

**INVESTIGATING INVENTION: A CHALLENGE TO THE PRIMACY OF
THE WRITTEN TEXT**

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates different ways of writing as creative invention for the writer/director/deviser. Three forms of writing are examined: the playwright as author of the dramatic text, the devising group as author of the dramatic and/or performance text, and the director as author of the *mise en scène*.

In the first chapter the playwright as author is examined in relation to a historical view of the dramatic text. My own background as a playwright is treated in the context of the challenge to the written text experienced by contemporary playwrights as visual and physical elements of performance gain increasing importance.

In the second chapter the devising group is addressed as author of the dramatic and/or performance text. Potential benefits of improvisation and devising are explored, as well as drawbacks of the devising process when compared to the process of writing a dramatic text as a playwright.

In chapter three the director is scrutinised as the author of the *mise en scène*. The director's choice of a sign system and different methods of writing the performance text are weighed in view of their efficacy in creating a performance code that is readable by an audience.

In the conclusion the three types of writing are evaluated, and the benefits and challenges of devising the dramatic and/or performance text are weighed; the devising process is regarded as an augmentation of a traditional writing process.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is the basis of theatre. American playwright Michael Wright claims that the playwright is the only creative artist in the naturalistic theatre, because all the other artists interpret his work (Wright 1997). Patrice Pavis asserts that the director writes the performance text (Pavis 1982), while Mark Fleishman states unequivocally that improvising performers employ a wider spectrum of communicative languages than playwrights (Fleishman 1991). Thus, writing for the contemporary theatre is currently understood as an employment of various means of creating a text for performance. In this investigation these multiple ways of writing are explored as creative invention for the writer/director/deviser. For the purposes of this exploration writing will be examined in the following three contexts:

- 1) As the playwright writing alone, shaping the words and action of the dramatic text with a single imagination;
- 2) As a group writing the dramatic and/or performance text through improvisation and devising: a process of creation where the collective imagination generates the essence of the text(s) to be viewed by an audience; and
- 3) As the director writing the *mise en scène*: the process of orchestrating the various scenic elements to craft a system of performance signs readable by an audience.

Each of the forms of writing outlined above will be addressed as a form of creative invention. Because my own background is in playwriting, the invention investigated here is taken on as a challenge to a traditional logocentric conception of writing. This traditional conception will be outlined in Chapter One. In this paper the terms “dramatic text” and “performance text” will be defined according to semiotics theory, where a dramatic text refers to a script written by an individual before rehearsals begin, while

performance text refers to a system of signs assembled into a product to be shown before an audience. *Mise en scène* means the process of mustering all the available scenic elements to translate the dramatic text into stage writing received by an audience. The three kinds of writing investigated here were all utilised in the process of creating my thesis play, Akhon'amandla.

Akhon'amandla is a fictional re-creation, based on fact, of the events leading to the death of American Fulbright Scholar Amy Biehl at the hands of an angry mob in Guguletu in 1993. I wanted to examine both sides of the familiar story, depict them fairly and attempt to understand and illuminate the motives and behaviour of both Amy Biehl and her killers. My assumption was that no one had heard the stories of the four young men convicted of killing Amy Biehl, as the local and international press coverage focused on the tragedy as a political symbol: white American dies in black mob action. In addition, newspaper accounts of the event represented Amy as a singular individual, while showing the four young men as sullen members of a mob, with no voices, no personalities and no differentiation. Amy and Malusi Noyila, the character created to represent the murderers in Akhon'amandla, are the main characters in a play intended to introduce foreign audiences to the complexities of South Africa's historical past, and inspire South African audiences to examine a past event with new eyes.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PLAYWRIGHT AS AUTHOR

1.1 A Historical View of the Dramatic Text

Historically, writing for theatre was understood to mean a single playwright creating a script alone before rehearsals began. This pre-written script is the dramatic text, and the playwright is the sole author; her single imagination shapes the words and action of a dramatic text that is the bearer of meaning for the theatrical performance. Fleishman classifies this as “literary theatre,” written by one person and performed in a formal space (Fleishman 1991: 10). The dramatic text contains the structure that determines the shape and form of the play. The writer approaches the text with a mental *mise en scène* already established, exercising complete control over issues of writing including crafting the language, determining the content, establishing the style, defining the aesthetic, conceptualising the use of space and setting the time. All these, supported by the critical determining structure, are created by the playwright and embedded in the dramatic text.

In this traditional framework, text and performance are considered “quite independent from each other, the performance being despised...as the material husk of the soul of the drama” (Pavis 1998: 398). If the text is the soul of the play, housing its themes and ideals, the performance is its body, which

comes only afterwards, as a superficial and superfluous expression that addresses itself solely to the senses and the imagination and distracts the audience from the literary beauty of the story (Pavis 1998: 385).

In this view of the dramatic text as hidden potentiality or “stage virtuality,” there is only one correct staging of any particular text, which should always serve the perceived ‘meaning’ of the play as expressed in the text by the playwright (Ibid).

1.2 Writing by Ear: My Background as a Playwright

My own background as a writer first and director second illustrates this somewhat limited view of staging. Writing a play for me means that I determine the defining choices for the dramatic text before actors ever touch a script; as I usually direct my own scripts, these choices ultimately translate into performance reality. I began writing plays to capture the voices having conversations in my head; as I write, I envision a *mise en scène* involving the characters and situations, which is communicated through the dialogue. Language is a strong focus for me: I want to create clever but believable dialogue. In the past I believed that this level of invention would be enough to carry the play, as good dialogue has the ability to express what is said, how is it said, what is not said, and what is meant by it (Wright 1997:3). It is a kind of writing by ear, the way some musicians hear their music before composing it. This method lends my dialogue a credible presence and a natural rhythm, but ends up creating exclusively realist plays. Scenes grow out of the dialogue; location, plot, and character all evolve as the characters speak to each other. This logocentric focus dictates other writing issues as well: time is always the present, space is barely investigated, and the aesthetic and content are always contemporary and realist. It is a method of creating theatre that reflects Gooch’s view that writing “remains in the rational sphere” (Gooch 1988:1). My previous work grew out of this understanding of theatre as a literary exchange of words: the play existed to showcase the dialogue, and the dialogue determined the shape and form of the play.

1.3 Contemporary Theatre: The Written Text Challenged

The shift from theatre perceived as a literary form to one that is perceived as verbal, but also spatial, physical and above all, visual, has challenged the traditional conception of the importance of the written text. The 1992 Birmingham Theatre Conference saw a heated debate between “advocates of the individually written theatre” and those who favoured “the collaborative ethos of live art” (Edgar 1999:20). British playwright and scholar David Edgar reports that the “growing intellectual challenge to the primacy of the individually written text” has the full support of contemporary literary theory (Edgar 1999:20). Playwrights have had to adjust to the elements - beyond words - that increasingly define synchronic performance. As a result, some writers are moving beyond narrative to include innovative structures, non-traditional plotting and, as in the work of Phyllis Nagy, distinctions and rupture as well as continuity in their work. This is done to challenge traditional assumptions and expectations of storytelling (Edgar 1999:31).

The work of Suzann Lori Parks and Steven Berkoff, among others, also shows how writers are adopting new forms of invention to compensate for the change in status of the written text. Structuring the words on half a page, using slashes to direct the dialogue, writing character traits into costume - as David Margolies does with the character Debbie in The Model Apartment, where the actress wears a fat suit to show the massive guilt her character bears as the child of Holocaust survivors (Wright 1997:11) - are among the methods contemporary playwrights are using to assert more of the writer’s voice into the performance text. Wright advocates this practice, saying,

As playwrights, I believe we need to start by considering the components of the theatrical and end by trying to access and utilize these components in our writing (Wright 1997: 2).

Wright advises writers to learn about directing, set design and lighting. A writer who understands how visual artists work can judge what their work can offer her own; this knowledge ultimately gives her far more control of her script (Wright 1997:10). As the creation of the performance text relies increasingly on *mise en scène*, the playwright must invent new methods to keep her words relevant to an audience more accustomed to visual than verbal or literary stimulation. Wright states bluntly that the more the playwright knows about the range of choices available, the more effective her expression can become (Wright 1997:11).

This issue of effective expression is central for contemporary playwrights as their traditional stronghold, the dramatic text, gives way to the rising significance of other forms of theatrical expression. Writers themselves must invent in new ways in order to contribute something other than words to the performance text. As Wright explains, “The question that plagues all playwrights is how do we craft stories and people who are truly theatrical? How can we use the real potential of the stage?” (Wright 1997:8)

CHAPTER TWO: THE DEVISING GROUP AS AUTHOR

2.1 Improvisation-Based Devising: Maximising Theatricality

The form of writing that maximises theatricality and most fully realises the potential of the stage is group devising. This type of invention, characteristic of South African theatre, involves the collaborative creation of the dramatic and/or performance text by using improvisation techniques to devise in a group. The act of creating the dramatic text as one goes along gives actors a tremendous freedom from the restrictions of character immediately imposed by a written script. Fleishman notes that “improvisation potentially frees the performer to participate in the meaning-making process...” (Fleishman 1991: ii) where he or she might only interpret meaning in a traditional rehearsal process. Tim Etchells of British improvisation group Forced Entertainment credits the devising process with bringing “plurality and spaciousness, a breadth of ideas and inputs” (Oddey 1994: 53). Alison Oddey calls it

a process of making theatre that enables a group of performers to be physically and practically creative in the sharing and shaping of an original product that directly emanates from assembling, editing and re-shaping individuals’ contradictory experiences of the world. There is a freedom of possibilities for all those involved to discover; an emphasis on a way of working that supports intuition, spontaneity, and an accumulation of ideas (Oddey 1994:1).

Improvisation also helps to “free the producer of meanings, both as an individual and in the network of relationships in which he or she operates, and to enable him or her to develop a larger ‘vocabulary’” (Frost and Yarrow 1990:143). For both actor and director,

improvisation helps to break down barriers to creativity, creating “an atmosphere, a relationship, to make everybody comfortable...[and build] trust” (Brook 1993: 64). Above all, the devising process is a method of creating text; says Fleishman, “Improvisation is the creative process by which segments are formed which will later make up the episodes of the play” (Fleishman 1991:83).

The effectiveness of improvisation-based devising is seen in the work of British director Mike Leigh, whose stage and screenplays are

created experientially. They are based upon observation. They are authentic, carefully crafted and detailed examinations of character and social environment. They are drawn from life...but they are also shaped and purposeful events, poetic and symbolic statements about the ways in which human beings live and relate and fail. Leigh ...[has] shown that improvisation need no longer be just a rehearsal device of the drama schools. With Leigh’s plays, improvisation has become the source and means of dramatic creation itself (Frost and Yarrow 1990: 42).

Leigh’s widely recognised work has also helped to gain respect for the devising process, drawing attention to its “nature and excitement...that you can work on Act 2 on Friday, and as a result of your work...have a whole new act 2 on Monday” (Breed & Kahn 1995: 11). Leigh films like “Secrets and Lies” have a voyeuristic quality to them: the acting and staging achieve such a believable level of realism that the camera feels like a spy into the lives of actual people. Leigh’s work illustrates the tendency of devising based on improvisation to produce dramatic text in the realist mode.

In contrast to the logocentric, text-based tradition of Europe or the United States, South African actors and directors have been more likely to improvise the dramatic text and devise shows collectively that are not at all realist. South African theatre practitioner Yvonne Banning characterises African theatre as “social representation,” with character

depicted through action, external signs and relationships to other characters; this is in contrast to realism's psychological grounding in the individual and focus on inner motivation (Banning interview, 2002). Liz Mills writes that

South African theatre has over the last two decades generated a range of theatrical responses to the political and social issues. These theatre pieces had little or no use of realism in form and content. The political plays of the 1970s/80s relied on caricature or character types, episodic structures, and elements of farce and/or satire to capture the warped reality of South Africa under apartheid (Mills 1999:15-16).

The many and varied productions created by companies ranging from Johannesburg's Market Theatre to Grahamstown's First Physical Theatre Company to Brett Bailey's Third World Bunfight, among many others working in South Africa, support this historical view and show the same patterns of creation.

As a writer/director who previously worked exclusively in realism, I hoped the group devising process that created the dramatic text of Akhon'amandla would, in the South African tradition, offer alternatives to that style. Instead, I was surprised to find the dramatic text created in our improvisation rehearsals to be tremendously realist. Every day, I set improvisation exercises in rehearsal to help the actors create material; at night, I wrote the day's work, editing the volume of ideas offered into one final dramatic text. This editing process was in itself a form of writing, since I determined what would appear in the performance text. Once the dramatic text was finished it was treated like any other script by the actors: there was no improvisation in performance. But as a reaction to the overwhelming realism of the devised material, I decided to experiment with other styles in writing the performance text. These examples are addressed further in Chapter Three.

2.2 Seeking Authenticity

Devising offered a way to write an authentic South African sensibility into the dramatic text. The actors, as young people who grew up in this country, have language skills (in Afrikaans and Xhosa) and an awareness of songs, stories and social practices that occurred during apartheid (township police raids, for example) that I would otherwise be unable to access. Using actors to recreate a foreign experience is certainly not new: Fleishman discusses it as a time-honoured way for South African white actors and directors to access the black experience. The pattern wasn't limited to whites, either:

It is also important to note that black intellectuals have often themselves turned to workshop techniques precisely in order to represent working-class experiences which they felt unable to do from their own class position (Fleishman 1991:106).

Although the practice is well established in South Africa, the actors in my play served as neither consistent nor authoritative sources of information. Their information tended to be anecdotal and personal, which helped to write the authentic sensibility that was sought, but did not offer historical accuracy or context. My research into the wider historical and socio-economic implications of apartheid proved quite useful. The two knowledge bases complemented each other as information sources for the writing accomplished by devising.

In Akhon'amandla, music served as one of the most effective and authentic codes by which to transmit meaning to the audience. All the songs used in the play were used in the struggle against apartheid, to encourage, console or intimidate. The song the mob sings when they burn the Casspir goes "Nanzi mello yello/Che sa," which means, "There's the

mello yello (slang for the yellow-painted police tanks)/Let's burn it." The chant sung by the recruits in the African People's Liberation Army says

Bawelile abafana
Basekhaya e Azania

Lomoya lo u makaza

Thatha scorpio e guerilla
Ubulale amaSettler (Akhon'amandla, 18)

which exhorts the young men to leave their homes, take up Scorpion machine guns and kill settlers (whites) in the fight to reclaim Azania. After Malusi has been arrested, Baba and the women sing "Senzenina," a well-known South African mourning song that asks, "What have we done?" An extra verse the actors added says, "Amabhulu/Azizinja," which answers the title's question with "It's because we are black/They treat us like dogs." I knew the song Senzenina and had planned to use it in the play; however, I had no way of accessing this extra verse. The actors' knowledge wrote material into the dramatic text that brought a tremendous added depth to the performance. Another example of this is the scene where Baba brings Tumelo home from being tortured. Coming as it does right after the massacre that ended the Freedom Charter scene, the single voice beginning the song, "Thula Mama" addresses, collectively, all of the women related to activists for the Freedom Charter, as well as Mapaseka in her specific, immediate grief. Another extra verse here was tremendously significant:

Bamthatha
Bambeka e khaya
Wafika wa khala
Wathi amandla
(Akhon'amandla, 16)

They came
They took him from his house
And as the prison doors closed
They heard him say, Amandla!

As the actors sing, Baba and Malusi are standing on either side of the seated Tumelo, with Mapaseka weeping at his feet. At “Amandla!” Baba and Malusi each raise their outside hands and give their freedom salutes: the clenched fist of the ANC and the open hand of the PAC. It is one of the most graphic, visually powerful moments in the show.

Devising, when combined with the found text yielded by research, also helped to write the desired historical mood for the play. The early 1990s in South Africa were years of uncertainty, fear and violent upheaval. No one knew if the country would make the transition to democracy peacefully, or if there would be a bloodbath from any number of quarters - AWB, Inkatha - that threatened to disrupt the transition process. The critical issue for the country then, which continues to today, was about identity: how would South Africa, so long defined by apartheid, define itself after apartheid? Akhon'amandla, a play about South Africa at that critical time, explores the issue of identity on multiple levels: that of Amy Biehl (individual), Malusi (an individual who also represents social/political forces), and the country as a whole (national). One of my abiding fascinations as a playwright is with identity: my personal identity as an Asian-American working and living in Africa; racial identity on a societal level (addressed in my play “King Li”); or here, the created self-definition of a nation. Susan Bennett notes that “the 80s were full of fascination with identity as viewed through ethnicity and race” (Bennett 1997:166), and that was certainly the case with this play, for which those two issues were fundamental and unavoidable. She goes on to say, “That the cultural endeavour known as theatre should at this historical moment be so deeply engaged with issues of identity, seen by and through intercultural artistic expression, is not at all surprising” (Bennett 1997: 166). As British director Peter Brook explains,

A theatre experience which lives in the present must be close to the pulse of the time...Theatre art must have an everyday facet - stories, situations, themes must be recognizable, for a human being is, above all, interested in the life he knows" (Brook 1993: 93).

In writing this play in this fashion I sought to combine my personal investigations into identity with the collective and ongoing quest for national self-definition underway in South Africa today.

Writing A Portrait: Unequal Character Creation

A completely unforeseen and unintended result of the process of devising the performance text was that Amy became a much stronger and more sympathetic character than Malusi. In the beginning, Amy's role in the play was as a cipher: unknown, mysterious, somewhere between myth and martyr. Nearly all our information about her came from one three-hour interview with her mother, Linda Biehl. As a result Amy was expected to be a distant figure, alive for our purposes but otherwise dead to the audience. Malusi, on the other hand, was created by the actor Lulama Masimini based on extensive interviews over two days with Easy Nofomela, one of Amy Biehl's convicted killers. Easy hosted the entire cast at his home in Guguletu, where Lulama and another actor, Mbulelo Grootboom, spoke at length with Easy's father about his experiences in politics. Easy himself was very open about his experiences, and much of the dramatic text for the character Malusi came directly from his statements. Lulama had also experienced similar events and held similar political views during the struggle, so he identified very strongly with his created character. With this background and preparation, Malusi was expected to be the most dominant and memorable character of the play; instead, Amy was. I wrote Linda Biehl's monologues into the dramatic text, and the loving detail she provided about her daughter created an intensely specific verbal portrait of an individual. Amy ceased to

function as a cipher and became a real, remembered human being. Malusi, though, became a stand-in for a collective experience of political oppression and the inevitable struggle against it. The assumption was that if the audience understood Malusi's politics, they would understand, if not necessarily excuse, his violent actions. The actual result was that Malusi ended up as a generalised political type instead of a rounded character. The language barrier was certainly a factor in the imbalance: I could understand and relate to Linda, while Easy's testimony and accompanying emotions had to be mediated through translators. Perhaps as a result, Amy's character, intended to be a cipher, came alive in the context of the play, while Malusi stayed two-dimensional under the burden of being a symbol.

Two of the most compelling writing techniques offered by devising as a method of creating dramatic text are the spontaneity and physicality that arise out of improvisation. At the heart of acting is what may be termed a credible immediacy, where the actors' actions are all believably motivated and seem natural. Improvisation, working as it does from the actor's own words and body instead of an externally imposed text, creates "a form of theatre which appears light and effortless, never stylised or artificial, and where that which seems most mysterious and elusive is made visible" (Delgado 1996: 39). For Brook, improvisation with his actors helped them to transcend "stereotypes and imitations...[and] find... actions so transparent that they appeared completely natural, whatever their form" (Brook 1998: 147). Viola Spolin, the doyenne of improvisation teaching, writes that

Spontaneity is the moment of personal freedom when we are faced with a reality and see it, explore it and act accordingly. In this reality the bits and pieces of ourselves function as an organic whole. It is the time of discovery, of exploring, of the creative expression (Spolin 1999:4).

She adds, "In this spontaneity...the total person, physically, intellectually and intuitively, is awakened" (Spolin 1999:6). Freedom of expression is so important for actors, she explains, because "a player...can communicate directly to the audience only through the physical language of the stage" (Spolin 1999:17). A free actor is a more expressive one. Ultimately, employing improvisation is a spur to producing,

for actors and audience, something that on one hand feels 'authentic' and on the other hand is centred around a kind of liveliness, a sense that something present is happening. The success of the performance has less to do with adherence to a conventional notion of 'realism' than with an imaginative entering into ways of speaking and moving which transmit that sense of reality...the actors are ready to cope with anything. They are fully there, in context; they are not 'pretending' (Frost and Yarrow 1990:42-43).

Fleishman sums up the importance of the technique by defining improvisation as "an essentially physical event. It is this fact that makes the text of a performance created in workshops fundamentally different from a performance based on a written text" (Fleishman 1991:88).

In the same way, using improvisation in the devising process can contribute to a noticeably increased physicality in the actors' portrayals of character. Because a play script is so word-heavy, the visual side of depicting character often comes second to learning the words. But, as Spolin reminds us, "A stage reality must have...physical reality: space texture depth and substance" (Spolin 1999:17). And using a physical gestural language for expression heightens immediacy for the actor to the point where "text and dialogue... [could] become potential obstacles to the expression of the actor's preformed image of character, their vision of its 'truth'" (Counsell 1996: 65).

In the end, improvisation adds energy to and erases some boundaries in the dramatic text creation process. It

doesn't work entirely without a pre-existent 'text', any more than language or creativity do; but what it does is to operate with the ever-present possibility of reorganisation - of shaking the kaleidoscope again - which can keep you on your toes, on the edge of your seat or on the limits of your mental and physical world. It turns text into texturing, into the art of weaving new patterns... (Frost and Yarrow 1990: 169).

2.3 Writing the Actor into the Dramatic and Performance Texts

Employing a collective devising process to write a dramatic text inspires enormous participation from the actors, erasing much of the hierarchy that exists in more traditional theatre work. Through the process, the actors write themselves into the dramatic text by inventing their own lines, and write themselves into the performance text by developing much of the physical action of the play. The director here is not the author of the performance text, but just another voice in the group; the same applies to the playwright for the dramatic text. According to Spolin, "the language and attitudes of authoritarianism must be constantly scourged if the total personality is to emerge as a working unit" (Spolin 1999:8). In theory, each member of the group has an equal say in the play's performance text; this freedom can result in a vibrant creative democracy. As Brook says,

if each person on the group is genuinely bringing something appropriate from his own background, he is enriching the work...if the subject matter is genuinely enriched by the coming together and the friction between backgrounds...the friction of healthy exchange, then...the work is at once enriched (Delgado 1996: 45-46).

Certainly most directors agree that "there is more to be gained from an acting performance which is ultimately liberated rather than fettered by direction" (Gooch 1988:105). Most directors have experienced, as French director Ariane Mnouchkine puts it, that "all the time I see actors doing something much better than what I proposed to them" (Delgado 1996: 185). The development process offers the actor a chance to be "a full collaborator who discovers and establishes the basic perimeters and core of the

character” (Breed & Kahn 1995: 17). One strong benefit of the devising process is that increased actor participation helps to shape the performance text.

Since the actors in this process have such a significant role in writing the dramatic and performance texts, they also create a strong bond with the audience. Akhon'amandla impacted audiences in a direct, personal way. The material seemed immediate and accessible, as the Amy Biehl story is remembered by and relevant to many people in Cape Town. As such, the

strong presence of actors and a strong presence of spectators can produce a circle of unique intensity in which barriers can be broken and the invisible become real. Then public truth and private truth become inseparable parts of the same essential experience (Brook 1988: 41).

Brook says the audience “will only be irresistibly interested if the very first words, sounds or actions of the performance release deep within each spectator a first murmur related to the hidden themes that gradually appear” (Brook 1993: 84). Bennett writes,

It is, of course, true that live performance has an often uncanny ability to touch those very stories by and through which we understand ourselves...part of what makes us a theatre audience is our willingness to engage with performances in ways that speak to the most intimate detail of our experience (Bennett 1997: vii).

Akhon'amandla seemed to affect people deeply, in large part because of the accessibility and familiarity written into the performance text by the actors during the devising process. This connection with the audience was important to achieve, since “it is with the spectator...that theatrical communication begins and ends (Elam 1980: 97). This theatrical communication with the audience was a direct result of the intense dedication generated by this type of writing from the actors. The actors in this devised play were fiercely intent on communicating with the audience. They created their own characters, participated fully at every level of the meaning-making process (in effect writing their own roles) and

were much more committed, invested and willing to take risks for the performance than the actors in any of my previous plays. The actors in Akhon'amandla all easily fulfilled what Brook calls the actor's "requirement to be more intense within a short space of time than when he is at home" (Brook 1993: 17). I was consistently impressed with the willingness on the part of the actors, particularly Lulama, to risk injury in order to serve the dramatic purposes of the play. In particular, the scene where Malusi is tortured by being hung out the window was quite risky to stage and required weeks of experimentation involving a safety harness, metal clips and a tremendous amount of faith. We had rehearsed the scene with a safety line strung from the lighting rig; a week before opening Lulama came to me and said we could take the safety line away because it didn't look right for the scene. He and Charles had figured out a way to hook the harness over the balcony, using Thembinkosi as an anchor, so that the safety line could be removed. This level of complete dedication came out of the devising process; the actors were so intensely committed to the roles they had written for themselves that they volunteered to take chances I would never have asked of them. As Oddey writes,

The significance of this form of theatre is the emphasis it places on an eclectic process requiring innovation, invention, imagination, risk, and above all, an overall group commitment to the developing work (Oddey 1994:2).

2.4 Drawbacks of Devising: The Lack of Structure

On the other hand, devising, as compared to writing done by a playwright, also brought some significant drawbacks to the performance text. The first was in coherence of structure. In rehearsals, I was trying to manage the devising process and record the generated material; I did not function as either a writer authoring the dramatic text, or the director authoring the *mise en scène*. As a result, a dramatic structure that mirrored and communicated the play's theme was never created. What

became apparent in performance was that the devised scenes tended only to further the narrative. This occurrence was not unique to our experience; in fact, “groups that write collectively have often been accused of producing poorly crafted plays that suffer from a lack of cohesive style and clear single vision” (Oddey 1994:551). In our case, the scenes ended up following, one after the other, a pattern of explication building to Amy’s death; they served the idea that

traditionally, the conventions of act and scene division work in tandem with the construction of the dramatic plot...[which] contribute to the shaping and signposting of the unified beginning, middle and end... (Aston and Savona 1991:18).

Because the driving engine of structure was narrative, the second half of the play, after Amy’s death, lacked the same energy and purpose. In Gooch’s terms the play was “broken-backed, in the sense that the second act seem[ed] to be about something quite different from the first” (Gooch 1988:5). The theme of reconciliation explored in the second half was certainly related and relevant to the action in the first half; but the dissonance between furthering narrative through action and then exploring theme through reflection made for a disjointed structural transition. This problem is related to the very nature of devising: we generated so much material in the process that we had what Brook calls “an over-richness of material which eventually has to be simplified” (Brook 1988: 16). In the process of cutting and simplifying that excess material, quite late in the process, structural holes appeared that were then apparent in the performance text. Because in my written plays structure always followed dialogue, I expected the same coherence to arise out of the writing process here. This expectation was not met.

The Problem of Language: Transcending the Deictic Function

The dialogue evolving out of our improvisation exercises was “ordinary,” common colloquial language. As a playwright, I always place great importance on the cleverness and originality of dialogue. However, the lines written by the actors were very much limited to deictic interchange, the I-You exchange of actors taking turns to speak and give information about the here and now (Elam 1980, in Aston and Savona 1991:52). For example, this exchange between Baba and Malusi:

Baba: Yes, a house needs a stable base. Like you, son, you need a stable base. You need an education.

Malusi: Not Bantu education.

Baba: How can you be stable with no education?

Malusi: Liberation before education! Anyway, Bantu education is not education, baba. They teach us to be their slaves (Akhon'amandla, 3-4).

This devised dialogue very competently serves the function of *deixis*, pointing to objects and events to locate the audience (Elam 1980, in Aston and Savona 1991:52); it tells us that Malusi is a young radical who is boycotting school, while Baba is a middle-aged conservative who tries to work within the system. The lines give us information, but fall short of fulfilling any of the other potential functions of dialogue: complicating character, establishing or subverting space, enriching insight. The created dialogue, though less ‘exalted’ or inventive than comparable lines crafted by a playwright, did serve to mirror a credible reality of the world inhabited by both the actors and the audience. But in the same way that our devised scenes ended up furthering the play’s narrative instead of serving the overall theme, the devised dialogue served its *deixis* function and no others.

The real issue here may lie not with the words themselves, but the sign system in which they exist. Pavis states that

any 'ordinary' text can become dramatic as soon as it is staged, so that the criterion for differentiation is not textual but pragmatic. As soon as a text is uttered on stage, it is read within a framework that vests it with fictionality and differentiates it from 'ordinary' texts that claim to describe the 'real' world (Pavis 1998: 121).

In this case, the shortcomings I sensed with the dialogue could very well be equally applicable to the framework in which the lines existed.

CHAPTER THREE: THE DIRECTOR AS AUTHOR

3.1 Choosing A Sign System for Performance

The director writes the performance text. Keir Elam defines the performance text as that produced *in* the theatre, versus the dramatic text, which is composed *for* the theatre (Elam 1980:3). E. G Craig described the *mise en scène*, which creates the performance text, as action, words, line, color, and rhythm, a definition that still applies (Pavis 1993: 137).

Pavis describes the *mise en scène* as the creation of a system of signs or codes which work together through the performance, or contrast each other through common signifieds; a "stage actualization...of th[e reading of the dramatic text] which can be either explication or complication of text" (Pavis 1994:33-6). The performance, then, becomes "not or at least not only, spectacle..." (Pavis 1998:398), but a potentially groundbreaking form of creative expression that is itself a text. Antonin Artaud was a passionate proponent of the director's role in authoring this text, saying,

As long as the *mise en scène* remains, even in the minds of the boldest directors, an accessory mode of expressing the work, a sort of spectacular intermediary with no significance of its own, it will be valuable only to the degree it succeeds in hiding itself behind the works it is pretending to serve (Artaud 1964b: 160; Eng.: 1958:106, in Pavis 1998:398).

The synchronic view is of the director as the author of the play's performance, who conducts a variety of scenic elements (lighting, sound, set design, actors) as a conductor leads an orchestra, to craft meaning and harmony into a final, coherent and integrated performance. In the language of semiotics, "the performance text becomes...a macro-sign, its meaning constituted by its total effect" (Elam 1980:7). As Wright explains, "Using the space of the stage in the most imaginative ways possible engages the audience emotionally, intellectually, and viscerally" (Wright 1997:8). The pre-written text is now generally considered only

a "script," incomplete and awaiting staging. It acquires meaning only in performance...and can be understood only when uttered by actors in the context of enunciation chosen by the director. This does not mean, however, that there is only one form of performance possible for a particular text. Rather, the reverse is true: the many different performances that are possible multiply the meanings of the text, which is no longer the fixed centre of the theatrical performance, as it was long thought to be (Pavis 1998: 398).

Colin Counsell goes even further in refuting the primacy of the written text, and credits the entire creative team as the generators of a performance's meaning:

It is not that texts perfectly communicate a theatrical practitioner's intentions. Rather, audiences and 'authors' - directors, actors and designers as well as playwrights - have access to shared discourses, and so can employ shared codes/logics in both 'writing' and reading; or if they do not, we can expect the audience's interpretation to differ markedly from the authors' (Counsell 1996: 14).]

These shared discourses are accessed through the choices made by the director authoring the *mise en scène*, what Pavis calls the "network of associations or relationships uniting the different state materials into signifying systems, created both by production (the

actors, the director, the stage in general) and reception (the spectators) (Pavis 1994:25). As directors become authors of the performance text, the process of structuring, shaping and staging a play becomes another form of dramatic writing.

Thus a fundamental writing question for the director is how to structure her play. Within the context of the *mise en scène*, all the signs chosen by the director are part of an organic whole, in which the different signs and sign systems constantly inter-act, re-inforce [sic] each other or create new meanings...the full meaning of a dramatic performance must of necessity always emerge from the total impact of these complex, multilayered structures of interwoven and interdependent signifiers (Esslin 1987:106). While creating a system of readable signs to write the play's performance text, there is also the question of writing the corresponding themes to express the director's artistic vision. Pavis calls this the metatext, with its accompanying question: "must this metatext be easy to recognize and formalize...Or should it rather be discreet and even secret, being mainly produced - completed and 'rewritten' - by the spectator?" (Pavis 1944:34)

These were some of the issues relevant in the creation of Akhon'amandla. Signs chosen to express my vision of the play's performance text worked with greater or lesser efficacy depending on how well they were supported by other, corresponding signs. Conversely, if they were meant to be counter-signs, their success depended on how well they subverted the system of signs previously established.

3.2 The Conceptual Distance From Page to Stage

A collision between two different kinds of writing occurred in the first “Snapshots” scene. I named the scene “Snapshots” because of the way the word-portraits of found text selected from primary sources are juxtaposed, like photos in a photo album. As a writer I was very interested in interweaving texts from different sources into the dramatic text of the play. It was a way to represent the various viewpoints of a wide range of different South Africans throughout history in the play. The intent was to challenge the audience and establish

a dialogue between the quoted text and the original text...transform[ing] the original text on the level of both signifier and signified...[This technique] contrasts...often opposing rhythms and writings, and places the text at a distance by stressing its materiality...[and] forces us to seek links between two texts, to make thematic comparisons, and to expand the horizons of our reading (Pavis 1988:188-9).

As a result, included in the dramatic text are testimonials and quotations from Boer settlers, English gentlemen, black activists and international human rights workers. This juxtaposition worked on paper, where each quotation was carefully edited, positioned and attributed to its source. The reader could note that a line from Desmond Tutu was placed provocatively in front of a contrasting line from F. W. de Klerk. The process of selecting and arranging these pieces of found text was in itself a form of writing, as I used other people’s words to bring historical context into the script of our dramatic text.

On stage, the idea was to utilise Brecht’s *Verfremdungseffekt*: “The actor who changes costumes on stage, performs with the house lights up or steps outside of his/her role to comment on it, defamiliarises our habits of theatrical ‘seeing’ (Aston and Savona 1991: 7)

and focuses attention in a new way on the stage action. My writer's mind wanted the audience to pay attention to the content of the lines spoken, not the speaker. But the lines were spoken by physical, visual figures existing in time and space, and the use of stereotypical costumes to contextualise figures like a poor black woman or a Trekboer read to the audience as caricatures and signals to laugh. Since "*mise en scène* as a structural system exists only when received and reconstructed by a spectator from the production" (Pavis 1994:25), the success of this technique ultimately depends on the audience's interaction with it. In this case, the introduction of the "Snapshots" figures broke the audience members' automatized state – their expectations of a realist play - and resulted in a misreception of the performance text writing I had intended as a director.

Foregrounding Violence: Writing Through Stylisation

Certain aspects of the play were selected to showcase experiments with style and break up the prevailing realism of the performance text. One of these was play's violence.

According to Elam,

the bringing of other elements to the foreground occurs when these are raised from their 'transparent' functional roles to a position of unexpected prominence...[and also] the distancing of those aspects from their codified functions (Elam 1980: 17).

The intent was to challenge the audience by foregrounding the play's violence. I wanted the audience to focus on the violence because it is such a critical and defining factor in the story: the violence suffered by the murderers resulted directly in the violence they inflicted upon Amy. The problem of portraying violence on stage is how to depict it without trivialising it. It was important that the audience understand the exceedingly dangerous world of the townships in the early 1990s, while still feeling the impact of each

threat, punch or blow to the head. In our working process it became evident, as Gooch notes, that “actual physical contact - striking a blow or pretending to stab someone - tends to destroy the illusion” (Gooch 1988:47) as well as dilute the emotional impact. In the language of semiotics, “it is not...the dramatic referent - the object in the represented world - that is shown, but something that expresses its class” (Elam 1980:30). In the end I chose to write the violence by stylising it outside of realism in order to express the *idea* of violence without explicitly committing it. Since “text and stage are perceived at the same time and in the same place, making it impossible to declare that the one precedes the other (Pavis 1994:29), it was possible to show the violence necessary for the narrative, create the desired emotional response -revulsion, fear, disgust - in the audience, and comment on the useless viciousness of the whole culture and cycle of violence at the same time. All of our violence is suggested symbolically – sometimes in graphic ways – but there is very little actual physical contact. (An exception was hanging Malusi out of the window.) So when the soldier smashes the student’s face with his rifle butt in the opening riot scene, he does it from about a foot away, and the student’s physical reaction to the blow conveys its impact.

Violence is also stylised in the dinner party scene, where the fight between Malusi and Garth was written into the performance text in the comic book style. This was done to criticise the cartoonish nature of bigotry. In the same way, the unrelenting harshness of the policeman is a critique against senseless brutality. The choice to symbolically depict violence is most clearly seen in the very suggestive torture scene, with two policemen abusing an empty chair while Tumelo, the victim, reacts in another chair. The actions on stage themselves comment on the choices made by the characters in the text. Each new technique - the wet paper bag, the electric shock - elicits a reaction from the actor/victim,

and a corresponding reaction from the spectator/audience member, at an increasing level of intensity. The intent was to build the violence in a crescendo from the beginning to the end of the play, aiding in the creation of a climax and ending at the moment of most irrevocable violence, Amy's death. All this occurred while the very choice of technique commented on the brutality of the violence it was depicting.

Our working process as a group tended to write realist scenes, despite the fact that I had deliberately chosen the devising process to challenge the prevailing realism of my written texts! Thus, it became necessary to deliberately choose non-realist styles to express certain ideas, for example the violence mentioned above. The play evolved in a realist style: the sets, the use of monologue and the family dialogues all indicated to the audience that they were watching a realist play. All these signs reinforced their automatized state and reassured them that their expectations of a realist show would be met. But then three scenes into the show we had our "Snapshots" scene, where the caricatured figures of politicians and historical figures appeared and broke the realist mode. Then the Noyila family dinner scene re-established the realism, which was broken again in Amy and Marian's dinner party, when Malusi and Garth fight in a deliberately cartoonish way. The comic strip style was chosen to comment on the violence, deliberately break the building tension of the play and inject some unexpected energy. The *Verfremdungseffekt* carried some, but not all, of the spectators. The result was

a kind of stylistic disorientation for the audience....[who wondered] what does the action played out in front of our eyes really represent? It seems like a slice of life one moment, and then we're asked to imagine the same stage is representing something entirely different. In effect, the stage is trying to be a camera [which] it cannot do (Gooch 1988:46).

The relationship between the audience and our performance text was not clear enough.

The mixture of styles I experimented with to write my ideas into the play didn't

necessarily read for the audience. In some cases, it confused them. Sudden stylistic shifts in an otherwise realistic text must be clearly marked and appear enormously different, using all the stage elements - speech (diction as well as the spoken lines), spatial (lights), music, scene - to mark the change, so that each version of reality offered is equally persuasive.

Writing Time with Signs

An element of the performance text that read more clearly for the audience was time. The dramatic text written through our devising process jumps back and forth in time to illustrate different events from South Africa's history. Because Amy Biehl's death was a political act that was in itself a response to institutionalised apartheid, it was critical to show important events in the formation of apartheid, and the accompanying struggle against it, so the audience would understand the historical context behind the central narrative. (Even for an audience of South Africans, it was important to establish *our version* of history, so that the entire audience had the same *dramatic* understanding of apartheid for the play's purposes.) In this sense we created Elam's definition of 'historical time': events from the real world experienced by the spectator in relation to the dramatic world, "a more or less definite then transformed into a fictional now" (Elam 1980:117-8, in Aston and Savona 1991:30). The play opens in *time present*, locating the spectator in the here and now of Cape Town, South Africa, circa 1993. The story unfolds according to *chronological time*, following a linear time sequence in relating the story (fabula) of Amy Biehl's death. We wrote our jumps back and forth using *plot time*, structuring events (i.e. the Freedom Charter) from chronological time to shape our fictional 'here and now.' Aston and Savona write, "in the construction of plot time, drama is able to engage in

chronological time shifts in the interests of the dramatic present” (Aston and Savona 1991:29); this effect is achieved by techniques of reportage, time shifts and flashbacks, which we utilised. And finally, the sense of a limited *performance time* - the finite period of stage time for events to take their course - added tension, suspense and pace to the building of events leading to the play’s climax, Amy’s death (Aston and Savona 1991:27).

Here again the impact of authoring of the performance text was reliant upon the efficacy of the network of supporting signs. In some sequences, the abrupt time shifts in the text were well marked by layers of reiterating signs. For example, in the Freedom Charter scene the actors were in period costume (from the 1950s), held their hands in the thumbs-up protest gesture of the time, and sang a period song as they marched. The audience could read clearly the signs established for them to know exactly what was happening, and when. In other scenes, however, the action was not as well marked, and ended up being too general: the Noyila family could have existed at many points in South Africa’s history. (One cause of this lack of specificity was that the actors were portraying generalised social roles -father, daughter, son in a black family- instead of individuals.) Another case, the police brutality against students in the township, was an example of misapplied plot time: the viciousness of the attacks would have been more realistic in 1985 instead of 1993, the year we attempted to evoke. But we chose to write police violence into the character of Barnard to further the story and reflect a historically accurate social reality.

CONCLUSION

4.1 Evaluating the Three Writing Styles

Each of the three ways of writing investigated in this examination brings individual advantages to the process of creating a dramatic text. For the playwright, the power to shape the dramatic text with her single imagination, crafting dialogue and creating a coherent structure, is an attractive reason to write alone. For the devising group, the energy, physicality and dedication inspired in the actors are convincing reasons to choose the devising process. And for the director, creating a unified system of signs with which to encode meaning for an audience in the performance text is a compelling argument for personally writing the *mise en scène*.

This written explication's exploration into the three forms of writing outlined above has examined some interesting alternatives to writing outside the traditional conception of a playwright writing alone. Conceptually, it is exciting to think about the creative possibilities offered by a director writing a performance text or a devising group writing a dramatic text. I chose a devising process to write the dramatic and performance texts of Akhon'amandla because I was fascinated by the possibilities offered by new ways of creating text. However, in practice, I found that these ways of working require extensive experience in order to be used effectively. In the same way that creating a play is more than just writing words on paper, managing the alternative ways of writing mentioned above requires a density of lived experience on the part of the writer/director/deviser in order to understand the implications of and effectively employ the different techniques.

In the main, though, I found that the devising process enriches the process of creating a dramatic text for performance in a variety of ways.

4.2 Devising as Augmentation of the Writing Process

1) The devising process gives the writer a new method of creating text.

The devising process can yield a rich vein of material from which to draw in creating a dramatic text. The writer may very well find the group energy and inventiveness inherent to the devising process a revitalizing addition to his or her own creative invention. Of course, this is if the writer can adjust to her tremendously changed role in the devising process:

In the same way that leadership or the role of a director varies in every devising company, so the role of a writer is significantly different from the conventional initiator and author of a script. The writer's role has been specifically located within a company's practice, and has a particular relationship to the devising process (Oddey 1994:49).

Since each person has his or her own job to do, the playwright benefits if she can

think not in terms of writing on the page, but of writing on the stage...[remembering that] what you write is not communicated directly to the audience...but mediated through a director and actors, and also through the audience's experience of it as a collective body (Gooch 1988:17).

In other words, the writer must accept the inherent limitations of the role of initial - but not sole - author, and work within the collaborative process to collectively write the work. This occurs in the British devising group Forced Entertainment, where "the role of writer is one of writer of text within the devising process, rather than writer of a show" (Oddey 1994: 53).

2) Devising brings the director new techniques for creating the performance text.

Aston and Savona note that theatre today needs its students to be increasingly proficient at the making (encoding) and reading (decoding) of texts (Aston and Savona 1991:9). The goal is theatricality, or what Barthes calls “a density of signs” (Barthes 1972 in Aston and Savona 1991:9); therefore, the more inventive and varied a director can be in structuring systems to communicate signs to an audience, the better. Indeed, says Brook, “The whole problem of the theatre today is just this: how can we make plays dense in experience?” (Brook 1988: 47) In order to achieve this density of signs and experience a director must craft an effective *mise en scène*, which is “a structure made for communication” (Alain Rey 1980:188, in Pavis 1994:30) and “always in a state of becoming, since it does no more than point the way, preparing the text for utterance...”(Pavis 1994:30). The *mise en scène* “highlights the function of ‘emptying’ or ‘fulfilling’ structural ambiguities” (Pavis 1985: 255-60, in Pavis 1994:28), although ultimately it “depend[s] on the perception of the different rhythms of visual and stage discourse and the auditory and textual flow” (Pavis 1994:32).

In the end the director’s job is the same: to construct a system of signs that can be successfully read by the audience. As part of this work she will use some level of external reality “as an assumption common to playwright and spectator and as a referential illusion (a reality-effect) that makes it possible to read the dramatic text” (Pavis 1998:237). What the director needs to avoid, of course, is employing

stage signifieds which amount to no more than a repetition, inevitably superfluous...of the text itself. That would entail disregarding the signifying materiality of verbal and stage signs and positing theatrical signifieds aside their signifying matter and eliminating any difference between the verbal and non-verbal (Pavis 1994:26).

What is exciting to the spectator is that the *mise en scène* does not show what is said, but questions and subverts it (Vitez 1974:42, in Pavis 1994:32).

2) The process of devising can break down barriers between people in the creative process and create a truly communal work.

In the generally hierarchical and specialised world of theatre, collaborative devising can be a breath of fresh air that assigns all members of a group an equal voice in the creation process. Of course, it is not for everyone:

Some writers are afraid of collaboration. It diminishes their sense of their own inviolably unique creativity. There is a very strong and pervasive myth that writing is a solitary vice...but theatre is a collaborative art (Frost and Yarrow 1990: 137).

Since theatre is in fact a collaborative art, including as many of the stakeholders as possible in the creation of a piece in some ways reflects the art more accurately than having a single writer or director impose her vision of the work on the group. As Gooch notes, “The life of a play is often indivisible; once you begin picking at threads, the whole thing unravels” (Gooch 1988: 4).

4.2 Some Challenges of Writing Through Devising

In addition to its benefits, the process of devising brings unique challenges to the writer/director. Since all my plays before this one had been pre-written, then self-directed from the script, the performance text of Akhon'amandla was very different from any of my previous work. Writing as a playwright, or writing as a process of editing testimonies or assembling found text, is more likely to yield a dramatic text with a coherent structure

and well-crafted dialogue that is consistent with the writer's vision of the play. Writing in a devising process, on the other hand, brings spontaneity and physicality, new material and increased dedication from the actors, but does not incorporate as easily a single coherent artistic vision of the play.

The creation and documentation of the work, which occur simultaneously in the devising process, also proved a challenge. There was little time to ponder or evaluate what had come out of our day's work; I went home every night and raced to type it up. This recording process was in itself another form of writing, as I chose what to include in the dramatic text out of the masses of material generated that day. But the physical demands of planning rehearsals, managing the devising and then recording the results left little time to shape the overall product. As Oddey says,

Devised theatre is transient and ephemeral, which makes the documentation of the form difficult. In turn this does not encourage the promotion, status or existence of the work, unless it can be recorded in some way or another. In text-based theater, not only does the play script initiate the work, but it also documents it too. (Oddey 1994:21)

The fact that I was initiating, creating and documenting the work at the same time created a dramatic text that was less critical than it could (or perhaps should) have been. As Breed and Kahn point out,

An analytical approach [to development] requires a predisposition for looking closely at the work, a vocabulary for usefully discussing it, time to reflect and respond to the consequences of your discoveries, and the ability to apply the heady work of analysis to the practical development of the script" (Breed & Kahn 1995: 11)

All these conditions need to exist for a successful process to occur.

As a theatre practitioner coming from a background in writing I found that using an improvisation-based devising process to write the dramatic and performance texts of Akhon'amandla significantly aided my authorship by expanding my ability to create dramatic text as a writer, while increasing the vocabulary of theatrical language available to me for shaping the performance text as a director.

AKHON'AMANDLA

Evil Has No Power

Devised by the Cast

Directed by Esther Pan

First performed at Arena Theatre

University of Cape Town

Hiddingh Campus, Orange St.

Dec. 3-8, 2001

The play follows two characters, Malusi Noyila and Amy Biehl, as they meet on a tragic day in 1993 in the months leading up to South Africa's first democratic election.

Characters:

Malusi Noyila	Lulama Masimini
Baba Noyila	Mbulelo Grootboom
Mapaseka Noyila	Khumo Maakwe
Tumelo	Thembinkosi Njokweni
Barnard	Shaun Webb
Garth	Charles Tertiens
Marian	Roxanne McKaiser
Amy Biehl	Bernadine Gardiner

Scenes:

- 1) Monologues
- 2) Building the shack
- 3) Student demonstration (De Klerk)
- 4) Snapshots
- 5) The Noyila family
- 6) Linda on Amy
- 7) In the army (Bawelile)
- 8) Amy meets Marian
- 9) Amy/Scott phone call
- 10) Township march (Nelson Mandela)
- 11) Tumelo/Mapaseka reunion/(Tumelo talks to Malusi)
- 12) Tumelo caught
- 13) Dinner party
- 14) Amy meets Mandela
- 15) Tumelo tortured
- 16) Freedom Charter (Siya ya)
- 17) Tumelo returns (Thula tulle)
- 18) Malusi enraged
- 19) Cleanup (Senzenina)
- 20) Malusi tortured
- 21) Roxy's speech
- 22) Mello yello/burn van
- 23) Amy's death

Section II

- 1) Election
- 2) Constitution
- 3) Snapshots 2
- 4) Closing Monologues

Opening: Monologues

Amy: My mom is always saying to me, “Amy, calm down! Relax! Take it easy.” But I can’t. There are things I need to do in the world. If there are things I can accomplish in my lifetime, why wouldn’t I? I hate fear. South Africa - is a country that crawled into my consciousness. I know there’s something I need to do there.

Malusi: What kind of angels would victims of a demonic system be?
It is not my hate for apartheid that controls the vibrations of these utterances
Rather, the thorny memories of a long painful past
And a lingering vision why one day, things will just blast.
With blood I choose not to write of equal rights
But a story of love and anger, gunshots and laughter
On a shrunken piece of paper dampened by tears of joy.
My heart has no choice but to rejoice
It inherited pain and will endure it
Not again. (“Wounded Words,” by Siviwe Mdoda)

Scene 1: (Baba and Malusi are building a shack.)

Baba: Come son, let me show you.

Malusi: I can do it.

Baba: I’ll just...

Malusi: I can do it. I know.

Baba: All right, all right. You know. *(pause)* You know, I was just thinking...about your initiation.

Malusi: What about it?

Baba: Ha! The questions you asked me! What will I wear? What will I eat? Should I bring my toothbrush? *(laughs)* You were so scared!

Malusi: I was not scared. That's not true.

Baba: You ran to your mother!

Malusi: I only went to Mama to ask her to look after my clothes until I came back. That's all.

Baba: That's not what she said to me...

Malusi: Let's leave Mama out of this.

Baba: My son, so scared...

Malusi: I was NOT scared! I wasn't. *(beat)* Maybe I was. But I went to the mountain, I spent time there, I came back a man. That's what counts.

Baba: Yes, my son.

Malusi: But the stories I heard about someone...

Baba: What's that? Eh?

Malusi: Uncle told me all about it. You ran three times before they caught you.

Baba: What's this nonsense! I never ran! *(sputters)* If your uncle was still alive I'd sort him out! Son, let me show you how to do that.

Malusi: I can do it. A man should build his own house.

Baba: Make sure the base is stable. Yes, a house needs a stable base. Like you, son, you need a stable base. You need an education.

Malusi: Not Bantu education.

Baba: How can you be stable with no education?

- Malusi:** Liberation before education! Anyway, Bantu education is not education, baba. They teach us to be their slaves.
- Baba:** At least you learn something! Look at your sister! She's getting a bursary and going to university!
- Malusi:** I would rather learn nothing. Shaka had no education.
- Baba:** Shaka killed everyone! Do you want to do that?
- Malusi:** Hitler also killed everyone, and he had an education.
- Baba:** Bah. Son, you're a man now, you're building a house. When are you going to get married?
- Malusi:** I'm not getting married.
- Baba:** What?
- Malusi:** It's not for me. How could I court someone's daughter and then bring her here to starve? No, when I get married I won't bring my wife to a shack, but...a mansion.
- Baba:** Ha! A mansion! You want a mansion! And where will you get your mansion, with no education?
- Malusi:** There are ways.
- Baba:** Ways, bah. You are not so clever. Leave the mansions to the white people. you - just try to pass matric.
- Malusi:** They have a saying in English: Don't argue with a fool.
- Baba:** What? Are you calling me a fool? (*chases him off*)

Scene 2: Student demonstration

(A protest. Whistles as students signal each other. They gather at the centre of the township to demonstrate against Bantu education.)

Mbulelo: I'm tired of Bantu education! Down with learning in Afrikaans!

Khumo: I've had enough of being beaten! No more corporal punishment!

Roxanne: I already know how to wash my clothes! I don't need to learn it in school!

Charles: I don't want to be taught by some white larney!

Lulama: Release our student leaders from prison!

Thembinkosi: Students of Africa! Listen! Bantu education decrees that we should be nothing! We are determined to rise above it, using whatever means we can! Amandla! Ngawethu! Viva Mandela Viva! Viva! (*A song, chanting. Barnard appears and approaches the group, which falls silent. He grabs the flag and throws it on the ground, then hits Charles, knocking him down. Screams, gasps. Barnard turns and shoots a student, then another who tries to help. Screaming as lights fade.*)

Scene 3: Snapshots

Archbishop Desmond Tutu: When the white man first came here, he had the Bible and we had the land. Then the white man said to us, 'Come let us kneel and pray together.' So we knelt and closed our eyes and prayed, and when we opened our eyes again, lo! - we had the Bible and he had the land.

Thomas Pringle, 1830s Englishman: It is a lamentable truth that in our treatment generally of savage nations, all respect for common honesty, justice or humanity appears to be often

utterly forgotten, even by men otherwise generous,
kind and sensitively honourable.

Yusef Dadoo: We have in South Africa a system of racial discrimination sanctioned by law, which is the worst in the history of mankind. Of course, there has been discrimination in many parts of the world...but here it is enforced by the authority of the State against a section of the population on the ground that it is not white. Merit does not count. I may be a doctor, but on the street I am a coolie. This kind of system makes life absolutely intolerable.

Afrikaans woman, 1836: The shameful and unjust proceedings with reference to the [English] freeing of [our] slaves is what prompted us to leave the Cape in search of new lands. And yet it is not so much their freedom which drove us to such lengths, as their being placed on equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God and the natural distinction of race and religion, so that it was intolerable for any decent Christian to bow down beneath such a yoke; wherefore we rather withdrew in order thus to preserve our doctrines in purity.

Van der Merwe: What's freedom coming to, when you can't hit your own kaffir on your own farm with your own sjambok?

Anton Lembede: Africa is a black man's country. Africans are the natives of Africa and they have inhabited Africa, their Motherland, from times immemorial; it belongs to them.

Black woman in hostel: If the government had set out to create a society that would consume itself, it couldn't have done better. It has destroyed our family life, left the homelands fatherless with mothers struggling to help the remains of their family survive. Either the women must revolt or go mad.

Dr. Hendrik Vorwoerd, 1953: There is no place for [the black man] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. What is the point of teaching him mathematics if it cannot be used in practice? If the native is being taught to expect that he will live his life under equal rights, he is sorely mistaken.

Afrikaans woman: After the war, we had nothing - no furniture, no cooking facilities. We didn't have a stove and if we had had a stove we had nothing to put on the stove not in the way of either utensils or food. And they killed everything, every chicken and every pig and every sheep - every animal on the farm. There was nothing on the farm. Nothing on any farm.

Alan Boesak: Whites will never be free as long as they have to kill our children in order to safeguard their own privileged positions.

Ruth First: The oppressed peoples of South Africa are on the march, and all the savagery of the government cannot prevent their ultimate victory. The Emergency proved one thing to all our peoples: LIBERATION IS NEAR. There is no longer any question of whether freedom will come. It is only a question of when and how. We are in sight of freedom in our lifetime. We live in the presence of history.

Scene 4: The Noyila family

(A shack in Guguletu Township, home to the Noyila family. (Baba, Malusi and Mapaseka are preparing for dinner.)

Malusi: You're wrong.

Baba: You're too young to know what you're talking about.

Mapaseka: Can we please not argue about this again?

Malusi: Being African and being black begins when you are born.

Baba: That is not a new idea.

Malusi: How can you expect us to deal with whites? They're all the same. Settlers.

Mapaseka: Malusi, they're not all bad. Look at Joe Slovo.

Malusi: Is he suffering? Who is suffering in this country? Joe Slovo supports our aims. But does he live in Soweto? Are his children starving? Of course not! How can a white man claim to fight for us if he doesn't know what we're fighting for? These so-called white liberals are hypocrites.

Mapaseka: You don't have to be suspicious of everyone.

Malusi: You don't have to trust everyone.

Baba: Malusi, enough.

Mapaseka: Some of them put themselves at risk to help us.

Malusi: What risk? If things get bad, they can run off to England or America. We can't run anywhere. This is our land, our only home. Africa for Africans!

Baba: Son, be quiet. You give me a headache. *(sigh)* Why can't you be like your sister?

Mapaseka: You should work within the system, Malusi. An educated black person is the best revenge against the whites. You only hurt yourself by boycotting.

Malusi: How can some of us be educated while others are not? We must stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters and fight the system collectively.

Baba: Your views will make nothing but trouble.

Malusi: Baba, you are wrong. And your stubbornness delays us from liberation.

Baba: Liberation! You're dreaming. The best we can hope for is shared power. The whites will never give up their positions.

Malusi: So we will kill them. Not everyone is afraid to fight, baba. Our leader Sabelo Pame has decreed this the year of the Great Storm. The time for revolution is now!

Mapaseka: You'll get yourself killed.

Baba: What will you fight with, my son? Your arms? The white man has the guns, the tanks, the money. How will you fight him? He will shoot you like a dog. *(pause)* I am old. I will die soon. You will die fighting the white man. And what then? Who will put food on the table? Who will support your sister?

Malusi: They're killing us already. At least there will be some dead settlers to go with all the black bodies.

Baba: Be careful, my son. Your loose talk will get us all into trouble one day.

Malusi: I will be the freedom fighter who liberates Azania while you hide behind your ANC flag.

Mapaseka: Enough! No more politics. Dinner. *(They eat.)*

Baba: Mapaseka, how is my grandchild?

Mapaseka: Aiesh, all right, baba. What can we expect? Today he was playing that he was an airline pilot, buzzing his hand all around the house. *(they laugh)* What shall I say to my son? Shall I play along with him, and pretend that his dream can become a reality? Or should I tell him the truth, that he will never have the same opportunities as a white person?

Malusi: It's the whites who have done this. They make us believe that we can't do things like fly planes or build bridges. They teach us to be fools so they can pretend they are the only ones with intelligence. "Look at my skin. It is black like the soil of Mother Africa. It is the black man's duty not to allow himself to be swamped by the doctrines of inferiority." Anton Lembede said that. Of your ANC.

Baba: The ANC is committed to non-violence.

Malusi: A certain doctrine for a certain time...that time is past, baba. You won't open your eyes to see - even your beloved ANC took up arms long ago. Who founded the MK?

Baba: *(reluctantly)* Nelson Mandela.

Malusi: It is up to us to continue the struggle. The youth, baba, like in Soweto. The whites will not listen to us. The only way to get their attention is to kill them.

Baba: The system is wrong. I am not arguing about that, just what we should do about it. I cannot support an armed struggle. That would destroy any hope of a future together in this country. We need the whites!

Malusi: We need them dead. *(Tumelo enters, Mapaseka kisses him.)*

Tumelo: Moloweni.

Malusi: Hello, friend. How was it today?

Tumelo: Same as always: no work anywhere. And I got picked up today.

Mapaseka: No! How did you get away?

Tumelo: I ran. (*shock from others*) I'm sorry, baba. It looks like it'll be even longer before I can pay *lobola*.

Baba: We can't lose you.

Malusi: (*in Xhosa*) Damn police!

Mapaseka: The police are killing us. How will we escape from this hell?

Tumelo: I'm leaving. Tonight. I can't put you in danger.

Baba: Where will you go?

Tumelo: Out of the country.

Malusi: I'll go with you!

Baba and Mapaseka: NO!

Tumelo: No, Malusi. Stay here and protect the family.

Malusi: But...

Mapaseka: Do you really have to go? (*crashing knock on door*)

Barnard: *Maak op!*

Mapaseka: Run!

Malusi: Go, go, go! (*Tumelo dashes out the toilet and crawls onto the roof.*)

Barnard: I said, open up! Damned kaffirs...(*breaks door down*) Where is he? Answer me!

Baba: Who are you looking for, baas?

Barnard: You know who! Tumelo, that damned troublemaker...I know he's here!

Baba: Tumelo, I don't know Tumelo...he is not here.

Barnard: (*Stops, takes Baba's outstretched hand.*) Molo baba. Kunjani? (*Sits, deliberately takes his gun out slowly and sets it on the table.*) Upi Tumelo?

Baba: I told you, I don't know.

Barnard: *(looks at Malusi)* Wie is daai?

Baba: That's my son, Malusi.

Barnard: Hoe weet ek wie is hy?

Baba: You can take my word for it, that's my son.

Barnard: *(goes to Malusi, puts the gun in his face).* Hoe weet ek wie is jy? En nie Tumelo nie? Ek kan vir jou toesluit. Een kaffir is dieselfde soos die ander. *(throws him down, turns to Mapaseka)* Is dit jou dogter? *(puts the gun to her face, caresses it)* Jy het twee keuses omte maak, Baba. Se vir my waar Tumelo is...of ek sal jou kinders vat. Dit is jou besluit. *(exits)*

Baba: My child, are you all right?

Malusi *(to Baba):* And you say we must be patient! The question is not, "Is apartheid a problem?" The question is, "What are we going to do about it?" I say we fight!

Scene 5: Amy

(The Biehl home. Linda is sitting on the couch with a photo album.)

Linda Biehl: Amy was my second baby. I called her 'my difficult child.' She was very driven and had a very strong sense of self, even from an early age. When she was 8 months old she climbed out of her crib and fell, breaking her collarbone. She didn't cry, but whimpered like an animal. She always pushed herself. She started diving because she was afraid of heights. She was a person who wanted to conquer things that frightened her.

She wanted to be the best at whatever she did, at everything she did. When she was 4 she decided she wanted to go to Stanford. When she started school she

decided she would get all A's all the way through. And she did. If she didn't get something, she just worked harder until she got it.

She was so determined! Stubborn might be a better word. When she was in kindergarten she had a cowboy outfit and a mask, like the Lone Ranger. She met the Lone Ranger at a restaurant in Santa Monica - he had a horse, and I think he put her on the horse. After that, she refused to take off that outfit. She wore it every day. Every single day. I couldn't get her to wear anything else. Even in her school picture, she's wearing it. How long did she wear it? *(pause)* Three, four months. *(sigh)* In first grade, it was a football outfit. With a helmet.

It was in high school that Amy first learned about South Africa.

(Rally, ANC flags. "Free Mandela," chants: Amandla! Ngawethu!)

She asked me, Mom, who's Nelson Mandela? Why is he in prison? From that day on, Amy was obsessed. She wrote 'Free Mandela' on her letters and postcards, she signed it next to her name. She dove into South African politics and history, learning everything she could. She studied Xhosa. She fell in love with the country. She had a new challenge.

Scene 6: Army

(Soldiers marching in formation, line up singing: Bawelile abafana)

Commander: HANDS DOWN! Drop and give me 100! Come on, soldier, this is APLA! This is not nursery school! How you going to kill the Boers? Up! ABOUT TURN! Up

the mountains! Go soldiers, go! Go soldiers, go! *(pause)* You think you're finished? You think you're finished? ANOTHER HUNDRED! You're pathetic, soldier. How're you going to kill the Boers if you can't even lift your fucking weight? Are you a kaffir or a freedom fighter? *(Tumelo collapses)* Jassis!

Scene 7: Amy meets Marian

(A classroom at University of the Western Cape. Amy is waiting for the lecture. Marian comes in and sits next to her.)

Marian: Is this seat taken?

Amy: No, not at all. Hi. I'm Amy.

Marian: I'm Marian. Where are you from?

Amy: From the states. California.

Marian: California! What are you doing here?

Amy: I'm on a fellowship. Er, a bursary.

Marian: Just think, everyone here wants to go to California, and you came all the way from California to Udubs!

Amy: What did you call it?

Marian: UWC, that's what we call it. Or Bush. What are you studying?

Amy: Women's issues, mostly. I'm also doing some research for the Bill of Rights, and I'm interested in human rights and voter education. What about you?

Marian: Sociology and psychology, and I want to go into social work.

Amy: That's great. *(pause)* Is this man ever going to come?

Marian: I was rushing so, I forgot it's Thursday. He doesn't come on a Thursday. Come, let's go. *(to the crowd)* Die man kom nie meer nie. Julle kan maar gaan. *(to Amy)* So, Amy from California, do you have a boyfriend?

Amy: I do, yeah, back home.

Marian: A long-distance relationship! I also have a boyfriend, and it's also a long-distance relationship, since I'm here and he's in Mitchells Plain.

Scene 8: Gugs rally

(Amy, Marian and Mapaseka at UWC.)

Mapaseka: Well, I'm off to catch the train.

Amy: I'll take you home.

Marian: That's not a good idea, Amy.

Amy: Why not?

Marian: She stays in the townships.

Amy: So?

Mapaseka: Marian's right, Amy. It's fine, I'll take the train.

Amy: That's what I'm here to see, guys. I'll be fine, don't worry.

Marian: Amy...

Amy: Look, you're my friend, I haven't seen where you live, or met your father...come, let's go. Come. *(they drive to the Noyila house)*

Mapaseka: Baba, meet my friends. This is Marian, and Amy.

Marian: Hello.

Amy: Molo baba. Kunjani?

Baba: Ndiyapila, enkos. U theta isiXhosa?

Amy: Ewe, ndisifunda eUniversity.

Baba: eUniversity! Phi?

Amy: eStanford, eCalifornia, eAmerica. *(They hear singing from outside.)* Is that a rally? Let's join in!

Baba: No, no, it's too dangerous...

Amy: It'll be safe if you're with us! *(They join the rally, singing until Baba is tired)*

Malusi: Baba, let me go with my friends.

Baba: Can't you see we have guests? Come in! *(Malusi pauses inside)*

Malusi: Uhmlungu?

Amy: *(laughs)* Molo. Ngu Amy.

Malusi: Malusi.

Marian: Hello, I'm Marian.

Malusi: Malusi.

Amy: So I saw you out front there in the march. You must be very political. What party are you from? *(awkward silence)*

Malusi: Daddy, I must go. I won't be late.

Baba: All right. Be careful.

Malusi: I will. Kulungile.

Marian: We should also be going.

Baba: It was nice to meet you.

Amy: Sahla kahle.

Baba: Hamba kahle.

Scene 9: Phone call

(Amy and Marian's apartment, early one Saturday morning. The phone rings)

Amy: *(stumbling)* Hello.

Scott: Hi honey.

Amy: Scott, hi. You've gotta stop calling me this early. It's 6 in the morning!

Scott: I miss you.

Amy: Well, I miss you too, sweetheart, but it hasn't been that long..

Scott: How's the new place?

Amy: It's nice...soo much better than res! We're still settling in, but it's getting there.
Marian's great.

Scott: Good. She sounds fun. How's everything else going?

Amy: Really good. I'm settling into my program, and my advisor is really cool, she's a women's rights campaigner so she knows all the issues and the people - I'm helping to set up a women's centre and Mandela might come to the opening! And there's a conference next week on domestic violence that we're helping to organize, and I might go back to Namibia to advise the president!

Scott: That's great.

Amy: Remember I met Sam Nujoma last year? Apparently he wants to establish an office of women's issues, and so I might go there and help with that.

Scott: That's fantastic. Trust you to never sit still. *(pause)* Amy, I really miss you.

Amy: Well, honey...

Scott: I want to come see you.

Amy: When?

Scott: I don't know, soon.

Amy: I don't know if that's such a good idea.

Scott: Don't you want me to come?

Amy: Of course I do, I definitely want you to come and see South Africa, but...it's just that I'm so busy I won't have time to take you around...and I'm building a life here, and I just...nine months isn't that long.

Scott: I need to see you. Can we meet somewhere else, then?

Amy: Where?

Scott: How about Paris?

Amy: Paris?

Scott: Could you make it, with your schedule?

Amy: Well, I could maybe take a break in June...

Scott: Please, Amy. Say yes.

Amy: I'll think about it.

Scott: All right, baby. I miss you.

Amy: Me too. Call me next week? Okay. Okay, bye. Love you, too. Bye. (*hangs up*) He wanted to come here.

Marian: With your schedule, how would he see you? I live with you and I barely see you. What's this about Paris?

Amy: He thinks we should meet there.

Marian: And you were hesitating? Girly, a man wouldn't have to ask me twice to go to Paris!

Amy: We'll see. After the conference, maybe. (*opens the paper*) Oh no.

Marian: What is it this time?

Amy: *(reading paper)* 15 dead in township violence. Unrest in Guguletu township overnight caused a confrontation between shanty dwellers and police, leaving 15 killed, including 4 women and 2 children.

Marian: When will it end?

Amy: Look at this, Marian. It makes me sick. When black people die they are always numbers: 68 in Sharpville, 20 in a road accident, 15 in 'black-on-black' violence. But white people always get an obituary: Willard Smith, dead at 53, leaves behind wife Rhoda, children Geoffrey and Matilda, and beloved cat Twinkie. Even the name of his pet! Marian, if I die here you have to make sure they don't write an obit for me. Promise?

Marian: What?

Amy: I want to be a number just like everyone else. The fuss they make over white people is disgusting. Promise!

Marian: You're crazy, girl. Okay, I promise. *(yawns)* I'm going back to bed. It's too early to think about this kind of stuff. *(she exits. Amy reads on.)*

Scene 10: Tumelo comes home

(Mapaseka is in the house when Tumelo returns. He stands in the doorway until she notices him; there is a long pause, then she runs into his arms. Malusi enters)

Malusi: Hey bhuti! It's good to see you! How was it?

Mapaseka: Malusi, don't bother him, he just got back!

Tumelo: No, it's all right. It was hard, Malusi, very hard.

Malusi: Harder than this?

Tumelo: Yes! Every morning, you wake up to pap and water. Then you start running, 50 ks a day, up the mountain in Tanzania, with the big gun at the back, the bullets, the water, the knives, the big boots...and you just run, and the commander is screaming at you, "Run! Run like a man! Are you a kaffir or a freedom fighter? Go and kill the Boers!"

Malusi: Wow.

Tumelo: (*sharply*) Don't think it's glamorous, Malusi! It's hard and dirty and dangerous. You sleep with your guns and bullets and grenades every night, angry and obsessed with killing the white man. I just wanted to get back here.

Malusi: Are you staying?

Mapaseka: Will you be quiet!

Tumelo: It's all right, baby. (*takes Malusi to one side*) I can't say.

Malusi: When you go again, I'm coming with you.

Tumelo: No, Malusi, we need you here.

Malusi: To do what?

Tumelo: I have a job for you. Listen carefully. Tomorrow morning at 7, go to the station. Behind the fourth phone box. Bring Siphoh, Wandile, Zorro and Spike.

Malusi: What do we do there?

Tumelo: Someone is expecting you.

Malusi: (*growing excited*) Do I need to bring anything, clothes or food or...

Tumelo: No, just go. And Malusi...if anything happens, I'm counting on you.

Scene 11: Tumelo caught

(Tumelo and Mapaseka are in bed. Police bang on the door. Mapaseka frantically gives Tumelo her nightgown, he hides in the bed. The police come in and drag the covers off, find him and carry him out.)

Scene 12: Dinner party

(Mapaseka and Malusi are sitting uneasily on the couch in Amy and Marian's apartment. Amy and Marian enter from the kitchen.)

Amy: Well, guys, the food's almost ready. Another ten minutes.

Marian: Can I offer you something to drink? Mapaseka, what would you like?

Mapaseka: A cool drink, please.

Marian: Malusi?

Malusi: I'll just have water.

Marian: Don't just have water, man. Don't you want a beer?

Malusi: All right.

Marian: And Amy? 11 in 1?

Amy: Sure, that's fine. *(to guests)* Was it hard for you guys to get here?

Mapaseka: No, the taxi rank is close by.

Amy: And isn't that dangerous, taking taxis at night?

Mapaseka: It's all right if you're with someone. Malusi scares off the tsotsis.

Malusi: For you, it would be dangerous.

Amy: I'll be sure not to do it, then. I'm so glad you both came. *(to Malusi)* Was it strange for you to come here? Is this what you expected?

Malusi: What do you mean?

Amy: Being in an *uhmlungu*'s house.

Malusi: No, it's all right.

Amy: Good.

Marian: (*handing out drinks*) There you go. Wasn't that such an interesting speaker on campus the other day?

Mapaseka: The PAC woman? (*to Malusi*) Remember, I told you about that.

Malusi: Was it a rally?

Marian: It might as well have been. She got everyone all worked up, they were screaming and shouting and toyi-toying all over the place.

Mapaseka: Did that make you uncomfortable? You were just about the only white person there.

Amy: A little. Especially when they were chanting the thing about the bullet.

Malusi: One settler, one bullet.

Amy: Right. What is that, exactly?

Malusi: It has two meanings. One is that it is what whites deserve. But also, because the PAC is not rich, it means: don't waste. (*surprised laughter*)

Marian: I never thought of it that way! Very economical! (*Mapaseka, upset, leaves*)

Amy: Is she all right? (*Malusi shrugs*)

Marian: We were so sorry to hear about Tumelo.

Malusi: It happens every day. What can we expect from a settler regime?

Amy: Why are they still called settlers?

Malusi: Because that's what they are. They have a settlement date in this country.

Amy: South African whites? Or all whites?

Malusi: Any whites in Africa.

Marian: I read that the PAC views whites as visitors, and only blacks as real Africans.

Malusi: It is very simple. Africans are from Africa. When we go to China, even if we live there for a long time, we are still Africans. We cannot become Chinese. So Europeans in Africa are settlers. Not Africans.

Amy: And not friends.

Malusi: It depends what you mean by friendship. It's not easy to trust white people. They bring with them a lot of other things: arrogance, pride...

Amy: Historical betrayals...

Malusi: Yes. And they come from a different environment. We are saying you cannot be part of our struggle if you don't fully understand it. And if you come to our rallies, but go home to a big house with a swimming pool, you cannot understand our struggle.

Marian: Are there whites in the PAC?

Malusi: One. A doctor. He lives in a village in the Eastern Cape.

Amy: So whites who are sympathetic to your have to prove themselves? Or will whatever they do never be enough, because they're not black?

Malusi: Whites only want to join on their own terms, for their own interests. For example, when I come to your house as a visitor, I cannot do as I like and treat it like my house.

Amy: And then make laws saying I can't come in, except to be a maid. And then pass it on to your son and tell him it's his house.

Malusi: Exactly.

Marian: So what does the PAC think of coloureds? Because without whites and blacks both, I wouldn't be here. Are coloured people considered African?

Malusi: Yes, my sister. Because you are from this land.

Amy: But what about whites whose families have lived here for 300 years?

Malusi: They are not from the land. They own the land. It is not the same.

Amy: And they're not willing to share it.

Mapaseka: That's the problem.

Amy: Is the PAC Socialist?

Malusi: Yes. The people should share ownership of the land and its resources. How can a man say he owns a mine? South Africa has gold, diamonds, minerals - and yet our people live in shacks and eat from dustbins. The riches of the land belong to all of us.

Marian: Well, that certainly makes sense. But socialism hasn't done well in Russia, hey?

Mapaseka: That's more communism.

Malusi: It is a different context. African societies have always been socialist. The collective supplies the needs of the individual

Marian: I never thought about it that way. *(knock on door)* Oh. I wonder who...I'll get it, don't worry. Excuse me. *(Garth enters. Amy and Malusi keep talking)*

Marian: I didn't know you were coming.

Garth: I wanted to surprise you. Surprise!

Marian: I'm busy. We have guests.

Garth: But I'm here now.

Marian: You can't expect me to drop everything just because you're here now! Join the conversation. *(to group)* I'm sorry, I missed that.

Malusi: I was just telling Amy that it's different in America ...

Garth: Die kaffirs es mir belangrik as ek? *(Malusi reacts. A fight. They throw Garth out and Malusi and Mapaseka head for the door.)*

Amy: I'm so sorry. Are you hurt? I'm so sorry.

Malusi: No, it's all right. It's not your fault.

Amy: I hope I can see you again...I'm sorry. (*door slams*) What a disaster.

Marian: I can't believe it.

Amy: Your boyfriend is an asshole!

Marian: Thanks a lot.

Amy: I'm sorry, I mean...I don't know why you're with him. He comes in here, insults our guests...and things were going so well...(*smacks Marian with a cushion.*)

Marian: Hey! (*fights back, they pummel each other*) So much for our first dinner party. All this wasted, and the food...the food is burning! (*she runs out*)

Amy: I wonder what his life is like.

Marian: (*offstage*) I don't know.

Amy: I really want to see him again.

Scene 13: Amy meets Mandela

(Amy and Marian offstage.)

Marian: Are you ready? (*rushes on*)

Amy: I think so...where are my glasses? And my hair...oh well. (*comes on. They stand nervously to the side of the stage.*)

Marian: It's okay, we're not late, and these things never start on time, anyway.

Amy: I can't believe it. I think I have to sit down.

Marian: He'll be here any minute!

Amy: I can't believe we're actually (*in unison*) *meeting Nelson Mandela!*

Marian: You know, I'm so glad I met you, and we moved in together, and we're opening the women's centre, which is going to do so much good for so many people, and

on top of it all we're *meeting Nelson Mandela!! (they jump up and down)* Okay, let me take a photo. Pre-Mandela. *(she snaps)*

Amy: Oh my God, here he comes. *(Mandela enters, with bodyguards and fanfare.)*

Mandela: Thank you, thank you everybody. I am very happy to be here today, thank you for inviting me to the opening of this women's centre. Thank you.

Marian: Hello, Mr. Mandela, sir. Welcome. It is such an honour, Mr. Pres...Mr. Mandela, sir. Thank you.

Amy: Molo baba. Wamkelikile. *(conversation continues as they exit)*

Scene 14: Tumelo tortured

(Tumelo is handcuffed to a chair. Barnard and another cop are circling a second chair, and hit it repeatedly. Tumelo reacts. They beat him, then move to electric shocks on the neck, side and genitals. After the last shock his body goes still. As the lights go out Barnard takes the chairs off, dumping Tumelo's body on the ground. It stays there through the following scene.)

Scene 15: Freedom Charter

(Malusi starts the song from outside. Everyone joins as he passes them, then meets in the middle to speak the charter in chorus.)

Freedom Charter, Soweto 1955

We, the people of South Africa, declare for our country and all the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people.

The people shall govern.

All national groups shall have equal rights.

The people shall share in the country's wealth.

The land shall be shared among those who work it.

All shall be equal before the law

All shall enjoy equal human rights.

There shall be work and security

The doors of learning and culture shall be opened

There shall be houses, security, and comfort.

There shall be peace and friendship.

(Gunshots, screaming, they fall, helicopter and siren noises.)

Scene 16: Tumelo returns (Thula mama)

(Roxy starts the song from the side. Malusi and Baba walk Tumelo to the shack - he can barely stand. The song ends as they bring him inside.)

Scene 17: Malusi angry

(Malusi leaves the hut, furious. He picks a fight with Baba, who tries to restrain him. Malusi leads a riot that demolishes a nearby shack, while fighting with Baba. Barnard comes in the commotion and arrests Malusi. Shock, then Baba starts "Senzenina" while beginning to clean up, slowly. Amy and Marian come to help.)

Scene 18: Malusi tortured

(The police hang Malusi upside down from a window, and pretend to drop him. He screams.)

Scene 19: Warnings

Linda: She always thought she had some bad karma or bad luck. Whenever she got something she wanted, something bad would happen. She was all excited to be a camp counselor in sixth grade and then she got sick. Her grandparents gave her a new bicycle to take to college and the first time she rode it she was hit by a car. Just months before leaving for Africa there was a fire in her room and she lost everything. *(pause)* That's why this didn't surprise me. Not at all.

Marian: A month before Amy left she told me she was surprised nothing had happened to her here. She crossed the line. She did things she wasn't supposed to. At times she forgot she was white.

Linda: On the Wednesday of her death, Scott had a dinner meeting scheduled with my husband. To ask his permission. To propose.

Marian: Amy used to say if she ever died in Africa, she wanted to be a number, not a name.

Linda: She got the Weekly Mail sent to her at Stanford, and she used to read the obituaries and circle them in black marker.

Scene 20: Roxy's Speech

(A crowd at a PAC gathering in the townships. Patricia de Lille is addressing the audience.)

Brothers and sisters! The time for revolution is now! We have tried talking. We have tried negotiating. The white man is not listening! The white man is a deaf man. He is deaf to the voice of the black people. He is deaf to the cries of our children. He is deaf to the weeping of our women. The only way to get the white man's attention is to kill him! It is the year of the Great Storm...the time for talking is over! The time for waiting is over! The time for fighting is here! Take back our land! Take back our future! Take back our pride! Africa for Africans! One Azania one nation! Brothers and sisters, there is a great strength among black South Africans. It amazes those who come among us. This strength comes from the land, from working a harsh land under a harsh sun. We worked this land once, when it was ours, and we farmed it and herded our cattle on it, and we were prosperous and happy. And then the white man came. He took the land. He stole our cattle. He enslaved our grandfathers and raped our grandmothers, and we had to endure it for 300 years. But no more! Today we say enough! Enough working to feed the white man in his mansion! Enough milking the cow for the white child to drink! Enough! Our families live in hovels! Our children have no milk! They are starving, and we have had enough of watching them die! Amandla! Ngawethu! Brothers and sisters, we are not asking too much. We are not a small minority group asking to be accepted by the majority. We ARE the majority, and we DEMAND our basic human rights! We have been whipped and enslaved and oppressed for three hundred years, but we are not beaten. Oh no, brothers and sisters, we are not beaten. The whites, deep in their hearts, they know we will win. It makes them afraid, but it gives us courage, for no matter what the odds, no matter what we suffer, no matter how many of us die or are sacrificed for the dream of a

better future, we WILL continue! We will push forward! We are in sight of freedom in our lifetime! Aluta continua! Amandla! Africa for Africans! (pause) One settler! One bullet! One settler! One bullet! One settler! One bullet!

Scene 21: Setup

(Amy and Mapaseka in Amy's apartment.)

Mapaseka: Okay, I'm off to the taxi rank.

Amy: No, I'll take you home.

Mapaseka: Amy, we've been through this before...

Amy: Come on, I'm leaving in two days. This'll be the last time.

Scene 22: Mello yello

(The crowd, chanting "One settler! One bullet!" sees Barnard's police van. They chase it, throwing rocks and roughing him up. Barnard escapes, leaving the van. The mob torches it, making a circle and dancing around the flames. They freeze and lights up on Amy and Mapaseka, driving. Then,

Scene 23: "Nanzi settler!" The crowd approaches the car, throwing rocks. The girls scream, crawl out. Amy tries to run and is tripped. They pull her hair, punch her, roll her over.

Mapaseka and Marian are screaming. Amy is pulled up, and the screaming builds to a crescendo as Malusi stabs her. As they all freeze Malusi realizes it's Amy.)

Scene 24: Election

(Lights up on the stage cleared of furniture. "Nkosi Sikilel 'iAfrica" is playing, solemn. There is a South African flag and a voting booth. A long line of people come out and wait in line as the song finishes.)

Albie Sachs: Was it worth it? No, if it means reward at the end of a long struggle. The idea of measuring my involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle in terms of personal reward is deeply distressing...what gave honour and dignity to our lives was precisely the fact that we chose to combat injustice without thought of personal benefit. The reward was the endeavour, the comradeship, the sense of living an intensely meaningful life...in that sense we were the most privileged of human beings in the late 20th century, to take part in a struggle animated by the highest ideals of the age. If I asked you, was it worth it, after all you have been through, to end up tired and strained in an anonymous voting queue, and be one of 20 million people making crosses on a piece of paper?

All: Yes. *(kwaito version of Nkosi Sikelel 'iAfrika, which leads to...)*

Constitution: *(chorus)*

We the people of South Africa recognise the injustices of our past, honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land, respect those who wanted to build and develop our country and therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this constitution as the supreme law of the republic.

The Professor: The fact that nobody today wants to admit to having supported apartheid is in some ways a positive sign, demonstrating that the majority of white South Africans no longer wish to identify with apartheid. However, while the rejection of apartheid could indicate a growing disapproval of the previous political system, it also contains a dangerous denial of responsibility for the past. 'I have never supported apartheid' is a statement which reflects the understandable desire to deny individual and collective responsibility for apartheid. In a recent survey (1996) barely half of white South Africans were willing to concede that most whites used to support apartheid.

Desmond Tutu: Perhaps it is revenge to let someone who hates beautiful things sit in a gorgeous garden, but it is not a destructive vengeance, for he may one day be converted, and so you may destroy the enemy by making him into a friend.

Constand Viljoen: All of us have failed. We all used violence to get what we wanted. The terror of the tyrant invited the terror of the revolutionary.

Samora Machel: The success of the revolution depends on the tiny daily acts of each one of us.

Afrikaans woman: We did not understand how important language is as a beacon of goodwill. I am very sorry that previous governments did not make it compulsory for

our schoolchildren to learn the black languages of our area. Afrikaans, yes, English, yes, but definitely the African languages, too.

Lillian Ngoyi: When I die, I'll die a happy person because I have seen the rays of our new South Africa rising.

De Klerk: For too long we clung to a dream of separate nation states, when it was already clear that it could not succeed sufficiently. For that we are...sorry. Yes, we have made mistakes. Yes, we have often sinned and we do not deny this. But that we were evil, malignant and mean - to that we say no.

Chris Hani: Some people have said that had I remained with the ANC I would be amongst those who would form the next government in this country. But let us raise the issue which is basic as far as I am concerned, the material improvement of the conditions of millions of poor people in this country. The perks of the new government are not appealing to me. The real problem is not whether one is a key minister in the cabinet or not, but what we do for the social upliftment of the working masses of our country.

Albie Sachs: One day, white will be beautiful again. It was a Mozambican leader who said this: white is beautiful. When we asked him what his government felt about the phrase 'Black is Beautiful' he replied, 'Black is Beautiful, Brown is Beautiful, White is Beautiful.' That is what we want, in South Africa and everywhere. White made itself ugly by declaring that black was ugly. Now, it is black that will help white discover the beauty in itself.

Joe Modise: We need the whites. We need their skills. We cannot run this country alone. We need them just as much as they need us. They can't run the country alone without us.

Jose Zalaquett, Chilean activist: It is sometimes necessary to choose between truth and justice. We choose truth. Truth does not bring back the dead, but releases them from silence.

Scene 25: Closing Monologues

Malusi: If I didn't forgive myself I wouldn't be here. In those times, someone had to die. It could have been me, or Amy, or anyone. Under those circumstances, would I have behaved differently? The answer is no. Amy: I wish I had never met her. She was too good to be white. She took me by surprise.

Linda: So here we are, so intimately involved in a country we never thought twice about. You see things you can't even imagine from home. I cry a lot. But I also feel privileged to be part of a country that's changing. I think of Amy as laughing at us. She would think we were hilarious, in Guguletu, struggling with Xhosa. But she would also be so proud. She sent me a poem right before she died. It's by Sarah Rudin, and it's called "South Africa":

In this thin country I have been
With you, and in its mines have seen

The riches of your heart, and known
A mountain in a city, wreath of stone
Around your head. The patient sea,
Your blood, has been here every day with me.

Though once I howled to think of your
Five decades less of bread and breath,
You stare out now from shanty doors,
Life of my life, death of my death.
At last you make me understand:
God cannot kill a country or a man.

THE END

Songs Used in Akhon'amandla

1) Akhon'amandla
Hallelujah
Akhon'amandla
Hallelujah

2) Nelson Mandela
Thetha no de Klerk
Sifuna ukuvota

3) Bawelile abafana
Basekhaya e Azania

Lomoya lo u makaza

Thatha scorio e guerilla
Ubulale amaSettler

4) Thula thula mama thula
Thula mama thula
Thula mama thula

Bamthatha
Bambeka e khaya
Wafika wa khala
Wathi amandla

5) Senzenina
Sibotshwa nje
Amabhulu
Azizinja

6) Songena sirhoboloza
Epitoli, songena sirhoboloza
Epitoli, sonyashi i apartheid
Epitoli, sonyashi Freedom Charter
(Siyaa siyaa)

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