

**Considering Rhythms of Emotional Proximity:
An Alternative Approach to Directing Theatre in a Violent
Society**

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If our imaginations can lead us to profound, performative empathy, I believe ever more strongly that the space of performance must be harnessed to imagine love instead of hatred, to create hopeful fictions of meaningful lives instead of senseless deaths.

(Dolan in Bharucha, 2014:63)

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Abstract

This inquiry is concerned with realistic representations of violence on stage within a South African context. Inside this broad frame I focus on why this directorial approach is a problem and I propose a possible solution in a directorial intervention with *mise-en-scène*, which attempts to regulate the audience's emotional immersion and distance through theatre apparatus. This notion is supported both by Psychological research into the problem of violence in South Africa, and by Theatre and Performance studies, with author Lilie Chouliaraki (2013) arguing for the “in-between” of theatre as a means to approaching violence. Conceptually, I propose working with theatre apparatus in a spatial triad, which is located within Peter Brook's ideas around an “empty space”, the post-Brechtian according to David Bennett, which is concerned with both distance and emotional immersion, and the spatial trialectics of Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja, who argue for the insertion of a “thirdspace” in order to counter the limited workings of binaries. This conceptual frame translates into praxis in the form of theatre apparatus such as interruption and disruption of the narrative, working with metaphor and gesture, “playing” with time, duration and repetition and working towards moments of extreme intensity before a pause is inserted into the action. I propose these apparatus as the findings of a series of Practice as Research projects which formed part of this study, and as the tools for my final Thesis Production. This project will take place in November, 2015 in the form of an adaptation of a novel, where my objective will be to create a rhythm of emotional audience involvement. My aim is to test whether the apparatus I have discovered in this study are able to regulate the emotional proximity of the audience to the violence on stage, hopefully providing an alternative approach to working with violence in an already violent society.

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Introduction

This is a study about the “in-between” of theatre, an “in-between” that is consciously inserted into live performance when working with violence on stage. For Lilie Chouliaraki “it is this in-between that connects us imaginatively with a distant world that is not and should not be reduced to the world we comfortably inhabit” (2013:205). For the purpose of this research project, it is a mechanism used to regulate the emotional proximity of audience members to performed violence, and provides them with a pause – an opportunity to reflect on the action without becoming completely disengaged. This paper follows Chouliaraki’s proposition that “we need the in-between of theatre” in order to encourage moral agency in performance, as it is the “in-between” of theatre that

[...] enable[s] us to raise the crucial questions, now almost forgotten, of justification (why is this important?), antagonism (what is right and wrong?), complexity [...] otherness and historicity (what makes these people who they are?) that may turn us from utilitarian altruists to cosmopolitan citizens. Without this agonistic engagement with otherness [...] there are no moral dilemmas to struggle with, no sides to take, no stakes to fight for, no hope to change the conditions of suffering”. (Chouliaraki, 2013: 205)

Chouliaraki uses the term “in-between” and the metaphor of theatre in a humanitarian context and I would like to borrow this term extensively in this paper as it speaks directly to my research question around how to work with violence on stage. The aim of the “in-between” in this paper, is to achieve optimal regulation of emotional proximity and critical distance during performances where suffering is embodied. The idea of incorporating “distance” is based on Bertolt Brecht’s theories around alienation (*verfremdung*) and critical reflection, but differentiates from them through the addition of a consideration for affect (or feeling).

Critical distance – a concept invented by Brecht and used extensively by Applied Theatre Practitioners – is a space between the audience member and the performer’s action, and an acknowledgement of the fictitious nature of what the actor is representing (Fèral, 2011). Essentially, for Josette Fèral, it is a “safe” space which audiences naturally visit during live performance, as the performance oscillates between “immediacy and mediation, between reality and fiction” (51).

The in-between strives to regulate this critical distance within the rhythmical progression of the performance, and is a counter-argument against the complete eradication of such a distance – a growing trend amongst theatre practitioners in South Africa.

The in-between also blurs the lines between entertainment and efficacy¹ (Thompson, 2009) and highlights the importance of taking the audience into consideration when framing violence in the wider context of a play (Nevitt, 2013). This also equates with Brecht's notions of "theatre for pleasure" and "theatre for instruction", which Thompson argues might be useful to consider together as they form an interaction between an effective and affective register in performance (Thompson, 2009: 128). Thompson defines affect as the "emotional, often automatic, embodied responses" that occur upon an observational stimulus, memory recall or a practical activity (119). Josephine Machon's recently invented term "(syn)aesthetics", encompasses this sensate response as well as its aesthetic functions. The term describes the "sensory perceptual experience" of a "sensate approach to artistic practice and analysis" (Machon, 2011:14). Characteristically, a (syn)aesthetic performance style constitutes a multi-modal, interdisciplinary style that produces a visceral response in its audience².

I propose that the performance style of the in-between is (syn)aesthetic and chiefly concerned with empathy, immersion (both related to affect) and critical distance (related to Brecht's notions around alienation) as constituents of the *mise-en-scène*. My proposal for an alternative approach to directing violence thus sits within the discussion between what Josephine Machon calls "(syn)aesthetics" and what James Thompson deems to be "affective". This paper proposes that they work together and in-between the binaries of hope and horror, violence and peace, in order to arrive at the "in-between" as a moment of rest.

Complete immersion, where the audience is extremely close to and wholly taken up with the illusion of reality on stage, strives to prevent any form of distance where the audience might think critically about what is being performed on stage (Fèral, 2011:54).

¹ In Applied Theatre, efficacy is the "success" of a production to effect social change after the performance. This paper uses the term in the same sense, but in the realm of straight theatre and performance.

² This summation of (syn)aesthetics follows from research I had done for my Honours thesis in 2013.

The *temporary* suspension of critical distance can be a useful tool in performance, bringing into the performance space an “uncomfortable interaction” or a feeling of “discomfort”, which may reduce the trivialisation of a serious issue and promote empathy from the audience (Benford et. al., 2012:2006)³. However, the use of uncomfortable interactions bring with them a set of ethical considerations as they might in fact be so emotionally powerful, that they may be damaging (Benford et. al., 2012:2012).

In South Africa, the work of Mpumelelo Paul Grootboom, Aubrey Sekhabe (*Relativity*, 2006; *Foreplay*, 2009), and Wolf Brits (*Bitter*, 2013), stand out for me as work that strives to eradicate critical distance, with a focus on the complete immersion of the audience into the often naturalistic actions of the characters (especially in the case of Grootboom and Sekhabe) as they perform violence and suffering. On the other end of the spectrum, is a body of work that encompasses the characteristics of what I deem to be part of the “in-between”. The work of Lara Foot (*Tshepang*, 2004 and *Karoo Moose*, 2009), Mark Fleishman (*Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking*, 2009), Paul Noko (*Fruit*, 2015) and the play *Oscar and The Pink Lady* (2014) directed by Lara Bye, for example, contain elements of what I suspect the “in-between” is.

These five productions seem to be united by the use of a pause for recovery during scene transitions. In *Tshepang*, it is Ruth’s constant rubbing of the salt, which in its repetitiveness creates moments of critical reflection and empathy. In *Karoo Moose* it is the vivid use of a metaphor for rape through movement⁴, rather than a realistic depiction – a theatrical strategy also used by Jennie Reznek and Faniswa Yisa in *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking*⁵. In *Fruit*, silence and metaphor are key devices in the storytelling of the young girl Matlakala, which create moments of pause and recovery after traumatic events in her story⁶. *Oscar and the Pink Lady* has Sandra Prinsloo simply turn her back to the audience after every scene with a dimming of the lights, as every scene ends with intense details around the little boy’s deterioration⁷.

³ Please note that “2006” is a page number as cited from the article, which was published in 2012.

⁴ In *Karoo Moose*, a rape is for instance physicalized as a soccer game between men.

⁵ In *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking*, abuse by men towards the mother and her daughter are shown in a simple gesture where they mime the walking of men’s shoes over their bodies.

⁶ In *Fruit*, a smashed avocado is used as a metaphor for rape.

⁷ As an audience member, I could feel myself breathing and preparing for the next scene every time Prinsloo turned her back. I found this a useful device for recovery and reflection.

The in-between is a relief, a recovery from discomfort, but it needs a certain amount of discomfort on stage to exist. Discomfort and horror however, should not overshadow the context of the play. For *Foot, Fleishman, Noko and Bye*, creating images of discomfort or violence was not the ultimate goal but “a momentary point on a journey” in the performance (Benford et al., 2012:2011)⁸. I consider this intention of discomfort as a “point on a journey”, one of the key objectives for a director who wants to work with the in-between.

Because theatre is an *embodied* practice, real acts of violence have the power to “hit the audience like a brick” (Fèral, 2011:53), and this shock of the senses can often leave only the violent event in the memory of the viewer. This might contribute to “numbing” or what Lilie Chouliaraki (2013) calls “compassion fatigue”. Fèral argues that the presence of live bodies in space have the potential of showcasing violence “identical to that experienced when faced with the real event” (2011:52). Furthermore, this “engrossment of the gaze” on the spectacle of the enacted violence, “eradicates theatrical distance” due to the performativity of the violence:

Each microsequence of events garners their [the audience’s] complete attention. Thus, they are not in a position of aesthetic distance, judgment or analysis. They themselves are within the process, within the performativity of the action and the movement. [...] Any distance evaporates. They are within the intimacy of each microaction. (Fèral, 2011:56)

I aim to address this problem of complete immersion – which for the purpose of this paper is synonymous with an extreme level of discomfort – through the consideration of the negative effects of performed violence on the audience in a South African context. In this dissertation, my main concern is how to direct violence in theatre, and how to more actively consider regulating rhythms of emotional proximity for the benefit of an audience who come from an already violent society, where they are familiar with the “vocabulary” of violence (Homann, 2009).

⁸ Please note once again that “2011” here is a page number as cited in the article which was published in 2012.

I propose that, while the performance of acts of violence on South African stages may raise awareness around socio-political issues, their realistic nature, “negative” imagery and tendency to overshadow the context of the performance, provide South African audiences with no alternative imaginings of reality. I suspect that this contributes to the perpetuation of trauma narratives in an already traumatised and violent society and I consider this directorial approach counter-productive. The thesis of this paper rests upon the assumption that sensationalist practices in theatre – the explicit performances of violence on stage where the image of the violence takes precedence over the context of the play – may be entrenching the insensitivity it is supposed to challenge (Sierz, 2002:22).

For Applied Theatre practitioner, James Thompson, theatre instead presents opportunities where possibilities of a better life can be imagined (2009:128). Similarly, academic and director, Lucy Nevitt, posits that:

Under [violent] circumstances it is perhaps unsurprising that theatre offers opportunities to imagine a non-violent life, to escape from the realities of danger, horror and terror into playful and imaginative explorations of fun, hope and beauty, and we should not lose track of the value of these aspects of performance. (2013:73)

Theatre offers opportunities to re-imagine ways of being in the real world because it is a “communicative structure” (Chouliaraki, 2013). The term “theatricality” in itself refers to this “communicative structure” which distances the audience from the spectacle of violence in the performance through the objective space of the stage. Simultaneously, it enables a proximity between the audience and the spectacle through devices that “invite our empathetic judgement” towards the action taking place (22).

The in-between of theatre aims to regulate this space by finding devices that will achieve this multi-modal and interdisciplinary practice of regulating emotional proximity. I propose in this paper, through the use of certain theatre apparatus, that the regulation of emotional proximity is a rhythmical approach to directing: paying attention to variations of distance (both emotional and physical), to pace and tempo (physically, vocally, dramatically), the use of space, and to the overall “musicality” of the piece.

I use the term “apparatus” in this paper, following Jill Dolan’s use of the term where she aligns it with all the practical constituents that make theatre representational (Dolan, 1991). Apparatus is a “representational strategy”, one that “disrupts”, “denaturalizes” and “demystifies” (Dolan in Stopford, 2013:41). In her context she uses the term as a means to confront and challenge the “male-gaze”. However, in the context of my research into alternative ways of working with violence on stage, I find her use of the term and her approach to “apparatus based theory and practice” (41), apart from feminist theory, extremely useful and relevant to my own approach to directing violence.

A theatre apparatus is thus a theatrical device used in the *mise-en-scène* to achieve certain desired effects or, in the case of this research project, affects. Because this research project is concerned with representations of violence in performance, I find the term “apparatus” suitable in its ability to refer indirectly to the directorial tools, structures and methods used to make theatre, as well as to the spaces within which it is used.

A Brief Methodological Outline

I have not included in this paper a separate chapter for a discussion around the methodology of this research project. Rather, I would like to include a brief discussion here for two reasons: the research project followed a simple trajectory of Practice as Research and the methodology that accompanied each practical project is discussed in detail in each project chapter. Practice as Research or PaR, can be defined as that project which:

[...] is a process of creative evolution. It is not progressivist building towards a finality; nor is it mechanistic in the sense that it knows what it is searching for before it begins searching. It begins with energy (an impulse, an idea, an intuition, a hunch) that is then channelled, durationally, through repetition, in variable and indeterminable directions; a series of unexpected and often accidental explosions which in turn lead to further explosions. (Fleishman, 2012:37)

I started this study with a hunch about the detrimental affects of explicit representations of violence on stage and wanted to find an alternative approach to directing scenes where violence and suffering have to be presented. I therefore chose material – both theoretical and practical – in which I could propose a different aesthetic: an alternative to showing mere violence with a consideration for the insertion of an aesthetic of hope. I found in my practice however, that I was in fact exploring the problem ineffectively. My Medium Project, *Whale Nation* was considered “too beautiful” and lacked sufficient impact to actively engage my audience. I discovered that a heightened intensity of the violence was required if I wanted to make an affective impact on my audience – a discovery which opposed my earlier hunches that violence should simply not be engaged with.

The method of this research thus clearly exemplified Fleishman’s idea of intermittent and accidental “explosions”: findings that open up more questions. Fortunately, each piece of praxis yielded important insights on my route to understanding the nature of the problem of representing violence in theatre, and helped open up ways of thinking about possible solutions.

From the praxis of *Whale Nation*, I understood that a space between absolute immersion in the violence on stage and a critical distance in order to process it, would be my next phase of exploration. The pattern of short bursts of insight through praxis thus continued through to my next project, a One-Person Show entitled *In-Between*.

I had ironically titled the piece *In-Between* because as a solo piece, I was exploring some very painful aspects of my biography: my feelings of not belonging, of being neither here nor there, of literally being “in-between”. The correlation between my own state of being represented on stage and the title of this thesis was made only after the project was concluded. Thinking, conceptualizing and doing were thus entirely methodologically interlaced. For my practical projects, I was chiefly engaged with my own organic way of working – which used movement, spoken text and music in varying degrees in each project.

I have been influenced by Anne Bogart, Bertolt Brecht, Konstantin Stanislavsky and Jerzy Grotowski, as well as choreographers Jiří Kylián, Nacho Duato, Paul Lightfoot and Sol León – all of whose techniques I use intuitively and randomly (and recently more theoretically) in order to explore and find a personal style of representation.

The methodology of this study, in summation, has thus been to start with a hunch around the negative affects of representations of violence, developing and nuancing this hunch through reading and practical projects (*Whale Nation* and *In-Between*), solidifying my theory and thinking around the problem as well as possible solutions in this dissertation, and finally, testing out my findings in a thesis production.

This minor dissertation is thus a proposal for a thesis, my final project: an adaptation of Engemi Ferreira's first novel, *Die Jaar toe My Ma Begin Sing Het* (1988), which will be testing my theory in this paper through praxis. I will discuss my approaches to this thesis production in detail in the final chapter of this paper.

Rationale

In order to support my hunch that unmitigated representations of violence on stage are counter-productive to well-being in the South African context, I recruit the research findings of Thompson (2009), Bushman & Anderson (2009), Kaminer & Eagle (2010), Schellekens & Goldie (2010), Seedat et al. (2014), Riddle (2014) and Chouliaraki (2014). It is important to note that the work of especially Thompson and Chouliaraki are carried forward in this paper as they deal directly with empathy, immersion, critical reflection and affect.

James Thompson posits that “being ‘at peace’ might seem a passive state to some” but “being alive and feeling safe are a radical starting point for many” (2009:127). A director’s intention with showcasing realistically enacted violence might be to raise awareness around issues of gender violence, poverty or political strife (or to merely shock an audience by pushing the boundaries of what is deemed acceptable to “show”). I have however observed audience members becoming fatigued by the constant bombardment of negative imagery that provide them only with graphic representations of truths they already know and are faced with outside of the theatrical, fictional frame.

In 2010, psychologists Debra Kaminer and Gillian Eagle, noted in a national survey on exposure to traumatic events, that 75% of participants had been traumatised in some way through the experience of violence, death or threats to their personal safety, and that over half of them experienced multiple traumas (Kaminer & Eagle, 2010:8). They write that it is apparent that “very few South Africans live lives completely untouched by trauma” and that exposure to “potentially traumatic experiences” is for many, “an inescapable part of daily life” (8-9). Furthermore, inter-personal violence was found to be the greatest contributor to statistics of violence in South Africa, with violence against women and children being particularly brutal compared to countries with similar high levels of interpersonal violence (26). Cited causes of this violence are numerous, ranging from inherited violent behaviour from apartheid, to poverty, cultural ideas around gender superiority, gang violence, sexual depravity and childhood trauma manifesting in adulthood (48-49).

These causes seem to be prevalent throughout poverty-stricken communities, middle-class neighbourhoods and upper-class societies, in varying degrees, due to the prevalence of violence in every aspect of South African life.

Kaminer and Eagle assert that continuous and regular exposure to potential violence and trauma in real life, leads to the majority of South Africans not benefiting from the much needed “post-trauma period” in which to “process, or attempt to adapt to, their recent trauma experiences, before the next traumatic experience (whether it is direct or indirect) occurs” (48-49). Many South Africans thus suffer unknowingly from a form of post-traumatic stress disorder, and this manifests in many different ways – either through constant struggles with anxiety, a heightened awareness of personal safety or a struggle with feelings of hopelessness and depression. Being reminded of a trauma in a “safe” space like a theatre for instance, thus also shortens or halts the recovery from real trauma, and has the potential to send audience members back into society more damaged than when they entered the performance space. During a recent conversation with a friend who lost her husband during the terrorist attacks on Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya in 2013, she expressed her outrage at the realistic violence enacted on stage at a performance she had gone to see a few weeks before. The violence reminded her of the trauma she and her family had gone through when they found out about the terrorist attacks, and the subsequent news that they had lost a husband and a father. She stated that she could not bring herself to understand the purpose of explicit violence on stage in a country and continent so rife with suffering and violence.

Postgraduate student at the University of Cape Town’s Drama Department, Frankie Nassimbeni, recalled during an informal postgraduate Readings-session, how a woman was re-traumatized during a performance where men came into the theatre with life-like rifles, enacting a heist. She had to be removed from the theatre because a panic attack ensued. This same woman was still recovering from a hijacking which she had survived just months before she attended this production.

These anecdotes are but two of many, and highlight for me that an overt focus on the spectacle or the performativity of the violence enacted on stage, presents a major problem for theatre practice in South Africa.

I suspect that realistic images of violence cause inertia and what Jessie Prinz calls “low positive affect”⁹ (Prinz in Schellekens & Goldie, 2011:73). The realistic use of violence in performance also raises questions around the causes of what Lilie Chouliaraki calls “compassion fatigue”. “Compassion fatigue” is caused by the constant bombardment of “negative” imagery – imagery that portray the suffering of vulnerable others – and either causes a “bystander” or “boomerang effect”.

The “bystander” effect leaves people feeling that the problem showcased is too big and that there is nothing they can do, rendering the situation hopeless and therefore people feel that they cannot bear to think about it. The “boomerang” effect, which “guilt-trips” the viewer into feeling miserable and guilty about the situation portrayed, causes people to feel indignation towards the image and those who tell the story. These effects of “negative” imagery undermine rather than encourage moral agency (Chouliaraki, 2013:60-61). Moral agency seems a necessity in South Africa if we are to see any change in the status quo (Seedat et al., 2014). Chouliaraki proposes that the “in-between” of theatre counters negative imagery, a concept which will be discussed in more detail in the final chapter when I discuss the apparatus of the “in-between”.

By focusing on the spectacle of performed violence, the director is effectively destroying any chance for the audience to safely and actively engage with what is being presented. Theatre, much like audio-visual and social media, can have an adverse effect on its audience if the performance space and the emotional proximity of the audience to the violence is not considered by the director. I am proposing an intention on the part of the director to try and regulate the emotional proximity of the audience to violence in order to counter possible negative affects.

In a scientific study by Brad Bushman and Craig Anderson, research showed that violent media causes the viewer to become desensitized to suffering, which in turn influences the response-time in which help is offered to those in danger or in discomfort (Bushman & Anderson, 2009:276). They state that “people exposed to media violence become ‘comfortably numb’ to the pain and suffering of others and are consequently less helpful” or less likely to become involved with the problem (277).

⁹ Feelings of hopelessness and depression.

In another study by Karyn Riddle, vivid details of graphic violence in the media were found to detract from the overall message or context of the story, and seems to lower the viewer's ability to "process" what has been seen. This limits the possibility that the viewer's attitude might be changed on the violence viewed (Riddle, 2014:295).

Research shows that long-term exposure to violent media¹⁰ can cause serious desensitization, leading to "blunt emotions" and the lessening of "cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses to violent stimuli" (305). Because theatre is an embodied practice, I suspect that the negative effects of viewing violence on stage might be similar or even worse, especially if the violence is enacted hyper-realistically.

Spectacle and the proliferation of violent images in the media and on stage, Chouliaraki asserts, "deprive suffering of its moral agency" and finally lead to generalized suspicion around the themes referred to on stage or in worst cases, complete apathy (26-27). This is because, she claims, "reality today is not simply dominated by spectacle but is altogether displaced by it" (38) in a global movement which she calls "post-humanitarianism". The "human" in violence, is often eradicated or forgotten. Very few plays nowadays remind us of the "goodness" and "responsibility" of humanity to care for its own.

The in-between is thus not only a momentary pause in performance, but also an attempt to encourage moral agency among South African directors and audience members alike, firstly because of theatre's ability to inspire change, and secondly because change is so necessary in a country plagued with violence.

¹⁰ In many of the studies mentioned here, research was done on volunteers who either played violent video games before assessment or watched violent films with highly graphic content.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

This chapter outlines the conceptual framework to my question around how to direct violence on stage. I investigate and provide a conceptual grounding for the term “in-between” by reviewing selected writing by Peter Brook (*The Empty Space*, 1968 and *The Open Door*, 1993), Henri Lefebvre (*The Production of Space*, 1991) and Edward Soja (*Thirdspace*, 1996) that deal directly with the idea of regulating “space”. All three men propose the insertion of a third space between binaries, which speaks directly to my conceptual ideas around what constitutes an “in-between” space in theatre.

Additionally, observations by academic, David Barnett, are included in the conceptual frame as they relate to post-Brechtian devices which seem useful for creating a space between intense representations of violence and rest. I will now briefly discuss how Brook, Lefebvre and Soja’s ideas around “space” have informed my own formulation of the “in-between”. Conceptually, I am working towards the creation of a triad as a model through which to approach the creation of an in-between space.

Peter Brook’s idea of an “empty space”, is one where there is nothing but an open floor, a few actors, a director and their collective imaginations. He suggests a trialectic relationship between the actor, the subject and the director in the rehearsal space, as all that is needed to create work (1968:100).

In performance, this three-way relationship shifts into one that removes the director, but adds the audience as the third party in the triad. The director in both cases, although “absent” in performance, is chiefly responsible for the production and meaningful usage of the rehearsal room and the performance space as spaces of “possibility”. Brook’s theatre practice, as he alludes to in his book *The Empty Space*, seems to be chiefly concerned with the use, the workings and the possibilities of a space that functions at its best in the presence of certain relationships and rhythmical approaches to these relationships that give rise to a form of performance that is not conventional or predictable.

These ideas are closely related to my own hunches around the in-between. The in-between, as I have come to understand it, is concerned with placing a greater emphasis on the safety of the audience as they enter into a relationship with the performance space and the actors. It also plays with moments of silence and duration as Brook likes to do when improvising with his actors (52) – which gives it a rhythm.

The in-between also aims to balance the affective experience of the real versus the imagined by regulating the emotional proximity of the audience to the action. Lilie Chouliaraki asserts that:

It is [...] the power of the theatre to imaginatively engage us with someone else's position that renders imagination a pedagogical catalyst in the theatrical experience. Indeed, ever since Aristotle's conception of tragedy as imitating an 'important and finite act' that inspires pity and fear [...], imagination is seen to rely on the capacity of image and language to represent suffering as a cause of sympathetic identification that may lead to action. (2013:44)

There are thus still binaries at play, but the in-between acts as a mediator, rhythmically regulating the emotional proximity of the audience as the performance moves through its paces.

Brook's empty space is also an opening up of time in performance, where the rhythm of the performance is regulated in order to accommodate possible emotional experiences. Time, when working in a space of possibility, can change abruptly and usurp any expected conventional experiences. James Thompson echoes this notion when he states that "affects linger, stretching performance across time and space, in a way that ephemerality seems to miss" (2009:158). My idea of the in-between space, much like Brook's empty space, is that it is a tool in theatre practice which can be loaded with immense possibility for the creation of meaning as the audience is rhythmically and affectively transported from scene to scene during the performance.

For Brook there are two approaches to working with time in theatre. He first asserts that "[o]ne is not bound by a unity of place, a unity of time, when the emphasis is on human relationships" (1993:34). For this emphasis to ring true apart from real life outside of the theatre, Brook proposes "a compression of time that is inseparable from an intensification of energy" (35).

This compression of time, and an emphasis on the relationships between the characters on stage and the audience, is what creates – according to Brook – a strong link with the audience: it raises the stakes and therefore also the energy in the room. I seek for the in-between as a conceptual whole such an intensity and link with the audience *before* a space for recovery is created. I want the audience to experience strongly, but it is not a guarantee, and therefore my practice is now concerned with aiming to work towards that goal. A linear time-line is not useful to the in-between; time needs to be condensed, jumbled up and interrupted in order for the audience to maintain their interest in the action on stage, and for moments of intensity to have their own “rise and fall”.

This brings me to Brook’s second approach to working with time in the empty space. His focus is on “the moment” of deep meaning in performance. For the in-between, this moment is the exact instance that a space is created for recovery after a moment of intensity in the performance, the “Kairos”¹¹. Brook explains it as a rhythmical flow with its own rising and falling curves:

To reach a moment of deep meaning, we need a chain of moments which start on a simple, natural level, lead us towards intensity, then carry us away again. Time, which is so often an enemy in life, can also become our ally if we see how a pale moment can lead to a glowing moment, and then in turn to a moment of perfect transparency, before dropping again to a moment of everyday simplicity. (1993:100-101)

This moment of deep meaning is not just a moment of recovery when I consider the in-between; it is a moment of a certain “quality” (101) – a moment where the proverbial emotional button is pushed in the audience. As a director, I cannot predict when this will happen, but I can work towards such an event with the hope that the moment I create is pregnant enough with meaning so that an empathic response is encouraged.

For Brook, this affective, empathic response is the result of “the locale, the social and political climate” and “the prevailing thought and culture” exhibited in the performance and in the performance space (1993:61). Thompson similarly suggests that “a focus on affect insists that the lines between efficacy and entertainment is impossible to draw” (2009:130) and can thus not be separated from the social, lived space of the audience.

¹¹ Kairos is the Greek term for “the opportune” or “perfect” moment in time.

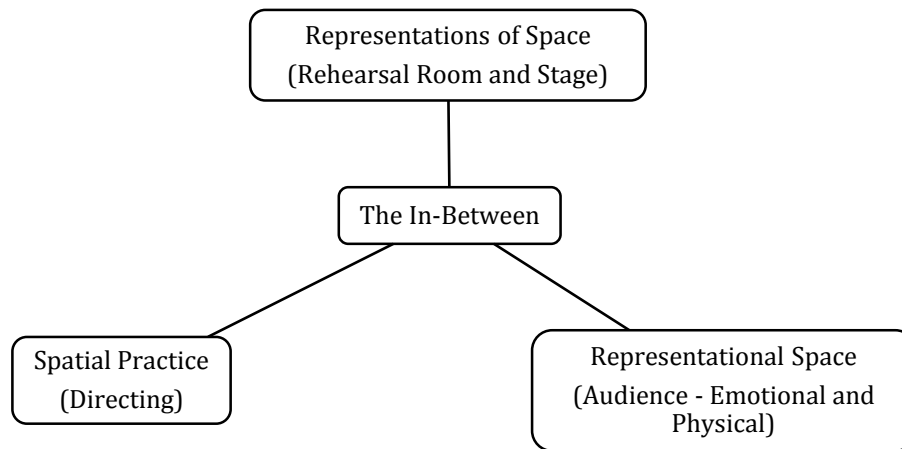
Building on this foundation of Peter Brook's three-way relational model in the empty space and keeping in mind the importance of "affect", is Henri Lefebvre's invention of the spatial triad with a trialectical relationship between what he calls "Spatial Practice", "Representations of Space", and "Representational Space", and Edward Soja's invention of what he calls "Thirdspace".

Lefebvre invented the ontological concept of the spatial triad in order to move away from the restrictions of working with binaries, and likens the production of space to a musical composition: the spatial triad serves multiple purposes (like a musical symphony), it creates space for new ideas, it breaks away from conventions in order to discover new ways of being and it explores new rhythms of argument and representation (Soja, 1996:9). If I relate this to the in-between, Lefebvre's triad could easily be applied to Theatre Practice (as Spatial Practice), or to the director who works creatively, intuitively and who is always in dialogue with his or her actors, designers and the stage crew.

"Representations of Space" is conceptualised space or conceived space, and is the central space in the mode of production (38-39). This space works mostly with "a system of verbal signs" (39), which is reminiscent of both the rehearsal and performance spaces in theatre, where dialogue is able to conjure up memories, ideas or intentions. For the in-between, "Representations of Space" is both the rehearsal room and the performance space or stage, as these spaces work with both dialogue and the imagination to conceive of spaces similar and representational of reality.

The last corner of Lefebvre's triad, "Representational Space", is for him also *lived* space, concerned mostly with non-verbal signs and symbols and is predominantly affective (39).

“Representational Space” is closely linked then to the space of the audience (both emotional and physical) as they enter into a relationship with the subject of the performance and the performers themselves. For the in-between then, its spatial triad would look something like this:



Edward Soja built on Lefebvre’s triad in order to add what he calls “Thirdspace”. Thirdspace is often a synthesis of two binaries (thesis + antithesis = synthesis), and in many ways it relates closely to what I propose for the in-between.

In my thesis production, I will attempt to find this thirdspace as a bridge between the binaries of violent intensity and rest. I am thus proposing a conceptual way of thinking about the in-between as a spatial triad, of which the constituents often change depending on their purpose and context. The in-between can conceptually work with thirdspace as the synthesis of working with both affect and distance at the same time. Working with the post-Brechtian seems helpful in this context, as it is not purely Brechtian but makes use of Brechtian devices. The post-Brechtian is defined by David Barnett as a way of working which:

[...] has at its core both a dissatisfaction with the narrowness of the Brechtian dialectic and a desire to expand its remit to address concrete social problems. (Barnett in Jürs-Munby, Carroll & Giles, 2013:66)

The post-Brechtian, according to Barnett, functions within the limits of five characteristics: it aims to reconcile theatre practice with “epistemological uncertainty” (the ambiguity or opening up of meaning), to preserve the use of dialectics (where Brechtian stagecraft is modified but not rejected), to retain emphasis on *showing*, to limit critique of Brecht to his interpretative system and, to have the stage concerned with *association*, rather than interpretation (2011:337). Thus, the post-Brechtian is situated between Brechtian approaches to directing theatre, and what Barnett calls “the broader church of the postdramatic” (Barnett in Jürs-Munby, Carroll & Giles, 2013). Overall, the post-Brechtian is chiefly concerned with working with theatre as a catalyst for social change, which sets it apart from the postdramatic.

To reconcile theatre practice with epistemological uncertainty, means to use the devices of Brecht’s practice, but to keep the formulation of meaning open to interpretation by the audience. In the “pure” Brechtian sense, meaning should always be made clear, leaving no room for ambiguity in performance. This aim towards epistemological uncertainty is a postmodern, postdramatic shift. To keep meaning open, is thus essentially a conceptual borrowing from the postdramatic paradigm and a practical insertion of the borrowed elements into Brechtian practice. I propose that with the in-between, meaning is alluded to through metaphor and gesture, but the audience is not didactically told what to “take” from the performance. Using post-Brechtian devices in accordance with spatial trialectics will be a conceptual aim of my thesis production, where the main objective is to create a space where empathy, immersion and critical reflection (and the apparatus that create them) can co-exist as useful tools when working with violence on stage, with the help of the consideration of the trialectic relationships of the theatre spaces at play.

Whale Nation: Problematizing Beauty and Horror

Background

Whale Nation seemed a perfect text with which I could start testing out some of my hunches around how to direct violence. I had a suspicion that using the aesthetics of beauty in performance could bring relief from traumatizing my audience. At the time I was engaging with scholarly writing around affect and the aesthetics of beauty (Cohen, 2013; Winston, 2006; Scruton, 2011; Badiou, 2004 and Thompson, 2009), and took this body of theory as my point of departure for work on *Whale Nation*.

Whale Nation (1988) is an epic poem about whale conservation, written by Heathcote Williams, which was suggested to me in June 2014 as a text with which I could start an exercise in working with *mise-en-scène*. The text provided me with the tools I needed for my experiment: It dealt with the violence that accompanies methods of whale hunting, it contained a poetic language that opened up the possible aesthetics I could use in performance and it was essentially an “open text” that I could adapt, which allowed me to create my own *mise-en-scène*. Through this I could express the daily life of a whale, its feeding and breeding processes and the suffering of the whale during whale hunts, in the face of pollution, and as entertainment in oceanariums. *Whale Nation* is an ode to cetaceans; a celebration of their global ecological function in our oceans and an educational piece of work that relays facts about their daily existence in a beautifully poetic language that likens them to human beings. The text in itself focuses on the aesthetic and ecological beauty of the whale, which made it ideal for my focus on the aesthetics of beauty as an alternative to explicit violence.

The text’s violence however, lies within detailed descriptions of whaling processes and how whales die physiologically when hunted with harpoons. The text thus provided me with the opportunity to juxtapose the horror of whaling with the beauty of the whale’s ecological design, as a test to see whether the aesthetic of beauty can help insert hope and optimism into an otherwise dire narrative.

Whale Nation was performed in two formats. First, at the Hermanus Whale Festival in October 2014 as a One-Person Show and then as my Medium Project Examination piece in November 2014, with a larger cast of seven actors. In both productions I tried to follow my hunch around juxtaposing beauty with violence on stage.

For my Medium Project, the piece was performed at The Little Theatre on Hiddingsh Campus and made use of rostrums for levels, atmospheric lighting and a completely exposed cyclorama for video projections. My objective for my MA Medium Project was to find a physical, affective vocabulary that would evoke the sensual world of the whale and which would provide a sensate experience for the audience. By doing this, I hoped to work affectively with violence in order to make the audience “feel” something. Whether that feeling was sadness, compassion, empathy or outrage at the abuse and slaughter of cetaceans, evoking a “feeling” through an embodied story and affective *mise-en-scène* became my focus.

Here, I aimed to work with images of violence through the actors’ bodies, rather than just through vocal narration. They would for instance embody a whale moving by combining parts of their bodies in motion as an ensemble, or they would enact the process of whale meat processing by performing metaphoric movements: banging and shaking their bodies against the cyclorama under redlighting for example while showing the grinding process of whale meat. I tried to vary moments of horror with moments of beauty: The actors would for instance create a whale cow with their bodies while one actor would be a whale calf frolicking around her, or they would playfully enact how whales invent games or how whale bulls compete for a female.

The narrator would at times form part of the formations the actors were making, which added an extra aesthetic to the narration of the poem. The lights on stage, the costumes, the way the narrator approached the poem, the choice of musical accompaniment and organic sound and the varying rhythms of the actors’ movements (informed by their conscious working with breath), all contributed to the aesthetic of beauty and the *mise-en-scène* I wanted to create.

The biggest juxtaposition between beauty and horror in the Medium Project however, was two different video clips played during the performance. The first was footage of a Bryde’s whale’s last moments as it dies from asphyxiation after ingesting 6m² of plastic debris. For this scene, the cast was frozen and the lights on stage dimmed to blue in order for the footage to be clear and focused on the cyclorama. At the end of the piece, I showed another video clip, this time with footage of whales in the wild accompanied by celebratory music.

For one audience member, this juxtaposition made all the difference between feeling enervated after seeing so much violence and feeling inspired and hopeful for their survival.

Findings

I have found aspects of both *Whale Nation Hermanus* and *Whale Nation: The Medium Project* useful for future considerations of working with violence on stage. Feedback after the Medium Project performances highlighted for me the fact that I placed too much focus on the aesthetic beauty of the piece; trying to make it look beautiful and choreographed, which in some cases detracted from the horror of the whale's suffering¹². An objective for my next project became to work towards engaging more directly with violence and to not be afraid of using "ugly" images. Creating striking images with my ensemble in the Medium Project seemed a helpful tool in representing violence, especially if the images were metaphorically strong and clear. Because the piece was predominantly movement-based, the metaphors had to be clear in order to convey my intentions to an audience who might not have experienced movement pieces before.

Repetition and returning to a known image – like that of the whale formed by all the actors' bodies – seemed like a mechanism I could use for transitions or as periods of "rest" between sequences. I did not notice it at the time, but in retrospect, I can see how returning to that same image provided a familiar sight to the audience before something new was introduced. I found this to be a useful tactic for future use in order to shape storytelling.

Recent correspondence with an audience member – almost a year after *Whale Nation: The Medium Project* – highlighted another important factor for me which speaks directly to my enquiry into emotional proximity when directing violence. Mr Jon Calder had seen *Whale Nation Hermanus* and the image of the disembowelled porpoises in this production moved him and had stayed with him ever since the performance.

¹² I distributed Questionnaires that asked audience members to comment on the balance between violence and beauty in *Whale Nation* at all performances, but the sample was too small for a detailed and trustworthy analysis. The feedback on some of the questionnaires did however offer some insight into future considerations for how to work with violence more effectively on stage.

After watching the Medium Project version however, he noticed that he did not “feel” as much as he did when he saw the One-Person Show version in Hermanus. He explained that this was possibly due to the fact that during the Medium Project production, he was sitting near the back of the auditorium, whereas in Hermanus (due to the small space), he was sitting quite close to the narrator and therefore felt more involved in the story. He also expressed that the movements that created the images of the whale and its life processes in the Medium Project, were more of a distraction to him than an aid in storytelling, and that there were only single moments where he felt the movement served the narration (Personal correspondence with Jon Calder, September 2015).

This correspondence played a significant role in my thinking about the relationship between the physical and emotional proximity of the audience with the action on stage. There seems to be a correlation between affect and distance, and regulating rhythms of emotional proximity to performed violence on stage might be linked to how close an audience member is sitting to the action and how affective the action is.

For my following piece of praxis however, my One-Person Show which was performed in March 2015, I needed more intensity – to work more actively with violence in an intimate setting. I needed to find a more affective vocabulary with which to convey suffering, and I needed to find more apparatus instead of just the aesthetic of beauty and its juxtaposition with horror, in order to work effectively with suffering without traumatizing my audience.

The One-Person Show: Discovering the In-Between

The One-Person Show Task

The One-Person Show is the third in a series of four projects that form part of the MA in Theatre and Performance. For this project, the onus is on the student to write and devise a performance piece of no more than twenty minutes, wherein a central image or metaphor clearly expresses the student's personality, obsessions or research interest. The process starts with autobiographical writing exercises about personal obsessions or about a single object that has been an obsession or fascination of the student for a long time.

My objectives with *In-Between* were built upon the findings and shortcomings of *Whale Nation*. I had to find a way to work more actively with violence on stage instead of avoiding it: to tell a horrible, violent story in a non-traumatizing way, and to insert moments of hope into the performance. At the time I did not know that I was looking for an "in-between", but I knew that I was working with binaries (horror and hope) and wanted to find a way through them.

Interruption of the intensity of the trauma in the narrative seemed a useful theatrical device at the time, but I did not exactly understand how it worked. The task's main objective was to arrive at and leave the audience with one central image that captured an expression of myself and what obsesses me, and so an additional directorial objective became a quest to find an affective vocabulary and a number of theatrical devices to show my obsession with freedom¹³.

Themes I touched on in my writing were experiences of abuse, witnessing people die for the first time, the pain of being abandoned and a very deep desire to "escape" and travel the world. The specifics of these themes are not important, but they provided important pathways into an enquiry of how to share my story.

¹³ An image that kept coming to the fore in my writing was that of a Swallow. I have for a long time seen the Swallow as a symbol of freedom. In my piece, I wanted to bring this symbol into play with ideas of "flight" and "freedom" as elements of hope.

In Performance

In-Between was a multi-modal performance piece, and made use of music (both sung and recorded), movement (physical theatre, pedestrian movement and dance), spoken text (informal storytelling directed at the audience and soliloquy), and a Brechtian “making visible” of the mechanisms of theatre (I would for instance speak directly to the lighting and sound technician and direct her actions as I performed).

The piece started as if it was a musical performance but halfway through the song I was singing¹⁴, I motioned for the music to stop and ran stage left to vomit through a door in the theatre. This was followed by an apology to the audience, and a few moments of “recovery” as I tried to get over the feeling of nausea.

I then started telling the audience the story of an accident I witnessed in 2008 on the N2 on my way to Stellenbosch. The narrative was constantly disrupted with either text from a poem I wrote, sudden pauses in the action where I would run to the window frame and stare through it as if I were a child, or frantic and repetitive movements. The story of the accident kept building in intensity with each movement resembling a body flying through the air. The movements became uglier and less controlled until I fell to the floor. Silence followed.

Rocking back and forth with my dress gathered around me, I started to sing the words of the song I attempted at the beginning of the piece, but this time in a fearful, child-like way. I then tried to open my arms to fly. The struggle to lift my elbows and the effort of lifting them against my own resistance became my objective and built in intensity until I released it with a loud laugh from my belly, falling backwards onto my back and facing the ceiling¹⁵. In the silence that followed, I developed a real cry. As it built in intensity, I crawled towards the window frame and as I reached it, the crying ceased.

I became a child trying to climb up and through the frame. The window was hoisted just high enough for me to reach it with my legs, but it still required effort to get on top and through it.

¹⁴ *Fly to Paradise* by Eric Whitacre.

¹⁵ In hindsight, this laughter of despair and self-irony seems useful for a “pause” or the “in-between”. It was as if the self-irony of the dark and self-reflective laughter, was a way of disrupting the trauma of a dire narrative.

At this point, another piece of music began to play¹⁶. I reached backwards and swung the frame closer to the thing I was yearning for but eventually hung upside down in order to be able to reach further. From this position, I could use my shoulders as an anchor as I kept on reaching along the floor. The piece ended with me in this upside down position on a black out.

The most important discovery I made through *In-Between*, was how to make use of theatre apparatus to aid in my storytelling. Using devices such as interruption, repetition, building intensity, silence, sudden outbursts of seemingly unrelated actions and varying rhythms, seemed to be affective while conveying the horrors of my story.

Interruption seemed to be the most useful apparatus and I found rest to be another useful device to interrupt or to affect: lying still before bursting out in unwarranted laughter was a pause; lying still before crying was another pause; I “rested” after vomiting before starting my story, and I used a moment of stillness or physical rest to express psychological trauma through the singing of a little song. All of these seem useful in retrospect for further investigation.

Audience members at the exam (the piece was performed only to senior students, postgraduates and lecturers of the Drama Department), commented on the thin line between aesthetic beauty and ugliness that became visible in my work, with one describing my physical embodiment of the accident as “aesthetically beautiful”. This echoes a notion by Howard Barker where he makes an argument for the ugly as beautiful. In his book *Arguments for a Theatre*, a text I engaged with early on in my research, he argues that:

To write tragedy, to paint calamity, is to know the ambiguity that lies behind the witnessing of pain, the possibility of beauty in suffering – not as a political fetish – but within the privileged and illusory space of theatre, where theatre is emphatically not the world, but a speculation upon it. (Barker, 1997:142)

¹⁶ *The Fire* by Imogen Heap

One audience member remarked on how I had managed to find “irony” and how the interruptive nature of my storytelling helped to create an affective engagement with the stories I had to tell. My thinking around how to work through the binaries of horror and beauty seemed to have helped my practice. I suspect that audience members were affected by the performance through the *devices* or *apparatus* I had made use of.

First, the narrative was disrupted, allowing only for brief moments of empathic engagement before another action or idea was introduced. I suspect that disrupting the narrative, distances the audience but also aids in making the rhythm of the piece interesting, giving it a rhythmic energy.

Secondly, the violence in the piece was denaturalized – an aspect of apparatus as defined by Dolan (1991). My storytelling focused on how unusual and bizarre the image of flying bodies was, and by embodying the movement of these bodies falling from the taxi, I suspect that I successfully created an image in the imaginations of the audience but kept it “strange” by my actions. Keeping something “strange” in this sense means, to make the image associative rather than literal. The horror of the deaths of the passengers in the taxi for example was not natural, not logical, and by denaturalizing the scene of the crash, associations could be made by the audience without showing them images of a “real” accident or car crash. I also denaturalized the use of rhythm and time, with some scenes telling a story which happened within seconds, whereas other scenes were more durational. Similarly, the use of an almost musical repetition of certain movements and gestures (like miming the car crash, or continuously running to the window) seemed to evoke empathy from my audience as I observed them while performing. Mdu Kweyama, who recently completed his Masters research on the visceral nature of dance when combined with drama, quotes Ciane Fernandes’ interpretation of Pina Bausch’s use of repetition in his thesis, which helps to explain the use of repetition as an affective device:

When a gesture is done for the first time onstage, it can be a (mis)take as spontaneous expression. But when the same gesture is repeated several times, it is clearly exposed as an aesthetic element. In the first repetition, it becomes apparent that gesture is dissociated from a spontaneous emotional source. Eventually, the exhaustive movement repetition generates feelings and experiences for both dancer and the audience. (Fernandes cited in Kweyama, 2014: 34)

I found this to be an affect of the in-between, and noted repetition as a useful apparatus that might aid in my creation of an in-between space. The third apparatus, the demystification of the workings of representations of violence in the theatre space, is slightly more complicated. I assume that through metaphor and through the device of breaking the fourth wall (addressing the audience as well as my technician directly in performance), helped create another distancing effect.

Overall, working with these apparatus (interruption, time, metaphor, disruption, rhythm) revealed to me more than one way of working with violence that was ethically and aesthetically acceptable to me both as a director and as a performer, which demystified my presumptions around the use of violence on stage.

Die Jaar Toe My Ma Begin Sing Het/ The Year My Mother Started to Sing:

A Proposal

Investigating Theatre Apparatus

I understand in hindsight that I have intuitively discovered useful apparatus for opening up a thirdspace – a space for pause and reflection – in the narrative of trauma which now needs to be tested in my final production. The idea of a “spatial triad” has helped me to think about experimenting with the regulation of emotional proximity between the audience and the performance. A precise exploration of the terms of “space”, an essential component of “proximity”, will help to clarify this concept in terms of my proposed thesis production.

Representations of Space is both the rehearsal room and stage. When using the apparatus I propose for the in-between, my objective in this space will be to foster the relationships between the actors in order for their appearance as siblings to “ring true” in performance. I thus plan to use rehearsal techniques that foster trust and playfulness among the cast, as well as a communal work ethic where relationships both within the world of the play and outside of it are respected and considered at all times.

Representational Space is the space of the audience or the “lived” space of the spectator. My objective as director here, is to make sure that the audience’s relationship to the violence on stage is regulated both physically and emotionally. I have no guarantee that my efforts here will succeed, but I hope that with the use of the suggested in-between apparatus, I will be able to come close to a successful regulation of especially the audience’s emotional proximity to scenes where violence is present.

Spatial Practice is the creative space of the director where the director needs to creatively engage with empathy, immersion and critical reflection and achieve a balance between the affective experience of the audience and the imagined violence on stage. I hope to achieve this with a number of theatre apparatus which form the focus of this chapter and are at the heart of my experiment for my thesis production.

A Note on the Selected Text

Die Jaar Toe My Ma Begin Sing Het (1988) was the debut novel of Afrikaans author and poet Engemi Ferreira. Considered “wisdom literature”, the novel was quickly incorporated into the schooling system in Kwa-Zulu Natal as a prescribed literary work for Grade 11 pupils and matriculants. The novel has been reworked for theatre since 1995¹⁷. Undertones of *As I Lay Dying* (Faulkner, 1930 – with its use of streams of consciousness in the writing) and *The Hotel New Hampshire* (Irving, 1981 – a coming of age novel) can be found in the narrative, which is written in seven short chapters. Each chapter is titled with the name of one of the six siblings in the family who recall from their own perspectives one year and one event that changed their lives forever: the brutal murder of their deformed and disabled baby brother, Lysander.

The plot is focused around forming the image of the mother of the Malan family – a woman known for her artistry, creativity, love for music and a deep love for all her children. The birth of her seventh child however – born without arms and legs – destroys her spirit and once she is confined to a wheelchair and refuses to speak, the family starts falling apart. One day however, a scream is heard from inside the house and the family finds the mother calmly singing to one of her daughters, Trien (the outcast in the family), whom she is comforting while holding a bloodied bread knife in her hands. The little new born is found on the bed in the pool of blood.

After the murder, the mother is committed to a mental institution, but continues to care for her children by painting and selling her work in order to pay for her children’s education and livelihoods. None of them are aware of this until Konstans, the eldest brother reveals this at their mother’s wake twenty years after the tragedy.

¹⁷ At the first KKNK in 1995, actor Hannes van Wyk performed the piece as a one-person show under the direction of Wim Vorster (Terblanche, 2014). In 1997, Elma Potgieter adapted the novel for the stage and in 1998 the piece was performed by her, also as a one-person show, at the Aardklop Kunstefees with her husband, Schalk Jacobz, as director (ibid.). This latter version of the play has since been copyrighted. I will be making my own adaptation of the original novel for the purposes of my Thesis Production exam.

Their mother's innocence is also proven when Trien – now a nun – reveals in the final chapter that she wanted to commit suicide on the day their brother died. Their mother, however, shouted to stop her and instead Trien took out her anger on her brother.

The story is ultimately about a mother's love for her children, about finding hope even in the direst circumstances and not allowing the past to control who you become in the future. The violence of their brother's death marked them forever, but what the Malan children remembered more vividly was their mother's sudden broken silence: her voice as she sang in order to comfort Trien. There is an air of magical realism in some sections of the text, and the reader may get the feeling that the narrative is an intimate retelling of a family history.

I propose for my thesis production an adaptation of the original novel where the story takes place in the Transvaal. For my adaptation, I would like to move the setting to Laingsburg, a small town in the Karoo that suffered a devastating flood in 1981 and another in 2014. This would serve a multitude of purposes: first, it makes the story more relevant to a contemporary audience and the town is predominantly Afrikaans, comprising of both "white" and "coloured" residents – a feature which suits the demographics of the cast I will be working with for my thesis production. The town is also surrounded by farms and small holdings that keep sheep, horses, cattle, and produce a number of fruit (apricots, pears, plums and quinces). In the novel, the family is able to keep the farm through their fruit orchards and sheep farming.

The original novel is written in formal Afrikaans, which would need to be changed in order for a contemporary audience to understand it. The Malan family in the novel are poor whites on the outskirts of a town, and for my adaptation, I would like to have for the children a white father and a "coloured" mother with the family living a few kilometres from Laingsburg, but still on route of the path of the flood. In Laingsburg today, most of the residents are Afrikaans-speaking "coloureds", but there are still problems with racial segregation, lack of literacy and a high rate of drug abuse – social issues I would like to feature as undertones in the narrative.

Each actor will receive a chapter (named after the character) and will be given a chance to narrate the story. The piece will therefore be an ensemble work, with the aim of building an image of their absent mother while building intensity in the storyline through their hardships on the farm and through the tension in especially Trien's monologues. She is the only character who narrates twice. At first, her narration is in the form of a strained prayer as she sits in the nunnery. The second instance is an admission of guilt in front of her brothers and sisters, but directed at the audience.

These are just a few additions and changes that I propose for the *text* in reworking it for performance with a full cast of six or seven actors. Essentially, the piece would take on the form of a post-Brechtian production which makes use of Brechtian devices like *verfremdung* and an episodic structure, but where all the actors remain their characters throughout the piece and where an element of realism is still present.

If a true Brechtian device was used, the actors would sometimes speak to the audience out of character as "themselves". For my thesis production however, I do not want this device. Rather, I want the characters to be psycho-physically involved with their characters as if they were acting in a Stanislavskian realist style.

Relating to Justine Machon's notions of "visceral performance" (2011:14), I thus propose for this piece a multi-modal structure and *mise-en-scène* in order to try and achieve the rhythmical regulation of the audience's emotional proximity to the violence and suffering portrayed on stage.

Working with Apparatus

I would like to propose the following apparatus (theatrical devices) for inclusion in the mise-en-scène throughout the play:

- Interruption and Disruption of the narrative

As with my One-Person Show *In-Between*, I hope to find ways to interrupt each character's retelling of that one year that changed their lives in order to create moments of critical distance. I therefore propose the use of moments of disruption of the storytelling where there is either a quick showing of the murder or a quick recollection of the past where the actors then engage with each other as they did when they were children. Each chapter already contains these recollections, and I hope to include just the most poignant ones that would serve the objectives of my research.

- The use of metaphor in gestural movement

Although I do not foresee for my piece a physical theatre style throughout, I hope to find metaphoric images or gestures through movement that might euphemistically yet evocatively represent suffering or violence. There is in Trien's narrative for example a hint towards possible sexual abuse by her housemaster at school, a secret she had kept from her parents. In order to build intensity in the play, instances like these would need to be explored and I hope to find adequate metaphors for them that would assist in the regulation of the emotional proximity of the audience towards the action on stage. Another option to consider would be one actor narrating while the rest of the cast embody the narration metaphorically, building a web of semiotic relationships on stage.

- The use of music in moments where "rest" or "pauses" are required

For the author, Engemi Ferreira, music was incredibly important and informed many of her decisions while writing the novel (Terblanche, 2014). The mother and father of the children do not feature on stage, and are only narrated about by the children. I would however like to propose an appearance of the mother in the final and climactic scene of the piece. For this, I have requested an opera student from the UCT School of Music who would appear in the scene and provide the "pause" after the horror of the death of the child.

The “pause” in this case, would be the mother singing an aria from Karl Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, called “In Trutina”. Should I be unsuccessful in obtaining the music student, a recording of the aria by Lucia Popp will be played in the final scene and an alternative “mother figure” will appear on stage. The scenic effect I am looking for is one of rest, relief and peace – the feelings of a daughter in her mother’s caring arms.

Music also seems to be an intrinsic part of the mother’s identity, and I hope to use different – but similar sounding – compositions of music in between scenes. Not only will they serve a conventional function of transitioning between scenes, but I hope that the structure of the music will assist in deepening the meaning of the piece. I aim to use music as moments of “rest” after intensity or as part of the storyline.

- Playing with time, pace and duration of certain scenes and actions

When “playing” with time I follow Peter Brook’s precepts of durational extension through *mise-en-scène*, or speeding actions or scenes up to induce an affect of chaos, stress or panic. I will also “play” with the unnatural slowing down (slow motion) of events or actions which might be amplified by the reverse tempo. Ultimately, time has to serve my main objective of regulating the emotional proximity of my audience. I know for instance that durational movements draw an audience in whereas an explosion of a multitude of images and movements can keep their attention – what Susan Sontag calls – “light, mobile [and] relatively indifferent to content” (Sontag in Guerin & Hallas, 2007:2). This stems from her idea that a bombardment of images merely causes “image-glut”, whereas a careful selection of images and the clever use of rhythm gives an audience time to “discover, to reflect or to imagine” (2). This is what I am hoping to achieve by using time as an apparatus.

- The use of silence

In both *Whale Nation* and *In-Between*, I have found the use of moments of silence an effective apparatus for transition or carefully ushering in new ideas, themes or storylines into the action on stage. I plan to use moments of silence where feelings of nostalgia are most prevalent in the narrative, or where a moment of remembrance is most poignant to the character.

Silence also relates closely to the apparatus of time, as silence has the ability to either contract or stretch time in the world of the play. I suspect that these moments would be instances after moments of extreme intensity.

- Repetition

Another apparatus is the repetition of a single scene throughout the play, or a section of a scene in order to either draw attention to the trauma of the family in order to build tension, or to reduce its affects by inserting more moments of rest. I propose an experimentation with this in rehearsal where a scene will be taken and repeated throughout the play but differently each time – as if from different perspectives – a sort of different showing of the same action or theme through different versions.

As with *Whale Nation*, a repeated or a returning to a familiar image might also be useful in creating an affect. Physical exertion is an aspect of this repetition apparatus that I am looking to explore further in order to find the opportune moment (or Kairos), for both the climax and the release (or pause, that insertion of the in-between moment). In my One-Person Show, climbing through and struggling with the window frame built this intensity until I found release and a pause in the action by sitting in one of the frames. Amplifying this kind of intensity could be another strategy I could experiment with. Here too, rhythm and time plays an important part, as in the repetition of a scene or an action, it can either be sped up or slowed down, depending on the effect. Essentially, the repetition should emphasize and augment a specific image, idea or theme that I have found useful in the text and which would resonate in the in-between space by using time, rhythm and repetition.

- Building the action to extreme physical intensity

I hope to find a vocabulary with which I can repeat a certain action in my thesis production – perhaps related to the murder of the child – which would build in intensity either throughout the play or throughout the final scene just before the climax (where Trien reveals that she was the one who murdered the child and not her mother).

- The use of Multi-Modality

For this apparatus, I take my cue from both the post-Brechtian framework and Tori-Haring Smith's detailed article on *Dramaturging Non-Realism* (2003). Her inclusion of the following devices of non-realism speak directly to the in-between: "abstract and dissolving language" is used; there is no linearity – only "associative images"; the mood, tone and resonance of the images are important for storytelling and most importantly, "meaning exists in intentional gaps" or spaces (53). By mixing styles like Realism, Monologue, Movement Theatre, Opera and Musical Theatre I hope to find a style that is specific to this production and which helps with the regulation of the audience's emotional proximity to the action.

- Breaking the "fourth wall"

Breaking the proverbial fourth wall in the theatre is a pure Brechtian device, and one that I would like to use in *Die Jaar Toe My Ma Begin Sing Het*. Because every chapter of the novel is essentially written as a monologue, there are numerous opportunities for the actors to address the audience directly and to lure them into the world of the play.

The monologue narrations are extremely personal, and I want the actors to connect with their audience as if they were a confidant. In the chapter "Hjalmar" for instance, his narration takes place from a seat on his plane to South Africa from Finland. He swears like a sailor and is extremely afraid of flying, and I would like to use this scene specifically as some comic relief in an otherwise morbid story. I want him to speak to the audience directly, as if they are the only people who truly understand his fear.

This scene is comical and short, but puts Hjalmar's character into perspective for the audience. He was after all just a little boy when the murder took place and his mother was taken away from him. When he entered the room where the murder took place and heard his mother singing, he, in his innocence asked: "Are we holding another concert, Mommy?" His comical retelling of his memories thus serve as a juxtaposition for the sadness of his mother's sudden absence after the murder of his baby brother.

- Chorus Work

I would like to experiment with the insertion of brief moments of chorus work – where all the actors come together as an ensemble and narrate a section of the text together. I suspect that this could provide a distancing effect or enhance the feeling of a family who were essentially close-knit before the tragedy. The making of ‘vocal landscapes’ might also aid in the atmospheric quality of the work that I am looking for.

- Juxta-positioning and making use of the “ugly as beautiful”

In both *Whale Nation*, and *In-Between*, what stood out for some audience members was the juxta-positioning of horror with beauty. I propose to use this same apparatus in my thesis productions, where moments of beauty (the children playing together on the farm) can be juxtaposed with moments of horror (the effects of the flood and the fire, perhaps even the sexual abuse of Trien). I specifically have in mind the climactic scene, where Trien is sobbing in her mother’s arms, with her mother lovingly holding her and singing a beautiful aria to comfort her while the murder weapon is still in her right hand. I am still considering other moments in the play where I can make use of this apparatus, but for now, this is the main image that I will be working towards.

Material Considerations of Proximity

In line with the insight I gained that physical proximity between the audience and representations of violence influences the in-between, I will create a performance space of extreme intimacy. This will be achieved by seating the audience on the Little Theatre stage with the performance happening around them. I anticipate that this will amplify the tension – the rise of intensity before the pause. I will also be able to then amplify and exploit “pause” in a smaller space, whereas in a bigger space, pauses and silence can at times read as “nothing happening”, or as “neutral”.

I also want the physical world of the stage to be a “memory space” – essentially a space with an assemblage of objects which could serve each character as they narrate their memories from different places: Wilmien is in her brother Roald’s apartment in the city for example, whereas Trien narrates in a church while the priest is delivering a sermon.

I aim to thus make use of very few props and set pieces (chairs, rostrums) which could be used for multiple purposes and moved around as necessary to change scenes and represent different objects. The space should be minimalistic enough to allow the actors to play like children or have conversations like adults, depending on the scene.

For a central metaphor (or guiding principal) I am inspired by the idea of a musical composition, with various movements, tempos, moods, and changes in rhythmic and melodic variations which relates directly to my research topic and enquiry. For the “look” of the piece, I am looking at impressionistic painting with its layer upon layer technique, juxta-positioning of colours and use of light and dark. An impressionistic painting also looks rough and unfinished when looked at in close proximity, but when viewed from a distance, the image becomes clear and the painting is complete. The same could be said for the desired effect I am looking for in the piece: with its episodic structure and interrupted narrative lines, the piece will only make complete sense after the final scene as the audience is able to assess the overall experience and put the pieces of the puzzle together.

Die Jaar Toe my Ma Begin Sing Het might then metaphorically be an intimate opera of the mind. Both a memory scape and a mindscape of each character, the play might evoke an intimacy with the audience both because of the personal style of the narration and the physical proximity of the action. The added apparatus of music or an opera aria might add to the unnaturalness of the story and assist in distancing the audience after moments of intensity. The mother in the story was both a musician and an artist, so the metaphor could suit both the story and the musicality and rhythm of the emotional proximity of the piece I am attempting to regulate.

Conclusion

This paper was a study about the “in-between” of theatre and argued for an insertion of a pause or moment of rest between moments of intense representations of violence on stage. It was also a counter-argument against the use of realistic violence on stage in an already violent society, and focused this argument on theatre practice in the context of South Africa. The study made use of Psychological research in order to support my suspicion that an alternative approach to directing violence in South Africa is a current necessity, and recruited research findings around problems such as “desensitization”, “compassion fatigue” and “low positive affect” as the rationale for the study.

The study followed a Practice as Research approach, and documented the processes and findings of two projects, *Whale Nation* and *In-Between*, as practical experiments which yielded valuable results in terms of my understanding around how to direct violence from a theatre practice perspective. Theatre apparatus were discovered as devices that could be used during performance to either build intensity before “relief” or to provide relief by inserting moments of “pause” and “rest”.

This dissertation is not a traditional thesis but rather a proposal towards a thesis which will test out my findings around the use of some of the apparatus I identified in the previous chapter. Essentially, this paper has provided me with the space to think into how I can best utilize my findings from my previous projects and my theoretical research, to work towards my objective of regulating the emotional proximity of my audience to performed violence.

I have proposed to direct as part of my Thesis Production my own adaptation of Engemi Ferreira’s novel *Die Jaar toe My Ma Begin Sing Het*, of which the outcomes can only be articulated as objectives at this point: To try and creatively use the apparatus of the “in-between” to work with empathy, immersion and critical reflection in a rhythmical way that would regulate the emotional proximity of my audience to the violence on stage.

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Appendix

Contents:

1. *Whale Nation Hermanus* Photographs
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4. *In-Between* Poem
5. *In-Between* Photographs

Whale Nation Hermanus Photographs



Poster for Advertising



The venue



Sarah Grace Potter as Gaïa, the narrator, Costume design and body-painting by myself, Coral skirt and bodysuit by Irene Grässer.

Whale Nation Medium Project Script

Original text by Heathcote Williams

Text adapted and edited by Sarah G. Potter and Roné Herbst

Gaia:

(Evolution)

From space the planet is blue.

From space, the planet is the territory

Not of humans, but of the whale.

Ancient, unknown mammals left the land

In search of food or sanctuary,

And walked in to the water.

Their arms and hands changed in to water wings,

Their tails turned into boomerang-shaped tail flukes,

Enabling them to fly almost weightless through the oceans:

Free from land-based pressures:

Free from droughts, earthquakes, famine and ice ages.

Larger brains evolved, ten times as old as man's,

With a larger cerebral cortex,

Luxuriantly folded, intricately fissured, deep down in another country,

Moving at a different tempo.

From space the planet is blue.

From space, the planet is the territory

Not of humans, but of the whale.

(Play)

Whales are playful creatures

Their light minds shaped by buoyancy, unrestricted by gravity,

Somersaulting,

Like angels or birds.

Whales play

For three times as long as they spend searching for food.

Delicate, involved games,

Play without goals,

With floating seabird's feathers,

Or logs of wood,

Carried in their teeth,

For a game of tag across the entire Pacific.

(Music)

Likewise, webs of elegant cetacean music stretch around the globe;

Lyrical litanies on the bio-radio

That draw on an oral tradition

From a living memory bank founded fifty million years ago.

Different dialects; different themes;

A different song each year, constantly evolving.

Clearly retained in the mind, uncluttered,

Free of all methods of transcription

Which, disconnected from the body-language of the informant,

Facilitate deceit.

Alien beings,

Their whole body: every bone, every membrane,

part of an enormous sensitive ear.

Whale families, whale tribes

All have different songs:

An acoustic picture-language,

Spirited pulses through the water

At five times the speed sound travels through air,

Varied enough to express complex emotions,

cultural details,

history and news updates.

A lone humpback whale may put on a solo concert lasting for days.

An odyssey can be told in minutes;

Rumors of ancestors,

memories of loss,

memories of ideal love;

the minutiae of a shared consciousness;

Whale dreams and

The accumulated knowledge of the past.

(Breathing)

The whale moves in a sea of sound.

A gargantuan heart at the hub of things:

For the baleen whales superintend the earth's bio-mass,

Plankton,

From which almost all the oxygen in the world derives.

The central atoms of life farmed by power-houses,

In charge of the world's breath.

(Playful Feeding)

Whales are not compulsive eaters

They can go for eight months without food;

And they do not work to eat,

They play.

The humpback catches its food by blowing bubbles:

Five-foot-wide bubbles as large as weather balloons and when they burst,

They make a circle of confusing mist.

The plankton, tiny little shrimps, are corralled into the middle by a bewildering ring of hissing bubble-bombs.

The whale then rises up
into the center of a round plate of brimming water,
And eats.

In Alaska, whale tribes have learned to hunt plankton like this in large groups.
Imagine blowing bubbles, and food drops from the sky!

(Sophistication)

Without hands, for making external tools,
Without depending on tons upon tons of artifacts, destined as litter,
The whale's sophistication has become internal:
Its skills are perceptive,
Social, sensual, playful and
Non-manipulative.

(Breeding)

When whales breed,
They breed with ecological consideration,
In precise relation to the amount of food in the sea.
After a season of foraging in the arctic Ice-flows,
They find their way to the south to mate.
Using the rotational forces of the planet,
The azimuth of the sun,
The taste and temperature of the tides
To find their liquid seraglio.
Mutual attraction is an elaborate, delicate and thoughtful process.
When a male and female finally come together,
They join forces, Embrace, and mate face to face, like man.

(Motherhood)

Eleven months later

The first sound a whale calf hears, is singing.
Should anything untimely happen to the calf,
Its mother will support the calf upon her back
Until it disintegrates.

(Symbiosis)

The Kwakiutl people of Albert Bay
Believe that the whale is a 'long life-maker'
Who brings prosperity.
The Nootka people claim that the whale allows his death,
To spare the people from hunger,
And therefore must be worthy of dying.

(Murder Machine)

But other men have deceived nature
And elected to view the whale
as an essential component of an expanding economy...
When an underwater shape is detected on the submarine radar,
The harpoon is raised.
As the whale comes within range,
An accurate shot is fired between the shoulder-blades.
Then another and another.
With no enemies in the sea
The whale is loath to believe in attack,
As were the Indians, as were the Aborigines.
The factory ship, as large as an aircraft carrier,
has the capacity to deal with a whale every thirty minutes.

A set of moving claws is lowered,
Curved fingers pull in the whale inch by inch to be dismantled.
Tiny men in spiked boots pin themselves to her body,
Armed with long-handle knives
To slice the whale into manageable bits.
She is stuffed through manholes,
To be carved in to a sodden mess by whirring knives.

The flesh is double-boiled, the residue dried and bagged up.
The pelvis, jaw, ribs and spine are ground down in to fertilizers and feed.
The inner organs are towed in to boilers to be distilled in to pharmaceuticals.
The skin collection for glycerin.
The jaw cartilage is pickled.
The tail-flanks are frozen to be eaten raw.
For twenty thousand pounds of animal oil,
Foreign currency has finally been acquired.

(Ceaseless Building)

No whale has ever been found with a cancerous growth or pathological disease.
Yet civilization was built on the back of a whale.
Coastal settlements followed the presence of whales;
Which grew in to cities:
Boston, New York, Plymouth, Tokyo,
Lisbon, Vladivostok, Odessa, Brest, Yokohama,
San Francisco,
Reykjavik, San Pedro, Valdivia,
Rotterdam, Sydney, Buenos Aires,
Glasgow, Liverpool, Hamburg,
London, Helsinki, Hermanus, Cape Town...

(Mourning)

The whale's insulating wet suit is hacked off in untold billions for fuel;
The flexible baleen filaments for umbrellas,
toys and the springs of the first type writer.
Millions and millions and millions died in the marine holocaust,
Generating the implacable human appetite for electricity and petroleum.

(Eroding Earth)

The whale's blubber is used:
For soap, mixed with dirt to be returned back to the sea;
For margarine; for glycerol for lipstick;
For detergents, from whose froth modern advertising was spawned;
For glycerine and nitroglycerine, to blow a hole in the human herd;
For brushes and brooms;
For surgical stitches;
And tennis racket strings;
For wax crayons;
For chess men;
For insecticide;
For calcium for fertilizer, to speed up the gestation of the earth;
Without the blood-letting of the whale:
The prime source of light and lubrication,
The Industrial Revolution would have been scantily equipped.
There is a haunting of the myth of progress.
So keenly forgetful in the bright name of novelty.
Whale oil is used:
For paint;
For skin cream;
For stock cubes and what-do-you-feel-like-for-dinner low calorie cooking oil;

For endocrinal hormones for those stiffened by arthritis;
For liver-oil and vitamin to treat those who are flagging;
For insulin to treat those whose blood is too sweet;
For pipes, piano keys, pastries, sashimi, anti-freeze:
The aesthetic apparatus, the sensual sustenance
Of empire building...
For ambergris, burned in religious ceremonies
To put you in good odor with the gods;
For cosmetics to put you in good odor with each other.
It is unthinkingly supposed that the rest of life will not be shriveled in the process.
Large creatures disappear;
And life inevitably becomes smaller...

(Washed up on Oil)

Cetacean oil:

Does not go rancid;

Does not corrode;

Does not react to temperature change;

oil that can withstand extreme cold from outer space.

Irreplaceable sperm oil is stolen

To anoint the moving parts of missiles.

This lubricant however will lead to all human cities being clogged with rubble;

Ending their existence like beached whales,

Washed up on the shores of civilization,

Whose foundations were built upon dead blubber.

(Elimination)

The sullen killing continues

The killing of the largest creatures in the world.

First, the Greenland whales: Eliminated.

Then the Right whales, so called because they were the right whales to kill

Then the Humpbacks

Then the great Sperm whales

Then the Blue whales who only recently jumped back from near extinction in the waters of Southern California...

Then the Grey whales, then the Fin whales

Then the Minke whales of Norway

Who are killed in their hundreds every year in the name of a blood-thirsty tradition.

Then the Bryde's whale, of which only a few are left...

In ancient times, the rare stranding of a whale was taken as an omen of the death of a loved one.

In modern times, the mass strandings of whales and dolphins,

Prompted by disorienting industrial noise, plastic waste and radiation,

Is taken to indicate the inferior intelligence of whales,

And is ignored...

(Preservation)

You are a Whale Nation;

Your own towns and cities were built upon the backs of whales.

But all is not lost.

You can save the whale and dolphin from sure decline by nature, save yourselves and ensure your food security for the future.

Are you recycling plastic and not pouring harmful chemicals down your drains?

Are you aware of the amount of plastic waste that drifts around in our oceans,

Killing up to 300 000 whales and dolphins each year?

Did you know that whales need large areas to migrate without interruptions from underwater sonar, industrial noise, tankers and underwater mining?

Are you aware of Japan's plans to hunt whales every year with the pretence of killing them for science?

How long will we ignore their plight for help?

(Turning the Tide)

Remember...

In the water whales have become the dominant species without killing their own kind.

In the water, whales have become the dominant species,

Though they allow the ocean's resources to renew themselves.

They use language to communicate, not to eliminate;

Without trading innocence for the pretension of possessions.

In the water, whales have become the dominant species,

Though they acknowledge minds other than their own.

In the water, the whale is the dominant species;

An extra-terrestrial, who has already landed... And who desperately needs your protection.

From space, the planet is blue.

From space, the planet is the territory

Not of humans, but of the whale.

Whale Nation Medium Project Production Stills









Lighting Design: Luke Ellenbogen with the help of Marco Frontini

Set: Nicolas Meyer and Little Theatre Workshop

Costume: Irene Grässer and Leigh Bishop

Video montage: Danielle Sher

Bodypainting: Myself

Video: Courtesy of audience member, Daniël Maartens

In-Between Poem

(Used with movement during interruptions of action)

I constantly find myself in between spaces. In between spaces I constantly find myself.

In-between spaces in-between struggling in-between struggling in-between in-between I find myself. I'm struggling I constantly find myself I constantly find myself struggling.

In-between spaces I constantly find myself I constantly find myself struggling.

The present.

Not the present.

And the present.

The present. Struggling is is dancing. Feeling in-between.

Struggling as dancing. So to say I'm in-between.

Past mistakes and dancing I forget.

Past mistakes and past and so many past mistakes

and mistakes and so many pasts and so and so mistakes

And so past mistakes and so many and so many. And many and so and so and many.

I am between flying and falling.

I'm falling the falling as to fly is to fall, flying to fall, fly falling, flying as to fall flying is to fall, fly and fall. Wishing I was somewhere else. Because.

Now I trust I fight I hope. Now I trust I fight I hope. Now I trust I fight I hope.

Something to live for, I fight I hope. I try try.

As a song.

Where does my hope come from my hope. Where does my hope come the hope.

Where does the hope, my hope.

Now. Struggling as I do.

My hope. Struggling I do hope too.

The hope struggling.

And the hope struggling. Struggling as I do.

I I I I and I and I and and I and I and and I and I and and I.

I am and as I am, and as I am I am, I am and I am and I and as I and I and as I am, I am.

Can earth be paradise, unlikely.

As now. As struggling. As hunger.

Has hunger. Has hunger.

As hunger. As hunger,

Now. Telling you. Now.

As if telling you now.

Help would help.

I cannot. A life.

I cannot. An ache.

I cannot. I ache.

I'm life. I'm ache. I cannot. I ache alive.

But hope dances.

Dances free. Is free. Flies free. Is dance and is flight.

I can tell you what hope gives. Hope gives. What hope gives.

I can tell you.

Flight.

In-Between Photographs



