

## Moving Beyond Text

The transposing of disability histories into performance is currently being explored as a powerful medium of self-representation for disabled people. Yet, *if we seemingly accept the power of performance as a medium through which such stories may be told, why does its scope remain limited to dissemination of stories and not engage in their creation?* This article will question the methodology of transposing oral histories into performance and argue instead that such histories might be generated through theatre or performance practice. If indeed, the aim is to move ‘beyond text’ through performance, then the foregrounding of the oral text as the initial source, actually privileges the very text we want to move beyond. This debate is grounded in contemporary philosophies of knowledge, particularly the work of Gumbrecht<sup>1</sup> and Bordieu<sup>2</sup>, who seek to challenge hierarchies in knowledge making. Likewise, performance studies theorists are increasingly advocating for theatre as a research method in its own right, in an attempt to give value to those expressions beyond language<sup>3</sup>.

A new methodology which truly moves ‘beyond text’ in a foregrounding of experiential and embodied forms of knowing, offers a means of resistance to dominant discourses of representation, and a challenge to the epistemologies that have held such views in place.

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<sup>1</sup> Gumbrecht, H (2004) *The Production of Presence*. California. Stanford University Press

<sup>2</sup> Bordieu, P (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Trans. R Nice. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Conquergood, D (Summer 2002) *Performance Studies: Intervention and Radical Research*. *The Drama Review* 46, 2 145 – 156 (T174)

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