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Contemplating Positionalities: An Ethnodrama

NEERA MALHOTRA AND VERONICA HOTTON

ABSTRACT | This article is an ethnodrama playscript that examines the role of positionality in an interdisciplinary general education program called University Studies at Portland State University. Drawing from both the literature and from the practice of critical reflection, the authors share their experiences as faculty members relative to their institutional and social positionalities. The authors perform this ethnodrama through the construction of this article for an audience of teaching faculty and administrators in higher education. Throughout the ethnodrama, the audience/readers are invited to interact with the playscript through prompted critical reflection on their own positionalities in their professional lives.

KEYWORDS | contemplative practice, dialogue, ethnodrama, play script, qualitative methods, reflective practice

Prologue

Sign language interpretation will be provided throughout the performance. Prompts for contemplation will be displayed on the projector for the reflective post-act activities. The audience will also receive note cards and pencils to write with and a few tablets will be available for digital writing. This will honor the different learning/writing needs of the audience. Local indigenous community leaders (from the place this piece is performed) will be consulted on whether the production should begin with a traditional protocol, and, if so, what that should be (e.g., song, prayer, smudging). If no protocol is suggested, one or both authors will use their cultural protocol(s), or the play will start with the Prologue: Welcoming and Honoring.

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Authors' Protocol

A large standing brass oil lamp filled with mustard oil, surrounded by orange marigolds on the floor, is at the northeast side of the stage. A ceramic smudge pot (kund) is next to the lamp, containing sesame, herbs, dried flowers, camphor, and sandal powder. Indian classical instrumental music is playing faintly in the background.

There are two chairs center stage. The authors come in, and one of them lights the lamp. This author stands in silence for a few minutes, then lights the smudge pot, walks around the stage, and then takes the smudge pot backstage. After a minute, this author returns to join the other author.

The authors begin by acknowledging and honoring the land where this piece takes place. During the conversation on literature, the authors move freely, from sitting to standing to walking around stage.

Prologue: Welcoming and Honoring

NEERA:

We welcome you to this performance by honoring and acknowledging the people and more-than-human communities whose land we are standing on today. At Portland State University, this includes the Multnomah and Clackamas peoples, and other tribes that have populated this region. It is vital to acknowledge the ancestors of this place and to recognize that we are here because of the sacrifices they were forced to make. In remembering these communities, we honor their memory, their lives, and their descendants. We also remember that we are guests of this land and must do our best to never forget the original inhabitants.

The purpose of our article is to explore faculty positionality through this ethnodrama playscript. You, the audience member and reader, are invited to notice the feelings and thoughts you experience throughout the play, including moments of engagement and/or disengagement, connection and/or disconnection, familiarity and/or discomfort. In our professional experiences, we seldom have frank conversations about our work experiences, let alone perform it. We request that you expect and accept a lack of closure after this performance, since we are not here to argue

or place blame [Singleton & Linton, 2006]. We hope that you receive your own answers to the questions we offer. We invite you to observe carefully and be present with us even if you don't find any answers.

VERONICA: Reflective and contemplative observation in higher education is a learnable skill and includes practices like walking, sitting, reflecting, writing, and slowing down [Barbezat & Bush, 2014]. We will be using contemplative and reflective practices in this performance. This performance has four acts: Act 1 is a review of literature. Act 2 is a walking tour of the physical spaces we work in, which will reveal literal positions in physical space. Act 3 is a discussion of the emotional experience of positionality. Finally, Act 4 offers our concluding thoughts and notes. After each act, we provide reflective questions to allow the audience/reader to consider their academic institution and their positionality within it. Now let's talk about the literature, *Neera*.

Act 1: Literature Review

NEERA: I am happy that we have selected a creative methodology to write this article. Do you know Veronica, an ethnodrama playscript is a powerful methodology that will help us deliver this article to our academic community in a creative way.

VERONICA: What is ethnodrama? It is like performative ethnography?

NEERA: For an ethnodrama, transcripts, field observations, statistical data, and journal entries are used to create a theatrical script that can be performed [Saldaña, 2008]. Instead of a paper as a final product, a script is created, and ideally performed. For example, in our case, we have used our journal entries and conversations for our playscript. And, yes, performative ethnography is another term for ethnodrama. Ethnodrama [Saldaña, 2005, 2011], performed ethnography [Goldstein, 2012], and/or performance ethnography [Denzin, 2003] are different kinds of

related qualitative research methods that transform the research findings into a script that can be performed. For our purposes, we are using ethnodrama and playscript. You and I will be called playwrights!

VERONICA: Ethnodrama was something I had heard of before, but just in a different context. In our case, we are writing about positions within a program, positions of power and oppression, and how precarity plays out, pun intended, through these different academic roles (i.e., adjunct, short-term contracts, and continuous-track positions). We'll also consider positionality related to social and cultural locations and their relationship to our professional lives. Neera, how might an ethnodrama help with these challenging subjects? It can be awkward and difficult to talk about our complex work experiences.

NEERA: Aren't we all performing/acting in our roles in academia? Imagine if we were our authentic selves with no fear. How would that look? What might result from it? Perhaps it could be another playscript! Rhetorical questions, I know. But yes, "the reality-based mounting of human life on stage is a risky enterprise" [Saldaña, 2005, p. 230].

So, how can ethnodrama help with this challenging subject? Before I dive into the answer, it is important to note that an ethnodramatist can have different goals for their work, ranging from basic education to social change. This article explores positionality. Rather than having a final agenda of change or a central argument we are advancing, our ethnodrama is about bringing to the surface the experiences we have had in our general education program, University Studies (UNST, Portland State University's general education program), and how those experiences are related to our positionalities. Based on the values described by various scholars [Denzin, 2003; Goldstein, 2012; and Saldaña 2005, 2008, 2011], I think an ethnodrama challenges conventional thinking about academic writing. I also

believe that it may change the way positionality of faculty members in academia can be presented to the audience, and received by that audience.

When I think of ethnodrama, I think of a call for action, an invitation to the reader to engage with the script through the lens of reflection and to look within themselves—that is, to contemplate mindfully their own self through the lens of the script. As an educator who is trained in interdisciplinary qualitative methodologies, I locate my work [Malhotra, 2016] within the “literary turn” of critical disability studies [Kafer, 2013; Linton, 1998]; contemplative methods rooted in interpersonal neurobiology [Badenoch, 2017; Williams, Owens, & Syedullah, 2016]; Theater of the Oppressed [Boal, 1985]; and feminist pedagogy [hooks, 2009]. I think that the playscript writing process involves presenting the narratives of one’s embodied self, which makes it exciting and challenging. What are your thoughts on this, Veronica?

VERONICA:

I like the idea of using ethnodrama for our article. Anything that is not another typical paper is something I want to work on. A playscript reminds me of my dissertation research, which was about the writing, walking, and teaching practices of academics [Hotton, 2015]. I interviewed each of the participants during a few walks and at least one seated interview. I found the best way to present the walks in writing was in a series of “walking with . . .” chapters that were recreations of the dialogues I had with participants. My research actually may be more like an ethnodrama than I knew at the time. An ethnodrama would be a nice way to work with my dissertation, since I have not been inspired to write articles or develop a book. Maybe it is too typical, and hard, hard for me to write. Since I also do not plan to be, or become, a research-track faculty member, publishing is something I am not as interested in as a core part of my work as a scholarly educator. I prefer to be working with students, and even working on this paper feels like a distraction from being with students. But

an academic article as an ethnodrama may open up more options for our present students who go on to graduate school. (*Pause.*) But, it's really the "publish or perish" stress that turns me away from tenure-track work and the demands of getting grants and writing on demand. That social construction of high-status scholarly work causes my stomach to ache, and makes me want to walk away from academia.

(*Pause.*) I bet we both miss our students right now. (*Pause.*)

I'm interested in knowing more about the persons who have written about ethnodrama. Is there something to say about their positionality, and how their positionality might have influenced their choice of ethnodrama?

NEERA:

This is a wonderful question, Veronica. As a brown woman faculty member in a predominantly white university and state, I have recently started to get more curious about the identities of academics and what our identities mean for our ability to teach, work, and be our authentic selves.

Johnny Saldaña, whom we've already referenced in this piece, says this about who he is:

Look at me: I'm a 59-year-old man with a white beard. Gay leather bear, Hispanic, a touch of Cajun (in spirit, not by blood), with a little bit of bad-ass biker in me, and a proud dash of redneck-wannabe. . . . No PhD here. I got a MFA in theatre, though. Some people look down on that. I used to care but don't anymore. I got street cred now. I know people, and they know me. I grew up poor, too. [Saldaña, 2014, p. 976]

Reading that statement of self, I imagine Saldaña has been very much influenced by who he is and what he's experienced in his selection of ethnodrama as a methodology. Tara Goldstein [2012, 2013] is a female Canadian performative ethnographer. Using ethnodrama, Tara has done a lot of work on LGBTQ families in Ontario.

- VERONICA: How is ethnodrama connected to the empowerment and amplification of minoritized voices?
- NEERA: Veronica, when sensitive topics are voiced and brought to the public, there is the potential for folks to develop empathy and to connect with vulnerability—the vulnerability of others, and our own—while providing empowerment to those who have been silenced. Goldstein [2003, 2012, 2013] and Saldaña [2005] have discussed direct connections with empowerment. In my own research, I found that women with intellectual disabilities could “hear” their own voices when their words were featured in a theatrical performance. One woman came to me to share how empowering it was to be part of the play as a writer, reader, and audience member [Malhotra, 2016, n.d (working manuscript)]. Also, as Bhattacharya writes, “arts based research stemmed from the need to subvert the structure of oppression in higher education by putting secrets out in published spaces” [2013, p. 615].
- VERONICA: Ethnodrama may let us talk about positionality in general education. When we tried to find literature on positionality in general education, it was difficult. Did we try hard enough? Maybe not. With a high teaching load as instructional nontenure faculty, time for scholarly writing is minimal. There was one near-perfect piece from the *Journal of General Education*, about Portland State University, our institution, by a former provost and vice provost [Tetreault & Rhodes, 2004, respectively]. BINGO! Their inquiries, as related to University Studies, included looking at “similarities and differences of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, tenure status, and discipline among faculty members and students” [p. 93] with positionality as their theoretical framework. In 2004 the authors noted a difference between valuing content/experts (namely, tenured) versus valuing the learning process/facilitators (fixed-term/non-tenured), and

found that the process-focused approaches dominated UNST pedagogy. In the past, UNST had several tenure-track faculty based in the program, but our current configuration is non-tenure-track faculty only, with shared-line tenure-affiliated faculty who reside in a different home department but teach UNST classes.

In Tetreault and Rhodes's [2004] reflection, former Portland State president Judith Ramaley communicated that she had "failed to understand . . . that beneath the surface of scholarly identity [positionality] were deeper and less coherent elements of core human identity itself—who am I, where do I belong, what does change mean to my deeper sense of self?" [p. 98]. It was interesting to me to see that positionality had been initially discussed in 2004 at the level of the provost and president; and that these issues are still quite active today, as we both experience and know, and as Ramaley and Maurice Hamington, the current UNST executive director, discuss in this *Journal of General Education* special volume.

NEERA
(to audience):

How is everyone doing? We have been sitting for a while. We have note cards and pencils under your chairs if you would like to reflect on the questions projected on the stage. We will have silence and a break for five minutes. Feel free to step out for a walk or stay in your place to write/reflect. The next act will start in five minutes. You will hear a bell when we are about to start.

Post-Act Reflection

1. What creative methods have you used, or could you use, in your teaching and research?
2. What thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations have you experienced so far?
3. What are your initial reactions and thoughts to an article being presented as an ethnodrama?

Act 2: The Floorplan: Physical Spaces of University Studies

VERONICA: We thought it might be nice to take you all on a tour of the physical space of University Studies. Plus, I get antsy when I have to sit for too long. How do students put up with all this sitting?

University Studies is located in Cramer Hall on our expansive urban campus. It is one of the older buildings of a young campus from the 20th century, and due for earthquake upgrades; although what is not along the Cascadia subduction zone? I have been working full time in UNST since Fall 2017, and during the 2016–2017 school year I was an adjunct faculty in UNST.

You remember, Neera, the second time we met? It might have been one of those less common visits I had to campus. We were both on our way to the main UNST office. I think you were needing to print something, since your office was at the other end of the building in one of those closet-offices. You often used the adjunct faculty computer/drop-in workspace, since it is easier to print to the main office copier from there. And you used it again when you were waiting for your new office in the main office wing to be reactivated with Internet. It's funny how you and another faculty member had office spaces at the other end of the building. But space is so limited throughout all of campus. An urban campus in the middle of an already established city footprint makes it a problem to expand.

NEERA: Yes, I do remember our visit in the hallway as our second meeting. And the first time we met was when I was starting my first year as full-time continuous non-tenure-track faculty in Fall 2016. You came to the Freshman Inquiry [FRINQ] in-service meeting so you could learn more about how FRINQ and Senior Inquiry [SRINQ] are connected. That was the first year you were an adjunct faculty for UNST, and your second year at Portland State.

VERONICA: Yes, I remember that too. For those who do not know these courses, Senior Inquiry is a dual-credit

course in the high school for 12th graders, essentially Freshman Inquiry completed in the senior year of high school. Oh man. Oh, and I do mean *man*, I have to say/write this: when can we (Portland State) drop the “man” in *Freshman* Inquiry? Seriously, folks. The Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice learning goal seems to be a direct link to a rebranding of FRINQ . . .

Moving on!

NEERA:

Oh, wait, I must add that how often I have thought about this *Freshman* thingy. I never voiced my thoughts out loud, thinking that what do I know about American University system and wondered if it's my position to even voice this out, as a guest in this country. I appreciate you mentioning this, V. Yes, Moving on!

VERONICA:

(*smiles*) It's interesting how we went from two casual meetings in Fall 2016 and Spring 2017, then by Fall 2017 we were “buddies,” engaging professionally and writing together. I wonder if our being peer buddies, all year, for the UNST Cultivating Your Professional Identity professional development series [Carpenter, Knepler, & Reitenauer, 2018] was the main instigator for us to start collaborating? I suppose an obvious answer is yes, but we could talk about my attending your pranayama and meditation classes off campus as another important way we began to collaborate.

But back to this layout of UNST in Cramer Hall. When I started my fixed-term, one-year, non-tenure-line position, I was using that drop-in adjunct faculty space too since there are too many UNST folks across staff, administration, and faculty for dedicated office space, and I had to improvise a regular workspace for Fall 2017. By the end of Fall 2017, I could share one of the last empty offices with another one-year, non-tenure-track instructor for the year. It was the office you moved in to this year, coming out of the hallway and into the main office wing.

I remember when UNST finally got the accessible button for opening doors added to the entrance to the main office, although the other two exit doors are not

accessible in this way. For a program, and an institution, that prides itself on inclusion and accessibility, this seems to be a real place of breakdown for us all.

NEERA:

Yes, I agree. I wanted my business cards to be accessible, mainly for people who have visual impairment, but I have found no way within the institution to get these made. Outside of Portland State I have found someone who makes accessible cards, though, and may well pay for this myself.

VERONICA:

While we were working on this article, offices were getting moved around again for the new year. For the 2018–2019 year, I am in a large shared space with another full-time continuous non-tenure-line instructor and two full-time, one-year fixed-term instructors. We each have a desk and three *gigantic* windows to the outside. I like that it is shared space, since I am skeptical of the assumption that a faculty member should get a private office space. It just gets assumed that this is how it should be. But we work a public job in a general education program in a state university: what do we have to hide?

Neera, what has it been like for you to go from the closet hallway office to the space in the main office I used last year as a temporary instructor in the main office?

NEERA:

It's been a transition. I like that I am connected and visible, but it is strange after being able to nestle away in my previous closet-office. There I could do pranayama and smudge the space without feeling out of place. With time, the current office will feel like my place too. I wonder about your question, what do we have to hide? I guess it is more like . . . aah! perhaps a different article!!

VERONICA
(to audience):

How are you all doing out there? We have been talking for a while again. If you would like to reflect on the questions posed on the stage screen, you can add to your notecard. These were the note cards you had at the end of Act 1. You can also just rest for a bit in silence. We will have a five minute break. Feel free to step out for a walk or to stay in your place. You will hear a bell when we are about to start.

Post-Act Reflection

- 1. Where is your office space located? How is it related to the other office spaces occupied by your colleagues?
- 2. What are your assumptions and constructs about private and shared work space?
- 3. How does your body and breath feel right now? List a few words that describe your present physical and emotional state.

Act 3: Emotional Spaces

Scene 1: *Dim light from left top corner of the stage. Indian classical music plays softly for 30 seconds. The stage is empty, the silence raising its own voice. Now there is soft brass music for 30 seconds. A transparent veil drops, covers center stage. A person walks behind the veil, their shadow visible. Behind the veil, they read an excerpt from Adrienne Rich’s The Dream of a Common Language:*

Silence can be a plan
rigorously executed

the blueprint to a life

It is a presence
it has a history a form

Do not confuse it
with any kind of absence

[Rich, 1979, p. 17]

NEERA: Rich’s poem connects to this act in its emotional content. Silence can be presence. Veronica, this excerpt makes me think about our various places in the program, and where we rooted ourselves in and on the blueprint of UNST.

VERONICA: While working on this paper, I searched back to an old email in an attempt to figure out how my one-year, full-time, non-tenure-line position came to be, since it was foggy in my mind. That one-year experience was when I began to feel rooted in UNST. I got

an email around 3:00 p.m. during a Senior Inquiry all-schools inservice, where the high school teachers and faculty from Portland State were meeting to plan for the year. It was a busy day, and I'd been ignoring emails. I *may* have seen the email from the UNST executive director that offered me the position, but I did not think it was for me personally, so I did not read the email body. Based on the subject line, it looked like an announcement sent to the faculty listserv. But it was for me. So in that late afternoon, I went from being an adjunct faculty to becoming a one-year temporary fixed-term instructor.

I had a flood of emotions and thoughts. Health insurance? Relief. Not having to "adjunct" between two schools? More relief. Less stress was on the horizon after enduring a hectic multi-school schedule.

NEERA: Phew!! I witnessed your journey. And by the time we wrapped up this article, you gotten hired as a *continuous* non-tenure-track instructor. Yay!

I came to the program as a graduate mentor. After I graduated from my doctoral program, I taught as an adjunct faculty for three terms. I remember when I saw the posting of two non-tenure-track positions in the program. I immediately began the application process. I wondered if I would make it to the final list of selected candidates. I thought my teaching experience in Special Education gave me a boost as a candidate, since we now have students with intellectual disabilities taking UNST courses through Think College Inclusion Oregon (TCIO). But now, I wonder if my hiring was about affirmative action.

VERONICA: (*long pregnant silence*) As we know, I applied for those two positions, too. (*VERONICA and NEERA look at each other.*)

NEERA: Veronica, when I learned about the possibility that I was an affirmative action hire, I experienced silence deep within my soul. I was hoping that I was hired because of my intellect and professional experiences. Somehow, the connection of my positionality with affirmative action made me feel less than other folks

in the program. As a brown faculty member, my positionality in the academic space often gets filtered through the lens of how I look, talk, and dress. As Dovidio [2012] writes, “the frequent questioning of competence that is directed at women and women [faculty] of color . . . is not new” [p. 114].

I find myself in the genuflection mode when I think about my positionality in academia [Spivak, 2010].¹ Many other South Asian faculty members have noted a similar trend in American universities. As Nina Asher, who teaches in education, noted, “in the United States, based only on my appearance, I may be variously construed as a Latina, an immigrant, a non-English speaker. . . . I began identifying myself as a ‘person of color’ and a ‘South Asian woman,’ identities I had not needed in India” [2005, p. 166]. Veronica, perhaps a continued reflection on the place of being silent/silenced, as related to my experiences of trauma, identity, and colonization, will open more doors for examination. How does identity connect to the internalized oppression and vulnerability I experience being in academia [Bhattacharya, 2013, 2015, 2018; Smith, 2012]? As I explore my own construction of consciousness, within the power-filled spaces of academia, I am learning to speak *to* (rather than speak *for*) my hidden silenced spaces.

(NEERA unfolds a piece of paper with a poem on it.)

VERONICA: Do we ever think the same way twice? Is that a poem there you have? Can you read it to us?

NEERA:

The polarity, dichotomy,
and paradoxes
Colonized discourses
and pervasive
microaggressions
Subtleness and sharpness
Mainly subtleness
Dismissal and
disproportionality

Pervasive
microaggressions
Subtle actions and
behaviours
When viewed in isolation
seem naive and innocent
Experience of
microaggression
Otherings
Detrimental to the
well-being
Impaired performance
Presumed incompetent
Empire and imperialism,
power and hierarchy
Dismissive and
exclusionary
Higher education
The role of faculty
Daily experiences
Unacceptable
Being unseen is better
Remembering love
(Silence)
(Lights go off)
(Light comes back)

Scene 2: Several people stagger around and stop on stage. A voice from backstage asks the group to step forward. Group steps forward and leaves the stage. A second group of people comes to center stage, including the authors. This group stays on stage and they are busy doing their own work (standing, sitting, walking, lying down). The light focuses on the two authors, who are whispering and in conversation amidst the large group.

NEERA
(to audience):

You may wonder why there are so many people coming and going, why is the light focusing on the two of us while there are still other people with us? The stage setting for this scene demonstrates the chaos in our thinking and work. The transition of shared spaces by a group demonstrates the transition in the

positionality within our academic community. Our position is always in flux.

(to VERONICA): Despite the chaos, we were still able to maintain our connection, bonding, and reflection. This Act 3 is hard!

VERONICA: Yes. Damn hard. But a lot of fun too, yes?

Scene 3: The authors sit across from each other. One instructs the other with breath practices (pranayama). Both of them spend a few minutes doing pranayama.

NEERA
(to audience): We will take one last time to silently reflect using the questions posed on the projection screen on stage. This time will never come again. The next act will start in five minutes. You will hear a bell when we are about to start.

Post-Act Reflection

1. Do you have a colleague you can openly reflect with?
2. What microaggressions do you sense, experience, observe? How do you respond?
3. How do you give voice to your inner silence?

Act 4: A Conclusion for Position in Process

Scene 1: Sounds of wind gusting between the west and east for 30 seconds. The stage lights up with two chairs, position in center stage with the authors on stage sitting or standing.

VERONICA: Was that a thunderstorm? Did you notice the direction of the sound?

NEERA: I think the wind was asking us to decolonize positionality in academia by bringing the sound from the West and East together. The role of silence. What is the connection of silence to colonization and social identities in academia? But colonialism is different for different people.

(The authors pause and look at the audience.)

VERONICA: Talking about colonialism means talking about suffering and damage. Trauma.

- NEERA: Yes, and to me education can be healing. Hence, through this playscript, with our experience in education, we bring attention on how positionality plays within academic programs and departments.
- VERONICA: We looked into physical spaces, emotional spaces, and silence spaces. We looked at how these spaces are impacted by positionality within an academic setting. What is the position of this playscript? What was our point? Do we have an argument? Did we have a point?
- NEERA: Our final script is entirely different from what and where we started. I have to say that I am not entirely displeased about the way this has evolved over time. I have been intrigued by the power of personal narrative. I was motivated to share my personal story for this unique publication. But it was challenging to choose what to make public as an early career academic, and a non-tenure-track faculty member. We discussed vulnerability, oppression—lots of difficult questions with more difficult answers.
- VERONICA: Perhaps we will find some answers.
(Pause with NEERA and VERONICA catching a glance and a smile.)
- NEERA: *(Takes a long deep breath to add gap for 10–15 seconds)*
 Before we wrap up, do you remember you mentioned a doctoral student from Canada who wrote their dissertation in their First Nations language and then they had to rewrite it in English, but could do it without punctuation [Stewart, 2015]?
- VERONICA: Yes, that was one of our first discussions. It was nice to have a chance hallway conversation. Why do you ask?
- NEERA: V, the concept of using punctuation in a sentence makes me think about positionality. Where and how punctuation is positioned matters. Position of the punctuation can change the entire meaning. This now makes me think about this verse from a poem by Craig Santos Perez, a Chamoru² scholar and poet [as quoted in Voeltz, 2012]:

*when you take away the
punctuation*

*he says of
lines lifted from the docu-
ments about
military-occupied land
its acreage and location
you take away its finality
opening the possibility of
other futures*

So, what is positionality: the position of you, of us, following this play?

VERONICA: You know, Neera, I really do not know, other than to shine some light on our experiences of positionality at this time. Regardless of our fluctuating positionality, and how our audience/readers fluctuate, it was worth all the drama (another pun) of making this moment in time public, aka published. We could have said so much more based on our conversations during this process. We left out much. But we did what we could, and would within the constraints of our positions. And most significantly, we became and renamed buddies. It was play-ful!

NEERA: Since this is a playscript. I would end it like an embodied act. (*NEERA takes a few steps toward center front of the stage. NEERA stretches her arms and hands up in the air, with fingers all stretched and spread apart, aiming to touch the sky. Then, she abruptly bends down, holds her knees and sits in a squatting position, with her head in between knees, bent down.*)

Epilogue

(Silence)

NEERA MALHOTRA is an Instructor in University Studies at Portland State University. She completed her doctorate in Special Education with an interdisciplinary focus from Portland State University. Her scholarly interests include contemplative mind in higher education, art-based contemplative research, sexuality and women with intellectual disabilities, trauma-informed pedagogy, and interpersonal neurobiology.

VERONICA HOTTON is an Instructor in University Studies at Portland State University, with an interdisciplinary natural science focus. She completed her PhD in Education at Simon Fraser University (Canada) and an M.A. in Geography at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. At Central Michigan University, she completed a BS in Environmental Studies and Music, and a B.M. in Orchestral Instruments.

NOTES

We understand ourselves to be full co-authors of this text, as we collaborated equitably in its production, and have represented ourselves in this article alphabetically by first name.

1. The act of bending at least one knee to the ground.
2. Indigenous people Chamoru (Chamorro) from island of Guåhan (Guam).

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