences of gender hegemony (Madison, 2012). This invocation is strengthened by my appropriation within the play script of the literary fairy tale which underlines the extent to which dominant gender narratives are “habits of history” and have become deeply ingrained. In its depiction of the partial presence of temporal and embodied conversations in dialogic form, the play script format also opens spaces for the reader to make her/his own meanings; to engage in dialogue with the text. So, mirroring my teaching/research process, “The Habits of History” is designed to intervene in dominant gender narratives by opening spaces for dialogue.

While “The Habits of History” shows the extent to which habits of gender are embedded, it does so at the expense of the particularisation of the students’ and my embodied narratives. It conceals the extent to which, in Ireland, these habits are synonymous with the habits of Catholicism, with Catholicism’s mentalities and practices. Although Catholicism is no longer the dominant social and cultural force in Ireland, its practices and mentalities still linger in people’s behaviours (Inglis, 2005, 2006). They linger too in the practices and mentalities of the Catholic College of Education and the Liberal Arts in which the teaching/research project took place. Indeed, most of the students attended Catholic (often single sex) schools and went on to teach in Catholic schools (about 90% of Ireland’s primary schools are still Catholic). In “The Habits of History,” I ignored these, and other particularities, in search of a broader reach. Nonetheless, in its extension of possibilities for dialogue and intervention beyond the particularities of the teaching/research process, “The Habits of History” offers the reader spaces for dialogue in the context of her/his own gender narratives as it simultaneously calls on her/him to respond to the effects of gender hegemony.

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#### Article Citation

Morrissey, D. (2018). "The habits of history": A research-based play script. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(2), 403-421. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss2/9>

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