

1990

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Abstract

Several tentative research questions posed early in the study focused on the audience. The study of audience was later abandoned because it would not have been feasible for one researcher to conduct analyses of audiences while also observing performers. A study of these audiences would have been interesting because these were not a typical audience coming to a theatre for entertainment. These audiences were emotionally tied to the topic of the texts. Most of the audience members were highly knowledgeable about AIDS and related issues. The only audience analyses in this study were the directors' and performers' impressions of audience response obtained through interviews and the researcher's own observations. The questions of the study became: what behaviors occurred during rehearsals, what were the performers' initial impressions of the script, did these impressions change over time, how much initial knowledge did the performers have about AIDS and the AIDS Memorial Quilt, how well did the performers function as a group, and what ~ were the performers reactions to and perceptions of events at the quilt display?

This paper

Performances at an AIDS Memorial Quilt Display:

An Ethnographic Study of Rehearsal

by

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**is submitted in fulfillment of the Research Paper requirement of
The Department of Communication and Theatre Arts,
University of Northern Iowa,
Cedar Falls, Iowa.**

December 6, 1990

(date)

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the two and one half years of its existence, The Names Project: AIDS Memorial Quilt has grown from a small grouping of panels commemorating the names of individuals who died of AIDS to a project so big, so potent and so positive it was nominated for the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize.

In a November 1, 1989 address to a group at the University of Northern Iowa Cleve Jones, founder and executive producer of the NAMES Project, explained part of the impact of the AIDS Memorial Quilt is its ability to function on many levels simultaneously: as an artistic object, a healing power, a political statement and a tool for outreach. The quilt has a positive effect on friends and family of AIDS victims because "the quilt helps people to hold on to their memories in a way that will strengthen them and not tear them apart" (Jones). In answer to the question "Why quilts?," Cleve Jones noted that "AIDS is ugly. Quilts have a nice middle American image. People can look at quilts" (Jones). This study examined the rehearsal processes of a group of performers preparing to perform, at a display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, letters and

biographies which had been submitted with quilt panels.

Background of the Study

In its conceptual stages, the focus of this study was the rehearsal processes of performers preparing a Readers Theatre script. Originally the subject matter was of little significance. The emphasis of the study was to be the interaction among performers as they rehearsed. The two rehearsal groups finally selected were to perform at a display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt. When these two groups were selected the emphasis of the study shifted away from studying rehearsal processes to placing more significance on the script than had been foreseen. The problem of the study became: how do performers deal with a script of a sensitive nature. AIDS issues prompted concerned talk about the performance event itself. The directors and performers were continually reminding themselves that they would be performing biographies of real people who had died and letters written by friends or family. The directors and performers were also reminding themselves that the audiences were going to include friends and family of AIDS victims. The families of some individuals whose letters and biographies would be performed planned to be in attendance.

Research Questions

Several tentative research questions posed early in the study focused on the audience. The study of audience was

later abandoned because it would not have been feasible for one researcher to conduct analyses of audiences while also observing performers. A study of these audiences would have been interesting because these were not a typical audience coming to a theatre for entertainment. These audiences were emotionally tied to the topic of the texts. Most of the audience members were highly knowledgeable about AIDS and related issues. The only audience analyses in this study were the directors' and performers' impressions of audience response obtained through interviews and the researcher's own observations. The questions of the study became: what behaviors occurred during rehearsals, what were the performers' initial impressions of the script, did these impressions change over time, how much initial knowledge did the performers have about AIDS and the AIDS Memorial Quilt, how well did the performers function as a group, and what were the performers reactions to and perceptions of events at the quilt display?

Importance of Study

Since the performance of literature in social contexts is a relatively recent phenomenon, this study is important to help establish the knowledge base in that area. The performances demonstrated how literature can be used or adapted for a specific audience when a specific purpose is intended by the performers. This study is important to our

understanding of how performers cope with performing literature of a sensitive nature. This study also contributes to the knowledge base about the performance of personal narratives because the performances presented letters submitted with quilt panels and biographies about the AIDS victims for whom the panels were made.

Definition of Terms

The performance technique employed by both groups was Readers Theatre. Numerous definitions of Readers Theatre exist but Joanna Hawkins Maclay states that "Readers Theatre had traditionally been interested in presenting a literary text with a special kind of simplicity and a minimum of theatrical trappings" (5). All definitions agree that Readers Theatre requires group performance. Wallace A. Bacon uses the term to indicate "the group reading of material involving delineated characters" (457).

As its name implies, oral interpretation in social contexts is the performance of texts in settings other than the classroom or the theatre. The possible contexts in which texts can be performed are limitless as are the audiences. Kleinau and McHughes list some audiences for whom texts can be specially selected to suit their particular needs (298-300).

Personal narratives are the stories humans tell each other about their daily lives. They are a means of shaping

reality and validating our existence and importance. Personal narratives are increasingly being viewed as objects of study for scholars. Langellier stated that "recently the personal narrative has entered the performance canon in oral interpretation as it has expanded to embrace texts from oral traditions and the ethnography of performance research" (Perspectives 243).

"Gatekeeper" is a term which is used repeatedly in this study. Going into the field usually requires obtaining access permission from an authority figure in the setting. Taylor and Bogdan refer to this authority figure as a "gatekeeper" (20).

The informants were the group of individuals around whom the research was focused and data collected. Taylor and Bogdan define informants as "members of the culture whom the researcher converses with and receives clarification from" and those who provide the researcher "with deep understanding of the setting" are called key informants (Taylor and Bogdan 41).

Data

The data for this study are observations of two groups of interpreters preparing to perform letters and biographies at a display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt. Data also included interviews with the performers audiotaped a few weeks after the display.

Methodology

The recent trend toward ethnographic and qualitative research is indicative of the inadequacy of quantitative research to study human beings in everyday situations. Communication studies have traditionally followed cognitive and behavioral methods of conducting research. These methods attempt to catalogue important cognitive variables and correlations (Littlejohn 12). Current trends in research contend that human behavior is too complex to be understood through a simplistic model of stimulus and response.

Many of the communications and behaviors which occur in everyday situations do not lend themselves to structured reproductions in laboratory settings. Because human behavior is complex, the totality of its elements cannot be easily identified in a laboratory nor exactly replicated. Communication scholars have discovered the utility of qualitative research as the scope of communication research areas has broadened to include study of human interaction in natural settings. Ethnography has become a useful qualitative research method in the communication field because it is a method designed to study how humans interact within their own culture. Rebecca A. Litke asserts:

The goal of ethnography of communication is the recording, interpreting and explaining of the

variation and uniformity in human interaction. Thus, ethnography of communication research constitutes a specialized form of ethnographic research. (14)

Data collection can be accomplished in several ways but each method employed is some kind of recording. Usually a researcher will keep detailed field notes and these notes are crucial to the final analyses and interpretation of the field. Lofland and Lofland assert that "the logging record is the data" (47) and Taylor and Bogdan caution against "writing sketchy summaries, omitting details, or postponing recording the notes" because "if it is not written down, it never happened" (53).

Ethnographic research is not based solely on observation. The researcher talks to members of the culture to get individual perspectives. These individuals are also important to the researcher because they can clarify ambiguous behaviors or occurrences for the researcher providing "a deep understanding of the setting" (Taylor and Bogdan 41).

Once the researcher has reached a saturation point, a stage "when the long hours spent in the field yield diminishing returns," (Taylor & Bogdan 67) it is time to begin analysis of the data and interpretation of the findings. Litke cautions that:

We must continually remind ourselves that our ethnographic descriptions are translations. Our finished writings give insight into the behavior of a people, but these writings cannot fully explain all aspects of the culture's behavior. Ethnography involves interpretation, and interpretation is always partial. (17)

Ethnography is a method of qualitative research which is well suited to this study. An ethnographer goes into the field to collect data rather than trying to recreate the setting in a controlled environment. Instead of trying to isolate one or a few variables which may be universal, the ethnographer tries to get as thorough as possible an understanding of one context. That one context may then be used as a case study against which similar contexts may be compared.

Explanation of Methods* and Procedures

The research method employed in this study was ethnography as presented by Agar, Lofland and Lofland, and Taylor and Bogdan. The researcher employed the ethnographic technique of participant observation to obtain data. Audiotaped interviews with participants were also employed as a check on data obtained through participant observation.

Two groups of performers were studied. All of the performers had volunteered their time to the project. One

of the directors volunteered after seeing a notice posted in the greenroom of the Strayer-Wood Theatre on the University of Northern Iowa campus. Extra credit in an undergraduate communication course was the impetus which compelled six of the performers to volunteer (Appendix 63). The remainder of the performers volunteered because they heard about the project from someone who was already involved (Appendix 63).

The settings for rehearsals were located on the University of Northern Iowa campus. One rehearsal took place in a lounge of a dormitory and the other rehearsals took place in classrooms. The performances occurred in the auditorium of Central Intermediate School in Waterloo, Iowa. The performers made a few trips to the school to accustom themselves to the performance space. Eight of the twelve interviews occurred in the dormitory rooms of the interviewees. Of the four remaining interviews, one took place in an office on campus, one in the theatre, one in a classroom and one in the library.

Field notes were coded, patterns determined. An examination of field note patterns led to the formulation of research questions. This process is consistent with steps of ethnographic methodology as explained by Lofland and Lofland (20-135) and Taylor and Bogdan (15-105).

Interviews were conducted with ten of the twelve performers. Two of the performers could not be contacted.

Before each interview was conducted, informants were asked to sign an informed consent form. This consent form had been approved by the Graduate College of the University of Northern Iowa along with the Human Subjects Review form filed by the researcher. Each informant was assured that his or her identity would remain confidential and that the interview could be terminated at any time. The only people who would see the consent form would be the researcher and the researcher's project advisor. The interviews were audiotaped. Notes were taken of the interview responses as a backup in case something happened to the audiotapes.

Interview questions focused on the directors' and performers' working relationships and the participants' initial and final impressions of the texts and their colleagues. Informants were questioned about their perceptions of the rehearsals and the performances. The informants were also questioned about responses to some questions. To avoid leading questions, the informants were simply asked general questions such as "What were the rehearsals like for you?" Informants were encouraged to respond with any impressions which they found striking, memorable, appropriate, touching, etc. Some questions, as expected, elicited similar responses from all participants.

The interviews were transcribed from audiotapes to written transcriptions and then each interview was compared

with the other interviews for similarities and differences among responses. Each interview was broken down and each interviewee's response to a question was compiled with all the other responses. These compiled responses are listed in the Appendix. For the sake of clarity, pauses, vocalized pauses, and repetitions were deleted.

Assumptions

This study was predicated on two assumptions: (1) ethnographic methodology was an appropriate method of collection and (2) that this social context was relevant to similar social contexts.

The first assumption was that participant observation would allow data collection which quantitative methods could not provide. The rehearsal situations and performance at the quilt display could not be replicated in a controlled setting.

The second assumption was that implications of data gathered in this social context would be applicable to similar social contexts. Specifically, the data would be applicable to social contexts grappling with sensitive issues.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

AIDS and related issues have only been discussed since 1981, when doctors became aware of the AIDS phenomenon (Altman 31). Since those initial reports, public response to AIDS and AIDS victims has been vehement, discriminatory, vocal and, at times, hysterical. Knowledge of the disease spread first through case studies and personal narratives in a gossipy, grapevine way: "One hears stories of people refusing to eat in gay-owned restaurants, and New York magazine reported that female models avoided male colleagues who 'might' be gay" (Altman 65). The media, especially in televised commercials, have continued to impart information through personal appeals by victims sharing their personal narratives of how they contracted the disease and through celebrities encouraging viewers to learn the facts.

This review of literature is divided into four parts. First, AIDS information and public response are considered. Second, personal narratives are discussed with particular emphasis on Walter R. Fisher's narrative paradigm. Third, oral interpretation in social context is explored noting the unique link between text and audience. Fourth, group performances of oral interpretation scripts and rehearsal

processes are discussed.

AIDS Information and Public Response

Little useful information is available on AIDS prior to 1985. It was not until 1985 that studies about AIDS and AIDS related issues began to be published in large numbers. Since 1985 the knowledge base about AIDS, related syndromes and treatments has grown at such a rapid rate that most publications are outdated as soon as they are published. Gerald J. Perry's AIDS Information Sourcebook and Dennis Altman's AIDS In The Mind of America are still valuable sources of information on the origins and history of the disease. These particular sources have not become obsolete because they deal more with a public awareness and response than the disease itself.

Public response to AIDS and AIDS related issues often has been based on an inaccurate notion which emerged from diagnoses during the outbreak of the epidemic: that AIDS was a disease only contracted by homosexuals. Dennis Altman asserted that "the fact that the first reported cases were exclusively among gay men was to affect the whole future conceptualization of AIDS" (33). The doctors who treated the first AIDS patients did not have a name for the disease so AIDS was "originally named 'gay-related immune deficiency' (GRID)" (Altman 33). The term AIDS was not used until September 1982 (Altman 37).

The supposed link between AIDS and homosexuals led to the public's use of homosexuals as scapegoats for their fear (Altman 58-59). The lethal disease was a horrible, painful ordeal for its victims and the lack of knowledge about its contraction, contagion and limitations frightened the public. That the disease seemed to be confined to the gay community allowed for a stratification so that all reproaches and condemnations could be placed upon one group of people. James B. Nelson stated that "AIDS has become one of history's classic examples of 'blaming the victim'" (176). Public response could be extreme in its ignorant terror and Dennis Altman said "the disease seems to give a macabre permission to many people to express homophobic reactions they would previously not have uttered, maybe not even thought" (187). James B. Nelson identified three types of homophobic outworkings: the "Falwellian-type" accusations of divine punishment, brutal homophobic recommendations and limitations on gay access to adequate services from medical personnel, police, firefighters and funeral directors (177). Nelson goes on to censure the "largely timid responses thus far from mainline Christian denominations" and "mixed government response" (177).

Though the general public's response has been to condemn and shun the victims (Altman 59-65), there has been some response which seeks to understand the epidemic from

the victim's point of view (Altman 176). The media have dominated this quest for understanding (Altman 163-66). Among the media responses are two theatrical plays about AIDS and homosexual victims: William M. Hoffman's As Is and Larry Kramer's The Normal Heart. Each play made its debut off Broadway though As Is later moved to Broadway and earned three Tony Award nominations (Plummer 476).

Reception of the plays was mixed and critics disagreed on their merit. Karl Levitt compared the two plays by saying:

While As Is is the more cohesive and emotionally gripping of the two plays, The Normal Heart carries more information and has a harder edge that exposes the softer, more sentimental tone of As Is. (47)

Ken Plummer gave a more personal reaction by stating that "neither play is comfortable theatre . . . I left As Is moved; I left The Normal Heart enraged and shaking" (476).

The focus of both plays is on AIDS in relation to how it affects homosexuals and the people in their lives. Both plays were written during the period when few of the reported AIDS cases were outside the gay community. Plummer noted that underlying both plays is:

a dark disturbing question: what would the AIDS problem look like today if it hadn't first

attacked the stigmatized and the marginal; if it had attacked the rich and the powerful instead?

(477)

The persistent notion that AIDS predominantly affects homosexuals may owe as much to the high visibility of the gay community as to the fact that the first AIDS victims were gay men. Altman argued that:

One of the reasons that the perception of AIDS has been so closely linked to gay men is that no other affected group has comparable political will and resources to deal with the issue. (39)

Though the gay community has the political might to confront government policies on the issue, the stigma of AIDS being a gay disease has not lessened with this group spearheading efforts for policy reforms. Removal of the stigma needs to come from another sector. Edmund White nominated the arts as the sector which could remove the stigma from the gay community. White maintained that "Art must compete with (rectify, purge) the media, which have thoroughly politicized AIDS" (71).

Fine artists and performing artists are two groups of people who have sought to develop the general public's understanding of the AIDS crisis with support for victims rather than condemnation. White claimed that his article on AIDS in the fine art community focuses on artists coping

with and responding to AIDS "because of the impact the epidemic has had on esthetics and on the life of the art community, an impact that has not been studied" (68).

In late 1987 prominent professional dancers, choreographers and New York City dance companies began organizing an AIDS benefit called "Dancing for Life." The goal of the benefit was to raise \$1.4 million to be divided among the American Foundation for AIDS Research, the Gay Men's Health Crisis, the National AIDS Network and "various groups that provide hospice care and direct services" (Parks 6). Otis Stuart stated that:

A dual goal in Dancing for Life was made manifest: to make some major money and, in the process, to make some major noise--to show, brilliantly, that boundaries are where we put them. (37)

Benefits such as Dancing for Life and other media events are gradually weaning the public away from the long-held conviction that AIDS is a homosexual disease.

Personal Narratives

Humans have been sharing narratives at least since the age of cavedwellers, if we believe that cave paintings are an attempt to tell a story. Since we all tell personal narratives in our daily lives it seems reasonable that all humans who have shared narratives have also shared personal narratives. There may be various reasons humans share

personal narratives but as Kristin Langellier said:

Telling personal narratives does something in the social world. Personal narratives participate in the ongoing rhythm of people's lives as a reflection of their social organization and cultural values. (Perspectives 261)

Interpretation scholars have been studying and performing literary narratives since the field began but study of personal narratives has become a focus for study only recently. The ubiquity of personal narratives may have blinded interpretation scholars to their potential use for study and performance. Langellier states that personal narratives have "a long history of being invisible, inaudible, and ignored as an object of research" (Perspectives 244). This neglect has begun to change and scholars have now discovered that "personal narratives construct realities that are personally and culturally appropriate but also present some opportunity for cultural challenge and innovation" (Langellier, Perspectives 264).

Personal narratives perform an important function for humans. As Dwight Conquergood put it, "our experience of life is contingent upon the expressive traditions and performative resources of our community" (36). Personal narratives are an important means of imparting information to others and grappling with our own reactions to and

understanding of our culture.

The realization of the important and necessary role narratives play in human life led communication theorist Walter R. Fisher to the development of his narrative paradigm. The narrative paradigm is based on Fisher's notion of homo narrens. Fisher coined the term homo narrens to represent his belief that humans are "essentially a storytelling animal" (Case 1). Fisher stated:

The idea of human beings as storytellers indicates the generic form of all symbol composition; it holds that symbols are created and communicated ultimately as stories meant to give order to human experience and to induce others to dwell in them to establish ways of living in common, in communities in which there is sanction for the story that constitutes one's life. (Case 6)

The symbolic communication which takes place when narratives are shared is the core of Fisher's study and the reason he created the narrative paradigm. Fisher asserted that:

The primary function of the paradigm is to offer a way of interpreting and assessing human communication that leads to critique, a determination of whether or not a given instance of discourse provides a reliable, trustworthy, and

desirable guide to thought and action in the world. (Elaboration 351)

Fundamental to Fisher's perspective for critical analysis was his belief in the merger of poetic and rhetorical modes of discourse which he said "are reunited by the concept of humans and storytellers" (Beginning 74). Fisher did not agree with the traditional stance that poetic and rhetorical discourse are separate entities and he asserted that:

Human communication in all of its forms is imbued with mythos--ideas that cannot be verified or proved in any way, including metaphor, values, gesture and so on--as well as, on occasion, clear-cut inferential or implicative structures. (Beginning 87)

Lance W. Bennett and Murray Edelman agreed with Fisher that poetic and rhetorical discourse should not be separated. Bennett and Edelman found the union of the two especially beneficial in political discourse where:

the narrative form is particularly vital because stock political plots construct meanings to counter the ambiguity and to reinforce the ideological disagreements that pervade political communication. (158)

Bennett and Edelman were in the minority on the issue

of uniting poetic and rhetorical discourse. McGee and Nelson "disagree[d] with [Fisher's] deliberate contrast of reason to narrative, especially in public argument" (139). Lucaites and Condit could not reconcile poetic and rhetorical discourse because they said poetic narratives routinely flout or reconstitute the code of form they should be following (104).

The scholars who did not accept Fisher's merger of poetic and rhetorical discourse could not accept the narrative paradigm. Lucaites and Condit questioned Fisher's whole concept when they said that "if there is a unified narrative paradigm of human communication, or a universal metacode, they have not yet been discovered" (105). McGee and Nelson allowed that Fisher had created a narrative paradigm but dismissed it by saying that "the need is less for a paradigm than for an epistemology of narrativity" (151). Thomas B. Farrell was the most vitriolic and condescending when he said that "the notion of homo narrens, like many a happy invention, is rooted in a fortuitous encounter between two unlikely sources (as the sewing machine and umbrella of surrealistic fashion)" (126).

A study of narrative reveals how humans use stories to explain and understand the world around them. Fisher's narrative paradigm is important to the study of personal narratives because as a world view it gives primacy to

narratives. Fisher uses narration as a master metaphor and extols its value in "recounting or accounting for human choice and action" (Philosophy 62). Though other scholars disagree with some parts of the narrative paradigm, value remains in its world view and major premises. Another scholar could use these premises as a starting point from which to develop a practical narrative theory. Whether or not Fisher's current vision of a narrative paradigm has practical value for communication scholars, his notion of homo narrens is a perspective on motivation of human communication which could be useful to scholars.

The universality of Fisher's homo narrens concept is important to this study because the goal of the performance was to show, through letters (stories) and biographies of people who had died of AIDS, that the disease is universal and can affect anyone. The quilt panels are the main attraction at the display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt but coordinators of The Names Project do not neglect the significance of the letters which are submitted to The Names Project with the panels. The letters underscore the meaning of the panels themselves and reveal the emotional impact which the loss of an individual has had on those left behind. Many of the panels are submitted with poems or prose as a tribute to or description of the deceased.

The performance of personal narratives at the display

underscores what The Names Project is all about: remembering that AIDS victims were human beings; individuals who should not be quickly forgotten because they died of a disease which is so devastating that most people prefer to not remember it. The Names Project is a positive statement counteracting the prevailing notion that AIDS only affects one group of people. Langellier noted that:

Although narratives can function as an ideological device to legitimate the meaning systems of dominant groups and the status quo of habitual and established practices, they may also delegitimate or contest dominant meaning systems.

(Perspectives 268)

The AIDS Memorial Quilt and the narratives which accompany it contest the persistent belief that AIDS is restricted to one group by representing individuals of both genders, all ages and all backgrounds. The narratives submitted with the panels are a testament to the importance of each AIDS victim. The AIDS Memorial Quilt is a powerful symbol and its power to persuade is enhanced by the personal narratives accompanying it.

Oral Interpretation in Social Contexts

Performing literature for a specific audience in a specific situation has advantages which other means of

conveying or sharing of ideas and information do not. Interpretation often meets the needs of a social context with a type of script which Wallace A. Bacon called "composite" (471) and Kleinau and McHughes called "compiled" (138). A composite or compiled script draws together selections from many sources and often from many genres and combines them into a performance script. Bacon averred that "There is literally no end to the kinds of scripts which can be imagined and produced" (471).

Performing literature in social contexts has become increasingly popular as interpretation practitioners have sought performance venues outside the classroom and theatre. The exploration of new performance spaces is matched by a desire to perform texts which are outside the literary canon. Both ends are achieved with the performance of personal narratives in social settings. Langellier asserted that "performance and narrative converge in storytelling as a mode of speaking present in cultural settings and everyday life" (Performance 133).

The interest in oral interpretation in social contexts began in the mid-1970's. In 1975, Jean Haskell Speer argued the need for interpretation scholars to study folklore. Two years later Speer, along with Elizabeth C. Fine, was still speculating on the possibilities of performing folklore. Other scholars began pondering the possibilities of

performing literature in social contexts. In an essay titled "From Academic to Social-Political Uses of Performance," Kay Ellen Capo traced twentieth century political changes and response to these changes in the theatre (439-40). Capo followed this summary with a discussion of two government-supported interpretation programs in the State of Maine. These projects prompted a special workshop in 1979 to consider "how interpreters can use their art in social service, business, and political change contexts" (444).

Kleinau and McHughes, in their 1980 textbook, asserted that "Interpreters Theatre is for all people" (298) and they discussed how interpreters can perform for audiences which are blind, deaf, physically handicapped, mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed (298-300). Many other audiences can be targeted for interpretation performances. Brandeis University developed a program which "uses literature to help professionals confront career dilemmas and moral issues they face in their daily work" (Bailey 3).

Possibly the best argument for using oral interpretation in social contexts is that "literature provides a 'non-threatening' way to discuss difficult subjects" (Bailey 3). Discussion can be facilitated because participants can discuss the characters' reactions or nonreactions to the subject rather than personalizing the

discussion. A teacher quoted by Bailey wrote that "the texts provided a frame, a safe distancing device, yet paradoxically, an opportunity for intimate exchange not usually available to strangers at a conference" (3).

For the facilitation of a desired response or to facilitate discussion, the interpreter must select the performance text(s) with care. Langellier cautioned that:

The effects of words always depends upon context, that is, the shared conventions and shared obligation between the partners in the narrative contract, as well as between the collective social and cultural forces controlling language and the individuals putting it into practice. (Women's 10)

One method of compiling a script designed to elicit a specific response from the audience is what Janet Elsea named "trigger scripting" (Valentine 38). A trigger script is comprised of literature selected because it specifically addresses the issues being faced by the target audience. Trigger scripting is a useful method for performing in social contexts because it can adapt to serve many purposes:

Trigger scripting can be used to affect public policy, intercultural communication, attitude change, medical communication, leisure time activity, self discovery, liturgical innovation,

and specialized learning goals. (Valentine 39)

Interpreters need to be aware of the possibility of losing the integrity of a text when trigger scripting. Performance goals can easily overshadow concern for the integrity of the literature. If interpreters allow performance goals to become their top priority the literature can be manipulated out of all recognition. Although the performance goals are the reason a production is mounted the literature must remain the primary concern. After all, it is the literature which contains the perspective(s) on the issue being addressed. Kristin Valentine said that integrity of the literature can be maintained if "we choose literature whose rhetorical purposes can be in concert with the rhetorical purposes of the situation" (38).

Performing trigger scripts in social contexts can be beneficial to both performers and audiences. The audiences benefit because "the literature is chosen, scripted, and performed to meet their specific needs, causing them to realize that art can illuminate their personal realities" (Valentine 38). Performers benefit as much as their audiences because "performers who take the time to share literature with those outside the university are giving one of the greatest gifts one human can give another" (Williams 432).

Group Performances and Rehearsals

Group Performance

Group performance, as used in this study, is a group performance of literature referred to in performance studies as Readers Theatre. Techniques employed in group performance are the same as those developed by the individual interpreter (Lee & Gura 404). The difference between a group performance of literature and a solo performance of literature is that having a group of performers allows for a greater number of performance options, for example: "since the combination of several performers' expertise allowed greater physical and vocal variety, frankly presentational performances could capitalize on unlocalized setting" (Lee & Gura 403-04).

Care must be taken that literature remains the primary facet of performance. Bacon warned against getting so caught up in performance details that the text suffers:

Something is to be said for maintaining in ensemble performance the primacy of the text being performed, for insuring that the theatrical interest does not overwhelm the literary interest, since it is the life which matches text and performer that interpretation resides. (449)

Special considerations need to be made for the performance of letters and biographies. Long, Hudson and

Jeffrey noted that the intimacy of letters "often offends some audiences, and forces a director and cast to consider the problems of aesthetic distance and 'taste'" (69). Though letters and biographies are both forms of intimate revelations about an individual, there are differences between the two genres. Letters are often performed in the lyric mode whereas "the presence of a mediator between the subject and his (her) audience leads some to place biographies in the epic mode" (Long, Hudson & Jeffrey 70). Directors need to be aware of the concurrent presence of two different modes and ensure clarity for the audience.

Rehearsals

The purpose of performance is to share literature, with its inherent ideas, emotions and perspectives, with an audience. Before the literature can be shared with an audience, the performers must come to understand the literature. It is through the rehearsal process that performers come to understand the literature, other people and themselves. Only after the performers have achieved this understanding can they then communicate this understanding to others.

Long, Hudson and Jeffrey separated group rehearsals into two types, rehearsals of exploration and rehearsals of setting. Rehearsals of exploration were defined as a time when "the director provides necessary background for the

script, explains the initial analysis, the production concept, and the methods of adaptation" (28). Rehearsals of setting are "held to refine, polish, and finish the action of the literature" (Long, Hudson & Jeffrey 35).

Kleinau proposed that two types of dialogue occur when the interpreter performs alone, interior and exterior (4). These types of dialogues would be employed by a group performer when he or she worked alone on individual sections of the script. Interior dialogue is an intimate empathic response to the literature. Kleinau explained that in an interior dialogue "The action is at once contractive and expansive in that as one pulls an 'other' to oneself, and in turn moves toward the other, the self is enlarged by the presence of the other" (8). The interior dialogue takes on significance when the 'other' of the literature is vastly different from the performer. During the rehearsal process the performer must find points of commonality or some means of understanding the 'other' before he or she can portray the 'other' in performance.

While both types of dialogue occur within the individual, exterior dialogue is more analytical and detached. In an exterior dialogue "a lively communication ensues between performer and text, held apart at such distance as to allow for objectivity, experimental probing, and friendly disagreement" (Kleinau 11). When a performer

engages in external dialogue he or she is examining the mechanical aspects of the text such as grammar or syntax rather than subtexts and implied meanings. As the performer engages in each type of dialogue he or she comes to understand the totality of what the text conveys and thus he or she can then communicate this understanding to an audience.

Summary

Information about AIDS is continuing to augment and revise prior knowledge. The early link between AIDS and homosexuals was reinforced by the high visibility of the gay community and its political struggle to obtain an improved standard of living for victims. This link was challenged by two theatrical plays and benefits such as Dancing for Life continued to weaken the link. As more knowledge about AIDS is acquired, the public is learning to accept AIDS as a disease which can strike anyone.

Personal narratives have become an area of study as a means for understanding how humans shape and share their concept of reality and their experiences. Though other scholars have criticized it as being impractical, Walter R. Fisher's narrative paradigm offers a perspective on understanding human beings through analysis of personal narratives. The narrative paradigm is a critical method which reveals the function and value of personal narratives.

The performance of literature in social contexts provides limitless possible scripts which can be developed to meet the needs of any special interest audience. Discussion of sensitive issues can be facilitated because the audiences can address the issues in terms of the performance instead of personalizing their input. Trigger scripts are especially advantageous in social contexts because they are compiled from literature selected because it affirms of side or another of the issues being presented.

Group performances are more appropriate in social contexts than individual performances because groups have more options for variety than an individual has. Two things which performance groups need to be aware of are that the text needs to retain primacy and that different genres of literature require different considerations.

Rehearsals are the time not only for memorizing lines, honing delivery skills and walking through blocking, but it is also the period when the performers come to understand the literature. This understanding makes it possible for the performers to communicate the literature to an audience.

CHAPTER III
FIELD COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODS

From its inception, this study was designed to study rehearsal processes. The selection of a rehearsal group for study was the first major development in this project. The type of material which the selected group would be rehearsing was not considered to be of significant importance early in the study's conceptual stages. Any group which was about to begin rehearsing a Readers Theatre production was equally an option for consideration. Readers Theatre productions were given preference over theatrical productions because the researcher has more expertise in Readers Theatre theory and practice than in conventional theatre.

Several production groups available for study were considered before the researcher was made aware that groups would soon be forming to perform for the AIDS Memorial Quilt display in Waterloo, Iowa. Initially the researcher was uneasy about observing a group performing narratives of such a sensitive topic. Knowing little about The Names Project contributed to this uneasiness. A weekend of investigation and reflection led to the conclusion that the significance and impact of the NAMES Project would give this study an added dimension which would be lacking in the other

productions available for research. The researcher also wished to discover more about the NAMES Project and be a part, in a small way, of such a unique national memorial. Later, in the interviews, many of the performers revealed they had similar reservations about agreeing to participate and similar reasons for deciding to participate.

Informants

Determining who the informants would be was a matter of waiting until the groups were formed. All of the performers and both of the directors would be informants for the study. The gatekeeper had posted a notice in the greenroom of the Strayer-Wood Theatre announcing the search for performers. Only one person contacted the gatekeeper through that notice. This person had an extensive theatrical background and enough directing experience that the gatekeeper made him one of the two directors. Lack of response to the greenroom notice led the gatekeeper to try other means of obtaining performers. Notices were read in communication classes by instructors. This method procured the second director and hence most of the other performers. The majority of the performers who volunteered were taking a class taught by the second director. He offered extra credit in his courses for any of his students who performed at the display. Both directors would be performing in addition to directing. The gatekeeper told them they "can be Alan Alda . . . direct and

act" (Notes 10).¹ There were twelve performers in addition to the two performing directors. Five of the performers were assigned to group one and the other seven were assigned to group two. The performers had varying levels of experience from one who had virtually no previous experience to one performer with an extensive theatrical background. All of the performers and both directors were students at the University of Northern Iowa.²

Setting

The majority of rehearsals for both groups took place in a classroom of the Communication Arts Center on the University of Northern Iowa campus. Group One held their first rehearsal in a classroom twice the size of other classrooms in the building. Group Two held one rehearsal in a lounge of one of the dormitories. Each group had a space rehearsal in the auditorium of Central Intermediate School.

Observation Procedures

Observation procedures mainly consisted of taking field notes on a steno pad. Early in the study the researcher's presence was openly announced first by the gatekeeper and then by the directors. None of the performers voiced objections to the researcher's presence. The researcher tried to be as unobtrusive as possible by sitting by a wall or in a corner or any place that was on the fringes of the group and not right in their midst. The researcher overtly

took notes after determining that this behavior did not bother any of the performers. No one gave the researcher more than a cursory glance when rehearsals began. Since all of the performers were college students the researcher could reasonably assume that they were used to seeing people taking notes. Taylor and Bogdan assert that "One of the few times at which notes can be taken unobtrusively is when other people are also taking notes. . . ." (58). During the first rehearsals many of the performers themselves were taking notes on blocking and such, in the margins of their scripts. The researcher's physical distance from the groups combined with the groups' absorption in their own activities minimized the amount of attention paid to the researcher.

Field notes were taken on a steno pad instead of an 8 1/2" x 11" notebook because it was less obvious. The researcher participated in group activities when called upon to do so. During a Group One rehearsal the researcher was asked to read a two-line part for a performer who was absent (Notes 20). Sometimes the researcher was asked to give technical critiques during rehearsals (Notes 35). Field notes comprised all activities occurring during the rehearsals. Activities noted included conversation, nonverbal behaviors, technical aspects, specific direction, laughter and goofing off. The researcher's own impressions, interpretations and questions were also noted.

Interviews

A few weeks after the final performances interviews were scheduled with both directors and ten of the twelve performers. Two of the performers could not be contacted. All but four interviews occurred in the interviewees' dormitory rooms. One of the directors was interviewed at his office. That interview was followed by an interview with one of the performers who needed to talk to the director for a few minutes. This interview was conducted in the room next to the director's office. The third interview which was not conducted in a dorm room was conducted in the graduate study room of the library and the final interview was conducted in a top floor lounge area of the Strayer-Wood Theatre.

The same set of questions was posed to each interviewee with the exception of question eight. Question eight had to be phrased differently when posed to the directors because it concerned their directing style and effectiveness. Appendix A lists the questions asked and the responses given.

Special questions were asked of some of the performers after they had answered the set of general questions. These special questions explored things that warranted further explanation from the interviewee. One of the directors and one performer (D2 and PO) were asked to comment upon their

relationship during rehearsals because it had seemed to be very aggressive at times. PO had seemed almost mutinous toward D2's direction at times and it was important to get their perspectives of the situation as a check of the researcher's interpretation of the situation. Asking performer PR about the researcher's presence and its affect on PR was also important because it had seemed that PR was overly conscious of the researcher's presence. D1 was asked how it felt to read names at the display and D2 was asked about the family of the author of his monologue and their response to his performance.

All of the interviewees were audiotaped after the interviewees had signed informed consent sheets and had been advised of their right to withdraw participation at any time. The researcher took written notes of the answers as a safeguard in case something happened to the audiotapes.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

At the beginning of this project, general categories of research areas had been delineated: interaction among performers, interaction between the directors and the performers, interaction between the performers and the texts, events of the rehearsals, the actual performances, the performers' reactions to and impressions of the quilt and performers' perceptions of audience response. No specific questions had been developed except for a broad one regarding text. The researcher wondered how the performers would react to texts concerning a sensitive issue such as AIDS. Would they be initially uncomfortable with the text due to the subject matter?

Early observations of the two performance groups involved taking notes of as much behavior and conversation as possible. As the rehearsals progressed there was less constant conversation because the performers were working through their scripts. Conversations still occurred in breaks during the rehearsals but the breaks were not as frequent as they had been in the early rehearsals. Many of the behaviors occurring during script rehearsals were part of the blocking. Other behaviors seemed to be caused by nerves or boredom (Notes 35, 62).

Patterns in the field note data were discernable after several rehearsals had been observed. Eventually the data could be coded into ten categories: Scheduling, AIDS/Quilt Information, Technical Aspects, Specific Directions, Pronunciation Problems, Kinesics/Proxemics, Conversations, Humor/Laughter, Digression/Goofing Off and Observer Comments. The field note data could also be divided into two large sections: Rehearsals and Performances/Events at the Display.

Scheduling

Every rehearsal had a brief scheduling session before the conclusion of the rehearsal. Decisions were made for the time and location of the next rehearsal. During Group One's first rehearsal a tentative schedule of rehearsals was devised. D1 quizzed the cast for time conflicts before determining that the best days and times for rehearsals would be Wednesdays 6:00-7:00 pm, Thursdays 7:30-9:00 pm and Sundays 6:00-7:30 pm although "length is negotiable" (Notes 14). D1 informed the cast that "If rehearsals are progressing well the Sunday rehearsals may be dropped except for October 29" (Notes 14). Arrangement of carpool rides were added to the scheduling sessions for the trips to Central Intermediate School for space rehearsals at the auditorium and for the two performances. "Let's get to the rides. We're going tomorrow. We're gonna have to go

another time this week 'cause I don't want us to look shitty" (D2, Notes 73).

AIDS/Quilt Information

At the orientation meeting for directors and performers the gatekeeper spent a considerable amount of time giving the performers a summary of the origin and background of the quilt (Notes 5-10). The gatekeeper also gave information about AIDS and briefed the performers about the performing space in Central Intermediate School and what would be expected of them. The performers were told that "Audiences will be coming in and out of the auditorium. It's not a traditional or conventional audience" (Notes 7). The performers were also informed that there would be "no sets or lighting. I want to keep it simple; maybe stools" (Notes 7).

On November 1, the NAMES Project founder, Cleve Jones, gave two addresses on the campus of the University of Northern Iowa. The researcher and several of the performers were in attendance at one or both of the lectures. Jones' addresses gave those in attendance more information about AIDS and the NAMES Project than the gatekeeper had given them. Jones discussed the symbolic aspects of the quilt and its cathartic effect. He asserted that the quilt helps people "hold on to their memories in a way that will strengthen them and not tear them apart" (Notes 86).

The topic of AIDS only came up during one rehearsal observed by the researcher. Group One got into a discussion of why "sexual orientation" is a better term than "sexual preference" (Notes 63). The performers did not discuss the NAMES Project or the display except regarding their own performance pieces or practical requirements they would be expected to meet.

Technical Aspects

Technical aspects was a code term used by the researcher mainly to designate notes and discussions of blocking:

PM1 comes centerstage.

PI goes back to original chair.

PO sits in chair just vacated by PM1.

PM1 questions position.

D2 says, "Centerstage is fine."

PM1 speaks too softly.

D2 indicates that PM1 should speak louder by cupping a hand to one ear. (Notes 75)

Discussions of costuming were also placed in this category. The researcher noted with interest that the gatekeeper participated in a costuming discussion during the space rehearsal at the Central Intermediate School auditorium. The gatekeeper told the groups "Not whites. Pretend you're dressing for t.v. Solids. No reds. Nothing too dark"

(Notes 54). These instructions were ignored by both groups. Group Two dressed in white for the performances and Group One wore red sweaters and dark blue slacks.

Specific Directions

Specific directions was a categorization for specific directions the directors gave to individuals and to the groups as wholes. This categorization excludes blocking and pronunciation problems. Most of the directions were for vocal delivery and emotional motivation. During one rehearsal D2 reminded his whole cast to remember the purpose of the performances. Though many of the pieces were memorized, D2 cautioned the cast to not let them become rote (Notes 32).

Pronunciation Problems

Most of the rehearsals had at least one incident of a pronunciation problem. Usually the problem was a mispronunciation of a person's name (Notes 80) but sometimes the performers had difficulty with the pronunciation of the name of a disease (Notes 53). Occasionally problems with pronunciation provoked laughter. A good example of this was Group Two's reaction to PM1's inability to pronounce the word "goatee" when earlier a long, complex name of a disease proved to be no problem for PM1 (Notes 36).

Kinesics and Proxemics

Kinesics and proxemics of the two groups were most

noticeable in early rehearsals. The first time Group One rehearsed they arranged their chairs so that they were sitting virtually in a line (Notes 13). The group members kept their eyes to their scripts and only spoke when it was their turn to deliver a narrative. Little movement or fidgeting was discernable. The first observed rehearsal of Group Two was the opposite. The cast spread out all over the lounge and sat or reclined in a variety of positions, sometimes on the floor, and were boisterously talkative commenting on each other's narratives and frequently stopping to discuss subjects unrelated to the rehearsal (Notes 31). Each performer had his or her own idiosyncratic movements such as PI playing with string or PM1 wiggling a foot (Notes 33). In later rehearsals it was more difficult to decipher what was kinesics or proxemics employed by the individual performers and what was blocking. Kinesics or proxemics only became noticeable when individuals were behaving contrary to the rest of the group or when they were not doing the specified blocking (Notes 80).

Conversations

The category of conversations includes all conversations not specifically related to the rehearsals of text or blocking and to parts of telephone conversations between the researcher and the directors which turned to topics unrelated to rehearsals or other aspects of the

project. Conversations during the rehearsals mostly occurred between letters or at the beginning and ends of rehearsals. Often the conversations would be among two or a few members of the group not the whole group. Many times two or more conversations would occur simultaneously. The topic of the conversations would be about anything except AIDS or the NAMES Project (Notes 70).

Humor/Laughter and Digression/Goofing Off

The categorizations of humor/laughter and digressions/goofing off were distinguished for coding purposes because one is verbal and the other is behavioral but they usually occurred simultaneously. A good example occurred during one of Group Two's rehearsals:

PR reads.

D2 says (jokingly) "This one should be done rap style."

PR does so. This provokes laughter.

PR then stands and dances while rapping.

PR sits and reads it straight. (Notes 38)

The frequency of humor in the rehearsal of such serious material was striking. The term serious can be applied to the performance scripts because the subject matter is terminal illness and subsequent death. This subject is not normally discussed in a humorous vein. Both groups goofed off during later rehearsals though they were serious during

the first few rehearsals. D2 stated that he kept the first couple of rehearsals "strict and serious" (Appendix 74). Later D2 allowed the cast to laugh and goof off because he had determined that they had been bored and since they were all volunteers it was okay to let them loosen up a bit (Appendix 74). The seriousness of the casts during the early rehearsals is defined by a lack of laughter and camaradery which later developed. Table 1 shows the frequency of laughter, goofing off and digressions in the two groups. The laughter and digressions noticeably decreased prior to performance. Nervousness may account for this because during the rehearsal time just prior to performance the members of each group spent more time rehearsing their own lines to themselves then joking and talking among each another.

TABLE 1

GROUP 1

	Laughter	Goofing Off	Digressions
Rehearsal 1	0	0	0
Rehearsal 2	0	0	0
Rehearsal 3	0	1	2
Rehearsal 4	4	3	3
Pre-Performance 1	1	2	0
Pre-Performance 2	0	1	1

GROUP 2

	Laughter	Goofing Off	Digressions
Rehearsal 1	4	4	3
Rehearsal 2	3	4	3
Pre-Performance 1	0	3	0
Pre-Performance 2	0	1	2

Observer Comments

This final category includes questions, opinions and other impressions noted by the researcher. Most of the observations which could be described as impressions were written at the quilt display, including how the researcher felt about reading a list of names of individuals included on quilt panels:

A rhythm and pace is set for reading names. Due to nerves I was a bit fast on the first few names on my list. I slowed down and got into the rhythm. (92)

The researcher's critique of the performances are also included in this category (Notes 97).

Checks Made on Data

Checks made on the field note data came through the interviews with the two directors and the ten performers. Since the researcher, the two directors and the twelve cast

members were all students, the researcher determined that it would not be feasible to conduct interviews both during the rehearsal weeks and after the performances had been completed. The researcher elected to wait and conduct all the interviews after the performances were over and the field notes had been coded. Patterns in the data would be evident in the coded field notes and the researcher could formulate more specific questions.

Specific questions allowed for examination of areas which applied only to particular informants. Many of the questions asked were based on the tentative research areas delineated early in the study. Questions concerning audiences had to be abandoned. It was not feasible to do a proper audience analysis in this project. The only audience analysis possible was comprised of informants' comments and the researcher's observations. The informants' perceptions of audience reaction were obtained through interviews which corroborated impressions in the field notes.

The first question posed after finding out how each informant became involved in the project probed into their impressions of the letters and biographies the first time they read them. It was necessary to ask this question in part to confirm researcher suspicions that their impressions changed as they worked with the material and partly to find out if the subject matter made them uncomfortable in their

initial read-throughs. Ascertaining precisely what the performers' initial reactions had been through observation was difficult and not necessarily accurate. Group One's first two rehearsals revealed little because the performers read through the script with monotonous voices while seated in chairs. Their eyes were kept primarily on their texts (Notes 17-18, 21). These behaviors could be attributed to several things including normal rehearsal nervousness and unfamiliarity with the texts. The researcher suspected that at least some of the performers were uncomfortable with the subject matter of the scripts but this suspicion was not confirmed until the performers were interviewed. Six of the performers revealed that they had indeed been uncomfortable with the scripts initially. Three other performers said they thought the letters were sad and D1 admitted he cried. Using different terms three of the performers said that reading the letters made them aware the AIDS can affect anyone.

The question about initial impressions was followed up by asking if their impressions changed as they became more familiar with the scripts. Two interviewees did not think that their impressions had changed at all. The rest of the interviewees thought that the emotions became less strong as they worked with the scripts. PB claimed that "I felt attached; like somehow I knew these people" (PB, Appendix

66).

A special question was asked of D2 and PO regarding apparent antagonism between them during rehearsal. D2 did not think that PO had been "really obnoxious or annoying" and said that he listened to PO's ideas even if he did not use them. PO felt that he was making helpful contributions and that D2 listened even if he did not act upon PO's suggestions. PO stated that "I liked working with him in that I could challenge him on what I thought about the piece. He listened; was open" (PO, Appendix 91).

The special question asked of PR sought to find out what PR's reaction to the researcher's presence had been. Several times during the rehearsals PR would make comments such as "Oh, evaluation again. If I had known I'd dress up" (Notes 70) or "I'm just giving you everything to write down" (Notes 102) after an incident of goofing off. It was obvious that PR was highly aware of the researcher's presence. During the interview PR said that she was aware of it but that it did not bother her. She said that she would become aware of how she and other group members were behaving. PR claimed that she was not bothered by the researcher's presence and that ultimately it was good for her to have someone watching because "that's how I change. Just by watching people and then watching myself" (PR, Appendix 92).

A special question to D2 asked about his experience performing a letter written by a man who had recently died of AIDS when he knew that the man's family was in the audience. D2 said that he was "really nervous" and that his nerves "just shot up in the sky" when he saw the author's family in the audience. After the first performance the author's mother came up and "congratulated me on a good job." D2 said he was much less nervous the second time. D2's account of the incident in the interview is slightly different from what he told the researcher the day after it happened. There was some confusion over which family member congratulated him. The rumor spread by the other members of the cast was that the author's father had been the one D2 talked to (Notes 105). The next day when the researcher asked D2 about the incident he said it was the grandmother (D2, Appendix 90). D2's response in the interview of how the mother reacted to his performance of her son's letter was that she simply congratulated him. The day after the incident, however, D2 had said "She loved it. She came up and gave me a big hug. She was crying" (Notes 106).

A performance related question which was asked of all the interviewees was their reaction to the quilt display. Words which appeared repeatedly in the responses were "sad," "huge" and "emotional." Most of the performers said that seeing the display made AIDS and the impact it has had on

the lives it's affected seem real. There was one performer however, who claimed "We walked around and looked at some of it and it still never really hit me" (PR, Appendix 79). The performers were aware of the impact the display was having on the people around them. Asking about their impressions of the display drew out what the performers nonverbalized responses had been. Through observation alone it had not appeared that the performers had been emotionally affected at all. They seemed to be taking a casual interest as they walked around reading the panels (Notes 93). During an interview one of the performers revealed that she suppressed her emotions, "The first day I almost wanted to start crying because other people were crying. I wanted to start crying really bad the first day but the second day I expected it" (PK, Appendix 83).

The final interview revealed an observation not mentioned by any of the other performers or observed by the researcher. PD claimed that:

We felt like we were competing with the other group. I hated that. The other group would keep coming over and saying, "I hear you guys aren't very good" or something like that and saying "Yeah, we're doing really good." We didn't say anything. We just did the best we could.

(Appendix 85)

This claim was not substantiated by any of the other performers.

CHAPTER V
IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The information revealed in the interviews with the directors and performers and observations of the rehearsal processes is useful for future directors of scripts of sensitive issues. Initial discomfort with the texts which the researcher expected to see due to the sensitive nature of the subject was not evident. The interviews with the performers after the event revealed that they had been uncomfortable with the scripts in the early rehearsals even though this had not been visually evident. This information would be useful for directors of similar scripts so that they could find ways to ease the performers' discomfort.

Humor was the coping mechanism which emerged to help the performers confront their discomfort with the scripts. The high level of laughter and humor noted during the rehearsals was a surprising finding in light of the seriousness of the texts. Only one of the letters had a conscious intention to be humorous. That letter encourages the deceased addressee to "write back if you can" (Ruskin 115). The earliest rehearsals of the two groups were much more constrained than later rehearsals. Group One's early constraint was self-imposed. Their director did not require the expressionless responses which they gave (Notes 11-18). Group Two on the other hand was indeed held in check by

their director (Appendix 74).

The NAMES Project: AIDS Memorial Quilt display is unusual in that it provides a means for people to interact, discuss and come to terms with a sensitive issue. Emotions run high and people are forced to deal with their reactions though it is overall a positive experience. No other sensitive issue has quite so powerful a means for facilitating discussion and understanding. Nevertheless, the act of performing sensitive issue scripts can be cathartic both for performers and audiences. Directors need to be aware of the emotional impact on performers. Directors can help relieve the emotional impact by allowing the performers to engage in behaviors which reduce tension such as D2 allowing one performer to read part of the script "rap style" (Notes 38). Directors also need to make their performers aware that audience reaction may be unpredictable and varied. In this study the gatekeeper warned the members of both groups that their audiences would be coming in and out of the auditorium during their performance (Notes 7).

Readers Theatre presentations of letters and biographies submitted with the quilt panels engender a different audience response than a production of As Is or The Normal Heart would mainly because of different performance styles. Both types of performances would probably stimulate congratulatory interaction from the

audience to the performers after the performance. The difference between the two types of presentations would occur during the performances. As Is and The Normal Heart would employ the theatrical convention of the "fourth wall" to create aesthetic distance between the audience and the performers. A Readers Theatre performance would use off-stage focus to create an intimate connection with the audience rather than minimize performer awareness of audience presence. A Readers Theatre performance would also employ the technique of having each performer portray more than one persona. This multiplicity of roles forces the audience to become actively involved in the performance as they respond differently to each new persona. The audience is not given the safety of the "fourth wall" and cannot impassively accept or reject the texts presented.

This study provides the NAMES Project additional cases of the positive effect the quilt has on people who experience the display and are exposed to the biographies and letters of people whose lives have been affected by AIDS. Most of the performers in this study knew very little about AIDS and nothing about the quilt before becoming involved in this project. All now say they are glad they participated in the project and have acquired a deeper understanding of AIDS and the people affected by it. Not only does this benefit the NAMES Project but communication

scholars as well.

The performers acknowledgement that their attitudes towards AIDS and the AIDS Memorial Quilt were changed after working with the letters and biographies supports Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm. The narratives changed the performers' perspective on what constitutes the reality of AIDS and AIDS related issues. The letters and biographies became a means for the performers to share this new perspective with each other and with audiences.

This study contributes to the knowledge base about interpretation in social contexts as a specific case study. This study faced problems in that not only did the script need to meet the needs of a specific audience but that the issues which the script embodied were sensitive issues. Directors planning to compile performance scripts for other sensitive issues can look at this study for insights into how the directors of the two groups dealt with the problems they faced such as how to overcome discomfort with the script and planning how the performers would cope with inattentive or hostile audiences.

This study contributes to the base of knowledge about rehearsal processes in general and rehearsal processes of Readers Theatre performances specifically. Similar future studies could be conducted with a team of researchers so that the audience could be analyzed in addition to the

performers. A team approach to this study would have been helpful at times when the researcher needed to be two places at once.

Some of the findings in this study may have been expected or even obvious but they need to be discussed. Little has been written about the performance of sensitive issues in social contexts or about how performers are affected by texts as they rehearse them for performance. The questions raised early in this study sought to discover whether or not performers' initial impressions of their scripts changed over time, how the performers functioned as a group and what reactions the performers had to the quilt display. At the conclusion of the study the researcher had discovered that the performers' impressions of their scripts had greatly changed. The performers developed a cohesiveness which aided them in coping with the issues raised by the script and helping each other understand the script. The performers' reactions to the quilt display were varied but most were emotionally affected by it.

Notes

1. All subsequent references to **Notes** refer to the researcher's field notes.

2. All references to informants in the field notes and in this paper are coded to protect their identities. The two directors are designated D1 and D2 and the performers are discussed as PO, PR, PV, PM1, PS, PB, PT, PK, PY and PD.

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APPENDIX

QUESTION 1 - "How did you become involved in this project?"

- D2 Sign in the UNI Strayer-Wood Theatre greenroom
Opportunity to get involved in the Names Project
Another way to direct
- PO I'm a friend of D2 and he came to me and asked me to
perform
- PR In D1's class; extra credit
Neat experience
Like to speak
- PV In D1's class; extra credit
Thought it was interesting
- PM1 In D1's class; extra credit
Interesting
Good cause
Give me more culture
- PS In D1's class; extra credit
- D1 Gatekeeper talking about it; volunteered
- PB Talking to PO who had already volunteered
PO referred PB to Gatekeeper
Gatekeeper referred PB to D1
- PY In D1's class; extra credit
- PD Through PD's boss; display organizer
Interesting
- PK In D1's class; extra credit
- PT Memo passed around in Dimensions of Interpersonal
Communication
Knew Gatekeeper

QUESTION 2 - "What was your reaction to the letters and biographies the first time that you read them?"

- D2 It didn't really hit me.
It didn't register until I got to the display.
- PO Initially I snickered.
It was different.
Really, really powerful
Uncomfortable at first
- PR We kind of laughed about them.
It was so strange to me.
From a small town; this stuff is just not there
Do I really want to do this?
Not my beliefs; it would be okay
- PV It was weird.
From a small town; there aren't any homosexuals
Uncomfortable at first
- PM1 It was so strange.
I was so surprised.
Really incredible
- PS Some interesting; some came as a shock
We got used to it.
- D1 I cried; I cried a lot...especially family ones
One by woman with four gay sons - I was devastated by
that one
It got better as I got through them.
The fact that they were real not fiction...
- PB I thought they were sad.
Gave me an idea about the Names Project
It shouldn't be taken lightly.
- PY It was emotional; a lot of them were sad.
More aware of what the families go through.
Some were bitter.
- PD It sort of made the whole thing more real.
It's kind of sad.
It can happen to anybody.
- PK I was sort of shocked.
Before I didn't really think it pertained to me.

QUESTION 2 (continued)

PT It was a rude awakening.
I was touched; very touched.

QUESTION 3 - "Did your initial impressions of the letters and biographies change as you worked with them?"

D2 It didn't come off as really strong emotion.

PO I got more comfortable with them.
There are certain words that you have to be more open to.
It got a lot easier as we practiced and became more open.

PR I think they just became more familiar.
Started to feel my own more and other people's less.
It didn't change my views.

PV You got used to it after a while.

PM1 They probably did but I actually realized all of the emotions at the display.

PS We got used to it.

D1 They weren't as strong.
You become removed.
It becomes rote.

PB I felt attached; like somehow I knew these people.

PY It made me sad but they become routine after a while.

PD Not really; I felt the same.
I felt like I needed to help.

PK It's not something that's foreign anymore.
It's not something that's terrible.
I have more compassion.

PT I became more familiar with it.
It got easier with practice.

QUESTION 4 - "How much did you know about AIDS and the Names Project before you became involved in this project?"

	<u>AIDS</u>	<u>Names Project</u>
D2	Nothing really	Nothing
PO	Not a lot; I knew some from working at a blood bank.	I didn't know there was a quilt.
PR	I'd been to some seminars.	I didn't know anything.
PV	Yes, I knew about AIDS.	I didn't know about that.
PM1	I knew about AIDS but I probably had a biased opinion before I actually saw all those people and knew that innocent people had AIDS.	I didn't really know about it.
PS	I knew about AIDS.	I'd heard about the quilt. I just knew that people sent in quilts.
D1	I knew it was a disease and it was affecting a lot of people. I was fully aware of the homosexual issue and what a hot issue it would be in Iowa because we're homophobic in Iowa.	I knew there were panels made by family members and that it was just recently in DC. I knew it was a serious problem. I knew it would be a teaching thing.
PB	I had heard of it. I didn't know how widespread it was. I had only known of one incident in this area; a girl's brother.	Nothing.
PY	The basic facts; what I'd read.	I didn't know anything.
PD	Basic facts	I heard something about a quilt a while ago but I never realized how big it was.
PK	Just from what instructors	Nothing.

QUESTION 4 (continued)

PK had explained; pamphlets
my mother had gotten.

PT Just the basic facts.

I knew that people made
quilts and sent them in.

QUESTION 5 - "What were the rehearsals like for you?"

- D2 A lot of repetition
Getting the cast to put emotion into it
First directing project without lights and props
Using the script instead of actions
- PO Basic rehearsals
They weren't all that professional.
We had our share of goofing around and being serious.
Freshman director
Laid-back; easy-going rehearsals
- PR Some of them were very relaxed; got me away from my
job.
Let me be with some friends
They were fun.
Some of them drove me crazy and I got mad at a couple
of them and told some people off.
Too much joking; we weren't getting anything done.
Didn't have time to waste
- PV It was fun; chaotic.
We had a good time.
- PM1 They were probably not as serious as they should have
been.
We had fun; we joked around.
- PS Kind of spontaneous at first.
Not much organization.
Sometimes they got off the track; start joking,
digressing.
D2 wasn't really authoritative.
D2 sometimes started the jokes; so the rest of us took
that attitude too.
- D1 Impromptu
Sometimes I didn't have things planned but that's
partly the way I work; I can't do spatial blocking
unless I see it.
Actors not showing up made things difficult.
- PB Basically pretty easy
- PY At times they got long but for the most part they were
interesting.
We made them fun.

QUESTION 5 (continued)

- PY They were pretty organized.
We got things done in a short period of time.
- PD Long and tedious; Boring
A lot of us didn't enjoy it; we expected it to be fun.
I just volunteered my time; I wasn't doing it for a
class.
It was okay I guess.
- PK Sometimes hectic; other times relaxing.
I liked the people I worked with; it was fun 'cause I
got to know them.
- PT It was fun.
There wasn't any stress but it was time consuming.
It was real informal.
It took a lot of time I didn't have to give.
But I made the commitment.
For a while I was putting it ahead of my schoolwork.

- QUESTION 6 - "Did you notice any discomfort during the rehearsals due to the subject matter of the script?"
- D2 Yeah. There was one line "And, oh, what he can make you feel in your head and in bed." which made the whole group lose it.
It's just when you get caught off-guard like that. Working through it helped them come to accept it though there were a few who wouldn't accept it at all. Most of them came to accept homosexuality. We didn't giggle as much.
- PV I didn't see any discomfort.
It might have been there but I didn't see it. I think all the goofing around was typical of rehearsals.
- PM1 A few of the letters bothered me.
I realized how some of the people had actually gotten the disease.
- D1 There didn't seem to be.
They all seemed pretty cool about it.
We didn't talk a lot about it because it didn't seem to present itself.
- PB No because thought they were real people, I didn't know them.
When we first read them over it was tense; later it was more easy-going.
- PY I didn't see a lot of emotion; not as much as I thought I would.
I think for the most part we were a bunch of college kids getting together and practicing.
- PD Sometimes when you were supposed to be a male lover to another character; that was tough.
Easier when you realize it's someone else's letter.
- PK Not really.
- PT No, there was no discomfort.

QUESTION 7 - "How did you get along with other cast members?"

- D2 They all tried; they all did good.
They worked at it.
They didn't have any egos I had to work around.
- PO We got along really well.
I still talk to them when I see them.
There was one who couldn't perform but we all got along.
- PR Some of us really did; we got along very well.
The thing that upset me and the reason some of us didn't get along was due to stress that was never voiced.
A couple of people wanted to run the show.
I told them it was D2's show but it was just a waste of my time.
- PV Good.
D2 was a freshman and some of the older ones took advantage.
It sometimes got out of hand; there was a lot of goofing off.
- PM1 I felt I got along pretty well.
They were all pretty friendly.
- PS Great.
- D1 For me it was hard and frustrating.
I realized I could work with lots of different people.
They were volunteers so I didn't get to cast them.
- PB Great.
I think we all did a decent job.
We worked pretty good; it was pretty easy.
- PY I liked them all.
We got along pretty well.
I don't think we had any problems.
- PD Really well; better towards the end.
We all got to know each other.

QUESTION 7 (continued)

PK Yeah, I got along with the other cast members.

PT We got along pretty well.
I still talk to a lot of people in the group.

QUESTION 8 (Directors) - "How well do you think the performers responded to your direction?"

D2 I don't think the goofing off was an escape from the literature.

When I had the first rehearsals I kept them strict and serious; they got bored.

They started finding other ways to amuse themselves.

Since they were all volunteers I eased up on them.

It's when you get to the last few rehearsals that you crack down.

D1 As well as could be expected.

They were pretty easy to direct; pretty pliable.

There was no actor-ego stuff; no challenge to authority or any sort of artistic difference.

My style of directing was different due to time constraints.

Instead of asking them what the motivation should be I simply had to tell them what I wanted it to be.

Humor is part of my style but sometimes it got out of control.

Laughter was perhaps a tension release.

It's important to have a little rapport thing with your people.

QUESTION 8 (Performers) - "What are your impressions of the way your director directed your group?"

- PO He has a good way of working.
I like how his mind is always working; he's always onto six different thoughts at the same time. His mind is always clicking on to new ideas which is good. Sometimes he loses control in that.
He's a really good director.
He seems to come in with good ideas of what essentially he's looking for but he wouldn't set his mind to one direction right away.
- PR He gets really into it; I think he does a pretty good job.
He has a lot of neat ideas.
I liked his manner because there were a couple of people that just were not speakers. I think he did his best to try and get them to speak.
When he told us what we needed to add he didn't degrade us.
He was supportive and complimented people when they did well. And that always makes you feel good.
- PV He did good; he knew what he wanted.
And he stuck by his ideas but he was open to suggestions.
He listened to other people's ideas.
- PM1 I think he did need guidance for the actual bringing together of the project.
I think he handled everything pretty well.
- PS He wasn't all that authoritative.
At first he came across as "We're going to get this done." but then he slacked off.
A lot of us practiced on our own.
- PB He's got a lot of good ideas.
I thought he was unorganized.
For how many times we practiced we really didn't get that much accomplished.
It was really that last week we started to put things together and we'd been working at it a long time.
- PY For the most part he did a good job.
He organized things so it didn't get boring.
There were times when he made me angry. He would get

QUESTION 8 (Performers continued)

- PY mad at PD for not showing up on time. PD had a lot of things going on and I don't think it was always PD's fault.
- PY D1 didn't show up for one rehearsal and that was what he was preaching at us not to do.
- PD Sort of disorganized; very disorganized.
Too technical for some of the performers.
He kept changing his mind and changing things as we went along. It confused a lot of us and then he'd get upset when we were doing it wrong.
He'd never have what he planned to do ready.
- PK I think he had a lot of energy and a lot of good ideas. I thought he was a little unorganized; but I think he's good.
He likes to work with people.
He's overall great.
- PT I think he did pretty good.
He knew what he wanted.
He had to stop to explain some of the terms to me.
He did a pretty good job.

QUESTION 9 - "What were your reactions to the quilt display?"

- D2 It was huge!
You just stand there.
I just couldn't think.
It was interesting.
- PO I was trying to prepare myself for it but I got there
and it was really amazing.
I looked around and was just in complete awe.
- PR It was sad; really sad.
Arrived late and was more worried about where to go so
when I first saw it it didn't even really hit me.
- PV It was overwhelming.
It was huge, huge.
But it was neat.
- PM1 It brought together what it stands for; the whole
picture of AIDS and how many people it's hurt.
I don't know what I was expecting but I had to see it
to fully understand.
- PS It was pretty interesting.
I was curious to see it.
After awhile it really got to me.
- D1 I was impressed with it.
The thing that struck me most was when they pulled it
in the air and it poofed up like a balloon and
came down. It was just so fluid and beautiful.
The irony; such a beautiful thing for such an ugly
disease.
It was sad.
It would be nice to have a mother's quilt; my mother
died of cancer last year.
You don't really have to know anyone with AIDS to
appreciate this and be touched by The Names
Project.
Those are people who have died from a disease that is
killing the innocent and the guilty.
I was certainly moved.
- PB It was really weird.
It just felt strange knowing each one was a person.
It was like walking in a cemetery except it was more

QUESTION 9 (continued)

- PB personalized.
It was sad.
- PY It was more than sad.
It was more emotional than the practices because you
saw more of the people involved.
- PD Very emotional; seeing everyone else being emotional.
Just the sight of the unwrapping was just amazing.
You realize every one of those quilts was for someone
 who died.
I can't explain the feelings to see it.
- PK It made it all more real; the fact that that many
people had died of AIDS.
- PT They kept unfolding and unfolding and I thought it was
 never going to end.

QUESTION 10 - "How did it feel to actually walk among the panels?"

D2 Seeing older people crying over it really affected me. It made me feel like what I'm doing would be right. That's what made me feel good. What I thought a lot of the time when I was looking at it was "Who in there has AIDS?"

PO The emotions are just soaring. The one panel which really hit home to me would have to be the signature panel. Each of the panels has its own story but unless you've studied the panel or read the book (Cindy Ruskin's) its hard to know what the panel really means. The signature panel has it all right there. Someone had written really big in the middle "We didn't start the fire" which really hit home with me. People signing their names and "We miss you" and "We love you." Somebody signed "Be more open and accepting" and things like that. It just made you step back and just really think about what's going on in society and how tragic AIDS is.

PR We walked around and looked at some of it and it still never really hit me. And then after that I never really took the time to walk around. So I can't say I probably got what a lot of people did. I didn't see anybody walking around crying like they said you would. I think that probably more than anything would have hit me. Because that would have made me look at the quilt more. I think had I known someone or recognized the name or something it would have hit me more. I think what did hit me was seeing the family of the guy who wrote D2's monologue. That's why we're all here. For families like that.

PV There were a lot of people there that were emotional. It made it more real.

PS Seeing the reactions of other people really got to me.

D1 Heaviness in the air. Some people were really touched by this and others were shocked. It was hard to walk by people who obviously had known

QUESTION 10 (continued)

- D1 someone and were crying. You practiced civil inattention.
You felt like you were intruding on people's grief. That was interesting; it was public grief but you didn't want to intrude.
It was interesting for the group to find panels we were reading about and see them in color.
I wonder if it affected performance? I think maybe to a certain extent it did, made it concrete what was really going on.
- PB It was like you were watching a movie or something; like you're not really there.
It was weird because there were so many panels. Seeing there were women and babies...it was astonishing.
There was one panel I stood by and this man was crying really bad. I felt sorry for him that he had to go through this.
It was really weird because I don't know anyone with AIDS or who had died of AIDS.
- PY I got really emotional when I saw the kids' pictures and when I saw other people crying.
It brought it home to think some people were probably directly linked to somebody in the quilt.
It was interesting to see what people could come up with and to see what type of people are involved.
A lot of doctors had died because of patients and stuff like that. That made me sad.
- PD I felt I couldn't relate to what other people were feeling because I had never gone through anything like that.
I knew it must have been bad. I know I wouldn't want to have to go through it.
Cleve Jones said that all of us would go through someone dying of AIDS at one point or another in our lifetime.
I don't think I'd be ready for it.
But Cleve said it's growing, keeps growing so I s'pose...
- PK What affected me most was seeing the people that came to watch the quilt; seeing their emotions.

QUESTION 10 (continued)

- PK Seeing the reactions of people who brought panels to be
 added to the quilt.
 I had to see it to fully understand.
- PT I looked at everybody and you could tell who had family
 there or was personally affected by AIDS.
 I felt relieved that I didn't know anyone and yet I
 felt sad.
 I just kept walking around looking.

QUESTION 11 - "Was it any different the second day?"

D2 Yeah, the second day was different. I wasn't with my group as much.

PO I knew what the set-up was but I saw so much more the second day.

The same feelings were there.

I saw more panels and it was like looking at a completely different quilt. I saw things I didn't see before. Little intricate details in each panel.

It almost brought on more emotions the second day.

The first day you are almost in shock and the second you can really absorb all the feelings and emotions that are going on.

PM1 Yeah it was.

It still kind of bothered me being there.

The quilt still seemed uncanny to me.

It was still impressive.

PS We didn't really get to look at it the first day and the second day we got to see more of the display.

D1 There wasn't the build up that there had been before. We didn't spend the time looking at the quilt that we did before.

PB The second day I don't think we looked as much; I didn't.

Being there for an hour before we went on was enough.

I didn't want to go back though.

It was kind of eerie to go back.

PY It was kind of routine the second day.

I was just going back and looking at things I wanted to see again.

PD It was easier.

The first day was almost like walking through a graveyard but the second day was like "It's all right; it's okay."

The group went their own ways.

The first day I went through slow and read everything.

The second day I felt I had seen everything.

PK I wasn't as shocked.

QUESTION 11 (continued)

- PK I didn't have any emotions the second day whereas the first day I almost wanted to start crying because other people were crying. I wanted to start crying really bad the first day but the second day I expected it. I was more controlled.
- PT I went back to look at the ones I thought were special. It wasn't quite as touching as the first day. I went back and looked at the ones we read about. I didn't look at all of them. It wasn't as astonishing.

QUESTION 12 - "How did the actual performances go?"

- D2 They did good. The first day I wanted to be right there; in case anything went wrong I could fix it. The second day I felt more comfortable with leaving them on their own; letting them perform what we had rehearsed.
- PO They went really well. The second day we cut a lot. We went from 18 monologues to 8 because the timeframe the second day was much tighter. The first day a little older lady came up and gave me this big hug. She told me it was beautiful and she loved it. My emotions were flying. I thought "Wow, we really touched people." The first day we used the idea of taking the monologues from the top of a symbol of the quilt as if we were reading them straight from the quilt. The second day we walked out and said our monologues and sat down on the symbolic quilt as if we were becoming the panels. I liked that even more. It hit home more with me and I think with the audiences as well.
- PR I think our's went really well; it flowed very smooth. We were prepared and knew what was going on. If someone started to go wrong someone fixed it before anything happened. It seemed like the other group's went well too. We don't know what they were supposed to be like but from what I saw it went okay. I can't say I liked theirs as well as ours but of course I'm biased.
- PV It was good; it went well. I didn't have any nerves. I think we did good.
- PM1 I don't feel I did as well as I could have. My vocal delivery was soft and I don't speak well in front of crowds. I feel that everyone else did a good job. I attempted to do well; I tried my best but I'm just not good at speaking.
- PS They went pretty good. I think the second day went

QUESTION 12 (continued)

- PS better than the first day even though we did some last minute changes because of time. It came off better.
- D1 I didn't think they were that good; part of that was there wasn't time to be that good.
It didn't stink but it wasn't terribly wonderful.
- PB I was really nervous the first time because I didn't want to screw up.
I think we did pretty good.
The second time seemed to go fast; I wasn't nervous at all.
Actually I had some place else to be so I was anxious to get out of there.
- PY The first day went really well.
The second day was a little slower.
I did worse the second day. I stuttered, forgot my first line and couldn't find my place.
The second day I was nervous.
Overall I think it went pretty well.
We didn't have any major problems.
- PD It went pretty well; we all felt good about it.
A lot of us felt stupid doing it because it felt like a dumb little skit. But we did enjoy doing it.
And we felt like we were competing with the other group; I hated that.
The other group would keep coming over and saying, "I hear you guys aren't very good" or something like that and saying "Yeah, we're going really good."
We didn't say anything. We Just did the best we could.
- PK Oh, good.
Everyone was nervous but it really went great.
We worked together really well.
I was more relaxed the second day.
- PT I was very nervous and I was shaking.
At one point my knee was shaking so hard that D1 just grabbed my knee to make it stop. The whole quilt had been shaking.

QUESTION 13 - "How do you think the audiences responded to your performances?"

D2 The first day we didn't perform until 6:00 so the audience that was there had seem similar performances during the day.

I think we made them think.

We made the dead people in the biographies live.

It affected them to think that this person had been alive.

PO I could watch people in the audience as I was doing my monologue. I could see their faces totally intent on listening to what we were saying and trying to feel what we were trying to make them feel.

It was just amazing.

I've heard a lot of comments.

They seemed really receptive and got what we were trying to portray.

PR We had a good crowd for what was expected. In comedy you can judge your audience by how much they laugh. Something like this is real quiet so you never really know.

This is a gut feeling but I think they took it well.

I think they responded well.

My mother was uncomfortable but said our performance went well. But then her next immediate question was "Well, how many of those letters did you guys have that weren't from gay people?" Being from a small town that was her main thing.

It totally went passed my mother but she was an unusual circumstance. My parents came to see me where everyone else came to see the quilt.

PM1 I think we did a pretty good job of the performances. I don't think the acoustics were very good.

PS I didn't really notice the audience too much.

D1 They were received far better than I thought they would be.

People were real excited about it and they felt it went well.

PB I think they enjoyed it.

I don't think there was anybody in the audience that knew anybody we were talking about like the other

QUESTION 13 (continued)

PB group had. That would have been weird.

PY They were well tuned in.
It seemed like they were really interested in what we
 had to say.
They were happy we got up there and said what we had to
 say.

PD I got a lot of good feedback.
I was in Des Moines a while ago and a man came up and
 said he had seen one of our performances and was
 touched by it. He was dying of AIDS and was
 really moved by our performance.
That made me feel good.
It wasn't as stupid as I had thought.
They could understand about this because they thought
 we did.

PK I didn't really see the audiences.
I think they respected what we were doing and no one
 was offended.
They saw what we were doing as positive.

PT I'd like to think we made them think.
A lot of people were already affected by AIDS so maybe
 it was an emotional release.
I hope at least a few were touched.

QUESTION 14 - "Do you have any final impressions of the experience?"

- D2 I liked directing it; I liked getting the experiences. Different type of rehearsals. Overall, I felt it went really good; especially the last night.
- PO I come from a town that's not really small but I've never been exposed to anything like this before. I don't think this could have been pulled off there; the town's too conservative. I was never exposed to the actual spread of AIDS. This opened my eyes, especially the homosexual aspect. I can discuss it now. I find it more comfortable to talk about AIDS. I'm not scared to be with someone who has AIDS now where before I had reservations about it.
- PR It was kind of funny that our practices were late at night. It was neat how we worked together as far as setting practices up. Usually that's hard with an RA in the group.
- PV Because D2 was a Freshman the rehearsals got out of hand at times. Everybody tries to take charge unless there's an adult there that they'd listen to.
- PM1 It opened my eyes to what AIDS means. It's given me a less shallow opinion of homosexuals. I know now that it's not just a homosexual disease. It was a good experience. Everyone needs something like that to teach them about AIDS.
- PS I'm glad I did it. I was really impressed. I knew it was a big deal when I saw the license plates on all the cars in the parking lot. I bought a sweatshirt and some people asked me how I could wear something with AIDS written on it but I was glad to be a part of it. I'm glad I can talk about and share the experience with other people; people in my classes. There didn't seem to be competition over the letters. Everyone just did the ones they were given.

QUESTION 14 (continued)

- PB I'm glad I could be a part of it; it made me feel good. It was worthwhile and needed to be discussed. It made the audience aware that there are caring people out there.
- PY It was a good experience to get involved in something that is a worldwide problem and a national thing. I really enjoyed it. Brought it close to home here in Iowa. When I think of the problem of AIDS I think of it as being "Not here."
- PD I'm glad it's over. I'm glad I was a part of this big monument; something as big as that; it travels around the world. I'm thankful I got to be a small part of it.
- PK I'm glad it did it. It gave me insight; what happens with the emotions. Before I had no knowledge of AIDS. This way I got to learn more about it. I'd never volunteered for anything like that before. It gave me performance experience. It was hard. It was fun working with the group. It was a great experience.
- PT D1 had us memorize a lot of letters and after we had, told us they didn't have to be memorized after all. We were mad at first but it was good to have them memorized. We probably performed better because we knew them.

SPECIAL QUESTION TO D2 - "What was it like performing 'Brian's Letter' with his family in the audience?"

D2 The first time I was up there I was shaking; I could feel my knees shaking. I had worn big pants because I knew they'd do that. If I lock my knees the blood will rush away from the brain and I will get real lightheaded. So my knees started shaking and I got real nervous. I looked across the audience. I tried to pick people out and talk to them. And then when I was Brian's family my nerves just shot up in the sky and I just kinda concentrated on my lines and got that down.

The second time I felt more comfortable. After the first performance his mother came up to me and congratulated me on a good job. The second time when I saw her out there I felt a lot more relaxed. I could focus on the audience.

SPECIAL QUESTION TO D2 AND PO - "Can you comment upon the apparent antagonism between the two of you during the rehearsals?"

D2 You always get people who want to do something different because they think it will work better. I let them say it. I listen to the ideas but I usually gloss right over it. I didn't find PO really obnoxious or annoying. A lot of times I didn't find his ideas to correspond with what I say in the piece.

PO We come from different theatrical backgrounds. He seems more into directing and my main emphasis is acting but I've done directing. I liked working with him in that I could challenge him on what I thought about the piece. He listened; was open. Sometimes you could persuade him if you thought your way was better or he could persuade you if he thought his way was better. I got told by a lot of people in the group "He's the director." That doesn't mean you can't give him your ideas. Directors are open people, or they should be. At the end of each performance he and I would go walking and talking b.s. about what happened in the day.

SPECIAL QUESTION TO PR - "How did the researcher's presence affect you?"

PR At first it didn't at all, not at all. And then that one day downstairs in the lounge when there was a comment made about PM1 moving her leg or something when she talks.

And then, every once in a while I'd think, "So, what weird things am I doing now?" And I'd step out of myself and look at myself.

And I remember the one practice down in the lounge. I was laying like this (demonstrating) and doing my part and I thought "I'll bet this is comical in her paper."

I caught myself every once in a while thinking "Am I doing anything out of the norm?" It was kinda fun because I made me stop and think about myself and how I was acting and what I was doing.

And then other times I felt like your partner. Then for a while I'd sit back and I'd be watching other people thinking, "Okay, I'm not trained at this 'cause I probably would have never noticed PM1's leg moving but look at the attitudes here."

The last day there it was kind of funny because we were just giving you a bunch of crap.

It didn't bother me. I always think if somebody's watching me and is taking notes maybe I'll see the end result and they'll know something that when I read it I'll say, "God, I'd **hate** somebody that did that!" And then I realize it's me they're talking about and that's how I change. Just by watching people and then watching myself.

And so stuff like this doesn't bother me at all.

SPECIAL QUESTION TO D1 - "What was it like to read names at the display?"

D1 I didn't want to goof up their names.
It was an important occasion and I had some hard names.
I think it adds to the overall feel of the display.
It was very weird reading names of dead people.