

**Deconstructing the Native/Imagining the Post-Native:
Race, Culture and Postmodern Conditions in
Brett Bailey's 'plays of miracle and wonder'**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of MA (Drama and Performance Studies), in the School of Literary Studies, Media and Creative Arts, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

As the candidate's Supervisor, I have approved this dissertation/thesis for submission.

Signed:..... (Dr Veronica Baxter)

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Abstract

This dissertation combines African philosophical discourses with perspectives on cultural performativity to explore the theme of ‘deconstructing the native’ and ‘imagining the post-native’ through theatre. The dissertation consists of two main parts, a theoretical and a ‘practical’ section. The latter consists of ideas on how to translate the insights gained from the theory section into a strategy for making theatre.

The theory section focuses on the aesthetically groundbreaking early works of South African theatre director Brett Bailey (Chapter 1), and their relevance to themes of African philosophy (Chapter 2). Using the concept of ‘engendering space’ as a point of contact between African discourse and theatre praxis, I show how Bailey’s theatre engendered a physical and metaphysical space in which to deconstruct the native and imagine the post-native. I consequently argue that Bailey’s aesthetic revolution has immense political and ethical consequences for contemporary African society. I imagine what these consequences are by deconstructing the cultural and moral discourse generated through critical and public responses to Bailey’s often controversial work.

The practical section comprises an academically extended version of the professional theatre project proposal for my play, *Hondo Love Story*, which will be staged subsequent to this dissertation. The contents of the section include my strategy for engendering an aesthetic space similar, but not identical, to that of Bailey’s plays (Chapter 3). The similarities include aspects of form, theme and content, which I imagine may result in *Hondo Love Story* having a similar relevance to the theme of deconstructing the native and imagining the post-native through theatre. While I do not systematically deconstruct the play to fully elucidate this, I explain (Chapter 4) the more ‘intellectual’ aspects of content such as historical subtext and psycho-mythical narratives underlying story structure and characterisation. The complete script for the play is appended.

Introduction

On African Ontology

This dissertation is about deconstructing the native and imagining the post-native through theatre. It looks at cultural, historical and psychosocial processes that are at the heart of issues relating to the question of ‘African’ identity, agency and belonging. These issues are dealt with in the early dramatic works and associated theoretical writings of well-known South African playwright, designer and director Brett Bailey, whose ideas, experiments and experiences provide the focused study for such broad themes. The dissertation includes a critical analysis of Bailey’s aesthetic, which focuses on heavily theoretical problems, but hopes to establish the real exigency of these problems within current public and scholarly debates about African culture, identity and ideology. Blending Afro-postmodern and postcolonial perspectives, I discursively extrapolate some widespread complexes that still inform and challenge even popular or populist notions of identity and belonging in contemporary Southern African life. I am interested in the capacity of culture, through the powerful metaphysical agency of creative mediums like theatre, to transgress and transcend the traumatic imprisonments of history, clearing new spaces for articulating the ‘self’. At the same time, this ‘self’ is historically constituted and therefore historically contingent, emerging in-and-through time (temporality) to discover, not its limited particularity, but its full and unique access to the universal. The resulting propositions are teleological, made relevant to ‘the here and now’ through deliberate correlations with the ideas of prominent African and/as postcolonial thinkers and critics discussed below. This is not, however, an attempt at authoritative summaries and criticisms of particular philosophical discourses, political theories or social science perspectives. It can be seen, rather, as more of a dialectical tussle with theories of social and cultural *performativity*, desiring nevertheless to make connections with those broader, current discourses about African life, with the ultimate aim of contributing in a small way to the post-structural and interdisciplinary quests of African cultural studies. As an essay on cultural theory, therefore, it is inadequate. As a process of ratiocination on theatre/performance politics, it is experimental

and rudimentary. As an Afro-postmodern and postcolonial interrogation of Brett Bailey's world and works in relation to the metaphysical themes of African history and heritage, identity and ideology, I hope that it will turn out to be quite 'comprehensive', although by no means the definitive account on these matters. Needless to say, then, I invite complementary and contradictory perspectives alike to engage in dialogue or playful combat in this exciting arena of African discourse. Here is the story.

The history of modern Africa is in large part a history of complex interactions, including rivalries, between disparate ethnopolitical orders that were previously separated by long distances and/or ancient demarcations on the vast terrestrial geography of human cultural knowledge and identity. It is a history of clashing civilisations, of elaborate symbolic exchanges and violent contests between their mutually distinct and ever evolving languages, ethics, religious experiences, social mores, value systems and knowledge concepts, not to mention aesthetic codes and technical standards. It is also a history of power, of each sociocultural order's attempts, through tactical or technological prowess, to oppose, annihilate, dominate, infiltrate or assimilate the competing and/or contrasting beliefs and survival practices of 'others'. This history sees dramatic terrors and transformations between diverse theologies, cosmologies or/as practical ontologies, shoving societies irreversibly in new directions toward a way of life for future generations. The history of modern Africa may thus be described as a mutable and multifarious genealogy of *realities in conflict*, wherein 'conflict' implies both a 'positive' and a 'negative' sense, that is, the sense of frictions that may precondition the progressive modalities of production, on the one hand, and on the other, those that may erupt into regressive forces of devastation. 'Realities in conflict' here, therefore, describes the political and epistemological crossroads where new and old interconnected identities are shaped and reshaped by multiple factors, gradually and chaotically emerging in historic time to give Africa its own distinct forms of social and cultural hybridism. Indeed the notion of hybrid culture, as both a source of anxiety and a cause for elation in what is superficially branded 'postcolonial' discourse in the humanities and social sciences, is probably the most accurate description of any African society, whether

discrete minority or domineering majority. For as we have seen in the collective works of postmodern historians, anthropologists, archaeologists and evolutionary scientists, which in turn prefigure the stunning evidence now being presented by geneticists, human life is primarily about two things: mixing and moving. The history of Africa, then, is also a history of arrivals and departures, which happen in the form of invasions and migrations, evictions and evacuations, conquests and cohabitations. It is a series of fragmentary counterpoints that ultimately configure the score of the grand narrative of survival: the survival of lineages, cultures, families, nations, races and the species itself, whose prospects for success or threat of failure are directly linked to and contingent upon the protection, preservation or innovation of particular knowledge systems. Punctuated by the diverse manifestations of a natural drive to 'take root' somewhere, only to discover the disruptive need to go somewhere else, this narrative of survival is perhaps the only thing so far proven to have any permanence in the human soul, therefore the most substantial 'spiritual' link we may have to our ancestors.

Ironically, but somehow not unexpectedly, it is also this deep-seated, survival-orientated predisposition for movement that is sometimes taken to define the contemporary human condition at a time when our critical awareness of the social and biological 'self' and its environment seems especially acute. While the visible effects of centuries-long processes that animated the violent projects of globalisation are called 'unprecedented' – from ecological mayhem to economic centralisation, from advanced technocratic organisation to 'anarchic' moral, political, aesthetic and psychological indeterminacies – yet ostensibly the most profound change in human behaviour herein appears, in fact, not to encompass much behavioural change at all. We have always been a mixing and moving species, affecting and being affected by its environment wherever we settled. What is 'unprecedented', however, has to do with the scope and the stakes of our social actions and/as our environmental impact: there is an unprecedented capacity to create as well as to destroy. Unprecedented is the range and efficacy of technological means through which we may literally reinvent or alternatively damage our world and ourselves. Unprecedented also are the discursive, conceptual and semiological horizons through which these possibilities and dangers can be anticipated,

experienced or rationalised. Thus the abovementioned concept of realities in conflict attempts, on the one hand, to describe the general condition of a human history that has probably many times come full circle, and on the other, to resonate with the specific conditions and heightened anxieties of our times. It also tries to position Africa, as both conceptual signifier and hypothetical signified, at the epistemological centre of its own historical and philosophical significance. Indeed to affirm this significance in the first place is still a situation that is often rendered unthinkable (Mbembe 2001) according to the imperialistic logic, or ‘Logos’ (Ekpo 1995), of Western rationalism that was notoriously demonstrated by Hegel.

Today, however, there is talk of ‘Afropolitan’ identities, a phenomenon directly related to African residents’ increasing, unprecedented access to geopolitical and sociocultural mobility. Such identities forcefully bear witness to the African individual’s capacity to experience, recreate, inspire and refashion the universal with an unprecedented agency within the global sphere of cultural existence. Beyond frenzied celebrations of postcolonial hybridity in various proliferating Diasporas, there are also attempts to identify postmodern montage in indigenous landscapes and sociocultural milieus. There is interculturalism and multiculturalism; there is post-nationalism. There are also ongoing tensions between such cosmopolitan generalities and the insular particularities that they desire to assimilate into their concepts of sameness as well as ideologies of difference. On the opposite end of the spectrum of political hermeneutics, there are concerns about the political estrangement, alienation or exploitation of less globally privileged cultures, identities and nations threatened by the steady advancement of Western capitalism, mass media and consumer culture. There are even hysterias about the death of indigenous values and morality vis-à-vis the alleged remnants of an obstinate and unsubtly veiled colonial paternalism in Western liberalisms, or feminisms for that matter. In their attempts to reach their critique or teleology toward new cultural and geopolitical frontiers, such movements have often been accused of undermining the modalities of cultural authority so crucial to the survival of indigenous knowledge systems, the better to disavow their complicity with foreign agendas of global domination. Echoing such paranoid parochialism in ostensibly more erudite circles have been the occasional demands of an absurd scholarly

desperation to define the proper ‘African’ sciences and humanities, whose vocation must forever remain highly utilitarian, their single shallow purpose to legitimise the indigenous and, in a perversely regressive operation, banish it from the universal.

No such politically and philosophically short-sighted views on African culture, civilisation, and scholarship are entertained in these pages. Nor do I wish to simply undermine one type of discourse on Africa for another by espousing the more euphoric, or alternatively cynical, ratiocinations of the postmodern and the postcolonial, which so disingenuously try to omit reality’s more disconcerting hues the better to absolve intellectual endeavour of all responsibility to speak to the world, I mean, to really speak *to* it and not just *of* it. I would not like, in other words, to choose between a critical methodology that reduces all reality to the postmodern manifestation of signs, concepts and discourses, on the one hand, and on the other, one that would completely discount the pertinence of semiological process. There is a very practical reason for this. I am interested here in the overall picture of African realities in conflict, which I understand as the defining epistemological factor that preconditions our sociopolitical landscape, showing Africa to be pretty much like the rest of the postmodern world – a place inhabited by disparate and intersecting practices of knowledge and concepts of reality, as well as of the self. Yet the very particular forms and manifestations of such practices and concepts are as symptomatic of Africa’s unique cultural-historical experience as they are indicative of Africa’s agency to articulate the universal. In celebrating this paradox, therefore, I am joining the new long-haul scholarly toil to bring Africa back into the world, back into time, but on its own terms: as a ‘self’ that does not require the condition of being ‘other’ (alterity) in order to recognise itself. For as Achille Mbembe (2001) has pointed out, the problem with alterity is that it is not a precondition for being; rather, it is a manifestation of non-being. This last point deserves some elaboration.

On Marginal Spaces

Underlying the geo-culturally specific philosophical problems of African, or Afrocentric,

psychontology – that is, the psychic ontology; the psychology of perceiving reality; or the psychological processes entailed in the state of conceiving and acknowledging reality – are broader existential issues of universality and alterity, being and non-being, to which Mbembe has paid close attention. All these issues have very direct correlations in both the physical and metaphysical worlds of theatre, drama and performance. The correlations become clear when we consider the treatment of *space*, which is a precondition for performance, whether we mean a ‘stage’ per se – the site of a performance *event* – or simply the perceptual framing that effectively spatialises a performative *act* when the mind of the beholder acknowledges that ‘there, in front of me, is a performance’. Because space and/or spatiality are fundamental to performance, the inhabiting and use of space as a limited resource, and the conception of spatiality as a constitutive element in a temporary relationship dynamic between viewer and viewed, are thus processes imbued with *power*. To ‘get’ space, or to ‘give’ space; to ‘have’ space, or to ‘be allocated’ space – these acts and states insinuate a negotiation, or struggle, for power. Those who are able and authorised to claim, to appropriate, to demarcate, to own, to guard, to occupy and to ration access to space effectively have power over those who need space but are not authorised to exercise certain agencies in relation to space. However, those who are subjected to power through the manipulation of their need for space can also affect, resist, beguile, elude or initiate new spatially constituted power relations altogether by harnessing the potent creative agency of *engendering space*.

This theme of engendering space recurs throughout the pages that follow. Of concern here is the question of *how* to engender space for performance, practically, and as a corollary, *why*. Implicit in the theme of engendering space is the question of novelty and innovation. The kind of performance for which physical and/as aesthetic space is engendered, therefore, in turn engenders *cultural and ethical* space for new ideas, ideals and sensibilities. This cultural and ethical space may also translate to, or help to engender separately, *social* space, wherein the possibility of transforming relationships – and even (consequently) structures of power or concepts of reality and responsibility – is conceivable.

A corollary to the theme of engendering space is the concept, and question, of marginality. If the contestation and innovation of space – both physical and metaphysical – is about power, then the multifarious and complex relations of that power necessarily entail relations of spatial centrality versus marginality. In our current concern with the spatial ontology of African identity, this is a crucial factor to consider, since part of the historical essence of nativism is that stance of positioning the self – that is, the colonised and oppressed, native self – as marginalised other – that is, marginalised and othered by the colonising self. The ensuing struggle, then, is about attempting to legitimise that position of marginal other, so that it may be allocated power; quite directly, be ‘empowered’ in the Affirmative Action sense. The problem is: the self that has power to affirm will not voluntarily recognise the self-ness of any other self; and it is this other self-ness that is the only possible grounds for legitimacy. To put this in historical terms, the colonising self will not voluntarily give space for the colonised self to be empowered. The denial of choice terrestrial space for colonised peoples was necessarily, not accidentally, concurrent with their denial of discursive space in political, theological and/ as epistemological spheres.

If the marginalised, colonised, othered self requires legitimacy, therefore, it may have to engender its own space, in which to perform for its own empowerment within or without the established order. That is, of course, putting aside the option of violently taking over the space of the legitimate and oppressive authority, thereby *becoming* that legitimate and oppressive authority – a familiar situation in African postcolonial states. If the marginal other chooses, rather, the more peaceful route of performing for its freedom, which this dissertation espouses, the marginal other has a number of options in terms of its approach. It may revel masochistically in, protest indignantly about, or rise defiantly against its own condition of alterity. Mbembe’s abovementioned point about non-being is that alterity is the condition of being a self-that-is-seen-and-may-consequently-see-itself-as-other-to-another; a self that *is* other; a self that is not a ‘self’ at all; a non-self (Mbembe 2001: 4). It is a self that, consequently, or effectively, does not exist, since it cannot conceive of its own existence unless it is legitimised by the legitimising authority at the centre of ethnocultural,

epistemological, or theological, power. The issue of engendering marginal space for the performance of the marginalised other is therefore key to deciphering the relations between theatre, performance, culture, ontology, and history. It is an issue that defines the entire history of anticolonial resistance, and relates to both the postcolonial and postmodern conditions of marginalised cultures, classes, identities, epistemologies and psyches.

Hence, the major concern of this dissertation, the issue of ‘deconstructing the native’ and ‘imagining the post-native’, must necessarily be approached in terms of how nativism is constituted as an alterity that occupies marginal space – political, historical, epistemological, theological – and how a work of art can engender aesthetic, cultural and social space in which to contradict, or rather, transcend that alterity. The first step is to understand as much as possible about the nature of a conceptual relationship between theatre’s physics and metaphysics of performance, on the one hand, and culture’s physics and metaphysics of engendering space, on the other. The problem of nativist ontology must be approached backwards, by starting with intensely focused questions of space and marginality in Brett Bailey’s theatre, then arriving gradually at the ‘bigger picture’ questions of alterity and ontology. How, logistically and conceptually, does Bailey’s theatre engender space, and what kinds of spaces, physical and metaphysical, are engendered? Then: what effect might this engendering have on the viewer who perceives reality through the psychontology of alterity; and what other ramifications may there be? Finally, what can all this teach to the young artist-intellectual writing these pages while planning to engender his own performance space? I undertake to answer these questions below in the following chapters.

Dissertation Structure

In Chapter 1, I consolidate existing critical and reflective discourse about Bailey’s work in relation to the theme of engendering space. Bailey’s large-scale African ritualistic dramas combined avant-garde, professional and community theatre paradigms to explore the violently fragmented psychic and social reality of certain Xhosa-speaking communities in the Eastern

Cape. Each of his three plays, made between 1996 and 1999, retold bizarre and/or harrowing true events that happened at different times and affected the involved communities at profound levels of tragedy and/or controversy. The plays were also critically acclaimed and publicly successful as cultural spectacles that seemed to tap into the South African cultural performance marketplace. The plays thus also launched Bailey's career as artist-playwright and established his reputation as socio-cultural activist. While all this was happening, however, certain artistic choices that Bailey had made, and his intellectual justifications thereof, resulted in various public and critical controversies, generating some academic interest. The purpose of Chapter 1 is to provide a preliminary overview of the sophisticated scholarly perspectives that consequently emerged from the discursive stream of intellectual responses to Bailey's work. These perspectives largely focus on Bailey's own themes of cultural knowledge and the performativity thereof, as well as the postcolonial cultural politics of his radical subjective engagement and collaboration with class-marginalised black communities within their cultural specificity.

In Chapter 2, I deepen the inquiry by supplementing the existing critical perspectives with my own interest in a particular branch of African neo-postcolonial and neo-postmodern philosophy that goes beyond cultural politics, into the realm of ethics, epistemology and ontology. In other words, I write about Bailey's work while positioning myself within an emergent theoretical movement that seeks to interrogate some of the ethical, epistemological and ontological assumptions of postcolonial thought. Such assumptions also underlie the neo-anticolonial discourse of cultural politics that is so prevalent in contemporary Afrocentric thought. I look at Mbembe's (2002a) ideas on 'nativism' and 'Afro-radicalism' as intellectual movements that have operated on the basis of certain epistemological assumptions that emerged from political exigency but for Mbembe seem less useful for the 'Afropolitan' desires of a certain progressive branch of contemporary African thought. I theorise how Bailey's plays may be seen as translating Mbembe's philosophical challenge into a cultural challenge through performance, by positing a similar postmodern challenge to African postcolonial and anticolonial ways of thinking. Bailey's theatre cleared the same space for the

articulation of a new African cultural and political sensibility that was not permanently haunted by the demons of our colonial past – or perpetually praying to the angels of our anticolonial past. In this way, Bailey's theatre represented a situation in which cultural and intellectual activism became one.

In Chapter 3, I combine the insights of the first two chapters through a creative concept that expresses my own desire to engender artistic space beyond nativism. The Chapter comprises the project proposal for *Hondo Love Story*, my new play about the murky history of anticolonial movements in Zimbabwe, my country of origin. In addition to basic descriptions of content and subtext, I include information about the writing process as well as ideas about direction, production and staging. I also include a proposed aesthetic ideology for my theatre company who will perform the play. The company's envisioned artistic and ethical identity is visibly influenced by the issues investigated in this dissertation. Intended to be a collaborative endeavour involving both South African and Zimbabwean participants, the project will engender an inter-African theatre space for metropolitan reflection and debate on South Africa's topical neighbour, whose major sociopolitical issues surely need no preliminary synopsis here. I have thus used this dissertation as, in part, an engendered theoretical space in which to strategise, conceptualise, reflect on, grapple with, justify and record my vision for giving this play cultural space in South Africa. Because of the unavoidable issues of industry building and people's empowerment within a difficult South African economic matrix, the question of engendering *commercial* space for the metropolitan exposure and exploitation of marginal performance is also taken seriously. To this end, I include ideas on marketing.

In Chapter 4, I describe the origins and evolution of the concept for *Hondo Love Story*, and also ruminate on the psychoanalytic, historical and cultural dimensions of the written play. While discussing the play's own specific thematic and contextual concerns, I remain focused on this dissertation's more general philosophical problem of how such a specific African context may be theatricalised in such a way as to represent its subjects as human agents who are in a position to articulate the universal. Thus the play can be staged with the aim of

engendering space in which to transcend, but also challenge and grapple creatively and consciously with, historic alterity.

The script is attached in this dissertation, as an appendix, for two reasons. The first, legal reason is that the play is co-authored, and although initiated by me, based on my background and ultimately dominated by my input, is not mine and mine alone even spiritually. The struggle between two playwriting voices is thus appropriate to the theme, dominant in the play and discussed below in relation to Bailey's work, of history's subjective realities in conflict. Had the play not been co-authored, however, the second, theoretical reason to exclude it from the dissertation would stand. As I explain in more detail below, the issue is not the literary creation of a drama script that *comments* on nativism, but rather the *conceptualisation of an aesthetic* that can have an *impact* on the psychontology of nativist alterity. That this impact is subtle and indirect does not limit its profundity. As my study of Bailey's theatre illustrates, such profundity may even be greater when the frames of objectivity during the process of aesthetic consumption are deconstructed, and the verbal defences of 'clever' playwriting are not there to inhibit an artist's vulnerable inner truth. The drama, of course, must lend itself to these issues; not every play is appropriate.

A Manifesto and a Proviso

While looking back at the problems of history's ontology that have become part of our inheritance, I also look forward to a new day. The theme of engendering space is explored here as an aesthetic, cultural, spiritual, psychological, political, epistemological, social and professional concept whose urgent ideological and ethical application is the consequential task of challenging negative alterity. For me, this struggle is as much 'personal' as it is 'intellectual' and 'artistic'. The concept of engendering space is a deceptively simple metaphor for a way of life. It is my personal religious myth about the future state of things; my teleology of self and society. This dissertation and the artistic project that will follow are just two small steps toward the immense goal of engendering space for a new world, or at

least a new Africa in the world. I believe in this goal, whose full completion – that is, putting aside for the moment the postmodern challenge to the whole notion of completion – will take many, and various, contributions over a long time to achieve. The big idea beyond this research thesis, then, is that such a revolution is already underway. How can artists contribute? Brett Bailey's seminal work alerts us to a way of creating, an artistic methodology, while the philosophers whose ideas are explored below offer ways of thinking.

I write as a praxis-orientated artist-theorist who happens to be exposed to academic concepts, and presumes that readers are familiar, if vaguely, with terms like 'avant-garde' and 'postmodern', as well as with the Western historical and contemporary contexts of such cultural practices. In any case, the original context is less the point than the translation, reformulation and redefinition, within a new context, of what, moreover, have been and will continue to be highly contested terms in debates that vastly exceed the space available here. I do, however, clarify in discursive context specific things about the avant-garde or the postmodern as they relate to Bailey's work, which can be seen as a practical demonstration of how Western postmodern and avant-garde elements may be adapted for Southern African marginal and space-engendering performance experiments in the new era. I use what I have learnt through Bailey's 'influence' to conceptualise my own future work. The differences between Bailey's approach and mine, however, illustrate the potential, within this proactive epistemology of performance, for artistic diversity. The discourse produced here will also be instrumental in initiating further critical dialogue about *Hondo Love Story*.

In thus thinking about my own future career and the constitution of my professional identity – embracing my intellectuality and my creativity as two complementary, not opposed, forces – I am engendering an appropriate space for myself in the industry. It is a commercially and institutionally undefined space, in which a young artist-intellectual need not heed the ultimatums from both sides and choose between 'doing' and 'thinking about doing'. This marginal space that I inhabit is different from, and more insecure than, the strictly intra-disciplinary space in which theatre academics have attempted to legitimise 'research as

practice'. While their predicament is about legitimising art as valid intellectual pursuit within academic institutions, mine is about legitimising apparently 'academic' pursuits within the intellectually impoverished institutions of art production. Both sides can benefit from the concept – if I may, the philosophy – of engendering space. In the final analysis, we are all trying to close the rift between institutions, to my mind an important endeavour in these precarious times when the dangerous public charisma, ethical short-sightedness and grotesque parochialism of influential individuals in the political sphere threaten to swallow a thought-starved and jingoistic mass society whole.

Chapter 1: Engendering Space: The Theatre of Brett Bailey

Brett Bailey, contemporary South African playwright, theatre director/designer, actor trainer, performance artist, bohemian eccentric, University of Cape Town-educated “white boy” (Bailey 2003: 13) and “third-generation African” (15), is locally and internationally renowned as “one of the most innovative and controversial presences” (Flockemann 2002: 275) in the theatre emerging from the ashes of the struggle after 1994. Founder of *Third World Bunfight*, a community-orientated ensemble drama company and professional recruitment facility, his progressively more spectacular, deliberately contentious early works aimed to reform or revolutionise what he saw as the aesthetically bankrupt and politically complacent cultures of black resistance and white liberalism in the theatre (Bailey 2003). Inspiring this endeavor was Bailey’s more general ambition to *engender new spaces*, both physical and metaphysical, for the expression of an emerging post-apartheid South African social imaginary and (multi)cultural experience. This process was to happen primarily through the simultaneous and relationally complex implementation of two distinct modes of catalysing or actualising spiritual, social and/as aesthetic transformations, namely, African ritual and hybrid performance.

The following chapter pursues three simultaneous objectives. (1) It delineates the unique forms and processes by which these two foremost methodological elements in Bailey’s theatre, that is, ritual and hybrid performance, specifically contribute to and define Bailey’s project of engendering spaces. (2) It speculates on the kinds of spaces engendered, considering also, perhaps unavoidably, their immediate *phenomenological impact* within the context of performance, that is, how Bailey’s aesthetic impacts on the ‘phenomenal’ plane of intellectual experience that constitutes a generally assumed and philosophically problematic threshold between ‘external’ (physical; empirical) reality and ‘internal’ (mental; psychological) reality. In even simpler, if superficial, terms: I consider how Bailey’s theatre creates its most important meaning through a conscious engagement with the five senses and with the corporeal sensibilities as opposed to, or rather *in excess of*, the cerebral transmission of

‘signs’. (3) I also suggest some broader socio-theoretical ramifications of this engagement by relating both the general processes and final impact of Bailey’s theatre to various questions and speculations about the historic and/as contemporary conditions of African identity, culture and/as postcoloniality.

The aim here is, also, to engender space for articulating theatrical insights about the broader performativity of culture as a performativity of knowledge, identity and belief within the South(ern) African context. My argument is, quite simply, the proposition that Bailey’s aesthetic does engender space, both ‘practical’ (as in, within the large arena of cultural practice) and theoretical (as demonstrated by this thesis).

Truth and/as Representation

Three plays, *Ipi Zombi?* (1996; 1998)¹, *iMumbo Jumbo: the Days of Miracle and Wonder* (1997) and *The Prophet* (1999), explored tragic, bizarre, contentious, familiar and ‘true’ events that took place in the Eastern Cape, affecting some of the Xhosa-speaking populaces of that region. While viscerally portraying some of the hard-hitting, often horrific social reality that gave such events their disturbing historical and cultural significance, the plays also interpreted this significance through mythopoeia: the practice of making myths. Thus affirming the supernatural agencies of Xhosa ancestral religion, traditional folklore and modern superstition as ‘real’ participants in shaping the course of events, the plays thematically highlighted the issues of Xhosa identity politics, morality and cultural knowledge. Cosmologically confronted with both Christian and secular desires, the African mythic-ancestral spirit of these performances was also seen to struggle for new legitimacy and expression within a national and global-historical imaginary wherein some of the most momentous and violent ethical or ideological rivalries have been described through such fallacious binary equations as: ‘Western’ ‘progressive’ ‘modernity’ versus ‘non-Western’ ‘backward’ or ‘primitive’ ‘customs’. Contesting the epistemological centralisation of a world

¹ Originally titled *Zombie* in the 1996 production.

history that has always privileged the former colonial powers, “the plays of miracle and wonder” – also the title of Bailey’s book (2003) about the trilogy – told “stories of our time” (Bailey: 9) from the impoverished and vibrant margins of globalisation. As a concrete manifestation of (rather than merely abstract commentary on) the cultural desire of its time and place (Flockemann 2002), each successive installment of the trilogy became a chapter in the ongoing transition from the repressive cultural order of colonisation to the pluralist chaos of postcoloniality (Bailey 2003; Flockemann 2002; Jamal 2003b). Within its particular geopolitical setting, therefore, such performance could also be seen as bearing, perhaps even generated by, the artistically fecund sociohistorical tensions theorised by Liz Gunner (1994) as being part of a general shift in political imaginaries: from an apartheid-ruled “crisis of legitimacy” to a post-apartheid “crisis of identity” (quoted in Jamal 2003b: 39). As the plays showed, however, the latter crisis had/has not yet completely superseded the former, and the relationship between the two theatrically manifested as – and thus thematically attested to the incidence of – a broader artistic and/as sociopolitical *crisis of representation*.

This crisis of representation accounts for much of the noted ‘innovation’ as well as the concentrated public contention generated by the plays (Flockemann 2002). A central methodological concern in Bailey’s oeuvre was that of exploring the relationships of continuity and divergence between ritual and theatre (Bailey 2003: 15), either of which were deliberately sourced from culturally specific practices to celebrate the unique diversity of African performance. This rationale led to the controversial staging of authentic Xhosa ancestral rituals, often performed by real sangomas (spiritual healers/diviners), as the main part of an impressive spectacle of culturally and artistically hybrid form. Such a spectacle exemplified “the current preoccupation with the performativity of knowledges, meanings and identities”, which in turn relates to issues about “the relationships between performance and the processes of democratisation and decolonisation in the... spotlight of globalisation” (Flockemann 2002: 276). In addition to Xhosa ritual, myriad less sacred performance trends and traditions were drawn eclectically and experimentally from around the African milieu and beyond, combining the disparate indigenous (usually grassroots)

performativities of protest, heritage, gospel, musical, dance, pageantry and comedic styles, with those of imported avant-garde and ‘showbiz’ practices. This melting pot of cultural histrionics was appropriately reinforced by an extravagant emphasis on visual design, which resourcefully and inventively harnessed the grungy, colorful textures and forms of African, especially traditional, art, sculpture, costume, ‘make up’ and décor for both ritualistic and frivolous ends, often with a humorously flamboyant emphasis on “kitsch” (Rudakoff 2004). Spectacularly featuring large casts of amateur “locals” – children, choirs, priests, and the abovementioned sangomas – who simply “performed themselves”, as well as Bailey’s astoundingly talented and gruelingly disciplined thespians, the emergent style was one in which “the emphasis seems to be less on what this kind of theatre ‘means’ than on what it ‘puts together’, often incongruously” (Flockemann: 275). Produced through a commitment to social regeneration via tapping into indigenous forms of cultural expression and enhancing these with foreign insights (Bailey 2003: 9-10), the plays of miracle and wonder emerged as seductively vibrant, melodically charismatic, poetically rhythmical, ritualistically intense, symbolically ornate and theatrically ‘grotesque’ (Flockemann 2002; Rudakoff 2004) displays of African orality, spirituality, corporeality and visuality.

Conflating form and content, such multicultural and intertextual “spectacles of excess” (Flockemann) and their supporting publicity imageries (275) often provocatively juxtaposed disparate cultural, especially religious, iconographies in a ‘put together’ sociological portraiture that was aimed at representing African and non-African “worlds in collision” (Bailey, quoted in Flockemann: 275). This ‘collision’ effect helped to reinforce, in each play, the trilogy’s overriding theme of societies in crises caused, amplified, sustained or culminated by the clash of conflicting beliefs, both local and imported. It also became methodologically key to the plays’ trademark tendency to “re-enact historical events in ways that foreground the constructedness of cultural and historical memory” (Flockemann 275), in turn creating an aesthetic that “symbolically and literally intrudes onto culturally sacred ground” (275). Choosing for their subject matter very familiar, journalistically and/or academically documented, culturally ‘sensitive’ and highly poignant, often disturbing, true

events, the plays' narrative and theatrical forms were completely 'inflected' by mythopoeia. The experience of this inflection was reinforced through spatial and histrionic modes of interactivity (below) that fully encapsulated the audience in 'other' realms of physical and (therefore) intellectual experience. It thus not only theatrically revealed, but also *emotively espoused* and aesthetically fetishised the ideologically 'abjected' dimensions of mythopoeia as an equal player in both national and cosmopolitan power games of 'truth' (Jamal 2003b). Such processes are 'abjected' in Ann McClintock's (1995) sense (appropriating Julia Kristeva's famous psychoanalytic formulation) of being 'disavowed', 'repudiated', expelled to the furthest epistemological and/as spiritual margins of mainstream cerebral reason, only to draw the latter's *constitutive inner limit* as its chaotically ambivalent and *indispensable* frontier. This frontier is where Achille Mbembe (2002a), in a provocative study of modern (pan)African political thought, has discovered an 'economy of sorcery' haunting the disingenuous historical perception of a purportedly 'secular' core of African nationalist modernity. But whereas Mbembe's cosmopolitan eye guards its polemical distance from such sorceries, Bailey's theatre remained critically ambiguous: both satirically distant and curiously complicit.

The ambiguity was a dualistic tension of apparent opposites whose awkward meeting point is the defining moment of a postcolonial crisis of representation. On the one hand, the plays' aesthetic appeared to distance the empirical reality of certain 'found' truths; 'found', that is, through Bailey's research endeavours and/as physical journeys – fascinatingly detailed in his book – which also became artistic, intellectual and spiritual quests. On the other hand, perhaps owing to his simultaneously 'discovered' spirituality during the process of finding stories, the plays converted their found truths into supernaturally real and/but 'logically' incoherent (celebration of paradox) and socially grotesque parables that poetically echoed the Bakhtinian 'carnavalesque'. Seeming not only to advocate but also *facilitate*, through the power of ritual, a calm acceptance of the mystique of the unknown, such parables thus also appeared to endorse the hysterical behaviours of controversial or plainly condemnable figures in recent and not-so-recent histories. The plays seemed less concerned with 'rationally' portraying the

event, interrogating its causes and judging its players than with ritualistically enchanting its interpretive possibilities. The plays also, or maybe therefore, *theatrically* challenged audiences to ask themselves radical questions about the nature of truth in relation to history's 'ontology', that is, history's sense of 'reality'; of 'being' real, by being able to know, access, and/or articulate the real. Questions like: what actually happened here? Did anything happen at all? If it did, how did it happen? In any case, how would *we* know? And what would be the cultural forms as well as the ultimate 'universal' 'purpose' of this knowing? As a result of such questions, whether enunciated or implied, the plays of miracle and wonder not only appeared epistemologically inconclusive, hence didactically ambiguous, but decisively irreverent. In the context of dramatising events that seemed to require, urgently, 'rational' critical politicising, such antics surely would, as they did, strike more than a few socially conscious observers as outrageously lacking in the artistic proprieties of responsible 'thought' (Flockemann 2002).

However, as shown by various arguments about the prospects of South African political performance in a hypothetical post-protest era (Jamal 2003b), and as Bailey's own evidently thoughtful and searching questions reinforce, the postcolonial crisis of representation in the 'progressive' political arts is predominantly methodological. Or to put it as a question: how can art/theatre's necessary but often repressed drive to provoke and stimulate through some form of public *transgression* be reconciled with its duty to equip, motivate and/or mobilise for political and/or/as intellectual *transformation*? It is an important question because without the achievement of such transgression, even the most emotive, urgent and relevant art is pretty much an ineffectual contender for engendering transformation. Admittedly a severe protocol to impose on the "practical epistemology" (Jamal 2003b) of political performance through the rationale of a somewhat abstract logical proposition (art + transgression = transformation), the idea is neither arbitrary nor new. It has been an almost incessant theoretical as well as experimental preoccupation throughout the intercultural history of modern performance: from the original Western movements of realist, anti-realist, absurdist, avant-garde, countercultural and postmodern performance; to our anti-colonial/anti-apartheid movements of protest, resistance, and now some postcolonial/post-apartheid performance. Indeed in many contexts,

aesthetic transgressions, and their transgressive aesthetics, are superseded by the transgression *from* aesthetics toward a ‘pure’ politics of performance that Baz Kershaw (1999) likes to call “radical”. Using the word mainly to describe the transgressive *and* transitional spaces of cultural expression *between* Western modernity and an irony-driven postmodernity, Kershaw also finds elements of the radical in the interventionist work of postcolonial practitioners such as Augusto Boal and Zakes Mda.

Exploiting this rich intercultural heritage, Bailey’s theatre was quite directly aimed at ‘pushing boundaries’, a recurring slogan in his interviews and writings. This aim was pursued at a time when the South African spirit of artistic transgression for social transformation had become a mixed blessing for liberal democracy. This spirit, no longer as physically ‘dangerous’ as when it served the politically repressed and morally unambiguous anti-apartheid imperative of human rights (Jamal 2003b), now ventures into far more *ethically* perilous (Jamal 2003b), sometimes legally treacherous (Rudakoff 2004) realms of *cultural* rights (Moyo 2004). Bailey’s practical epistemology of performance engaged with culturally fecund and politically potent tensions at the precarious intersection between disturbing/disturbed social reality, deep spirituality and frivolous enchantments.

Enchanted Histories

Ipi Zombi? satirically dramatised the horrifically violent and, if I may, socially anachronistic Kokstad (Eastern Cape) ‘witch’ hunts of 1995, during which a group of young superstitious vigilantes, inciting a larger hysterical mob, publicly and brutally executed three older women. Through a series of inconsistent and plainly absurd testimonies, the women had been accused of holding captive the souls of twelve dead schoolboys from the community, recently killed in a road accident, as sexually enslaved ‘zombies’. The angry youths, who were finally spared the most severe criminal justice action possible, also raided a mass Christian funeral for the deceased boys, gruesomely mutilating the bodies as a way to free the entrapped souls. While theatrically bringing out the uproariously tragic absurdity and gender-specific human atrocity

of this grim episode, the play perversely maintained the disturbing mythic reality of the zombies (among other creatures) who, in one of the play's later climaxes, emerged dramatically from a cupboard to perform an endearing musical showstopper with the little girl who had fatally testified against her grandmother. Furthermore, the play's sangomas on stage represented the ones in the 'true' story, who had ordered the body mutilations. *Ipi Zombi's* sangomas would perform on stage their own sacred rites of ancestral appeasement and demon exorcism in a scene that viscerally fortified and audaciously combined the profane poetics of dangerous superstition with the sacred performance rites of serious religion.

Sangomas were featured again in *iMumbo Jumbo*, which took the defiantly empathetic stance on 'pagan' practices, as well as the politically incorrect celebration of 'irrational' form, to new frontiers. The play-within-a-play epically chronicled the well-known adventures of Chief Nicholas Tilana Gcaleka: high-profile sangoma (played by an actor); estranged spiritual visionary; multiply convicted (forgery) 'conman'; power-hungry political charlatan (allegedly neither a real 'chief' nor entitled to the prestigious 'Gcaleka' name); "opportunistic businessman"; and gifted public charismatic in a longstanding feud with members of the Xhosa political elite (Bailey 2003: 96). In 1996 Gcaleka had returned from his extensively media-reported journey across Europe, with what he believed to be the beheaded skull of king Hintsa kaPhalo, the Xhosa monarch killed by British colonial troops in 1836. "Sponsored by Coca-Cola and South African Breweries", and pursued by a hysterical media in whose cynically ironic attention Gcaleka naively reveled, the gung-ho visionary's notorious enterprise was promptly undermined through DNA tests ordered by adversaries back home (93-4). The tests, which incontrovertibly refuted the skull's acclaimed authenticity, epitomised what may become an increasingly fierce, or at least very awkward, encounter between two dominant imperatives in South African politics²: (1) the constitutional protection *and empowerment* of local religions, cultural heritages and/as social orders; (2) the unavoidable exigency of *national* empowerment in the global-economic sphere through African, especially

² These sentiments were expressed in speeches delivered by national scientific leaders at the opening ceremony of the prestigious South African 'Sci-Fest' (Science Festival) in Grahamstown, which I attended in March 2007.

black, appropriations of the cosmopolitan sciences and technologies. Entertaining Gcaleka's rage over alleged conspiratorial alliances bent on victimising his people's knowledge-world, *iMumbo Jumbo* faithfully adhered, in narrative terms, to his crucial testimony about how the ancestral 'Hurricane Spirit' – histrionically personified on stage – had instructed his quest. Hence, while theatrically treating fascinated audiences to a grotesque spectacle of the Afro-kitsch, the play appeared to empathise with Gcaleka's rationale: the symbolic act of retrieving the skull was to help save the Xhosa nation from continued disastrous decline due to weaknesses initiated during colonial defeat.

The Prophet ritualistically enacted one of these historical blows, a morbid human tragedy of colossal scale. The 'cattle-killing' saga, as it is widely known, is the story of Nongqawuse (trans. 'The Liar'), the legendary child prophetess who predicted the return of the ancestors and the consequent deliverance of her people from dire social crisis under the pressures of colonial encroachment. Officially now regarded, by historians and Xhosa masses alike, as a poignant instance of strategically genocidal colonial manipulation, Nongqawuse's visions – spectacularly dramatised by Bailey's entranced actors as living ancestors at the theatrical event itself – also clarified that the land had to be 'purified' if salvation was to come. The historical result was a deeply divided society, the mass slaughter of four hundred thousand cattle, untilled land and the consequent death-by-starvation of one hundred thousand believers. The most theatrically extravagant and ritualistically emotive of the trilogy, the play's narrative structure and set design were both completely engulfed by the procedural and spatial forms of a traditional ceremony (below). Its dramatically eschatological climax showed the entranced subjects dancing to powerful drums, in the delirium of apocalyptic desire, toward their inevitable physical death – or was it spiritual birth? Naturally ambiguous about the metaphysical fate of the fallen, and made in 1999 – at the temporal edge of possibility –, this pre-millennial "drama of South Africa", as Loren Kruger's (1999) phrase goes, ended with the supernatural characters being among the last left standing.

Ritual: Enchanted Spaces

While unsettling the fragile political imagination of a national audience that was/is still trying to comprehend its difficult past, such provocative enchantments of history's ontology also evidenced an equal capacity to disturb the minds of audiences who were less familiar with the cultural, social and/or geopolitical contexts. For those audiences, the thematic focus on 'real' Xhosa histories, tradition and belief, the visceral demonstrations of authentic rituals, the visual emphasis on hybrid spectacle, and the grotesque use of ethnic kitsch, would all together reinforce an atmosphere of the sensationally exotic and otherworldly that was abrasively jolted at the moment of its inception (Flockemann). In the most funded and logistically elaborate performances at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival, this otherworldliness was reinforced through spatial arrangements that interacted directly with postcolonial (theoretical; ethnographical) notions of 'hybrid' space as also socially marginal, politically active and culturally 'interstitial' space. Here, historically and/or socially specific sites that were also civically eccentric, or simply at the marginalised frontiers of festival commerce, were fully adapted to simulate "rural grit" (Bailey 2003: 145), thereby fully engrossing audiences in the performance environment and forcefully implicating them in the borderline negotiation, or "traffic" (Flockemann), of images between First and Third Worlds. Abstaining from the more polished mainstream venues to which *Third World Bunfight's* high-profile shows (after initial fringe success) were entitled, Bailey opted for spaces like the "Recreation Hall" for *iMumbo Jumbo*, "in the coloured neighbourhood between the white suburbs and the township: an apt location for this drama of cultural collision" (Bailey: 144-5). The other off-centre site was the physically secluded "Power House", an old deserted power station seven kilometers outside Grahamstown, to which audiences without cars were driven in busses labelled with such names as the "Heebie-Jeebie shuttle" for *Ipi Zombi?* (Flockemann 2002: 280) and "The Cattle Truck" for *The Prophet* (Bailey 2003: 194).

Inside the buildings, the crucial conceptual-aesthetic tensions between theatre and ritual were physically realised through modes of textual/contextual interactivity that violated the

traditional 'fourth wall' of 'suspended' theatrical belief, which is often differentiated from the ritualistic processes of fabricating *intentionally* volatile boundaries for the purpose of 'liminal' transgression and/as transcendence and/as transformation. This fourth wall breach took five distinct but simultaneous forms: (1) the *spatial* form of circular or semicircular sets, adhering to the normal conventions of most traditional African ceremonies; (2) the *histrionic* form of actors addressing, moving among and, discursively or otherwise, 'casting' or 'framing' their audience in a narratively and/or thematically functional, if non-obstructive, role; (3) the *social* form of amateur performers from local communities featured as themselves and performing their real-life ritual dramas on stage; (4) the *spiritual* form of rituals that directly incorporated audiences into a process of collective healing, often led by real sangomas and hypothetically attended by real ancestral presences; (5) the abovementioned *civic* form. In order to maintain as much as possible the real-life atmosphere of ritual, the ceremonious ambience of these presentations was properly adorned with prayer, dance, song, drums, spirit possession, beer, bones, skulls, altars, livestock, burning herbs, candle light, giant shrines, clay pots, religious carvings, masks, mats, figurines, human sculptures, and in one of the most controversial performances (*iMumbo Jumbo* revival, 2003), the sacrificial slaughter of a live hen (Rudakoff 2004). Having burdened disappointed actors "who dreamed of velvet drapes and banks of multi-coloured stage lights" with the task of building the elaborate sets on earth floors, Bailey exposed well-mannered festival audiences to bales of straw where they sat "with all that incendiary potential around them", unaware, in one instance, of a renegade snake hiding in the pile (Bailey 2003: 145). Through the intensity of worship, the scattered energies of epic spectacle and a normally "operatic" (Flockemann 2002: 277) sense of space were focused into the intimate act of mediating the healing spirit of ritual to the entire spontaneous 'community' of the theatrical event (Bailey; Flockemann). The stylistic conflation of ritual and theatre thus became a means of engendering a sphere of dramatic inter-activity that was temporally and functionally indistinct from the real-life viewing and/or performing contexts from which the techniques had been lifted. That is to say, the life and work of the sangomas was not merely put 'on display' as an illustrative portrait of what happens elsewhere: it was actually being lived and done in that place. The result was the

culturally authenticating effect of post-theatrical performance, that is, performance *as* event, rather than merely (though not to the exclusion of) a creative simulation of the event, or a critically driven ‘anti-theatrical’ response to simulation.

Owing much to this air of ritualistic authenticity, then, the visual spectacles of colliding worlds on one hybrid, multicultural stage also had the “tricky” corollary effect of enticing the panoptic (i.e. ‘all-seeing’) gaze of the curious cultural tourist with a “snapshot” view of the foreign (Flockemann 2002: 279-81). Within this alien view, clay-smeared black bodies, colourfully ornate human fetishes, and the exposed chests of women, men and prepubescent children adhering to traditional protocols of ceremonial ‘decency’, were implicitly (and problematically) eroticised. Furthermore, these sensuous spectacles of African corporeality brought to life a variety of sensational characters: personified ancestors, charismatic deities, perverted devils, menacing Zombies, and grotesquely cross-dressing race, gender, and class hybrids. The complete human and cultural spectacle of the stage would thus be “located as both ‘African’ and hence ‘tribal’ or chaotic, in relation to the West” (Flockemann 2002: 279) so that it was “having to propound its “Africanness” as the embodiment of the continent’s possibilities for modernity” (Rasool and Witz, quoted in Flockemann 2002: 279). With its additional emphasis on the authentic reproduction of sacred rites from an existing order of identity and/as belief whose communities are largely underprivileged, such a spectacle also positioned the viewer through a penetrating gaze of documentary realism that seemed to invite some resulting accusations of cultural intrusion, objectification, exploitation and even debasement (279). However, such a gaze was also constantly subverted through a number of theatrical mechanisms that challenged the implicit ‘rationality’, or rather, *rationalism* that is the necessary core of any process of ‘realistic’ depiction and ‘objective’ viewing (279).

Hybridity: Textual Transgressions

One of these mechanisms was an ironically self-conscious and (therefore) satirical play on “colonial mimicry”, which directly confronted and disturbed the “fixed” reality of politically

alienating images of African life and cultures (Flockemann 2002: 279). Here, various textual-performative ‘signifiers’, as Saussure would have it, say, ‘African dance’, were visually pastiched and parodied through elements of theatrical surprise (Flockemann 2002: 279), so as to refute the truthful authenticity, that is, the ‘concrete’ ‘reality’ of the ‘signified’, in this case, ‘Africa’ (Flockemann 2002: 279; Jamal 2003a/b). The result was an effect in which the possible spiritual, aesthetic and political transformations of ritual and hybrid performance were paralleled and contrasted, if problematically, with an *epistemological* transformation from performance to meta-performance. In other words, performance became about the perform-ability of the performative act, and/or the represent-ability of the representative act. In even more direct, if simplistic, terms: the ‘what’ of performance (themes; subject matter) was didactically conflated with its ‘how’ (method/mechanics). This caused, if I may, an intellectual ‘coitus interruptus’ during the intersubjective textual intercourse where seeds of meaning are transferred from authoritative producer to passive consumer. In an ironic moment of postmodern play, meta-performance highlighted the theatrical frame versus the ritualistic sincerity, thus emphasising the ‘constructed’ nature of performance. Consequently, it invited a form of critical reflexivity on the viewers’ part similar to, but not identical with, Brechtian ‘distancing’ (Flockemann 2002: 285). Its privileging of theatre’s representational actions over social meanings possibly had the corollary effect of disturbing some still widely held general assumptions about the relative meanings of art, activism and artifice, which are (respectively): aesthetic authority; ethical transparency; political neutrality. Moreover, the physical and mental challenge experienced by the performers was extended to audiences in less than comfortable surroundings, their pure enjoyment of the exotic constantly interrupted. Much of this interruption was executed by brusquely confrontational characters and/or real personalities who defended their own cultural beliefs and practices against the alienating assumptions that the audience were taken to represent. Such characters and personalities were also capable of asserting their symbolic and narrative significance, often overtly ‘archetypal’ in the Jungian sense, through highly self-conscious exchanges of meaning wherein characters were positioned as textual producers rather than merely ‘manifestations’ of an invisible textual authority (the playwright). Removed from the safe zones of cultural consumption to which

they were accustomed, audiences were thus made into conscious and active participants in their own theatrical *and* ritualistic ‘subjection’.

In this way, Bailey’s theatre resonated profoundly with, and was partly influenced by, other methodologies of theatrical communion that are academically well known but in fact have borrowed from grass-roots concepts of cultural and/as political realisation. One of these is Eugenio Barba’s ‘third theatre’ (Flockemann 2002), in which performance shifts emphasis from the transmission of audiovisual text to the creation of a network of ‘relationships’ (Flockemann’s interpretation). In Barba’s traveling theatre experiments, a given staging in foreign territory would organically result in the intercultural exchange of performance texts with locals, creating cultural dialog and greater communicative potential. Considerably more radical than this is Boal’s (1979) ‘theatre of the oppressed’, where spectators become ‘spect-actors’, physically and discursively intervening with the action on stage, directly to produce their own sociopolitically efficacious results. Before this, the material is developed through research into the community’s specific issues using elements of Paulo Freire’s (1970) grass-roots ‘pedagogy’ which seeks to re\create knowledge ‘from the bottom up’ in political and/as methodological opposition to the ‘banking’ methods of an authoritarian education. This methodology is reflected in Zakes Mda’s (1993) politically demanding ‘conscientisation’ theatre, which also appropriates, whereby the ‘issues’ tackled and the performance epistemology deployed come from ‘the people’ themselves, in their particular context, and through their particular practices. It must be noted though, that the philosophy behind Mda’s work here is also diachronically linked to his own sizeable contributions to theatre per se during apartheid, which involved the strategically crucial methodological shift from Athol Fugard’s (among others) “protest” style toward the radically mobilising force of “resistance” theatre (Mda, interviewed in Solberg 1999). While “protest” was a plaintive and confrontational, sometimes accusingly indignant theatrical vocality mainly addressed to white suburban audiences, the latter involved, in Mda’s influential work, an ironic, hard-hitting, sometimes surreal and often absurdly eschatological theatre based in the actual townships.

While not as drastic as some of these perspectives in terms of mobilising performance for a methodologically precise political activism, there are parallels between Bailey's work and that of the abovementioned practitioners. Consciously part of a diachronic emergence of South African *cultural* activism, the plays' physical function of immersing the audience, through the latter's own participation, in a completely otherworldly zone of cultural experience also became emotive and intellectual, so that audiences and/as performers were metaphysically 'transported' – a word Bailey (2003) uses repeatedly – to alternative *psychic* spheres of enchantment *and* disturbance. Maintaining a continuous and productive emotive-aesthetic tension between ritual and theatre, performance and meta-performance, this 'liminal' drama of South Africa was a postcolonial hybrid whose enactments realised the postmodern rite of passage between truth and/as representation. Within this passage, and because of it, precarious imbalances of binary thinking were upset, exposing the furtive national games of institutionalised power, with their abjected subtext of inequality, which will always underlie the more public and 'official' agendas of 'truth' (Jamal 2003b). This passage simultaneously, if jarringly, bridged functional differences, as well as conceptual gaps, between 'sincere' performance and entertaining spectacle; 'true' history/memory and imagined 'constructs'; 'reason' and 'unreason'; cultural sacred and artistic profane (Bailey 2003; Flockemann 2002; Jamal 2003a/b; Matshikiza 2003; Rudakoff 2004). But also: between performer and spectator, self and other, local and foreign, 'high art' and popular/grass-roots culture, 'centre' and 'margin', aesthetic 'purity' and methodological impurity (Bailey 2003; Flockemann 2002; Jamal 2003a/b; Matshikiza 2003; Rudakoff 2004).

Body Politic

Indeed the very 'conceptual' and 'functional' aspects of theatre making were conflated, so that in training/rehearsing the actors of *Third World Bunfight*, ritual communion with sangomas became a means of developing 'characterisation' during taxing sessions of spiritual intensity (Bailey 2003: 21-3). Furthermore, Bailey's own gruelling experiments with entranced actors, anticipating the plays' later public contentions with controversy among resident dramaturges,

appropriated African forms of authentic spirit possession to artistic ends, sometimes with traumatic results (Bailey 2003: 21-2; 198). These were combined with avant-garde trance theories and techniques appropriated from practitioners like Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski and Peter Brook (Flockemann 2002: 284), who have delved confrontationally into the complexly paradoxical ‘libidinal economy’, as psychoanalysts would say, of the sensational Body: violent and vulnerable; erotic and ethereal; chthonic and theatrically grotesque. However, while these European practitioners would “often ‘re-invent’ the ‘primitive’ or the [socio-historic; cultural] ‘other’ in response to the scientific ethos of modernity”, Bailey’s experiments aimed to stimulate, challenge, transform and *empower* the expression of “viable heritages that are part of an existing performance continuum” (Flockemann 2002: 284-5). Drawing primarily upon their own local resources, Bailey’s theatre attempted to give these heritages a renewed and/but historically dynamic ‘voice’ whose agency in cultural politics necessarily collapsed the very problematic dichotomies of civilised mind versus ‘savage’ imaginary, exterior surface (discursive; corporeal) versus explosive subconscious (individual; collective) (Bailey 2003: 22-3).

An artistic and sociological experiment with “states of hysteria” (Bailey, quoted in Flockemann 2002: 276), the plays of miracle and wonder were psychoanalytically aimed at catalysing healing processes for a historically traumatised and wounded post-apartheid multicultural society, through the Artaudian concept of the ‘plague’ (Bailey 2003: 9). In contrasting and contentious simultaneity with religious ritual, this involved bringing out the ‘grotesque’ (Bailey 2003; Flockemann 2002) elements of social and/as psychic reality, intentionally reinforced by the “crude” (Bailey, quoted in Flockemann 2002: 275) aesthetic of rural imagery. Combining their theatrical expertise with lessons learnt from sangomas during the rehearsal period, the actors of *Third World Bunfight* could induce their own authentic trance states on stage, bridging the gap between acting and worship; sacred performance and profane display. Their racially, culturally, geopolitically and sexually naturalised bodies not only inhabited the tensions and contradictions of postcolonial passage, but also became the visible sites where these forces would manifest (Moyo 2004). The grotesque performance (and

meta-performance) of African kitsch thus became a way of highlighting and challenging some prevalent operations in much mainstream postapartheid theatre culture, which are part of its sociopolitically grotesque historical irony. Such operations include the practice of casting performers in racially and sexually defined roles, due to the requirements of story contexts, so that their commoditised corporeality is not politically transgressive or spiritually transcendent. Refusing to politicise the corporeal and/as human historicity of an often economically exploited histrionic labour force, such a practice therefore ends up reproducing old forms of racial and sexual exploitation. The African bodies in the plays of miracle and wonder were re-politicised in a way that connected this “post-protest” theatre (Jamal 2003b) and its postmodern idioms with preceding anti-racist performance paradigms.

Impact/Evaluation

Diverse responses from general audiences and public or/as scholarly critics alike ranged from bedazzled enchantment to curious bewilderment, and from determined apathy to polemical outrage (Bailey 2003; Flockemann 2002; Rudakoff 2004). The plays certainly got the hysterical response Bailey had hoped for, with high public visibility, full-house shows, funding, tours and critics’ lauding on one side, and continued accusations of propagating “stereotypes” on the other (Flockemann 2002). Such accusations would be the main rationale for at times fierce opposition to Bailey’s experiments, provoking equally fervent counter criticisms on his part and finally resulting in his total abandonment, for now, of the ritualistic oeuvre (Bailey 2003: 198). Hence, while representing and recreating spaces of confrontation on stage, the theatre itself *became* a “space of confrontation” where methodological barriers were transgressed, bringing to the discursive fore questions about the political and cultural ethics of artistic entitlement and responsibility (Moyo 2004). Such questions would focus on the representation as well as the *use* of African ‘culture’ (Flockemann 2002: 278) as a means with which to “cross the cultural divide” (Rudakoff 2004), especially when undertaken by (white) artists whose identities had been barred claim to an authentic ‘Africanness’ or ‘Africanity’ through the conservative intervention of self-imposed authorities (Bailey 2003;

Flockemann 2002; Jamal 2003a; Moyo 2004; Rudakoff 2004). The most fervent champions of such authority, both black (Bailey 2003; Matshikiza 2003) and white (Flockemann 2002; Rudakoff 2004) intellectuals, were only further provoked, rather than embarrassed, by the awkward fact of Bailey's skin color. 'Awkward' because, as I (2004) have previously argued, Bailey's situation here confronted one with the difficult question of *identity as cultural ownership*. The artist's class-race background had exposed him to unofficial forms of artistic censorship in a postapartheid multicultural democracy. This situation, explored further in Chapter 2, elucidated black ideology's basic internal contradiction as the dominant force in a postcolonial democracy. Bailey's whiteness, and the contradiction it invoked, had been abjected to the disavowed margin of political entitlement in a similar way to how dark-skinned minorities in Western countries experience their white-dominated democracies. William Du Bois' famous problem of the 'colour line' had revealed itself once again, keeping a stiff grip on its 'designated' century right to the latter's very end with dangerous aspirations for future continuity. However, the conscious desire to challenge the racial paradigm being one of his personal motivations for creating *Third World Bunfight* (Bailey: 10), Bailey's tactics "which unsettle already fragile, contested and even familiar realities" (Flockemann 2002: 275) had the corollary effect of emasculating the residual racism of yesteryears that forms a subtle layer beneath the surface of 'liberal' consciousness (Jamal 2003a).

The crisis of representation in the plays of miracle and wonder also manifested as a tension of internal contradictions underlying the very *imperative* of 'representation' in South African post-apartheid cultural politics. Multicultural in ideological orientation, this imperative has two mutually contingent goals. The first is to optimise the corporeal, symbolic and/as audiovisual performativity of political renewal, within national borders, that Kruger (more below) calls 'theatrical nationhood'. The second is to maximise this same performativity on a global stage, in order to 'pitch' the nation's cosmopolitan worth within the privileged political economy of multicultural democracy. In both cases, the contradiction arises at the intersection between politics, economics, 'culture' and representation. Here, the South African pitch of multicultural harmony falls short of the glory of democracy, as cultures become

commoditised, while their sanitised and (therefore) marketable representations not only stray from, but do nothing to rectify, the realities of economic impoverishment and political marginalisation facing the original agents of said cultures, whose exploited assets bring home no returns but for a privileged few. However, it would be a mistake to place Brett Bailey's work in this category of cultural exploitation. Rather, the plays of miracle and wonder made consciously radical and contentious critiques about the national and cosmopolitan power games of cultural value, identity, entitlement, authenticity and responsibility.

Furthermore, such critiques were not arbitrarily propounded personal opinions on South African politics merely seeking authoritative (or authoritarian) voice through art. A spiritual journey of self-discovery and self-realisation through art and/as ritual, Bailey's theatre emerged organically through both formal research endeavors and informal cultural experiences. This process began with a romantic hitchhiker's hunt for thrilling tribal adventures to take him "away from my childhood... of sheltered education and apartheid conditioning; all that marshmallow-soft whiteness" (Bailey 2003: 12), matured through intimate involvements and an increasingly fervent identification with the complete worldview of the 'other', and culminated with life-changing revelations, both liberating and painful (Bailey; Moyo). It involved: extensive travel, writing, interviews, library sessions, attending shows, observing art, auditions, drama workshops, rehearsals, spiritual visions, studying ritual under sangomas' tutorship, manual labour, political risk-taking, sharing a beer with someone, and experiencing ordinary life with the living, poor descendants of Xhosa ancestry, for whom the reality of the African spirit is that final frontier of existence which the destructive legacies of colonialism and apartheid failed to eradicate. Hence, the stage was not the only drama context in which the theatrical conflation of ritual and hybrid performance illustrated the processes informing and challenging Xhosa/black postcolonial identity. The theatre itself had emerged from these processes, and remained bound with them in all its final representations. Subsequent to the 'glamorous' festival appearances, the travelling shows adapted creatively and resourcefully to new situations and environments: from entering unknown zones in the rural and high-density urban Eastern Cape, where they inhabited community halls and outdoor

forums; to becoming alienated spectacles on the proscenium stages of sanitised playhouses in elite metropolitan districts (Bailey 2003). The theatrical experience not only created, but also encountered as well as challenged forms of social, cultural and/as environmental ‘otherness’, interacting directly with emergent conceptualities of social and/as cultural space that, as Homi K. Bhabha (1994) seminally asserted, are among the definitive ‘conditions’ of postcolonial hybridity. As part of a sustained though frequently subverted dynamism between text and context, the linguistically diverse but predominantly English versions were translated for Xhosa-speaking audiences met on tours that practically realised *Third World Bunfight*’s “quest for a theatre accessible to people right across the social spectrum of this land (from the highbrows who pay R50 for a ticket to those who scurry to their shacks to find 50c)” (Bailey 2003: 10). The dream of bringing such groups together in ritualistic communion always at the horizon (Bailey 2003: 82), the plays of miracle and wonder not only thematically alluded to and discursively (if implicitly) impacted on the then hyper-topical national issues of political reconciliation, spiritual harmonisation and (multi)cultural ‘renaissance’, but quite literally *engendered the space for*, as well as challenged the modalities of, such processes.

Chapter 2: Bailey and Africa: Theatre in Discursive Context

This chapter considers the impact of Brett Bailey's aesthetic and its vital processes and thoughts on certain notions of an African 'selfhood' that have been integral to the dominant discourses of anticolonial thought, which in turn are founding discourses for contemporary Afrocentric ideology. I examine how the abovementioned modes of representation in Bailey's theatre, while celebrating the black African body politic and its myriad cultural objects, also serve to challenge and disturb the core assumptions of what can be called nativist aesthetics through a symbolically and phenomenologically intricate game involving both the historic ontology and the contemporary cultural iconography of 'African' race and place. Simultaneously, or consequently, Bailey's theatre reconstitutes the epistemological horizons that have previously narrativised the psycho-cultural body of African identity as an exclusive and self-limiting autochthonic progression from geographical particularity. Performed within/through the 'liminal' spaces of hybrid culture wherein the lived, transformative actions of ritual entangle with, or blur against, the contrived theatrics of 'showbiz', these ironic and idealistic, frivolous yet fervent social dramas effectively re-invent subjectivity from what has historically been understood as 'native' conscience or/as consciousness to a 'post-native', or maybe even, "post-African" (Ekpo 1995) stage. At any rate, they invigorate debates that may lead to inspiring realisations about what makes performance 'postcolonial'. Hence, while the rich textuality and thematic complexity of the plays of miracle and wonder is still their most outstanding attribute (Flockemann 2002; Jamal 2003a/b), their specific relevance to contentions of race, culture and ideology, I argue, constitute this groundbreaking oeuvre's most radical and rousing aspect.

Controversy

In fact, these contentions were already at the forefront of public debates and, later, scholarly discourse around Bailey's work, as Miki Flockemann's extensive survey has shown (2002: 275-84). As highly experimental performances dealing with sensitive issues around black

African history, culture and identity politics within the Xhosa social, religious and mythical contexts, Bailey's morally and ideologically ambiguous works quickly generated critical concern about the political ethics of artistic entitlement and responsibility. As a white, male, middleclass, university-educated artist-intellectual from Cape Town suburbia, working with underprivileged black communities and employing mostly township actors, Bailey was accused of exploiting the sincerity of black cultural heritage and that of its proletarian subjects by manipulating the latter's material poverty in order to profane, trivialise and/or commoditise their sacrosanct beliefs and rituals. Furthermore, his concurrent use of existing popular folklores that are normally considered 'irrational', not to mention dangerous, was criticised for its ostensible sincerity in helping to explain tragic events or bitter scandals taken from real-life Xhosa histories and recent pasts. Seen as a perverse mystification of black people's culture as well as of their grisly empirical realities, on the one hand, and an exploitative manipulation of strangers' ignorance about the exotic and the otherworldly, on the other, Bailey's antics, which Flockemann promptly calls "shock aesthetics", were compounded by a thematics that is aptly summed up by Bailey's own designation, "worlds in collision" (Flockemann 2002: 275). Infatuated with the historic scenario of the so-called clash-of-civilisations, this thematics typically found its aesthetic expression through provocatively stylised montages of disparate and/or contending religious, cultural, political and socio-environmental iconographies (275-9). It was central, both in shaping the form and in determining the public impact of an aesthetic that "symbolically and literally intrudes onto culturally sacred ground", because:

[The plays] re-enact historical events in ways that foreground the constructedness of cultural and historical memory. The emphasis seems to be less on what this kind of theatre 'means' than on what it 'puts together', often incongruously, but at a time when there is a public obligation to uncover the truth about South Africa's past and achieve some attempt at reconciliation, or simply closure, such works which unsettle already fragile, contested and even familiar realities, are bound to raise questions. This, in turn, invites discussion of current developments in South African theatre which extends to a broader debate on the relationships between performance and the processes of democratisation and decolonisation in the context of our often traumatic emergence from the confines of isolation into the spotlight of globalisation. (Flockemann 2002: 275-6)

Such a typically postcolonial concern with “democratisation and decolonisation in the... spotlight of globalisation” has, in fact, led an equal number of Bailey’s critics to laud and sanction his efforts at pioneering new forms of grass-roots cultural activism based on intercultural hybridist aesthetics, which may enrich and transform South Africa’s purportedly threadbare and clichéd political theatre and performance practices. Some of these commentators, however, still expressed some reservations regarding the possible ethical ramifications of this particular method and context of intellectual challenge or innovation, even as they welcomed the results. Still others negatively criticised ostensibly more technical aspects of theatrical form, suggesting product-orientated evaluations. But for Flockemann:

The very passion and diversity of responses to Bailey’s works suggests that these provide fertile ground for much-needed debate on South African cultural politics... (Flockemann 2002: 277)

So that:

The most interesting reviews... are those that attempt to describe what ‘kind’ of theatre it is and how it relates to some of the prevailing local, international, and traditional theatre trends. They note amongst other features its operative use of physical spectacle, myth and African ritual, its emphasis on design and theatrical tableaux; it has also been welcomed by some as an example of ‘new’ (and indigenous) South African theatre. (277)

Thus Flockemann impels critical attention beyond the primacy of value judgment toward the more fundamental, but not unrelated, problem of definition. This is not merely a question of genre placements or of determining the performance epistemology per se, which, as Flockemann discovers and as Bailey’s own comments (Flockemann 2002: 278; 284; Bailey 1998; Bailey 2003) reinforce, would be a misleading, if feasible, undertaking. The real objective here is to discern what exactly is ‘new’ about this theatre, given South African culture’s political-aesthetic heritage, which may in turn, not so much explain as *justify* the impact that Bailey’s work has had on public and scholarly sensibilities alike. The very relevance of Bailey’s oeuvre is precisely what necessitates this justification. Why? Because there are other accomplished, novel and challenging texts produced by both black and white

artists exploring similar or identical themes, concepts and/or sources (Flockemann 2002: 276-8; Flockemann 2001), so that the considerable visibility of *Third World Bunfight* may appear to contradict their seeming conformity to prevailing trends and concerns. Furthermore, while Flockemann's analysis of such trends and concerns includes both visual and, more emphatically, literary texts – as part of her “relational” reading strategy outlined elsewhere (Flockemann 2001) – she recognises that certain abovementioned key methodological elements in Bailey's theatre are also part of “the current preoccupation with the performativity of knowledges, meanings and identities” (Flockemann 2002: 276). For the sake of ‘user-friendliness’, these methodological elements can be provisionally systematised into four main, artificial categories: (1) the chiefly *aesthetic* concern with spectacle, montage, hybridity and inter-textuality; (2) the *spiritual* focus on religion, ancestry and collective healing or divination through ritual; (3) the *political* inquiry into the meanings of history, identity, ‘culture’, decolonisation and reconciliation; (4) a particular *psychological* interest in the subconscious processes of memory, myth, trauma and subjectivity, with an emphasis on “an extremely topical grotesque” that is both theatrical and social (Flockemann 2002: 283). As Flockemann's broad survey goes on to show, these concerns are already part of a local and/or international discourse that precedes and exceeds, perhaps even uncannily prefigures, the influence of *Third World Bunfight*. It can also be said, however, that perhaps the most definite factor rendering the discursive prominence of *Third World Bunfight* ‘unexpected’ is Bailey's own apparent distance from institutionally ‘mainstream’ forms of creative ambition, in large part due to his curiosity about the cultures, identities, beliefs and performance practices of ‘the margin’. It is a curiosity so fervent and ‘dramatic’ in its own right that:

On one level it might seem incongruous that Bailey's oeuvre has elicited such intense debate: as one critic puts it rather grudgingly, ‘[e]verything about Brett Bailey shrieks didgeridoo-blowing, teepee-weekending white boy who's managed to coil his tongue around a Xhosa click and thinks he's in heaven’. In fact, she admits, there is something ‘so flea-market fey’ and ‘Zen gardenerish’ about his appearance that it is hard to reconcile this with the fact that ‘he looks set to being a contender to transform South African theatre's fortunes’.... (Flockemann 2002: 277-8)

Yet, it is precisely this somewhat comical association with banal 'New Age' forms of ethno-cultural fetishism for privileged modernity's politically isolated, (because) epistemologically marginalised and economically disadvantaged 'others' that has caused such notable ethical disquiet about Bailey's work. The intellectual erudition that is so evident in the aesthetic reflexivity and critical complexity of Bailey's art seems only to fortify rather than deflect such association. For Flockemann, this spiralling disputation links back to the abovementioned issues with regard to Bailey's use of folkloric context in narrating historic and contemporary tragedies or scandals that are part of culturally protected psychic territory. However, the immediate problems of irreverence and of allegedly obscuring social 'realities' can be more fundamentally (and theoretically) linked to that familiar zone of contention we understand as *postmodern desire*, that is, a desire for the 'irrational', the indeterminate, the opaque and inconclusive. It constitutes in this case a 'zone of contention' because, in espousing these things, postmodern desire contravenes the cerebral excesses of a purportedly truthful and transparent secular rationalism that has been the dominant mode of thought within the 'socialist' component of African anticolonial/anti-apartheid and, to some extent, postcolonial/post-apartheid politics. Moreover, through this contravention, postmodern desire may expose the cultural-political paradox that lies at the heart of African secular rationalism: the paradox of its *Western* origins (Ekpo 1995).

Philosophically founded during the European Enlightenment, then later appropriated and politically transformed by Afrocentric thought for anticolonial expediency, Western secular rationalism has historically pitted itself against the supposedly 'irrational' Otherness of non-Western, ethno-traditional cultures, thus justifying the intellectual violence of its 'civilising mission'. It also effectively ensured the continued political marginalisation of these cultures in postcolonial states on 'epistemological' rather than 'ideological' grounds. How was this achieved? Or to ask the question differently, why was it possible to achieve this? It was possible because, despite its own pretensions to the contrary, the very 'Logos' of Western secular rationalism was metaphysically founded on a Manichaean dialectic, which was symbolically epitomised by the archetypal 'contact' scenario between Christian-colonial

reason and pagan ‘primitive’ mystique, but has in contemporary times concocted a more ‘scientific’ (not to mention diplomatic) vocabulary with which to pose the same threat against the human societies of ‘historically’ outdated cultures. I have put the word ‘historically’ here in quotation marks, rather than ‘outdated’, because at issue here is not simply to dispute or defensively question the assumption that these cultures are ‘outdated’, but more crucially to challenge the political authority implicit in that assumption, an authority that, in order to assume that certain cultures are ‘historically’ outdated, necessarily imposes its own historical teleology. Not only is this ethically problematic, it is epistemologically unsound, as that imposed historical teleology was not self-evident, but simultaneously created and legitimated itself *through* (rather than before) the polemical action of de-legitimizing the teleological authority of Others. It is out of the resistance to this authority that postmodern desire, both as theory and as a cultural practice exemplified in the theatre of Brett Bailey³, has emerged.

Postmodern desire disturbs the factitious dichotomy dividing scientific reason and its mystical-magical Others by showing that the former is just as imbued with supposedly illusory practices and concepts of reality; that science and social objectivity are also magical fetishes, which in the final analysis cannot escape their own temporality. In performance, this translates to an ontological blurring of distinctions between ‘real’ narrative and ‘unreal’ narrative; knowledge and myth; history and fable; transparent ‘truth’ and opaque ‘representations’. This blurring may account for the political tension caused by an otherwise banal aesthetic tension between theatre and ritual, acting and trance, critical conscience and corporeal-sensory overload. Overwhelming perception, such tension clearly scandalises a South African post-apartheid, post-protest theatre tradition whose backdrop is the historic situation in which the all-embracing imperatives of social struggle have almost exclusively accommodated the ‘transparent’, strategic action of responsible rationalism. For now the very marginality that sought liberation through the political representation of such rationalism seems ambivalent

³ No doubt, Bailey has had (or given himself) a postmodern/postmodernist education, as indicated by the style, layout and theoretical content of his book (2003) – not to mention the publication’s epigraph which revealingly quotes Michel Foucault in anticipation of eclectic citations thenceforward, including such postmodern voices of cultural innovation as Ben Okri and Richard Schechner.

toward, if not totally opposed to, its own epistemological delineation through the language of pragmatic reason; an intolerable discomfort. Hence:

[...]one of the common criticisms of Bailey's work is that in the emphasis on visceral spectacle and ritual he is 'anti-thought'; the kind of spectacle presented obscures the real forces at play, mystifying what are in fact traumatic historical events. After all the 'myth and mystery and smoke 'n mirrors storytelling' what are we left with, [asks one critic], apart from images that keep bubbling to the surface of our consciousness? (Flockemann 2002: 284)

Indeed, what are we left with? And what are these "images that keep bubbling to the surface of our consciousness"? For Flockemann, one answer may address both questions: what we are left with is the postmodern 'traffic' of images of Africa and Africanness, shared and contested between First and Third worlds. Her reprise of the word 'traffic' is significant for a number of reasons. (1) It suggests Bailey's use of these images as *animated signifiers* rather than stable signifieds upon which transparent meaning and 'rational' or irrational prejudices can be 'fixed'. (2) It indicates an attempt, in Bailey's theatre, to highlight the infinite *contestability* of these images. (3) It understands the diverse meaning-making processes attached to these images and to their representation in Bailey's theatre as part of a continuous negotiation of power that may involve various forms of trickery and double-dealing across cultures. (4) It brings attention to the empowering potential of Bailey's theatre, which provides, or rather, *engenders* an alternative reading space, that is, a mentally and sometimes physically secluded area in which audiences as readers may confront and contest the meanings attached to visual objects that bombard their consciousnesses on a daily basis through mass media, general 'knowledge' and other mechanisms, fixing old prejudices into the minds of 'new' Africans.

This last point also relates, in anthropological terms, to ritual and theatre's 'liminal' capacity, an idea that has been thoroughly explored by some of Bailey's avant-garde influences, including Grotowski, Brook and Artaud (Flockemann 2002: 284). As Flockemann notes, however, Bailey has also specifically distanced himself from the Western modernist avant-garde, whose proponents only speculate and fetishise the primitive otherness of foreign cultures but do not escape their own scientific paradigm (284). In addition, he has articulated

an explicit ideology of African cultural and political renewal through mainly local performance practices sourced, in part, from traditional heritages that seek full legitimation through postmodern desire. Thus Flockemann looks at other ways of rationalising Bailey's theatre beyond his influences, such as Eugenio Barba's "third theatre", which focuses on "relationships", and Awam Ampka's ideas on the "subjectivity" of postcolonial performance (284-5). Having also situated her own experience of viewing the plays, she concludes that:

Despite the criticism that Bailey's work is 'anti-thought', the emphasis on African spirit possession and ritual in his work can be read as effectively placing those generally marginalised realities at the centre in a way that makes it difficult for the spectator to maintain the position of cultural voyeur because of the affective force of the spectacle (Flockemann 2002: 285).

This "affective force of spectacle" is crucial to understanding how postmodern desire in Bailey's theatre engendered a controversial space for the articulation of new concepts of African self-hood that transcend native space. By "placing those generally marginalised realities at the centre in a way that makes it difficult for the spectator to maintain the position of cultural voyeur", Bailey collapsed the binary of self and other and immersed audiences in the marginalised reality of the-other-who-has-become-one-with-the-self. As I explained in the introduction to this dissertation, the principle of spatial separation, whether physical or conceptual, is the precondition for performance, as well as alterity, thus characterising the conceptual link between performance and alterity. By contravening this principle of separation, even conceptually, Bailey, as detailed in Chapter 1, disturbed both the ontology of performance (theatre/ritual enactment became actual communication with ancestors) and the epistemology of alterity. In the latter case, the 'other' on stage become unclassifiable as such, thus synonymous with the 'self', and transcending particularity to become universal, as well as central, reinforced by physical and metaphysical centrality on stage. This universality and centrality makes the marginal alterity that is the precondition of nativist psychontology impossible to sustain. The thrust of Bailey's plays, then, can be described as, in part, a dynamic (and not always comfortable) dialogue between aesthetic Afrocentrism – which respects indigenous world views – and postmodern desire.

I would now like to delve deeper into this problem of African alterity versus postmodern epistemology, but first, let me take a moment to reify discursively the conceptual links between theatre, alterity and the scandal of postmodern desire. Of concern here is how in Bailey's theatre the space-engendering principle of visceral immediacy links directly to the scandalous principle of postmodern ontological indeterminacy.

Reviewing Bailey's book, *The Plays of Miracle and Wonder*, for the *South African Theatre Journal*, Christopher Warnes (2004) describes:

[...]a beautiful book that includes a lavish collection of photographs and posters, intriguing drawings and sketches by Bailey, eloquent essays, journal extracts, quotes from philosophers, cast members, historians, public figures, novelists – indeed everyone from Aristophanes to Okri" (Warnes 2004: 287).

There are also full scripts of all three plays, but, concerned about the "scant dialogue", impoverished character development and "sketchy" narrative structure, Warnes finds these "the least interesting feature of the book" (287). Comparing Bailey's script for *Ipi Zombi* with Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Warnes makes his point. While both plays deal with witch hunts and violent hysteria, only the literary giant's classic "lives on the page" (287). In this regard, however, it is not just the scriptwriting issues that Warnes is intrigued by:

The central paradox of this collection is that the harder it tries, through photographs, performance histories, diagrams and so on, to capture the plays' spirit, the more it reminds us that this 'hectic primal energy' (p.84) lives in performance, and not in any publishing project. To be sure, all works of drama suffer from being entombed in the pages of books, but in the case of plays that deliberately and self-consciously aspire to the condition of ritual, the loss is all the more noticeable. (Warnes 2004: 287)

Moreover, this judgement is "unfair", since for Bailey "the difference is the point", and instead Warnes finds problems with Bailey's publication that go "beyond the obvious loss of performative context" (288). Looking at Bailey's ratiocinations about the critical contentions surrounding the artist's works, Warnes is "not sure" that he finds Bailey's answers to these

contentions “very satisfying” (288). As mentioned above, Bailey has been accused of perverting African (Xhosa) autochthonic tradition, mythology and worldview in the public eye by radically espousing their ideologically unacceptable aspects in his plays. Throughout the book, Bailey is steadfast in his convictions, defending his theatre’s satirical assaults on the competing worldview of African scientific modernity, and thus irritating Warnes with such rejection of “the potential contribution of science to African culture” (289).

Despite Bailey’s “anti-rational” stance against the “cerebral” thinking of his harshest critics, however, Warnes feels that Bailey’s dense “essays and journal extracts lend themselves to... dispassionate analysis that could not be anything but cerebral” (288-9). This contradiction, which Warnes clearly sees as also hypocritical, has the effect of undermining, first the “credibility”, then the “relevance”, of Bailey’s Afro-spiritual polemic against scientific rationalism (289). This, in turn, leaves Bailey too open even to the “banal” accusations of “exoticism” – of seeking the “irrational” for its own postmodern sake and thus of being disingenuous in his identification with African traditions, which ultimately serve to “appease his own very Western nostalgia for enchantment” (288). Hence, in his own conclusion on the matter, Warnes sees no reason to support what he sees as weak defences, on Bailey’s part, against such accusations. While Warnes appreciates the “invigorating contribution to South African drama” which “is sorely needed”, he resents (and suspects) Bailey’s rejection of ‘cerebral’ rationality and African scientific modernity in search of mythical “fairy-tales and nightmares” (290).

However, while Bailey’s appropriation of Xhosa spiritual culture to decorate a postmodern aesthetic polemic against Western science does explain some of the more general controversy about his work, Warnes’ ideological and ethical argument with Bailey’s writing does not get to the heart of the matter. This is because the argument itself is subjected to the same limitation that Warnes notes about Bailey’s book – it all takes place on paper, and only addresses conflicts of opinion, but does not really grapple with the visceral reality experienced by audiences who were scandalised by Bailey’s work. The most unsettling aspect of the plays

was not Bailey's cultural polemic against science, but rather, or more specifically, the postmodern disturbance of the ontology of African alterity through Bailey's treatment of performance space. This aesthetic disturbance, I argue, is identical to the philosophical disturbance undertaken by the postmodern African thinkers discussed below.

Alterity and/as Epistemology

Writers like Achille Mbembe and Kwame Anthony Appiah have appropriated the postmodern challenge to epistemology in general, and posited that challenge to African philosophy in particular, both cultural and political. In different ways and to varying degrees, they have also gone beyond positing the challenge and attempted to identify theoretical and cultural spaces for the development of new epistemologies. The emergent postmodern movement in African and/as postcolonial philosophy questions, for example, the idea that considerations of 'power', 'culture', 'identity', 'performance', 'community', and 'history' must all be approached from a liberationist, pro-proletarian, empowerment-orientated point of view. Such assumptions can be attributed to the Marxist and anticolonial ideological roots of postcolonial discourse, which in its wise old age no longer feels the need to declare its philosophical goods at the customs checkpoint of the border between two intellectual countries: the National Republic of Truth Claims and the National Republic of Political Exigency. This flamboyant and admittedly self-indulgent metaphor serves to illustrate the sceptical nature of much of this postmodern meta-discourse, which often uses ironic, playful, or even satirical tones to poke provocatively at what is seen as the tendency of liberation-orientated discourses to conceal their arguable assumptions about ideological appropriateness. If we are going to talk about the poor, it is implied, we should all be Marxists at heart.

In his article on "African Modes of Self-Writing", Achille Mbembe (2002a) describes the political and/as philosophical paradigm of "nativism" as one of two major "currents" in modern African thought that have previously dominated the latter's critical discourse on the teleological ontology of the 'self' and its relationship to the 'world'. The other major current is "Afro-radicalism", which appropriated neo-Marxist and nationalist conceptions of political

subjecthood in order to advance an instrumentalist science of social engineering. The discourses generated, or encapsulated, by these two currents emerge from the exigency of anticolonial struggle, their primary concern the articulation and mobilisation of populist-liberationist militancy and its corollary forms of cultural subjecthood. Conceptually tied to racial classification and geographical setting (i.e. ‘black Africa’), the native proletariat of African anticolonial thought can be understood, for present purposes, as the result of two kinds of theoretical processes: (1) the *ideological* (and aesthetic) appropriation of African ancestral signifiers and cultural idioms, ‘real’ or imagined, which simultaneously determine and are determined by the ethno-racially exclusive and essentialist master-narrative of autochthony; and (2) the *epistemological* rationale of narrating, selectively and through a particularistic lens of history, the sinister and spectacular tragedy of imperial domination, exploitation and deracination. Inflected by pathologies of indignant lamentation and conspiratorial finger-pointing against the imperial and neocolonial ‘centre’ of Western civilisation, anticolonial nativism and Afro-radicalism both ultimately serve to justify and perpetuate a politically and ethically narrow vision of emancipation while attempting to absolve Africa of all responsibility for its past and present states. Consequently, African contemporary society’s ‘postcolonial’ metaphysics of identity, its poetics of belonging (culturally; geopolitically) and order of political or economic entitlement are rendered contingent upon the “perverse structure” of autochthony, with its incessant visualisation of the nightmare of imperial victimisation. Having reduced all conceptions of African subjectivity-in-time to the sad, debilitating internal tortures of memories of a traumatic encounter with white fascism, the native-nationalist metanarrative of autochthony not only obscures its own fascist tendencies, but also obstructs possible knowledge about new and historic, transgressive or transcendental modes of “self-styling” that have always dodged the moral, metaphysical, cultural and ethno-racial Manichaeism of black African versus white foreigner. Moreover, as Mbembe elaborated in his 2006 Bloke Modisane Memorial Lecture⁴, the history of the native is primarily a history of dispossession, deracination and death. The native is always, in past and present, destined to die – even while s/he is alive, the native is already dead, a walking corpse. The ontology of the nativist subject is thus existentially flawed in its very conception,

⁴ References are to my personal notes from the lecture, which was hosted by the Center of African Literary Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg.

leaving nothing to be salvaged that can restore that very human dignity, which the nativist subject purports to espouse. It is this fundamental failure – the failure to articulate an authentic African experience without being consumed in the brutal psychopathology of victimhood – that causes Mbembe to reject either the ideological cooption or the epistemological standardisation of the nativist ontology as a basis for any progressive Afro-humanist or “Afropolitan” agenda.

It is here that we can get a sense of the socio-political exigency of these abstract concerns with postmodern desire and the aesthetics of alterity. As South Africa waits for its political destiny at the postcolonial crossroads of history and fate, the mainstream of power appears to have largely (but not absolutely) evaded the atmosphere of ‘ethnic’ bigotry that has violently ravaged the social and economic stability of other postcolonial African states. However, the tenacious and destructive presence of racist thinking here demands that we take Mbembe’s plea (during the abovementioned lecture) for society’s conscience to progress ‘from blame to responsibility’ very seriously. As ostensibly African postcoloniality’s last chance to attain full political integrity and material prosperity at once, South Africa’s call for new, radically creative and critical discourses of and about the self to help make general sense of the times is nothing short of urgent. Although Mbembe’s early work mostly speaks to scholarly narratives, stressing the need to rethink and rewrite dominant perceptions of what constitutes the spiritual or psychic ‘core’ of African identities – indeed to question the presumption of its existence – the issues raised are extremely pertinent in the arena of cultural practice, since what is understood as the modern African cultural and intellectual heritage has for a long time been synonymous with anticolonial activism, hence Mbembe’s observations and objections. Moreover, the discourses produced herein have had a profound effect on artistic production, as exemplified by the so-called ‘black consciousness theatre’ of anti-apartheid resistance, which sought to give voice to the native-proletarian self by performing a psychontology that was similar to those of nativist political and/as philosophical writing.

Within the tumultuous and conflicted world of African scholarship, the question of the possibility of an African Postmodernity is one that has previously not received much specific attention (Magubane 2005). However, there is evidence of postmodern thinking, indeed direct

references hereto, in the works and comments of several leading African thinkers, including V.Y. Mudimbe, Kwame Anthony Appiah and Achille Mbembe. In his well-known “Is the “Post-” in “Postcolonial” the “Post-” in “Postmodern”?” essay (1997), Appiah addresses the ideological and/as epistemological controversy that has in the past caused a philosophical chasm between the Western intellectual movement of postmodernism and African cultural theory. This controversy stems from Western Postmodernism’s failure to acknowledge the critical glance of ‘Other’ cultures at Western society, or at least to accord this glance equal importance. For Appiah, one crucial aspect of African postmodernism is that it cannot make epistemological sense unless it critically distances itself from the politically humiliating stance of ‘marginal other’. The other crucial feature of African Postmodernism is that the ‘modernity’ that its cultural pathology attempts to transcend is politically, historically and ideologically specific: the modernity of Afrocentric, anticolonial, nativist nationalism.

Yet, as famous ‘Third Worldist’ polemics, from Frantz Fanon to Edward Said, have also argued (as have their abovementioned successors), the problem is twofold. First, the ‘historicity’ of non-Western societies, that is, *their historical agency and authenticity*, has all too often been banished to that notorious Hegelian non-space of absolute historical vacuity (Mbembe 2001), or what Anne McClintock (1995) described, in her “situated psychoanalysis” of colonial history, as “anachronistic space”. On the other hand, the capacity of African cultures, peoples and world views to articulate a human universal has also been undermined through what Mudimbe (1988), in his influential genealogy of African philosophical knowledge, calls the ‘epistemological ethnocentrism’ of Western institutions. Because the native subject is ultimately a being with no real access to the universal, anticolonial modernism fails to *transcend* anachronistic space, even while it attempts to resist anachronistic space through metanarratives of native origin. This, however, does not reduce the historical importance of anticolonial modernism, and its dialectical relationship with African postmodernism thus constitutes the *diachrony* of African cultural politics, rather than anything like a ‘paradigm shift’ as such.

Bailey’s theatre, I would argue, exemplifies the features of a progressive and critically astute African postmodernism, thus contributing culturally to the experience of an evolving African

postmodernity. This is achieved through a double criticism: of the “Western bigotry which denies the validity of other world views”; and of “that valium called Political Correctness”, which in the African postcolony has often amounted to various forms of *nativist chauvinism* (Bailey 2003: 10). The ‘post-native’, then, is nothing more specific, more particular, than that transgressive, transcendental and universal self-subject that is emergent in the cultural sphere and is the phenomenological symptom of African postmodernity. This post-native subject is possibly also the spiritual equivalent to Mbembe’s (2002a) “cosmopolitan” subject, who is described as the phenomenological outcome of modes of “self-styling” based on postcolonial rather than anticolonial sentiment, yet transgressive of the *neocolonial* conditioning that has turned out to be the dramatic fate and cruel irony of much anticolonial politics. This fate is only one part of what Mbembe has described, in great ethnological detail, as a broader historical ‘process of brutalisation’, which is not only political, social, economic, semiological and intellectual, but has far-reaching, dehumanising effects which operate at the spiritual and psychic core of an individual’s moral and cultural development.

It seems reasonable to hypothesise, then, the possibility of reversing such effects on their broader scale by conceiving of transformation ‘from the inside out’, that is, through the processes of self-realisation that have a phenomenological and intersubjective (in other words, psychically interactive) teleology, rather than those that, ‘from the outside in’, define ‘activism’ in the positivist terms of socialist-instrumentalist paradigms, thereby repeating the oppressive logic of the very history that they aim to undo. Thence, it is also significant that for these thinkers, questions of power, cultural knowledge and social legitimacy can be so inextricably bound with the interrelated themes of art, ritual and belief in the divine. Appiah’s analysis begins and ends with the question of what sort of characteristics make certain African arts and literatures ‘postmodern’ or ‘postcolonial’, attributing great importance to such metaphysical works as the mystical prose of Ben Okri. Mudimbe’s Foucaultian study of philosophical knowledge within colonial and anticolonial paradigms includes subject matter ranging from classical figure painting to Christian missionary ideology. Mbembe often sees artistic and religious expression as alternate modes of self-styling and self-realisation, which are crucial to mapping out postcolonial paths of transcendence beyond the problems of nativist chauvinism. What remains to be emphasised, for our purposes, is the cultural performativity

of performance itself, that is, what performance, as one specific form and function of cultural performativity generally, has to offer in the way of engendering space for transformation.

Engendering Space: the Politics of Theory

Within the institutional disciplines and modern historical movements of dance, drama, theatre and/as performance, there have been various competing methodologies – which have either implied or explicated specific epistemologies – for engendering marginal space. These methodologies and epistemologies have often been identified through aesthetic and ideological concerns, or by the nature of a creative conflation between the two. As a sweeping statement, Western marginal performance histories and contemporary performance practices – as well as related discourses thereof – have offered the most dominant concepts for engendering marginal space, which still largely determine the discursive and practical epistemologies of marginal performance in South African public theatre institutions and university drama departments alike. Where ‘indigenous’ marginal performance practice and theory have been used to engender space, these have been appropriated within Western-derived ‘intercultural’, postmodern and/as postcolonial performance paradigms, with outcomes such as Bailey’s post-avant-garde African ritual theatre. In order to address with relevance the theme of engendering space for South African marginal performance, therefore, it is necessary to approach the Western perspective of this theme, extracting its most pertinent aspects and critically re-contextualising these within the South African social and/as cultural milieu, as Bailey does.

The Western paradigms of marginal performance that have influenced South African cultural and/as academic concepts of engendering space are: the avant-garde ‘movement’ as a whole; postmodern performance and ‘performativity’; performance art; countercultural performance; polemical identity performance (including feminist, gay/queer, black, ‘ethnic’, working class and/as minority performances); and political theatre. All these categories have been extremely fluid, multifarious and interrelated, defined more by the context of action and the people than by the artistic form. Moreover, the ‘marginality’ of these forms has also been determined by

context – avant-garde trends, for example, have variously constituted the artistic, commercial, intellectual and political bridge between mainstream and marginal performance spaces. Lastly, all the above categories of marginal performance have variously interacted with non-Western inventions such as Theatre of the Oppressed and Third World – including Eastern, African and South American – cultural performances. Although black marginal performance in South Africa has its anti-apartheid, migrant, urban grassroots and African traditional roots, relations and influences, the historical and ongoing flow of culture between worlds means that to speak of an ‘authentic’ or ‘pure’ African performance paradigm, even when looking at grassroots movements, is unrealistic. As Loren Kruger (1999) argues, not eccentrically, throughout her substantial genealogy of South African performance in the twentieth century, the “syncretic” is the defining attribute of South African aesthetics from the margins to the mainstream. What Ashraf Jamal (2003a) regards as Brett Bailey’s “syncretic gift”, therefore, is the artist’s ability to create era-defining works that epitomise and demonstrate, as well as redefine, a South African sociocultural epistemology of marginal performance.

However, the abovementioned differences between Bailey’s postmodern sensibility and the postmodern sensibilities of Western performance theorists and/as practitioners also need to be emphasised. As stated earlier, Bailey’s theatre not only subverts the epistemology of alterity, but also destabilises the ontology of performance. This has important political ramifications, since the very postmodern conceptualisation and theoretical study of the notion of ‘performance’ has evolved within, not without, a very specific intellectual context, and is thus shaped by the cultural desires and prejudices of that context. This is the context of Western, First World, Cold-War-generation drama theorists and/as practitioners living in politically and economically privileged liberal democracies and intellectually grappling with the lived and performed reality of the rest of the world in relation to their own specific life experience. Where critical awareness of this specificity was not well developed, there has been the unfortunate tendency to patronise the cultures of postcolonial ‘others’ through aesthetic and anthropological primitivism – the othering function of Western ‘modernism’ in the high arts (Jordan and Weedon 1995). In the worst cases, this primitivism has resulted in rampant abuses of individuals from highly impoverished communities through an ethically and morally

muddled ‘interculturalism’ that drove Rustom Bharucha (1993; 2000) to epistemological suicide. While more recently the politically sophisticated postmodern and/or postcolonial cultural ethnographies of scholars like Marvin Carlson (1996), Baz Kershaw (1999) and Loren Kruger (1999) have proven the usefulness of postmodern performance epistemology for postcolonial discourse and cultural practice, the more general and related, aforementioned issue of African postmodernism’s need for a separate philosophical identity remains pertinent.

Carlson, for example, writes a postmodern history of Western performance that covers a vast theoretical and disciplinary spectrum, but culminates in a politically situated cultural ethnography of performance art in America. While his theories of political-as-aesthetic performativity are illuminating, if we were to change their context to, say, South African anti-apartheid performance epistemology, the cultural performativity of some of his case studies of American postmodern performance art might lose its original political grit and be regarded as ‘art for art’s sake’; elitist and irrelevant. Conversely, an anti-apartheid, Afro-populist cultural performativity, while emotionally or intellectually gripping to sympathetic foreigners, can appear to the more ‘objective’ among them as artistically backward Brechtianism. Indeed, the belief in the inherent backwardness of Third World, or simply non-metropolitan, cultural performativities is tenacious (Bharucha 2000; Mbembe 2001; Appiah 1997; Mudimbe 1988; McClintock 1995; Jordan & Weedon 1995; Bailey 2003). Such ostensibly flattering labels for ‘other’ cultural performativities – Grotowski’s “poor theatre”, Brook’s “rough theatre”, Barba’s “third space” – can have too much of an air of bucolic naïveté, so that when projected onto Third World contexts they have exposed the practitioners to the charge of plagiaristic Orientalism or noble savagery⁵. As we have seen, Brett Bailey, a former University of Cape Town drama student, is very aware of the ethical problems associated with these intellectual influences. Bailey uses some of their vocabulary, but, as part of his overall project to engender a progressive Afropolitan cultural performativity, radically distances himself from the more politically alienating aspects of their performance epistemology. Recognising the need for a healthier cross-cultural framework that realises Bharucha’s (2000) dream of an ‘intercontextual’ performance epistemology, Bailey states his aim “to tease a vital, new theatre

⁵ See Bharucha’s (2000) criticism of Peter Brook’s *The Ik*, an avant-garde play about the existing North African tribe oppressed and endangered by environmental capitalism. The Western actors spoke in gibberish.

out of South African soils, fed by African and western nutrients” (Bailey 2003: 9).

Kershaw’s perspective is instructive here. In an extensive analytical survey of “radical” cultural performativity within both postmodern and postcolonial contexts, this European male author inserts his own scholarly and autobiographical voices into the political metanarrative of global-capitalist power. Here Kershaw discovers links and continuities between the disparate struggles of gender, class, race and nation, which he attributes to a cultural and theoretical environment in which “the political” has been “promiscuous”. While an astute philosophical reflexivity and expansive historical knowledge help in balancing contextual diversity with political nuance, the true brilliance of Kershaw’s Brecht-versus-Baudrillard paradigm is that it really puts postmodern performance epistemology to the test, by exposing it to the critical gaze of a ‘modernist’ progressive rationality. At the same time, it exposes modernist reason – with its baggage of epistemological ethnocentrism – to the subversive gaze of postmodern desire. The resulting theories can be applied to Brett Bailey’s theatre, which has some of the characteristics of ‘radical’ performance that Kershaw distills from his Euro-postmodern, cross-cultural perspective.

In his book, *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard* (1999), Baz Kershaw understands ‘radical’ performance as “by definition... deeply rooted in the conditions of the contemporary” so that it “always participates in the most vital cultural, social and political tensions of its time” (Kershaw 1999: 7). Radical performance has “four main characteristics”, which are often found together, and include “dialogic exchange, participatory engagement, performative absence, and aesthetic reflexivity” (20).

As elaborated above, Bailey’s audiences were completely immersed in the participatory atmosphere of ritual, confronted with reflexive signs, engaging with ‘real’ people on stage (sangomas; choirs; children) as well as actors who spoke directly to audiences and announced their real issues as performers as well as characters:

VIVA: Hey, we are the pride of the Eastern Cape, we are the pride of this place; we The Natives, we entertainers, we who are telling you this story, this IPI ZOMBI? *sitsho thina*, a story of this country; we who are travelling from village to village, from town to town, while others are afraid, locked up in their houses, believing their televisions, and outside the wild spirits of the forests are possessing the people, killing each and everybody in the streets, in the taverns, even in their beds. Hey, this country is struggling. These are the hungry times: the rich are eating the poor, the dead are eating the living, even the roads are eating the children ... My friends, we bring wonderful stories to you in these strange times in this land of ours, we tell you the stories from the heart of this country, we The Natives, we the Real Live Blacks! Ja! (singing) *Balele, balele, balele* ... (Bailey 2003: 44)

Such ironic, confrontational and self-conscious framing of personality and context characterised the entire script for each of the plays of miracle and wonder. In the above excerpt, the audience of South Africa is identified and enrolled as “friends” who also belong to “this land of ours”, so that they may be conscious of their role and their capacity to experience relationships with the performers. Rather than the dominant model in professional theatre of defining the stage-auditorium exchange primarily in terms of an aesthetic producer-consumer relationship, here the theatrical event becomes an aesthetically reflexive *community* event.

This, of course, is an institutionally marginal approach to making theatre for the public. Marginality is crucial to Kershaw’s vision of how and which performances can be seen as radical. Hence Kershaw perceives that “the place of *theatre* in post-industrial societies seems increasingly compromised, even by its success, and so its potential for radicalism has become subject to doubt” (Kershaw 1999: 5). A surplus of radical potential is to be found, rather, in “performance beyond theatre” (5). The spatial marginality of radical performance is seen as a creative and cultural position from which to grapple with disadvantage within or without institutional hierarchies. This position is part of a matrix of relations, between power, performance and space, that Kershaw sees as defining the “conditions of the contemporary” within which radical performance emerges (7):

[...]as the world wakes up to the twenty-first century [...] the processes of *performance* have become ever more crucial in the great cultural, social and political changes of our times [...] performance has emerged as central to the production of the new world disorder, a key process in virtually every socio-political domain of the mediatised globe. The *performative* quality of power is shaping the global future as it never has before. (Kershaw 1999: 5)

This “performative quality of power”, as I have been suggesting, relates to the spatial quality of power as well as to the spatial quality of performance. This matrix of relations creates a complex space of ethical indeterminacy that is “problematic” in the context of “cultural praxis” because “it invites an ideological investment that [radical performance] cannot of itself determine” (20). Hence the cultural and aesthetic space engendered through radical performance represents “a creative opportunity to change the world for better or worse, a performative process in need of direction” (20).

Kershaw also highlights the positive, space engendering potential of radical performance as an aspect of aesthetic definition. Concerned with Western anxieties about the struggle of liberal democracy in the face of subtle coercion through capitalist power, Kershaw asserts that radical performance is “not only resistant to dominant ideologies, but [...] also [...] transgressive, even transcendent, of ideology itself” (18). Radical performance engenders space for “freedom” that is “not just freedom *from* oppression, repression, exploitation – the resistant sense of the radical – but also freedom *to reach beyond* existing systems of formalised power” (18). As shown through Kershaw’s accounts, further in the book, of rehearsal processes in mainstream Western theatres, this “formalised power” manifests directly through the hierarchical treatment of social space inside the institution. Such relations entail the manipulation of power, so that the freedom of reaching beyond the structure of institutional relations through radical performance also means freedom “to create currently unimaginable forms of association and action” (18). The reaching beyond also entails a literal engendering of social and performative space in venues and sites other than – beyond – the theatre building. This process becomes a metaphorical resistance, even if the radical performance created within the engendered space does not focus on polemical expression.

The literal deviation from institutional space becomes a way for the agents participating in a radical performance event to *embody* their own freedom through “dialogic exchange, participatory engagement, performative absence, and aesthetic reflexivity”, rather than merely conceptualise freedom as passive consumers living vicariously through theatre (20). Hence Kershaw’s concern with the forms of freedom enabled by radical performance is not about how “radical performance might *represent* such freedoms, but rather how radical performance can actually *produce* such freedoms, or at least a sense of them, for both performers and spectators, as it is happening” (18-9). The logic of engendering space is clear here, because in its proactive struggle to go beyond existing structures or modes of power *and* resistance, radical performances can constitute “forms of resistance that, decisively, are not articulated to the dominant structures of authority and power in ways that make them automatically recoupable by those structures” (26). Transgressing the limit of binary logic, the engendered space of radical performance can accommodate “a radical freedom that is not just negatively against a regime but positively for some value or ideal that lies well beyond its ideological territory” (26). While it has the potential for polemically revolutionary acts, therefore, Kershaw is convinced that radical performance is at its best when it can “insinuate pathologies of hope” (26).

The most radical aspect of Bailey’s theatre, then, is not its polemic against secular rationalism, but its postmodern and (therefore) post-nativist pathology of hope, of which Bailey is very conscious. As discussed above, Bailey’s approach to engendering performance space entailed an emphasis on creating community spaces whose shape and location deviated from those of regular theatre. This method of reaching beyond for eccentric modes of interaction in performance space had explicit political and/as cultural ramifications – for Bailey’s alternative arrangements were modelled on the existing ceremonial procedures of Xhosa rituals. By appropriating such procedures within an aesthetically reflexive context of engendered marginal space, Bailey made it impossible for audiences watching his high profile avant-garde theatre spectacles to forget about the institutional marginality of the Xhosa cultural space and (therefore) cultural voice that such spectacle appropriated and exploited for aesthetic impact.

In fact, Bailey complains about the adverse effect of institutional spaces like Johannesburg's Market Theatre, wherein the plays were robbed of their ceremonial texture and (therefore) their capacity to immerse audiences fully in the visceral, marginal reality of the performers (Bailey 2003: 145). Condoned yet constrained by the mainstream, the plays' resistance to aesthetically defined cultural and/as class prejudices – disguised by distinctions between 'professional' (suburban; Western) and 'amateur' (community/township) theatre – was quenched as the plays were co-opted into the order of non-threatening consumer spectacle. This cooption entailed variously successful attempted restrictions on culturally significant aspects of Xhosa ritual, such as the burning of herbs, the presence of animals, and women's full adherence to the traditional dress code, which involves exposed breasts (145). Under the new, alienating conditions of culturally sanitised playhouses, Bailey was required to offer a nativised spectacle of African alterity that censors all the institutionally unpalatable aspects of the globally marginalised African traditional worldview. Audiences were not under any spatially engendered aesthetic pressure to empathise with that worldview. Restricted from "participatory engagement" through the harsh spatial separations of stage-versus-auditorium, participants in the performance event no longer had the opportunity to experience "currently unimaginable forms of association and action" (Kershaw 1999: 18-20). Consequently they could not embody forms of freedom beyond the apartheid-inherited situation of black theatre trying to get into the 'white' playhouses and festivals with the intention of either gaining patronising acceptance or wreaking polemical havoc.

Kershaw's phrase, "pathology of hope", is provocative because it uncannily nails the psychological essence of Bailey's work at its spatially engendered best. Bailey describes this essence in his book about "three plays exploring the spiritual beliefs of the Xhosa people and their collision with changing times; ritualistic dramas based on *sangoma* ceremonies, with an emphasis on trance performance from the actors" (Bailey 2003: 198). The plays were "a trilogy of struggles – dramatic battles to restore health and harmony to communities invaded, assaulted, diseased" (Bailey 2003: 9). Such battles were "played out in the arenas of a sickened country to summon a healing" by "driving out [...] infections and [...] closing the

wounds” (9). Drawing on the “African Netherworld”, Bailey’s plays featured histrionically – and hysterically – personified “beings who speak from realms accessed in the delirium of fever, in dreams, in ecstatic trances, in reveries amongst the rushes on the shaded banks of deep pools” (9). These beings, whose theatrical manifestation resulted in iconic imagery that is now part of the *Third World Bunfight* signature, included “ancestors, spiritual snakes” and “the disembodied souls of bewitched boys” (9).

Hence, while Kershaw perceives that “the greatest radical turbulence can be found in performance when modernist and post-modernist versions of the world collide” (Kershaw 1999: 7), Bailey discovers such turbulence between African secular-cosmopolitan and psychic-traditional realities. Bailey and Kershaw are united, however, by their similar sentiments about the place of theatre in contemporary society. Describing how he made space for himself as a theatre practitioner in South Africa through the plays of miracle and wonder, Bailey mentions that he had “found most of the urban black theatre [...] bland and formulaic”, its aesthetic defined by “unnecessary frills”, while “most white theatre” could not “rise to the challenge of confronting the dynamic times in which we exist” (Bailey 2003: 9). Both Bailey and Kershaw are very concerned with the exigency of engendering space for “stories of our times” (Bailey 2003: 9), which grapple proactively with “the great cultural, social and political changes of our times” (Kershaw 1999: 5). The coincidence of both authors’ use of the phrase “our times” with such an air of apocalypse reinforces the teleological correspondence between their respective performance epistemologies. This teleological correspondence situates both the Bailey approach and the Kershaw approach within the greater postcolonial and global-cosmopolitan context, corroborating for performance epistemology what we postmodern Africans know in our hearts: that even while it speaks for itself and its own people, demonstrates its own forms and invents its own techniques, understands its own background and addresses its own needs, African cultural performativity, through initiatives like Bailey’s, can also truly articulate the universal.

To speak of the ‘postmodern’ or ‘postcolonial’ in theatre, therefore, it is necessary to have a critical awareness of the socio-historical contexts and conditions under which these labels and their purported realities come to be known and theorised. It is also necessary, however, to consider the *agency* that the forces or entities described by such labels as ‘postmodern performance’ have in directly affecting the social reality from which the entities emerge and of which they are a part. As Kruger’s vast genealogies of performance in both Western (1992) and South African (1999) contexts show, performance has had a direct effect on the sways of social conscience and/as consciousness through the ages. Simultaneously, performance is also, directly, a conscious or unconscious *expression* of such forces and is therefore directly affected by them. The problem of primitivistic modes of intellectualising non-Western cultural and/or sociopolitical performativities in the previous Western avant-garde movement has been the absence of historical context and the simultaneous *ad hoc* application of quasi/neo-scientific analytical methods (Mbembe 2001; Bharucha 1993). Brett Bailey’s theatre differs from this through its radical aesthetic, political and epistemological reflexivity. The essence of this reflexivity is an awareness of historical context.

In the remaining pages, I linger on the issue of historical reflexivity with regard to Bailey’s theatre, but also with a view to introduce readers to the major themes and subtextual elements of my script for *Hondo Love Story*. The play, which I do not discuss at length here, explores the murky history of Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle movements, which have left a nation remembering and reliving violence in its divided society and wounded psyche. One of the dominant themes in *Hondo Love Story* is the uneasy dichotomy between history and psyche. Since the theme is very clear in my play, I discuss it below in relation to Bailey’s work, establishing links between his aesthetic concepts and mine.

On History and Psyche

The Western avant-garde theatre movement’s preoccupation with myth, ritual and primitivism has been attributed to the broader Western cultural and intellectual influence of Jungian and

Freudian psychologies (Innes 1993). The generation of practitioners like Jerzy Grotowski and Peter Brook has influenced experimental theatre practices and theories beyond its own geo-cultural borders, so that the Jungian aspect of Brett Bailey's work is not unexpected in terms of his association with these practitioners. In their theoretical writings as well as in their plays and/or performance experiments, Western avant-garde theatre practitioners have sought insights about the human psyche from their own civilisation's ancient myths, from foreign cultures at the margins of today's modernity, and from theories of the primal subconscious. While this aspect is notable in the plays of miracle and wonder, and in Bailey's writing, the theme of psyche as part of Bailey's performance epistemology is juxtaposed with an ethnographic perspective characterised by Bailey's thorough and participatory research into various aspects of the communities portrayed in his plays. While making the plays, Bailey lived with and worked for the communities, taking pains to understand their cultural knowledge, ethnic histories, customs, beliefs, rituals, superstitions, public scandals, moral values, colonial experiences, political struggles and economic predicaments. In his book, Bailey comments extensively on all these aspects.

Historical knowledge, argues Anne McClintock (1995), illuminates the secrets of the psyche in ways that pure psychoanalysis cannot, while psychoanalysis can humanise history and give its social specificity much more universal meaning. Indeed, for many of the psychontological perspectives explored above, a critical consciousness of history has been the very condition of possibility. However, in these terrible postmodern times, the notion of 'history' is also a contested category. Moreover, that contestation has been a crucial problem for African cultural politics, not only in written and spoken discourse, but also in the physical arenas of performance (Kruger 1999), during a process that may be humorously labelled as a kind of histrionics of historicity. It is a histrionics that also reveals, through the various dramatic tensions (ritual; mystery; task incentive; dramatic irony), the narratological tension between teleology and etiology, that is, the stories conceal as much of the past as they reveal, and always according to the political and/as cultural agendas of the storytellers (Kruger 1999). History's monolithic claim to epistemological legitimacy is thus complicated by the realisation

that 'history' has never been one thing: there have been 'histories' and, as feminists have added, 'herstories'. To speak of historical context, then, it is necessary to recognise the extent to which 'context' has become more an *effect* of cultural performativity than the latter's 'reason' or 'rationale'. In other words, it is necessary to recognise how performance can also *engender* history, even while it emerges from it or expresses it.

This, possibly, is the key to solving the problem of some postmodern/post-structural frames of analysing cultural 'resistance' and 'agency' from the 'margins' of gender, race, class and so on, which have sometimes been accused of continuing to portray those other subjectivities as intellectual foreigners to reason itself. The academically polemical introduction to Achille Mbembe's *On the Postcolony* (2001) is an exemplary critique in this regard. As Mbembe points out, however, the ethical problems that he criticises are engrained in the very founding philosophical works of postmodern thought, whose epistemological dilemmas have consequently spilled over to the standard postmodern/post-structural methodology of social theory and critical cultural studies. For Mbembe, this causes enormous difficulties when dealing with African subjects, who have already been philosophically stereotyped (most famously, but not only, by Hegel) as foreigners to reason. The most obvious political consequence of this stereotyping has, of course, been the exclusion of the other from the liberating order of the 'rights of man'; an exclusion with tragic consequences of its own.

In order to have a clear perspective on the relationship between theatre and historic problems of alterity, then, we must focus on the relationship between his/herstory and performativity, critically honing in on its significance as the very condition of possibility for his/herstory's own ontology (as Kruger does). Consequently, what we discover is the *subjective* nature of this ontology: the past is only as real as each individual sees it. Furthermore, subjectivity itself is seen as contingent upon other, namely, social factors (or more precisely, factors of socialisation); including gender, race, class, culture, status, location (geopolitical; socio-structural), religion, sexuality, aesthetic sensibilities, political views and world knowledge or education. Lastly, these categories are relative, relational and interrelated; that is, they constrict, illuminate, expand and, sometimes, help define each other's horizons. These

categories, or rather, processes of socialisation, can be viewed as myriad forms of intellectual training – they discursively interpellate the subject, position her/him in relation to the world and to her/his society, thus endowing the subject with particular ways of thinking about the world, finding one’s place within it and claiming entitlements or accepting responsibilities from it based on specific interpretations of it. As a result, the myriad forms of subjectivity available to or imposed upon the individual also determine, define and delimit, often simultaneously, the individual’s relationships with others like or unlike him/herself: whether relationships of conflict or of cooperation; of desire or of domination (which are not always mutually exclusive modalities). The his/herstories that we share or contest with others are therefore contingent on our subject positions, our present relationships as well as on previous forms and contexts of such relationships, encapsulated and rationalised by such generalities as colonisation/decolonisation; patriarchy; modernisation; and so on. We can even go so far as to say that relationships *are* historical/herstorical, insofar as they are formed between his/herstorical subjects.

However, all this critical emphasis on the multiplicity, relativity and contingency of his/herstories must serve to strengthen rather than weaken the agency of narrative voice, whose authority to articulate his/her particular notion of what ‘the story’ is, or will be, must be preserved. If the previous dominance of a nativist aesthetics of ‘voice’ in South African cultural-political performativity has begun to frustrate those critical and creative sensibilities with a more complex vision of African reality (Jamal 2003b), this frustration, I believe, is not with the idea of voice *per se*, but with its major stakeholders’ (Black hegemony, according to liberal democracy) claims to exclusive sanction. As I previously elaborated (2004), this is the frustration that Brett Bailey encountered during the making and staging of the plays of miracle and wonder: he wanted to articulate an authentic African voice, creatively as well as critically, but was not allowed in by the racial guardians of a purportedly ‘African’ voice that has been made synonymous with *native* voice. The conflation of native voice with African voice is precisely what Brett Bailey’s theatre rebels against, and what is at the centre of current cultural controversies, encapsulating some of the philosophical and/as political predicaments

summarised above⁶.

The plays of miracle and wonder engendered space for the voices of South Africa's Xhosa-speaking populaces living in the Eastern Cape and concerned with the survival and definition of their respective communities in various capacities: political; cultural; spiritual; aesthetic. These individuals and communities are attached to religious convictions, rituals and, sometimes, superstitions from both Christian and African ancestral traditions. They are also affected by urban myths and legends that have evolved vis-à-vis the growth and struggle of their African postcolonial modernity. They seek divinity and deliverance in a world ravaged and left to rot by the manipulative, spirit-draining political agendas of populist-nationalist authority, on the one hand, and the evil history of apartheid racism on the other. Among the more violated by colonialism since its onset on African soil, they have also been abandoned by their former 'liberators' to a wasteland of rural ghettos and townships that are in a state of perpetual underdevelopment. From oppressed colonial labour force to impoverished postcolonial/post-apartheid voting power, their struggle is partly a struggle to transcend, spiritually, ideologically and socially, their tiresome role – the character of the 'black masses' – in South African nationalism's loud histrionics of historicity. Their struggle is no longer the struggle of fervent natives fighting for freedom, but the struggle of hungry minds, wandering bodies and deep souls searching for new knowledge about their own existence in the first place.

It is not that they do not know suffering, or that religious and superstitious zeal has clouded the perception of these materially deprived. The African voices in the plays of miracle wonder are not too shy to testify to the trial and trauma that impacts on their daily lives. They speak of

⁶ Here I differ only slightly with Jamal's (2003b) thesis about Bailey's work, whereby the 'surreal' elements of the *Third World Bunfight* aesthetic point to a heightened skepticism about African, especially national, authenticity. Bailey's (2003) own emphasis is on the need to distill African authenticity (which he claims for himself as a young white artist) from a racially motivated native voice. Hence, while there are profound similarities between Bailey's performance epistemology and that of the super-critical post-liberationist artist William Kentridge (Jamal 2003b), Bailey's 'faith in a practical epistemology' certainly does not indicate sympathy with Kentridge's ideological stoicism and desire to 'trust in the inauthentic' (Kentridge, quoted in Jamal 2003b).

poverty, disease, violence, prejudice and oppression. They speak of the cruelty of life itself, abandoning its subjects to sudden, horrible fates. They speak of death. But how they rationalise these things is no longer a process dictated by historic classifications. The native condition is, fundamentally, a teleology of inevitable loss – the loss of one’s rights, one’s belongings, one’s inheritance; of one’s identity, one’s community and one’s culture; of one’s perception, understanding, abilities, aims, hopes and prospects; the loss of one’s health, home and happiness; of one’s life, indeed, it is the loss of one’s very soul. Even death has not the dignity of a private silence or a simulated stillness in the world of the native. It may be a publicly open, debased death: the result of a lynching or a riot. Or it may be a death hidden underneath the deaths of a thousand bodies cramped in the trenches of liberation’s sacrificed. Death may produce the effect of time-freeze: a gaping mouth; wide eyes; arms outstretched but the corpse twisted upon itself in futile defence against a moment of horror that appears to duplicate itself and kill temporality along with the killed. But in this very state of inert horror, the dead native plays a moment that is death re-animated: the dead native walks. It is debasement that animates death, for debasement exposes to the passing eye the natural processes that slowly but cleanly take us back to the soil. In fact, we do not know if he was really dead to begin with, since ‘death’ (inertia; hypothetical) and ‘life’ (animation) can infect each other in the body of the brutally exposed native. And if he is alive, then death catches up, before he falls, to say ‘No. There is no real life for the native’. What then can ‘native voice’ do beside announce this same reprise?

The African voices of *Third World Bunfight*’s stories are not victims in this way. Neither do they gratify the colonial desire for a vision of ‘happy natives’ dancing the dance of Dionysian ecstasies; romantic savages unaffected by the challenge of their own existence or unmoved by the prospect of reflection. Contrary to some critics’ accusations (Flockemann), and Brett Bailey’s own misleading comments about ‘irrational’ impulses in the plays of miracle and wonder, there is logic at work here; the logic of authentic African voices whose scandalous deviation from the canon of modern, even postmodern, rationality offers an immense challenge to all concerned. The inhabitants of Bailey’s psychic world are thinkers and dreamers as much as they are fighters and sufferers. They are the voices of a new African teleological phenomenology of selfhood – that is to say, a new sense of one’s unique purpose

in time and/as one's particular relationship with the perceived world – which is both postcolonial and post-native.

Chapter 1 above undertakes to examine the elaborate phenomenological form of such an aesthetic, as well as to speculate, broadly, on its teleological function/significance within the sphere of South African culture's historically emergent 'politics of performance', which is also, as it always has been, a politics of cultural knowledge. By 'phenomenological form' here is meant: those theatrical, or meta-theatrical, modes of (re)presentation and inter-action that occur, not on the metaphysical level of 'discourse', even though these modes may appeal to the 'symbolic' realm of culture, but rather on the hypothetical level of immediate action and sensation. 'Hypothetical' because here we are talking about those things that 'we' as sentient beings can embody and experience that are supposed to be within ontology's grasp: space, the body, perception, feeling: in short, physicality. Therefore I have referred to 'discourse' as 'metaphysical', not to undermine the role of language in phenomenological form but to refute the power and omnipotence of a language that aspires to the status of Logos – or, The Word, that is, the 'rational' word, or the calculating word of 'reason'. Its defining characteristic is its apparent complete confidence in itself, a form of ontological complacency that says 'I, The Word, am fully real and therefore fully rational; my judgment is absolute and subject to change only through my discretion alone, giving me exclusive power to articulate the real and demarcate its limits, as well as to disqualify everything that does not fulfill my criteria of legitimation, which I, of course, satisfy'.

In presuming to be fully and solely capable of deciphering and demarcating the real, logocentric rationality thus functions according to the panoptic principle of transparency, which is arguably the defining epistemological factor that was responsible for the grand project of European modernity (Ekpo 1995). The agents, consumed in ecological hubris, purported to have the ability to order nature's drives, planning and implementing technologies that would attempt, quite literally, to penetrate, rob and exploit (rape) 'her' feminised body of libidinal potency. In the colonial context, which Western performance epistemology in the past has disavowed only to the detriment of its own historical pertinence, this potency was also seen to manifest in the hyper-sexualised and geo-spatialised bodies of the gendered and raced

other (McClintock 1995). In the most superstitious and fetishistic imaginings, the object of the gaze conflated both markings of sexualised otherness, making the mature black female body, as an example, the archetypal force or 'source' (crisis of origins) of anxiety (McClintock) for what Robert Young (1995) has called 'colonial desire'. As postmodern feminist psychoanalysts have taught us, then, Logocentric language is part of desire's disguise mechanisms, after desire 'abjects', in Julia Kristeva's famous formulation, those elements that belong to what Jean-François Lyotard, in a neo-Freudian and post-Marxist move, has described as the great 'skin' of the 'libidinal economy'. The impulses that emanate from this economy are certainly 'carnavalesque' and 'grotesque' in Mikail Bakhtin's sense, but also, as Achille Mbembe (2001) reminds us in a context politically closer to home, such 'chaotic' tendencies do not preclude participation in a 'banal' order of power where the colonial principle of 'commandment' frames, perhaps even instructs, contemporary manifestations of brutal governance in many postcolonial states, causing between rulers and ruled a 'mutual zombification'. For Mbembe, then, libidinal economy is tied to, as he later (2003) calls it, 'necropolitics', in other words, the systematic application and endemic manifestation of death as both the instrument and environment of postcolonial/neocolonial power's theatrics of interpellation; a spectacular histrionics of historicity that frequently enacts tragedies of genocidal proportions that are temporally indistinct from the auditorium of ordinary life (2003).

On Alterity in Space (Conclusion)

By disturbing the ontology of theatrical performance, Bailey's theatre, I have argued, also disturbs the historic ontology of African alterity that engenders nativism and manifests in intellectual and/as public spheres through racial and cultural representation. It is not so much about whether Bailey's theatre makes a 'commentary' about nativism or satirises notions of race and identity within the narrative and visual context of the drama. Bailey does not set out to deconstruct race as his main concern. Rather, he sets out primarily to challenge the boundaries of theatre through ritual performance, and this primarily aesthetic challenge has ramifications for alterity. Bailey's theatre is not political theatre in genre terms. It does not deal with issues of race; but it *impacts* on these issues.

The aim of this chapter has been to tease out, through philosophical arguments, what this impact is and how it occurs. The answers are not to be found in the performance text, or even the context of dramatic action, but rather by looking at the *space concepts* that inform the context of dramatic action within which the performance text operates. Moreover, a space-concept approach is not only appropriate to theatre analysis, but also conveniently mirrors Bailey's own space-concept-orientated performance epistemology, helping to simplify the task of connecting the convoluted philosophical discourse on African ontology and epistemology with the visceral and ephemeral medium of theatre. Bailey's performance epistemology is 'space-concept-oriented' because his theatre is not about transferring performance texts or operations from one physical space to another, but rather about creating an aesthetic concept that focuses on how performance emerges from a given space, transforms a given space, and is transformed by a given space. While such conditions are part of the environment of any performance event or operation, not all performance epistemologies use this fact as the basis for artistic creativity. It is not eccentric, then, for Ashraf Jamal (2003a) to associate Bailey's aesthetic approach with performance art.

As elaborated above, one of the critically noted characteristics of Brett Bailey's theatre was the fullness of the dramatic experience, the "total theatre" aspect welcomed by Zakes Mda as part of that theatre's 'newness' (Flockemann 2002). Bailey's intention had been to create a theatre whose most important meanings emerge through the non-literary and ephemeral impact of the "event" (Jamal 2003a: 50). As Bailey confirms in an "important note" to readers, about his book:

The plays published here were never envisaged as pieces of literature separate from the rich and multi-layered non-verbal elements which make up the language of living drama: the music, the dramatic form, the spectacle, the ritualistic rhythm, the atmosphere. When I am creating a play, the visual and dramatic components of a scene are most often with me long before the text comes along. Sometimes the text evolves together with these components, but rarely does it predate them. To read these plays for their ideas or philosophy rather than for their drama would be to miss the boat. (Bailey 2003: 10)

Of course, as Christopher Warnes (2004) more irritably points out in his abovementioned criticism, Bailey is too modest here in not recognising that the plays, while not offering “ideas or philosophy”, impact profoundly on the discursive world of ideas and philosophy. Aware of those “rich and multi-layered non-verbal elements”, Bailey’s main scholarly critics have situated his works within broader theoretical concerns of art epistemology, postcolonial cultural theory and current affairs in politics such as the issues of national reality ushered in by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Flockemann 2002; Jamal 2003b). When the question of theatre’s messaging capacity has come up, the critical consensus recognises, approvingly or disapprovingly, how Bailey’s theatre disturbs such expectations through textual ironies and ambivalences which reveal the contradictions and ironies of theatre itself. Ashraf Jamal explores this in detail by analysing Bailey’s aesthetic, along with that of other prominent South African theatre directors, from the perspective of Loren Kruger’s (1992) memorable poststructuralist theories of theatre, hybridity and history. Jamal:

Because of its formal hybridity and its liminal impurity in relation to the other arts, each of which theatre absorbs in order to make itself, theatre is well placed to expose the contradictions which threaten a projected national unity, while, at the same time, providing a way forward. This way – the way of theatre – is the way of the shadow-play. Theatre projects as well as protests, intuit as well as states, dreams as well as concretises. Figural and literal, total and partial, theatre necessarily straddles a contradiction. It is this contradiction that is the root of theatre’s ‘impurity’, an impurity which, for Kruger, marks and mars all claims to legitimacy, be it the legitimacy of the People, the authorised nation, or the legitimacy of contesting fields of cultural inquiry that would pronounce the theatre dead, the better to enliven those art forms that dissimulate a seamless integrity. (2003b: 45)

Indeed, as detailed in Chapter 1, the plays of miracle and wonder exploited all the most uniquely non-literary strengths of the theatrical medium: the visceral spectacle of the body; the ephemeral imagination of the oral text; the intersubjective immediacy of performance; the ritualistic encounter with what Sir Peter Brook so famously called ‘the invisible’, including more culturally defined personifications of the supernatural. Bailey:

Let the theatre be rich and thriving and humming like a Hindu temple, with flowers and cows and children running and bells clanging and incense smoking and devotees dancing and offering libations! Or like a voodoo ceremony, with people flipping into trance, chanting and sacrificing, dust and blood and beer and gods. Or instil in it the silent intensity of a Zen temple, where the deep stillness inside us may bloom. (2003: 9-10)

Bailey sees this encompassing richness, festivity and spiritual intensity as a preferable alternative to the “passive solitary watching” that is part of the pervasive culture of “safe TV aestheticism” (10). In this culture:

[...] theatre has largely been reduced to an audio-visual display. We sit in a dark hall and watch and listen, and if we identify with somebody we do it quietly, by ourselves; it does not bring us together in communion. (Bailey 2003: 9)

Bailey sees a direct relationship between this aesthetic problem and the cultural problems of African alterity, for the “cold tradition” of the “hackneyed old genres” that he would not like to see in South African theatre is part of “the de-spiritualisation of the West” (9). In Bailey’s view, to adapt such a tradition would necessarily mean adopting “the cynical ethos of the decaying European empires” (10). This ethos entails the epistemological stance of “Western bigotry which denies the validity of other world views” (10). For Bailey, that is unacceptable:

As Africans we do not have to look at ourselves through those eyes, judge ourselves according to those jaded opinions, as is our common tendency. Forget the Euromerican modes and models. We do not exist in relation to them only. We may express ourselves in our own voices, with all the fervour, trauma, richness and vitality of the developing nation we are. (Bailey 2003: 10)

By turning to national redemption through spiritual healing as an answer to Western prejudice, rather than to the nativist ideology of race and cultural dogmatism, Bailey kills two birds with one stone. First, Bailey avoids the mistakes of his Western avant-garde mentors, whose aggressively ‘post-national’ ideology of ‘interculturalism’ made it too easy to primitivise the foreign other because they had dismissed one of the main institutions that requires its subjects to be defined, not as vessels for sexy foreign culture, but as thinking agents of modernity capable of voting (Bharucha 1993). By the same logic, however, nativist movements within

the nation often work, ironically, to undermine the ordinary people's agency of modernity in a similar way to Western primitivism, by imprisoning the common body politic in the "anachronistic space", as Anne McClintock's phrase goes, of a backward-looking autochthonic alterity. Because of the reflexive visual textuality of Bailey's dramas (Chapter 1), the plays of miracle and wonder cannot be suspected of engendering anachronistic space in this way. Rather, the plays engendered an Afro-postmodern space in which to interact reflexively with anachronistic elements in a visual "traffic" of signs of the Third World (Flockemann 2002). Such traffic comprised a self-consciously fragmented and incoherent aesthetic reality that cannot reassure a nativist gaze looking for comforting images of tradition to justify its secular, Afrocentric modernity. For the nativist gaze is not a static reflection on the self, but, like all paradigms of the self, creates its present identity by classifying itself as the logical or metaphorical culmination of a nostalgic and linear narrative of origins. Because of the linear logic of time, all self-defining narratives of origin emerge from anachronistic space. By visually deconstructing that space, Bailey disturbed the expectations of the nativist gaze.

This in itself was not 'deconstructing the native' as my dissertation's title states, for the nativist self is under no pressure to respond to any challenge posited against its preconceptions of origin. The radical (Kershaw's sense) treatment of space and the immersion of the nativist self in the engendered space of a deconstructed reality is what puts the nativist self under pressure to rethink itself. Space, in other words, is the key to understanding how Bailey's theatre encouraged, not the subversion of, but the *transgression from* nativist paradigms of alterity in their entirety. If the nativist self participates in colonial and postcolonial discourse as a marginal entity protesting injustices, then what Bailey's theatre offered was an engendered space in which to learn and practice Kershaw's "freedom to reach beyond existing systems of formalised power" (Kershaw 1999: 18).

Bailey's theatre engendered an aesthetic, cultural and/as epistemological space within which audiences who identified with native alterity had the opportunity to experience a post-native subjectivity. Whether they did so or not depended on whether they individually chose to take up the challenge of their transfiguration. The ritualistic shamanism of Bailey's actors and

sangomas thus extended its purposes from ancestral communication and spiritual-Dionysian “healing” to invigorating the *mind* of an African selfhood (Bailey 2003: 9). It is not that Bailey opposed intellectuality with spirituality, but rather, his plays:

[...] shatter the boundaries between waking reality and inspired vision, between reason and unreason, allowing our imaginations to dance to subliminal rhythms, to embrace paradoxes and to confront symbols, giving us the creative strength to pass through the razor-wire-topped walls and recreate our selves’. (9)

The idea of recreating ourselves, of making space for new selves that are as yet undefined, liminal – this is the crux of the entire process. The ‘post’ in post-native is the same “space-clearing gesture” that Appiah refers to in his abovementioned comparison of the contentious terms ‘postcolonial’ and ‘postmodern’. To imagine the post-native, then, is not to conceive something specific with which to replace the native, but to engender internal psychic space, so that the new manifestations of our selfhood, whatever they are, may come when they may and find a place ready in us; so that they may inhabit us; so that they may heal us; so that they may change us. For Bailey, those new manifestations of our being are the African spirits which possess the human body directly through traditional performance, and come from a reality beyond the limited imagination of our alterity. For Ashraf Jamal, the spirit is the “African sublime”, the “occult”, which stirs the darkest depths of our consciousness, and is both “the medium” and “the message” (Jamal 2003a: 51). In order to benefit from the transformative reality of this occult space, the self that is imprisoned in history’s ontology of alterity must choose to enter the subjective space of the ‘post’ that allows for universality (Appiah). The heart must be empty and ready “so the spirit can dance” (Bailey 2003: 19). This liminal condition is not a state of nothingness, because it is not the sort of ethical and existential passivity that nativist victimhood perpetuates as we feel powerless to make the transition from blame to responsibility. Rather, our very openness to indeterminacy, our abandonment of ethical and ideological fundamentalism, the better to embrace our human vulnerability, is what allows us as post-natives to attain – no, to *receive the gift* – of universality.

Introduction to Hondo Love Story

Hondo Love Story is a full-length experimental avant-garde musical about Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle (1966 – 1979) war veterans reliving their violent past through fatal re-enactments in the present. The play thematically delves into the frightening psyche of political extremism and militancy which is so seductive to our insecure human natures, luring us into a nightmarish haze of paranoid delusion and perversity. Appropriating some of the narrative conventions of literary magical realism, I tell the story of two characters who experience this seduction and must subsequently struggle for survival, both physical and psychic, as their nightmarish internal reality becomes manifest through their worldly tragedy. Written in the format of an upbeat rock musical, *Hondo Love Story* is an ironic, allegorical, incendiary, schizoid, foul-mouthed, sexually explicit and occasionally harrowing little piece of political filth that, in part, comments satirically on the violent legacy of anticolonial racism. In the political realm, this legacy has often appropriated, and perverted, the ideas of however well-meaning (and not always pacifist) nativist and Afro-radical discourses.

In writing the play, I appropriated the narratological and psychoanalytic insights of Joseph Campbell, whose famous theory of the 'hero's journey' in myths has been canonised as a Hollywood storytelling paradigm. Influenced by Freud, Jung and Arnold van Gennep, whose studies of ritual preceded and influenced Victor's Turner's liminality theory, Campbell theorised a basic, universal, or archetypal, narrative structure of myths. Based on his vast worldwide studies of folklores and mythologies, Campbell believed that this archetypal structure is subconsciously an allegory of adolescent initiation rites, punctuated by Oedipal conflicts, and whose narrative logic is consistent across cultures and times. As some of Campbell's studies illustrate, this allegory was made explicit in the myths and initiation rituals of certain cultures. Campbell's list of the 'stages' of the hero's journey, rather mystifying out of context, has become popularised as an essential tool for screenwriting amateurs. Borrowing some of Campbell's insights, I also used Biblical narrative to create a postcolonial allegory whose precise commentary on the Zimbabwean context is not too preconceived, but rather left

to audiences' and readers' personal interpretations.

The two main characters are Adam, a white male historian, and Eve, a black female war veteran, who meet after an occult intervention leads them onto each other's paths. Adam and Eve then run into a series of fated misunderstandings, leading to fatal confrontations, with monstrous figures, all war veterans, who are like relics from Zimbabwe's colonial and anticolonial past. During this process, Adam and Eve fall in love and are forced to kill whoever threatens their lives and future prospects. Throughout their intimate discussions, Adam and Eve disagree on the nature of reality and the ethics of violence as Adam's secular-historical knowledge and liberal-pacifist worldview conflicts with Eve's personal and occult experience of the war. During interactions between various characters, including the main relationship in the play, the issue of perspectival differences on Zimbabwe's history and conflicts of reality emerge as dominant themes in the play, showing how history and psyche are merged through the ontologically unstable subjectivity of knowledge.

Like Bailey's plays, my play's relevance to this dissertation's major theme of nativist alterity is not immediately apparent. The play comments, rather, on the atrocity of colonial and anticolonial racism from a general stance of looking at the dehumanisation of political violence. As they are both drawn into the dark side of their own natures, the two protagonists struggle to overcome that dehumanisation through spiritual and hedonistic love. The explicit conflict of realities – between Eve's mythical, allegorical and psychoanalytic reality, on the one hand, and Adam's historic, sociological ontology, on the other – engenders a thematic space in which the story's native and non-native subjects are immersed in the psychontological opacity of human 'being' (verb). Not simply written as subjects of class, race, gender, ideology, nation, culture, religion and so forth, my characters also embody Jungian archetypes, endure Oedipal conflicts and undergo a violent mythical initiation rite to become universal subjects within their contextual specificity. Like Bailey, I have engendered a conceptual space that does not specifically deal with nativist alterity as a philosophical problem, but will surely *impact* on the latter when the play is staged. This may, also, involve a

degree of controversy, although of a different nature to that of Bailey's plays.

Chapter 3: Hondo Love Story: Project Proposal

Executive Summary

For your consideration, Afromojo theatre ensemble presents the following project proposal for *Hondo Love Story*, an experimental African avant-garde musical about the history of Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle movements.

We request financial, administrative and technical support, as well as space, for the purpose of rehearsing, marketing and staging the play in 2009.

We will provide all basic creative resources for the production, including script; lyrics; (pre-recorded) music; imagery; and graphic design. In addition, we will provide core cast members as well as be responsible for selecting extras.

Artistic direction will also be provided by the Afromojo team.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arifani Moyo', enclosed within a faint rectangular border.

Arifani Moyo (Director)

About Afromojo

We are a group of African cultural activists using our professional skills in theatre, dance, music and multimedia performance. Our mission is twofold. First, we aim to bring the people of Africa together, physically and metaphysically, by creating an artistic space in which to share knowledge about our diverse contexts and concerns. Second, we aim to share this knowledge with the people of the world, improving their understanding of us as Africans. Our aesthetic need is to make art that is innovative, challenging and inspiring.

Our works reveal to audiences aspects of African histories, cultures, societies and psyches through the transmission of stories, ideas and experiences. As much as possible, we aim to make all our works strongly thought-provoking. We encourage audiences to interrogate deeply what they know of African life – including what they learn from us – rather than merely consume its spectacle. We believe that such interrogation has become essential in a global world where cultures and identities have become overexposed yet, paradoxically, destructive ignorance, misunderstanding, or simply indifference, persist. We contend that while any form of ‘cultural’ exchange always implies some form of ‘knowledge’ exchange, the latter part needs to be emphasized and made critically conscious. Through this critical consciousness, we as African artists may contribute to the grand project of our World society’s positive ethical and spiritual regeneration.

While we are proud of our African specificity, we espouse the ‘universal’ values of democracy, tolerance, reconciliation, human rights, human equality and social responsibility. Acknowledging and working to address Africa’s challenges in these areas is, for us, a vital part of our activism that is neither contradictory nor inferior to our main, abovementioned, aims. Hence the ‘African’ in our work is not about isolating the Black experience, but about contextualizing the latter as human experience, and relating it to other human experiences in Africa, which are not less African or less important. We are prepared to abandon, if necessary, the ideological safety nets of any of our own inherited and/or institutionalized cultural,

political and moral norms in order to cultivate respect, compassion and understanding. As an ethical requisite, our team is multiracial, multi-ethnic, multicultural and pan-African.

Based in South Africa, we are dedicated to creating opportunities for South Africans while taking the pan-African ideal seriously. We recognize that our entertainment must fulfill a direct educational imperative for the people of this great nation. We must create a space for South Africans to learn about other Africans. This learning begins in the rehearsal room, through the exploration of subject matter that will expose South African participants in our projects to new knowledge and insights about the peoples beyond the border. We insist on African tours of our mobile works, whether or not they can also 'make it' overseas.

While currently focused on exposing our own original work, we will, in our future theatre projects, restore canonical texts by writers from various African countries. We will also help both established and upcoming artists who are not part of our company to execute their visions for groundbreaking new works. In all of the above cases, we will choose scripts and/or project proposals that comply with the artistic and ideological parameters explicated in this document.

About Hondo Love Story

Description

Hondo Love Story is a full-length (two-act) experimental avant-garde musical for at least seven performers. The play's aesthetic concept includes the use of specialised pre-recorded music and sound effects (provided); multimedia projections (images provided); live African traditional drumming; contemporary dance and physical theatre.

Style

The theatrical format is that of an upbeat, hybrid musical event, staged as something midway between a history lecture, a rural African ceremony and a rock concert. This event features a collision of primal and urban elements: from ritualistic drumming and allegorical magical realist storytelling to 1970s underground rock music; edgy light and sound effects; fast-paced multimedia displays; and gritty guerilla dance spectacles. Atmospheric special effects such as disco ball, veejay and smoke machines are an appropriate but non-essential enhancement.

Music

The play uses pre-recorded, computer-generated orchestral simulations for all its sixteen main musical compositions. These were arranged and produced entirely on an early version of the Apple Mac music production program Garageband. The production quality is raw, with an integrated sound concept vaguely based on 1970s underground rock music (e.g. The Doors). The actual musical composition, however, draws upon various well-established popular genres, both past and contemporary, to create an intensely hybrid and eclectic form that includes both urban African and Western elements.

Script & Lyrics

Draft Status: complete (manuscript available on request)

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Subject, Themes and Plot

The play combines social, psychological and spiritual themes to explore a particular historical context. Set in the Zimbabwean 1980s after the anticolonial Liberation Struggle (1966 – 1979), *Hondo Love Story* delves into the murky and contentious history of Zimbabwe's militant movements, which profoundly affected the lives of ordinary people after the war.

The character-driven plot follows the fantastical journey of a historian who gets sent by an ancestral messenger to witness the last days of an unrecognized guerilla war heroine still threatened by the monsters of her past. Their destinies merged through divine intervention, the two characters must survive a series of ordeals involving fatal clashes as the woman becomes estranged from her wartime comrades, one of whom she married, and confronts an old enemy. During the process, the wimpy historian falls in love with the warrior woman, who is too jaded by love to admit her feelings for him. As he is drawn into her violent world, the historian finds himself being seduced into the occult psyche of political extremism and perversity from which no one that lives comes back sane. Hence the play's tagline, 'this music's not for the faint-hearted...' quoted from the song 'Murder Serenade'. Combining fast-paced murder plot, magical mystery and quirky romance, the play takes an ironic and hard-hitting look at the hope, desire, terror and madness of Zimbabwe's postwar society.

Background and Setting

The word 'hondo', in Shona, means 'war'. Two major wars in Zimbabwe's highly conflicted modern history preceded the country's postcolonial African independence in 1980. Among other names, these wars are both called 'Chimurenga', a title derived from the name of a famous militant Shona King. The First Chimurenga (1896 – 1897), or Second Matabele War, was a brief and ill-fated Shona-Ndebele rebellion against British colonization. The Second Chimurenga (1966 – 1979), or Rhodesian Bush War, was a Black Marxist-Nationalist guerilla struggle against the white minority regime of British settler descendants.

The action of *Hondo Love Story* takes place some years after the Second Chimurenga, and not long before the end of South Africa's apartheid regime. Zimbabwe's decline to its current state of emergency has not yet happened, but there is an atmosphere of imminent catastrophe as the country remains in the grip of violent political tensions left over from the Struggle.

As Zimbabweans of that generation are well aware, the 1980s were a time of devastating postwar violence as the paranoid ruling party deployed a specialized section of the national army to massacre tens of thousands of people in the southern province of Matabeleland. These massacres were orchestrated primarily to annihilate political opposition, but because of ethno-territorial patterns of political membership, the operation effectively became an ethnic cleansing movement. While the play does not deal specifically with this event, it does confront the issue of postwar violence more intimately through the personal plight of its main characters, who are all confronted with the cyclical violence of their traumatic past.

This intimate personal reality, which includes the characters' religious beliefs, superstitions and/or psychological neuroses, influences, disturbs and manifests in their violent objective reality. The characters exist in an occult world where dreams, prophecies, fantasies, nightmares, magic, witchcraft, spirits and ancestors are just as visible and true as the physical world, but in a different way for each person. Memory and history are thus unstable, subject to

being distorted by perverse imaginings. Facts are everywhere but the 'truth' is unattainable. Minds can be telepathically invaded and read, so that their most vulnerable and repressed secrets are discovered. The total reality that the characters experience together is thus fragmented, entangled and dangerously contested. In such an environment, paranoia is rife and arguments about what happened in the past can lead to deadly confrontations.

In terms of drama, however, the story is written in an accessible linear format that uses mainstream Hollywood conventions of narrative and character development, with 'realistic' relationship conflicts and logical turning points. The plot also takes the literary shape of a mythical allegory which appropriates a well-known Bible story for its symbolic ironies.

Synopsis

Adam (35), a pacifist 'white liberal' and passionate historian of the Zimbabwe Liberation Struggle, collapses one day while giving a lecture on one of his books. In a dream, an ancestral messenger gives him instructions to follow later that evening, after regaining consciousness. Adam must go on a special mission whose purpose is unexplained and for which he will need to bring a shovel.

The mission involves Eve (30), a former guerrilla freedom fighter, whom Adam is to find in the most unlikely of places: the informal red light district. Adam knows the area well because he has driven past many times, observing the street prostitutes with curious fascination. When Adam and Eve meet, she has been waiting for him, having also had a dream. Neither knows the purpose of their fated and awkward introduction, which quickly becomes tempestuous after Adam, because of where they are, mistakes Eve for a prostitute.

While they are arguing, they get interrupted by Dragon (40), Eve's husband and former military commander from the war days, who arrives unexpectedly on the scene. A paranoid, vengeful and psychically damaged alcoholic who has never left his past, Dragon believes that

he has accidentally caught his wife whoring herself to the 'white imperialist', whom he attacks with a knife. Believing that the ancestors willed her meeting with Adam, Eve intervenes to prevent sacrilegious bloodshed, and a deadly physical struggle ensues between husband and wife, while Adam cowers. Just when Dragon is about to murder Eve, Adam abandons his pacifism and hacks Dragon to death with the shovel.

Adam is hysterically traumatised by the gruesome scene, while Eve takes the initiative in dealing with the crisis and voices her disapproval of Adam's unmanly weakness. During the passionate exchange, they both become entranced by an occult desire and explode into a hedonistic lovemaking ritual attended by invisible Spirits, and followed by tenderness as the divine marriage is sealed. Realising afterwards that they are now partners in a heinous crime, however, the lovers must bury Dragon's body and run away together before the Serpents, Dragon's dangerous wartime comrades, begin to search for him.

The lovers begin a new, rootless and carefree life together, travelling aimlessly on the open road, until Eve has another dream, in which they are instructed to invade a white-owned farm. The dream promises a bloody confrontation in which either they or the armed hermit who lives on the property will die. Despite his extreme reluctance, Eve convinces Adam to participate in her assassination plan by entering the farmhouse and luring the hermit out for the violent deed.

The plan goes wrong when the hermit turns out to be Uncle George (55), Adam's long estranged childhood father figure, a former sergeant in the Rhodesian army. A raging, racist psychopath still bitter about Rhodesia's defeat, Uncle George tries to connect with his quietly unimpressed nephew by boasting about the black people he has killed during the war and afterwards in clashes with farm invaders. Adam finally loses patience when Uncle George reveals a jar containing the preserved penis of one of his most recent kills. Adam's protest leads to an argument, which ends when Eve appears suddenly and kills Uncle George with Dragon's knife. As Eve is claiming the spoils, Adam can no longer tolerate the violence of

Eve's world, and breaks up with her.

Before Adam can leave the house, the Serpents, a formidable guerrilla chorus led by Cobra (35), arrive suddenly, having tracked the lovers down through black magic. The Serpents have been sent by Dragon's soothsayer to avenge Dragon's murder, but with a special and sacred decree: they can only kill the one, guilty perpetrator. As Dragon's former second in command – who bitterly coveted Eve while she was with Dragon during the war – Cobra interrogates the lovers to determine the killer. When Adam and Eve defiantly cover up for each other, Cobra decides to have them both tortured and left alone to bleed, letting divine fate decide who will live and who will die so that Dragon's justice is served. It is Eve who dies, in Adam's arms.

Adam endures weeks of grief and depression until his ancestral messenger finally returns and offers Adam a unique opportunity to use Eve's memory to change his own life...

Space and Touring Logistics

Set Design

While open to interpretation, the play is most suited to a spacious and minimalist set design, so that the play's aesthetic emphasis is on light, costume and background visual, audio and performative elements. Staging requirements (detailed list below) include: basic sound and vocal amplification facilities; multimedia projection screen; an arrangement of African skin drums, traditional percussion and mbira ('thumb piano'); Adam's lectern; and the cross section of Adam's car, which can be as minimal as two isolated car seats and freestanding steering wheel. The car seats are transformed into couches for Uncle George's lounge in Scene 6, after which they are not needed for the remainder of the play. Atmospheric special effects such as disco ball, smoke machines and atmospheric veejay are optional extras.

Venue Adaptability

The simple, concert-like arrangement means that the play is spatially adaptable to a variety of venues. It is equally comfortable to perform on the raised proscenium arch; the makeshift rally stage; an unconventional outdoor setup; a roomy Grahamstown National Arts Festival community/fringe venue; or a well-built studio theatre. A challenge, however, will be the sound acoustics of less professional venues.

Transportability

The artistic emphasis on theatrical minimalism and fairly standard technological arrangements means that the set can be transported with relatively little fuss (by theatre standards) while not compromising on aesthetic concept and spectacle.

Cast Size

Reducing the cast size to its more tour-friendly recommended minimum of seven performers will impose additional investment on costume and makeup resources, due to the necessity of role doubling. There is a specific casting arrangement for this, explained in the script, which will ensure smooth stage logistics for performers while also keeping the play's dramatic and metaphorical meanings intact.

Audience and Marketing

Accessibility

The play is accessible to adult English-speaking, cosmopolitan and Afropolitan, audiences. It will be most stimulating to those with some awareness of the broad issues of African colonial and anticolonial history. However, the script approaches context through an 'educational'

frame in order to guide the less aware. Factual knowledge of history is thus not necessary, since all essential facts and figures are written into the dialogue of the play. Furthermore, since one of the two main protagonists is a white historian confronting an alien reality, audiences who feel very foreign to the black African anticolonial context can still engage fully with the most important emotional relationship tensions in the play.

While thematically layered and contextually complex, audiences will not have to grasp the play's deeper intellectuality in order to be mentally fulfilled. Moreover, the story structure and emotional subtext are composed according to mainstream Hollywood conventions of narrative and character development, with which most audiences are familiar.

Restrictions

An age restriction will be required, owing to the strong language throughout the play, sexually explicit imagery (projected) and simulated stage sex in Act 1. An advisory to sensitive viewers may also be needed for disturbing (projected) images of violence toward the end of Act 2.

Audience Targeting and Marketing

The play can be marketed to two types of audiences. It may appeal, on the one hand, to mature and open-minded audiences looking for sophisticated, intellectual, artistically challenging and/or socially and politically conscious theatre. It may also attract those, including younger, audiences desiring the 'fresh', 'edgy', 'hardcore', 'transgressive' and 'hip' theatre.

Potential selling points include: 1970s underground rock music; magical realist storytelling; a sensual, forbidden romance; a sensationalistic murder saga; irreverent political commentary; edgy light and sounds effects; fast-paced multimedia displays; and the human spectacles of song, African drumming, urban dance, and physical theatre.

Branding

In addition to its professional reputation, a public identity will be created for the Afrojojo theatre ensemble that is more appealing to ordinary people, as part of a branding strategy for the play and its successors.

Extended Historical Background

Below is some more detailed information about the historical legacies that have created the social and political contexts explored in *Hondo Love Story*. This is not an authoritative historian's account, but a summary of my accumulated general knowledge as a Zimbabwean-born-and-raised playwright. Such 'knowledge' is necessarily framed by my personal perspective, which has developed through a lifetime of learning from school curricula, television, national culture and old people's stories. The life experiences of all the characters in the play are either shaped or affected by this history.

Political Overview

Most of the play's characters are war veterans of the Zimbabwe Liberation Struggle of the 1970s, also known as the 'Second Chimurenga' or 'Rhodesian Bush War'. Rhodesia was Zimbabwe's colonial name during the 'white settler' minority rule over indigenous black African peoples and their lands. The war was fought between the Rhodesian government and competing factions of the Zimbabwean Black-Marxist-Nationalist movement, who together sought to destabilize the economy through guerilla warfare. After a devastating Struggle, internationally mediated talks between rival leaders led to Rhodesia's first non-segregated election and Zimbabwe's subsequent independence under black majority rule in 1980.

On Guerilla Warfare

During the war, most of the black guerillas were young rural people, both male and female, who left their homes quietly at night to train in secret camps in the foreign wildernesses of Zambia and Mozambique. They returned across the border as fierce revolutionary underground soldiers living dangerously in the bush and surviving on small animals. They attacked mainly civilian homes, transport systems and public establishments – including farms, villages, busses, roads, missions and hospitals. Casualties included both black and white victims. Pursued by the ground and air militaries of the Rhodesian Security Forces, the guerillas were constantly on the move, attempting to remain stealthy and elusive.

On Community Rituals

When they passed villages, the formidable guerillas wielded considerable power over the rural black populaces, commanding temporary sustenance and support, as well as inciting uninitiated youths to join the Struggle. Much of this interaction took place during secret midnight meetings, called ‘pungwes’, in the bushes and hills of the village outskirts. The meetings were attended by ‘chimbwidos’, women who provided food and entertainment; and ‘mujibas’, men who acted as watchers and informers for the guerillas. Most of the participants were young people.

On Gender

The sexual and labor exploitation of female participants in the Struggle, both near the villages and in the training camps, is a politically controversial and documented topic that has also been explored by some Zimbabwean writers. In addition, the issue was extensively probed in Ingrid Sinclair’s acclaimed film, *Flame*, which premièred in Cape Town in 1996 after surviving Zimbabwean censorship and went on to gain international accolades for the country at festivals like the Cannes.

On Atrocity

While the official line on *pungwes* often emphasizes the ceremonial sharing of revolutionary songs, slogans and dancing, the public exposure and ritualistic punishment of accused political ‘sellouts’ and moral ‘degenerates’ is a more sinister and well-documented part of this history. A puritanical law unto themselves, the guerillas dealt mercilessly with alleged whores, witches, adulterers and fornicators as well as informers for the Rhodesian police. Usually, it was not possible to differentiate genuine political and moral enemies from victims of mendacious and petty agendas in the village. Punishments included rape, mutilation, extreme humiliation and brutal executions.

Similarly, the Rhodesian Security Forces’ ‘anti-terrorist’ efforts included more institutionally organized apartheid-style detentions, torture, arson, espionage, bombing and extortion. In terms of extreme bodily torture methods, however, the Marxist guerillas, influenced by brutal communist movements overseas, arguably committed the most harrowing atrocities. Whatever the case, civilians were the main sufferers, caught in the middle of a lethal competition between guerillas and Rhodesian police, for their fearful allegiance.

On Spirituality

While some novices in the guerilla Struggle were envious of the almost superhuman status and seeming absolute moral autonomy of the freedom fighters at the villages, others, especially older volunteers, were inspired by the instructions of their local spiritual leaders. In many villages, there were revolutionary shamans, or spirit mediums, who claimed to be the reincarnated souls of ancient Zimbabwean heroes or heroines.

The most famous heroine is Nehanda, who was originally a powerful empress in the ancient Shona kingdom, long before the European settlers’ arrival. Before her return during the 1970s,

she was reincarnated during the 1800s as a revolutionary prophetess who became one of the martyred leaders of the First Chimurenga – a brief and ill-fated uprising against British colonization. On the day of her execution, she is said to have prophesied the coming of the Second Chimurenga moments before her death. Usually referred to reverentially as Mbuya Nehanda, meaning ‘Grandmother Nehanda’, she has since become something like a patron saint for Zimbabwean nationalism.

Apart from the revered legacy of spirit mediums, occult phenomena such as witchcraft and magic have always remained a part of the political imagination of the religious and superstitious masses in Zimbabwe.

Characters (Extended)

Adam

Adam (white; male; 35) is a liberal-pacifist, a secular rationalist and an avid historian of the Zimbabwe liberation struggle who has written many books. Divorced and childless, he has completely devoted his life and work to the cause of helping humankind to learn from its tragic history in order to do better in the future progress of civilization.

A lover of Africa and Africans, and interminably curious, Adam also has a neurotic and perverse fascination with street prostitutes, whom he sometimes visits. But it is not their bodies that he is interested in. Adam befriends the women and interviews them about their real lives, trying to get as much truth from them as possible. This strange pastime is his desperate attempt to cure his loneliness and existential malaise. By escaping from his daily life to consume these women’s far more dramatic life stories, he gets to live dangerously vicariously through them.

Adam’s character journey in the play is the most substantial as he must lose everything he

treasures in order to gain a powerful new gift. During the course of the play, Adam is plunged into the depths of a world that challenges his entire world view, his ideals and his ethical assumptions. It is a world in which he is classified as the enemy, despite his altruistic intentions – a painful realization. Adam's journey climaxes with the violent confrontation and purging of his own disavowed negrophilic racism, as he learns to love the most unlovable things about his beloved country. He emerges not as a jingoist, but as a deeper, more creative and radically empathic thinker – symbolized by his final decision to become a playwright.

Eve

Eve (black; female; 30) is a proletarian city dweller who left her rural home at the age of fourteen to join the guerilla Struggle. She fell in love with one of her comrades, who was also her commander, and married him after independence. The marriage soon began to fall apart as the pair of unrecognized war heroes struggled to make a living with no professional skills or educational qualifications. From surviving the trauma of war, Eve endured years of her husband's physical and emotional abuse. Deeply religious and by nature militant about any cause to which she commits herself, Eve is prepared to go anywhere and do anything if she believes that it is the will of the ancestors.

While spiritually inclined, however, Eve is no stranger to the dark side of her own human nature. Her neurosis is bloodlust, which is also sexually arousing. It is concealed from her own conscience, however, so that during the war her decision to become a soldier would have been more consciously motivated by her ancestral beliefs. Subconsciously, she was driven by her infatuation for the guerilla leader whose group had visited her village. She envied his dangerous life and also desired him. When she joined the army and he became her lover, they experienced passionate romance in the thick of a sadistic war. Their marriage after independence was already doomed, then, without that deviant carnality that had had unlimited expression during the war and thus bonded them emotionally.

In the course of the play, Eve progresses from rediscovering her past to becoming free of her aggressions. She discovers the vulnerable freedom of choosing to love the enemy.

Dragon

Comrade Dragon (black; male; 40) is Eve's husband, a proletarian city dweller who spent his entire youth and early adulthood serving as a soldier and later a military commander in the guerilla Struggle. Once an attractive and dynamic young revolutionary, he lost his glory and sense of purpose when the war ended. Struggling to cope with the new times, both materially and psychologically, Dragon became a heavy drinker and a wife beater. Unable to escape his extremely violent past, he also became paranoid. His culturally inherited superstitions and outdated wartime radicalism became justifications for more violence. Convinced that witches, whores and imperialists were conspiring everywhere, Dragon continued to summon his wartime minions to help him murder people. His mind and soul immersed in psychopathic hell, significant parts of his humanity have been damaged beyond repair.

Uncle George

Uncle George (white; male; 55) is Adam's childhood father figure who served in the Rhodesian army and bought a farm after the war. Adam's memories of him are mixed, with suggestions of severe emotional abuse. Not overly concerned about growing crops and nurturing the land, Uncle George has settled into a hermit lifestyle with no other company but his guard dogs, and no more treasured possessions than his guns. Still living in his nationalistic past, he remembers Rhodesia's political defeat bitterly, and predicts the downfall of the newly independent Zimbabwe under the communist regime. He has continued to fight a private war against occasional farm invaders. His dogs help him kill and dismember enemies, whose intimate body parts he collects and preserves in jars as souvenirs. Like Dragon, his tortured soul has gone to hell.

The Serpents

The Serpents of Hell (chorus of four: black; mostly male; ± 30) are a group of peasants who previously served in the guerilla army under Dragon's command. Like Dragon, they all failed to adjust to normal life after the war and remained superstitious, psychically damaged, homicidal and fascist. As war veterans, they became Dragon's minions and perpetrated further pointless atrocities with him. They all know Eve as their former comrade.

Cobra

Comrade Cobra (black; male; 35) is one of the four Serpents, and Dragon's envious second-in-command who also secretly desired Eve.

Chasarandi

Chasarandi (black; male; ancient) is an African ancestral wizard who appears in dreams or hallucinations and acts as an inscrutable and sinister herald from the netherworld. Surrounded by smoke, mystery and a chorus of Spirits, Chasarandi speaks in riddles and non sequiturs. He can see the future and the past.

The 'real' Chasarandi on which the character in the play is based was a figure of peasant folklore in Zimbabwe's mountainous eastern province of Manicaland, near the border to Mozambique. Never seen by mortal eyes, he settled on a mountainside overlooking the rural areas, and was gifted with various magical powers, including the ability to fly. His original home, to which he sometimes returned, was in Nyasaland (Malawi), hence the name Chasarandi, 'the thing/being from Nyasaland'.

His most well-known power is that which he exercised on the minds of young people of the villages during the war, to get them to join the Struggle. At night, so the legend goes, he lit

fires and beat drums which intoxicated and entranced the youth with the smoke and rhythm of revolutionary fervor. This was the only way, it was reasoned, that well-raised teenagers could sneak away from their homes at night and wander off to war without parental knowledge and consent. Chasarandi was thus part of a comforting hero myth to help rationalize the permanent and traumatic loss of young people, sometimes in large groups at once, from their families and communities.

Spirits

The Spirits (chorus: unspecified) are ethereal beings from the netherworld, who gather around Chasarandi during his appearances but also remain active in his ostensible absence from the immediate world. Guardian spirits to mortals, they can only be seen by immortals.

Other Roles

Prostitutes (chorus: black; female; various ages), Eve's Mother (black; female; 40), and Adam's Assistant (young female) appear briefly to fulfill functional and/or symbolic roles, as well as support lead singers throughout the play.

Story Outline (Extended)

The following is a complete and detailed scene-by-scene, beat-by-beat analysis of the play as it will be seen by audiences. I summarize dialogue and describe actions as well as aspects of character development, though I do not repeat the character descriptions above. Each paragraph constitutes a beat and begins with a statement of the main dramatic task tension of that beat. Songs are included as separate beats.

Prologue

In the song 'This is a War', Eve, as a rural teenage girl growing up in the war-torn

Zimbabwean 1970s, must make her final decision to become a guerilla freedom fighter in the Struggle. Dragon and the Serpents introduce the historical and social context of the war, and then wait in the background while Eve argues with her disapproving and devastated Mother about the decision. The bitter exchange is cut short when Dragon gets impatient and pressures Eve to finish her goodbyes quickly in order to attend to the far more important work of the revolution. Eve goes with the guerillas, leaving her mother sorely disappointed and predicting the worst for her daughter in the lawless company of young wild boys. Eve and her newfound comrades sing and dance fatalistically into their bleak future.

Scene 1

In the first beat, Adam must answer his calling, which finds him in a lecture room, delivering a seminar on one of his books about the Struggle. As Adam explains his focus on the role of grassroots music in motivating anticolonial resistance, a sudden stinging sensation in his ribs interrupts his speech a couple of times and develops into a sharp pain which makes him breathless. As Adam begins talking about musically induced trance, he becomes entranced and fails to respond to the concern of his Assistant. Adam hears a call from beyond his surroundings, and responds, then faints.

In the second beat, Adam must receive instructions from Chasarandi, who enters his unconscious dream space to herald the adventure. Chasarandi does not introduce himself, but rather teases and tests Adam's intellectuality with obscure questions and verbal challenges, which Adam is somehow compelled to answer. Chasarandi claims to have a job for Adam to do. Adam must tell a story, a fable, for Chasarandi. Adam claims that he is not interested in fables, since he is a historian and an academic realist who believes that all questions deserve properly researched answers. As they continue to argue about history and the nature of reality, Chasarandi criticizes Adam's academic idealism and inability to recognize the reality of dreams and fables, but promises an opportunity for Adam to learn. Adam is informed that while they are talking, time is passing in the world outside, so that when Adam wakes up, he

will be back home after being taken to hospital, examined and discharged, conscious but still half in Chasarandi's trance. Chasarandi gives Adam instructions to follow later that evening. Adam is to go to the informal red light district, a place he knows well, in town, and find a woman named 'Eve'. Plus, Adam is to take a shovel with him. After Chasarandi refuses Adam's request for further explanation, Adam accepts the mission.

Scene 2

In the song 'Streets of Easy Love', Adam must find Eve in the area where the prostitutes loiter. As he drives, Adam contemplates about his activities here, remembering the first time he ever spoke to one of the prostitutes. He declined to use her normal services and asked for a conversation about her life. Instead she made him talk about his. While a raucous chorus of prostitutes demonstrates their street seductions, Adam admits to being addicted to these drives, and attributes the addiction to his desperate loneliness. As the song ends, Adam, still deep in thought, stops suddenly before running over Eve, who appears out of the darkness and is standing confidently on the road.

In the second beat, Adam and Eve must get acquainted. When Adam steps out of the car, he and Eve instantly recognize each other. He offers her a lift, and they have their first, awkward conversation. It seems that neither understands the purpose of this fated encounter. Adam does most of the talking, clearly intimidated by Eve's silent, inscrutable presence. Soon Adam's nervousness gets the better of him as he begins to confess randomly to Eve about his relationship with the prostitutes. He assures Eve that he does not have sex with any of the women, explaining that he is only perversely curious about their life experiences and interested in interviewing them for a pastime. In a blundering moment, Adam reveals that he had presumed that Eve is one of these women, and offers to make an exception for her regarding his sexual abstinence. Eve is extremely offended and agitated by all this, and demands to get out of the car. Unable to calm her down, Adam stops the car, but follows Eve on foot, pleading for her patience. When she ignores him, Adam grabs Eve's arm to stop her.

In the song 'Where I Come From', Eve asserts her disapproval of Adam, who must defend himself. She accuses him of sexual racism and warns that he is dangerously ignorant of her true identity. Adam denies the accusation and blames his strange behavior on the surreal conditions of their whole encounter, which has challenged his secular rationalism and skepticism. Adam recants his earlier suggestion that he desired Eve's body, and also rejects her as a friendship prospect, claiming that he is no longer interested in knowing anything about her at all. He declares that it is her loss, since he would have made a good, sympathetic listener. The song ends with a stalemate to their vocal and danced face-off.

In the fourth beat, Adam and Eve must confront Dragon, who arrives unexpectedly on the scene. From the outset, Dragon's racism, misogyny, drunkenness and violent nature are apparent. Outraged to see Eve in the present location, at night, and with a white man, instead of being at home cooking his dinner like a good, moral wife, Dragon demands an explanation. Eve can only speak of the dream that brought her and Adam together for what she imagines must surely be a divine purpose. Unconvinced, Dragon accuses Eve of witchcraft, prostitution and political disloyalty comparable to treason – casting her as a 'sellout' and Adam as the 'white imperialist' who is buying her body and soul. Adam's peacemaking efforts are quickly deterred by Dragon's threats of mutilation with a pocket dagger from Dragon's war days. Eve tries to appease Dragon and persuade him that his paranoia is unfounded; the war and the colonial threat are over. Inconsolable, Dragon finally launches into Adam, but Eve blocks the way, taking Dragon to the ground. A deadly tussle ensues between Dragon and Eve while Adam cowers behind his car. Dragon quickly overpowers Eve and batters her gravely before announcing his intention to kill her. She begs him desperately to change his mind, but to no avail.

In the song 'Murder Serenade', Dragon and Eve must have their final, and fatal, marital showdown. Responding sarcastically to Eve's plea for her life, Dragon ironically appropriates the Hamlet idiom and ponders aloud whether or not he should kill Eve. He decides that there

is no turning back from the homicidal trance induced by their musical seduction to violence. Eve comes to the realization that the marriage has long failed, and now acknowledges that her attraction to Dragon has also faded. Just as Dragon is about to deliver the lethal strike, Adam appears suddenly, with shovel in hand, and wallops Dragon gruesomely out of the way, instantly killing him. Adam then lyrically and melodically appropriates what would have been Dragon's final verse to finish the song.

In the sixth beat, Adam and Eve must try to cope with the crisis of Dragon's death. Adam is shocked and traumatized by his own actions, which go against his liberal-pacifist values. Hysterically distressed, sorrowful and irrational, Adam alternates between moral self-flagellation and projecting his judgmental anger onto Eve. While Eve calmly tries to console him, Adam condemns what he sees as her culture's lack of diplomacy, and also disapproves of what he sees as her callous composure in the midst of all this horror. Eve soon becomes impatient and withdraws her maternal act, reverting to her tougher wartime personality and attempting to slap some sense into Adam. She forbids him from indulging in any more theatrical displays of his weakness, which she neither regards as useful for their now joint survival nor finds desirable in a man. When all this proves futile, Eve decides to abandon Adam and walks away. Terrified at the prospect of being left alone in this situation, Adam scrambles after Eve and stops her.

In the song 'The Killer Instinct', Adam must prove his worth to Eve as a survival comrade, by mastering the aggressive performance of his primal manhood. In his first verse, he fails to impress with his bad rebel postures and cliché death lyrics. Seeing Eve's attention fade, Adam offensively takes possession of Eve's body and utters extreme obscenities at her. Finally convinced of his military and sexual potential, Eve joins Adam in the song's chorus. Together they become entranced by traumatic and hedonistic Dionysian passions, exploding into wild, dirty and loud lovemaking. Unbeknown to them, a host of invisible Spirits celebrates around the lovemaking in its own danced explosion of lewdness and rhythm. Adam and Eve climax together to musical cues and fall asleep in each other's arms.

Scene 3

In the first beat, Adam must learn Eve's side of the Chimurenga story as the two begin to bond intellectually. Eve describes her early adolescent contact with the guerillas and their cause while Adam intervenes with prodding questions. He expresses his moral contentions with the guerillas' violent and repressive ideology. As Eve explains her personal perspective at the time, the debate evolves into a sharing of general knowledge and reality perspectives about the long history of Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle movements. Displaying his passion for that history, Adam impresses Eve with his grasp of the facts. As they return to the present reality, Eve summarizes for Adam's curiosity the history of her wartime relationship with, and postwar marriage to, Dragon. She describes Dragon's decline to alcoholism and the paranoia that lead to his postwar atrocities. Eve tells Adam about the Serpents, who helped Dragon, and alerts Adam to the fact that their vengeance might be imminent. She proposes to bury Dragon's body. When Adam does not understand how the Serpents, with their limited resources as peasant war veterans, will know who killed Dragon, Eve explains that the Serpents have magicians at their disposal, who use dream sorcery to learn the truth. Despite his incredulity, Eve convinces Adam to take the threat seriously.

In the song 'Bury the Body', Adam must dig Dragon's grave while Eve encourages him and contemplates the tragedy of Dragon's ruined life. She speaks of Dragon's survival prowess on the battlefield, his revered leadership among comrades, and the decline of the whole group to futility, desperation, addiction and pathological violence after the war. Eve continues to emphasize to Adam the danger of not doing a good job in hiding the evidence of Dragon's murder. Adam becomes interested in hearing more about Eve's romance with Dragon during the war and her motivation for becoming a guerilla. Eve relates nostalgically her youthful infatuation with Dragon's impressive personality and their larger-than-life wartime love story, which ended in disappointment. As the song approaches its conclusion and Adam completes the burial, Eve becomes emotional and curses Dragon to hell for all the pain to which he

finally subjected her.

In the third beat, Adam and Eve must decide on their next step. Eve proposes that they both leave the city and have no future contact with any of Dragon's spiritual remnants on earth, which means having no contact with any of the places in which Dragon may have spent the night and dreamed. This avoidance is the only way, Eve believes, to insure that they cannot be traced by the dream sorcery of the Serpents' magicians. Adam comes to the realization that he must leave behind his entire life as he knows it – his home; career; and social circles – for good. Eve convinces him of the absolute necessity of the sacrifice. As they go to the car, Adam stops and asks to clarify the nature of their relationship, hoping to confirm verbally that they are now a couple. Eve is ambivalent, preferring to only talk about survival. Their debate reveals broader philosophical differences: Adam's neurotic need to actualize everything in words versus Eve's preference to accept the mysteries of life. Adam gets carried away with emotion and wants Eve to share in his sense of romance.

In the song 'Fly With Me/Don't Call It Love', Adam and Eve must agree on the terms of their partnership. Just as Adam's lyrical effusion of sentimentality begins to entice Eve, Adam fumbles upon the word 'love', ruining the mood. Eve asserts that she could never truly fall in love again. During a musically serenaded pause, Adam kisses Eve, but fails to persuade her. As Eve goes to the car, she reasserts her position in a reprise. As Adam follows, he joins her in the reprise, acquiescing to her relationship preferences and promising never to say the forbidden word. The song ends as they drive into the sunrise.

[Fifteen-minute interval]

Scene 4

In the song 'Awake in Me', Adam must find his own piece of mind to complement the harmony that he has found with Eve. As he drives aimlessly and optimistically on the open

road, with Eve asleep on the seat next to him, Adam quietly remembers the series of unexpected events that have led to his present situation. He is becoming comfortable with being submerged in Eve's unfamiliar and uncertain reality while sharing her uprooted existence. However, he still cannot help needing to define his feelings verbally and thus obsessing about the question of love.

In the second beat, Adam and Eve must respond to a new calling, which Eve announces as she wakes up from a visionary dream. Entranced, Eve describes a depreciated farm that has barren and fruitless land and is almost completely deserted except for one white man and his dogs. Eve believes that the farm has been promised to her and Adam, so that they can live on it and make the land productive again. However, they must kill the hermit, who has guns and will defend his property to the death. Adam is incredulous of all aspects of the dream, from the absence of workers and family to the notion of revitalizing a wasted farm with no equipment. Eve challenges Adam not to falter on his newfound belief in the reality of dreams. Adam concedes, but remains unhappy about the prospect of bloodshed. As the conversation becomes allegorical of Zimbabwe's topical issues, Adam offers to use his foreign connections to help Eve to find a new home in South Africa, rather than die for Zimbabwean land. Fatalistically, Eve insists that this violent land reform is the will of the ancestors; effectively a continuation of the unfinished work of the anticolonial Liberation Struggle, subsequent to which black people remained poor and landless. The murder of the white farmer will thus be a symbolic act with physical consequences. When Adam's rational ethical arguments against such atrocity fail to compel, Adam admits that he has fallen in love with Eve and is no longer interested in her survival tutorship. Still offended by the concept of love, Eve questions Adam's sincerity with it and challenges his loyalty. As soon as Adam accepts defeat in the argument, they arrive at the farm gate.

In the song 'Somebody's Property', Adam and Eve must reach the farmhouse. As Adam drives slowly toward it, they both take account of the murky sky, ominous silence and general eerie ambiance of the desolate place. While Adam finds the atmosphere disturbing, Eve anticipates

the pending bloodbath with calm acceptance of life's uncertainty. In unison they concur that their trespassing is immoral, but their voices part in responding emotionally to the fact. Adam anguishes about Eve's refusal to choose his love over her war, while Eve reprises her intention to bury the enemy. They arrive at the farmhouse as the song ends.

In the fourth beat, Adam and Eve must strategize their invasion. Ignoring his last-minute objections, Eve instructs Adam to go to the farmhouse and lure the farmer out with a friendly face and a fib about needing some emergency petrol supplies. Eve plans to assassinate the farmer as soon as he arrives at the car. Reluctantly, Adam goes.

Scene 5

In the first beat, Adam must make contact with the farmer. When there is no response to Adam's knocking at the verandah front door, Adam pauses, exasperated. A coin is suddenly thrown in front of him, and while he is distracted by it, a rifle is held to his head. A torrent of profane insults and threatening orders ensues. It is only when the speaker promises to feed Adam's testicles to the dogs that Adam suddenly recognizes the ranting psychopathic voice of his Uncle George, who is responsible for Adam's childhood memory of the exact scenario. Adam identifies himself to Uncle George, who recognizes his long lost nephew after a few clues. Maintaining his brashness, Uncle George invites Adam into the house for a drink.

Scene 6

In the first beat, Adam and Uncle George must catch up. During the conversation, Adam learns that Uncle George, who has no farming history or expertise, acquired the property from a friend after Zimbabwe's independence forced an end to Uncle George's Rhodesian military career. The previous white landowner migrated after some farm invaders murdered his wife and two daughters. While Adam is moved by the story, Uncle George is more interested in venting his extreme racist views; for he blames the tragedy on what he sees as the moral

weakness of the victimized family's male head, who had always sympathized with black people. Distancing himself from such sympathy, Uncle George boasts his latest victory to Adam – eight farm invaders recently torn to pieces by Uncle George's dogs. As a souvenir, which Uncle George shows to Adam, the dismembered penis of one of the deceased is preserved in a jar, a practice Uncle George remembers from his war days. Horrified at the sight, Adam refuses to touch the jar when offered and condemns Uncle George's barbarous behavior. Taking offence, Uncle George reminds Adam of the equal barbarity of the Marxist guerillas. When Adam tries to reason with him using the rhetoric of international diplomacy, Uncle George condemns the entire world using the rhetoric of paranoid Rhodesian nationalism. Resenting the Western diplomacy that helped Zimbabwe to gain independence under black majority rule, Uncle George predicts imminent disaster for the country.

In the song 'When Blacks Took Over', Adam and Uncle George must confront their radical differences. As Uncle George continues his rampage of cynical remarks about how communist anarchy, inefficiency, corruption and terror are destroying the country's political economy, Adam tries to convince him that there is hope for improvement through reconciliation and cooperation between racial and political polarities. In response, Uncle George condescends Adam for futile and naïve idealism. Uncle George also claims that things were much better during white rule. The more Adam calls out for reconciliation, the more Uncle George's far more dominant voice dictates the main melody of the song, until it soars with his declaration that he can never feel anything but pure hatred for the blacks. Eve appears suddenly and stabs Uncle George with Dragon's dagger. As Uncle George dies dramatically in Eve's grasp, Eve reciprocates Uncle George's hateful sentiment in the final verse.

In the third beat, Adam and Eve must take their spoils. As Eve declares the victory, however, Adam, traumatized, wonders when the bloodshed will ever end for Zimbabwe, and gets angry at Eve's cold esoteric justifications. She reminds him of his strategic part in the murder and he accuses her of mindless bloodlust. The escalating argument pauses when Adam reveals his familial relation to Uncle George, but Eve fails to appreciate Adam's guilt, offering

reassurances about their chance to start a new life together. Adam begins to doubt her intentions altogether and walks away, ignoring her panicked request not to abandon her. Before Adam can get far, Cobra and the Serpents arrive suddenly by nosily breaking into the house and overpowering Adam and Eve.

In the song ‘Smite!’, Cobra must lead the Serpents in a group self-introduction while announcing his group’s mission. Cobra explains that Dragon’s dream trails were stumbled upon, leading to the discovery of Dragon’s death and the decree of his magicians, who analyzed Dragon’s spiritual remnants, that the murder must be avenged. The Serpents were given directions to find Adam and Eve, and must now determine who the killer is between the two. While they would prefer to kill both, they are only allowed to execute the one deserving culprit as part of a sacred purification ritual for Dragon’s soul. Boasting their legendary status for their wartime sadism, the Serpents promise the most brutal execution for the unlucky candidate who will be chosen for their punishment.

In the fifth beat, Eve and Adam must face Cobra’s judgment. As the sarcastic conversation starts between Eve and Cobra, there is an immediate sense of past relationship tensions between them that are more personal than the present conflict. Enjoying his power over her, Cobra teases Eve with mock reunion courtesies and is amused by her witty defiance. When Cobra spitefully introduces the subject of Eve’s treasonous relationship with Adam, Eve mentions the embarrassing topic of Cobra’s longtime secret envy of Dragon – both as group leader and as Eve’s spouse. In retaliation, Cobra points out that it was Adam’s prolific sexual imagination that helped the Serpents’ magicians to trace Adam and Eve’s dream trails to the present location. Having seen Adam’s many fantasies about black women, Cobra suggests to Eve that she is merely an object of racial degradation for Adam. Eve torments Cobra’s jealousy by pointing out that she has gladly given Adam more than fantasies. Affronted, Cobra divulges Eve’s most delicate secret. Her real name, abandoned when she joined the Struggle as Comrade Eve, is ‘Rudo’, which, as Adam knows, is Shona for ‘love’. For the first time completely exposed and vulnerable, Eve demands that Cobra hurry up with the

execution, blaming herself for Dragon's death. Adam, for the first time completely understanding Eve, refutes her claim and demands that he be executed. To Cobra's amusement, they argue and compete with each other for the Serpents' punishment. Recognizing Eve's familiar resolve, Adam soon realizes that he cannot stop her from dying for him, and pleads with her not to sacrifice herself, until he has an emotional breakdown. As compelling as Eve is, however, Cobra will not risk killing the wrong person, in case he gets cursed for failing to avenge Dragon. Cobra decrees that both Adam and Eve will be tortured and left to bleed with an equally slim chance of survival. Then the Spirits must decide on each victim's fate – presumably, nature's own law will make sure that Dragon's justice is served.

In the song 'Kangaroo Court', Cobra must lead the Serpents in teaching the audience about guerilla Marxist torture methods in a raucous and satirical lesson that soon turns horrific. While manhandling and molesting the victims in small but threateningly suggestive ways, the Serpents proclaim their intention to burn Adam and brutally rape Eve. It is a medieval trial in which execution precedes verdict. In the song's instrumental climax, the Serpents perform a ritualistic, circular war dance that is reminiscent of tribal witch hunts. The song ends with a drastic musical and theatrical change of tone, as the stage is blackened for the Serpents' glowing ultraviolet masks of grotesque cartoon faces; along with a monotonous bass note and a slideshow of graphic pictures showing real Zimbabwean war atrocities from the period. As the awful sound and spectacle end, Adam and Eve are left alone, mortally wounded.

In the seventh beat, Adam must witness Eve's death. In denial, he painfully crawls to her and desperately reassures her that she will not die. When Eve shows that she has accepted her fate, Adam tries ordering her to live, and then begging, but all to no avail. Now at peace and ready to meet her mother again, Eve lets go of her fighting spirit and admits to Adam that she does love him. She dies in his tearful embrace.

Scene 7

In the song ‘Absurd’, Adam must wrestle with his grief and sense of hopelessness. While he has returned to his normal life, Adam has been unsuccessful at becoming reintegrated into his society, feeling perpetual loneliness, displacement, alienation, plus a more general lack of pleasure and optimism. All this culminates in a disturbing crisis of faith in who he is and what he stands for. He is permanently entranced in Eve’s conflicted reality, which he now finds truer than the entire objective worldview that he has defended throughout his prodigious academic career.

In the second beat, Adam must once again confront Chasarandi, who appears in Adam’s waking dream. Adam immediately demands to know why Eve died, and this time will not have his questions dismissed through non sequiturs. Chasarandi reminds Adam of their earlier agreement: that Adam was going to tell a story for Chasarandi – Eve’s story. Adam is not convinced that her death and his consequent heartbreak were necessary. When Chasarandi coldly espouses cruel ironies, life paradoxes and the authority of fate, Adam explodes with anger and refuses to be frightened by Chasarandi’s counter-anger. Adam’s tantrum engenders a cathartic revelation, as he realizes that he is no longer afraid to confront or question anything, including his own dark human nature. Standing as a guardian at the threshold to this darkness, Chasarandi symbolically inaugurates Adam by giving him a pen and telling him to know himself.

Scene 8

In the first beat, Adam must show that he has accepted his new role and identity. Standing before a press conference, Adam announces his resignation from the academic profession, and his related decision to become a playwright. His first play is going to utilize the knowledge that he has gained throughout his life’s work as a historian of the Zimbabwe Liberation Struggle. The play will be a fable, Adam says, about a girl who became a revolutionary and a

boy whose life she changed. The play will be called *Hondo Love Story*.

Epilogue

In the song ‘Sacrifice’, Eve, now at peace in a glorious afterlife, must deliver the play’s final message. Speaking in dreamy metaphors, she foresees the coming of an earthly world without violence, censorship or suffering; a world where the telling of stories is the only legitimate and practiced means of attempting to bring salvation to society. She talks about the expressive power of song, which liberates and finally redeems the human spirit. As the song progresses, Adam supports Eve’s lead vocals while offstage characters wander in to fill the stage. As the song approaches its conclusion, Eve leads the entire cast toward an uplifting choral climax.

Writer’s Statement

The history of Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle movements has always fascinated me. It is a history that I grew up with as a young Zimbabwean exposed to highly nationalized television, radio, and junior school education. There were also stories that my generation heard from parents and older relatives or family friends who spent their youth in that turbulent period.

Not all the stories we heard were as dramatic as the ones portrayed in *Hondo Love Story*. In such extremely conflicted times, the war, for our parents’ generation, had been more than a series of terrible larger-than-life events happening far from most people’s homes. The ambience of era-defining conflict had consumed the whole divided multiracial and multicultural society of Rhodesia. The bloodshed in the bush; the invasion of civil zones by guerillas; civil unrest in cities, townships, colleges, and rural villages; relationship-defining arguments among suburban relatives with differing opinions; ideological warfare in the media and intellectual forums – all these had been various manifestations of the same political struggle that had affected every life in the country. Moreover, while immersed in their own times, many people had been aware that Rhodesia was one of the last bastions of a particular,

centuries-old style of Western, or Western-descended, colonialism in Africa; and that the historical ramifications of Rhodesia's collapse were thus immense.

During its time, contact with the war could be direct or indirect; the stories profound or banal; the encounters planned or random. There were those individuals who lived to tell of their amazing journeys as soldiers traveling through the wildernesses of death. There were those who were exiled and got to know the world as cosmopolitan activists. There were those who protested, and those who were hired to suppress protest. There were those who were innocent bystanders in extremely close encounters, or witnesses, even victims, in the most harrowing scenes. There were those who claimed that they knew people in the above categories, and either helped or hindered, studied or ignored, such people. There were those who could only say that they knew people who knew people who knew people. There were those who looked in the distance and saw something unremarkable – like a group of soldiers, drinking water – that nevertheless pointed to something incredible – like where these soldiers had been the day before.

Hearing the stories of others who lived through history, one not only learnt about that history; one was intimately touched by it; one realized how one came directly from it. Both my parents had their share of close encounters with guerillas and militants. My mother was a 'chimbwido', one of the women who took food to the guerillas hiding in the bush near the rural villages. She was consequently detained by the Rhodesian police. My father narrowly escaped with his life from an impromptu war gang trial in a bus. Indeed buses were a bad place to be in those days. A housekeeper we lived with for some years had a childhood memory of witnessing the mass deaths of nearly all the passengers in a bus during a guerilla attack, while she was miraculously untouched by a single bullet. With vivid and nightmarish images that would haunt us for a long time, she described to my siblings and me the death of a large middle-aged woman on the seat right next to her. Incredulously, we pictured the large heaving breasts, punctured chest and hissing voice of the dying woman straining for breath.

Hence the duality of the play's main relationship – between Adam's highly intellectualized knowledge of history and Eve's highly phenomenological perspective – is directly an expression of my own internal duality regarding how I see this history. Adam is perhaps the most autobiographical character, though there are substantial portions of me in Eve. There are, of course, substantial portions of my co-writer, Sita Moyo, in both characters. As those who have known us more intimately as a couple will also realize, however, the 'autobiographical' angle goes beyond an abstract merging of two quite separate life stories. The emotional journey of Adam and Eve was considerably, though unconsciously during the time of writing, influenced by our marriage and by the individual neuroses that inevitably come out when two people are engaged in a very intimate relationship. The fact that we mixed pieces of our own psychology and of our own gender-race-class and cultural associations quite chaotically in both characters is not about 'disguise', but about freely expressing our conviction that these are nonsensical categories. And yet, as nonsensical as they are, such limitations on our human 'being' (verb) affect every single life profoundly; for society and institutions use these fables of subjectivity to perpetuate ideology, power, and violence.

Directorial Approach

Aesthetic Overview

In the script, we already laid the conceptual foundations for a directorial approach that will bring together the often separate theatre worlds of the sophisticated, the edgy and the raw. In terms of familiar theatre genres, I aim to combine the commercial slickness and professionalism of Broadway musicals; the primal, psychological intensity of avant-garde experimental theatre; and the natural, volatile emotional energy of township performance. In order to achieve this blending, our uncompromising aesthetic values as cast and crew must be: technical precision; technological competence; choreographic and vocal discipline; and dramatic verve.

Framing Violence

In the script, we also considered the framing of violent acts, and decided that all should be stylized or hidden. Weapons on stage should be mimed, while images thereof are projected onto the screen. This miming should be highly choreographic and representational – like moving tableaux – and absolutely timed. Audiences can still experience the horror of war when we finally project the shocking photographs, while actors remain psychologically protected from identifying with such violence through their actions. The specific technical procedures for implementing these ideas in each scene are detailed in the script's stage directions.

Performer Ethics and Training

Actors must consciously work to develop an ethos not based on either professional arrogance or obsequiousness, but on the need for artistic and/as spiritual humility, honesty, vulnerability, compassion and sacrifice. This will be essential for them to handle the traumatic subject matter responsibly, as well as deal with the public and/or critical contentions and/or sensations that the play may cause. The sense of responsibility among cast members must be highly individualized, at the same time as being practiced effectively through their commitment to the ensemble. The whole time they must clearly perceive their own humanity and the humanity of others, including those fictional but reality-based human beings whose lives they are portraying, satirically or seriously, on stage.

In addition to improving their physical endurance, performers will have to develop emotional strength to cope with the intense rehearsal and performance process. An ethos of mutual respect must also be emphasized and developed among performers, who must be firmly guided through the process of clearly separating their real relationships from the emotionally abusive interactions of their roles on the stage.

Listening skills will have to be developed through regular group listening exercises, perhaps at the start of each rehearsal, after physical and vocal warm-ups. Actors must be consistently reminded that it is more important to listen to the other than to ‘focus’ in one’s own isolation or to simply listen to the ‘environment’. The ear, not the mouth and eyes, must become the locus of intersubjectivity onstage or offstage. Learning lines should be about understanding the necessary response and therefore offering it, rather than merely remembering ‘triggers’.

An awareness of the desiring body must be highly developed for the performers who have to be vulnerable on stage. Adam and Eve, especially, will have to work on their intimacy, so that their psychic bodies really connect through the expression of desire in the physical body. They must go beyond simply getting used to their imposed familiarity; to becoming fully aware of, and comfortable with, their mutual attraction. They must be able to declare this attraction in our intimate rehearsals and proactively work to translate desire into meaningful stage actions that go beyond the execution of text – to spiritual communication.

Production Resources

List of Staging Requirements

- Sound Equipment
 - Microphones
 - 3x wireless head microphones
 - Choir microphone(s)
 - Several standing microphones for Chimurenga musicians
 - Sound System
 - Loudspeakers
 - Monitors
 - CD playing device (attached to above)
- Musical Instruments

- African traditional instruments including:
 - Drums
 - Shakers
 - Mbira ('thumb piano')
- Costumes
 - 1980s civilian clothes to dress the following individual characters:
 - Adam – male academic (smart formal)
 - Eve – township woman (smart outgoing)
 - Dragon – township man (scruffy and casual)
 - Uncle George – farmer (smart safari wear)
 - Assistant – female student or young academic (smart casual)
 - 1970s civilian clothes to dress the following individual characters:
 - Young Eve – rural girl (plain casual)
 - Mother – rural woman (plain casual)
 - 1970s guerrilla soldiers (x5)
 - 1980s city prostitutes (x4)
 - Spirits (x4)
- Set Elements
 - Main performance area
 - 2 car seats and
 - 1 freestanding steering wheel on
 - 1 broad platform, which has:
 - 2 operating car headlights attached to it
 - Outer fringes, framing main performance area:
 - 1 slideshow projector with either screen, white wall or drapery
 - 'Orchestra' area, lower stage wings, pit, or somewhere in the auditorium, set up for traditional music rituals, is decorated by:
 - African drapery/textiles on wall and floor
 - Sitting cushions, stools or neutral chairs for Live Musicians

- Special lighting
 - Ultraviolet light, to activate invisible ultraviolet ink graphics
 - Onstage wiring for (abovementioned) car headlights, which are part of the set design and must be controllable from main lighting desk

Song List

1. Overture [None]
2. Nyika Yedu [Serpents; Cobra]
3. This is a War [All except Adam]
4. Streets of Easy Love [Adam; Spirits]
5. Where I Come From [Adam & Eve]
6. Murder Serenade [Dragon; Eve; Adam]
7. The Killer Instinct [Adam & Eve]
8. Bury the Body [Eve (Adam supporting)]
9. Fly With Me (Don't Call It Love) [Adam & Eve]
10. Awake In Me [Adam]
11. Somebody's Property [Adam & Eve]
12. When Blacks Took Over [Adam; Uncle George; Eve]
13. Smite! [Serpents; Cobra]
14. Kangaroo Court [Serpents; Cobra]
15. Absurd [Adam; Serpents]
16. Sacrifice [All]
17. Finale [Bows]

Rehearsal Schedule

WEEK	DAY	TIME	WHO	WHAT
1	Mon		All	Orientation
	Tue		All	Read-through
	Wed		All	Listen to music
	Thu		All	Watch film: 'Flame'
	Fri		All	Discussions
2	Mon		Adam	Solos (4; 10; 15)
			Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (2; 3)
	Tue		Eve	Solos (8; 16)
			Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (4; 7)
	Wed		Adam	Supporting vocals (6; 8; 16)
			Eve	Supporting vocals (3; 12)
			Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (8)
	Thu		Adam & Eve	Duets (5; 7; 8)
			Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (13; 14)
	Fri		Adam & Eve	Duets (9; 11; 16)
		Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (15; 17)	
3	Mon		Dragon/Uncle George	Lead vocals (3; 6; 12)
			Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (2; 3)
	Tue		Adam & Uncle George	Duet (12)
			Eve & Dragon	Duet (6)
			Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (4; 7)
	Wed		Adam; Eve; Dragon/Uncle George	Trios (6; 12)
			Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (8)
	Thu		Cobra	Lead vocals (2; 3; 13; 14)
			Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (13; 14)
	Fri		Young Eve & Mother	Lead vocals (3)
		Young Eve	Lead vocal (3)	
		Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (15; 17)	
4	Mon		Cobra & Serpents	Backing vocals (3; 4; 15; 16)
	Tue		Cobra & Serpents	Main songs (2; 13; 14)
	Wed		All except Adam	Ensemble vocal (3)
	Thu		Adam; Cobra & Serpents	Integrate solos (4; 15)
	Fri		All	Integrate end solo (16)
		All	Block bows (17)	

5	Mon	Adam & Eve	Block dialogue
		Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (2; 3; 4; 7; 8)
	Tue	Adam; Eve & Dragon/Uncle George	Block trio dialogues
		Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (8; 13; 14; 15; 17)
	Wed	Adam & Eve	Physical intimacy workshop
		Adam & Eve	Sing & block love scenes (7; 9)
	Thu	Adam & Eve	Sing & block duets (5; 8; 11; 16)
		Cobra & Serpents	Choreography (run all)
Fri	All (Dragon/Uncle George may skip)	Show (7; 9) & integrate-block (7)	
	All (Dragon/Uncle George may skip)	Block confrontation with Cobra	
6	Mon	All	Integrate Act 1
	Tue	All	Fix issues Act 1
	Wed	All	Integrate Act 2
	Thu	All	Fix issues Act 2
	Fri	All	Stagger through play
7	Mon	All	Run & fix Act 1
	Tue	All	Run & fix Act 2
	Wed	All	Run
	Thu	All	Run
	Fri	All	Run (final day with scripts)
8	Mon	All	Costume parade & run
	Tue	All	Lighting technical
	Wed	All	Sound/AV technical & run
	Thu	All	Dress rehearsal
	Fri	All	Dress rehearsal
9	Mon	All	Dress rehearsal
	Tue	All	Dress rehearsal
	Wed	All	Dress rehearsal/Preview
	Thu	All	Dress rehearsal/Preview
	Fri	All	Opening night
10	Mon	All	Performance
	Tue	All	Performance
	Wed	All	Performance
	Thu	All	Performance
	Fri	All	Performance
11	Mon	All	Performance
	Tue	All	Performance
	Wed	All	Performance
	Thu	All	Performance
	Fri	All	Performance

12	Mon		All	Performance
	Tue		All	Performance
	Wed		All	Performance
	Thu		All	Performance
	Fri		All	Performance & Strike

Publicity Resources

Product Particulars

Title:	Hondo Love Story
Genre:	musical thriller
Running Time:	105 minutes (two acts; 15-minute intermission)
Language:	English
Age Restriction:	18 (strong language; sex; suggested violence)
Other Advisory:	disturbing images of war atrocity

Credits

Written by:	Arifani Moyo & Sita Moyo
Composed by:	Arifani Moyo
Graphic Design by:	Sita Moyo
Performed by:	Afromojo (theatre ensemble)
Directed by:	Arifani Moyo

Advertisement

Set in Zimbabwe some years after the Liberation Struggle of the 1970s, *Hondo Love Story* is an explosive musical thriller about two intimate strangers caught in a mystical web of fate, passion, politics, history, vulgarity and violence. The hero is Adam, a pacifist ‘white liberal’

and avid historian of the Struggle whose favourite pastime is driving into the city night to chat with prostitutes. The heroine is Eve, a black war veteran and believer in African gods, who is jaded and impoverished by the very national independence she fought for. They meet one surreal evening in the red light district, both possessed and guided by a supernatural force that, for whatever reason, wants them to find each other. An unstoppable chain of events is set in motion as the fated interracial couple becomes a dangerous sexual and political controversy among various jealous and bloodthirsty rivals. Forced to adopt a 'kill or be killed' philosophy, the hero and heroine can only redeem their souls through the unexpected love that they find in each other as they plunge toward their doom.

An electric urban fable from the Afromojo theatre ensemble, *Hondo Love Story* is the play about Zimbabwe that is more sensational than the media. Powerful and peculiar, self-conscious and sincere, kinky and catastrophic, the most untrue tale ever told will seduce your senses and mess with your mind through an incendiary collision of 1970s underground rock music, edgy light and sound effects, fast-paced multimedia displays, gritty guerilla dance and strong African drumming.

So come and see the violent psychological intensity of *Natural Born Killers* clash with the hedonistic musical mayhem of *The Rocky Horror Show*. But be warned: with deadly, sexy songs like 'The Killer Instinct', 'Murder Serenade' and 'Bury the Body', this music's not for the faint-hearted...

Chapter 4: Intellectual Contexts of Hondo Love Story

Writing the Play: Background

The original concept for *Hondo Love Story* was developed during my Honours Drama year (2004) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg. As part of my coursework for the directing module, I work-shopped a fifteen-minute play with four first-year drama students. The process, to be honest, was extremely disorganised – I hardly met with the actors; I had no directorial strategy; I would have preferred to direct a scripted play but the work-shopping process was one of the requirements of the course. In the few meetings I did have with the actors, we played with various characters and situations that ‘came up’ through improvisation and brainstorming sessions intended to generate ideas for the play. I participated in one or two of the improvisations, and one of the characters that I came up with was an Afro-Marxist revolutionary who much resembled the character of Cobra in *Hondo Love Story*, though he would not appear in my ‘production’ of that year. The improvisation did, however, instigate my interest in making theatre about the contexts associated with such a character.

At the time, I was also only beginning to be interested in postcolonial theory and discourse in the proper academic sense, including typical issues of race, gender, class, culture, ethnicity, citizenship, democracy, Diasporas, rights, colonisation, liberation, history in general, and consciousness. This interest was, of course, connected to personal questions, anxieties and contemplations about the condition of being a foreigner, studying and recently married in South Africa, and thinking about immigration. Like many in the Diaspora, I was tracking political events in Zimbabwe, including the economic meltdown that was radically changing the social, physical and psychic landscape of the country I called home. Indeed, with each of my sporadic visits to the homeland, I felt increasingly a foreigner to it, due to the rapidity at which the civil environment was changing.

However, I was also contemplating foreignness in a much broader, namely, existential sense, as I already had a longstanding aesthetic and/as intellectual fascination with existential themes. This fascination had begun during late high school years, when I was first introduced to Samuel Beckett, whose play, *Waiting for Godot*, we studied in English, and Albert Camus, whose novel, *The Stranger*, we studied in French. The English teacher for *Waiting for Godot* was John Eppel, who, prior to teaching at our cultural relic of an Irish-Catholic all-boys private school, was recognised for his award-winning postcolonial (often satirical, atheist and anti-authoritarian) poetry and novels. The title poem of his 1986 collection, *Spoils of War*, which I would recite in an exam for a performance module also in my Honours year, inspired one of the two main characters of my Honours directing piece.

The directing piece was called *This is not a bush, this is our country...* a prose-like and minimalist meander around the concept of two characters, James and Rudo, who are both ex-combatants from opposite armies of the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle. They were young soldiers – he fought for white Rhodesia; she fought for black Zimbabwe. They crossed paths one surreal mid-afternoon in the blood-soaked wilderness, both lost and alone in the bush (for reasons unexplained). They nearly killed each other in a deadly face-off, but something ‘metaphysical’ happened and neither one could pull the trigger. They meet again, years into the new Zimbabwe, as middle-aged master and newly hired maid in James’s suburban home. James is an unemployed and unemployable househusband suffering from depression by day and haunted by war nightmares at night. To forestall the latter suffering, James leaves his patient, breadwinning wife Amelia at home and drives out into the urban wilderness, to find a comforting prostitute. Rudo is a struggling member of the proletariat disappointed by the empty prosperity promises of a revolution that has forgotten her, and a lonely life.

On Rudo’s second day of work, James insists on sitting her down for a conversation, during which he asks her direct questions about her personal life, and then taking her for a drive. When she is reluctant, he asserts domestic rank by claiming that he has work for her to do in town, and she agrees. Once on the road, however, James takes the opposite route and Rudo

panics, suspecting licentious intentions on his part. The ensuing argument causes them to crash, and both souls are transported to a purgatory-like time-space wherein they find themselves re-embodied and trapped in a stagnant memory of that forgotten day when they met in the bush. A magical character, uncannily similar to *Hondo Love Story*'s Chasarandi (whom I knew nothing about at the time), appears to them and explains that the place of their original encounter was on a sacred route of ancestral journeys. Here, bloodshed is forbidden; hence, Rudo and James's face-off that day in the wartime bush did not result in death. Moreover, fate has brought the two back together to allow them to 'finish' their 'story'. The subjects will achieve this by choosing their respective routes between two roads, one leading back toward the 'past' and another leading forward toward the 'future'. James chooses the 'future' road, as he is afraid of what going 'back' to the 'past' implies: death. Rudo opts for the latter, having long had a death wish in her depressing earthly life, from which she may now be free. Both are instructed to run, as they have a limited time in which to reach their chosen destinations, and failure to arrive within that time will result in their permanent entrapment in purgatory. In the final scene, Amelia learns from a doctor (played by the 'Chasarandi' actor) that James and Rudo are in critical condition after the crash. An 'object' that has freakishly impaled both victims simultaneously may be removed from their bodies, with no guarantee that either will live after the costly operation. Amelia is left with a decision, either to authorise the operation or to request euthanasia. I meant to suggest that James is literally running back to his life from that crossroads between here and the netherworld, where Rudo is going.

I did not finish writing the play, and the under-rehearsed sketch did not serve me well for the examiner's evaluation, but here the conceptual and contextual foundations were laid for what four years later would become *Hondo Love Story*.

Historical Metonymy

Intellectual Characterisation

During the process of constructing characters, structuring plot, arranging subplots, identifying themes, inserting metaphors, and conceptualising a general aesthetic for *Hondo Love Story*, much of the play's political, psychological, historical, mythical and socio-analytic subtext was decided upon – although by no means were all decisions adhered to during the hectic trance of the final draft. Extensive use was made of creative dualities especially, so that much of the subtext may be illuminated dynamically on stage through visual oppositions and clear conflicts in relationships.

All the main characters in the play represent something much bigger than themselves, which they may believe in or serve if conscious of it and if appropriate within the world of the play. In terms of knowledge (epistemology) and concepts of reality (ontology), Adam represents the Western-derived secular-realist and historical world view, which contrasts with Eve's African-traditional, mystical-cosmological orientation. Ideologically and ethically, Eve's Afro-nativist militancy and socialist radicalism contrast with Adam's cosmopolitan values of international diplomacy and liberalism, which in Eve's polemical world have been regarded as 'white' and Eurocentric.

All other characters are fragments of the hero and heroine's worlds as described above. Uncle George represents the racist nationalism of the colonial world view, from which Adam's postcolonial (but nonetheless, arguably, epistemologically and ethically ethnocentric) worldview is transgressively derived. Dragon, Cobra and the Serpents are fascist extremes of Eve's anticolonial world view. Mother is representative of African traditional values supposedly preserved from pre-colonial times and thus linked to Eve's autochthony. Chasarandi, an inscrutable herald in Joseph Campbell's archetypal sense (more below), is the gatekeeper at the threshold to the ethically and epistemologically opaque world of the occult,

Eve's psychic world, which gradually infects and transforms Adam.

Narrative Logic

The symbolic association of a given character with a particular world view or set of ideals is not about static visualisation, whereby the association is intellectually 'over and done with' once made by the critical viewer. Rather, the symbolism develops temporally through narrative, and must continue to be deciphered, like a mystery, through the progression of characters' life stories and relationship through-lines.

Eve's life journey from rural to city life, with participation in the guerilla struggle for African national independence in between, embodies the historical narrative of the violent modernisation of the African native body politic. The fact that the play opens with Eve leaving her mother is thus significant in this light, for she abandons the traditional circumstances of her upbringing and gets violently modernised through the guerilla Struggle, which is her liminal phase. Eve thus undergoes a process identical to the historical narrative that describes the emergence of the native body politic that she represents.

Adam represents the Western-derived historical movement of scientific modernity, which in its liberal-cosmopolitan, globalising phase continues to strive for expansion into other worlds. The desire of this movement to inseminate its seeds of expansion into other worlds is metaphorically encapsulated by Adam's forays into the informal red light district, which represent the liberal Western venture into the postcolonial marketplace of pleasure-through-difference. Adam's relationship with the prostitutes – the fact that he tries to consume their stories rather than their bodies – also relates to this expansion narrative. By invigorating himself through their dramatic life stories, Adam is psychologically expanding himself through and into them.

The relationship tension and role confusion during Adam and Eve's first meeting correlates with the ethical dilemma of the metaphorically staged encounter between Afro-native body politic and Western expansive drives. The dilemma is the likelihood of an unequal exchange, whereby the native body politic may sell, prostitute, its most intimate and sacred things for too little to the neoliberal movement of global modernity. During their misunderstanding, Eve's sexual guard and her suspicion of Adam's intentions thus represent the postcolonial world's anxiety about Western neoliberal exploitation, whether cultural or economic.

Dragon's subsequent accusations against Eve of being a whore and a sell-out represent the radical response of more authoritarian forms of anticolonial defence to such anxiety. His paranoia of her infidelity represents anticolonial authoritarianism's paranoia of losing the loyalty of 'the people'. As history has shown, the result of such paranoia is the implosive violence of anticolonial authoritarianism *against* its own people, theatrically represented by the deadly tussle between Dragon and Eve. The lethal failure of their marriage and the years of abuse correlate to the failed relationship between anticolonial authoritarianism and the people whom it is meant to protect, and whose cultural beliefs and political misery it manipulated in order to create its armies.

When Adam murders Dragon, he enacts the familiar Western fantasy of global chivalry; of saving the Third World from all its dictators and militants, the better to get the girl and all that she represents – the land and the power over, or allegiance of, the native people. The irony of the shovel, a worker symbol, as the weapon of choice, extends the scene's metaphor to the historically monumentalised event of the Berlin Wall defeat of the Eastern Dragon of international Marxism at the end of the Cold War. In this meta-theatrical moment, what shocks Adam after the horrible killing is not only the basic inhumanity of what he has done, but also his unintentional complicity with neo-colonialism, as Adam enunciates in his lament.

The sexual ecstasy that Adam and Eve experience after Dragon's death correlates with the orgasmic atmosphere of political euphoria following the Berlin Wall victory of Western neo-

liberalism. When Adam copulates with Eve, he enters her intimate internal space metaphorically as well. He is now authorised to access her secrets and utilise her spiritual resources, just as Western civilisation gains political, economic, cultural and environmental access to non-Western space after defeating an anticolonial or anti-capitalist authority, the better to inseminate Western civilisation's seeds of growth. It is dramaturgically appropriate, then, that only after his intimate access to her native body can Adam hear Eve's life story in the next scene, and exploit her reality to enhance his. When the lovers bury Dragon's body and run away together, not knowing where they are going, the burial of the old world order and the uncertainty of the future relationship between postcolonial master and maid is also expressed.

When Eve has her dream about the farm, the disagreement she has with Adam about the ethics of invading the farm is metonymical of the ideological and ethical disagreement between their respective political and intellectual worlds, regarding the methodology of liberation. Their differing views on violence make them ambassadors for their inherited political cultures. Adam seeks secular diplomacy while Eve is fatalistically prepared to risk everything in a catastrophic struggle on the basis of religious and political principles. As Adam's decision to go along with the plot shows, however, the diplomacy that he preaches is not absolute. Moreover, the love for Eve, which Adam claims to be motivating his ideological and ethical hypocrisy, is itself hypocritical – driven by self-expansive drives rather than the strictly benevolent desires that he professes.

When Adam and Eve meet Uncle George, their relationship undergoes a crisis of loyalties, since Adam must now confront the fact of his relational ties to an undead colonial legacy. A deliberately crass symbol of that legacy, Uncle George is meant grotesquely to mimic the historical actions of the colonial plunderer. When he first appears, an image on screen shows a classical portrait of England's medieval Patron Saint George on his horse killing the dragon. The fact that Dragon was killed by Adam, not Uncle George, is ironic and significant in anticipating Adam's confrontation with and purging of his own repressed prejudice. Uncle

George's climactic revelation to Adam of the removed black penis preserved in a jar represents the colonial dismemberment of the cultural body politic of African pre-colonial and anticolonial patriarchy. It is appropriate, then, that Uncle George is killed by Eve, just as anticolonial revolutions have often relied heavily on the underestimated interventions of women when male leadership failed. For the Zimbabwean context, this gender element is starkly evident in the paradox of an extremely patriarchal nationalism that reveres the legacy of Mbuya Nehanda, the ancient matriarch – after the patriarchy of her era failed – who was later reincarnated as a female anticolonial revolutionary. The fact that Uncle George's farm was not being looked after also historically refers to colonial plunder, as well as contradicts the common perception that white farmers are better.

This is, of course, a potentially controversial moment in the play among liberal audiences, especially those who were affected in one way or another by the farm invasions. In the writing and in the design concept, we emphasise the unreal nature of the whole situation, the better to enforce the underlying symbolic messages about history and violent legacies. It is not about blaming the Zimbabwe farm chaos on either colonial or anticolonial murderers, but about thinking beyond these dualistic categories and seeing how we have all been implicated, through our inheritance, in violent legacies. Furthermore, having the farm invasion scene simply portray the suffering of a white family would have been too easy for a play that aims to be quite challenging to most viewers, and ultimately not very effective in having a critical impact, precisely because it would be morally *satisfying* to liberals, rather than incite them to get *angry* about the atrocity. In theatre, we must not be afraid to make people angry, for there is such a thing as righteous anger, and audiences deserve the space to feel this, for it is part of their catharsis.

The Serpents symbolise the new militant regimes which exploded in various African states after colonial/anticolonial movements had faded, threatening to consume certain countries in endless cycles of violence. Their arrival immediately after Uncle George's death and Eve's victory claim is thus historically allegorical of the violence that surprises postcolonial nations

expecting peace after war. The relationship crisis between Cobra and Eve is symptomatic of the situation between the militant regimes and the native body politic; the marriage that never was. The fact that Cobra coveted Dragon's power, and Dragon's wife, refers to the power drive of the postcolonial warlords and their regimes which are long out of touch with the anticolonial struggles that originally trained them, like Dragon trained the Serpents. While the Serpents have come to kill the one who killed Dragon – and they should kill Adam, the neoliberal who walloped the anticolonial Dragon out of history – they kill Eve, the native who would not have dared resist anticolonial patriarchy. Cobra's lust for Eve, therefore, does not stop him from exposing her to death, just as the new militant regimes may lust after the allegiance of the native people, but are more interested in exercising what Achille Mbembe (2003) calls "necropolitics", in which the lives and bodies of the masses are expendable and completely objectified. Whereas the anticolonial Struggle fought by Dragon and Eve together was a violent and euphoric (as shown by their romance) movement that saw death as a necessary sacrifice for liberation, the new regime of Cobra, loveless to the core, is a cult of death that practices atrocity for its own sake.

Adam's complete self-alienation toward the end of the play shows the potential devastation that such an environment may leave for the emerged African identity when the Serpents of our history's hell have finally vanished like ghosts, as they do in the scene of Eve's death. Chasarandi's outrageous assertion at the end of the play that Adam is the one who belongs in the future, not Eve, the righteous native, expresses my conviction that the cosmopolitan-liberalism that Adam as a character symbolises, with its gift of the philosophy of democracy, is ultimately Africa's salvation. But Adam is not as he was before. Through a violent and devastating transformation, he has been purged of his patronising attitudes, his deeply ingrained negrophilic racism, his rigid secularity and moral arrogance about his superior values. His new identity as a playwright with a historical background expresses the need, not to abandon the historical realism on which the global progress of civilisation depends, but to acknowledge and understand the fables, consequential, and dangerous if not taken seriously, which bring good and bad meaning to human life. Since having an awareness of that meaning

is essential to understanding the human condition, confronting the fables is as important to the work of a social, intellectual or environmental activist as knowing the scientific reality.

As for Eve, Adam has not lost her. Her soul lives in him, and changes the very essence of who he is. The fact that we see her last as she delivers the final message of the play is a challenge to a secular audience that wants justice to be served for the oppressed native, for in order to have this wish, they must accept the reality of Eve's ancestral existence and believe that her life has not really been lost. She is now timeless; she is still with us; hers is a real happy ending. If secular-cosmopolitan audiences can agree with this, then they begin to engage sympathetically with the ontology, and hence the worldview, of globally marginalised cultures. At the same time, having seen visceral and frank depictions of the atrocity that the more parochial societies of these cultures have been guilty of, audiences understand that they are not expected to tolerate everything about those cultures.

Psychoanalytic Subtext

Regarding Character

In Freudian psychoanalytic terms, Adam's Eros (desire; life instinct) is stronger than his Thanatos (animosity; death instinct), while Eve's Thanatos overshadows, delimits and perverts her Eros. In Jungian psychoanalytic terms, Adam's idealistic and reconciliatory Logos (reason; rationality) serves his Eros (relationship drive), while Eve's militant and ethically nihilistic Logos inhibits the functioning of her Eros. These contradictions underlie their relationship tension and conflict as they struggle with differing views on the ethics of homicide.

Except Chasarandi, whose Godlike status and nature must be depicted as defying all classifiable shapes and boundaries of the unconscious, other characters are also involved in these dualistic psychic arrangements. The Freudian Eros that binds Adam and Eve together as a unit contrasts with the extreme Thanatos of their violent adversaries. In the prologue,

Mother's Jungian Eros argues with Eve's Thanatos-Logos. Later in the play, the strictly Freudian Eros of the prostitutes, which Adam tries to make Jungian in his efforts to 'relate' to them, must contrast sharply with the pure Freudian Thanatos of the Spirits.

Regarding the Text

From the perspective of 'outside' the written text, the playwrights' Jungian Logos, of which Chasarandi is the meta-textual agent, and which binds the lovers to their tragic fate through prescribed narrative, oppresses the Jungian Eros of the protagonists' love affair. Furthermore, the playwrights' intellectual Thanatos, which seeks to 'deconstruct' and 'subvert' various aspects of the characters' political identities (race; gender; class; nationality), contrasts with the playwrights' Eros, which is reflected in the 'positive' aspects of the play. The latter include all the hopeful moments, when the protagonists discover their intimate connections, building a life-changing relationship in the face of life-threatening odds.

Regarding Authorship

As a literary work, the co-authored, semi-autobiographical love story is Erotic, literally 'our baby', although in order for it to be born we also had to apply Thanatos, or 'kill some babies', during the editing process. The written text, of course, as a prescription for moulding forms in an ephemeral medium, is Logos-centric as well as logocentric. Its culmination through the live, corporeal medium of performance is Erotic in both Freudian and Jungian senses.

Spiritual Dimensions

Mythic Structure

In terms of psycho-mythic subtext, the play's narrative and character development patterns are modelled around Joseph Campbell's famous story paradigm of the 'hero's journey'. While I

took general thematic inspiration and psychoanalytic insight from Campbell's ideas, however, I relied more practically on Christopher Vogler's influential book, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (1988), which clarifies the structural aspects of Campbell's esoterically highbrow theory of world mythologies and their uncanny similarities. Vogler simplified the content of Campbell's seminal book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), to create a user-friendly version of the hero's journey that emphasises the three major turning points of Hollywood's three-act screenwriting formulas popularised by celebrity tutors like Linda Seger and Robert McKee. Appropriating Campbell's stages and transitions of the hero's journey, Vogler identifies the 'first threshold', the 'ordeal' and the 'resurrection' as three main sites of confrontation that the hero must pass through successively in order to finish the adventure. Often this confrontation involves terrible clashes with the formidable ogres, villains, demons and dragons of so many memorable legends and folktales around the world.

Vogler maintains the importance of Campbell's overall idea of the hero's journey being essentially a narrative between two worlds. The first is the ordinary world of the hero's often mundane, constricting and/or oppressed life before the amazing journey. The second is the special world of the adventure, in which the hero has an opportunity to discover his hidden potential to achieve great things and assert a new identity. The hero's complete passage through the special world and his final return to normal life as a changed and elevated being makes him a 'master of two worlds' (Campbell). Often, the hero has also attained rare spoils through his exploits in the special world, and has eventually chosen to 'return with the elixir' (Vogler) with which he can help to heal or liberate his people from the same sicknesses and/or oppressions that the hero left behind. The hero, then, effectively discovers his more humble but ultimately greater purpose beyond that of enjoying the initial ego boost and pleasures of the 'ultimate boon' (Campbell), or 'reward' (Vogler), that came from his achievements in the special world.

Vogler also isolated what he regarded as the most functionally necessary of Campbell's archetypes within a story writing context, some of which are present in *Hondo Love Story*.

Adam is the 'hero' whose journey, a metaphorical initiation rite, constitutes the main psychological narrative and character development through-line of the play. In most hero's journey stories, the plot and dramaturgical structure of the play, film or book is often constructed around the hero's psychic journey, thus emphasising the hero's perspective, though this is not necessary. Eve is the 'shape shifter' who beguiles and bedevils the hero with her mysteries and paradoxes, taking on a range of other psychologically functional archetypal roles such as mother, lover and goddess who gives the hero access to the secrets of the special world, often through sexual initiation (Campbell). However, Eve also takes on the crucial, less gender-patronising role of the 'mentor', who in many hero's journeys is often male, and serves to initiate, train, educate, test, equip and finally inaugurate the hero. As Vogler notes, and as is evident from Eve's personal background story, the mentor is really a matured hero who previously underwent an identical process and finished her journey, so that her vocation is now to teach the uninitiated. Chasarandi fulfils the role of the 'herald', who announces the 'call to adventure' (Vogler) and challenges the hero to answer it, as well as the 'trickster' (Vogler), who plays a subversive role wherever he stands. Chasarandi is also a mentor of sorts, as are Dragon to Eve and Uncle George to Adam, for as Vogler, following Campbell, points out, the mentor-hero relationship is really an image of parenthood, thus being a vital component in the hero's journey metaphor for life and growing up.

In terms of dramatic functionality, however, one of the most important roles is the 'threshold guardian' (Vogler), who tries to stop the hero from going any further on his journey, and is thus responsible for defining turning points as well as creating conflict, tension and a sense of progression in the narrative. The threshold guardian may secretly be on the hero's side, merely testing the hero's strength, or it may have a hidden weakness that the hero must realise in order to assimilate, transform and utilise the power of the threshold guardian. A related archetype is the 'shadow'; that primal element of human nature that is often repressed by the socialised self in order to censor unacceptable drives and desires. Similar to Freud's 'id', the shadow is seen by Jung as only one among many other archetypes which influence the ego. When the shadow is overly repressed and denied adequate room for expression, however, it

can explode from the subconscious and disrupt the personality, resulting in the villainous extremes of perversion and atrocity represented by Dragon, Uncle George and the Serpents. Chasarandi, a shape shifter of sorts, also has a shadow and threshold guardian nature to him.

Since the hero's journey is a mythically externalised psychological process, the hero's confrontation with threshold guardian and shadow archetypes is a confrontation with repressed aspects of the self. When Uncle George unintentionally forces Adam to confront his own deeply repressed prejudice, therefore, the mythical role of the shadow is fulfilled and Adam is ready for his purging of those repressed elements. When, during the confrontation with Cobra, Adam is physically unable to bring himself to utter racist names even to save Eve's life, Adam shows the audience, who recognise subconsciously, that the purging process is complete and that Adam is ready for the next stage of the journey.

The three major turning points in the play are: the confrontation with Dragon (Vogler's 'first threshold'); the invasion of Uncle George's farm (Vogler's 'ordeal'); and the judgement of Cobra and the Serpents (Vogler's 'resurrection'). The shadow characters are also threshold guardians; terrible ogres of history blocking the way into history's adventure (Dragon); guarding the 'inmost cave' (Vogler) of that adventure (Uncle George on his farm); and violently purifying the inflated hero at the exit (the ritualistic torture of Cobra and the Serpents), so that the hero may be radically humbled (Adam's depression) before he can return with the elixir. As the guardian of the first threshold, Dragon is psychologically instrumental in giving the hero his first inkling of his own hidden powers. Dragon's death results in Adam's enhancement, as the ogre's murderous nature is assimilated into the hero's personality. This murderous nature, and the sexual ecstasy with Eve following Dragon's death, metaphorically point to Adam's hidden powers: the Dionysian Eros and Thanatos of art, which becomes an elixir at the end of the play when Adam decides to help in redeeming our tragic history through the power of stories, as Eve proclaims in the epilogue. Using his academic knowledge about the war, Adam will write a play about his adventure, and he will do this as a master of two worlds: the historical world of his secular intellect and the subjective world of Eve's

occult memory.

In between the three major turning points, there are other stages of the hero's journey which are used in the play. In Vogler's version, these have dramaturgical rather than thematic purposes, but contribute indispensably to the overall coherence of the journey. While Vogler, mostly concerned with action-packed Hollywood narratives, ignores the more psychoanalytic of Campbell's stages, I found the latter crucial to making space for meaning beyond plot. Among others, Campbell identifies the 'meeting with the goddess' (Adam meets Eve), the 'woman as temptress' (Eve implores a lovesick Adam to join her murder plot), and the 'atonement with the father' (Adam confronts Uncle George) as worldwide mythical motifs that are part of the complex psychological substance of the Oedipal hero's journey. Although Freudian and Jungian theories are no longer academically canonised, Campbell's ideas remain useful, simply as an imaginative and creatively inspiring way to rationalise the cultural prevalence and seeming power of the mythical motifs that Campbell interpreted in psychoanalytic language.

Vogler's twelve stages of the hero's journey as articulated in *Hondo Love Story* are:

1. the ordinary world (Adam lectures)
2. the call to adventure (Adam gets entranced and faints)
3. the refusal of the call (Adam argues with Chasarandi)
4. the meeting with the mentor (Adam meets Eve)
5. the crossing of the first threshold (confrontation with Dragon)
6. test, allies, enemies (Adam and Eve become lovers, comrades and partners in crime)
7. approach to the inmost cave (Adam and Eve anticipate the farm invasion)
8. the ordeal (confrontation with Uncle George)
9. the reward (Eve proclaims victory and ownership of the farm)
10. the road back (Adam breaks up with Eve and attempts to leave her entire world)
11. the resurrection (Adam survives the Serpents' torture, but loses Eve)

12. the return with the elixir (Adam returns to his normal life and gets transformed)

The idea of using these stages, however, is not simply to fit in with dominant (and for some, overused) storytelling modes, but to make the play *and* its context more widely accessible through mainstream conventions of modern mythopoeia, which in turn are challenged by a unique context. As Vogler and other screenwriting advisors emphasise, the hero's journey, potentially as diverse as the storytelling contexts in which it is used, should not be seen as a stagnant mould to be copied, but a dynamic form to be mastered, re-contextualised and, if necessary, revised. Having had my most personally significant theatre training in 'high art' projects, I merely took the form as an invigorating and non-permanent break from all the post-avant-garde emphasis on anti-narrative.

Moreover, as many cult films have shown, there is also room for thematically subverting the mould within its own structure, by reversing expectations at various stages of the journey and inserting ironies; such as a reward that is not appreciated by the hero, or a hero who consistently fails at tests. Indeed, Adam is not the typically capable Hollywood conqueror of adversity with a fully secure masculinity. In so many 'macho' hero's journeys, the 'reward' and the 'road back' are usually fairly pleasant, though anxious, stages for the hero who has fought monsters and procured spoils but must now run away or return home before the villains retaliate one last time (Vogler). Instead, Adam and Eve's experience of these stages is not enjoyable. Adam's 'return with the elixir' is similarly ambivalent, since the elixir – the story itself – is not immediately obvious to him and he is kept waiting through grief before he can perceive it. When he has recognised it, the moment is bittersweet, for while he will preserve the memory of Eve through her story, this will not bring her back.

Another point Vogler makes about the mould is that it describes only one character's experience, rather than the reality of the whole story. The phrase 'hero's journey' provokes this subjective sense and reminds us that any story can, and often does, have any number of heroes with very different journeys. In *Hondo Love Story*, the plot follows Adam's journey,

but the plot is *about* Eve – her life; her times; her vocation, which Adam experiences only insofar as he must learn to understand *her* world. Furthermore, Eve reveals more about herself than most mentors. Parts of her life-long hero's journey are revealed retrospectively through memories and flashbacks arranged in a non-linear order during the course of the play. This non-linearity is appropriate to Eve's fragmented reality and psyche as a subject who has lived her whole life in the thick of her country's violent postcolonial apocalypse. Adam, on the other hand, has been protected from such fragmentation while growing up in a class that, while challenged by the times, did not face the same degree of sociocultural and psychosocial disintegration as rural communities immersed in perpetual and ubiquitous violence. Adam had far more space, safety and privacy to construct an adolescent identity that could mature gradually into a reasonably sane adulthood. Of course, his privilege could not completely protect him from human fragility, which manifests through his sexual insecurity and quirks such as the neurotic need to classify and rationalise reality intellectually.

While much less is revealed about other characters, they all have life experiences, some shared, and some of which are summarised on stage in accounts that take the form of variously fragmented, muddled and/or condensed hero's journey narratives. The most detailed is the sub-story of Dragon's wartime glory, love, marriage, and decline to patriarchal fascism, which Eve narrates angrily and sorrowfully in the song "Bury the Body". By virtue of regarding his story as important enough to sing, Eve pays homage to this sadly fallen hero, despite his atrocity, and thus shows her own heroic potential for compassion despite her fragmentation and brutalisation. Eve thus pays Dragon's ruined humanity the same respect that she will consequently deserve from Adam when she has fallen. In postcolonial discourse, we can insist that 'the people' must speak with their own voice, but at the end of the day, we also need to be personally validated as human beings through the song of one – usually, but not necessarily, a lover – who closely witnessed our lives. This is the small but important responsibility that Adam is ready to accept after his gruelling journey, and it is only when he understands his new calling that his anger toward Chasarandi, about Eve's death, subsides. Adam's 'expertise', as Chasarandi calls it, with which to undertake the task of telling Eve's

life story, has less to do with Adam's copious historical knowledge than with the pure love and compassion that have been violently distilled from his previously perverse, prejudiced and self-serving curiosity about the fascinating sexual and cultural Other.

Heroism, then, is a crucial sub-theme of *Hondo Love Story* that links to my philosophical quest, above, for modes of articulating subjectivity through theatre which are concerned with universal, non-alterity-orientated, effectively post-nativist, questions of human 'being' (verb).

The Bible and Mythical Indeterminacy

In addition to the malleable nature of the narrative structure of the hero's journey, the system of archetypal roles is also open to variation. As noted above, characters can embody several archetypal roles at once, though usually one is dominant, as well as share the undertaking of specific roles. Vogler enjoys this complex fluidity of archetypes because it encourages more complex characters. Within the live performative context of theatre, another exciting opportunity for uncontrollable layers of mythical meaning is engendered through the difference and tension between archetypal characterisation in the written text, on the one hand, and archetypal casting on stage, on the other. In the script for *Hondo Love Story*, we recommend a casting arrangement for smaller productions in which Chasarandi, Dragon and Uncle George are played by the same actor. This effectively makes the shape shifting quality of that actor in performance more visually profound than the literary qualification of Eve as the shape shifting character archetype in the written story.

Regarding the Biblical narrative of the play, the Chasarandi/Dragon/Uncle George shape shifter makes sense in terms of having Chasarandi, as the God-figure who 'creates' Adam and Eve, return in the form of Uncle George to condemn their naked love with his racism; as well as to dismember the 'Dragon' of black male militancy (the jar) – as God dismembered the snake. However, since the same actor plays Dragon earlier, God and the Devil are shown to be two sides of the same coin in this morally murky play. The conflation here also has

consequences for the historical symbolism, explained above, of both characters. Despite the intellectual polarity of colonial-versus-anticolonial, which remains sacrosanct in politically correct postcolonial discourse, Dragon and Uncle George are symbolically shown to be mutually reinforcing embodiments of the same brutal and dehumanising legacy. Chasarandi's archetypal link to Uncle George as both elements of the same shape shifting function is not incongruent, but rather symbolically contradicts the superstitious colonial legacy's perception of itself as different from, and more rational than, the occult legacies of the colonised. Anne McClintock (1995), among others has deconstructed this colonial superstition and exposed the neurotic heart of modernity's violently rationalistic epoch.

The Eden that the colonial God (Uncle George) created and the anticolonial Devil (Dragon) tried to ruin is the cosmopolitan space of Western power that the postcolonial Adam, made in his colonial father figure's image, has inherited. The informal red light district, into which Adam drives, observing the black prostitutes who are ready to serve him, represents this space of Western power. The forbidden fruit at the centre of this Eden, however, which Dragon tempts Adam to eat by provoking Adam's chivalry while abusing Eve, is the authority of violence which the colonial God historically tried to keep to itself. The historical equivalent to the Biblical knowledge of good and evil that this forbidden fruit of violence brings is the absolute moral autonomy that the anticolonial guerrillas, having hijacked colonialism's violent authority, practiced at the villages. This is the knowledge of good and evil that also tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit when Dragon tempted her during the war. The heavy price of such knowledge is the psychopathic hell in which the war veterans exist psychologically, distanced from their own humanity; effectively dead to themselves and therefore completely comfortable with inflicting death upon anyone else. Adam's challenge is to resist the permanent entrapment of this hell while descending into it, like Orpheus, to rescue his lover who is a captive there and will ultimately not escape.

As stated at the end of Chapter 2, however, the use of Biblical narrative in the play was not *initially* so self-conscious – we had to allow *some* divine mystery for ourselves amidst all this

psycho-mythical and socio-historical lucidity. In incorporating the Adam and Eve story, our aim was very simply to retell the Bible story as a human hero's journey within a Zimbabwean post-war context, by translating the dramatic essence of each scene in the Genesis drama. This was mainly a brainstorming exercise, for generating ideas about character, situation and relationships, by exploiting the ready-made tableaux of the Genesis drama.

For example: 'Eve was the mother of humankind' became "Comrade Eve...would be the mother to a nation" (Cobra's words, Scene 6). 'The snake tempted Eve' became 'Dragon lured Eve into the war'. 'Eve came from Adam's rib' became 'Adam's sore rib is the event that heralds his meeting with Eve'. 'Adam was lonely in Eden with no suitable companion' became 'Adam has a good, privileged life, but is divorced and isolated'. 'God told man to go forth and multiply' became 'a supernatural being sends Adam to a place of sexual activity'. 'Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit of knowledge and death' became 'Adam and Eve gain carnal knowledge of each other while exposing themselves to lethal punishments'. 'God commanded that man shall kill the snake' became 'the supernatural agency of fate leads Adam into a situation in which he must murder Dragon'. 'Adam and Eve were ashamed after their transgression, assisted by the snake, which gave them knowledge of sin' became 'Adam and Eve become vulnerable after crossing Dragon's threshold to the dark side'. 'Adam and Eve tried to hide from God's anger' became 'Adam and Eve make themselves scarce in order to avoid retribution'. 'Adam was judged by his Father' became 'Adam confronts his father figure'. 'The snake's actions resulted in man's crisis of morality and mortality' became 'the Serpents come to kill the guilty one'. Beyond creating these parallels between stories, there were no preconceptions about what the parallels should actually *say* about the Zimbabwean post-war context.

Mass Culture Influences

Another source of early inspiration that preceded our Biblical deconstruction and would have a more subtle influence on the play was the real-life American legend of Bonnie and Clyde,

the two famous wanted criminal lovers who travelled around the country together during the Depression, committing robbery and murder. After we had first seen Arthur Penn's film (1967) together, we both recognised that something was extremely appealing about that antisocial "post-apocalyptic romance", as Sita called it, between two outcasts adrift in a world of desolate landscapes, underdeveloped towns and impoverished people at a time of economic hardship and civil instability. I guess, as two former rebel lovers (we eloped) adrift in these post-apocalyptic Southern African times, there was something too familiar about the situation. For me, the environmental similarities between the harsh social realities of the American Depression and the Zimbabwean crisis added to this familiarity.

However, it was only when we watched *Natural Born Killers* (1994) – Oliver Stone's edgy film with the same story in a more current, media-blitzed American context – that an aesthetic concept began to materialise through songs. Long before we began to work intensely on the script, I worked at the computer for some weeks, intuitively composing instrumental scores that would give a vague sense of story when played together. Not all the songs were written at that time; some arrived much later when most of the script was drafted. In the early stages, I had a vague idea that the play would be a reggae opera, given the influence of reggae culture and music in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle movement, and Bob Marley's well-known passion for the country. But with neither playwright being very fanatical about reggae music *per se*, the eclectic soundtrack for the play ended up reflecting what we mostly listened to: Sita's 1970s underground rock sensibility versus my Afropop and Soul sentimentality. The operatic proto-punk band, *The Doors*, was particularly influential, especially before Adam changed from the Rhodesian war veteran of my original fifteen-minute sketch to a historian, although it is not implausible that Adam the historian would listen avidly to this form of music.

Postscript

In the preceding chapters, I have explored the theme of ‘deconstructing the native’ and ‘imagining the post-native’ through theatre and/as performance. The dissertation delves into these concerns from the ethical and epistemological stance of an emerging, sporadic and not precisely defined movement in contemporary African philosophy and cultural activism. This movement is influenced by, and in turn hopes to challenge and invigorate, postmodern thought. The aim of my inquiry has been to contextualize the major themes of the scholarly movement within the ostensibly more intuitive world of cultural practice, thus illustrating the sociopolitical significance and exigency of said themes. Using the concept of ‘engendering space’ as a point of contact between philosophy and theatre, I have described how the use of marginal space in cultural and/as political performance can be a methodology for deconstructing the native and imagining the post-native. In a study of the early works of Brett Bailey, I have shown how theatre can engender a physical and/as metaphysical space in which participants may confront, come to terms with and ultimately choose to transcend the internally oppressive teleological ontology of a fossilized, historically engendered alterity. To be more specific, Bailey’s works challenged the outdated and destructively tenacious modes of thought which have defined the psychic space of anticolonial identity and/as ideology. The predicament is ethical, spiritual, cultural, intellectual and existential. The ramifications are social and political. The remedy is aesthetic.

In two main sections, the dissertation includes an academically theoretical analysis of the situation and my own response through a commercially oriented artistic concept. The latter comprises the production proposal and intellectual justification for *Hondo Love Story*, my coauthored and semiautobiographical play about the history and pathological aftermath of anticolonial violence in Zimbabwe. As with Bailey’s work, *Hondo Love Story* does not specifically explore the theme of nativist alterity, though it does illustrate, with irony, the historical situation, psychic reality and behavior patterns that are influenced by nativism. More fundamentally, the play, like Bailey’s works, reveals its unique African context as the

site of universally human struggles. However, while Bailey's aesthetic polemically privileges the spatial and performative elements of theatre over the 'cerebral', mine relies equally on the written and (subsequently) spoken word.

While it is unlikely that mass audiences will grasp much of the subtext from first viewing the play, I see this not as a limitation on the transformative agency of the ephemeral art. Rather, the curiosity engendered by the mystery of theatre is one of theatre's greatest powers with which to make a difference. More than the creation and consumption of an artwork, theatre, like other art forms, is a gateway to worlds, societies and/or psyches beyond our own. Theatre engenders a space in which to connect with difference, intimately and profoundly. Subsequent to this process, audiences may be motivated to investigate further, perhaps by watching the show again for better understanding (and for which we would be grateful), perhaps by reading, or by looking for websites relating to the show. If our work is well done, individuals may be inspired enough to educate themselves further about the context of the play, or even participate in positive causes. In our product-obsessed entertainment industry, plays and their criticisms come and go, while profundity is confused with sensational impact, and illusion is too often mistaken for mystery. Less familiar is the idea of performance being only a starting point for sustained, proactive, curious and critical dialogue and investigation that has nothing to do with a show's campaign for commercial longevity. Such a notion, better established in the discourse and praxis of educational and developmental dramas, can enrich the commercialized avant-garde and challenge it to go beyond its precious self as we continue the struggle that can never end: the struggle to keep showing the world why theatre does, and will always, matter.

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