



**The theatrical landscape as framework for home-grown patterns of chaos:
*making a play about tea-cups and doing the washing.***

By

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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 explication from the work or works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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an abstract

The major research behind this written explication was the creation of a *play about tea-cups and doing the washing*. This production was devised, directed, designed and written with several UCT drama students, other selected performers and musicians and played at The Little Theatre, Orange St, Cape Town, in October 2004.

I wanted to make a piece of 'home - grown' theatre, a term I have developed to describe a primarily visual art-form that focuses on recognising beauty in everyday existence. Home-grown theatre is concerned with the profound importance of very commonplace things and the complexity and density contained within this mundane terrain. This paper explains the concepts and principles that surround home-grown theatre to provide a context for the thinking and the motivation behind it. This paper explicates both the theory that informed my ideas for its conception and the philosophies of art and science that inspired my style for making the play. It investigates the work and writings of artists, philosophers, scientists, playwrights and theatre practitioners, who all identify elements in their fields, which link them to my home-grown theatre.

The introduction expands on the concepts presented in the title, locating the inquiry in the medium of theatre, as it acts as a frame for presenting home-grown art.

The first chapter connects the aesthetics of home-grown art to the religion of aestheticism prevalent in fifteenth century Japan – Teatism – which looks to the mundane experiences of daily existence for meaning and fulfillment in life and art. *The Book of Tea* by Okakura Kazuko (1906) is the source of discovery of this obscure cult. Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre's philosophies on the investment of value in everyday activities and their ideas that the small and ordinary things in the world bring meaning to life are introduced. As well as their ideas that ordinary ways of operating should not appear as the background of social activity but are rather the core of it.

Chapter two focuses on the study of 'landscape as concept' and 'landscape as modern theatre's new spatial paradigm,' by looking at the writings of Mark Roskill, Elinor Fuchs and Una Chaudhuri. The twentieth century ideals and 'landscape plays' of Gertrude Stein are investigated and the importance of 'scale' in home-grown art is identified as an essential factor in re-investing the domestic with significance.

The third chapter explains how chaos and fractal theory influenced the process and production of the theatre piece. The orderly disorder of nature, its geometry and aesthetic appeal

- as discovered by scientists Benoit Mandelbrot and Edward Lorenz - are borrowed in order to develop a theorized view on randomness.

Chapter four identifies and describes elements of a home-grown theatre: the use of everyday activities and objects, the relationships of time and space and the structure and style developed in the making of the play. The analysis draws on the ideas of the Surrealists, Edward Gordon Craig, Robert Wilson and the Cubists

Finally in chapter 5 there is a reflection on the fractal process of making *a play about tea-cups and doing the washing* and the chaotic transmission of home-grown theories to the landscape of this particular piece of theatre.

An appendix contains the script of *a play about tea-cups and doing the washing*.

a title

The theatrical landscape as framework for home-grown patterns of chaos: *making a play about tea-cups and doing the washing.*

This explication of theory has two major ingredients, one is the theory that informed the ideas and the second is the theory that inspired the style and the methodology of the practical exploration of them. To begin with it is important to recognize that the theory and the style are inseparable, they make each other. It is because I see things in a particular way - as having certain kinds of relationships - that I found a theoretical basis to support it, and because I feel strongly about certain aspects of the theory, that I developed a style through which to explore them, in elements of structure and production. From reading the title there are clearly several areas of inquiry and many theories that need unpacking. There is no real linear way to organize them because they are so intertwined. So in order to get a holistic understanding quickly so the rest of the picture can unfold in an understandable pattern, let me answer these three questions about *a play about tea cups and doing the washing* very basically:

Why? Is answered by *home-grown*.

What? Is answered by *a landscape play*.

How? Is answered by *fractals: the patterns of chaos*.

The following introduction is structured like an extended glossary of the terms in the title and introduces the key concepts behind the theory and the production.



act 1: the tea collection

an introduction

a) theatrical

Theatre has the power to articulate desires and generate pleasure through aesthetic operation, instead of laying things out for you so you can know them to be useful. Working in the theatre allows one to explore ideas practically and to work on them collaboratively, which is an invigorating way to gain knowledge and enhance understanding in your area of investigation. As a masters student in theatre-making, theatre is obviously my passion and my medium of expression. This essay serves to explicate the theoretical ideas behind the formal and practical research I carried out during my studies.

b) landscape

Landscape plays a significant role in our physical experiences in and of the world. By knowing the 'place' of these experiences we can 'locate' them for what they are. Landscape represents a shaping term in our conceptualization of what is 'out there,' and of the human relationships that interact with whatever that is. The landscapes we encounter more or less incidentally are there as a background to our actual physical lives, and also act as a kind of backcloth to everyday activity. The term landscape was traditionally a fine-arts term (originating with landscape paintings in the 17th C) only much later did it become incorporated into English to describe natural formations of the land. (Fuchs & Chaudhuri 2002:2) The study of landscape as a concept is a fairly modern development (20th C) and in its short philosophical lifespan it has undergone three critical stages of shifting thought. It initially represented the domain of nature as opposed to culture, and the way that people, over time, have slowly invaded the landscape, armed with their ideas on how to develop and decorate it. Later it became associated with socially and intellectually conditioned responses to nature, and in coming to terms with its immensity, the need to document and reproduce it. New 'ways of seeing' (Berger 1972) were revealed in paintings and photographs, which became ideological and psychological statements about the world around us. Still later it came to symbolize a territory of the mind and, with the onset of urbanization and the high-tech era, a spirit of recovery and protection emerged, as humans once

more attempt to create a harmony with their environment. (Roskill 1997:2) Today landscape presents us with a way of organizing frameworks for comparison between previously held ideas and the new 'ways of seeing' presented by the artwork, this includes the psychological affects that go with this consciousness of perceiving. Knowing that while the environment we live in shapes us, and our surroundings leave an indelible and concrete impression on our lives, so too, in the spirit of the art-life symbiosis, do we make just as much of an impression on our surroundings by investing value in and making meaning through them in our representations and interpretations.

The two fundamental features of landscape art that have emerged over time and across different cultures, are that it works by compression and distillation, and that it sets up a quality of resonance in the viewer's mind. (Roskill 1997:4) Compression and distillation involve focusing on particular elements (chosen from the vast range of possibilities in nature) to highlight the distinctive characteristics of the experience expressed. Resonance triggers the memory of the viewer, through whatever personal associations or paths of recollection that these elements evoke. Through the poetic nature of landscape art, the visualizing capacities of the viewer are channeled along personal paths of recollection. They are alerted to emotional ideas imparted in the representation that are similar to the ones from the existing natural stimulus. In other words, elements of nature are brought into focus and images are set up to stimulate memories and associations on the part of the viewer. 'As in other arts, distinctive idioms of presentation, associated pictorially with the working of compression and distillation and the achievements of resonance, impart the sense of being governed by underlying principles of construction, without being narrowly bound by them.' (Roskill 1997:4)



Winterset, 1981

c) frame[work]

A frame is a case or border that encloses things (a picture, a window, a television screen, etc.) an essential supporting structure, or 'framework'. I am interested in frames in two respects firstly in their actual-material-border sense and secondly in the sense that if you put a frame around something it enables you to think about everything inside it as a total, complete idea. According to Paul Duro, who writes on the boundaries of artworks (1996), the frame serves to create a space for the artwork, which the work itself is incapable of furnishing. The way we regard the frame is central to how we come to an understanding of the artwork. I felt that my task as a theatre-maker was to communicate through the physical frame of the theatre something that when viewed by a live audience could be thought of as a congruous whole. And then use this 'whole' or 'play' to then frame individual images and concepts within it in a way that enabled them to be contemplated as whole ideas. The nature of play as framework allowed the audience to then respond to these smaller frames in a familiar environment.

Through using the provided physical frame of the proscenium arch, I could arrange things within the frame and then either confine them to background or promote them as foreground, thereby determining the focus for the audience. This way: objects or compositions could be looked at as themselves, or in relationship to the things around them. These relationships that occur between different elements are paramount to the visual language of the theatre, as is the way objects integrate with the environment. A frame is the thing that allows these comparative communications to happen between the art and the viewer.

d) home-grown

But when we consider how small after all the cup of human enjoyment is, how soon overflowed with tears, how easily drained to the dregs in our quenchless search for infinity, we shall not blame ourselves for making so much of the tea-cup. (Okakura 1906:6)

The main motivation behind making plays about tea-cups and doing the washing is a personal response to the disproportionate characteristics of the modern condition (such as: technocracy, and alienation resulting from high capitalism) and the information and stimulus overload we live with in the world today. It is about finding the 'contradictory and fractured, even schizophrenic nature of lived experience in the contemporary era' (Gardiner 2000:13) completely excessive, and having to look to the mundane experiences of my daily existence for meaning and fulfillment in life and art.

The fifteenth century saw Japan glorify tea into a religion of aestheticism – Teatism. Teatism is a cult founded on the adoration of the beautiful among the ordinary facets of everyday existence. It is essentially a worship of the imperfect, 'a tender attempt to accomplish something possible in this impossible thing called life.' (Okakura 1906:3) It represents our 'art of life', which is the basis for this domestic-art-in-theatre enquiry. This investment of value in everyday activities and the idea that the small and ordinary things in the world bring meaning to life has mostly been concealed by the form of rationality prevalent in Western tradition. This rationality manufactures constructs, or highly organized groups (bureaucracies) and hierarchies to contain society, to provide appropriate roles and typified behaviour patterns, where the human condition is passive and guided by established rules within which to operate. Michel de Certeau's notions of the everyday (1984) advocate that our ordinary 'ways of operating' should not appear as merely the obscure background of social activity, but rather are in fact the crux of it.

In this constantly changing and rapidly advancing global village of a world, it is as if the search for a greater, explicable and sensible meaning to existence has dissipated. An alternative way of coping with this is to shift the focus onto the little things to give meaning to life, little things around which a personal and 'sensible' reality can be built. I feel inclined to shy away from the over zealous nature of outside stimuli and look at domestic ritual and everyday details as the Lego of my 'reality,' building it up from miniscule, understandable moments like cooking macaroni and watching Survivor on Tuesday nights. A reality made up of small moments is much easier and less stressful to live than one attempting to take in the extent of the dynamic worldwide shopping basket. In a world dominated by American capitalism, overwhelmed by consumerism and commercialization, and weighed down by recurring wars and natural disasters - choosing to make the domestic precious and valuable - makes sense. It is a desperate search for

stability in an apparently chaotic and unstable world, which involves constructing your own reality and being present and existing within it.

The theoretical links made between the philosophies of the everyday and those of aesthetics are extensive. Influences on my home-grown thinking include the writings of Okakura Kakuzo, Michel de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre, Gertrude Stein, Allen Read and Elaine Scarry. The philosophy behind what I call *home-grown* is the meeting point of 'everyday' and 'aesthetics' i.e. the discovery of aesthetic value in the ordinary and the use of the conventions of the everyday in the creation of a particular aesthetic; for the conception of a theatrical event - a home-grown play.

e) patterns of chaos

Nature and the universe feature elements of total disorder and chaos. The patterns that emerge from this pandemonium are called 'fractals': self-similar arrangements that occur seemingly arbitrarily in nature. Benoit Mandelbrot, an IBM researcher and the inventor of fractal geometry, coined the term 'fractal' in the 1960's to suggest 'fractured' and 'fractional'; two of the visual features of patterns of chaos. Chaos and fractals are non-linear¹ phenomena that manifest themselves in things that we see every day, such as clouds, trees, mountains and scattered autumn leaves.

Clouds are not spheres, mountains are not cones, coastlines are not circles,
and bark is not smooth, nor does lightning travel in a straight line.

(Mandelbrot in Briggs 1992:157)

Unlike Euclidian geometry which focuses on lines, triangles, squares and circles, fractal geometry focuses on broken, wrinkled and uneven shapes which mirror a world that is rough, not rounded and jagged, not smooth. 'Fractal' became a new word to describe a family of shapes that, according to Mandelbrot, is the organizing principle of nature. An organising principle that

¹ Non-linear equations express relationships that are not strictly proportional. (Linear relationships can be described by a straight line graph, they are easy to think about and they are solvable.) Non-linear systems generally cannot be solved and cannot be added together.

can be described by chaos theory in terms of what happens to dynamic systems² over time (i.e. the way cloud formations develop or the way trees grow.) Fractal geometry is the record of these images in space (i.e. the actual shapes in the cloud and tree formations.)

In mythology and legends, order and chaos are seen as a primordial duality. In ancient Chinese tradition, daily reality is constantly created and re-created by a fluctuation between the light-bringing, ordering principle, yang, and the dark receptive totality that contains all matter, yin. Fractal patterns were first discovered when they appeared like abstract, colourful spirits on the computer screen of meteorologist Edward Lorenz (1961) whose weather model experiment displayed a wild, haunting order amidst ostensible disorder. (Briggs 1992:18) The form of chaos that was subsequently discovered is very similar to the chaos of myths and legends. Within chaos there is a strange, mystical order and within order a surprising kind of chaos. Lorenz saw more than just randomness embedded in his weather model, the patterns of repetition were never quite exact, and they displayed recurrent disturbances, an orderly disorder. He saw a fine geometric structure of order masquerading as randomness. The discovery of fractal patterns greatly affected mathematical, scientific and artistic thought as they changed the nature of nature and held an extreme aesthetic appeal.

Chaos theory and fractal geometry have both inspired and substantially influenced the transmission of my home-grown theories to the landscape of my theatre. It is all a part of the same existential dilemma: I feel overwhelmed and aware of what little control I have in the world, and therefore believe that I need to focus my energy on the control I do have, control over the little things. In awe of the chaos of nature I order the everyday by borrowing from nature and its unpredictable yet ordered disorder.

This paper is as much about the theory of home-grown as it is about the means to transport those theories into practice with assistance and inspiration from fractals and chaos by using them as framing devices for the process and the finished product of *a play*.

² The systems that act on things such as trees and waves to determine the way they grow are dynamic systems, systems whose state changes over time. They are multi-faceted, complex and interdependent. 'They constantly push and pull at themselves to create the sensuous irregularity and unpredictability that is the signature of our physical environment.' (Briggs, 1992, 15)

f) making a play about tea-cups and doing the washing

a play about tea-cups and doing the washing (from now on referred to in this paper as *a play*) was the practical culmination of the research and investigation into the things that I find inspiring and meaningful in this chaotic world and into forms of theatre and art theory that could provide frameworks for these things. This 'home-grown' play was directed, designed and devised with a group of UCT drama students and some very good friends and it played at The Little Theatre in October 2004. It was play about the little things, personal objects and rituals that make up our everyday lives. A play made up of the infinite number of miniscule moments that make up our daily reality like brushing our teeth, locking the front gate, tea-cups and doing the washing.



The beginning of act 2: the washing collection.

chapter one: home-grown

In searching for a good adjective for this theatre of little things, 'domestic' seemed appropriate for a long time, but 'domestic' like many of the words that associate with it, such as 'ordinary' or 'homely', are very patronizing words, words that devalue the everyday experience they are describing, which will certainly not do to describe a theatre that elevates lived experience to the status of a critical concept. The word domestic also immediately makes me think of disinfectants and typically, the first synonym for it in the *Oxford Paperback Thesaurus* is – 'an unhappy household life.' The word 'ordinary' suggests things or people that are normal or boring – as does 'homely' which has associations with 'simple' or 'plain', as it implies things that are old fashioned, traditional and trapped in an ancient practice that has nothing to do with now. The word I was looking for had to convey a theory of theatre that celebrates the individuality and exceptionality of daily activities of the present and doesn't belittle or demean them as trite or dull. In fact instead of a feeling of commonplace things worn out by repetition I am imagining things that grow and rejuvenate via the therapeutic nature of repetition.

'Home-grown', according to the *Oxford Paperback Thesaurus*, is the one synonym for domestic which actually has very positive, even joyous connotations, implying achievement of some sort, and conveying the idea of objects or activities that breed, grow and develop in domestic environments without making us think of toilet cleaners. 'Home-grown' according to the *Oxford Paperback Dictionary* means: 'grown or produced in one's own home or country', and it is the perfect word for me in my search for an everyday aesthetic that is the embodiment of my present. Firstly, it immediately connotes both place and event which will be the essence of a theatre whose purpose is the recognition of significance in everyday actions and the importance of objects associated with home-growth, an investment of value in the kind of personal production that does not serve the greater worldly structures but instead feeds the individual's personal needs and desires to bring them a very elementary and tangible pleasure. A home-grown art recognizes this private everyday pleasure and transposes it into an aesthetic for the theatre that can mediate an appreciation of the value of these things to an audience. Secondly 'home-grown' is very topical, it is very now, it buzzes the streets of Cape Town and is perfectly appropriate in the search for a theatre that wants to embody the now and have generational and indigenous relevance. It does not imply having to be equipped to make art about the big things in the world

that an I cannot really understand but gives relevance to the small things that I engaged with directly, that cause pleasure and heart-ache on very personal levels.

Home-grown also speaks to me of a concept of landscape and the inescapability of one's immediate surroundings in our everyday existences. Landscapes are everywhere: they act as the back-drop to our lives and our art. In a domestic (national/ local) context landscape serves as a convention for representing culture and locality; it frames the objects and activities of our everyday lives. In Cape Town where the geographical landscape is especially present (or especially absent if it is misty or raining) using landscape as a frame affords us conventions for representing the 'home' of our home-grown art. This is done so that the audience can then interpret the specifics of the action or object through recognition of the environment within which they are taking place.

a) looking to the ordinary

My home-grown theatre is primarily concerned with the largely taken-for-granted world of everyday life, which remains clandestine, yet constitutes the 'common ground' or 'connective tissue' of all conceivable human thoughts and activities. Michael Gardiner in *Critiques of Everyday Life* (2000) discusses the theorists of the everyday and their approaches which are concerned with a number of interlocking phenomena such as human emotions, bodily experiences, practical knowledge, the role played by 'lived' time and space in human social experiences, language and intersubjectivity, and interpersonal ethics. In other words, we build significance from what we feel (emotionally and physically), what we know about these feelings and how we use this knowledge to interact with other people in our environment in the present of everyday living. Philosophers of the everyday want to elevate 'lived experience to the status of a critical concept – not merely in order to describe lived experience, but in order to change it' (3)

Gardiner identifies the French Marxist Henri Lefebvre as the quintessential critical theorist of everyday life. His notion was that the everyday should not be taken for granted or ignored because it represents the site where we enter into a dialectical relationship with the external natural and social worlds in the most immediate and profound sense. It is here where fundamental human desires, powers and potentialities are initially formulated, developed and

realized concretely. He asserted that it is through our mundane interactions with the material world that both subject and object are fully established through the medium of conscious human practice. (2000:77) He felt that people spend most of their lives constrained and defined by rigid, immobile social rules and conscious actions and performances: ‘many men and even people in general, *do not know their own lives very well, or know them adequately.*’ (Lefebvre 1990:94, emphasis original) According to Lefebvre under modernity all imaginative and creative human activity is malformed into routinized and commodified forms and that the centralized state represents the apotheosis of human alienation, in that ‘human powers and capacities are increasingly transferred to an anonymous, bureaucratic apparatus’ and the concept of everyday life constitutes the key vantage point from which to criticize the ‘formalized and alienated social practices characteristic of capitalism’. (Gardiner 2000:77)

b) and making it extraordinary

Tea is a work of art and needs a master hand to bring out its noblest qualities. We have good and bad tea, as we have good and bad paintings – generally the latter. There is no single recipe for making the perfect tea, each preparation of the leaves has its individuality, its special affinity with water and heat, its hereditary memories to recall, its own method of telling a story. The truly beautiful must always be in it. (Okakura, 1906, 25)

The objective of modernists, like Stein, in reaching their ideal aesthetic vision, was to shift the attention away from function and onto form; to make art that can be appreciated entirely in and of itself. They wanted to isolate things from their surrounding systems to give them meaning in themselves. In doing this they moved further away from ‘function’ and closer to an ideal aesthetic, where objects and activities have value not because they lead up to anything else, but because they are intrinsically valuable.

For example, if you look at a woman hanging up her washing at home, her action is a function of her daily reality. Then if you take this woman and her washing, and put them in a realist play, say by Ibsen, you have removed the action from its function, although it still may have a purpose in the greater context of the play. Then as you move further away from realism toward

abstraction, and make a play *about* the woman hanging up her washing, it is no longer a function within a play, but a function in itself. My home-grown theatre wants to isolate this woman and her washing from their everyday purpose in order to expose the inherent value of their forms and our responses to them, to find art in the shape and structure of subject, activity and object.

This contradiction within which I find myself working is that of Kantian Idealism (Graham 2000:12) which asserts that in order to make art we have to remove the object from its function in the environment, and represent it where it cannot relate to anything other than itself. This idea is very much at work in my aesthetic, but is also at the heart of the belief that philosophy is the understanding of abstract ideas of the intellect rather than of objects experienced in the world around us. So essentially what I am trying to do here is find an intersection between ‘ideas of the intellect’ and ‘lived experience’, both vis-à-vis my everyday life. In this everyday life, objects and activities are very difficult to appreciate, for the reason that in the context of reality they are mostly functional. Like Stein I want to move away from function and be able to experience these things in terms of their structure and form, in the hope that I can discover a new aesthetic value in the ordinary. Kant asserts that what we find in art is not a higher grade of everyday pleasure but a distinct kind of ‘aesthetic pleasure’. (12) Although Ingarden argued that aesthetic pleasures ‘have a special character of their own and exist in a different manner from the pleasures deriving from a good meal or fresh air or a good bath,’ (12) what makes them different is beauty. Therefore, if the intention is to identify everyday pleasure and raise it to the level of aesthetic pleasure, it follows that what I will be doing is delving into the concept of the beautiful.

Beauty needs to be appreciated, subjectively. It is not just a property of an object we might dispassionately record, such as being 50 years old. To call something beautiful is not to just describe it but to react to it. On the other hand, our reaction is not merely personal, as it might be when we refer to something of which we happen to be especially fond. In declaring an object to be beautiful, we mean to say that there is something about it that will make other people like it as well. (Graham, 2000, 13)

Beauty in the everyday seems to consist of general impressions. Like natural beauty, which does not receive the same minute scrutiny we provide it when we take an aesthetic interest in it and, say, paint a landscape. To bring attention to the beauty of domesticity I feel one needs to make art about it. It requires mediation to an audience, because that audience perhaps cannot appreciate it unaided. To do this it has to be dislocated from its environment and then relocated through representation so that people can actually see it as itself, look at it and recognise it to be beautiful, i.e. one has to take a photograph, make a film, or compose an image of an ordinary thing so that people can know it to be extraordinary. And they will: simply because of familiarity, the everyday does not deal with alien concepts or foreign imagery but things people know and manage all the time. I want to take small things from life and frame them as art, giving the viewer the chance to contemplate them only in reference to themselves, then by placing landscape frames around them and by further framing them with theatre, my own knowledge and perception of beauty can be negotiated with an audience, making it appreciable by them. A possible problem in this negotiation arises when what normally does not attract connoisseurs and their denigration becomes susceptible to criticism the minute it becomes art. Through reproduction home-grown art is opened up to the world of judgement and criticism and things we usually do in the privacy of our own homes away from the discerning eye become exposed and noticeable. But this should not be viewed as a problem but rather as the whole point.

chapter two: a contemporary landscape



Landscape Made in a Bottle #4, 1992

Landscape provides a multi-faceted and complex language of symbols, colours, shapes, and lines that offers a platform for visual expression as deep and diverse as any text-based creative undertaking. Landscape theatre, which sounds like a contradiction, is about bringing our relationship to the natural world indoors where we can contemplate it out of its normal context. 'Landscape names the modern theatre's new spatial paradigm' (Chaudhuri 2002:2) and rejects the notions of realism in favour of a scenographic, presentational theatre of 'visuality', image and mental sense impressions. For plays more like paintings than movies and the notion of play as a performance score rather than a traditional script. A landscape play advocates the spectator not attempting to enter into the emotional world of a drama but to merely observe it as he would a landscape - which is simply there - to be assimilated on a purely aesthetic level.

A landscape play is an event that explores the individual's sense of being in the world, which does not rely on language to help us make sense of the world but rather looks to forms of abstraction for communication. However, contrary as this may seem, it is essentially about trying to make sense of the world, and because vocabulary is limited - not feeling able to actually explain or express everything in words - instead we look to other mediums that may seem vague but which can lead to better understandings of shared experience, allowing for variances in the way information is shared and absorbed. Through theatre landscapes we can set up communicative devices to encode and transmit information about place and space, so that the audience can decode both their conventions and the specific messages they encode.



Portrait of Gertrude Stein by Pablo Picasso 1906

Landscapes are most famously linked to theatre by the ‘landscape plays’ of Gertrude Stein, who believed that...

The business of art... is to live in the present the complete and actually present and to completely express that complete actual present. (Stein in Ryan 1984:7)

Stein ‘devoted her aesthetic to an embodiment of the “now” and to the evolution of a style that could adequately express it.’ (Ryan 1984:1) Stein was directly responding to her perception of the twentieth century condition, and the complete revision of the concept-of-the-present brought about by the revolution of man’s understanding of the universe with the theory of relativity. One hundred years later the unprecedented diversity and spatial expanse experienced by Stein has continued to grow exponentially through globalization, sustained scientific discovery and technological advance. The new awareness of space Stein speaks of, in terms of seeing the earth from an aeroplane, is passé in our contemporary consciousness. It seems we have turned full circle, in that we have stopped looking out the window and rather started looking in at the small things in our lives and choosing to make them precious and valuable in life as well as art.

Each generation has to do with what you would call the daily life: and a writer, painter or any sort of creative artist is not at all ahead of his time. He is contemporary. He can't live in the past because it is gone. He can't live in the future because no one knows what it is. He can live only in the present of his daily life. He is expressing the thing that is being expressed by everybody else in their daily lives. (Stein 1974:151)

According to Stein we can only live in the present and therefore we cannot escape the impact of our era, and as artists we will automatically express this in our art. This is a pretty tall order for someone living in the chaos of the modern world. Trying to embody *this* present in theatre - and accounting for the whole global situation – is really just too much. There are an overpowering number of stimuli and so much has happened to us that we are almost incapable of being overwhelmed. My feeling is we shouldn't even try. I am searching for a home-grown theatre with an ultimately simple aesthetic, one that goes small, looks to the details and the little things in life. This is in direct response to the devastating twenty-first century landscape.

The only thing that is different from one time to another is what is seen and what is seen depends on how everybody is doing everything. This makes the thing we are looking at very different and this makes what those who describe it make of it, it makes a composition, it confuses, it shows, it is, it looks, it likes it as it is, and this makes what is seen as it is seen. Nothing changes from generation to generation except the thing seen and that makes a composition.
(Stein in Ryan 1984:9)

By the late twentieth century, in ways never before conceivable, images of the incomprehensively small and unimaginable large became a part of everyone's experience. Society was shown pictures of the universe and pictures of the atom, microscopes and telescopes made these images part of everyday experience. At the beginning of the twenty-first century pictures of the earth as seen from out of space are ingrained in our consciousness. There is an image in our collective psyche of the whole planet the size of a marie-biscuit, just as it would appear in the newspaper or *Time* magazine. The making of such a big thing so very, very small

signifies this generation's complete awareness of just how small they are in the greater scheme of things, and as a result, how they innately see the small things as the things that are important. It is home-grown theatre's response to this concept that makes it blow the teacup up to such proportions as the planet. The theatrical purpose is to recover the 'human' scale of things so one can, literally, hold it in your hands and know it to be precious. It is this capacity to play with scale that is important in envisioning how to reinvesting the domestic with significance. Even minute details of everyday life are filled with enough substance to warrant in-depth investigation and discussion. A woman hanging up her washing, therefore, is valuable enough to generate an entire artwork, a painting, a play or whatever. Furthermore, it will not have to take into account the state of the whole planet to give a reflection of its era. Rather it can just be itself in an absolute sense; not having to depend on full knowledge of its relation to other things, but what it is in itself. This is the strategy of making big things small enough to be tangible in the present moment, or vice-versa, making the small things big enough to reflect a significant reality, moment by moment. In exposing these moments on stage, home-grown theatre abandons progressive time, much like Stein, in a style that is quite violently anti-realism.

chapter three: chaos and fractals



Cape Town clouds from Clifton first beach

...the clouds spill across the sky, in random formation, yes, but also not-random, standing in uniform spikes or rolling in regularly furrowing patterns like brain matter. On a stormy afternoon, when the sky shimmers and trembles with the electricity to come, the clouds stand out from thirty miles away, filtering the light and reflecting it, until the whole sky starts to seem like a spectacle staged as a subtle reproach to physicists.

(Gleick 1997:3)

Nearly everyone finds the haphazard plethora of nature so intensely pleasing, even spiritually profound, that it seems reasonable to assert that there is a stimulating, even mystical order to be found in the variable shapes of waves as they break, in fire as it burns and in clouds as they stretch across the sky. Yet for centuries scientists dismissed such notions of commonsense order in their traditional task of simplifying nature and exposing its underlying logic as a means to understand and control it. But complex natural phenomena such as the weather or cloud formations can't be stripped down and analysed under a microscope. Natural patterns are the result of vast, shifting and unique circumstances, a kaleidoscope of influences and dynamic, continuously active forces, far too numerous to ascertain in scientific detail. (Briggs 1992:15)

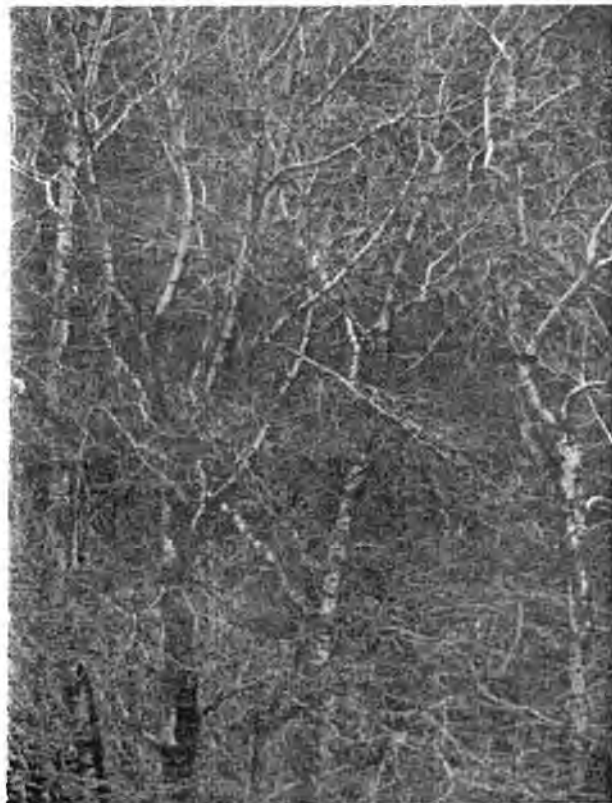
As landscapes are 'a way of seeing' so too are fractals. When fractal geometry and chaos theory were introduced to mathematicians and scientists it was a very big leap of faith for them to come to terms with things not being the way they were previously thought to be. Although once they realized how useful the theory was and how well it explained phenomena that had remained mysterious to them, it changed the whole world for them, literally. These first chaos theorists seem to have shared certain sensibilities: they had an eye for patterns, especially patterns that appeared on different scales at the same time, they had a taste for randomness and complexity, for undefined edges and sudden unexplained leaps in behaviour. I do not think it is coincidental that fractal thinking developed in the 1960's and 1970's the same time as wide-spread experimentation with the powerful hallucinogenic drug, LSD was taking place.

LSD first affects your senses, your hearing becomes more focused, colours become more vivid and realistic, and the underlying shapes and patterns of objects reveal themselves. Psychedelic art which makes use of the principles of fractal geometry was born from these phenomena. The senses of touch, smell and taste are also heightened and become unusual and strange. Previous knowledge and experiences are forgotten, so you cannot make comparisons between previously held ideas so as to extract meaning. As a result each sight or sound can now be experienced as they appear in that moment, as opposed to what they were previously understood to be. 'Your old reality fades a bit, and you incorporate a new reality. This identification is not metaphorical. It is neurological. In scientific papers [this process is called] re-imprinting.' (Leary 1983:5)

Experimenting with LSD uncovered the visuals of a fractal world for me, and things were no longer the way I had previously thought them to be. Suddenly, I could see the world as it really is (well maybe not the way it really is, but I certainly believed the perception of reality that was presented to me) as a chaotic assembly of shapes and patterns, self-similar and fractal. I saw things in their underlying molecular structures. I could see how everything fitted together, the patterns of existence. LSD inspired an awareness of fractal geometry in me. A form very different to the Euclidian one I was used to. Basic Euclidian geometry uses lines, circles and easily comprehensible contours as means to construct form. The man made landscape is almost exclusively defined by Euclidian geometric principles, we therefore are used to considering form with them. LSD allows for a reduction of form without government by Euclidian principles, instead, form becomes fragmented in a totally distinct fashion at the whim of natural geometric

constructions. Post LSD my consistent alertness to similar visuals lead me directly to researching fractal geometry which in turn lead me to chaos theory, and thus further investigation of making fractal art. This research has left an indelible print on my directorial sensibilities.

This explication briefly touches on chaos and fractal theory (this is not a scientific paper) so that the reader can follow how these theories and ideas filtered through the development phases of *a play*, and the effects of chaos and fractals on the process, structure and style of the production. The theoretical impetus of the scientific and mathematical theories guided a process which was assisted as much by disorder as it was by order.



Fractal photographer, Lawrence Hudetz (1992), uses fractal geometry to find order within disorder.

.. what thinking in fractal shapes does for me, is give me another dimension. With the old geometry I'd go into the forest and I'd be looking to line up the trees or get a certain rhythm going while the back ground chaos to the forest became just that, a background. But when I take the background as the real subject, then the fact that the trees are straight or not straight become incidental the new geometry is a more open way of looking, this creates a subtle shift. It allows me to accept images that I might have rejected in the past because my brain was saying, *that's not organized right*. (Lawrence Hudetz in Briggs 1992:161)

Hudetz describes himself as an artist recreating images that match his inner fractal, by which he means his search for texture, an inner pattern of roughness and tangledness that constitutes his sense of being in the world. He says it is a 'quality of *being* that needs to show up, it's there or it's not. If I try to analyze it, then the thing falls apart.' (161)

Pre Chaos theory scientists had believed that the physical world was a predictable place organised by established mathematical principles with mathematical models representing it. It was in searching for models to explain ambiguous phenomena that fractals were discovered. Chaos theory was introduced to explain these phenomena, where despite accurate and rigorous mathematical models, outcomes were not predictable, such as the disorder in the atmosphere, in the ocean, in oscillations of the heart and of the brain. Among the fundamentals of chaos theory, chaologists identified extreme sensitivity of dynamic systems to their initial conditions, which means that in chaos driven incidents, small changes in initial conditions result in vast differences in final outcome.

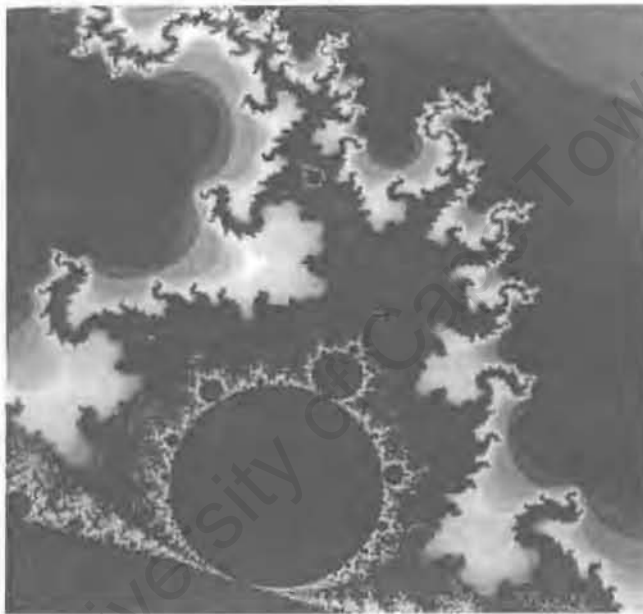
Nature, chaologists argue, is dominated by chaos, but it is not a superficial chaos that can be theoretically reduced to order once we have gained enough information about it. Rather, nature's chaos is profound: even attempts to gather information for analysis influence the system, distorting the data gathered. This extreme sensitivity is the hallmark of chaotic dynamic systems and can be explained by imagining two leaves dropping side by side into a stream – the stream is a dynamic system comprising water, rocks, leaves, twigs, reeds, bends etc. Even though the leaves might move together initially their paths soon diverge as the movement of the water

magnifies their initial variances. One leaf spins into the reeds on the side where it gets stuck for a little, while the other gets picked up by a strong swirl and runs away downstream. A very slight difference in their starting points ends up with a very big difference in their fates. Such systems are highly sensitive because they are always on the move, always changing and never recycling back to their exact initial states. Natural elements follow these types of intricate, potentially decipherable chaotic equations of growth. Chaos theory recognizes and investigates the extreme sensitivity of non-linear systems to changes in their initial conditions. In nature these initial conditions correspond to natural elements such as the weather or animal behaviour, there are infinite possible affecting initial conditions that accurate prediction tends towards impossibility, surely these things are completely random, but in this randomness, as is shown by fractal designs, chaos tends toward order.

One of the reasons that elements in a dynamic system are so sensitive to their initial conditions is that these systems are subject to feedback. (Briggs 1992:19) Feedback is a signal produced as a by-product of an operation which in turn affects the operation. Like the screech of a microphone that is placed too close to its speaker: a signal is amplified by the microphone, outputted by the speaker and then fed back into the microphone again where it is amplified and sent to the speaker. The cycle continues indefinitely (or until you move the microphone away) and is termed positive feedback. Riding a bicycle requires a negative feedback loop in the brain: the rider is essentially always falling to one side or the other, and recovering consistently, as a function of the signals fed back to the brain, which then issues new weight-shifting commands. Balancing is a complex feedback loop, where signals constantly instruct the body how to react, and the reaction causes new signals demanding a further reaction and so on, ensuring stability.

Fractal geometry is also governed by the principle of feedback; it relies on feedback loops to generate its astonishing patterns. Elements of the generating system read in signals from its surroundings and respond by furthering the pattern in some distinct fashion. Their action, in turn, influences the surroundings, and these new surroundings then affect the system in another way, on and on, ad infinitum.

To look more mathematically at the feedback concept, consider a black box into which signals are fed and out of which signals are sent. In the black box is a complex mathematical equation. For any given input, the black box returns an output that is simply a function of its indeterminate equation. The output is then fed back into the black box as an input. This is a negative feedback loop as it generates an output that is both a function of the mathematical equation and of itself. A previous output signal becomes an input signal in a regular and repeating cycle. Computer fractal images are generated through the use of these types of iterative equations, with each result being plotted at a pixel point on the screen. As the equation re-iterates and plots coloured pixels across the screen, the results are beautiful and startling images.



This flame-like image of the Mandelbrot is named *Peitgen* and shows the infinite detail of computer fractal images.

Fractals show like details on many different scales. As you look more closely at a fractal image, shapes seen on one scale are randomly similar but never identical to the detail in shapes seen at another scale. An everyday example, and a fractal from your fridge, is a cauliflower, which arranges its florets in self-similar scales. The whole cauliflower shape is similar to that of a single branch, which is similar to shape of the florets making up the branch, which in turn, is similar to the tiniest single floret.



A fractal from your fridge.

This case of self-similarity is left behind by the dynamic process of growth as it fills the space between dimensions. The next key to understanding how fractal shapes work are these fractal dimensions, a notion which James Gleick aptly calls ‘a conceptual high-wire act.’ (1997:98) In a fractal world, unlike in a Euclidian world with straight or curved edges, there are wrinkles and crinkles, sometimes infinite in detail, giving us more information the closer we look. The way these wrinkles and crinkles fill space, crosses the boundaries between the familiar Euclidian dimensions (such as 2D or 3D) and become fractal dimensions, a way of measuring qualities that otherwise have no clear definition (such as the degree of roughness, irregularity or brokenness of an object). According to Mandelbrot the degree of irregularity remains constant over different scales. The universe and nature repeatedly display this kind of regular irregularity. The characteristic irregularity of clouds can be described in terms of fractal dimensions, as they don’t change at all when they are observed on different scales. That is why when traveling it is easy to lose all perspective of how far away a cloud is.

My interest in fractals and the patterns of chaos lies in the logic of their aesthetic which seems to me to be informed by a kind of ideality that comes from within nature and natural phenomenon. This aesthetic of perfection is sensuous and in a way human, it reveals the hidden logic of matter itself, which really strikes a cord with me. It is a logic that I have always wanted to borrow from and reproduce in the making of theatre.

chapter four: elements in a home-grown theatre:

a) actions and activities

Domestic activities are the beautifully simple things we do everyday while we are living; they are small acts of being alive. There are of course, prerequisites to being alive as well: one has to breathe, eat, sleep and have shelter. And in achieving these things - feeding ourselves, making our bed, shopping and fucking, we set up practices for existence which are identifiable, repeatable and which become our own personal rituals. These rituals follow logic, more or less, patterns that gives sense and order to our everyday lives, patterns that can also give sense and order, to a purely aesthetic theatrical event.

Michel de Certeau, in questioning the identity of thought and being, focused his thinking on the 'modes of operation' or 'schemata of action' that are the originators or vehicles of human behaviour. (Gardiner 2000:174) It is these 'schemata of action' that can offer an alternative to dramatic action in the form of behavioural maps of activity. These maps are made up, according to Certeau, of groups of tactics which are dispersed among everyday living and improvised in response to the demands of the situation at hand. For example, in the activity of doing a white wash, you discover a red-wine stain on your favourite linen skirt, so you improvise a tactic and add Vanish to the wash. You do not use bleach because you already know, from previous mishaps, that bleach disintegrates delicate fabrics, and because it is your favourite skirt, you want to preserve its longevity. But you also know, from previous experience, that Vanish doesn't *actually* work no matter what the commercials tell you, and you fear for the stain in your skirt. So your next improvised tactic is to add some Omo, a well renowned and self-proven stain removal product. But your machine happens to be a front-loader and you're not supposed to use Omo in a front-loader because it is very foamy and you run the risk of making it overflow. However, to save yourself having to soak the skirt overnight and then having to hand-wash it, you add Omo anyway. You then decide to read your book on a chair nearby where you can watch the washing cycle in case it does overflow, in which case you will be able to turn it off quickly and save yourself also having to mop the floor, which probably wouldn't be such a bad idea, now that you think of it.

It is this kind of scattered reasoning that governs the logic of the domestic. This logic combines things you know for yourself from past experience; things that you may have assimilated from others, say your mother or maid; and things you have been told by advertising campaigns. In the making of *a play* we talked about, looked for, and uncovered these tactics from within our own everydays, and then used this reasoning in improvisations and to develop theatrical action.

Lefebvre (1990) and Certeau (1984) both posited everyday practices as practices which give rise to thoughts. Not only the kind of thoughts that involve getting stains out of skirts, but thoughts that traverse the boundaries of your home environment. Through performing domestic rituals you may not, for the most part, actually think about what you are doing. When you are doing the dishes, for example, it is not necessary to consider the water, foam, sponge, dirt etc. for longer than a few perfunctory seconds, before your brain can move onto other contemplations. Because these activities are routinized and habitual, it is possible not to think about the task and just 'experience it', or just to use one well-practiced part of your brain for the mundane thoughts while the rest of it has a chance to reflect freely on things of its own choice. It is a time to allow your mind to drift over things from the external landscape and put them into order, a way of taking time out to gain perspective whilst still being productive, as if by putting the small things into order we can keep the larger things in check. It is only when we allow the larger things to overwhelm us and take over our lives so we do not have time for our domestic chores that the world seems unmanageable, that living seems difficult and when things seem to stop making sense.

This idea is at the heart of my aesthetic construction: the way in which people order their immediate environment and its stimuli in small ways, directly effects how they make do with the more distant and greater structures. This idea also connects to chaos theory in as much as the kind of logic that is involved is fractal, i.e. dynamic and extremely sensitive to an infinite number of influencing factors. Small actions effectively alter the whole environment, which in turn, makes an impression on all consecutive actions. Fractal logic or 'methods of ordering' were used in *a play* in an attempt to construct a home-grown art practice that could encourage similarly ordered, manageable thoughts for both the performer and the audience.

The complexity and density of very personal activities as well as their non-normative values open up aesthetic spaces for home-grown art. In *a play* the interest in everyday rituals lay primarily in the patterns of their practice; I hoped that by identifying, abstracting and reproducing these patterns through the choreography and the design elements – I could create an ‘I-know-that-feeling feeling’ on the stage.



Zolani Mahola in act 2: the washing collection

b) objects

Within the welter of our material life, with all its amorphous flux, certain objects stand out in a sort of perfection dimly akin to reason, and these are known as the beautiful. A kind of ideality seems to inform their sensuous existence from within, rather than floating above it in some platonic space; so that a rigorous logic is here revealed to us in matter itself, felt instantly on the pulses. Because these are objects which we can agree to as beautiful, not by arguing or analyzing but just by looking and seeing, a spontaneous consensus is brought to birth within our creaturely life, bringing with it the promise that such a life, for all its apparent arbitrariness and obscurity, might indeed work in some sense very like a rational law. (Eagleton 1990:17)

In following the patterns of our lives and in performing our everyday rituals an assortment of objects come into play: our lives are full of stuff and we interact with it constantly, from the thread-bare, teddy-bear face-cloth that wakes your face up, to the vitally important pink-floral tea-cup that holds life's elixir. Without lucid thinking we bestow value on certain objects and not on others, and instinctively know them to be the pillars of our everyday lives. One can still drink tea from any random mug, but neither the process of making it or the act of drinking it will provide the same kind of pleasure as will using a favourite. Our choices that determine things to be preferred or favourite objects are based on numerous, various and strictly personal reasons – some based on memory and recovery of the past (who does this remind me of, what memories of events does it arouse, and what emotions does it stimulate when in use) and some based on immediate, present and sensory pleasures (the colour, texture, size and shape) that add to the actual experience of object use. My home-grown theatre is concerned with two types of objects: objects that hold special significance for the individual in their home environment (such as the pink-floral tea-cup) and objects that function as the tools for everyday activity (such as a vacuum cleaner or clothes-pegs.) *a play* was about finding the relationship between functional and emotional responses to actual, physical stuff (tea-cups, other tea making paraphernalia, washing, pegs etc) and recreating these interactions on the stage. In the rehearsal process and in ACT 1 of *a play* these interactions took place without objects - the majority of props were removed -

highlighting the quality of the movement. For example: picking up an invisible cup or pouring water out of a non-existent kettle forces one to 'realise' the properties of the object and then in performance amplify the intimacy of the moment of interaction.

The Surrealists incorporated fragments of their daily lives such as bits of clothing, newspaper headlines and bottle caps into their multi-media collages, resulting in strange and unfamiliar juxtapositions and the production of new patterns of meaning. (Gardiner 2000:30) This 'collage aesthetic', which was a forerunner to the now-familiar avant-garde techniques such as photo- and film-montage, 'found object' art and 'found' poetry, was part of their wider project to develop an entirely new language and a new aesthetic. Their aim was to liberate mankind from the nightmare of the past weighing on the brain of the living, to paraphrase Gardiner who paraphrases Marx. This developed from an ambition to create a 'relevant culture', one that took everyday life seriously as the place where human dreams, hopes and desires were situated. 'The highest art', Huelsenbeck wrote, 'will be that which in its conscious content presents the thousand-fold problems of the day' (Gardiner 2000:30)

c) *human beings*

My home-grown theatre is above all concerned with people: their physical and bodily experiences; their practical knowledge; their reason and habit forming natures; the patterns that they create in their daily lives; and the relationships that occur between them in a domestic environment. For the most part, the responsibility for activities and objects related to the domestic environment has fallen on women. In *a play* which had a majority female cast we celebrated this fact by exploring and exploiting the feminine aspect of our home-grown aesthetic allowing the male sensibilities that were present to be impacted without restraint, i.e. we thought we were going to be a good influence, domestically speaking. Interestingly, the few males weren't really affected by us at all. They all brought their own distinct energies into the predominantly feminine spaces and ideals but they were influenced very little by the abundant feminine energy, in the same way, I suppose, as in real life. The contrast between the roles and rituals in a gender sense were very clear: for instance not one of the men folded a single piece of washing, ever, in rehearsal or in performance. They either scrunched it up in a ball and threw it in the basket or bundled it over their arms and then patted it flat, very different to the accomplished, neat folding

of the women. Most noticeably the males in the cast provided very definite rhythmic nuances to the choreography and the text.

It is in recognizing that everyday life incorporates a way of influencing and referring back to itself, which accounts for the remarkable ability human beings display in adapting to new situations and coping with ongoing existing challenges. It also explains the enormous cross-cultural and historical variability that daily life manifests. (Gardiner 2000:6) Both these phenomena give us scope for an interesting theatrical aesthetic and if one perceives everyday life's routinized, static and unreflexive characteristics, one must also recognize its capability for surprising dynamism, moments of penetrating insight and boundless creativity, as a springboard for material.

It is a constant idea of mine, that behind the cotton wool [of daily reality] is hidden a pattern; that we – I mean all human beings – are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. (Virginia Woolf quoted in Briggs 1992:179)

The theatre is much more than a version of the practices it represents and it can be creative in a way that is reminiscent of the creativity in nature. This is what we were striving for in the making of *a play*. Briggs similarly argues that 'each form and gesture in an artwork has autonomy and yet its self-similarity draws it into an interaction with other forms and gestures in the piece to generate an environment that forces us to continuously realize the artwork is alive and dynamically in motion.' (1992:174)

d) time and space

It moves, but it also stays. (Stein in Ryan 1984:159)

This is the contradiction Gertrude Stein talks about with reference to the nature of landscapes. An apparently constant setting is actually always dynamic and changing. Landscapes have their own sense of time: a mountain can take hundreds of years to erode, while a single flower living on it can bloom and die within a single day. Clouds evaporate or materialize, the light changes constantly to reveal new shapes and colours in familiar things. This idea of landscapes as a flow of existence is used in a home-grown theatre as a metaphor for time which actually comes closer to a concept of space. Therefore in observing the 'whole time' of a landscape one must take into consideration the relative nature of its disparate elements and their own times. Similarly in a home-grown play, each aspect has its own innate sense of time, domestic activities take up the amount of time it takes to get them done, although in a chaotic world one has to take into consideration other factors that may be affecting their efficiency. Pleasure can be obtained from the simplicity of activities, both from being able to perform them in a no-mess-no-fuss fashion, as well as from the luxury of being able to accomplish them in your own personal time. My home-grown theatre can borrow structures of time from the everyday and then place the other elements, and their own times, inside these structures relative to each other, as a painter would place objects in a landscape.

In this way a home-grown play can also be a landscape play, and by doing this it can then be presented to an audience in a way that allows them to assimilate the play as a whole and on a purely aesthetic level, as they would when looking at a painting. The 'flow of existence' of a *play* is the 'lived' time and space of human everyday experiences. That is why I placed a 'real time' clock in the set-design, so the audience would be conscious of the real time they were spending in the theatre watching the play. The actors also informed the audience of the 'real time' in the world of the play: for instance, 'eight oh eight' or 'tea-time' so that each fragment could be placed within the time-scape.

Stein recognized that landscape itself is a kind of language that artists can read and that they can use as the ground for compositions in their own languages of paint, performance or, in Stein's case, words. Repetitive language was her medium in her landscape plays and contrary to what one might expect - that a play imagined as a landscape would use language sparingly and would instead specify a set of pictures - Stein uses words as a painter might place objects in a painting, as though they were related to each other spatially.

I felt that if a play were exactly like a landscape then there would be no difficulty about the emotion of the person looking on the play being behind or ahead of the play because the landscape does not have to make acquaintance...The landscape has its formation...as after all a play has to have formation and be in relation one thing to the other thing.... [t]he story is only of importance if you like to tell or like to hear a story but the relation is there anyway. And of that relation I wanted to make a play.

(Stein in Ryan 1984:122)

Stein believed that theatre happened purely in the perpetual present. That is 'seeing' a play involves immediate perception: the audience is involved in what they are looking at only in the moment that it is happening. In a landscape play because the audience are not emotionally involved, they remain in the same time frame as the action, neither being ahead or behind what is happening in the present moment. This happens if we look at the play the way we would contemplate a landscape and just see the things the way they are spatially on the stage and the way they are in relation to all the other elements in the picture. In a non-narrative scenario - spectators are invited to make meaning from the elements in themselves, through their repetition, and by the way all the elements make relationships within the space - not by watching the relationships that develop within a story.

e) relationships

A landscape takes up as much space as the viewer affords it, if you are looking at it with the naked eye from an outdoor vantage point. The amount of space it takes up equals your entire span of peripheral vision; however the space could be contained by frames such as a kitchen window, a car windscreen or captured in the frame of a camera. The theatre provides a frame in which the director can choose the amount of space they wish to show to an audience within the bigger, physical frame or architecture of the performance space, at any given time, as well as by what kind of activities / objects / humans they place inside it.

The idea is for the audience to look at the whole stage at once; the relationships between actors and objects, and between these things and the whole space. This synchronization of objects and activities within space and time creates a kind of separate and specific home-grown reality. It is this reality that *a play* attempted to represent on the stage. It is firstly about becoming aware of the relationships between personal objects and the way they are handled within the context of the everyday landscape and then locating these relationships with the body in the theatrical landscape. The theatre becomes the perfect outer frame for representation because of its innately human nature or a 'live'ness. The interaction of actor with audience happens on an intrinsically human level, especially when the subject matter is so accessible. Everybody, no matter how spoilt, has domestic, household or familial responsibilities that must be taken care of every day. Therefore, everybody is likely to find resonance in home-grown theatre no-matter how abstracted the representation because, essentially, the subject matter is known to them.

the landscapes we inhabit, like those Stein creates in her drama, seem permanently precariously – humming, as if they owe their composure to a miraculously co-ordinated effort by all its elements, including the observer, who affirms the arrangement by studying it closely.

(Robinson 2002:159)

f) harmony

What is a play?

A play is scenery. (Stein in Ryan 1984:36)

Gertrude Stein advocated a return to the physicality of theatre, an emphasis upon its function as well as its fiction. She equated plays with their embodiment on the stage, believing that their sheer physicality outweighed any other considerations. 'Anticipating a major tenet of the contemporary theatre, she insisted upon the entity of the theatrical experience.' (Ryan 1984:37)

The term landscape suggests a coherence or harmony, a notion that follows the theoretical legacy of composer, Richard Wagner and his concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*; a total or unified work of art in which all the elements – music, voice, movement and spectacle - work together for a complete and harmonious effect.

Edward Gordon Craig was an English stage designer who dreamed of reformation in the theatre at the turn of the twentieth century. Craig who has his origins in the 'music drama' of Wagner was searching for a theatre heightened by symbol and allegory, a theatre that went beyond the understanding of the men of his time. His major premise was that neither the play nor the acting alone constituted the art of the theatre, but that this lay in its whole presentation. (Milling & Ley 2001:35)

Craig defines artistic creation similarly to the post-impressionist painters in the way that a painter has total control over his creation. Through manipulating elements like inanimate materials, lines, forms and colours in his or her own creative way the painter transforms them into a means of expression to be interpreted by the viewer. Craig's intention was to *compose* the dramatic performance, treating the different elements as materials to be built up into a constant expressive structure in a way in which none of them would have to surrender any of their own qualities. (Bablet 1981:197) This made a production not only effective in each of its components and in its entirety, but also gave Craig scope for creating meaning within each element.

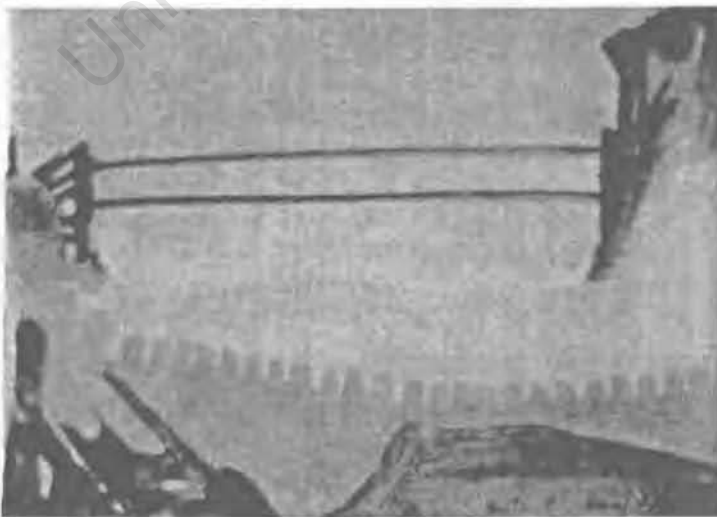
Craig firstly broke down a production into its essential elements, for him these were Action, Scene and Voice. Action referred to both gesture and dancing; Scene referred to all which comes before the eye and Voice referred to the spoken word or the word which is sung. (Milling & Ley 2001:35) These elements incorporated all the mediums of the theatrical production, and Craig motivated that they should give form and structure to a concept of a production instead of a written text. In *On The Art of the Theatre* (1911) he repeatedly insisted on the need for harmony between these elements, a harmony, he proposed, that could only be achieved by a stage director.

Craig believed in 'synaesthetic ideals' of theatrical performance; creating meaning through mental sense impressions relating to one sense by the stimulation of another sense. The only way to do this, he asserted, was for the director to take control of every aspect of production, integrating all the art forms into a single emotional harmony. Craig did not confine his attention to one particular form of theatre or to one single stage technique. His interest in *mise-en-scène* was twofold: that of the stage director and that of the writer, a profession that arose out of the need for integrating the diverse elements of an increasingly spectacular and technically complex theatre.

Craig wanted a visual theatre where the audiences were encouraged to think and dream instead of being lulled into any kind of realistic experience; to wake the audience from its stupor, through evocative images rather than to reassure them with realism. His dream was for a theatre where words and visions, sounds and colours, dance and music would combine to make a feast for eyes and ears. 'If a performance was to be raised to the status of a work of art, its component elements must not be used to rape reality but to transcend it.' (Bablet 1981:197) At the beginning of his career as a director, Craig worked with composer Martin Shaw, whose approach complemented Craig's ideas rather than competed with them. In his early operatic productions Craig achieved a remarkable unity of acting, music, scene and costume, as well as vital symbolic choreography of patterned movement and stylised gesture. Craig designed all the elements for these productions using the continuous musical accompaniment to provide a clear structure around which he could orchestrate his movements, while the simplicity of the librettos and absence of stage directions allowed Craig complete imaginative freedom.

A play happened in a very similar manner. Before the rehearsal process started the set and costumes were designed but the actors were kept in the dark for a while until they had made up their own pictures and images to keep in their heads. The musicians initially were given free rein to improvise with the performers on the floor and accompanying their activities. As soon as a working piece of music was composed, we would find something that had been generated by the actors to go with it. The structure and rhythm of the music would then give shape to the scene while the performers in turn influenced the feeling of the music. In this way sweeping and repetitive gestures were determined in a musical manner rather than a narrative one, and the mood and tempo of the music was transferred to the actions. While I designed all the elements of *a play* the musicians provided me with a clear structure in which to place them. Within the fractal environment musician and actor were feeding off each other and responding to each other the whole time changing the working atmosphere constantly.

My strategy for a home-grown aesthetic differs from other artistic visions which operate on a larger scale in the sense that it does not look to momentous or significant events as the source of theatrical story but rather turns to small domestic endeavours and objects as stimulus for the theatrical event, i.e. evade the 'dramatic', as it is traditionally used in theatre. In Realism the theme of the domestic is not a new one, although it has existed for the most part as the setting or background for other kinds of activities. I propose moving it to the foreground, where it can be all the elements of theatre - Action, Scene and Voice – to borrow terminology from Craig.



Henry V – The Tents – Edward Gordon Craig 1901

The remaining existing drawings and writings of Craig are radically inspiring to me in terms of design and directing even a century later. In *On The Art of the Theatre* (1911) he defined the role of his visionary stage director and his dream of a kind of performance generated from the essential elements of theatre. He motivated the supremacy of the stage director as the originator of creative art, a figure through whom integration of all the elements was to occur.

Touching on this matter of 'Design in the theatre.' As design is part and parcel of the whole play, the drama, it stands to reason that the very best person to make designs is the man who makes the play, if he can. (Craig 1913:8)

g) structure

Craig's visionary ideas and Stein's love of discord and repetitive absurd dialogue have an acknowledged legacy in recent avant-garde theatre work, including the productions of Robert Wilson. Wilson is a strong practitioner of what we could call landscape aesthetics, meaning that, like Stein, he creates his plays like an artist placing things in the theatrical frame and in relation to each other with a certain expectation of his audience in the way that they watch his work. Wilson is highly influenced by Cézanne in both his artistic and compositional techniques, which he explores theatrically and which contributed substantially to his directing style. Such as valuing the dynamics of architectural forms within the pictorial plane, the interplay of activating and balancing forces, the use of warm and cold light to heighten plasticity; the importance of linear rhythm; unity through repetition; the dialogue between depth and flatness; and the creation of mystery through abstraction. (Holmberg 1996:77) Wilson uses these techniques as means of expression in his theatre; his eye metamorphoses people and objects into primary shapes, making them abstract and mysterious and then he composes them into complete works of art.

Wilson's dramatic structure is unrestricted and organised according to Stein's definition of sequence: 'The natural way to count,' she said, 'is not one and one make two but...one and one and one and one and one.' (Robinson 2002:227) Each image provokes consideration and triggers associations of its own, while it builds on the world happening around it. Wilson organises his works in portraits, still-lives and landscapes, spatial terms borrowed from the tradition of fine art

and film. The portraits correspond to the most contained episodes in a production, when you need to be looking at just the 'one'. Still-lives correspond to things happening at a middle distance, and are about relationships between phenomena spatially and practically. The landscapes provide a panoramic, all-inclusive view, that synchronises individual actions with the movement of the whole. In *Einstein on the Beach* (1976) the perception of depth changes from close-up portrait (the intimate *knee* plays, Wilson's word for preludes and interludes) to mid-shot still-lives (the train and the courtroom) to long-shot landscapes (the space-ship scenes). The action expands and contracts between these views – making the audience aware of their own relationship to the stage. It is this dynamism, rather than narrative or emotional development that establishes the dramatic structure

Similarly in *a play* the foreground and background action were arranged within the landscape in portraits, still-lives and landscapes so that I could attempt to direct the energy between the views and thereby the audiences gaze. *a play* was an amalgamation of layered and re-enforced images, in the end moving between them is what established the structure.

h) style

The style of my home-grown art has always borrowed from the Cubist painters' model for perceiving the world and representing the interaction among objects in space, exaggerating form and structure in an effort to reveal the underlying and elemental construction of perceived activities and objects. It also involves combining several aspects of the same thing - as seen simultaneously from different points of view - and presenting them within the theatrical frame at the same time. It contains images that are not just exclusive representations of subjects, but rather independent visual images coexisting within the surroundings. The Cubists worked toward a language of pure structure, toward the abstraction and synthesis of pure form. This allowed them to reduce reality to its underlying essential forms and display them relative to the space around them. Their movement became about breaking the rules, about not being restricted to an objective view of time and space, but rather being able to express oneself through all the different perceptions one has of the world. (Glover 1983:14) For my home-grown theatre this means firstly identifying the essential traits of objects and activities from the home and reducing them to their most basic forms for representation against and in relation to its framing landscape.

In my home-grown theatre I wanted to further develop the transformation from a fine art ideal into a theatrical one through the development of the representation of action. Fine art can provide us frames containing images of domesticity, like some surrealist and cubist paintings, but they do not have the capacity for real human action that can be represented through live performance. My home-grown principles put forward a theatre that removes its subject from its context merely so it can show it more clearly. A theatre that uses home-grown activity as its stimulus for reproduction or repetition but chooses a method of representation that is not realism but abstracted, visual and about audiences experiencing moments of true recognition, rather than overall comprehension. And even if the theatre has little control over the audiences' imaginings - by removing both the activities and objects represented on stage from their ordinary context, as well as removing the audience from their everyday lives to experience them - one can essentially provide some perspective and illuminate the relative nature between people and their everyday lives. This does not completely override the utility of everyday theatre for social change, as Alan Read (1995) talks about in his book *Theatre & Everyday Life*, but rather aims at making meaning that is individual and personal for each audience member.

People are exposed to the representations of the everyday as it 'really is' almost constantly - on film, on television in soap-operas - and the directed focus of celluloid allows for an apparently realistic representation and implies an instruction to the audience both specifically what they are to look at, as well as how they are meant to feel about it through the use of music, editing etc. For this reason to watch this kind of realist material in the theatre, which lacks their focusing and didactic attitude, makes it seem completely contrived and irrelevant - much like television washing powder commercials, that never even begin to show you what doing washing is really about. Nor do they begin to make you remember what it really feels like to have gotten the red-wine out of your favourite white-linen skirt. My idea is to further the art that exists in moments of everyday life and show them to be artistic. Whether previously perceived as mundane, absurd or dull I want to show the everyday as what it could be, interesting, mysterious or beautiful.

chapter 5: a fractal process

Chaos is a science of process, a state of becoming rather than being.

(Gleick 1997:5)

Fractal and chaos theories are difficult concepts to simplify and the more I researched them the less I felt I knew about them. When I tried to explain them to my tea-cup team (after a few years of fractal research) I found I could point them out visually (everywhere) but could not explain them very well, and their questions made me doubt that I ever knew anything before. At some point we all had pretended that we understood some aspects of chaos and fractals and some of the repercussions it was going to have on our play. Very early on I discovered that if I let things happen as they would happen, I would see something more wonderful than I could create. I think that was an early feeling for fractals. It was part of the organic method to just allow things to happen, as they will, to be sensitive to the nuance of process.

In the making of *a play* the first thing I did was set up some chaos so that order could be uncovered in it, not a very difficult task with a cast of eighteen. Right from the beginning of the process I was very open to chaos and created an environment that was too. Even by bandying the word 'chaos' around I allowed a measure of disorder to ensue in rehearsals. Please note that when I say 'chaos' I do not mean a destructive force, but rather something to embrace as an unpredictable yet creative force at work in the universe, even if it does have mad connotations it is a madness that I believe to be very resourceful and imaginative. I applied this kind of chaotic sensibility in making up a suitable process and leading the team in fractally-minded activities toward making *a play*.

I mutated the scientific vocabulary borrowed from Mandelbrot and Gleick into a theatrical one. Substituting 'improvisations' for 'equations', 'process' for 'system', 'dynamic' crossed the vocabulary boundaries, as did 'non-linearity'. I borrowed fundamental elements from fractal theory such as dynamic feedback loops, extreme sensitivity, fractal scaling and self-similarity and embarked on a process that was structured but unpredictable, scientific in an unscientific way, and the whole time searching to uncover the mysterious order that underlies our everyday chaos.

Fractals and chaos tell us about the inherent value of living in a world that springs beyond our control. Such a world enriches and invigorates our curiosity and awe, which is why artists have responded intuitively to these ideas. (Briggs 1992:181)

I found the cast very receptive to fractal principles. For fractal research for *a play* we went on a fractal outing into the Table Mountain reserve. The point was to go out into nature to look for and identify existing natural fractals and to explore the kinds of structures that reveal themselves in nature, while using the time out of our city environment to talk and think about them without other distractions.



Coba-Maryn Wilsenach on the fractal expedition

We also played with looking through card-board frames at the mountain and other scenery, making little landscape pictures and examining everything inside the frame as its own picture separate from the greater environment. A great deal of primary material was actually generated on this excursion, it was a way of allowing the play to make itself, through bringing ideas into our collective thinking they could make their way into the play. Everybody left the excursion with their own ideas and experiences of fractals that they could take with them into improvisations.

In the rehearsal room, constraints were spontaneously invented to help facilitate the big group. Almost random sub-groups were created within the group, which I determined initially by individual schedules and who was available for each rehearsal. Then groups were chosen by superficial appearances such as body-type or hair-colour, and in some cases by ethnic and language groups, my idea was to set up possibilities for different dynamics to form within separate groups. Then, because I knew that I had to get everyone onto stage in the first half, and because I love working in numbers, I decided to start with one person in the space and build up to having eighteen and then co-ordinated everyone to entrance and exit accordingly. Once we had done this it reminded me of the rhythm of an actual day: waking up alone and then things getting progressively more hectic and sociable as one goes out and interacts with other people in the world. So in the second half I decided to wind down again from eighteen to one, the way one ends up alone again. The fact that it actually didn't end up working this way is a good example of chaos working in an environment that was open to it.

One of the principles of chaos theory is that no matter how good a scientific model or formula is, there is always a fundamental unpredictability and uncertainty driving dynamic systems. This is exactly the same as a workshop process: no matter how good your preparation work or the clarity of an instruction, the nature of the process and especially the actors is primarily unpredictable – and the number of shaping factors innumerable: from the rehearsal space, to the health of your team, to departmental issues – all random – yet all individually following their own disorderly order and thereby feeding back into the process. In improvisations, each actor, starting from the same starting point, is affected by infinite influences from their personal history, experience etc., and they are bringing all that to the floor when they improvise about their daily lives. Therefore the practical results of each improvisation differed greatly for each individual.

By viewing the making of *a play* as a dynamic system, directorially I could encourage actors to feedback from each other's work and then see what patterns emerged as movement or text phrases were repeated and mutated over time. The non-linearity of the both the structure and the process means that the act of playing the game changes the rules all the time, and I could never guess what the results of an extended improvisation would be.

Just as the creation of fractal structures involves the process of iteration, so the production of artistic work involves iteration. The creative process is a system wherein the output eventually becomes part of the input. In this way the process of making art becomes self-similar, self-referential and an iteration of itself. (Edward Berko in Briggs 1992:168)

Self-similarity and fractal space were first explored in the fractal outing and then transposed to elements of choreography in the play especially within the groups, who already had self-similar physical attributes such as 'a pair two' and 'a triplet.' In their dances self-similar movements were used on different scales and kept developing from and building on the movements that went before them.

In the rehearsal process we would do an improvisation and get a result with a definite beginning and ending, say a movement phrase. Then we would take that phrase and do the improvisation again, this time with a slightly different emphasis or instruction, building on what we already had until the specifics were all sorted out and a number of similar yet different phrases existed. Using fractal methods for imitating objects and activities, separate iterative formulas or recipes can be used for different parts of objects or for different elements of a scene. This procedure creates immense possibilities for re-creating the images of complex forms out of relatively simple sets of equations.

What I think worked for me in the end, was the calmness that I felt as a result of embracing the chaos. This calmness allowed me to not rush a process that was very personal for my performers and for me, and to believe throughout the whole process that an end product would develop that would stand as a good representation of our fractal journey.

conclusion

To value theatre is to value life, not escape from it. The everyday is at once the most habitual and demanding dimension of life which theatre has the most responsibility to. Theatre does not tease people out of their everyday lives like other expressions of wish fulfillment but reminds them who they are and what is worth living and changing in their lives everyday. (Read, 1995, 103)

This idea was at the heart of the process and production of *a play*: that through re-emphasising the small things in life, the group of people touched by the experience might take pleasure in making of a good cup of tea and delight in the act of doing their washing.

Whilst writing this explication I have become aware that recording parts of the performance inevitably distorts their structure because there were many valid observations that could be made with regards to the interpretation of the performance. Through writing it down you impose a singular order and pace of perception, which is very different from the actual experience of the thing. When you say: 'I did this because' it immediately excludes all the other possibilities for why a thing happened, and probably the reason why it was interesting in the first place. *a play* was only what it was while it existed, the meaning residing in the actual fragments of the play generated by the performers who developed the work. My job as a director was to layer these meanings on top of each other - relying on my complete belief that what I was doing was important - in such a way that they created more complex meanings together. Everything that is written here from either pre or post production is just a by-product of the actual play itself. It is a by-product affected by memory and like all acts of remembering, the description is creative in its own way.

The people who probably gained the most knowledge and meaningful understanding of my ideas were the cast and I am very happy for this to be the case. Through them I was allowed the opportunity of working through my ideas practically and cementing in my own mind the importance of making the little things meaningful. The cast's realizations were made through

personal and group research and stemmed directly from their own experiences. Then in rehearsal this experience was explored semiotically, through the body and their own explorations of the subject matter. What actually happened in the end is that the play became less about me and my ideas and more about the actors as they took on the ideas and gave things that were their own to the process.

My home-grown theatre is primarily concerned with the profound importance of very small things, the fragments of everyday life. It is about human beings and their very personal interaction with objects and activities at home and the relationships that occur as a result of these interactions. It is shifting the power away from superstructures and onto the ordinary. Njabulo Ndebele in his essay 'Rediscovery of the Ordinary' (1991) points out that paying attention to 'the ordinary and its methods will result in significant growth of consciousness.' (50) It is this idea of home-growth that I wanted my home-grown theatre to tackle directly; through reinvesting value in things that people take for granted, and making plays about them. The importance of home-grown can be offered to an audience in the hope that such representations can induce a home-grown consciousness in each of their own daily lives.

In a world where the media flashes all the horrors of the planet in a stream to our senses, implying a connection to a number of different realities, it is easy to become totally dislocated, desensitized to mass atrocities, random deaths, global economic activity etc. And unless one has a vested interest in any one of these things, or the scale of the event is truly colossal, such as the 9/11 events or the recent tsunami disaster, it is unlikely that any of this information will act on the awareness of everyday life. Even in times of huge catastrophes most of us will only be impacted because of the time we spend watching the disaster unfurl on our television. The point of home-grown art is a *re*-location in one's own environment and a *re*-sensitization to one's immediate conditions of living; a process of discovery that that lead to a home-grown theatrical event, *a play about tea-cups and doing the washing*.

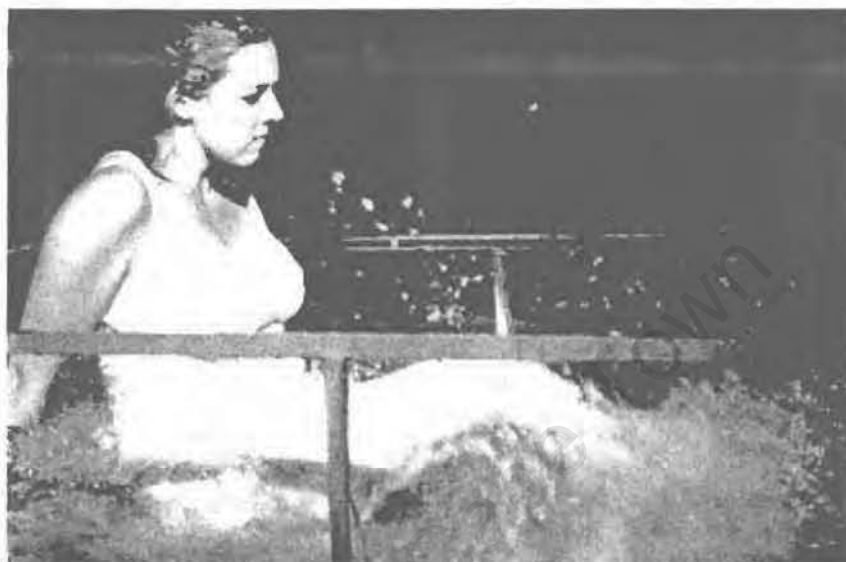
My home-grown theatre stems from a personal need for self-expression. A need to reveal the visions, feelings and creative impulses I have while experiencing my everyday life through art, which for me as a theatre-maker is about making a play of sorts, and then having these

expressions reflected back to me in the mirror of other peoples' perceptions, and discovering what this play awakens in them (if anything). The duality of this type of expression lies in my belief that one can learn, grow, and develop our ordinary lives through finding means of expressing the domestic in our art (i.e. putting our life into our art) which will in turn help us in finding means of expression in our domestic lives (i.e. putting art into our lives) and possibly the lives of the people the art reaches. Such expressions can be ways of helping ourselves to better understand our everyday experiences, by exploring our own personal reality and bringing it into the light so it can be seen more clearly. For me this is an important act of maintaining sanity in this crazy world.

In a search to explain my own drive to make theatre the way that I do I am consciously choosing to neglect the greater structures of my world, such as the hegemony of high capitalism and the constructs of modernity, which appear incomprehensibly to control and overwhelm me. I rather choose to acknowledge beauty in the things I know. The condition of being or existing (existence) is not the point of inquiry but rather what we perceive to be real and happening in our lives everyday (lived experience.) Lived experience is something I can tap into, attempt to understand, and something I actually desire to make art about. This desire is about recognising everyday experience as being significantly valuable to art, about seeing the possibility of beauty in what are often thought of as the dull, mundane and unromantic instants of reality and about raising them to a level of aesthetic importance. In the (ultimately impossible) hope that ones' representations can portray the essence of what they symbolize and that they can share this recognition of beauty with an audience.

A home-grown art expresses itself in a way that lets others see more of the people we are when we are at home by ourselves. In a way, it is about reaching out from the illusion of separation between people and reaffirming our essential connections with one another. When you share these private, intimate acts through theatre, you do so with the hope that the audience will see something of what you have put into it, and that their experience will echo yours in some way. If you have done well, you will be able to add something to their experience and in return, gain from their reactions to your work. A home-grown theatre can remind us of who we are; it can re-show us the things that are most familiar and everyday to us, in a new imaginative and inventive

way, generating significance in the ordinary that can possibly surpass the actual experience of the theatrical event. It can enable an audience to consciously recognize things they already know through moments and images of domesticity on stage, compelling them to remember feelings they have had that are similar, and that will hopefully continue to resonate when they return from the theatre to their mundane existences.



Diane Makings in the final scene of *a play*.

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an appendix: *a play about tea-cups and doing the washing*

a play about tea-cups and doing the washing

directed and designed by: Angela Nemov

{please note that Nemov is the author's working pseudonym and that her real surname is Anastasopoulos}

devised and written with:

a drummer Kurt Diedericks
a nude Dianne Makings
a portrait Coba-Maryn Wilsenach
a guitarist Josh Ginsburg
a pair Hanneke Rauch, Ardine Fick
a singer Zolani Mahola
a triplet Caely-Jo Levy, Jacqui Du Toit and
Frances Slabolepszy
another pair Ruben Engel, Jeremy September
skip-boy Mark Johnson
clouds Leonie C. von Hase, Sannie Fox,
Annalis Zehnder, Lisa Parsons and
Sibongile Balfour

First performed at

The Little Theatre, Orange Street, Cape Town

October 2004

First produced in conjunction with

The Drama Department

University of Cape Town

Authors note

The script of *a play about tea-cups and doing the washing* exists primarily as a documentation of the entrances and exits of the performers and a record of the texts performed in the final production. These texts are a collation of original prose written specifically for the play and found texts. This script is not an accurate representation of the actions and activities that took place in the play which was a primarily visual and physical piece, a better idea of these can be obtained from watching the video recording of the performance.

Act 1: the tea collection {visible title}

(1) **a drummer** is preset

The audience enters, the time is 5:05am, it is not very light yet, **a drummer** sits alone and drums something rhythmic and repetitive, he has been up all night.

(2) **a nude** enters

The sun begins to rise, **a nude** enters, we can really only see her in silhouette, she looks at the time and begins to make a cup of tea, across the stage **a drummer** sees her, she is not shy, he is and looks away quickly, the rhythm of the drumming changes. She finishes making her tea, takes the first sip.

a nude: What does your ceiling look like?
Mine is very boring, plain white and flat
At least it is newly painted
And I don't lie in bed trying to correct inaccuracies with my mind
As a child we had press-steel ceilings, the pattern in my first bedroom looked like repeated blocks of little girls with pigtail plaits holding hands, it was a very happy ceiling
My teenage ceiling was the old kitchen ceiling and much less elaborate, it was also asymmetrical which used to drive me mad, and there was a dark yellow mark where the old fluorescent light was replaced and every night I would paint it in my head, and fill up the remaining holes with imaginary poly-filler.
What does your ceiling look like?
Mine is very boring, plain white and flat
I can't say I have spent much time staring at it lately
It has become so difficult to wake up, so when I finally do open my eyes for longer than a few seconds to locate the ringing alarm clock and set it on snooze, I focus them on the next most important things - tea and a cigarette.

a nude exits as...

(3) **a portrait + a guitarist** enter

a portrait looks at the time '6:06' and begins to make tea, it grows lighter. She goes through the tea process accompanied only by the rhythm of the drums, as she takes the first sip, the guitar comes in, her eyes close for a moment and when they open, the style of movement has become more abstracted.

a portrait: Not muffins, no
But definitely something cakey
Maybe scones, but they're too plain...

Perhaps
A black forest cake...
Too heavy
Something light and fluffy

Not muffins, no
But definitely something cakey
Maybe scones, but they're too plain...

A lemon meringue pie?
Too rich
Sponge cake...
With lemon rind, no orange rind and apricot jam as a glaze on top. Carrot cake
could work, good for breakfast, if cream cheese be used for icing. With
walnuts, no pecan nuts

Not muffins, no
But definitely something cakey
Maybe scones, but they're too plain...

What about pancakes
No waffles
With maple syrup
And pecan nuts
No cherries
That is the perfect breakfast for three to have with tea:
Homely, friendly, not over the top, but still slightly decadent!
Yes!

Method for making waffles:
Dissolve the yeast in a little warm water. Then mix well with four ounces
flour. Leave for one hour and when risen add the rest of the flour, pinch of
salt, sugar, the beaten eggs, cream, melted butter and brandy. Work all well
together and leave to stand for another two hours. Cook in waffle irons until
golden brown on both sides. Serve hot sprinkled with sugar, maple syrup, and
cherries.

Flour
Yeast
Cream
Butter
Salt
Sugar
Brandy
And eggs

We hear a Nokia alarm ringing from off-stage. The lighting changes **a portrait** checks
the time and exits

(4) **a pair** enter

a pair walk in sleepily, the alarm clock is ringing again, **a portrait** forgets her list and
comes back in to collect it as one part of **a pair** leave to turn off the alarm, **a pair** do their
tea-dance, on the first sip, things become more abstracted as before (music change, slide
on) the movement moves them to sitting down with their tea and stare out of the window,

(5) a **cloud** floats across the sky

a **pair**: 'n Gesels-Gedig oor die Weer
A Conversation-Poem about the Weather

Kaapland
Woeste Weer Land
Al die Seisoene ontmoet hier
In een dag om 'n fraai tee-tafel

Die Reën, dikbek, sif haar vrug en droefheid neer
Terwyl die Suidooster hap en kla oor sy werk as stadsveër
Lente herrangskik haar blomme en lag oor die grap en lied van die lewe
Die Son skuif haar rooi rok hoog teen haar dye op
Fluister wulps vir Suidooster: "Tys om te gaan lê..."

'n Oomblik stil, dan begin insekte skinder
Oor die Seisoene se teeparty
Die Horison Vat
Vlam

a **cloud** floats across the landscape slowly, she winks at a **pair** through their window.
One part of a **pair** naughtily goes and gets them rusks to share.

the **cloud** exits as

a **singer** enters singing melancholically

a **pair** rinse their cups and exit as

(6) a **triplet** enter

a **triplet** bring a gown on for a **singer**, the mood changes dramatically, they sing and dance.

song:	it's fantabulous	tabulous
	marvellous	marvellous
	starting to feel dangerous	oooooh ooooo
	the feeling of gloom	
	starts to leave the room	aye aye aye aye

Z: Time

F: Time check please

J: would you please time check

C: Eight oh eight on the fast clock

F: Hmmm, hello world, morning every one

J: Morning sphere, hello world, tea for? Every one

- C: tea for four, vitamin C and maybe some Syndols
 F: zinc too and an anti-oxidant, beta-carotene
 J: with lots of water about seven glasses, your weight divided by eight
 Z: four for tea, almost endless possibilities for early conversation
 F: start with morning positivity and of course no edge in the voice
 C: and of course no edge in the voice, of course no edge in the voice
 J: beginning the day with a smile for those you live with
 Z: and a very calm purposeful attitude
 F: helpful and willing and above all
 C: of course no edge in the voice
 C: no edge in the voice
 J: just a smile
 Z: smile

At the end of the song, a **trio** make tea together in a organised flurry and bicker about inconsequential things.

- 1: Fuck
 2: Why the language
 1: Why is Duke *kotsing* everywhere?
 3: I don't know, I hate that thing
 1: It's not a thing Trish
 3: Shut up jess
 2: Guys
 1: I don't believe this
 3: Why don't you ask Vicky she loves him
 1: Did you feed my cat today Vicky?
 2: I've been wasted since yesterday.
 3: Vicky on what?
 2: Everything
 1: No wonder you're a receptionist
 2: You know my job is very demanding
 3: Go clean up Duke's puke
 2: Receptionists work hard
 1: Fuck
 2: We deserve play time
 3: The tea's getting cold guys
 1: Trish you are so bossy
 2: Go become a school teacher
 3: Go fuck yourself
 1,2: Hah

song: this fantabulous

tabulous

marvellous
starting to feel dangerous
the feeling of gloom
starts to leave the room

marvellous
oooooh oooooh
aye aye aye aye

Two alarms are heard from off-stage. A **singer** settles on a bench with raunchy novel, and is brought a cup of tea, a **triplet** exit with their tea, a **singer** becomes melancholy again

a **triplet** exit as 3 clouds float across the sky

a **guitarist**: tea?

the **musicians** take a break and exit to make real tea, their sound-effects carry into the space over the unaccompanied dancing

another pair enters

another pair dances their tea-floor pattern

kettle
switch on
mug
spoon
fridge
milk
linger
kettle
back
fridge
milk
linger
put back
tea-time

a **singer** tires of her book and goes to water her garden

(7) a **portrait** enters

(8) **skip-boy** enters

a **portrait** controls a slide projector, projecting photographs of everyday objects onto a small white screen held up by an invisible **skip-boy**

a portrait: A list of beauty:

When your eyes slumber lightly during the first sip of tea after a noisy day. The smell and comfort of fresh stasoft bedding, after a noisy day - that is beauty. When the cactus that has been dead for two years suddenly start to bloom breaking out in a rash of exotically detailed flowers. That is beautiful. When you leave a dirty kitchen behind in the morning and return at noon to find it clean and the sink filled with lilies and irises. To create shadows and shapes with your hands on a bright sunny day with a crisp sheet drying in the wind. To hold a hand that would like to hold yours. That is truly beautiful. The relief when a stain magically vanishes after scrubbing and soaking your favourite white skirt for hours. And sometimes, beauty lies in the simple act of breathing...

another pair exit as

the musicians enter

with their tea, **a guitarist** slowly drinks his, while the clock ticks, everyone on stage looks at them, they continue drinking their tea and are watched the whole time.

1 cloud exits as

a nude enters

a nude: Which is your favourite cup / mug? Mine used to be the pink porcelain one with blue and green flowers on it from clicks, until by sister broke it – with a very loud crash. I was calmly and deeply sleeping, probably quite late for me, when I hear this very loud crash, I wake up with a start wondering if something dangerous is happening, when I hear this little voice whining ‘oh no its her favourite cup’ I am relieved that nothing dangerous is happening and go back to sleep. When I wake up, what seems like hours later, there is one fragment of my cup on the kitchen counter, the bottom circle and a little triangle of pink with a hint of green stem, I remember the very loud crash and am nostalgic – for my pink porcelain cup with blue and green flowers on it from clicks, and for my sister who left the fragment there so I would know and not look about frantically for my cup, I forgive her instantly. I make tea in its friend, the blue porcelain cup with pink and yellow flowers on it from clicks (we bought them in a set of four as a Christmas present for our flat) but it is not the same.

a nude: I always imagine that my mother’s Aunt Violet, whom we used to go visit in Benoni, has beautiful tea-cups. I am always wanting to find these cups and put them into plays. They are always odd cups though, solitary cups, not sets or in pairs. Most of the tea-ups I know intimately are from sets or pairs, for sharing tea in sets of pairs. Tea-cups with stripes for academic discourse on the nature of the art of theatre in contemporary cape-town – I don’t actually use those cups much anymore – I should give them away. Long thin mugs with poodles and bears on for poodles and bears to overdose on tea and time together with them. Tea-cups white and delicate, deep and wide-mouthed, with bright flowers on them from the-just-too-high-shelf at his mother’s house, I really love those cups.

I'm a pink tea-cup you're a blue tea-cup will you marry me someday

(9) **another pair** enters

(10)

another pair repeat their tea-floor pattern, this time accompanied by the musicians, a nude, a singer and on part of a triplet (who has snuck on in secret) sing a refrain:

tea sips are tiny
tea sips are sweetly falling
tea falls on the floor
tea falls on the floor

a portrait and her assistant **ship-boy** prepare the tea-room for the visitors

(11) **a pair** enter

(12)

a pair get led to the waiting bench by **skip-boy**

a nude: My great aunt was a clairvoyant. By studying her tea she predicted her sister's death. She told my mother before I was born, that I was on my way. Two months later my mother found out she was pregnant.

How's that for a grand entrance? It's difficult to live up to an announcement like that ever again. But I try.

She used to breed Pitt bull terriers and her and uncle Bill had a caravan in their garden that I wasn't allowed to play in. Sometimes when I drive around, I see a blue caravan and become filled with an irrational impulse to follow them until they stop, sneak in and play in their blue caravan till they make me stop. I never have though.

a portrait and **a pair** have a Mad Hatter Tea Party

Claire: Dames, maak julle self tuis!

Linette: Ag, Dankie Claire. Weet jy, ons kom so min uit ons ou plekkie uit.
Dis regtig lekker om hier te wees

Annette: Dis regtig baie gaaf van jou!

C: Groot Plesier!

Ongemaklike stilte, **Linette** raak aan die slaap
(Uncomfortable silence, **Linette** dozes off)

L: *Skrik wakker (Wakes up)*

Claire, wat 'n pragtige skildery.

Wys na 'n kamstige skildery in die rigting van die gehoor

(Points at an imaginary painting in the direction of the audience)

A: Wraggies Waar! Wat 'n pragtige skildery!

L: Dit lyk vir my net soos die landskap van Openbaring!

A: Nee, Genesis!

L: Halleluja!

A: Amen!

C: Ag, dis sommer net 'n ou Monet'tjie... jy weet... niks spesiaals nie.

L: Ek het al van hom gehoor. Hy is mos die ou wat Cadbury's se sjokolade dosies...

Raak aan die slaap (Dozes off)

A: ...ontwerp! En die wolke... die wolke lyk soos... soos... spookasem! Jy het nie dalk spookasem nie, het jy?

C: Nee.

A: Wat van toffie-appels?

L: Ag verskoon tog... sy's mal oor kermises en kerkbazaar.

A: Tik die teepot met haar lepel
(Taps the teapot with her spoon)
Tel teepot hoog in die lug op, om onder die pot te probeer lees.
(Picks teapot up, high enough to read under bottom of pot.)
Waar het jy hierdie mooi pot gekoop?

C: *Staan op en neem teepot van Annette*
(Gets up and takes teapot from Annette)

L: Clicks?

A: Discom?

L: Nee. Pep!

A: Nee, Game!

L: Seker Woolies.

C: Dis van Japan! Dis fyn, fyn, fine porselyn!

A & L: O!

A: *Agter hand (Behind hand)*
Sy's 'n bietjie tens!

L: *Agter hand (Behind hand)*
Ek dink sy drink.

L: So, **Claire**, was jy al in Japan?

C: U-huh

L: Sê my, is daar baie Japanese in Japan, **Claire**?

C: U-huh

A: Maar hoekom lyk hulle almal dieselfde?

L: Dis van al die groen tee
Ongemaklike stilte (Uncomfortable silence)

C: Dames, tee?

L: Issit groen?

A: Jou stoel is groen!

L: Joune ook!

C: Nee!

L: Dan sal 'n koppie Boere Troos mos lekker smaak.
Claire skink vir almal tee (Claire pours everyone tea)

A: **Claire**, ek wil nou nie lelik wees nie, maar jou tee proe so bietjie blikkerig...

L: *Terwyl sy in die melk potjie loer (Checking out the milk)*
Is jou melk dalk af?

C: *Duidelik woedend, spring op (Obviously furious, jumps to her feet)*
Nee!

Expires / Vervaldatum; 25 Oktober 2004
Vars Volroom Melk!
Gepasturiseerd! Gehomoniseerd!
DAIRY BELLE!

HAVE A DING DONG DAY!

A: Sy's 'n bietjie tens

L: Ek dink sy drink

Linette raak aan die slaap (Linette dozes off)

A: Ek wou maar net sê, Claire, dat as jy dalk 'n lessie of twee nodig het in hoe om beter tee te maak sal ek regtig nie omgee om jou reg te wys nie.

Jy weet, ek het al nastenby 500 medalje's verower vir my lekker tee!

Tik teepot met haar lepel

(Taps teapot with her spoon)

C: *Staan op (Gets up)*

Wel, elke dag skakel nagenoeg 1 miljoen kykers landwys in om my regstreeks te sien tee maak.

A: Die hele China Macarena tegelyke tyd saam as hulle my tee al die pad van daar af ruik, dis so lekker!

Tik teepot met haar lepel

(Taps teapot with her spoon)

Linette Macarena in haar slaap

(Linette Macarena's in her sleep)

C: Dis nog niks!

Die Japanese Emporer het met ons laaste tee partytjie, waarvoor hy my spesiaal Japan toe gevlieg het om vir hom tee te maak, begin levitate toe hy my lekker tee proe.

A: *Staan op*

(Gets up)

Ag, asseblief. Die laaste keer wat ek tee gemaak het, het God self, Jesus, Maria Magdalena, en die hele Engele koor in tou uit die hemele neergedaal om my tee te kom proe!

Tik teepot met haar lepel

(Taps teapot with her spoon)

Claire stop haar

(Claire stops her)

C: It was over 100 years ago when Sit Thomas Liptonⁱ first created a blend of tea so good, that it was enjoyed by people right around the globe. Lipton searched the world's best plantations to locate the finest teas. These teas were then blended to produce the taste of what is today the world's number one tea. The tea served by me!

Gryp Annette by die arm en druk haar stadig terug op haar stoel

(Grabs Annette by the arm and slowly presses her down on her chair)

A: Sy's 'n bietjie tens

L: Ek dink sy drink

C: Dames, nog tee?

skip-boy does a haiku dance coupled with some haunting music

skip-boy: Spikingly smooth still

Drenching soaking but no spill

Filling emptiness

a nude and **another pair** smoke a joint and have a serious stoner conversation, **skip-boy** joins them invisibly

a nude: At any given time, any one of us is thinking about something that happened in the past, something that will happen in the future or what's happening right now. It's as if we're all standing in this very straight line looking in different directions, like forwards, backwards or um, right now.

pair 1: Ja

pair 2: But right now, was just then, and then, and then.

pair 1: But what do you mean, and then?

a nude: That's because you just processed a thought.

pair 2: So now becomes then in the time it takes you to think the thought.

pair 1: To process the thought.

pair 2: Then was now, because now, in the time it takes you to process a thought, becomes then.

pair 1: When?

pair 2: Then.

a nude: The perpetual present is the perfect past participle.

all: Laugh

pair 1: OK, but then, what are you doing now?

pair 2: Now ceases to exist the moment you think about it. And then, it only ever exists n your mind.

pair 1: Ja, but how can you still feel the effects of then now?

pair 2: Now doesn't exist, it's the feeling or the experience of then that exists now, and even that has just past.

a nude: What? So we're experiencing everything on flash-back?

pair 2: Experience-back.

a nude: Experience-back?

pair 2: Experience-back

a nude: Oh.

pair 2: Just like that.

a nude: Hectic

pair 1: Hectic

pair 1+2: Hectic.

pair 1: Guys the joint's flying again

pair 2: Between the past

a nude: The present

pair 1: And the future

a nude: I think, therefore I am, that's what you mean.

pair 1 +2: No.

pair 2: You can only think about the past or the future and the only thing that can happen in any now has just happened.

pair 1: What about action?

a nude: Ooh, Action is the only thing that can happen in the present as long as there is no intention or motive

pair 1: Or expectation....

pair 2: Hey what?

(13)

(14)

(15) During this conversation the clouds have drifted in through the open window.

all: I'm a little tea-pot song and dance with actions
I'm a little tea-pot short and stout

Here's my handle and here's my spout
When I get all steamed up, hear me shout
Tip me over and pour me out.

(16)

(17)

(18) The triplets run on late to join the big musical finish

tea sips are tiny
tea sips are sweetly falling
tea falls on the floor
tea falls on the floor

end act 1.

Act 2: the washing collection

The audience return after interval to find the full cast frozen in time and space, looking fully dressed and very wind swept. The space is cluttered with three washing lines, sporting different stages of washing being hang-up or being taken down. the title: *the washing collection* is drawn slowly across the space on a washing line.

Everybody is frozen in time and space, *the washing collection* is pulled slowly across the front washing line

Random washing hanging up and taking down including ducking under lines and shaking out rhythms

Slow motion

Freeze

a singer goes crazy, shouts and wakes everybody up

Fast motion

Freeze

a part pair - Weather report

The weather in Cape Town today is springy
Not unlike sprung steel but in the seasonal sense
A light to moderate breeze is predicted
However, this is not the most reliable element of modern meteorology
All washing should dry well
In a single afternoon

Normal motion collect pillow slips - **5 moist for mangling** – choral work

COTTON (up to 5kg)ⁱⁱ

- 1 extra dry
- 2 cupboard dry
- 3 slightly moist
- 4 moist for ironing
- 5 moist for mangling

MIXED FABRICS (1-2kg)

- 6 extra dry
- 7 cupboard dry
- 8 slightly moist

* airing

Everybody sits in a line

wash (wōsh, wōsh)ⁱⁱⁱ

v. washed, washing, washes

v. tr.

1. a. To soak, rinse out, and remove (dirt or stain) with or as is with water: *wash grease out of overalls.*
- b. To cleanse, using water or other liquid, usually with soap, detergent, or bleach, by immersing, dipping, rubbing or scrubbing: *wash one's hands; wash windows.*
2. To make moist or wet; drench: *Tears washes the child's cheeks.*
3. To flow over, against, or past: *waves that washed the sandy shores.*
4. To carry, erode, remove, or destroy by the action of moving water: *Heavy rains washed the topsoil away.*
5. To rid of corruption or guilt, cleanse or purify: *wash sins away.*
6. To cover or coat with a watery layer of paint or other colouring substance.
7. Chemistry.
 - a. To purify (a gas) by passing through or over a liquid, as to remove soluble matter.
 - b. To pass a solvent, such as distilled water, through (a precipitate).
8. To separate constituents of (a **nude**: ore) by immersion in or agitation with water.
9. To cause to undergo a swirling action: *washed the tea around the cup.*

a singer vacuums over other washing text chaos

Stage empties a bit (**a nude, a portrait, 2 parts triplet and a part pair** exit)

clouds become clouds

a drummer goes to sleep

video footage of a **portrait** and **skip-boy**

Handy hint #135:

Do you suffer from the embarrassment of smelly shoes? Skip does. Here's for our handy hint number 134. Skip; let's make that smell an invisible smell. If you have a pair of shoes that have an abundance of a non appreciative odour, this is what you should do: place your shoes inside a plastic carrier bag. Seal the bag with a tight knot. Place the plastic carrier bag inside the freezer. Your shoes will now reside inside the freezer for the duration of one night. The next morning, bright and early, remove the plastic carrier bag from the freezer and then remove your shoes from the bag, and voila! Your shoes will smell as fresh as roses.

a part pair: Pegs are necessary
For wet washing
Especially in cape-Town
Even if the washing looks like gravity will
keep it in position – it is lying
The wind will come up and

Blow it to the ground and
Blow it around
In the dirt –
Hardly practical not to use pegs
Especially in Cape-Town
Even if it seems like an extra
Domestic mission
To find a clever place to keep pegs
(I really want to get one of those little
dresses on a hanger with the bottom
sewn-closed – at the moment I use
a Tupperware – but the rain collects
in the bottom and then you have wet /
possibly muddy pegs – that's not right)
to put them on one by one
to take them of one by one
when the washing's done
and return them to their hopefully clever place
Leaving them one the line is hardly
Practical
However easy it may seem at the
Time
They'll just be in the way of the next
Washing load which can hardly
Be expected to follow the same
Pattern as the last.

a part triplet and skip-boy do their mini Tupperware dance– then **a part triplet** exits,
skip-boy sits and sulks

a nude and **a portrait** enter shopping

a nude: Sunlight dishwashing liquid went and changed its smell, I cannot actually tolerate it, then they went and changed its cap, my maid can't understand it and it is such an ugly red, so I buy Polagric, actually more recently I have discovered Quix anti-bacterial, I feel in some-way most dishwashing liquids have let me down.

a portrait: You should try ICU it's blue.

a nude: My sister still swears by sunlight despite its ugly smell and stupid lid.

a nude and **a portrait** exit shopping

a part pair: I hate drinking water. I think that this is the cause for the premature wrinkles I can see in my face. But my roommate taught me a trick the other day. If you fill a bottle with water it doesn't taste as bad. When you drink water out of a glass it tastes like egg. I don't know why.

a part triplet and **skip-boy** roll across the space over the next while

clouds become table mountain, **a part pair** covers them with a sheet

another pair sit on the giant post-it

- pair 1:** shakes penoxcylb
This is a really good sound.
- pair 2:** Ja, beautiful hey?
- pair 1:** Ja, awesome... um... What is it?
- pair 2:** It's the first pencil I wrote with in sub A, the very first pencil I expressed myself with in a learning environment. You see? I'm going to hand it over to my son on his first day at school. And he will have the choice of to express himself with it or keep it and hand it down to his son.
- pair 1:** So you're gonna hand this pencil to your son.
- pair 2:** Exactly.
- pair 1:** I don't see how he can express himself with a little pencil like this.
- pair 2:** It's not the practicality of it. It's symbolic man, it's the first pencil I wrote with.
- pair 1:** OK, cool, I can accept that... but take me now for instance, I too am giving my son an artefact. I'm giving him a red ruler. Now this ruler will not only be useful but symbolic as well. Get that... Symbolic and useful.
- pair 2:** Ja, but the thing is without the pencil the ruler is obsolete.
- pair 1:** Bullshit. The primary function of a ruler is to measure and it can do that just fine without a pencil.
- pair 2:** Oh well... I think rulers, at a young age, promote violence. I have seen too many children hit with rulers. And I don't think it's a good idea.
- pair 1:** Rulers don't hit children, children hit children.
- pair 2:** I think the ruler helps.
- pair 1:** OK, fair enough, but why choose to put it in a lunch box?
- pair 2:** It's not a lunch box, you can't fit your lunch in there.
- pair 1:** OK, miniature lunch box, the point is why put it in there?
- pair 2:** It fit perfectly. A pencil in a box.
- pair 1:** A pencil in a Lunch box.
- pair 2:** A pencil in a Box... pencil box ...cil box... cil b.
- pair 1:** boxcyl pen... penny box.
- pair 2:** Penbox
- pair 1:** Penox
- pair 2:** Penoxcilb
- pair 1:** Penoxcylb
- pair 2:** Penoxcylb
- pair 1:** shakes it again
- pair 2:** Don't shake it, you'll erode the nib.

another pair leave to get some perspective

a nude and a portrait re-enter with syllable shopping list

Jik
Marmite
Bananas
I won't buy bananas,
you start
Okay
Jik
Marmite
Bananas
Coffee
Tea
Pepper
Frozen fish
Eggs
Doughnuts
Olive oil

Soy sauce
Jam
Bread milk
Cuppa soup
Popcorn
Gin
Tonic
Panado
Black cat
Mince
Chicken
]boerewors
pasta
rice
bay leaves
tabasco

a part pair: I hate drinking water. I think that this is the cause for the premature wrinkles I can see in my face. But my roommate taught me a trick the other day. If you fill a bottle with water it doesn't taste as bad. When you drink water out of a glass it tastes like egg. I don't know why.

a nude and a portrait shop

a nude: I have a severe and chronic weakness for specials, if it has a little neon sticker on the self by it, I will probably buy it. Any ordinary grocery shop of say, ten things could easily be increased to twenty or even thirty things if the local shop is having lots of specials. I love buying things out of vats in the middle of aisles, that are cheaper because they have excess stock or because the sell by date is almost up. I love buying things that are new on the shelves and are cheaper because they are being introduced onto the market, I love buying things on promotion, I will always taste the little sample offered up to me by some completely disinterested promotions lady, and if its nice buy a sample or six. So id you see a whole collection of extremely bad tasting Thai microwave meals in my freezer you know why. I love pulling those little discount coupons out of the dispenser with the flashing lights and getting one rand off my purchase. I love buying 2 of something so I can get the third free. I love buying a whole series of something so I can get the free gift or the special vintage campaign packaging.

I suppose after knowing all this it would not be hard to guess that I really love factory shops! There is nothing quite so mood improving as a stroll through the plastic factory shop – all the silliest smallest plastic containers that nothing can actually fit in that your heart desires – last time I was there I bought tiny plastic spoons for 7 cents – I mean what the fuck can you get for 7 cents? And I have recently discovered the joy of the Cape Underwear factory shop, white cotton brookies for ten South African rands – what a bargain.

a part pair: I hate drinking water. I think that this is the cause for the premature wrinkles I can see in my face. But my roommate taught me a trick the other day. If you fill a bottle with water it doesn't taste as bad. When you drink water out of a glass it tastes like egg. I don't know why.

a nude and a portrait sew

a nude: I am a boycotter; I boycott things that make me crazy, thereby keeping the things that drive me crazy to a minimum. I boycott the 24 hour Engen with a Woolworth's, not only because you are definitely going to bump into someone you don't want to see there – cape town is a very small place – but also because it is always busy and the cashiers are so slow it is mind boggling. I boycott the 7/11 at the top of Kloof St, they never have anything you want, if you want green Rizla, they will only have red, if you want 2% milk they will only have full-cream, if you want Telkom air time they will only have cell C, if you want soft-pack they will only have hard-box – what's the point of a convenience store if they only serve to inconvenience you. I boycott Mr. Video – they have a totally retarded first rental policy and even though they're the only store that has the video of the shitty American movie I am in, I still won't go there and as a result have never watched that movie. I also boycott sunlight fabric softener and clover Danon that is now Nutriday fruit because they have such shitty advertisements. I boycott Skippy peanut butter, because I bought two stale jars in a row, and you can never, I repeat, never get through to them on their customer care line. I am not so arrogant to believe that my boycotting actually does any good or actually promotes any change, it's just one of the silly things I do, I don't even think much about it once I have decided to boycott something, I just make another plan, it feels better than giving in to stupid things that make me crazy.

a part triplet gives skip-boy some therapy

a part triplet:^{iv} Discernment is what one uses to determine what resonates with one's inner truth. There is an empathetic response to that is seen as not true. Physical boundaries may be places to align with one's truth but the thing, person or object is never removed from the heart. For example a person sees someone wearing a green jersey and finds in his heart whether green jerseys resonate with his inner truth, he makes one of the following decisions as a result:

- a) that green jerseys do not resonate with one's inner truth, he then asks the green jersey to leave the space or leaves the green jersey alone.
- b) That green jerseys do resonate with one's inner truth, he then will ask the green jersey to stay, or leaves the green jersey alone.

a drummer wakes up

video footage of a portrait and skip-boy

Handy hint #135:

Skip! Wake up , wake up Skip! Skip! Skip has a problem waking up, he doesn't hear his alarm clock. Do you have the same problem? Here's for our handy hint number 135. if you have a problem hearing your alarm clock in the morning, this is what you should do. Before you go to bed at night, place your alarm clock on top of your favourite saucer and rest assured knowing that alarm clock won't let you down. And voila it works! What a wonderfully reassuring way to go to bed at night. From me Claire and my helpful hand Skip, goodbye. And remember if a problem wants to make you quite just watch handy hints and useful tips.

the clouds have a headache^v

clouds: Composition:

Each capsule contains: Ibuprofen	200mg
Codeine Phosphate	10mg
Paracetamol	250mg
Sugar Free	

Pharmacological classification:

A.2.8 Analgesic combinations

Pharmacological action:

Has an analgesic, anti-inflammatory and anti-pyretic action.

Indications:

For the relief of mild to moderate pain of inflammatory origin with or without fever.

Contra-indications:

Impaired hepatic and renal function, peptic ulceration or a history of such ulceration. Cardiovascular disease. Hypersensitivity to any of the ingredients

Warnings:

The safety and administration has not been established for a period longer than four weeks.

Codeine:

Exceeding the prescribed dose, together with prolonged and continuous use of this medication may lead to dependency and addiction.

Paracetamol:

Dosages in excess of those recommended could cause severe liver damage

a singer:^{vi} The first cup moistens my lips and throat
The second cup breaks my loneliness
The third cup searches my barren entrails
But to find therein some five-thousand volumes of odd ideographs
The fourth cup raises a slight perspiration
All the wrong of life passes away through my pores
At the fifth cup I am purified
The sixth cup calls me to the realms of the immortals

The seventh cup...
Aaaah
But I can take no more
I only feel the breath of cool wind that rises in my sleeves

a part pair: Tea time!

Others to enter and exit in I'm a little tea-cup mode

song:	this fantabulous	tabulous
	marvellous	marvellous
	starting to feel dangerous	oooooh oooooh
	the feeling of gloom	
	starts to leave the room	aye aye aye aye

a pair do their mini Tupperware (tired end of day) and exit

a portrait leads a chorus of clouds in dishwashing^{vii}

a portrait: The term **dishwashing** is used for cleaning, eating and cooking utensils not just dishes. If one does not use a dishwashing machine to wash dishes, then one will usually wash dishes by hand.

Preparation:

When dishwashing, a common kitchen sponge and nylon greenback scourer works well, but this a really matter of personal taste, as is the choice of dishwashing detergent.

Collect all your cutlery into a pile. Remove food scraps and stack the plates and bowls neatly. Find all the coffee mugs, wine glasses and what-have-you and group them next to the sink. Arrange your dishes so that they are all in easy reach when you are standing over the sink. Empty all glasses or other containers before filling the sink.

Execution:

There are two basic guiding principles. Principle 1 is "Clean Before Dirty" (CBD), and Principle 2 is "Small Before Large" (SBL).

CBD means you wash the cleanest - i.e. the least dirty dishes - before the most dirty ones. For example: always do the glassware first while the water is clean.

That way you won't get greasy smears on the glasses. Then move on to the plastic ware, cups, bowls and plates, and finally the pots and pans.

SBL, is aimed at making stacking easier. Place all the small items *underneath* and the large items stacked *on top*. Place everything upside down to aid draining.

Use water that is as hot as you can stand; it makes cleaning easier and draining quicker.

Dishes with baked-on stains should be pre-soaked if possible.

Restaurants:

Washing dishes is considered the traditional punishment for being unable to pay a bill at a restaurant. However, evidence that this is actually practiced is anecdotal.

clouds exit

a portrait: A list of dreaming beauty:

If chrome taps could sparkle a spotless reflection for eternity. Crystal glasses drying without any effort, not leaving one soapy stain behind. If the vacuum cleaner was smart enough to clean out its own bag, aaaah, beauty without words. It would be truly beautiful if you could leave the rice to boil and return to find it perfectly cooked and not burned.

a nude has a bath

End.

ⁱ Modified from text found on the old packaging of a Lipton Yellow Label Tea box

ⁱⁱ Found on the instruction panel of an ancient AEG tumble-dryer

ⁱⁱⁱ Found on Wikipedia: the free encyclopaedia available ONLINE <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/scullery>

^{iv} Found in Namasté magazine September / October 2002 Volume No. 19 p31

^v Excerpts from a MYPRODOL ® CAPSULES package insert

^{vi} Okakura, K. 1906. *The Book of Tea*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company.

^{vii} Found on dictionary.com available ONLINE <http://dictionary.reference.com>