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Towards Theatre Remix: A Net Generational Perspective on Theatre Making

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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ABSTRACT

My research explicates the process of remix, normally associated with digital media, and contemplates how it could be applied to live performance in order to create a 'theatre remix'. I locate my own subject position as a theatre maker within what is termed the Net Generation and regard remix as part of the Net Generation's creative expression.

This paper outlines the characteristics, significance and mindset of the Net Generation to provide context for and to enable a better comprehension of remix as a creative expression for the Net Generation. Remix is regarded as a conscious process used to innovate and create through means of copy, transformation and combination. The possible cultural implications of remix are considered as a challenge to notions of originality, a larger cultural need to celebrate re-appropriation and 'laying claim' to cultural inheritance by making use of popular culture as a source for new creative works. It is acknowledged that we live in a convergence culture (as posited by Henry Jenkins 2006), where content moves between different forms of media. For example an image, song or narrative is transferable across a range of media such as television, cinema, the Internet or theatre. A possibility to converge digital sources with live performance in order to create a 'theatre remix' lies in seeking the similarities between these seemingly different media.

I contend that what could possibly be most enticing about remixing digital media with performance is that, due to performance's liveness, it offers something other remixes cannot – *presence*. Remixes are predominantly digital such as music, remixing clips from movies to create faux trailers for hypothetical movies and setting remixed movie clips to remixed music. Therefore they are mediated and cannot be experienced in the same way one would experience a live event.

This paper is written as a supplement to the practical component of the University of Cape Town's MA Theatre and Performance (Theatre Making) degree and at the time of completion, this culminating practical project was in its conceptualisation phase. In the creation of this production I intend to find and highlight the links between specific Shakespearean texts and the *Star Wars* universe. The impulse to mash and remix these two 'worlds' stemmed from my own realisation that these two 'universes' are much alike, from their cultural impact in our society to their themes and characters, and therefore have the potential to converge in order to create an original 'theatre remix'.

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Towards Theatre Remix: A Net Generational Perspective on Theatre Making

Young people are embracing remix en masse, and it is increasingly integral to how they make meaning and express ideas.

(Knobel & Lankshear 2008:23)

The recombinant (the bootleg, the remix, the mash-up) has become the characteristic pivot at the turn of our two centuries.

(Gibson cited in Gunkel 2008:489)

What is so great about this next generation of performance is that it is so...engaged with eliminating old definitions.

(Sellars cited in Oddey 2007:60)

INTRODUCTION

“A young friend recently admitted to me that, although he loves adaptations, he cannot bear going to stage-play versions: they seem so ‘stagey’ and unrealistic to him because he is part of a generation raised on film and television, with their conventions of naturalism and immediacy” (Hutcheon 2006:129). I must confess that there are times in my own life where going to see a play does not seem as appealing as going to see a film. I believe that perhaps this occurs since I am part of a generation that has been “bathed in bits”, as Don Tapscott (2009) asserts. My own literacy and frame of reference is perhaps more geared towards the digital. By locating my own subject position within what is termed the ‘Net Generation’¹ it clarified my own perspective as an individual and a theatre maker.

My research explicates the process of remix, normally associated with digital media, and how it could be applied to live performance from a Net Generational theatre maker’s perspective. This is done since remix can be viewed as part of the Net Generation’s mindset and to acknowledge that we live in a convergence culture – where content flows between different forms of media – since “this is a multi-media, cross-platform age. The old forms are collapsing. Categories of fiction and non-fiction, poetry and the novel, stage and text, hardly serve us anymore. The interesting work is being done among the rubble of this collapse. We have to be building new forms, finding new ways of working” (Winterson cited in Oddey 2007:22).

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 The Net Generation: A Theatre Maker’s Subject Position investigates the characteristics associated with the Net Generation² in order to better comprehend the general attitudes and mindset held by my generation. I then turn to the significance of the Net Generation since it is the largest generation³ on earth. The consequence of the Net Generation’s size is that their “culture will increasingly expand and influence the rest of society” (Tapscott 2009:5). I then consider the Net Generation’s mindset and perspective on the world, following Knobel and Lankshear’s (2006) assertions. These are strongly tied to the Net Generation’s attitude and use of technology since digital media and technology has saturated most of the Net Generation from a young age.

¹ As posited by Tapscott 2009 and Erickson 2008.

² Persons born during the twenty years spanning from 1980 to around 2000 (Erickson 2008:5).

³ Based on population figures.

Chapter 2 Remix: A Process for Creation outlines the process of remix, which is “to combine or edit existing materials to produce something new” (Ferguson 2010). Remix is regarded as “a practice very much in keeping with current times, and ... a product of our technological ability to surf, sample⁴ and mix” (MacDonald cited in Knobel & Lankshear 2006:116). I elaborate on the notion that ‘remix’ has extended its initial association with music and regard remix as a *conscious* process of copy, transformation and combination (Ferguson 2011b). I then move to addressing remix in relation to the Net Generation. Lessig posits remix as “the writing of the 21st century. It is literacy for a new generation. It is building a different democracy; it is building a different culture where people participate in the creation and the recreation of the culture around us” (Lessig as cited in *RIP: A Remix Manifesto*, 2009). I then consider the cultural implications of remix especially in relation to how consumers can make use of remix in order to ‘lay claim’ to cultural objects and make them part of their own creative expression since as a theatre maker I cannot ignore consumerism’s influence on my creative work. This chapter concludes by regarding remix as a challenge to notions of originality, exclusive owner-authorship and copyright infringement.

As Net Gener⁵ and a theatre maker I find remix captivating. I am not a video editor; I am not a digital musician. My passion and craft lies in the theatre and I consciously make remix part of my theatre making practice. Although the notion and terminology of remix is usually applied to digital mediums, in *Chapter 3 From Digital to Theatre Remix: Possibilities for Theatre and Performance* I explore the possible impact digital media would have on the performance text and production once digital samples have ‘stepped off the screen’ and into the corporeal. This possibility is framed in relation to Henry Jenkins’s (2006) notion of media convergence. In this chapter I also contend that in order for convergence to occur, similarities between various media need to be drawn in order for texts to flow from one into the other. The possibilities for drawing these similarities are considered in relation to Knobel and Lankshear’s (2008) notion of ‘L/literacies’ and Allain and Harvie’s (2006) assertions concerning liveness and presence.

I conclude by placing more focus on my thesis production⁶ with which I practically experiment with the theories explicated in this paper. In the creation of my thesis production I intend to find and highlight the links between specific Shakespearean texts and the *Star Wars* universe (the world of *Star Wars*, as created and conceptualised by George Lucas). The impulse to mash and remix these

⁴ Sampling refers to the process of lifting an extract or piece of text directly out of another text in order to recombine these samples to create a new work.

⁵ Tapscott (2009) makes use of this term as someone born between 1980 and 2000, forming part of the Net Generation.

⁶ *The Empire Striketh Back* as working title. See appendix for first draft of the script.

two 'worlds' stemmed from my own realisation that these two 'universes' are much alike, from their cultural impact in our society to their themes and characters. Since I am remixing, sampling dialogue, characterisation and design from both, I do not intend to re-tell a Shakespearean narrative or the *Star Wars* narrative. I intend to create a new narrative in an effort not only to converge the two worlds, but also attempt to find theatrical ways for presenting content that exist in other media. I regard the experiment occurring predominantly in the process of transforming and recombining the samples I take from the Shakespearean texts and the *Star Wars* Trilogy. I am hoping that in this process I will arrive at a coherent narrative and aesthetic that I can relay to the audience in a theatrical manner. Furthermore, I am hoping to "[take] an idea and [make] it suitable for a whole new audience" (Mason 2008:82) by perhaps allowing other theatre makers and a theatre-going audience to become aware of the process and possibilities of 'theatre remix'.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 1

THE NET GENERATION:

A THEATRE MAKER'S SUBJECT POSITION

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Characteristics of the Net Generation

Erickson defines a generation as “a group of people who, based on their age, share a common global location in history *and the experiences and mind-set that accompany it*” (Erickson 2008:5). Tapscott⁷ proposes that every generation is exposed to a unique range of occurrences that “defines their place in history and shapes their outlook” (Tapscott 2009:16). Erickson (2008:5) defines the Net Generation⁸ as persons born during the twenty years spanning from 1980 to around 2000⁹.

I would like to make it apparent that defining a generation does not suggest that every person born during a certain time-period has identical beliefs, experiences and outlooks. Erickson notes that naturally each individual, as part of a specific generation, has had somewhat dissimilar experiences depending on the country the individual lives in, their family’s socioeconomic background, and “a host of other factors” (Erickson 2008:25). However, Erickson goes on to observe that perhaps the Net Generation, due to the era of global communication, has more prominent and shared characteristics than any other generation before it (Erickson 2008:25). “With the rise of the Internet, the distinct localized characteristics specific to young people are somehow fading. Yes, countries and regions will still have unique cultures and independent features, but increasingly young people around the world are becoming very much alike” (Tapscott 2009:27). I posit that due to the Internet and online interaction, one could become increasingly aware of shared ideas, social structures and cultures globally, that one’s own identity can find resonance beyond national borders. I find myself more often than not thinking in ‘global terms’ since I actively engage with global trends online, take part in online discussion forums, expose myself to popular culture in the form of comic books, television shows and films that I relate to and which transcend national borders. Tapscott notes, “what makes the Net Gen unique? More than anything else, the Internet and its global reach. A true global generation of youth is emerging” (2009:23). This is not definitive, but rather a potential, since not every Net Gener necessarily has Internet access or is active online – but one cannot ignore that increasing Internet access is growing globally; “The global growth rate [of Internet users] from 2000

⁷ Tapscott’s book *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World* is based on a study conducted by his company “nGenera” between 2006 and 2008. Researchers interviewed over 6000 Net Geners from around the world including China, Brazil, India, Canada and the United States of America.

⁸ Or Generation Y.

⁹ Erickson notes that the Net Generation will possibly span between fifteen and twenty years based on previous generational models, and will therefore also include those born in 1995 and possibly up to those born in 2000 (Erickson 2008:6), although demographers are still debating the precise boundaries (Erickson 2008:5).

to 2008 was 290 per cent, meaning that across the world the number of people using the Internet has more than tripled” over eight years (Tapscott 2009:23). In South Africa¹⁰ “the Internet user base grew by 15% in 2009, from 4.6-million to 5.3-million, and is expected to grow at a similar rate in 2010” (Muller 2010). I am fortunate and privileged to be a Net Gener who does have access to the Internet and a range of other media, therefore I resonate with the notion of being part of ‘a global generation’ and I strongly relate to the description of Net Gener in this chapter.

Erickson remarks that the Net Generation is the first generation to be ‘plugged in’ to technology from birth (Erickson 2008:xvi) and Tapscott notes that the Net Generation are different from any other generation because they were the first to grow up saturated by digital media (Tapscott 2009:2). “Today’s kids are so bathed in bits that they think it’s all part of the natural landscape” (Tapscott 2009:2). Due to being exposed to and saturated by a range of digital media from a very young age, “[The Net Generation’s] is a world of proliferation – of brands, media, product type and channels” (Erickson 2008:38). I would argue that because of this ‘proliferation’ Net Gener are actively personalising the cultural and commercial objects they consume, by for example, customizing the products they purchase. Tapscott notes that Net Gener “love to customize, personalize...they have grown up getting what media they want, when they want it, and being able to change it” (Tapscott 2009:35). I would assert that this ‘love to customise and personalise’ provides insight into how the Net Generation makes use of media and cultural objects in expressing their creativity. Furthermore, due to this understanding of and close relationship with technology, for the Net Generation “it’s natural to have virtual relationships, participate in online communities, and explore ideas in a global context” (Erickson 2008:xvi). This suggests that it is plausible, more so than for other generations, for the Net Generation to view themselves as citizens of a global world (Erickson 2008:9) and that most Net Gener have grown up feeling connected to a global community (Erickson 2008:10). Westlake observes that this connection with technology is often seen, by other generations, as a weakness of the Net Generation.

Contrary to prevailing attitudes of Baby Boomers and Generation X-ers that Generation Y is somehow socially and politically disengaged because of technology, the opposite is true. Studies show, in fact, that while young people are spending more time on the computer they are more connected than ever in large part because technology facilitates contact in ways unfathomable even ten years ago (Westlake 2008:23).

¹⁰ It is estimated that 44% of all South African online users are Net Gener (Muller 2010).

Tapscott advocates that the Net Generation is a generation of collaborators and networkers (Tapscott 2009:35). The Net Generation collaborate on Facebook, take part in multi-user video games and stay in touch with each other continually through cellular networks and social media (Tapscott 2009:35). One could argue that due to this 'hyper-connectivity', the Net Generation is influencing each other through what Tapscott calls "N-fluence networks – online networks of Net Geners who, among other things, discuss brands, companies, products and services" (Tapscott 2009:35). Tapscott continues by noting that media and advertisement companies have come to realise that the time-honoured notion of 'word-of-mouth' has reached an apex with the Net Generation, due to these 'N-fluence' networks (Tapscott 2009:35) and the significance it might hold for future media and business endeavours. I would contend that as a Net Generation theatre maker, one could harness these 'N-fluence' networks to determine the ideas and perspectives circulating among a potential Net Generation audience and theatre makers. By becoming aware of what circulates among a potential audience, it becomes possible for a theatre maker to incorporate and engage with these shared ideas and perspectives into one's performances, to potentially resonate with a Net Generation audience.

The Net Generation's Significance

The idea that youth...might change things seems naïve and quaint in an age where new trends are sold back to us before we even knew they were happening. People who still take such things seriously are living in a dream world (Mason 2008:204).

The *Oxford Dictionary Online* defines the term 'youth' as the following: "the period between childhood and adult age" or "the qualities of vigour, freshness or immaturity as associated with being young" and "young people considered as a group" (Accessed 7 July 2010). The Net Generation could be considered today's 'youth' since, as noted earlier, a generation represents a group of people based on age (Erickson 2008:5) and therefore today the oldest members of the Net Generation are 31 years old, and the youngest are 11 years old. Although I agree with Mason's statement, that 'youth' cannot necessarily 'change things', one has to keep in mind how the world might or could shift once the Net Generation has more buying power, starts entering the job market and starts being more active in society. As Erickson asserts, a generation shares a common position in history and "the experiences and mind-set that accompany it" (Erickson 2008:5). I would argue that this suggests that as the Net Generation are starting to occupy the workforce; their outlook on the world could become more prevalent. "The bottom line is this: if you understand the Net Generation, you will understand the future. You will also understand how our institutions and society need to change today" (Tapscott 2009:11).

One could argue that Tapscott's statement appears bold and naïve but when one takes global statistics into consideration his statement carries more weight. The Net Generation is "the largest consumer group and [potential] employee group in history – representing more than one-third of the global population...in total there are about 2.3 billion Y's" (Erickson 2008:7). I concur with the point made in the previous section concerning the Net Generation's sense of global community due to communication technology. Due to this I have become increasingly aware of shared ideas, social structures and cultures that circulate globally but I remain interested in how these global figures for the Net Generation relate to South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa's *Mid-Year Population Estimates 2011*, there are an estimated 19 992 690 Net Gener South Africans. In relation to the 50 586 757 estimate for the total South African population, the Net Generation in South Africa is approximately 40% of the total South African population¹¹ (Statistics South Africa 2011:9).

Erickson observed that the consequence of the Net Generation's size is that they are unquestionably influential because they represent a huge market (Erickson 2008:8) and they "will dominate the workforce for the next forty years and will be a significant presence for at least sixty years or so" (Erickson 2008:8). Perhaps due to this 'presence' and through the use of digital media – which the Net Generation has been exposed to for most of their lives – the Net Generation's culture will increasingly expand and influence the rest of society (Tapscott 2009:5). The following section provides insight into what the Net Generation's 'culture' might be.

Not Just a Generation Gap: Different Mindsets in the Twenty First Century

A new generation has emerged, with new values, and it understands the new media much better than the boomers do. The situation that has developed is a classic generation gap. No wonder you see so much confusion and insecurity being shown by the boomers, not to mention all the nasty books, articles and TV shows targeting today's youth and the Net Generation's culture and new media (Tapscott 2009:7).

I would argue that the above-mentioned opposition by older generations toward the Net Generation is not simply a 'generation gap', but rather dissociation caused by opposing 'mindsets'. According to Knobel and Lankshear a mindset "usually refers to a point of view, perspective or frame of reference through which individuals or groups of people experience the world, interpret or make sense of what they encounter, and respond to what they experience" (2006:31). This implies that mindsets could be regarded as sets of expectations, attitudes, principles, and behaviours that position us toward "what

¹¹ Whereas Generation X (ages 30-49) is an estimated 25% and the Boomers (ages 50-69) are approximately 12% (Statistics South Africa 2011:9)

we experience and incline us to understand and respond in some ways more than others” (Knobel & Lankshear 2006:31). Knobel and Lankshear contend that in the twenty first century, mainly due to technological development that preceded its advent, there exist two divergent mindsets (2006:34). For the first mindset, the world that new technologies are operating in is the same social, cultural and economic world “where things got done by means of...long-standing assumptions about bodies, materials, property and forms of ownership, industrial techniques and principles, physical texts, face-to-face dealings” (Knobel & Lankshear 2006:34). “The second mindset assumes that the contemporary world is different in important ways from the world we have known, and that the difference is growing. This is related to the development of new digital electronic internetworked technologies and new ways of doing things and new ways of being that are enabled by these technologies” (Knobel & Lankshear 2006:34). The second mindset perceives the world as changed in rather core ways due to the envisioning and exploration of making use of new technologies in understanding and being a part of the world (Knobel & Lankshear 2006:34). Technologies are not merely used to improve on already established activities; rather these technologies present new activities and different social, economic and cultural possibilities (Knobel & Lankshear 2006:34). Unlike the first mindset, the second mindset cannot adequately interpret, understand and respond to the world merely in physical-industrial terms (Knobel & Lankshear 2006:38). For example, Steven Johnson asserts that Google has become contemporary culture’s principle way of knowing and understanding our world (Johnson 2005:121) and that especially the Net Generation “instinctively turn first to the Net to communicate, understand, learn and find” (Tapscott 2009:9). ‘Tools’ such as the Internet are utilised for mediating and relating and social relations are based on the emerging digital media spaces (Knobel & Lankshear 2006:38), not only based on physical interaction. This notion of divergent mindsets suggests that these mindsets are distinguished by attitudes toward technology. The second mindset incorporates technology into their lives in order to learn, communicate, understand and develop, whereas the first mindset utilises technology as a mere tool to make prior activities more convenient.

Barlow surmises that this distinction, more likely than not, exists along generational lines and that generally speaking, “people over 35 are ‘newcomers’ and, conversely, that those...who are under 35 are closer to being ‘insiders’ in terms of understanding what the Internet is” (Barlow cited in Knobel & Lankshear 2006:35). I am not suggesting that only the Net Generation possesses the second mindset or that the first mindset is only held by older generations, but since these mindsets are related to attitudes toward technology it could be contended that since the most significant factor affecting youth, in the last twenty years, is the escalating growth of the Internet, computing

advancements and the expansion of digital technologies (Tapscott 2009:17) the Net Generation are more likely to possess the second mindset.

Tapscott argues that generational differences are not just related to the way in which the Net Generation makes use of technology but that they also “seem to behave, and even be different” (Tapscott 2009:10) since ‘growing up digital’ has had an overwhelming influence on the way the Net Generation thinks¹² (Tapscott 2009:10). According to Tapscott this digital saturation is taking place during a time – namely teenage years and adolescence – when the human mind is exceptionally sensitive to outside influence (Tapscott 2009:100).

Swiss biologist and psychologist Jean Piaget extrapolated that “children build cognitive structures – mental maps – to help make sense of their experiences. The time when most of us form our map of abstract concepts and ideas is when we are teens” (Erickson 2008:24). Therefore, each generation’s communal teen experiences have a profound influence on its members’ shared philosophy, actions and responses (Erickson 2008:24). This gives insight to the assertion that “each generation forms its own unique impressions and therefore, to some extent, operates under a different set of rules: each group has experienced a very different world when they were teens...influenc[ing] the generations’ attitudes towards the world and toward each other for as long as they live” (Erickson 2008:24).

As a consequence of this digital immersion during such an influential time, Tapscott believes that the minds of the Net Generation could be ‘wired’ differently:

There are many reasons to believe that what we are seeing is the first case of a generation that is growing up with brains that are wired differently from those of the previous generations. Evidence is mounting that the Net Geners process information and behave differently because they have indeed developed brains that are functionally different than those of their parents¹³ (Tapscott 2009:29).

The Net Generation mind does not function in a sequential way; rather “[they] think differently from the rest of us. They develop hypertext minds...It’s as though their cognitive structures were parallel, not sequential” (Winn cited in Tapscott 2009:105). Tapscott notes that Marc Prensky argued in his book *Digital Game-Based Learning* (2000) that this notion of ‘hypertext minds’ is “one way that

¹² Tapscott illustrates this immersion by observing that “by the time Net Generation kids reach their twenties, the typical Net Gener has spent over 20 000 hours on the Internet and over 10 000 hours playing videos games of some kind” (Tapscott 2009:100).

¹³ This is based on research done by two brain scientists – Stanley Kutcher and his son Matthew. The Kutchers described how time spent with digital technologies may be changing the physical structure and functioning of their developing brains (Tapscott 2009:29).

digital immersion has rewired brains” (Tapscott 2009:105). As a Net Generational theatre maker I resonate with the notion of ‘parallel processing’ and ‘hypertextual minds’ since I have noted in my own work that I draw on various ideas - sometimes seemingly ‘unrelated’ ideas - during my creative process wherein I seek to explore a theme or concept through making connections between various source materials. For example, my ‘medium project’ *Die Buffel.exe* (2010) was a re-conceptualisation of Anton Chekov’s *The Bear*. I focussed on the theme of ‘life and love as a game’ and conceptualised the production as a digital game, alluding stylistically to computer games such as *Pacman* and *Guitar Hero*. The notion of ‘the game’ or ‘playing a game’ was not only represented in the allusion to actual computer gaming, but also in ‘power play’ amongst subcultures and consumers since each character was a representation of a particular subculture. The conflict between the characters was not only based on the theme of ‘love as a game’ (unrequited love), but also a tension between the various subcultures since the unrequited love was based predominantly on subcultural differences between the potential lovers. It could be argued that I made connections between the notions of ‘gaming’ as presented in the original text, the sphere of the digital and that of ‘everyday’ consumers and the power subcultures have over them in terms of their life choices. The following chapter considers an example of Net Generational creativity that makes use of finding connections and combining materials.

CHAPTER 2

REMIX: A PROCESS OF CREATION

Copy, Transform and Combine

The practice of remix, understood as “an alternative mix of a recorded song that differed from the original... taking apart the various instruments and components that make up a recording and remixing them into something that sounds completely different” (Seggern cited in Knobel & Lankshear 2008:22), started as a movement in music in Jamaica in 1967 (Mason 2008:72). It then evolved into a controversial idea and subsequently became a mass movement that spans several music genres (Mason 2008:72). Filmmaker Johan Söderberg makes use of an accessible analogy for describing remix:

To me, it is just like cooking. In your cupboard in your kitchen you have lots of different things and you try to connect different tastes together to create something interesting. The remix artist does the same thing with bits of culture found in his digital cupboard (Söderberg cited in Lessig 2008:71).

I would like to add to Söderberg’s analogy; in relation to cooking, there exist established and tested recipes but when remixing, one does not strictly follow the recipe but rather adds or omits ingredients to ‘mix and match’ in order to better suit the ‘tastes’ and ‘flavours’ one would like to emphasise.

The ‘bits of culture’ Söderberg mentions, is what is generally and widely known as a sample; an extract or piece of text lifted directly out of another text. According to Lessig remix is not mere copying since a copy refers to efforts not to alter the original work whereas “remix means transformative work” (Lessig 2008:255). It is fundamental to bear in mind that remixing is not a subconscious recombination or influence since “Remixing is a *conscious* process used to innovate and create” (Mason 2008:71, emphasis added). Remixers take cultural objects and combine and manipulate them into new creative blends (Seggern cited in Knobel & Lankshear 2008:22) in order to tell new stories, to have fun ... or to make social and political points (Knobel & Lankshear 2008:24).

Remix has now been widened to “include music and sound as well as moving and static images taken from films, television, the Internet, personal archives, and elsewhere” (Knobel & Lankshear 2008:22). Another form of remix is mash-ups. Gunkel describes mash-ups as “a bastard art form created by the illegitimate appropriation and fusion of two or more audio recordings” (Gunkel 2008: 490). This usually involves the ‘mashing’ of songs from different genres and does not only refer to music. Shiga observes that “two aspects of mash-up culture suggest that listening techniques are increasingly intertwined with looking and seeing: The mash-up technique is being

applied to images, video as well as audio, which stitches the sensorium together rather than parcelling it...Second is the growing concern with materializing mash-up culture in the ‘offline’ world” (Shiga 2007:100). I would argue that this notion of the ‘offline mash-ups’ points to a possible need for people to experience ‘live’ remixes. As a theatre maker I find this point especially interesting since I am striving to make use of the process of sampling and remix within theatre practice, which is concerned with ‘looking and seeing’ and ‘liveness’¹⁴.

Siva Vaidhyanathan, a cultural critic, observed that remixes and mash-ups have a rich lineage dating back to literary pastiches, musical sampling and artistic appropriations (Vaidhyanathan cited in Rimmer 2007:131). Brett Gaylor states, “from the Dadaists, to the Beat Poets to the Pop Art of Warhol, remixers are standing on the shoulders of giants” (*RIP: A Remix Manifesto* 2009). It is no secret that “humans have always created new things by repurposing old ones” (Mason 2008:71) and that culture is entrenched by re-use and reinvention (O’Reilly cited in Knobel & Lankshear 2006:116). Lasica asserts that borrowing from earlier work is at the heart of creativity for many people since

Every painter learns by emulating the masters...The fandom phenomenon celebrates pop culture by appropriating it: young adults publish comic-book fanzines that borrow copyrighted images; on Internet fan fiction sites, viewers write episodes that add new story line for characters from more than five hundred television shows; amateur video buffs have created more than four hundred homemade versions of *Star Wars* and circulated them online (Lasica cited in Rimmer 2007:7).

“Borrowing from earlier works has always been a time-honored [sic] and accepted part of the creative tradition” (Lasica cited in Rimmer 2007:7). Ferguson supports this notion by stating “The act of creation is surrounded by a fog of myths. Myths that creativity comes via inspiration. That original creations break the mold, that they’re the products of geniuses, and appear as quickly as electricity can heat a filament. But creativity isn’t magic: it happens by applying ordinary tools of thought to existing materials” (Ferguson 2011b) and that the basic elements of creativity are copy, transformation and combination (Ferguson 2011b). I assert that whether one remixes or draws on one’s own lived experiences in creating; these three elements are usually at play during the creative process. Remix makes use of a specific *conscious* creative process; taking parts of pre-existing texts (aural and visual) and combining them in order to create something new (transformation). As a

¹⁴ These notions are investigated in chapter three: *From Digital to Theatre Remix: Possibilities for Theatre and Performance*.

theatre maker, I make use of this process (which is usually associated with the digital sphere) by applying it to a theatre context by sampling for a production's design, lighting, dialogue or script, characterization and staging.

What I find captivating about remixing, whether I am the remixer or spectator of a remix, is the attempt to find the links and associations between the samples the remixer is making use of and how the combination of these samples creates a new piece. Lessig states; "knowing that the song [or video or image] is a mix that could draw upon all that went before, each second is an invitation to understand the links that were drawn - their meaning, the reason they were included" (Lessig 2008:93). This suggests that when one refers to a piece of work as a remix, there are certain associations and expectations that the audience may possibly bring to the work; it is as though remix is 'self-aware' and offers an open invitation to make connections. A remix's "meaning comes not from the content of what they say; it comes from the reference... And it is this 'cultural reference'...that has emotional meaning to people" (Lessig 2008:74-75). I would argue that because of the importance of referencing in remixes, that remixes are intertextual works.

Intertextuality cannot be confined to one clear definition since it is a flexible term and has, for example, been used by poststructuralist critics to disrupt notions of meaning; whilst structuralist critics employ the same term to locate fixed literary meaning (Allen 2000:4). I would argue that intertextuality is a useful term and idea for my research and practice since no matter how intertextuality is interpreted, "it foregrounds notions of relationality, interconnectedness and interdependence in modern cultural life... theorists [of intertextuality] often claim, it is not possible any longer to speak of originality or the uniqueness of the artistic object, be it a painting or a novel, since every artistic object is so clearly assembled from bits and pieces of already existent art" (Allen 2000:5). One could argue that remixes challenge the very notion of originality since remixers consciously 'compose' new works through the recombination of existing texts. Tryon contends that remixes "allow users to find a new language informed by popular culture with which they can comment on current events. As a result...remixes, through their complicated renegotiation of intertextuality, illustrated the degree to which texts work in constant dialogue not only with other texts but also with audiences themselves¹⁵" (Tryon 2009: 173).

¹⁵ The notion of challenging originality is further investigated in this chapter's section entitled *The Implications of Remix Culture*.

The Net Generation and Remix

Although remix is “the latest incarnation of a widely shared, deeply embedded cultural habit of cultural recombination across time and space” (Vaidhyathan cited in Rimmer 2007:131), ‘remix’ as described in this chapter is “a practice very much in keeping with current times, and...a product of our technological ability to surf, sample and mix” (MacDonald cited in Knobel & Lankshear 2006:116). I would argue that although remix might be regarded as ‘unoriginal’, it has become the means by which a generation is communicating; expressing their ideas amongst themselves and to the world around them since “young people are embracing remix *en masse*, and it is increasingly integral to how they make meaning and express ideas” (Knobel & Lankshear 2008:23).

Serazio (2008:90) argues “that Generation Y’s pop narrative – the collective memory based upon shared experiences moving through music history – has been utterly fragmented...This potentially explains the appeal and resonance of the mash-up [and remix]”, since remix and mash-up conceivably “identify the scattered pieces of pop detritus that litter the media-soaked landscape (and, with it, identity) and manages to make it coherent at the same time” (Serazio 2008:90). Hennion situates the drive to remix within the framework of a greater generational tendency (Hennion cited in Serazio 2008:82) and Serazio further notes that remix is “a definitive generational statement” (Serazio 2008:91). Although, as Knobel and Lankshear postulate that remix is embraced by younger people, I would like to make it apparent that remix is not only practiced by the Net Generation, but rather that remix can be seen as a practice which possibly resonates strongly with the Net Generation.

Lessig observes that remixes have struggled to gain legitimacy due to a ‘generation gap’. “Our culture, the story goes, is collapsing. There are no standards anymore. There is no quality. Taste and art are wasting away. Every generation has had the experience of an older generation insisting that the new is degraded, that only the old is great” (Lessig 2008:96). In response to this statement filmmaker Victor Stone is not perturbed when he states:

You know...this discussion will be over in ten or twenty years. As the boomers die out, and they get over themselves by dying, the generation that follows...just doesn’t care about this discussion. They just assume that remixing is part of music [and of culture] and it’s part of the process, and that’s it (Stone cited in Lessig 2008:96-97).

What Stone is suggesting – that remix will become a more integral part of creativity since it is a practice already embraced by the Net Generation – could be regarded as acutely valid due to the Net

Generation's previously noted size and its subsequent significance and impact it could bear on society.

As noted in chapter one, growing up immersed in technology has shaped many of the Net Generation's assumptions, activities and behaviours (Erickson 2008:34). Serazio asks "what, then, makes the mash-up [and remix] such a fitting expression of the Generation Y experience in this media unlimited world?" (Serazio 2008:90). Serazio suggests that remix and mash-ups could be a fitting expression for the Net Generation since Net Geners are a key factor in remix:

I'm twenty five and I have no experience with anything except media...the language I understand is media, so when I make something, as a raw material it's the only thing I'm comfortable with. It's not a conscious effort; being a hacker or making a political statement...It doesn't make sense for me to just draw stuff. I think with a lot of artists my age, it's all just mashing stuff together, and it's all about connotation and it's all about how things fit together, and it's all about cultural reference (Arcangel cited in Serazio 2008:90).

As established, digital media has saturated the Net Generation from a very young age, therefore it could be contended that they are highly 'media literate'. Lanham claims that digitally literate people are "quick on their feet in moving from one kind of medium to another" (Lanham cited in Knobel & Lankshear 2006:22). I would argue that Lanham's statement provides insight to the generational expression of remix since remix is "crisscrossing media borders" (Serazio 2008:90), which would seem natural to the digitally literate Net Generation.

Similar to Arcangel, remixer Mark Hosler from the group *Negativland*¹⁶ states that:

When you turn around 360 degrees, how many different ads or logos will you see somewhere in your space? [O]n your car, on your wristwatch, on a billboard. If you walk into any grocery store or restaurant or anywhere to shop, there's always a soundtrack playing. There's always...media. There are ads. There are magazines everywhere...it's the world we live in. It's the landscape around us (Hosler cited in Lessig 2008:74).

This landscape becomes the source for remixers to draw and sample from. As a Net Gener and theatre maker, I strongly resonate with Hosler and Arcangel. When I create, media and popular culture are my frames of reference and I too make use of these as 'raw materials' to sample from.

¹⁶ A prolific remix and mash-up band from San Francisco with a career that has spanned three decades, producing 12 full length albums, the latest of which *Thigmotactic* was released in 2008.

The Implications of Remix Culture

Whether remix is highly novel or not does not alter its pervasiveness in today's culture. "The Remix is one of the most powerful forces in pop culture today" (Mason 2008:70) and "it's no exaggeration to say that the cut-and-paste culture born out of sampling and remixing has revolutionized the way we interpret the world" (Mason 2008:71). Mason contends that since remix is so prevalent in our culture, the ethos of remix is engrained in popular culture and our everyday lives (Mason 2008:72). I would argue that this 'ethos of remix' embodies Ferguson's (2011b) previously discussed notion of copy, transform and combine.

Mason states; "the remix is nothing less than a new way to communicate" (Mason 2008:80). This discernment could be due to "the remix today [being] part of how our culture operates and relates to itself. The blending of styles, the appropriation of signs and symbols, sounds and images" (Howard-Spink cited in Rimmer 2007:151) causes a "vital habit of borrowing across the lines of race, class, gender and national identity" (Gunderson 2004). I would argue that is important since borrowing across these lines could potentially enable society to have a better comprehension of, and appreciation for individual cultures and identity markers. As Thomas Goetz proposes, this generous borrowing and referencing suggests that contemporary culture, at its root, "has already decided it wants to be a hybrid nation of explicit influences" (Goetz cited in Rimmer 2007:273). Sandywell and Beer postulate that we are possibly living during an intermediary period; "a period of creative cross-fertilisation and hybridisation on a global scale" (Sandywell & Beer 2005:108). Conceivably we reside in an age of transformation wherein "the fixity of structures, hierarchies and stable categories is out of tune with the morphing zeitgeist of playful experimentation" (Sandywell & Beer 2005:107).

Due to its popularity and proliferation, Serazio presupposes that remix expresses a larger cultural need which would seem to be a celebration of re-appropriation and "an indication that, in today's supersaturated media environment, originality is open to larceny; it can be seen as a sign of too many signs" (Serazio 2008:79). Gunderson notes that:

the very metaphor of the 'mash-up' suggests a process of deconstructing, an introduction of confusion... one could look askance at mash-ups, viewing them as puerile, disrespectful mucking about with other people's property, but one could also celebrate that very puerility insofar as it is anti-oedipal – insofar as it short circuits the culture industry's normally enforced boundaries between disparate genres...the sense of humour immanent to a good

mash-up...signify our liberation from an excessively restrictive horizon of expectations (Gunderson 2004).

This notion of 'liberation' could be related to frustration with available media. Jenkins notes that "if media didn't fascinate us, there would be no desire to engage with it; but if it didn't frustrate us on some level, there would be no desire to rewrite or remake it" (Jenkins 2006:258) and consequently, one could argue, there would be no desire to remix. "News stories often present mash-up culture as a form of resistance... work is borne out of a serious discomfort with today's pop pap" (Shiga 2007:94) and Wickson asserts that remix could be the urge "for something beyond the ordinary...It tells me that people want an experience that is their own and different than what is available" (Wickson cited in Serazio 2008:87). I would assert that through remix consumers of popular culture are transforming these cultural objects and become producers to some extent.

Hermes contends that "Popular culture is not the stuff of lowest-common-denominators; it is the stuff of citizenship and connection. It could and should lead to widespread discussion, but it does not often do so because we are not used to understanding popular culture as a resource" (Hermes 2005:viii). If one embraces this notion, it stands to reason that popular culture is not only a potential resource for theatre makers but can also be utilised by the consumers of popular culture. In this exchange, both parties become potential co-creators of cultural texts. I regard the notion of 'the consumer' as relevant in my research since it could be argued that remix encourages consumers to be producers; that they can take cultural objects and re-appropriate them. Furthermore, since I frame myself as a Net Gen theatre maker who draws heavily on various popular culture media such as movies, television shows, advertisements, comic books, Internet content and popular music, I cannot ignore the influence consumerism has had on my own creativity as a theatre maker.

Fiske notes that "Popular texts...are completed only when taken up by people and inserted into their everyday culture. The people make popular culture at the interface between everyday life and the consumption of the products of the cultural industries... Relevance can be produced only by the people" (Fiske cited in Harrington & Bielby 2001:9). I would argue that within the notion of popular culture there lies a tension. As suggested by Fiske, consumers create popular culture; however, I would warrant that one must question the role consumption plays in Fiske's construct of popular culture. I am in support of Hermes's statement; "I readily grant the argument that, as consumers, readers have little control over popular culture. But as viewers and readers we do have a say how popular culture may have meaning for us" (Hermes 2005:viii). For Hermes the significance of popular culture lies "in what audiences *do* with it...how audiences take up their roles as cultural citizens by enjoying and making use of popular culture" (Hermes 2005:13, emphasis added).

I would argue that through making use of popular culture as a source to sample from and through remix transforming and re-appropriating popular cultural texts, it becomes a way of 'making use of popular culture' since "using the omnipresent sea of symbols, images, sounds and texts as sources of material, millions of people are laying claim to their cultural inheritance" (Rimmer 2007:7-8). Breitz notes that our world is saturated by mass and popular culture "yet we rarely see how it touches us, and how we process it as it touches us" (Breitz as cited in Lessig 2008:7). I would argue that remix is an example of how one processes the ways in which popular culture 'touches' us by taking what is made available in mass culture and instead of merely consuming it, using it as a source for new creative works.

This notion of re-appropriating popular culture in order to create new works could be regarded as a way of challenging the notions of originality and authorship. Gunderson remarks that remix possesses a "willingness to dance on the graves of pop music's forbears...If art is to move forward...it can only do so when repressive pieties are broken down" (Gunderson 2004). If one partakes in remix culture (as a producer or a spectator), one "must be ready for assaults on everything [one] hold[s] dear" (Shiga 2007:99), since remix and mash-ups undercut author intent and eradicate initial coded meanings and readings, and can consequently be seen as an activity in irreverence (Serazio 2008:83). "It's definitely reducing reverence towards original sources, and that's part of the reason why people are making mash-ups... the original tracks are no longer sacred or untouchable. Now, anything is fair game for mashing" (Gunderson cited in Serazio 2008:83).

Remix and mash-up culture is also renowned for its disregard for the aesthetic principles and notions of originality and its emergence could be regarded as "a backlash against the cultural authority" (Shiga 2007:104). Gunkel suggests that remix goes a bit further than this backlash since "it is the monstrous outcome of illegitimate fusions and promiscuous reconfigurations...that deliberately exceed the comprehension, control and proper authority of the 'original artist'. In doing so, however, [it] does not just challenge the authority of the author but demonstrates that the concept of authorship...has itself always been equivocal and something of artifice" (Gunkel 2008:501). It would appear that remix culture endorses a candid challenge to a culture based on exclusive ownership and authorship since

Against ownership it upholds an ethic of creative borrowing and sharing. Against the original it holds out an open process of recombination and creative transformation. It equally calls into question the categories, rifts and borders between high and low cultures, pop and elitist art practice, as well as blurring the lines between artistic disciplines (Schutze cited in Rimmer 2007:261).

“Hybridization, recycling, and irony – the holy trinity of pop culture today – seem entrenched in the entertainment industry and entwined in the material it puts out” and it is in this cultural environment that the remix emerged as “a product and symbol of a pop period not so much bankrupt of new ideas as set on bankrupting old ones” (Serazio 2008:79). Consequently, part of the remix is “taking an idea and making it suitable for a whole new audience” (Mason 2008:82). Although it could be argued that remix has become a recognised mode for certain industries, the remix still conveys mixed messages since “lawsuits rage across the world as artists struggle to prove they aren’t simply plagiarizing someone else’s concept by remixing it, but changing it, putting it in a different context, amplifying part of an idea, emitting another, or making it palatable to a whole new audience” (Mason 2008:72). These purposes that Mason is referring to are protected by the copyright doctrine of ‘Fair Use’. Fair Use is evaluated on a case-by-case basis (Olson 2005:8) since Fair Use courts examine “whether the purpose and nature of the work is transformative or superseding” (Olson 2005).

A work is more likely to be protected as fair use if it transforms the original from which it borrows by adding something new with a further purpose or different character, or altering it with new expression, message or meaning. On the other hand, if the new functions as a simple replacement for the original, then it is less likely to fall under the ambit of fair use (Olson 2005:5).

Gunderson notes “the original function of copyright was to encourage social advance by giving creators a financial stake in their work and by insisting that intellectual property became, after a reasonable period of time, public property” (Gunderson 2004). For Gunderson the public benefit has been efficiently factored out of the current copyright laws since “monopoly capital has turned a legal spur to innovation and creativity, into a tool for artistic repression” (Gunderson 2004). I would agree with Gunderson since what seems to be evident in terms of copyright law is that companies have financial gain¹⁷.

Serazio notes that industries are fighting a battle over the use of images “in an era when mashers [and remixers] target sources precisely because of their image” (Serazio 2008:87). Rosemary Coombe observed that signs and images of intellectual property are ubiquitous in ordinary life; “copyright symbols, trademarks and celebrity images are omnipresent and...intellectual property is not just a product of formal legislation, cases and policy documents: it is part of everyday life and experience” (Rimmer 2007:7). Copyright holders bombard us with their images and products usually

¹⁷ For example, the copyright to the song “Happy Birthday To You” is owned by Time Warner, subsequently it is copyright infringement to sing this song in public until the year 2030 when it becomes part of the public domain (Olsen 2003)

in an effort to get us to consume these products, yet when we as citizens and creators make use of this work it could be regarded as copyright infringement¹⁸.

Despite its assorted messages concerning originality, Mason insists that one should lionise remix since “in essence the remix is a creative mental process. It requires you to do nothing more than change the way you look at something... It’s about shifting your perception of something and taking in other elements and influences” (Mason 2008:81). The final chapter investigates possibilities for a theatre maker to take in ‘other elements and influences’ that are usually not associated with theatre practice (remix) in an effort to recognise the potential of media convergence.

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¹⁸ It could be contended that due to the prevalence of remix, copyright holders may be softening toward creators adding to and transforming their work. For example, “today, relations between LucasArts and the fan fiction community have thawed somewhat... *Star Wars* fan fiction is all over the Web, including on several of the most visible and mainstream fan sites. The Webmasters of those sites say that they deal with the official production company all the time on a range of different matters, but they have never asked to remove what once might have been read as infringing materials” (Jenkins 2006:158).

CHAPTER 3

FROM DIGITAL TO THEATRE REMIX:

POSSIBILITIES FOR THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE

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Media Convergence

Reflecting on the practice of remix Gilberto Gill states that remix is concerned with sharing; “Sharing is the nature of creation, it doesn’t happen in isolation. No one creates in a vacuum. Everything comes from something else. It is a chain reaction; music, literature and cinema” (Gill as cited in *RIP: A Remix Manifesto* 2009). I would regard my notion of ‘theatre remix’, whereby a theatre maker makes use of the process of remix, as continuing this chain reaction into theatre and performance as a form of expression for the Net Gener theatre maker. Furthermore, throughout *Re-Framing the Theatrical: Interdisciplinary Landscapes for Performance* Oddey (2007) uses terminology such as ‘conductor-composer-collaborator’, ‘theatre-art’ and ‘director-creator-collaborator’ since “it is a case of terminology chasing the evolving forms that become manifest” (Oddey 2007:43) and that:

The phenomenon of wrangling about what are new forms, for instance, whether *New Dance*, which uses text, video and sculpture is the same as *New Media*, which is based on the result of ultimately being digital and new, means a continual overlapping area of changing terminology and definitions (Oddey 2007:44).

Based on this notion of ‘changing terminology’ I refer to a theatre maker making use of the process of remix, as simply ‘theatre remix’ since “were it music, we’d call it sampling. Were it painting, it would be called collage” (Lessig 2008:51).

Before investigating the potential of media convergence¹⁹ I contend that one first needs to understand what ‘media’ means. The term ‘media’ could be understood in two ways. According to Gitelman media firstly refers to “a technology that enables communication” (Gitelman cited in Jenkins 2006:13) and secondly to “a set of associated ‘protocols’ or social and cultural practices that have grown up around that technology” (Jenkins 2006:14). I assert that it should be acknowledged that theatre is a form of media. Pavis notes “there is not much sense in defining theatre as ‘pure art’, or even in postulating a theory of theatre that neglects media practice, because the media accompany and influence theatre productions” (Pavis 1998:206). One should acknowledge that various media appear inherently dissimilar since it could be argued that we seek to focus on the differences, rather than the similarities, between media. It is important to note that even though various media may share similarities, various media are not exactly the same, i.e. a film is not a piece of theatre. While

¹⁹ As posited by Henry Jenkins (2006).

film and theatre both 'enable communication', they make use of different technologies in order to do so. I would like to note here that part of my experiment for my practical outcome is to find ways to make use of theatre technologies in order to convey what has been communicated through film technology. This could be regarded as an experimentation with remixing form such as theatrically conveying a filmic 'jump cut' or 'split screen'.

Media convergence "describes technological, industrial, cultural and social change in the ways media circulates within our culture... Perhaps most broadly, media convergence refers to a situation in which multiple media systems coexist and where media content flows fluidly across them" (Jenkins 2006:322). Jenkins posits that convergence is "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries" (Jenkins 2006:2). To simplify, I understand convergence as content (for example an image, song or narrative) that is transferable across a range of media such as television, cinema, the Internet or theatre. Content or texts have moved away from medium-specificity towards content that flows across multiple media channels; increasing the interdependence of communication systems and multiple ways of accessing media content (Jenkins 2006:254) since "every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written can be cited, put between quotation marks... in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering an affinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable" (Landow 1991:103). If the content is able to break with its initially intended context, convergence is possible. I would argue that the notion of remix is an example of this process. As noted in the previous chapter, remix was initially only associated with music, but the process of remix has flowed into various forms of media such as 'paper based' fan fiction, faux movie trailers, music video remixes and live performance, to name a few. In addition, part of remix is "taking an idea and making it suitable for a whole new audience" (Mason 2008:82). I would argue that through convergence, specific content becomes accessible to a larger or different audience. For example, not everyone has necessarily read or seen a stage production of *Romeo and Juliet*, but since its content has traversed several forms of media, it could be contended that a theatre-going audience is not the only audience familiar with this text.

It is also worthy to note that convergence is understood as an ongoing process or series of intersections between different media systems, not a fixed relationship (Jenkins 2006:322) - suggesting that the way in which content or texts flow between media is not rigid. Jenkins asserts,

A medium's content may shift (as occurred when television displaced radio as a storytelling medium, freeing radio to become the primary showcase for rock and roll), its audience may change (as occurred when comics moved from a mainstream medium in the 1950's to a niche medium today) and its social status may rise and fall (as occurs when theatre moves

from a popular form to an elite one) but once a medium establishes itself as satisfying some core human demand, it continues to function within the larger system of communication options (Jenkins 2006:14).

Jenkins elaborates by stating that the older media coexist with the emerging media and that the older media are not displaced, rather their roles and status shift (Jenkins 2006:14), since “convergence alters the relationships between existing technologies, industries, markets, genres and audiences” (Jenkins 2006:16). This is made possible since convergence does not rely on any specific “delivery mechanism” (Jenkins 2006:254). A basic example would be that a specific image does not only reach the consumer via the medium of print, it can be delivered and viewed through various media such as television, cinema, the Internet, social networking or in live performance.

Convergence does not only occur when consuming content through various media but “also occurs when people take media into their own hands” (Jenkins 2006:17) since convergence also occurs through means of social interactions since there exists too much information for us to retain individually and we converse among ourselves about certain media (Jenkins 2006:4). Jenkins notes that in *The Internet Galaxy* (2001) cybertheorist Manuel Castells claims “the public...have developed a hypertextual relationship to existing media content: ‘Our minds – not machines – process culture... If our minds have the material capability to access the whole realm of cultural expression – select them, recombine them – we do have a hypertext: the hypertext is inside us’” (Castells cited in Jenkins 2006:133). This notion of a hypertextual relationship harks back to Winn’s assertion, noted in chapter one, that the Net Generation does not function in a sequential way; rather “[they] think differently from the rest of us. They develop hypertext minds... It’s as though their cognitive structures were parallel, not sequential” (Winn cited in Tapscott 2009:105). I would argue that as a Net Gener theatre maker, the notion of media convergence provides insight to applying the process of remix in theatre making.

Performance and Remix as Literacy

I would claim that convergence does not require content to change, but rather the context or ‘delivery system’ of the content changes. This can occur due to the audience or consumers’ ability to ‘read’ the context or medium through which the content is delivered. Hence, I would contend that a crucial factor in understanding and utilising convergence is the notion of literacy.

“Lanham claims that ‘literacy’ has extended its semantic reach from meaning the ability to read and write to now meaning the ability to understand information however presented” (Knobel &

Lankshear 2006:21). The notion of literacy invokes a sense of 'readership' and this too has extended its meaning.

As Hartley states,

Readerships are the audiences, consumers, users, viewers, listeners or readers called into being by *any* medium, whether verbal, audio-visual or visual, journalistic or fictional; 'reading' is the discursive practice of making sense of any semiotic material whatsoever (Hartley cited in Hermes 2006:8, emphasis added).

Knobel and Lankshear distinguish between 'Literacy' and 'literacy' where 'Literacy' encompasses ways of making meaning related directly to life and to being in the world that brings into being or realizes some element or aspect of our world (Knobel & Lankshear 2006:233).

'literacy', on the other hand, designates

processes of reading, writing, viewing, listening, manipulating images and sound etc, making connections between different ideas, and using words and symbols that are part of these larger, more embodied Literacy practices...because there are multiple ways of being in the world, then we can say that there are multiple L/literacies (Knobel & Lankshear 2006:233).

Based on Knobel and Lankshear's definition of literacy I would contend that remix, as described in chapter two, is synonymous to literacy since it relies on these very processes. I would argue that making use of these processes such as 'manipulation' and 'making connections' enable the Literacies of remix which include parody, convey affinity within a specific social group as well as heightening similarities between the samples used.

I would posit that Literacy in terms of theatre could be regarded as the themes of a specific piece, while the literacies can be interpreted as the various theatre materials that allow the Literacy to be read. Some of these theatre materials include the script, design and theatrical style. In relation to my thesis production, as noted in the introduction, I intend to create a theatre remix of selected Shakespearean texts and *Star Wars*. In this process, I intend to merge the L/literacies of the intended theatre remix in order to highlight the similarities between these two 'worlds'. While sampling for this project²⁰, possible Literacies (themes) came to the fore that are evident in both *Star Wars* and Shakespeare texts. These are; 'revenge', evident and seminal in the *Star Wars* Trilogy and in various

²⁰ Please note that at the time of writing, the script for this production was not yet completed.

Shakespearean texts such as *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Titus Andronicus*; ‘good versus evil’, evident in *Macbeth*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Richard III*. In the *Star Wars* Trilogy this theme is explored through the relationship between ‘the Force’ and ‘the Dark Side.’ The theme of ‘individual destiny’ is evident in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*. It could be interpreted that Romeo and Juliet unwillingly meet their fate by reconciling their family feud through death. Macbeth, after being told by the witches that it is his destiny to be king, willingly pursues this destiny and consequently disrupts and destroys the lives of others and his own. In *Star Wars* the antagonist Darth Vader tells the protagonist, Luke Skywalker, that his destiny is to join the ‘Dark Side’, which will influence the fate of the galaxy. At this point, all these similar Literacies are regarded as possible points for exploration.

As a theatre maker/remixer, I am simultaneously dealing with the corporeal and the digital. I would assert that viewing both remix and performance as L/literacies provides understanding to how these ‘seemingly’ different practices can converge since it could be contended that theatre making and remixing are merely different modes of conveying information and meaning.

Stepping off the screen: Notions of Liveness and Theatre Remix

One of the fundamental notions in performance, on which all strategies and methods are based, is that people who are actually present execute it. It is a question of an artistic event, which only exists and takes place through the actions of the artist themselves. These actions are bound in time and space and are executed live in real-time and real-space. The point of departure is...authenticity – the fact that someone is actually doing that which we (the audience) perceive – that separates performance from all other art forms (Peterson 2004:34).

As a term, ‘performance’ is used to identify a live event, a presentation that is usually pre-prepared before an audience (Allain & Harvie 2006:181). “This can be the presentation of any performing art, including theatre, music and dance... Important features for this definition are the performance’s liveness and usually an expectation that the performer will produce a sense of presence” (Allain & Harvie 2006:181). As a Net Gener, I have been saturated by digital media my entire life. Subsequently, digital media is my first frame of reference, therefore I incorporate images and source materials (samples) that I have only seen digitally into performance and hence into the more corporeal. It should be noted that when I refer to my theatre making process and the subsequent product, I do not regard my role as ‘facilitator’ of a devised piece. I do not step into the rehearsal process with just a concept, rather I have a flexible script – created by sampling from various sources – which usually develops and alters during the rehearsal process. I also regard myself as a

scenographer, due to my design background. “Scenography...has superseded the phrase ‘theatre design’...[and]...denotes the integrated work on all elements of a production, from costumes through landscapes... it alludes to the three-dimensional construction of a visual, aural, material and spatial mise-en-scene” (Allain & Harvie 2006:203). Therefore, when referring to ‘theatre remix’, I do not only refer to the script but also to the sampling for all the visual elements of a production.

I contend that what could possibly be most enticing of remixing digital media in performance is that, due to performance’s liveness, it offers something other remixes cannot – *presence*. Remixes are predominantly digital, therefore they are mediated and cannot be experienced in the same way one would experience a live event. As Allain and Harvie state, “performance’s liveness is exciting because it cultivates a sense of presence” (Allain & Harvie 2006:168). I am not suggesting that ontology gives liveness *priority* over mediated recordings (Roach 2007:522) or that “performance is ‘non-reproductive’; it resists becoming commodified, objectified and appropriated and it maintains instead the dynamic possibility of being continuously creative” (Phelan cited in Allain & Harvie 2006:169). Rather, I am in support of Philip Auslander’s challenge to the more conventional perception of liveness, as posed by Phelan. Auslander argues; “the live and the recorded are deeply interlinked and that it is inaccurate to set them up as binary opposites” (Allain & Harvie 2006:169). According to Allain and Harvie, Auslander’s arguments aim to exceed some of “the mystifying, vague language that gathers around live performance, they question idealized notions of the performer-audience relationship, and they challenge the very idea that performance can escape commodity culture” (Allain & Harvie 2006:169).

Auslander disagrees with the apparent notion that live performance offers superior possibilities for social conversation than recorded media do and argues “that live performance is premised not on intrinsic connection between audience and performer but on their necessary separation” (Allain & Harvie 2006:169). Pavis observes that ‘communication in theatre’ is often used incorrectly when denoting the process whereby meaning is exchanged between stage and audience (Pavis 1998:71).

Theatre research (both theoretical and practical) often confuses communication and audience participation, making communication between the actors and the audience the essential goal of theatre activity... [I]f we define communication as a symmetrical exchange of information in which the listener becomes the receiver and uses the same code, then theatre is not communication. Apart from the extreme case of “happening”, which seeks to eliminate the distinction between spectator and actor, the spectator always remains in his place, and can answer back only by applauding (Pavis 1998:71).

Pavis proposes that if communication is understood as ‘impact’ or ‘affect’, then it becomes applicable to theatre but then the reciprocal constituency is no longer necessary and what remains is co-presence (Pavis 1998:71). Therefore, it could be understood that communication in theatre conveys meaning to an audience and is not reciprocal in the sense that the audience relays meaning back to the stage by using the same code for communication.

Oddey notes that the digital age, the twenty first century vision of performance-making, welcomes theatricality and the elements of theatre in “a dialogue with the processes of film writing, editing and assemblage, and the nature of video art and installation [and that this] cross-fertilization...has produced a variety of innovative cross-art forms” (Oddey 2007:42). As noted in chapter two, remixes are cross-art forms and one could argue that the processes employed by remixers are well suited to theatre and performance. “In terms of theatre, innovation is in the devising from texts of films, true stories, the novel or poetry, devising in collaboration and creativity through technology. The shift is away from the adaption of texts and is in these non-theatre texts, how they become performance texts” (Oddey 2007:26).

Burke and Stein contend that technology exists in theatre almost entirely in enabling the spectacle of a production and serves as subject yet it has rarely enabled new forms of dramatic or performative narration (Burke & Stein 2004:93). Carver and Beardon observe that the true potential of digital technology in theatre making is not in merely contributing to the spectacular, but in its ability to offer material with which to create narrative and enable theatre makers to develop new thinking and approaches to their theatre making process (Carver & Beardon 2004:180). I would assert that incorporating and making use of the remix practice could be one way of embracing Carver and Beardon’s view on digital technology and its potential role in theatre making. In addition, Carson notes, “if theatre is to continue as a mirror to society it must engage with the changing means of communication which new technologies have brought about” (Carson 2004:153). I would argue that this could be achieved if theatre and digital media are not viewed as polar opposites, but rather by embracing the presence of liveness and adopting Auslander’s notion of finding links between digital media and live performance.

In terms of my thesis production, I am remixing, sampling dialogue, characterisation and design from the *Star Wars* universe and Shakespearian texts. I do not intend to re-tell a Shakespearean or *Star Wars* narrative. I intend to create a new narrative in an effort not only to converge the two worlds, but also to attempt to find theatrical ways of presenting content that exist in other media. I am hoping that through the process of transforming and recombining the samples I take from the Shakespearean texts and the *Star Wars* Trilogy, I will arrive at a coherent narrative and aesthetic that

I can relay to the audience in a theatrical manner. Furthermore, I am hoping to “[take] an idea and [make] it suitable for a whole new audience” (Mason 2008:82), perhaps by making other theatre makers and a theatre-going audience aware of the process and possibilities of ‘theatre remix.’

Jenkins contends that George Lucas’s *Star Wars* is in many regards a prime example of media convergence (Jenkins 2006:149). “The rich narrative universe of the *Star Wars* saga provided countless images, icons and artifacts [sic] that could be reproduced in a wide variety of forms” (Jenkins 2006:149). The *Star Wars* ‘universe’ has expanded since the first film release in 1977, with the *Star Wars* prequel movies, DVD re-releases, video games, toys, action figures, novels and comic books made available to consumers. I would argue that *Star Wars* has become increasingly prevalent and recognizable over the past three decades since convergence has caused its icons and images to be ubiquitous in various forms of media and popular culture. *Star Wars* also popularized Joseph Campbell’s notion of ‘The Hero’s Journey’ (1949), a narrative structure based on an analysis of the world’s main religions (Jenkins 2006:123). “*Star Wars* follows the outline of the monomyth, which consists of stages like The Call to Adventure, Supernatural Aid, The Belly of the Whale, The Road of Trials, The Meeting with the Goddess” (Ferguson 2011a). This ‘monomyth’, as Campbell refers to it, is a sequence of tasks and trials a protagonist must perform during the course of a particular narrative (Jenkins 2006:124). Due to the popularization of this plot structure, audiences are so familiar with this structure that protagonists and antagonists become broad archetypes that are immediately recognizable (Jenkins 2006:124). I would like to note here that I became acutely aware that in the *Star Wars* Trilogy female characters were absent and that it is a male dominated narrative. It was up to a male hero (Luke Skywalker) to save the galaxy, although it is revealed that his sister, Leia also has the potential to save the galaxy. Hobb notes:

Historically, most science fiction films have reflected a decidedly male perspective. They have usually featured heterosexual male fantasies that sprang from male writers, were envisioned by male directors, and were enacted by male actions. Female characters serve as stereotypical models that reflect male desires (Hobb cited in Ellis 2002:136).

Leia “functions as a maternal figure who looks on approvingly while boys undergo their rites of initiation and become men” (Rubey cited in Ellis 2002:138) and that her ‘femaleness’ prevents her from becoming more actively involved (Ellis 2002:135), since she is “acted upon, she does not act” (Ellis 2002:136). In my theatre remix I am hoping to explore and challenge this ‘male orientated’ portrayal of the ‘Hero’s Journey’.

According to Jenkins, Umberto Eco (1986) asked, what other than being appreciated transforms a film into a ‘cult artefact’? (Jenkins 2006:99). The conclusion Eco drew was that the film need not be particularly ‘well made’, rather it must provide consumers with resources that can be used in constructing their own imaginative visions (Jenkins 2006:100). “In order to transform a work into a cult object, one must be able to break, dislocate, unhinge it so that one can remember only parts of it, irrespective of their original relationship to the whole” (Eco cited in Jenkins 2006:100). This is possible since “we experience a cult more, [Eco] suggests, not as having ‘one central idea but many’ as ‘a disconnected series of images, of peaks, of visual icebergs’” (Eco cited in Jenkins 2006:100). Based on Eco’s assertions, one could argue that *Star Wars* has ‘cult status’ since “the extreme popularity of a Hollywood film such as *Star Wars* derives not so much from any fixed message it may be said to convey, or any single response it aims to provoke, but from the multiplicity of meanings that can be extracted from it, and from the multiple uses it can be put to” (Kramer 1999:45).

Jenkins contends that a cult film is easily ‘quoted’ “because it is made from quotes, archetypes, allusions, and references drawn from a range of previous works” (Jenkins 2006:100). Ferguson notes that *Star Wars* persists to be a work of remarkable imagination, “but many of its individual components are as recognizable as the samples in a remix” (Ferguson 2011a) since George Lucas was a remixer – he sampled recognizable elements from the *Flash Gordon* television serials (1930s) and from Japanese director Akira Kurosawa (Ferguson 2011a).

It could also be argued that Shakespeare was a remixer. Bryson states “Shakespeare was a wonderful teller of stories so long as someone else had told them first” (2007:98). Bryson provides examples of how Shakespeare would retell narratives.

Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* was preceded by an earlier *Hamlet*, unfortunately now lost and its author unknown (though some believe it was the hazy genius Thomas Kyd), leaving us to guess how much his versions owed to originality. His *King Lear* was similarly inspired by an earlier *King Leir*. His *Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* (to give it its formal and original title) was freely based on the poem *The Tragicall History of Romeus and Juliet* by a promising young talent named Arthur Brooke, who wrote it in 1562 [approximately 35 years before Shakespeare’s version] and then unfortunately drowned (Bryson 2007:98-99).

Shakespeare did not only retell narratives; he would also directly sample from other writers since

Shakespeare had “a habit of lifting passages of text almost verbatim from other sources and dropping them into his plays” (Bryson 2007:99). Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* both contain substantial passages taken without any alteration from Sir Thomas North’s translation of the Greek philosopher Plutarch (Bryson 2007:99), while *The Tempest* contains samples from the popular translation of the Roman poet Ovid (Bryson 2007:99). The phrase ‘Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?’ in *As You Like It* was not written by Shakespeare, who took it unchanged from Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander* (Bryson 2007:99-100).

In acknowledging the success of *Star War’s* convergence and viewing both Shakespeare and George Lucas as remixers, I am increasingly realising the possibilities for converging and remixing these two prevalent entities. I would contend I would be embracing the ‘spirit’ of remixing by building on already remixed works.

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CONCLUSION

I incorporate technology into my life in order to learn, communicate, understand, develop and create theatre. As Lanham claims, digitally literate people are “quick on their feet in moving from one kind of medium to another” (Lanham cited in Knobel & Lankshear 2006:22). Therefore the notion of convergence and sampling from various sources whether from films, television or the Internet in order to make a theatre piece seems natural to me. As noted, the media landscape becomes the source for remixers to draw and sample from and when I create, media and popular culture are my frames of reference and I too make use of these as ‘raw materials’ to sample from.

This way of creating has become a ‘new language’ since “the remix is nothing less than a new way to communicate” (Mason 2008:80). It is “the writing of the 21st century. It is literacy for a new generation. It is building a different democracy; it is building a different culture where people participate in the creation and the recreation of the culture around us” (Lessig as cited in *RIP: A Remix Manifesto* 2009). I would argue that remix would become a more integral part of creativity since it is a practice already embraced by the Net Generation and remix is seen as “a definitive generational statement” (Serazio 2008:91).

Lessig states, “knowing that the song [or video or image] is a mix that could draw upon all that went before, each second is an invitation to understand the links that were drawn – their meaning, the reason they were included” (Lessig 2008:93). A remix’s “meaning comes not from the content of what they say; it comes from the reference...And it is this ‘cultural reference’...that has emotional meaning to people” (Lessig 2008:74-75). For the practical production, which at the time of writing is still being developed, I am hoping that the audience will be able to make the connections between the samples; but I do not regard this as paramount. I would ideally like the audience to enjoy the narrative created and view it as a theatre piece.

For my thesis production I am mainly focussing on similarities between Shakespearian texts and the original *Star Wars* Trilogy and I am hoping to create a ‘new’ narrative by drawing on plot points from both ‘worlds’. For example, in the *Star Wars* Trilogy, the character of Obi-Wan Kenobi tells Luke Skywalker (protagonist) that Darth Vader (antagonist) killed his father. Later Luke discovers that Darth Vader is his father. In my practical piece one of the possible plot points is that instead of Obi-Wan Kenobi telling Luke about his father, the ghost of Anakin Skywalker (Luke’s father who becomes Darth Vader) tells Luke to seek revenge on he who killed him, as in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

Therefore this 'new' plot point is a mash-up between two similar scenes in both 'worlds'. In addition, I am interested in exploring the possibility of Leia (female) being the hero. Furthermore, with regard to the design, I am hoping to create a mash-up and recombination of Elizabethan and *Star Wars* costumes with the hope to create an aesthetic that does not attempt to emulate only one particular world. I regard the experiment occurring predominantly in the process of transforming and recombining the samples I take from the Shakespearean texts and the *Star Wars* Trilogy. I am hoping that in this process I will arrive at a coherent narrative and aesthetic that I can relay to the audience in a theatrical manner.

I contend that what could possibly be most enticing about remixing digital media in performance is that, due to performance's liveness, it offers something other remixes cannot – *presence*. Remixes are predominantly digital; therefore they are mediated and cannot be experienced in the same way one would experience a live event. With theatre remix, I am *hoping* that experiencing an image or character 'stepping off the screen', sharing the same space as these usually digital images, would be an enticing and successful attempt to find theatrical ways of presenting content that exist in other media.

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APPENDIX

Draft of *The Empire Striketh Back* Script

Prologue

Projection on screen.

THE EMPIRE STRIKETH BACK

'Tis long ago we set our humble stage

A galaxy far, far away doth rage

In civil war, where rebel forces hath

Defeated Empire evil once in wrath.

Jedi Skywalker doth think peace is near

What shall transpire prove opposite we fear.

Lord Vader seeks to destroy all Jedi

The Dark Side thus grows stronger by and by...

SCENE 1

Two Rebel soldiers. One is trying to sleep, the other is cumbersome.

REBEL 1 Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?

REBEL 2 I do bite my thumb, sir.

REBEL 1 Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?

REBEL 2 No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir.

REBEL 1 Do you quarrel, sir?

REBEL 2 Quarrel sir! No, sir.

REBEL 1 If you do, sir, I am for you: I serve as good a man as you.

REBEL 2 No better.

REBEL 1 Well, sir.

REBEL 2 Say "better"

REBEL 1 Peace, break thee off; look where it comes again!

[Enter Ghost of Anakin]

REBEL 1 In the same figure, like the Jedi that's dead.

REBEL 2 Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

Looks it not like the Jedi?

REBEL 1 Most like:—it harrows me with fear and wonder.

REBEL 2 It would be spoke to.

Question it, Horatio.

REBEL 1 [*To Ghost*]. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the Jedi of buried Republic

Did sometimes march? By heaven I charge thee, speak!

REBEL 2 It is offended. See, it stalks away!

REBEL 1 Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee speak!

[*Exit Ghost.*]

REBEL 1 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

REBEL 2 How now, Horatio! You tremble and look pale:

Is not this something more than fantasy?

What think you on't?

REBEL 1 Before the Force, I might not this believe

Without the sensible and true avouch

Of mine own eyes.

REBEL 2. Is it not like the Jedi?

REBEL 1 As thou art to thyself:

Such was the very armour he had on

When he the ambitious Sith combated;

'Tis strange.

REBEL 2. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,

With martial stalk hath he gone by my watch.

REBEL 1 Let us impart what we have seen to-night

Unto young Skywalker, upon my life,

This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him:

Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,

As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

REBEL 2 Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know

Where we shall find him most conveniently.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2

[*Enter Luke and Han*]

LUKE Thy reward received, now thou plan to leave?

HAN Thou art correct I'd be a fool to stay.

LUKE I plea that thee glance around and behold

That we rebels doth require thy skills.

HAN What good's receipt if thou not employ it?

LUKE Take care of thyself that's what thy do best

[Enter Leia and Rebel Soldier as Han is about to exit]

HAN *[To Luke]* Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!

For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

LUKE *[To Han]* I assume thou hath decided to stay?

HAN She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd;

REBEL 1 *[To LUKE]* Sir, I urgently seek thy audience.

[Luke and Rebel to other "room"]

HAN *[To Leia]* If I profane with my unworhiest hand

This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this:

My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand

To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

LEIA Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,

Which mannerly devotion shows in this;

For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,

And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

HAN Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

LEIA Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

HAN O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;

They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

LEIA Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

HAN Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purged.

LEIA Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

HAN Sin from thy lips? O trespass sweetly urged!

Give me my sin again.

[Leia and Han exit/lights off on them]

SCENE 3

[Lights up on Luke and Rebel soldier]

REBEL 1 My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

LUKE Saw who?

REBEL 1 My lord, the Jedi your father.

LUKE. The Jedi my father!

REBEL 1 Season your admiration for awhile

With an attent ear, till I may deliver,

This marvel to you.

LUKE. For God's love let me hear.

REBEL 1 Two nights together on our watch had we

In the dead vast and middle of the night,

Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,

Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,

Appears before us and with solemn march

Goes slow and stately by us: thrice he walk'd

By our oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,

LUKE Did you not speak to it?

REBEL 1 My lord, I did;

But answer made it none: yet once methought

It lifted up its head, and did address

Itself to motion, like as it would speak:

But even then the morning cock crew loud,

And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,

And vanish'd from our sight.

LUKE. If it assume my noble father's person,

I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape

And bid me hold my peace.

REBEL 1 Look, my lord, it comes!

[Enter Ghost of Anankin/lights up on him.]

LUKE. The Force defend us!—

Be thou a spirit of health or Sith damn'd,

Bring with thee airs from the Force or Dark Side,

Be thy intents wicked or charitable,

Thou com'st in such a questionable shape

That I will speak to thee: I will call thee

Jedi, father, Anankin; answer me! —

REBEL 1 It beckons you to go away with it,

As if it some impartment did desire

To you alone.

LUKE. It will not speak; then will I follow it.

[Luke follows Anakin]

ANAKIN. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing

To what I shall unfold.

LUKE. Speak; I am bound to hear.

ANAKIN. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

LUKE What?

ANANKIN. I am thy father's spirit;

Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,

And for the day confin'd to waste in fires,

Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature

Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid

To tell the secrets of my prison-house,

I could a tale unfold whose lightest word

Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;

Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;

But this eternal blazon must not be

To ears of flesh and blood.—List, list, O, list!—

If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

LUKE Murder!

ANAKIN. Murder most foul, as in the best it is;

But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Now, Luke, hear.

'Tis given out that, aboard my vessel,

A serpent stung me; the whole ear of the Galaxy

Is by a forged process of my death

Rankly abus'd; but know, thou noble youth,

The serpent that did sting thy father's life

Now rules the Empire.

LUKE. O my prophetic soul! Lord Vader!

ANAKIN. There is also another Skywalker

Thou hath a twin sister, Princess Leia

Impart to her this villainy that she
With her hand could avenge if thou should fail
Fare thee well at once!
Adieu, adieu! Luke, remember me.

[Exist Ghost of Anakin]

LUKE. These words are razors to my wounded heart.
To flee or not to flee – that is the question.

SCENE 4

[Enter Imperial Guard and Vader]

IMPERIAL GUARD. Make way for the good Emperor Vader,
Patron of vice, the Empire's best champion.

[To Vader] Lord Vader we have a prisoner. *[Whispers in Vader's ear]*

VADER Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this Jedi.
I have no delight to pass away time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity:
I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Ne'er let my heart know merry cheer indeed
Till all of the Jedi be made away.

SCENE 5

[Han, Leia, Luke]

LEIA Here comes a messenger. What news?

REBEL 2 Such news, my lady, grieves me to unfold.

HAN What is thy news then?

REBEL 2 The Empire hath captured Master Yoda

IMPERIAL MESSENGER Luke Skywalker, my lord the emperor
Sends thee this word,-- if thou love thy master,
Let Leia, Han, or thyself, Skywalker,
Any one of you, chop off your hand
And send it to Vader: he for the same
Will send thee hither thy master alive:
And that shall be the ransom for thy fault.

LUKE. With all my heart I'll send the emperor
My hand: Admiral, wilt thou help chop it?

HAN. Stay, Luke! for that noble hand of thine,
That hath thrown down so many enemies,
Shall not be sent: my hand will serve the turn

LEIA. Which of your hands hath not defended us,
And rear'd aloft the bloody light-saber,
Writing destruction on the enemy's fort?
O, none of both but are of high desert:
My hand hath been but idle; let it serve
To ransom the Jedi master from death;
Then have I kept it to a worthy end.

IMPERIAL GUARD. Nay, come, agree whose hand shall go along,
For fear he dies before his pardon come.

HAN. My hand shall go.

LEIA. By heaven, it shall not go!

LUKE. Agree between you; I will spare my hand.

HAN. Then I'll go fetch a blaster.

LEIA. But I will use the blaster.

[Exeunt Han and Leia.]

LUKE. Come hither, Admiral; I'll deceive them both:
Lend me thy hand, and I will give thee mine.

IMPERIAL GUARD. *[Aside.]* If that be call'd deceit, I will be honest,
[He cuts off LUKE'S hand.]

[Re-enter HAN and LEIA.]

LUKE. Now stay your strife: what shall be is despatch'd.—
Good Admiral, give his majesty my hand:
For my master, say I account of him
As rubies purchas'd at an easy price;
And yet dear too, because I bought mine own.

IMPERIAL GUARD. I now go, Skywalker: and for thy hand
Look by and by to have Yoda with thee:--

[Exit Imperial Guard]

LUKE. O, here I lift this one hand up to heaven,

And bow this feeble ruin to the earth:
If any power pities wretched tears,
To that I call!-

REBEL 2. Worthy Skywalker, ill art thou repaid
For that good hand thou sent'st the emperor.
Here is the head of thy noble master;
Thy grief his sports, thy resolution mock'd:
That woe is me to think upon thy woes.

[Exit Rebel]

LEIA. Ah, that this sight should make so deep a wound,
That ever death should let life bear his name,
Where life hath no more interest but to breathe!

LUKE. When will this fearful slumber have an end?
Why, I have not another tear to shed:
Besides, this sorrow is an enemy,
And would usurp upon my watery eyes,
And make them blind with tributary tears:
Then which way shall I find revenge's cave?

HAN. Revenge? Luke, beware! Should the emperor know
This discord's ground, the music would not please.

[Lights off on them and on Vader]

VADER Jedi Skywalker shall now pursue me
And I shall impart unto him knowledge
Which shall convince him to join the Dark Side.
How this villainy
Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it!
Let fools do good, and fair men call for grace:
Vader will have his soul black like his face.

SCENE 6

[Luke alone]

LUKE Is this a saber which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee:--
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible

To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A saber of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.

[*Leia enters*]

LEIA Luke, recount what haunts thou faculty so?

LUKE The Sith draws closer to this star system
I am bound to confront Lord Vader

LEIA Why?

LUKE He kill'd my father.

LEIA Thy father, but how?

LUKE There is more I must impart unto thee
The nature of which might diffuse thy mind
And vex thy ears to agnise my voice.
If I do not return felled by Vader
Thou art the only esperance for us.
Thou must seek Obi-Wan Kenobi
To be successful where my hand hath not.

LEIA Luke do not breathe such digression to me
Thou hath capabilities, faculty
That which mine own could never comprehend

LUKE Thou art mistaken.
Thou do possess these capabilities
In due course thou shall be seasoned as I.
The Force is brazen in mine family;
My father possessed it I possess it
And mine own sister possess the Force.
Aye, it art thou

LEIA It is as if I hath always known it.

LUKE Now thou art resolved I must confront him
And keep my promise to avenge mine own.

[*LUKE exits*]

HAN Hark ,my love, what hath transpired here?

LEIA Nothing my lord, at least not for thine ears

HAN Nothing for mine ears? What deceit is this

Thus thou not love me as thou has't foresworn?

LEIA My love, I cannot divulge that which I

Hath but mere moments before come to know

HAN Hath thee not here divulged to Skywalker

That which now makes thee dumb before mine ears?

LEIA Tis matter immoment until such time

As would allow it to become needful.

HAN Doth thou loveth him?

LEIA Aye, of course I do.

HAN Once Skywalker returned I shall flee

And prove barricade for thy heart no more

LEIA Nay, tis no deceit thou art misconstrued

The same blood doth move in my veins as he

For we are kin and he is my brother

[*They kiss*] *Lights off on Han and Leia*

SCENE 7

[*Lights up Luke ready to face Vader*]

LUKE Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand,

Blood and revenge are hammering in my head.

Hark, Vader,--the tormentor of my soul,

Which never hopes more hell than rests in thee,--

This is the day of doom for the Empire;

[*To Vader, saber drawn*] Barbarous Sith, Emperor, Lord Vader

For no name fits thy nature but thy own!

Not in the legions

Of horrid hell can come a devil more

Damn'd in evils to top thee Lord Vader.

VADER Good Skywalker, cast thy nighted colour off,

And let thine eye look like a friend onto me.

Do not forever with thy veiled lids

Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st 'tis common,—all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

LUKE O cruel, irreligious piety!

[Luke attacks Vader. They fight]

VADER Impressive young Skywalker most pithy

Thy expired master hath taught thee well
Thou hath controlled thy fear release thy hate
For tis all that can destroy me now Luke.

[Luke strikes aggressively but Vader knocks Luke's saber from his hand]

VADER There is no escape now young Skywalker

Thou do not yet realize thy importance.
We can abolish this conflict and with
Our combined strength cast galactic order.

LUKE I'll never join thee!

VADER Thou own fate lays with me young Skywalker

Thy master Yoda knew this to be true.

LUKE Nay, my purpose is of mine own accord.

Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind
Which never dreamt on aught but butcheries:
I would I were, to be revenged on thee.

VADER It is a quarrel most unnatural,

LUKE It is a quarrel just and reasonable,

To be revenged on him that slew my father.

VADER Nay young Skywalker I am thy father.

LUKE Poison and deceit drip from thine tongue.

VADER Employ the Force to explore thy feelings

Thou shall affirm it as veritable.

It hath been prognosticated that we

Shall overrule the galaxy henceforth.

Come with me and embrace thy destiny.

[Luke exits alongside Vader]

SCENE 8

[Lights up on Han and Leia]

LEIA I felt a great disturbance in my soul
I doth fear something terrible hath hap'd
I must impart this terror and seek to
Acquaint, as Luke foretold, this Kenobi.
With the Force he could brace me for my fate
To save my brother before tis too late

HAN Hackneyed religions and ancient weapons
Prove feeble in light of a good blaster

LEIA Art thou faithless in regard to the Force?

HAN My lady, I hath traveled far and wide
And not beheld a sight which could assay
A lone presence ruling my destiny

LEIA I doth not agnise thy apprehension
O, let me hence; I stand on sudden haste

[Leia to other room to send transmission to Obi-Wan Kenobi, blue light. In another room we see Obi-Wan, as if he is watching the transmission.]

LEIA Jedi Kenobi, my brother Luke hath
Foretold that if he be felled by Vader
Thy counsel I should seek to avenge that
Which he could not by his own hand resolve.
I fear that misfortune hath befall'n him
Tis our most desperate hour, help me
Obi-Wan Kenobi thy art my only hope.

[Light down on Leia. We see Kenobi gathering 'supplies'. Light off on him. Up on Vader. Luke enters.]

LUKE What tis thy bidding, my lord and master?

VADER There is a great disturbance in the Force.

LUKE I hath perceived it.

VADER A new foe rises Leia Skywalker.

LUKE Aye, tis true my lord.

VADER She could destroy us.

LUKE She is but a wench.

VADER Within her frame the Force doth torrent forth
The daughter of Skywalker a Jedi

Must not become, henceforth our fate be damn'd.

LUKE If she could be turned she would become

A brazen ally for the Empire won.

VADER Aye, my mind is turned, can it be done.

LUKE Death befall her if she doth not atone

Look by and by our plot will be sewn.

SCENE 9

[Leia, Rebel enters]

REBEL 1 My lady, Ben Kenobi has arriv'd.

[Enter Ben Kenobi]

LEIA I'm beholden unto thee Kenobi.

BEN Com'st, thou training must commence forthwith

But be warned when thou go to confront

Lord Vader and Luke thou must do't alone

For I cannot interfere in thy fate.

LEIA I understand that my fate is mine own.

BEN *[Takes out light saber for himself and Leia]*

An elegant weapon for a more civil time

For o'er a thousand generations

The Jedi Knights were the guardians of peace

In the Old Republic, before the strife

Known as the Empire of the Sith Vader.

[The following forms part of a training "montage" (old Kung Fu film ref) mainly silhouetted]

BEN Extend thy feelings and thy mind outward

Let thy faculty spring forth from the Force

And govern thy acture as a stream t' sea.

But beware of wrath, enmity and woe

Part of the Dark Side they are and thy foe.

Readily it doth appear and consume

Thy faculty hence up-locked in a tomb

Such was the fate of Yoda's apprentice

A Jedi now lost to a Dark practice.

LEIA Luke! Art the Dark Side stronger than the good?

BEN Nay, hastier more readily perceived.

LEIA But how shall I know good from the wicked?

BEN Thou shall know it when thou art staid, appeas'd

A Jedi uses the Force for defense,

Never for assault.

Now be attend and feel the Force quicken

And by its virtue thy shall now behold

Events that were and those not yet foretold.

LEIA Master Kenobi tis strange what I see

My father tempered with Lord Vader's face

BEN Tis not a strange vision that befell thee

Thou father is he.

LEIA Luke doth imparted that the Lord Vader

Did betray and murder our father –

BEN Thy father was seduced by the Dark Side

And ceased to be Anakin henceforth

LEIA I cannot do it master Kenobi

I shan't kill my own father and brother.

BEN Then thy father's spirit is ill-repaid

And our galaxy is condemned to hell.

Thou must confront Luke and the Sith Vader

Then, only then, a Jedi thou will be.

I feel them draw nearer conceit they bring

Thou must embark upon the sun's uprising

For fear they ransom those thy cherish so

And thus gain advantage over thy wit.

If this does happen I fear thou would die

And with thee the last remnants of the Jedi.

For my age and purpose served I shall yoke

With the Force and the Dark Side thus provoke.

[Lights down on Leia and Kenobi]

[Lights up Luke and Vader]

VADER I sense thou wish to hasten thou attack

On young Skywalker

LUKE Tis so my Master.

VADER Patience, my son. In time she will seek thou
And when she does thou must bring her before me.
Her strength hath seeded; borne a worthy foe
Only together can we turn her fate
Away from grace with the Dark Side yoked.
Her pity for thee will be her undoing
Things are proceeding as I hath foreseen.

LUKE As thou wish master.

SCENE 10

[Leia prepares to leave as Han awakes]

HAN Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:

It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate-tree:
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

LEIA It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

HAN Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I:

It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Tatooine:
Therefore stay yet; thou need'st not to be gone.

LEIA Let thou be ta'en, let thou be put to death;

I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex of Shiraya's brow;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:
I have more care to stay than will to go:
Come, death, and welcome! Han doth wills it so.

How is't, my soul? let's talk; it is not day.

HAN It is, it is: hie hence, be gone, away!

It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.
Some say the lark makes sweet division;
This doth not so, for she divideth us:
Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes,
O, now I would they had changed voices too!
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day,
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

LEIA More light and light; more dark and
dark our woes!

HAN O think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

LEIA I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve
For sweet discourses in our time to come.
I've felt there still art virtue in Luke's soul
He shall not expose me to Lord Vader
I can save him still and avow his soul
This I must attempt, I bid thee adieu.

SCENE 11

[Lights up on Luke as Imperial guard bring Leia to him]

IMPERIAL GUARD This is a Rebel that hath surrendered
She was armed only with this saber.

LUKE Well-laboured Commander now leave us be.

IMPERIAL GUARD Aye, my gracious Lord.

[Exit Guard]

LUKE I hath been awaiting thou arrival
And my Lord Darth Vader hath foreknown it.

LEIA I am certain that he hath my brother.

LUKE I see thou hath forged thy own saber
Indeed thou art a forcible foe as
Lord Vader hath foreseen and predicted.

LEIA Brother, leave this place and away with me.

LUKE My old master Yoda once thought as thee
But thou doth not comprehend the power
The Dark Side holds, I must obey my Lord
And take thou to him and turn thee to vice.

LEIA I shall not and thou'll be compelled to kill me

LUKE If that is thou fate.

LEIA Seek thy feelings, brother, thou shan't do it
I feel the conflict within thou being
Thy thoughts are as inconstant as the moon.

LUKE Tis too late for me now young Skywalker
Our Lord Vader shall reveal unto thee
The veritable nature of the Force

[Lights up Vader]

VADER Welcome, young Skywalker to thy destiny.
I hath plotted to complete thy training
And in due course thou shall call me master.

LEIA Thou art gravely mistaken Darth Vader
Thou shan't convert me as thou did'st my brother.

VADER Fie my young Jedi thou art misconstrued
By now thou know'st that thy brother can
Never be turned from the Dark Side
His fate embraced now thou must do the same.

LEIA Thou art diffused for I shall die with thee

VADER Not I but thy Alliance and thy love
Shall perish for we hath discovered them
Pursued as I speak unto thee young fool
I doth feel thy anger and hate rising.
I'm defenseless so take up thy weapon!
Strike me down with all thy hatred and thy
Voyage to the Dark Side shall be complete.

[Leia can resist no longer. She grabs her saber and swings at Vader. Luke's saber blocks Leia's blow before it can reach Vader. Leia turns to fight her brother. Vader speaks as they fight]

VADER Employ thy wrath, woe and malice as the
Dark Side quickens and torrents through thy frame.

[She realizes she is using the dark side. She steps back and sheaths her saber.]

LUKE Obi-Wan Kenobi hath taught thou well.

LEIA I shall not fight thee.

[Luke attacks, forcing Leia on the defensive.]

LEIA Thy mind betrays thou, I sense thy virtue.

LUKE I hath no virtue now affront thy fate

[Luke motions for a striking blow. Leia counter attacks aggressively and strikes Luke]

VADER Thy wrath hath proved thou a potent ally

Hence fulfill thy fate, replace thy brother!

I will be satisfied: deny me this,

And an eternal curse fall on you!

[Leia steps back and hurls her saber away.]

LEIA Never! Thou hath failed, I'm a Jedi

Like my father and brother before me.

VADER So be it Jedi thou art now undone

[Vader rises and "electrocutes" Leia. Strobe light.]

[The wounded Luke struggles to his feet, and moves to stand at his master's side.]

VADER Only now, at thy end, doth thou comprehend

That thy feeble skills thee cannot defend

LEIA Luke, please, prove not a villain and help me.

VADER Erewhile young Skywalker death befalls thee!

[Han burst in, blaster at the ready. As he aims for Vader, Luke steps in front of him, disarms and chokes him.]

LEIA Nay Luke, be damn'd thou art not of mine own!

For thou hast made the happy earth thy hell,

Fill'd it with cursing cries and deep exclaims.

If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,

Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.

[As Leia appears to die, Luke steps in and strangles Vader to death. Gets electrocuted and mortally wounded. Leia manages to get on her feet and moves toward Luke.]

LEIA Thou must com'st with me I shan't abandon thee

I must save thy soul

LUKE Thou already hath.

Verily thou were correct about me.

[Luke dies]

[Leia rushes towards Han]

LEIA. Thy lips are warm.

 This victory without thee made barren

 O happy saber!

[She takes her saber, as she lifts it, Han jolts for air.]

HAN I loveth thou so

LEIA To mine heart tis known.

[They kiss]

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