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**The body as a site of communication and performance in
storytelling: Analyzing the offline and online body in
performance, in Lungile Mncube's *The Ancient* (2017).**

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DECLARATION

I, Lungile Mncube declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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11 March 2019

Date

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Abstract

This research explores the idea of the body being the site of communication and performance in storytelling. It further examines how storytelling has evolved and how that has affected the “offline” and “online” body. The core of it searches for possibilities of how an offline body can converse with an online body in storytelling. It examines the continual coexisting relationship between offline human body and technology.

Moreover, this research is practice-based. Through searching for answers, I workshopped a play called; “*The Ancient¹*” with the cast. In this play two different ways of telling a story are explored, as well as the use of the body in two different spaces. Through the performance there was participation from the audience. It was done through a newly termed method that this research proposes; called the Social Network Interventional Theatre. This method is partly borrowed from applied theatre, however, it is modified with an inclusion of social networks as means of communicating with the world of the performers. Thus the audience were participating with what was happening on stage through the use of their cellphones.

In conclusion, this research finds that, it is possible for the offline body to converse with the online body in storytelling. Also, it reveals that the offline body still has power over the behavior of the online body.

¹ The production was performed on the 4th and 5th of May 2017.

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Chapter 1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

This research was inspired by a personal observation of a cousin who is extremely fond of Facebook. She has two Facebook accounts with different user identities. She would say things that contradicts her current state of mind in these accounts. An example is when she laughs with everyone around the dinner table and presents a happy face; but writes on her Facebook statuses that she is full of sadness. This made me wonder about what I should believe. Should I believe what I can observe on her offline body; or should I believe what she posts on Facebook, or who she is on Facebook. I further developed an interest in the body being used to perform, and I wondered to what extent does the offline body differs from the online body. During that time I came across Bernard Stiegler's theory of memory that states that humans and technology coexist (Stiegler 2006). It gave rise to questions in my head about the performance of the body in different spaces, and if they can be brought together in one space, those are the questions that motivated this paper.

1.2. Research questions

The primary question is, can the offline body converse with the online body in storytelling? Following are the research sub-questions.

- How do we physicalize the body in cyberspace?
- What is the relationship of the online body and the offline body in performance of *The Ancient*?
- How does the online body and offline body inform each other in storytelling?

1.3. Research objectives

The main three objectives of this paper are as follows,

- To study how the body is physicalized in cyberspace; specifically, Facebook,
- To examine the relationship between the online body and offline body in performance of *The Ancient*, lastly,

- To study how the online body and offline body inform each other in storytelling, and the effect of the audience using their cell phones during a performance in a theatrical space.

1.4. Literature Review

Defining the body as only a biological physical structure is no longer adequate (Longhurst, 1995 & 2001, Grosz, 1994; Goffman, 1959), this is because the body has become a contextualized concept. It is on its own, hermeneutic. Giving it a definition depends on many things, and some of those are time and space, (Frank, 1991; Nast and Pile, 2005; Murray and Sixsmith, 1995). For the purpose of this paper, I distinguish the body into two, offline body and online body. Both types of bodies are determined by time and space.

Boyd and Heer (2006) refer to the body as a “complex site of communication, allowing information to be expressed through subtle nuances of voice and gesture,” (2006, 1). This description seems fitting to be of an offline body as the physical, biological body allows communication through *body* language (gestures, facial expression, and posture) as well as the use of voice. On the other side, the new technology is opening up possibilities for disembodied subjectivities, (Featherstone and Burrows, 1996; Biocca and Mark, 2013; Jordan 1999). This is through the use of different identities on social networks. These different identities become what I refer to as the online body. Seemingly, there is a blur line developing between the offline body and the online body. This consequently appears to be leading to a formation of cyborgs. In which Haraway defines as a “hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction,” (Haraway 1991, 149). Featherstone (2005) adds that cyborgs are human-machine hybrid.

A different perspective on that is suggested by Gies (2008) where the author argues that having different identities might be a way for the user to know their real selves. On the contrary, I think the more people create different identities online, the more fragmented the “real” self becomes; such that they can end up losing themselves in that process (Barney, 2004 & 1997; Donath, 2003; McLuhan, 2003), which brings into question the real self and the representation of it on cyberspace.

In the book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1959), articulates that there are ‘front’ performances which are selectively to the observers. Both social networks and oral tradition open up space for the performance of the body, however the two latter have different impact on the user and the execution of each is differently determined by the space. Moreover, both mediums influence the audience/ user in some way, nonetheless, the relationship between the two is not clear.

1.5. Research Context: *The Ancient*

1.5.1. Summary of *The Ancient*

The Ancient is a workshopped theatre production which attempts to examine how the offline body and the online body inform each other in contemporary storytelling. This production invites the audience to the lives of couples whose relationship is hugely influenced by technology. Moreover, *The Ancient* explores paradigms of how the body has been affected by the change of technological communication, how oral tradition- storytelling is becoming a “bygone” and the possible future influenced by online reality. *The Ancient* poses a big question on the future of humanity, and the relationships we build or destroy with technology. It is a play in which this study revolves around.

1.5.2. Prior understanding before *The Ancient*

Before initiating this study, I had a preconceived understanding of the effect of social media on humans. These conceptions are clearly expressed in the production of *The Ancient* in which one can undoubtedly see how social networks have been positioned as having negative impact on humans. Apart from the play being workshopped by the cast and myself, I strongly believe I influenced the cast with negative information about social networks, which pre-existed in my mind.

In the inception time of *The Ancient*, I was reading mostly online newspaper articles focusing on the influence of technology on humans. Whilst reading on relative topics, I would limit technology to either internet or social networks. Some of the articles I came across include teens self- esteem being measured by the internet (Groot 2017); the FCD² referring to technology as a boredom buster and escape for reality, (FCD Prevention Works 2017) and the question of social networks resulting to loneliness, (Marche 2012). These articles created an

² The FCD is the leading international nonprofit provider of school-based substance abuse prevention services.

illusion in my mind that social network had more negative effects on the users than positive. Moreover, I am fond of oral tradition storytelling, and from the observation I had in my community, I realized that it is slowly but surely fading away because of the increased use of social networks. One thing I did not consider was that stories can also be set online. I think is based on the value I have of people coming, gathering and sharing stories together. In as much as the play, *The Ancient* illustrates negativity of social networks in a comedic way, the *social networks* also get to defend themselves in the play, leaving the audience with a question of what the world is turning into because of the influence of social networks.

1.6. Research Methodology

The methodology used in this paper is qualitative inquiry. It is from a directorial point of view. However, in the study itself, a different method of intervention is introduced which is borrowed from applied theatre (Prentki and Preston, 2009) and interactive storytelling (Lwin, 2017). I propose this new method of participation as Social Network Interventional Theatre. This methodology was first used in the play, *The Ancient*.

1.7. Analysis

The approach being utilized for analysis of data is Inductive Thematic Analysis. This approach allows the analysis of themes of the data being collected. The data analysed in this research is *The Ancient*. The themes of this play are analysed as well as the symbols from the play; that lead to the latter. There are also pictures provided of the performances which speak back to the heart of this study. The findings also interact with the literature.

1.8. Limitations

The biggest limitation to this study was not being able to analyse the comments posted by the audience members on *The Ancient* Facebook page (in which it is called *TThe Ancient*). This setback was due to ethical clearance reasons. Another one was not having sufficient technological resources for the final execution of the play.

1.9. Conclusion

This chapter has given a basic idea of what each chapter will entail and what the reader could expect from the paper.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It is imperative that we understand what the key words of the topic means in the academia and what they stand for in this study. This chapter will enlighten the existing knowledge on the keywords of this paper.

Technological advancement has played a major role in most of the changes witnessed in the 21st century especially with regards to communication of the human body. The change in communication from simple verbal communication to forms of communication mediated by Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) is indicative of how the ways of living in most places in the world have transformed altogether. As Rossiter and Garcia observed, “our lives, our learning, our students, and our teaching have been touched and changed by technology,” (Rossiter and Garcia 2010, 37), in a performance level, this study fundamentally, examines the influence of technology on online and offline body.

2.1. The epistemologies of the body

The 1950s text may seem outdated in the 21st century, however some of the content expressed then; is still relevant up to this day. Lipman (1957) looked at the body in three aspects, “first, there is the body as a qualitative presence, sometimes called the ‘body-image’. Second, the body as a favoured instrument of creative accomplishment. Third, the body as a persistent, intensely significant subject matter of the arts,” (1957, 425). Under qualitative presence, Lipman (1957) reflects on how each of us have our own bodies, and he refers to that as a “body-image”. The author also states that for all that we know of the body could be “objects which become crystalized for us only by our noting the ways in which they perform,” (1957, 426). Consequently, the association of the body with performance keeps coming up every now and again, raising questions such as, it is possible to separate the body from performance? According to Lipman, there is never a time where the body-image is static. It changes every now and then, depending on the influence of the space and time, an example is emotions, they can change subjective appearance.

The body as an instrument, Lipman reflects on how an artist or a painter sees his body as an instrument to, “produce symbolic objects external to himself,” (1957, 428). Some art forms

demand that the instrumental use of the body should itself be the “object of aesthetic enjoyment,” (1957, 428). Lipman points out that the body is not initially the instrument but it is made to be one. An example of that is Stelarc’s artwork which will be further explored in this chapter. one can say that Stelarc’s body is a good example of this point made by Lipman (1957). Lipman states that it occurs, “in the context in which the organism perceives itself as an object- in other words, the context of communication,” (1957, 431). Lipman explains this by making the following example, “suppose that stumbling occurs-a brick is perceived as the obstacle, and at the same time one feels a pain in the toe. One is angry at the brick and sorry for one's body, but now the body is a thing of which one has become aware. One says, "I hurt myself," and he has become, in his own eyes, a subject of action and an object of compassion, for he has symbolized to himself his own experience,” (1957, 431). This also highlights the interrelationship between the body, communication and performance. It seems that one has power to relate to the other, but the starting point is the body. It has the power to produce performance and communication. Lipman even makes an example of how an animal body can be the only means of communication among other animals. That is to say, the signals and gestures that animals send to each other can suggest something to them, as a result, they are a way of communicating.

“The role of the body as aesthetic model is already a vast field of exploration,” (1957, 433). This is the last point that Lipman makes about the body. It appears that the body being used aesthetically has been done for some decades now. From the body being painted grotesquely, to it being crucified, Lipman notes “the body has always been a battleground,” (1957, 433). Different artists have used their bodies aesthetically for performance art, and Stelarc is one of the postmodern artists who is still at it.

Stelarc suggests that we must not consider the body as something that consists of absolute nature, because the human body is now and again redesigned and redefined through technology, (Atzori and Woolford, 1995; Fernandes, 1969). This serves as a reflection on how the body has become heterogenous, meaning it is diverse, and to a certain extent, it is not fixed, it keeps changing.

2.1.1 The Offline Body

It is vital that we understand what the body is, and the difference between the two types of bodies explored in this paper, the offline and online body. The definition of the body in this paper is based on biologic point of view as well as a body created; or influenced by technology. The technologically- influenced-body is also examined through the lens of a renowned artist, Stelarc's work which provides evidence that the body is obsolete, and the artist uses his own body as an artwork.

Elizabeth Grosz understands the body as a, "concrete material, animate, organization of flesh, organs, nerves, muscles, skeletal structure which are given a unity, cohesiveness, and organization only through their psychical and social inscription as the surface and raw materials of an integrated and cohesive totality," (1992, 243). This comprehensively reflects on the biological structure of the body and how one could perceive it to be. Grosz (1994) also refers to the body as, "a self-moving machine, a mechanical device, functioning according to causal laws and the laws of nature," (1994, 6). This definition is outside of the inclusion of technology. Lipman (1957) refers to that as a body image, in which I refer to as the offline body.

2.1.2 Online Body

The influence of technology has forced for reconceptualization of the body. It is now imperative to also consider technology when defining the body, (Hall 2002). According to Anne Balsamo (1995), the technological parts are reconstructing the natural body.

It seems that we now live in a period where individuals can decide to be in the physical space or not. Computers have opened a platform for, "humans to escape the body," (Lupton 1995, 100). Through the creation of new identities online, and performing them, the offline body is disembodied and a new cyber -body is embodied, (Gies, 2008; Lupton, 1995). It is that new body that raises questions to what constitutes a body and what it means to have one. According to Lupton (1995) unlike the biological body defined by Grosz (1994), "the idealized virtual body does not eat, drink, urinate or defecate; it does not get tired; it does not become ill, it does not die..." (1995, 100). The behaviour of each body strongly relies on the space that the body is located in at that time. The online body has an impression of being a utopian body that most

people seem to possess in the 21st century, this is due to the convenience of being able to create more than one identity online.

However, Clynnes and Kline (1995) point out that once people get attached to their machines and keep on checking on them all the time, they become slaves to them. One may wonder what that may mean to the online body, especially as we live in a time where people rely on their technological machines almost for everything. Kevin Robins writes that, “the new technology promises to deliver its user from the constraints and defeats of physical reality and the offline body,” (1995, 139). This emphasises the transformation of the body online, showing that whatever the offline body may be considered to be in the physical space; can easily be changed in the cyberspace. Robins (1995) furtherly explains that technology seems to aim at giving the users “magical creative power,” (1995, 139). It comes across as though it’s giving the user all the power to be and do what they want online, this includes being anybody they want to be and being able to change their online bodies however they want to, and whenever they feel to. Unlike with the offline body, which would get ill and have other negative reactions to different things inflicted to it, the online body is not affected by any of those things.

2.1.3. Stelarc’s approach of the body

The idea of what a body is has brought a different kind of relationship between the body itself and technology, Stelarc states that it has led us to the end of evolution, (Stelarc 1991). Through the influence of technology, Anne Balsamo also reflects on how the natural body has been rebuilt “through the use of technological replacement parts,” (1995, 230). Stelarc is an example of an artist who has drastically challenged the perception and conceptualization of the biological body in relation to technology. His original name is Stelios Arcadiou, born in Limassol, an island of Cyprus. Stelarc is a revolutionary Australian performance artist, who has done most of his performances in Japan, Europe and the USA, (Zylinska, 2002). Stelarc’s performances are groundbreaking, and they demonstrate the body being used as an object, rather than a subject, which is exactly what he talks about in his article, (Stelarc 1991).

Stelarc's emphasis is on the body being used as an object for redesigning. Hence he mentions that it's no longer about the relationship humans have with technology but, "how to maintain human performance over extended periods of time," (1991, 593)³.

Briefly about Stelarc's history in the arts, he suspends different kinds of pain directed to his biological body (Crawford, 2012). Stelarc has done more than 25 suspension performances, where he would hang his body from hooks piercing his skin. He has implanted a prosthetic ear on his left arm, planning to install a microphone in it for people to listen to what is heard by the ear, (Moore, 2015). After the first surgery not going well, the second one became a success, it has been part of Stelarc's body since 2006. Garoian and Gaudelius (2001) classified Stelarc as one of the well-known cyborg pedagogues. According to these theorists, Stelarc is one of the performance artists who makes use of technology for the creation of a cyber-body/ identity. He is well recognized for extending and challenging the capabilities of the human body through technology. Stelarc's work blurs between what is real and what is not. In his performances, he goes beyond the idea of using the body as a tool for performance, to using the body as an artwork, (Atzori and Woolford, 1995). For the past 25 years, Stelarc has been exploring possible relations between the body, machine, self and agency.

Stelarc's performances also include robotics and integration of modern technology to the body. He has been extending his body with technological artefacts since 1960s. One of his performances that integrates robotics is where he had a third arm attached to his body, "Stelarc's artistic strategy revolves around the idea of "enhancing the body" both in a physical and technical manner," (Atzori and Woolford, 1995). It is in his interest to challenge the epistemology and ontological perspective of both the biological and virtual body in performance. In his interview with Atzori and Woolford (1995), he makes reference to the body as being obsolete, of which he means that, "the body must overcome centuries and prejudices and begin to be considered as an extendible evolutionary structure enhanced with the most disparate technologies," (1995). Stelarc firmly states that, "technology is what defines the meaning of being human, it's part of being human," (1995). The last question that he was asked during this interview with Atzori and Woolford was based on his next step with his

³ Appendix A shows some of Stelarc's work

artwork. Stelarc answered that it is to, “recolonize the body with microminiaturized robots to augment out bacterial population, to assist our immunological system, and to monitor the capillary and internal tracts of the body,” (1995). Stelarc is doing exactly that, he is “extending his nervous system into non- biological space”, (Clark 2003; 118).

Numerous scholars have looked into Stelarc’s prolific work. Mark Poster is also one of the scholars, who notes that there is a possibility of human clones after all and Stelarc’s work shows a huge possibility of that. In his article, *High-tech Frankenstein, or Heidegger meets Stelarc*, Poster (2002) looks at how the human body is different from machines, he writes that, “the conservative, “sensible” question of technology is now one of the nature of the cyborg, of the new order of humachines,” (Poster 2002). Thus, humans seem to be becoming inseparable with machines, the world is becoming a cyborg nation as technology brings into question the essence of what it means to be a human being. Poster (2002) also mentions that there are two sides that exist in Stelarc’s work. He notes that, “one is a series of performances that integrate technology and the body in ways sometimes provocative, sometimes disturbing and sometimes banal; the other is a set of essays that speculate on the nature of human body in the context of contemporary technology,” (2002, 28). Most of Stelarc’s work is also available on YouTube and his website.

Amidst all the definitions of what the body is, Garoian and Gaudelius (2001) specifically define what the body is in the cyberculture, “the body in cyberculture is a body that combines the virtual and real, the avatar and the actual,” (2001, 335). The body in cyberspace relies on the real, offline body. These two authors also highlight that we must drift away from liminal definitions of the body. Something to consider, with reference to Stelarc’s work is that, the cyberculture cannot be distinguished to corporeality anymore. In his presentation video titled, *Zombies, Cyborg and Chimeras: A talk by performance artist, Prof Stelarc*, Stelarc notes that, “machines are no longer going to be external to our bodies...in fact most technology in the future will be invisible because it will be inside the body...and we’ll be able to recolonize the body...” (Stelarc, YouTube video). Stelarc also indicates that, “humans have always been cyborgs through their connections to technological devices and that a reconceptualization in contemporary culture suggests that we interiorize technology rather than locate technology

outside the body,” (2001, 337). Indeed Stelarc has shown that in one of his performances where he performed with his stomach sculpture⁴. Convincingly, one would believe him when he says, “in the near future you might rest your head on your loved one’s chest, they won’t be attached. They’re breathing, they’re speaking, they’re certainly alive, but they have no heartbeat!” (Stelarc, YouTube video). The main cause of this would be technology taking over the human body.

Julie Clarke (2002) brings forth a concept of a post-human body which she defines as a, “body authored by its technologies which is also retelling and reconfiguring what it means to be human,” (2002, 34). This raises questions to Stelarc’s cyborg, and the notion of the body being “obsolete”. It questions whether the biological human body is taking a path of being a posthuman body. Clarke (2002) makes an example of Stelarc’s Third Hand, how it seems to be a representation of the assimilation of the other.

Stelarc’s work shows the use of performance to share ideas and possibilities. It communicates a message that the body is “obsolete,” (1995) as Stelarc himself would say. His body is not only used in performance, but it has become a site for both performance and communication in the physical space. Stelarc uses his body to communicate possibilities between technology and human beings. He shows how technology can enhance and amplify human capabilities.

Perhaps we need to distinguish between Stelarc’s cyborg and Social Network Sites (SNSs) cyborgs in relation to performance. In doing that, I will look at Thiong’O (1997)’s five main performance ingredients, which are: place, content, audience, time and goal.

Place

Stelarc’s performances originally happen in a specific, physical, geographically open space. Nonetheless the use and expansion of technology has made it possible for everyone in the world to be able to access Stelarc’s work through the internet. On the other side, SNSs cyborgs can be anywhere in the world, whilst maintaining the biological body in one place. Anyone can be a SNS cyborg, it all depends on the access to the internet with an intention of using

⁴ Refer to appendix B

social networks to communicate with other people, check updates, send messages and pictures, etc.

Content

The performances that Stelarc does, “blurs the boundaries between the exterior (inscription) and interior (embodiment) of the body as the information,” (Garoian and Gaudelius 2001; 342). Stelarc’s performances challenge the boundaries between technology and humans, hence there’s a blur line between the two. Moreover, Stelarc’s performances of suspensions show difficulty in the body being free in space, (Jones and Sofia, 2002). Whereas, SNSs cyborgs are always free in the space, they rather show possibilities of the body being diverse in the space. Also, Stelarc seems to be physicalizing the cyborg in his performances, when SNSs performers cyberize their physical bodies on social networks. Both performances are for distinguished intentions.

Audience

The audience of Stelarc’s performances are completely different from those of SNSs cyborgs. Not only in known or unknown numbers, or in the classification of spaces, but also in the way that they engage to the performance. They observe the performance from a certain proximity or remotely. They cannot perform along with Stelarc, except through observation only. In SNSs the audience members are also performers/ storytellers, while Stelarc experiment with his own body. Also, Stelarc does not become his audience as well. He becomes the only point of focus requiring audience to pay their attention to his performance.

Time

Both Stelarc’s performances and SNSs happen at different times. Stelarc’s is limited to geographic barriers. However, Stelarc’s Third Ear on his left arm will allow endless presence. We would be able to hear everything that the ear hears, all the time, once the surgery is completed. In the meantime, SNSs are timeless, users can access their accounts anytime of the day, for as long as they want to. Their internet connection is the determining factor for their accessibility to the SNSs.

Goal

Stelarc's goal with his performances is very clear. He wants to redesign the body in such a way that it coexists with technology, "if the body can be redesigned in a modular fashion to facilitate the replacement of malfunctioning parts, then **TECHNICALLY THERE WON'T BE REASON FOR DEATH,**" (2009; 246). Stelarc's motives seem to be based on a desire to control human existence. He also notes that, "it is no longer meaningful to see the body as a site for the psyche or the social but rather as a structure to be monitored and modified," (Stelarc 1991, 591). The body has been objectified, it can be altered and adjusted.

Stelarc points out that, "technology pacifies the body and the world, it connects the body from many of its functions," (2009, 246). Stelarc sees beauty in the physical connection of the biological body with technology, more specifically, with technology being projected inside the body. Beauty no longer lies on the make-up of the offline body, but on the abnormality, that can be associated with it, which becomes the new aesthetic body. Cyberspace, seems to be creating an anaesthetic body, where people cannot be sensible to any physical pain, where bodies can easily regain from any kind of fall projected to them.

2.2. The origins of Storytelling

"There was a time in African culture where the setting of the sun announced that it was time for storytelling," (Mhlophe 1990, 330).

Storytelling has become a broad and wide concept. Not only does it invite diversity, it has also become a diaspora for humility and unity for different cultures, races, classes and sexuality. This section aims to explore and frame storytelling. For the purpose of this study; it focuses on two types of storytelling, oral tradition and Facebook storytelling which will both be furtherly explored in this section.

2.2.1. The paradigms of "story" and "storytelling"

Scheub (1998) defines story as, "the way in which humans see themselves, experience themselves within the context of their world" (1998, 21). It is the way we live, breathe, talk, and walk. Everything that humans do can be transmitted into a story. A story highlights the potential of information to be reiterated and uttered by other people. When that happens, the story is being shared, it is being 'told'. From Scheub's (1998) definition of story, one could say that storytelling is an elicitation of the story by either the first or second person to the next. It could also involve how the storytellers see the world, who they see themselves as and what

they think matters the most to them. That way storytellers can tell their stories with different purposes and backgrounds, distinguished by their cultures. Similar to Scheub's view of stories, Clark and Rossiter (2008) note that, "stories draw us into an experience at more than a cognitive level; they engage our spirit, our imagination, our heart, and this engagement is complex and holistic," (2008, 65). According to these authors, the impact of good stories takes us away from the current state, to a higher level of consciousness such that the experiences that they explore seem to become real, (Clark and Rossiter 2008).

Rossiter (2002) defines storytelling as a type of communication that has preexisted written human history. According to Rossiter (2002) this communication is used for teaching lessons and sharing information generationally. Correspondingly, Caine et al. (2006) outlines storytelling as the foundational way in which people can access and retain information. These theorists see storytelling as a source of information which can be shared for the longest time.

In the above two definitions of what storytelling is; there are two common components. These are, the storyteller, and the audience. It seems that there is a specific order for storytelling, it starts from having the *story* to sharing, having the *storyteller* and the *audience* whom the story is created for. Perhaps one may ask, why does a storyteller need an audience to tell her stories, or rather, does the storyteller need an audience at all? Does the presence of the audience inform the shape/ format of the story in any way? Those are some of the questions to be explored in this paper. Storytelling is not only a method used in households; it is also used as a method of teaching in classroom environments.

Several things can be achieved through storytelling. This has resulted to different reasons why we tell stories. That has led to the development of various types of storytelling. Cooper et al (1991) refer to these as the value of storytelling. These authors explain that, "stories enhance imagination and visualization, through hearing and telling stories, students can learn to appreciate the beauty and rhythm of language, storytelling increases vocabulary, storytelling enhances speaking skills, storytelling enhances listening skills, storytelling allows students to interact with adults on a personal level," (1991, 9). This furtherly points out how storytelling is not only for entertainment, but is used for other things such as to promote language and literacy development (Peck 1989).

It is imperative to scrutinize how the storyteller herself utilizes her body in the telling process in both the cyberspace and corporeality. Especially as a way of comparing and contrasting how stories are told in the 21st century.

2.2.2. Nguni Oral Tradition Storytelling

In her article, Noleen Turner (1994) focuses on Zulu traditional oral storytelling. The author explores different forms of storytelling. She includes oral prose form which she describes as *izinganekwane* (folktales), lullaby, praise-songs, etc. Turner's point of focus is exactly what I focus on in this paper, which is traditional oral storytelling. Oral tradition uses the spoken word of mouth. Zulu speaking people are mostly dominant in Kwa Zulu Natal province, in South Africa. In a typical Zulu community, it is well known that a grandmother would tell a story (folklore) to her grandchildren, and those stories are known as *izinganekwane*. They are similar to *iintsomi*, from a Xhosa ethnicity, which is dominant in the Eastern Cape, also in South Africa. Both *iintsomi* and *izinganekwane* are similar. They are folktales altogether. They open a space for storytellers to freely use their mouths and bodies to tell stories with an expectation of audience participation in between the story.

Oral tradition has existed for centuries with stories being passed from one generation to the next. Scholar Tisani defines it as a "body of information that belongs to a particular group of people," (1994, 169). Different cultures tell stories differently, depending on what inspired them, and what the intention of telling the story is; henceforth cultural stories are not always the same. Tisani supports that, "oral tradition entertains but can also be a medium that helps human rise from the secular to the sacred realm," (1994, 170). To other people it is a spiritual act that assists people to connect to their 'inner-selves' or 'real' beings as well as their ancestors or higher beings. It is more than about entertainment but also about helping people; educating; uniting and sharing.

Like any other form of communication, oral tradition storytelling has not always been there, (Finnegan 1991). Almost in the same light as how one would see the construction of mediums of communication such as the media. It may come across as a natural medium because most individuals are familiar with it, however it is a construction. Oral tradition storytelling seems to be an ideology that turned into a cultural reality and practice.

This paper frames oral tradition storytelling according to the lens of Soe Marlar Lwin who states that, “traditional oral storytelling involves a small group of people who are co-present and engaged in the event as well as the moment of telling,” (2017, 34). This is one of the reasons why a storyteller is often surrounded by her audience so that they engage with what is being shared with them. Jackie Peck (1989) mentions what is not storytelling by stating that storytelling is not about memorizing script, however, it is about sharing stories in a natural way. In that; storytelling does not require the storyteller to go through the process of rehearsing and memorizing lines as how actors do when they prepare for a performance. In most cases this is because of Lwin’s point, that the audience is co-present in the process of storytelling. There is always a certain level of participation from the audience, which cannot be rehearsed beforehand, but can only be anticipated.

Examining the roots of storytelling, Scheub (1977) points out that oral narrative is a convergence of four elements of oral tradition, namely; the performer, narrative image, the contemporary world, and ritual. One thing remains the same in all types of storytelling, the need to use a body as part of communicating the message. Scheub (1977) talks about the importance of the storyteller to use hand gestures and movements in an oral performance, according to Scheub, these images “shape the external form of the performance,” (1977, 355). This echoes what Elwin (2017) analyses in her article *Narrativity and creativity in oral storytelling: Co-constructing a story with the Audience*. It also becomes evident to how the structure of oral tradition from the 1970s to the 21st century is still the same, and still relevant. Scheub claims that the images created are what unite the performer and the audience. They create a special relationship and bond between the two. They bring excitement to the audience.

According to Scheub (1975, 1977), repetition also plays a huge role. Imagine a storyteller sharing a story without any vocal creativity, with neutral facial expression; no body movements, or gestures. It would seem less interesting especially if the audience is face-to-face with the storyteller. As a matter of fact, that is what Elwin (2017) analyses, the types of gesture used in storytelling for creativity and how they invite the audience to co-construct a story with the storyteller. Elwin (2017) examines performances in Singapore; conducted by a professional storyteller in which they are performed for an audience of 20 adults. She analyses the text structure of the story as well as the body language of the storyteller. The evaluation becomes

interesting as it shows the power of how a story is conducted to invite the audience to participate, and co-construct the story with the storyteller. This is a sign of universality of storytelling, in which it is explicit that it is not only for Africans, but any nationality worldwide. It also shows commonality whereby the participation of the audience is constantly encouraged in the process of storytelling.

2.2.3. Digital Storytelling in the 21st century

Other ways of telling stories are online, where the audience can create platforms like social networks as a podium for storytelling, folksonomy; YouTube, twitter, Instagram (where stories are told through images), WhatsApp and other communication apps. The focus in this paper is on Facebook. Robin defines digital storytelling as a combination of, “the art of telling stories with a mixture of digital media, including text, pictures, recorded audio narration, music and video,” (2016, 18). The author mentions three categories of digital stories amongst the many, 1) personal narratives – which refers to the stories that deals with one’s momentous life events; 2) historical documentaries – Robin refers to these as, “stories that examine dramatic events that help us understand the past”, and 3) stories that inform or instruct the viewer on a particular concept or practice,” (2016, 18)

Humans are getting more and more directly engaged with technology, (Rossiter and Garcia, 2010). Technology appears to be extending human capabilities, and the way in which we “interact and work together. It has revolutionized the way relationships are created and maintained as well how groups of people link up and interact,” (White 2012, 2). Most people escape from face-to-face discussions or stories to cyberspace for various reasons. Some of these include the shift of means of communication in terms of technology, the connection and disconnection of relationships determined by geographical barriers. This applies with digital storytelling as well, there is now a blur line between digital stories and online videos, (Robin, 2016).

We live in a century where telling stories is no longer inhibited by geographical barriers. In fact we live in an era where technology is “seducing” us in every way because it knows our “vulnerabilities” (Turkle 1991). The 21st century is an era where storytellers do not need to be in front of the audience in order to share stories with them. That is the exciting part about

engaging with technological storytelling. There are no limits to what a person can say or where they can say it as long as they are connected to the people they are talking to.

The emergence of the internet has positively and negatively influenced how we see the world. It has affected how the users receive information, how they use it, as well as how they get affected by it. According to Manuel Castells (2001) the critics of the internet have studied and argued that, “the spread of the internet is leading to social isolation, to a breakdown of social communication and family life, as faceless individuals practice random sociability, while abandoning face-to-face interaction in real settings,” (2001, 116). From an early age, many children struggle to stay away from their cellphones and having trouble to make verbal conversations with their peers and other people. One of the causes of this seems to be the use of social network sites. In fact there has been debates over that.

There are scholars who claim that social network sites have nothing to do with all the negativity observed in users (Marche, 2012). The support for that is, there are other users/ audiences who use the same social network sites positively and are benefitting from it, thus it all depends on how one uses it. Nonetheless, there are people who suffer from addiction and misuse of it such that they result to what Castells (2001) talks about, and sometimes even worse than that. Hence they have learned how to be “alone together,” (Turkle, 2011), which refers to how to be together in one location, however in different worlds using cellphones.

2.2.4. Social Network Storytelling

For the purpose of this paper I will refer to social networks as a platform for storytelling. This is because social networks seem to have similar attributes as oral tradition storytelling. They create an online space where the user can share information, express themselves, participate in other people’s statuses, etc. Facebook is the focus in this paper.

In the book *Social Media, Crisis Communications and Emergency Management*, White (2012) makes an introduction about how everyone is a member of social network whether by choice or by default. The author makes an example of how firefighters are ‘networked together,’ this refers to the relationship they have with one another and how they connect from whichever area they may be at a time. According to White (2012), in relation to social networks, one could consider that the traditional means of connecting have been moved to the online world which created what is now recognized as “social networks” (2012, 2).

Nicole Ellison and Danah Boyd define social network sites (SNSs) as “web based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profiles within a bounded area, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system,” (2008, 211). SNSs are part of online world. Allucquere Rosanne Sandy Stone (1991) shares a story of how the virtual system was created. Stone (1991) points out four stages or “epochs” that make up this story. They are as follows, Epoch One is the period of texts; from the mid-1600s, Epoch Two is electronic communication and entertainment media; which took over from the 1900+, Epoch Three is the Information Technology; which dominated the 1960s+, and the last one, Epoch Four which is the Virtual reality and cyberspace which started to take over in 1984 up to this century. Stone notes that the beginning of each epoch was, “signaled by a marked change in the character of human communication,” (1991, 3). This character is explained by Turkle (2011).

Contrariwise to Stone (1991), Tim Jordan (1999) classifies cyberspace and virtual reality as one entity. It is a space where the real is left out, where a user can be able to access information and have control of who they want to be known as, however it cannot exist without communications technology, (Featherstone and Burrows, 1995; Holmes, 1997 and Jordan, 1999). In as much as each era introduces different and modified means of communication, Turkle (1995) points out that, “every era constructs its own metaphors for psychological wellbeing,” (1995, 254). So as to speak, humans are unconsciously, psychologically affected by each means of communications.

2.2.5. Facebook as Storytelling

Morgan Thornton et al. define Facebook as, “an online free social networking website. It allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, and send messages. It is an easy way for people to connect and share with their families and friends online.” (n.d, 1). Facebook exists in the cyberspace. It is in fact a platform for individuals to create online bodies that they can use to ‘perform’ online. They get to create their own online face-book. It is a way of telling and sharing stories, in this paper I refer to it as a cyberspace storytelling platform, resulting to a Facebook user being a storyteller. Facebook is recognized as the most popular social networking site in the world, (White 2012; Wilson, et al. 2012; Pew Research Center 2009-2018). According to White (2012), an average Facebook user is “connected to 80 community

pages, groups, and events,” (2012, 62) and that is with more than 70 translations available on the site. This alone says a lot about the prominence of Facebook.

Facebook provides a variety of ways of communication, White (2012) explains that it allows open groups, closed groups, secret groups, group sites, chats and video calls. Chats require a certain level of relationship. The first one, they have to be the user’s friend, meaning that the user also becomes their friend. Thus communication is two-way. White (2012) notes that, in Facebook, “both parties have to agree to network,” (2012, 56). By that, one member must send an invitation to be friends with the other, and the other must accept that invitation for the two to be able to communicate. Contrarily, in oral tradition storytelling, a storyteller does not need to have a certain kind or relationship with the audience, for storytelling to happen, or to be able to network. The storyteller shares her stories with whoever is present at the time and crafts how she can get the audience members to participate without any specific consent being made. The second way of communicating in Facebook is through groups. This can be categorized as open groups, closed groups, and secret groups, White (2012).

Stephen Marche writes, “Facebook arrived in the middle of a dramatic increase in the quantity and intensity of human loneliness, a rise that initially made the site’s promise of greater connection seem deeply attractive,” (2012, 1). Facebook has become a closest friend to many people, mostly the lonely individuals. They use it to keep themselves busy, distracted, preoccupied, and supposedly happy. It is a place where one can set up a date with someone, people meet there, they share things together and they live together, it is a community in an online space. There are families, there are friends, there are also enemies, business partners, sellers and buyers; all is found in Facebook in the same way to how it is in corporeality.

“We are living in an isolation that would have been unimaginable to our ancestors, and yet we have never been more accessible,” (Marche, 2012:1). The confusing thing is that one can have many social networks in which they have lot of friends but still be as lonely. Marche asks, “does Facebook make us lonely?” He reveals that, “loneliness is certainly not something that Facebook or Twitter or any of the lesser forms of social media is doing to us. We are doing it to ourselves.” (2012, 5). Facebook is a place where “users are no longer held back by the material body but can instead live out any bodily fantasy.” (Gies 2008, 14). Thus, what the

cyberspace is doing, is crossing boundaries, there are no limits on cyberspace, through that illimitation, online bodies are created.

Facebook allows a user to construct a body which is the user's identity, and it also allows the user to express their feelings 'physically' online. That is, through the use of emoticons also known as emojis.

According to Wilson et al. Facebook is changing ways in which many people relate to each other and share stories, (2012, 203). This could either be positive or negative.

2.3. Is technology a new *drug*?

It is important that we understand what is happening around the world with the influence of technology and social networks, more especially since this research is centred around the latter. Almost everything has both a negative and positive side to it. The negative impact of social network has masked the internet as a horrible invention. With no doubt the internet has become a space where people meet, where most of them are teenagers. In a broad spectrum, in this section I aim to look at how social networks are used, I will look at two studies conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life Project as well as Qwerty Digital.

The Pew Research Center focuses on the use of social networks in America as well as across the globe. In 2009 about 93% of teenagers, between the age of 12-17, in America would go online (Lenhart et al 2009). That leaves only 7% of teens who did not use the internet. Some of the findings from this research showed a positive use of internet by teens. For example, about 62% of teenagers get news about current events and politics online, 48% of them buy essential things like books, clothes or music online, about 31% of them get health and physical fitness information from the internet. This research was done in 2009. In the current year, the year of 2018, nine years after that research, Facebook is still the most used social network site; as well as YouTube. The current Pew Internet & American Life Project research shows that young adults still use social media more than the older adults. Nevertheless, young adults (18-24) still use a variety of social networks. The different use of social media in America is varies according to age, 18- 29 year olds show that 88% of them use any form of social media. However, other platforms still appeal more to certain subsets of the population, (Pew Research Center, 2018)

A research by Qwerty Digital (2017) shows that South Africa also has a high number of people who use the internet. In 2017 South Africa had a population of 55.21 million people and 28.6 million (52%) used the internet in some format. 15 million users engage with social network platforms. This research showed that nearly 70% of weekly activities were spent on social network platforms. These studies also show that Facebook is the most used social network site in both countries. In both states, teenagers are the largest users of Facebook. To use this social media platform, they are the ‘electronically connected generation,’ (Niener 2017, 1). This is one of the reasons why the play *The Ancient* (chapter 3) was targeted to teenagers and young adults.

One of the biggest challenges about technology is that it becomes addictive. The FCD Prevention Works define technology addiction as a “frequent and obsessive technology related behaviour increasingly practiced despite negative consequences to the user of the technology,” (2017, 1). According to the FCD, technology and drug substances are not that different in terms of the effect the two have on the brain of the user. Technology can be, “a boredom buster, a social lubricant, and an escape from reality,” (FCD Prevention Works 2017,1), which is similar to some of the reasons why some teenagers run to drugs. They serve as an escape from reality. In the article the FCD mentions some of the risks of teen technology use and times when technology is a protective factor.

Is the 21st century bringing another human revolution?

The difference between humans and technology is not that clear anymore, (Turkle, 1991; Clark, 2003). Clark (2003) talks more about this when he looks at how humans have always been influenced by technology. He makes an example of Brighton Main Street, how the stores ended up being for coffee and cellphones. That the cellphones ended up being more than new toys to the people but *mindware upgrades*. Clark refers to his body as an electronic virgin, the author stresses how we are becoming more and more like cyborgs and that soon enough, “we shall all be kin to the Terminator, to Eve 8, to cable,” (1991,3). He reckons that we ought not to be the superficial cyborgs but we will be, “the more profound sense of being humantechnology symbionts: thinking and reasoning systems whose minds and selves are spread across biological brain and nonbiological circuitry,” (2003, 3). It appears that; being a cyborg is more of static/ “potential” energy that has always been there to each and every human

being. It is a matter of utilizing it, where it becomes “kinetic,” hence Bernard Stiegler (1991) refers to human and technology as entities that co-exist. In the book, *Understanding New Media 2nd Edition*, Siaperia (2018, 2) questions, “does technology determine society? Or does society determine technology?” This is the biggest question in which there is a thin line between the two, in this century.

Online cyborgs

The connection that humans have with the internet, mostly through the use of social networks proposes new possibilities for experimenting with identity, (Turkle, 1991; 1999). This way the virtual world becomes second life to the user. Turkle (1991) talks about how on social networks we often live the fantasy of who we want to be. It becomes a world where all our fantasy becomes a reality. That seems to be a way in which cyborgs are created.

According to Turkle (1991), cyborgs are people who, “would live simultaneously in the physical and virtual,” (1991, 151), that is supported by Haraway who defines cyborgs as a “condensed image of both imagination and material reality,” (1991, 150). So as to speak cyborgs involve two bodies, the offline and online. This might qualify why Stiegler (1991) says we co-exist with technology, as well as another reason why Castells (2001) notes that the internet has been, “accused of gradually enticing people to live their fantasy on-line, escaping the real world,” (2001, 116). That results to cyborgs and the virtual reality becoming a space that produces “artificial entities,” Rabanus (2010, 347).

According to Haraway (1991), technology is a platform that has created a space where the users can both write and read about the world. It has become a space where the viewers can both be the audience and storytellers at the same time. There are no limits as to when to share something and when not to. Cuza (2015) notes that, “technology is part of our living and an important instrument through which we can construct and manage our identity,” (2015, 66). Social network sites seem to be some of the tools that technology use to manage our identities, indeed that happens through users being the ones initiating it all. Cuza (2015) points out that our contemporary natural environment is a “technosphere” kind of environment. By this is the author is referring to how we have been influenced by technology.

2. 4. The Influence of Knowledge in society

Stehr (2001) states that, “Present day society may be described as the knowledge society because of the penetration of all its spheres by scientific and technical knowledge.” (2001, 20). Perhaps it is vital that we examine the influence of knowledge in society. Stehr continues that humans are knowledge based, thus knowledge “always had a function in human life,” (Stehr 2001, 22). Knowledge could be the answer to what is changing reality. According to Stehr, “knowledge illuminates and is able to transform reality,” (2001, 35). “Knowledge enables an actor, in conjunction with control over contingent circumstances of action, to get something in motion and to structure reality. Knowledge allows an actor to generate a product or some other outcome,” (2001,44). Technology itself is a product of knowledge.

It is overt that we live in a society where knowledge plays a huge a role in what we do, we live in a “knowledge society,” (Stehr 2001, 20). Stehr gives definition of knowledge as a “capacity for action, (2001, 35). Stehr’s definition suggests that knowledge can lead to action. An example, one needs to know about social networks in order to be able to use them. A clearer example is, when one buys electronic appliances there is always a user’s manual that will be inside the box, and it is to inform the user how to utilize the appliance. That is a demonstration of how knowledge leads to action. Technology is a result of knowledge. Technology is a result of knowledge. Each technological thing requires our knowledge of it for us to be able to engage in it. According to Stehr (2001), knowledge has always had a function in social life, the author tackles the economic impact that knowledge has on society. Perhaps what could be interesting would be to consider the dynamics of knowledge and power in theatre, how the two influence what the audience see, and how the productions are delivered to them. Townley (1993) talks about knowledge not being isolated and detached, that it is always integral with operations of power. Townley (1993) also describes knowledge as the operation of discipline. Something to consider could maybe is; how is knowledge evident in a theatrical space as well as in the cyberspace. Townley (1993) also notes that the distribution of individuals into space requires discipline.

This chapter has illustrated a deductive direction of literature, in which theoretical propositions were connected to different concepts, as well as other existing theories. It has delivered in-depth description of concepts and terms that will be applied and reflected upon in chapter 4.

Chapter 3

PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNICATION

This chapter examines the use and importance of the body for performance and communication, and how that affects the individuals or “performers” involved.

3.1. Understanding Performance

Questions about what is performance and how do people perform; seem to be still relevant in the 21st Century. The term itself is vast such that it has become contextualized in most cases. There are people who associate performance with stage; that is to say, it is there for actors to “perform”. Meanwhile, Jacques in Shakespeares’ “As you like it” mentions that, “*All the world is a stage;/ and we all the men and women merely players*” (Literary devises). The world being referred to as a stage roughly means that everyone living in it is a performer, if not “performing”, waiting to “perform”.

One of the many definitions of performance has been granted by Schechner (1996). He describes performance as, “actions”, (1996). Schechner (1996) furtherly states that performances may take place in several dissimilar occasions and categories, which reveals that performances may sometimes come across as spontaneous. Henceforth, Schechner (1996) explains that performance is against fixation. In other words, it is constantly changing, it resists remaining the same. Denzin (2003) also battles with defining this term, in his description he notes that “every performance is an imitation, a form of mimesis”, (2003, 190). Denzin seems to be on the same page with Schechner with regards to performances involving “doing”. My concern is that do the same “actions” that both theorists talk about apply in social media/ social networks? In other words, are these actions determined by space or they are flexible to accommodate any space, be it offline or online?

Striff (2003) indicates that performance is constantly for audience. According to Striff (2003), it is possible for the performer to also be the audience. Yet, the audience also has power to

validate what is performance and what is not. Such occasion is confusing and may come across as a bit absurd, as what could be “performance” for me, may not be performance to the other person. This raises questions of power, in terms of who has the power to decide that one action must be qualified as a performance, and not the other.

Ngugi wa Thiong’O, a prominent Kenyan playwright, literary critic and novelist also studies performance. In his article, *Enactment of Power: The Politics of Performance Space*, Thiong’O (1997) talks about what performance is and where it can take place, in relation to the performance of the state. One of the points that Thiong’O raises is that, in as much as the state has its performance areas, so is the artist, however, “the power of the artist is solely in the performance,”(1997, 12). Thiong’O defines performance as a “representation of being – the coming to be and the ceasing to be of processes in nature, human society, and thought,” (1997, 11). It seems that representation can happen in both theatrical space where the audience is fully aware that what they see on stage is “fictional,” or it can happen outside of theatrical space where individuals are not aware of it. That is to say, people can perform who they are even outside the theatres.

Trying to figure out whether performances can only happen in the physical space or beyond it is more of a challenge. Whilst studying virtual system, Allucquère Rosanne ‘Sandy’ Stone notes that “on the nets, where warranting or grounding, a persona in an offline body, is meaningless”, (1991, 2), Stone believes that on the internet there are no boundaries, people can be anyone they want to be, anytime and anyhow, there seems to be no limitations. Stone makes it clear that on-line personas can be created, in a way such that, users have the privilege to decide who they want to be. It seems that unlike in real life where people would say, you do not choose where you want to be born, but where you want to be in life. In other words, social networks open a platform where users can be whoever they want to be, they decide on who they want to be “born” as, and how they want to live their lives thus far.

Stone (1991) uses an example of Julie, who was a middle-aged male psychiatrist but on the net was known as an older- disabled woman. In her on-line persona, many women, who were her friends on-line believed in her, she was more of an inspiration to them, and they would share their stories with her as she appeared to be very caring and kind. They got very shocked when they discovered that all that time they were talking to a man. Stone (1991) refers to this as

computer crossdressing in virtual reality, different space from the physical one that most people are used to nowadays. However, this raises questions whether what “Julie” was doing could be an on-line performance, as it appears to be a performance of identity, with possibilities of this person being a cyborg. It also questions gender performance, and this example is a good example of that. The essence of performance is being challenged in the process. Stone also refers to cyberspace as “partially the idea of virtual community,” (1991, 3) of which might explain one of Julie’s intents of pretending to be a woman, that he wanted to explore how it’s like to be part of the female “online community”.

Huston (1992) notes that, “all acting is performance, though not all performance is acting,” (1992, 13). This statement supports Striff’s definition and perception of performance that it happens when there is an audience. It also elaborates, yet summarizes that performance happens when an individual takes a character of someone else for the sake of creating a dramatic action, where there is a presence of the audience.

In the context of oral tradition storytelling, Finnegan (1992) notes that the term “performance” is, “often used to refer to the actual execution or practice of communication (as distinct from its potential, or its abstract formulation in knowledge or grammar),” (1992, 92). Communication appears to be key when one talks about performance. It seems that the reasons why people perform is to communicate a message to the audience one way or the other.

Finnegan (1992) also mentions that among all performances are, “the human participation,” (1992, 94). The audience is always participating while watching a performance, the participation may be verbally communicated or kept within themselves.

It seems possible and normal for individuals to easily use their bodies as a way of performing actions (Frank, 1991; Goffman, 1956). Striff (2003) also notes that “to consider performance is to study how we represent ourselves and repeat those representations within everyday life, working on the assumption that culture is unthinkable without performance,” (2003:1). It has become part of our everyday life to use the body for performance, it no longer has to be in a theatrical space as one would expect it to be, but also outside of it as well as on cyberspace, indeed all the world is a stage, as Shakespeare would say. Thiong’O (1997) lists the main ingredients of performance as, place; content; audience; time and goal. With reference to Peter Brook’s book, *the empty space* Thiong’O questions if the space is ever empty? He raises points

where he shows that rather than the space being regarded as empty, it can only be an open space. It is in that open space that a performance can happen. According to Thiong’O (1997), what qualifies a performance area is a presence or absence of people.

Technology is playing a huge part in redefining performance. Thus, resulting to reconsideration and deconstruction of the body of the storyteller as well as the audience in the process of storytelling. The perception of what a performance is, as defined above has recently been challenged by technology.

3.2. Communication space and time

We need to understand what communication means, how it is conducted, as well as its significance in order to know how the body acts as a site of communication and performance. Harold D. Lasswell (2007) writes that the most important questions to ask in defining an act of communication are, “Who, Says What, In Which Channel, To Whom, With What Effect?” (2007, 216). It is very difficult to give one concrete definition of communication. However, it is what connects entities, animals, people, etc. “In everyday experience we find that communication is something which makes connections,” (Richard Dimpleby and Graeme Burton 1992, 6). Human communication through the physical and technological interaction has become the most dominant one in modern society. “Over the years, human communication is increasingly mediated by technology,” (Allucquère Rosanne ‘Sandy’ Stone, 1991: 4).

Technology plays a huge role in connecting people nowadays.

It looks as if oral tradition storytelling has transformed and transcended with the contemporary audience setting. This may be caused by the new forms of communication developing every day. “As communication becomes more immediate absence/presence, writing/speech lose meaning,” (Holmes 1997, 168). Most people are no longer that much interested in making verbal conversations, (Turkle, 2012), rather they prefer the “anytime and everywhere” way of communication, which is made possible by cellular phones.

It is convincing that to communicate, whether by means of writing a letter, speaking to someone over the phone or in person, a use of the body is always essential, hence why Boyd and Heer note that “the body is a complex site of communication, allowing information to be expressed through subtle nuances of voice and gesture,” (Boyd and Heer 2006,1). However,

they also inscribe that “embodied interaction is taken for granted in everyday communication, but mediated conversations require individuals to write themselves into being,” (Boyd and Heer 2006, 1), this makes me wonder if the reason for people to use emoticons on Facebook could be because they want “to write themselves into being” it also makes me wonder why it is important to use emoticons if individuals avoid embodied interactions? The thought on that is, could it be that; the moment one uses emoticons in social network platforms, they are visually embodying their feelings in a different space?

In her book, *Life on the Screen*, Sherry Turkle emphasizes that, “we are social beings who seek communication with others,” (1995, 102). According to Turkle, the reason behind that is our loneliness as humans. Perhaps it is crucial to ask if us being “lonely” is because of the influence of technology in our lives, or we have always been lonely only not as obvious as it has become in the 21st century, with the huge influence of technology. In other words, could technology be making our hidden “loneliness,” visible? One thing to consider is the motive of stepping into the online world, specifically of using SNSs. While others use it to search for job opportunities, and look for friends, Turkle insists that immediately when we step into the online world we, “construct our identities,” (1995, 177). It is almost as if different users have different motives and objectives. Something to consider is whether the thought of constructing identities could be the main fascinating reason for most users to engage in social network sites? That it opens a door for a world where nothing is impossible. Turkle (2011) makes another point that the internet is what contributes to thinking about identity as something that can be multiplied. It allows the users to freely explore being different individuals at once. Turkle (2001) assures us that internet experiences allows multiplicity and flexibility, and that is mostly visible with teenagers, as the stats say that they are the generation that is hugely affected by social networking sites. They are the dominating users/ audiences/ storytellers.

The biggest difference between African precolonial storytelling and postmodernity storytelling is that we now carry means of communication in our pockets. So as to speak, we live in a period where being alone (in the physical reality) can allow being with crowds of people in cyberspace, it is all in the power of technology, “being alone can start to seem like a precondition for being together because it is easier to communicate if you can focus,” (Turkle 2011, 155). In most cases one can focus better when alone, than when with other people. Social

media has created a world where there is a blurred boundary between online and offline, (Baym and Boyd, 2012; Walther, et. al, 2011). That is one of the things that has brought about the role of the body in this process, and what is expected from both the audience and performers.

The value of face to face conversations seem to have tremendously depleted. It has transformed storytelling completely from how it used to be and what we knew it as. Gunilla Bradley (2010) writes that, “a new world is opening up when one thinks in terms of the virtual company, the online classroom and the virtual living room,” (2010, 848). It seems that we live in a century where anyone can be anything. Bradley (2010) writes about how if technology is used “in a proper way” it can bring human contact closer, however that is not the case. The theorist continues and writes that, “the dialogue between people is running the risk of getting thinner,” (2010, 848). This is not new, it is something that numerous other theorists have spoken about, including Sherry Turkle. Human contact is losing its essence and value.

Kurt Linderman (2005) writes about how online journaling has become a community for some people. Linderman notes that, “online journals provide the means and opportunity for presenting one’s self to a wider audience than ever before,” (2005, 355). The audience is continually developing new communal places in different spaces.

Communication space seems to have changed with the influence of technology which introduced new ways of communicating.

3.3. The relationship between cyberspace, body and identity

Cyberspace is a term that was first coined by William Gibson in his novel *Neuromancer*. Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows mention that it, “refers to an information space in which data is configured in such a way as to give the operator an illusion of control, movement and access to information, in which he/she can be linked together with a large number of users via a puppet-like simulation which operates in a feedback loop to the operator” (1995, 3). On the other hand, Tim Jordan notes that cyberspace is often called “virtual world because it does not exist in tangible, physical reality, but in the light and electronics of communications technology”, (1999, 1).

Cyberspace creates possibilities for users to be in control and to be whoever they want to be. “The strangeness to cyberspace - where people in whose bodies are separated by millions of miles can meet- is made familiar by describing it as a street traversed by a monorail and in which people walk using avatars that represents them to each other,” (Jordan 1999,29). The avatars used can be in every way the user wants, regardless of race, nationality, gender and age.

Sjöberg (1999)’s point of view on cyberspace is that it “has become an alternative public sphere for young people. A place that is not only used for informative purposes, but also for creating an electronic (often ideal) version of themselves. Experimenting with one’s identity on the Internet introduces new ways of finding one’s ‘I’. One crucial difference is that identity is being separated from the body, which in turn calls for new ways of presenting one’s physical appearance” (1999,114). Cyberspace has become a new platform for users to explore identity and their fantasies. It is this life that appears to allow users to, “hide from each other,” (Turkle 1991, 1). The hiding happens behind phone screens, computers, and other technological devices. However, it goes beyond the physical technological artifacts to the cyber world. Other users hide behind names that are not their real ones. In the midst of everything, White (2012) notes that, “social networks are a reflection of a society,” (2012, 1).

Holmes (1997), clarified that “Cyberspace abandons “the real” for the hyperreal by presenting an increasingly real simulation of a comprehensive and comprehensible real world,” (1997, 163). Cyberspace breaks the geographical barriers of a person in South Africa not being able to communicate with someone in USA within a minute. In a physical space one can find geographical barriers like huge mountains and rivers restraining a person who is across the borders to come to the other side, however, cyberspace is a space with no limitations, as Featherstone and Burrows describe that, “The world of cyberspace is itself an urban environment- “a simulation of the city’s information order”” (1995, 11-12). As much as there are different communities in the corporeality, same applies in the cyberspace, which is why Tim Jordan clarifies that “The physical exists in cyberspace but is reinvented. Virtuality is the general term for this invention of familiar physical space in cyberspace,” (1999, 1). The physical has a completely different structure in cyberspace from what is normally known in reality.

Biocca and Levy on the other hand, define cyberspace with Karl Poppers' suggestion of the 3rd world when we think of human action, "the world of the content of thoughts, and, indeed of the products of the human mind (Popper& Eccles, 1977, 38)," (1995, 18). It is on its own, an entirely different world, which is constituted by its own values, intentions and other reasons.

Mike Featherstone (1995, 22) notes that online body and virtual body are the same. Brian Simpson recalls that, by saying "Cyberspace...is not really a place, but is itself an abstraction created by our minds." (2005, 120). Nevertheless, this 'abstraction' seems to be taking over other users' minds, resulting to the confusion for others, of who created the other. This brings to the question of human and technology coexisting, which is what Stiegler and Stelarc bring upfront.

Sjo"berg enlightens that, "Cyberspace has become an alternative public sphere for young people. A place that is not only used for informative purposes, but also for creating an electronic (often ideal) version of themselves. Experimenting with one's identity on the Internet introduces new ways of finding one's "I". One crucial difference is that identity is being separated from the body, which in turn calls for new ways of presenting one's physical appearance" (1999,114). This goes back to the change of identity online creating online bodies.

Representation of identities and the use of emoticons may become the cyberspace's "physical appearance". Simpson explicates that the "Internet sets the frames for a role play," (2005, 120). It allows the users to take on different roles, at times which they will never take in real life. This is evident to how individuals can freely play with their identities, taking different bodies online.

Cyberspace plays a huge part in the perception of the online -body and who we claim to be, our identities. It aims to create a completely different world altogether (Robins 1995). Almost in the same light as with the real world, cyberspace has certain expectations from the people who "reside" there. There are norms, rituals, cultures, and ideologies that only exist there and not in the offline world. One of those is the expectations of who you must be, or do in order to be noticed in that space. Attention plays a huge part, people care about the followers they have, the likes, comments and inbox messages they get from the people they have. It is a world where

most people want to be known as those who “have made it” in life. However, I do not disregard the fact that there are people who use it for “right reasons”.

Identity has always been an issue online, the internet highlights it to our attention. According to Turkle (1999) the biggest advantage of cyberspace is that text can be one’s identity. That is because self- presentation is textual. Barney (2004) and Castells (1997) write about how identity is a construction through discourse. Barney (2004) furtherly notes that identities are, “built upon shifting relationships and networks of power, expressed in language practices,” (2004, 18). Social networks allow text to be in a language that the user can use, and is able to understand as well as access. Power also plays a huge part in the construction of identity, knowing who the user is “performing” for determines how the identity must be in most cases. Identity shapes our world, (Castells 1997), who people portray themselves as, plays an important role in how we are received by others, there are certain expectations based on how people portray themselves to others.

Turkle (1999) makes a metaphor of how the self is similar to computer windows. That an individual can be many things at once, and cyberspace allows that flexibility, “it raises the experience to a higher power,” (Turkle 1999, 644). There are slim chances of all of this reversing. People are expected to portray themselves in a certain manner. Hence why identity matters in both offline and online world. Identity is not only based on humans and how they portray themselves to the world. It is everywhere, an example is with the fashion industry. Anne Balsamo (1995) writes about how signs have become identities for specific brands to be recognized for commodity purposes. In other words, the signs that they use to brand themselves become who they are, their identities. Identity is very crucial, especially in cyberspace, (Donath 1999, 29). Fluidity of identity is high in cyberspace than it is in real life, which is why other people experiment through it. In real life the biggest limitation is the offline body. It remains the same to everyone whom a person meets, it becomes difficult to change a name for someone who already knows the original one when their body is still the same.

Therefore the body plays an important role in both these spaces.

3.4. Theatre in Crisis?

Among the many things that the book *Theatre in Crisis? Performance manifestos for a new century* edited by Maria M. Delgado and Caridad Svich explores, the following is found, what

theatre is, what its relationship with the audience ought to be and how it has been influenced by technology. This section looks at the arguments and points made by the authors in the mentioned book. It is important that we have a clear understanding of what the aims of theatre are and what theatre should consist of.

According to Tori-Haring Smith (2002), “theatre began as a way in which a community could tell its stories to itself. In this way, the theatre event grew out of the community and was an inherent part of it,” (2002, 98). This was after theatre was recognized as a “place for viewing”. (1987, 4). According to Helbo et al. (1987), theatre came from a Greek word, “theatron” which means a “place for viewing,” (1987, 4). In Africa, the basis of theatre was a grandmother or grandfather telling stories to their grandchildren. After theatre was recognized as a place where people could come to watch plays, the “fourth wall”, (Smith 2002, 98) became the new thing. According to Smith (2002) theatre was influenced by lights, and stage. Suddenly, two worlds were created, the world of the performers and the world of the audience, and the invisible wall between the two worlds started to exist.

The separation of the stage and auditorium seem to have brought both positivity and negativity on the role of theatre and what it stands for. Starting with negativity, Smith (2002) states that with the use of electric lights, “theatre became more like a cinema”. Not only was it creating two worlds but it also created a huge bridge between the performers and audience. *The Ancient* (see next chapter) tackles this issue of communication between the two worlds (one of the actors, and the other of the audience). At some point, it examines how an audience member can watch a performance and participate whilst watching, without disturbing the performance on stage, it also looks at how the “community” present in theatre can share what they see with the rest of the community which is not in a theatre space at the time. Smith furtherly states that, “the use of electricity also allowed the audience to be plunged into darkness, so that the community of viewers became a group of isolated individuals,” (2002, 99). This added to the separation created between the performers and audience. Smith made a bold statement that “theatre has lost sight of its roots and is in danger of dying,” (2002, 97). Smith’s concern seems to come from a point of view of theatre working hard to attract younger audiences. Perhaps if the roots of theatre were overt it would be easier to notice whether they are still nurtured or not. Helbo et al. (1987) note that, “there is no point in defining theatre as “pure art”” (1987,

21). This point is based on how theatre is now associated with media. Helbo et al (1987). state that theatre has a limited range. This is in comparing to media, where they write, that in theatre, “the performances cannot tolerate more than a limited number of spectators- or even performances- because theatre repeated too often deteriorates or at least changes,” (1987, 22), media on the other hand can multiply the audience easily. Helbo et al. (1987) also state that, “once we bring cameras into the auditorium, however discreetly, the acting is disturbed and changed; therefore we cannot film theatre without destroying it,” (1987, 39). This raises a question in terms of, how then must artists keep evidence of having shown a production in theatre? Filming a performance in a theatrical space can be for different reasons, one of them could be to have a recording which serves as evidence of a particular production having been staged.

Contrarily, Jorge Ignacio Cortinas (2002) notes that, “theatre will, like cockroaches always be with us. The ideal theatre space has a door that actually opens, with access unfretted by rent, cost of admission or other extortion techniques,” (2002, 20). Cortinas (2002) sees theatre as a space that will always be with us as it is a venue. This brings about questions that if theatre is simply a building; does it matter which type of performance must be shown there?. Mathew Causey (2002) defines theatre as, “the test site, the replica, or laboratory, in which we can reconfigure our world and consciousness, witness its operations and play with its possibilities,” (2002, 180). It is meant to be a world that can mirror the audience’s lives, whether be in a tragic, humorous or melodramatic way. Kugler (2002) notes that theatre magic lies when the audience, “see the actors and contribute their imagination and in conceit with the actors, create the performance event,” (2002, 96).

It seems that the above authors believe that theatre magic happens when the audience intervene to the world of the performers, breaking the bridge between the two worlds. Kugler (2002) continues stating that, “to really allow the audience into theatre is to admit (confess even) that performance is not product, but process,” (2002, 96). This brings questions whether all performances should now fall under a category of applied theatre or not in order to be recognized as real theatre? According to Prentki and Preston (2009) applied theatre always involves an active audience. The participation of the audience is what mainly distinguishes applied theatre from mainstream theatre. However, Prentki and Preston (2009) note that

applied theatre often takes place in informal settings, this includes, “non- theatre venues in a variety of geographical and social settings: schools, day centres, the street, prisons, village halls, an estate or any other location that might be specific or relevant to the interests of a community. Applied theatre usually works in context where the work created and performed has a specific resonance with its participants and audiences and often, to different degrees, involves them in it,” (2009, 9).

Craig Lucas’s thoughts on theatre and its future is, “I predict that theatre will be the primary form of entertainment after all the machinery breaks and we’re too poor to be able to pay Mel Gibson’s salary anymore... theatre will always be about storytelling. Any form will do,” (2002, 20). Theatre has always been the primary means of sharing stories, way before the invention of technology. The influence of technology has changed the way in which people see the world altogether, (Causey 2002).

The reason why I looked at theatre, what it is, is because the performance of *The Ancient* took place in a theatrical space and it strongly consists the use of technology.

Chapter 4

THE ANCIENT

4.1. The making process of *The Ancient* - to the product

The Ancient is a theatrical production that was workshopped with the cast and directed by myself. It was performed on the 4th and 5th of May 2017 at the Hexagon Theatre in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. It was part of the process of my investigation based on the performance of the offline and online body in storytelling, which this research is about.

This production was workshopped with an idea of what it could be about, there was no script but concept. The concept was inspired by Bernard Stiegler, who says, “the relationship between technology and humanity is one of dynamic mutual composition (Stiegler 2006), what is at stake is nothing but the future of humanity,” (Siapera, 2012: 12). The executing of it was stimulated by Allucquere Sandy Stone’s definition of the four epochs showing how virtual systems developed to what is now known as virtual reality or cyberspace. Hence there are different time frames in the play itself. I had an idea of showing the human reproduction system and development of the offline body on stage, as well as the development of the online body based on Stone’s epochs. Furthermore I wanted the production to involve the audience’s participation, however, I did not know how to go about with it. That’s where the impression of workshopping emerged.

I had a cast of ten members, whom were students from the University of Kwa Zulu Natal (UKZN), Pietermaritzburg. Initially, as part of creating work I gave my cast pictures of emoticons/ emojis as a stimulus for them to choose from and produce something from that point. I had lot of pictures on the floor in a circle for them to pick from, they walked around in groups of 3 and had to decide which one resonated more with them, or which one they thought they could work with. They all looked around and eventually chose something. I gave them time to come with short performances based on the images they chose. What was interesting with the short pieces they did was how they all portrayed social networking as a negative thing.

4.2. Methodology of *The Ancient*

Qualitative methodology was used. The reason behind that was to be able to analyze the responses of the audience members to the production of *The Ancient*, that was for the days of

performance. The process of rehearsals itself also played a huge role in every decision that was made and the production of the final product.

The first piece created showed a happy couple, husband and wife in a taxi, and the other people asking how they keep their relationship as beautiful as it was, whereas when the couple was alone, things were not as how they appeared in public. The wife was portrayed as someone who loves social media, she would take “happy pictures⁵” with her husband and get back to her phone still chatting with other people, whereas her husband is left not knowing what to do. It was clear that the cellphone was a biggest predicament to this couple. All of this was brought from a simple picture of two emoticons kissing each other. That piece brought lots of thoughts in my mind. I started thinking about how people represent their lives on social networks, how sometimes what you see on social network can be the opposite in real life. The whole notion of what we show in public being different from what happens in our private life.

The second group had chosen a picture of the emoji who has a zipped mouth. Their scene was about 3 siblings, one of which it was his birthday but everyone had forgotten. He goes and tries to remind his sisters only to find them all busy social networking, thus not paying attention to him, until one of them decided to go to Facebook and gets a notification that it is her brother’s birthday. That’s where she shares the news with her other sister and they started singing for him. In this scenario, I learned that in as much as the actors tried to portray social networks as bad by portraying the 2 sisters as anti- social to their little brother, the same social media, has helped them remember their brother’s birthday which they had completely forgotten. Therefore social networks can be a good source of information.

The last scenario was that of a couple in which the girl was cheating on social network. The guy that he was serious about found out through a message that was sent on her Facebook wall. With this scene, I realized that there was a recurrent of the use of Facebook as the main social network in all the three pieces, as well as depiction of it having negative impact on the users/ audience of which is not always the case.

That was the initial stage of the making of the production, *The Ancient*. As time went on with different exercises, tasks, integrations and segmentations, the production developed into

⁵ Refer to appendix C

something that looked at the relationship between oral tradition storytelling with the influence of social networks. It got to that point through all the ideas that sprung up during the process as well as the research side.

The Ancient has three time-frames; there is a past, present and future. The storyline of the final production started off with the past. It begins with a grandmother who is a storyteller, she starts off telling a story to the audience like how she used to around the fire/ under a tree before the invention of the cellphones. This was also inspired by Scheub (1977), Lwin (2017), and Finnegan (1991), all in chapter 2.

As the storyteller shares her story, there are other actors who are in the theatre venue with the audience. The actors sitting with the audience; start disturbing the grandmother; while sitting with the audience. They do it with their cellphone, one at a time. Some of them answer their phones as the grandmother is busy telling the story, where else others start playing music out loud. It becomes disruptive and disorderly to the storyteller. Eventually, one by one they go to the stage and start walking around masking the grandmother, nevertheless she persists and carries on with her story. It then comes to a point where it gets destructive such that the focus is taken away from the grandmother. All of the sudden there's a loud message beep and lights go off, as the people open their cellphones, they go to grandmother and light their phones to her face during a black out and she runs away from them.

The story continues with the present time frame. That is where we see the social networks (embodied by the actors) being invited to a meeting where they were taken back to how the world used to be before their intervention, to how it became after their intervention. It shows the negative side of it, however the social networks defend themselves towards the end of the play and they chase grandmother out of the stage, where they take the spotlight. They are shown what appears to be a 'picture' of a girl turning her back on them sitting in a swing.

Though there is the actual girl on stage. They keep asking what they're doing here and why they are told to look at the girl. Right after that the grandmother comes back and tells them that she's the one who called them. She then tells them that they need to account for the lives they have destroyed. They all argue with her that they do not understand what she was talking about, as they make people happy, that they never destroy lives. The gogo then tells them that they must have a look at the video to see what they have done. They all exit the stage. The 'video'

is simply a flash back of the birth of the girl in a swing, how she was born and how she ended up in that swing. The birth of this girl was unique as she was born with a phone in her hands, representing the future. The nurses and her mother were terrified by this, the entire village wanted to see her as her birth was considered an omen⁶. This was in line with Sterlac's notion of the body being connected to technological artifacts. However, in *The Ancient* the cultural expectation of the body contradicts that of a phone.

The ending contradicts the beginning. *The Ancient* is made up of contradictions, metaphors, and symbolism.

4.3. Analyzing *The Ancient*

The title, *The Ancient*, was motivated by my personal observation of how oral traditional storytelling is fading away in my hometown Paulpietersburg (KZN). Most children are getting attached to cellphones from a very young age such that they end up not even knowing how to play anymore without any "PlayStation" or other technological artifacts. This title was meant to be an alert of what seems to be fading away, that we need to save oral tradition storytelling before it becomes part of our history. The approach used for analyzing *The Ancient* is Inductive Thematic Analysis.

Following are some of the themes that came up during the making process of this production.

4.3.1. Themes in *The Ancient*

The politics of "privacy" and "public" in performance

One of the sociological definitions of privacy is that it is "the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how, and to what extent information about themselves is communicated to others," (Henderson 1999, 3). Thus individuals have a choice to decide on what they want to be known by the public and what they want to keep as private. In a context of social networks it would be interesting to find out who determines what is private and what is not.

Henderson (1999) notes two competing visions in the interaction of humans with the technology, "the Internet and the new media are sources of endless possibilities whether for

⁶ In Zulu language it would be called *ubuthakathi*.

artistic expression, business success, or new forms of human relationships. In the other, the technology is out of control, threatening privacy and even identity itself,” (1999, 13). Some SNSs create a space where individuals are “able” to feel they have privacy. This is through the settings, for example Facebook. Whenever a user shares information, they have an option to choose whether it can be seen by the “public”, “friends”, or themselves, where it’s written, “me”. That way users are guaranteed security, which is supposedly controlled by the creators of Facebook. However, one could ask if we ever have privacy online or we are granted an illusion of what seems like privacy?

Through the process of directing *The Ancient* I had an idea of staging an interrupted intimacy of a storyteller sharing her story. This was to find out what the audience’s reaction would be in a situation where a performer on stage gets distracted by some audience members. In the reflection process I realized that the idea of intimacy can be associated with the notions of privacy and the public, not only in the proscenium arch but also on social networks.

The main invasion done during the performance of *The Ancient*; was that of the audience commenting to what was happening in the world of the performers. Normally when the audience intervene to the world of the actors, or vice versa, it is referred to as breaking the forth wall (Haring- Smith 2002). This usually happens in Theatre of the Oppressed; where there can be a facilitator mediating the performance, or getting the audience to participate through sharing their views on a situation addressed on the performance. An example of that would be with forum theatre where the facilitator; who is referred to as the joker, would mediate the audience with the world of the actors, with an intention of trying to find solutions to the problem addressed on stage.

The Ancient on the other side, borrowed participation techniques from the applied theatre. However, the intervention was slightly different from the generally used methods under the umbrella of applied theatre; it was through Facebook, and the process itself was altogether different. It allowed the intervention of the world of performers and the audience in both digital space and theatre. Within the world of the performers there was the “real” world and the online world. The audience was positioned as the all Seeing Eye. They could see exactly what the performers were doing in their real life and online reality. Additionally, the audience had the power to intervene to what was happening in the lives of the performers. With regards to that,

The Ancient was challenging theatre rules, it enabled the audience to interfere to the world of the performers. As a director what I wanted to achieve with that; was to observe the audience's reactions and thoughts on Facebook, as compared to the one they would express in theatre. That resulted to the performers having no privacy, but they were not aware of that, and they had no control over what the audience would say or do.

Based on the characteristics of oral tradition storytelling, which is having a narrator/ storyteller with the audience (Sekoni 1990), *The Ancient* started with a storyteller⁷, sharing a story to the audience. The storyteller was sitting at the centre stage with a big picture of a tree on the screen in her background, which served as a representation of the past. She began to tell her story by saying, “*kwasuka sukela*”, which loosely refers to, “once upon a time” in Zulu language. She then carried on, telling the audience a story. As the storyteller began to enjoy her story, an invasion happens. There were “planted” performers sitting with the audience. They started to distract the storyteller with their cellphones. This caused the storyteller to lose her focus, it did not only end there, but it also diverted and invaded her space, which I now consider as her “privacy”. This led to a collision of two worlds where one has to obey the other because of the supremacy and dominance of the other, the world of the storyteller and that of social networks.

The storyteller (*gogo*), ends up being insignificant, this happens as the performers get on stage, all on their phones, talking loudly, chatting, and playing music. This juxtaposition leads to a shift of focus. The storyteller, who was initially all alone on stage ends up being the least focus in the scenario. That scene alone signifies the tremendous effect of technology in our lives. Moreover it raises focus to three agents, the audience, the old storyteller (*gogo*) and the new storytellers (social networks). Firstly, the audience had invested their focus on *gogo*, and the story that she was sharing. The same applies to *gogo*, she had prepared her best story to share with the audience, above that she is excited to share it. With her storytelling strategies, *gogo* has manipulated (Sekoni 1990, 142) the audience to focus on her, they are intrigued by her enthusiasm and excitement to tell the story. The second big change is caused by the shift of the main focus, *gogo* now becomes the “old” storyteller. In the play, that is shown by how social networks dominate the stage chasing *gogo* away to the world of the audience⁸. Therefore this

⁷ Appendix D shows the storyteller.

⁸ Appendix E illustrates the social networks chasing *gogo* away.

results to the social networks being the “new” storytellers. However, one thing remains the same, the use of the offline body to communicate the message, whether the message is verbally communicated or via technological artefacts. From my observation, this makes the body become the tool that can be manipulated in whichever way the performers want, it all depends on the message they want to send to the audience.

Focusing on the reaction of the audience, it was clear to see those who were confused and also “distracted” by the invasion of cellphones as gogo was telling the story. Something to imagine is how the storyteller herself must have felt at this instance. After all the preparations she has gone through; her story does not reach the potential she had hoped it would reach, as a result the storyteller gets disappointed. The new storytellers had a test ahead of them. They had to “sell” themselves as the best. This is because in the beginning of the play; the traditional storytelling is taken as a normal and the only way of sharing stories. The rise of social networks is then introducing new ways of communication altogether.

The distinction between the “old” and “new” storytellers is mainly based on the tools of communication used. The old storyteller used her voice as the primary tool for sharing stories, whereas the “new” storyteller can only be accessed through the use of cellphones as the primary and main tools of communication. Another one is that gogo knew exactly who her audience were, she could see them all in the room, conversely, with the new storytellers, they had the audience that was in the room and the one in their cellphones, on SNSs, in which some of them are anonymous, (Walther et. al, 2011). Unlike how Sekoni says, “conflict is the major source of tension” (1990, 143), that scene expressed the collision of different mediums of communication, as the tension. The initial setting was that of a traditional society as it was contained and not influenced by any other culture, (Ogunjini and Na’Allah, 2005). The cyberculture overshadowed the oral traditional culture.

During the rehearsal process, there was a short scene created by the performers by observing an image of two emoticons kissing each other. It scrutinized how what we see in public, most especially on social networks is not always what it is in private life. In this piece there was a woman who was cheating on social network. The fiancée found out about that affair through a message that was sent on the woman’s Facebook wall, and confronted her about it. She gave him an ultimatum that he could leave her anytime she wanted to, but he won’t find anyone like

her. It was clear that the woman was the most wanted one, the man ended up staying and pretending to be happy to other people, while he was not happy at all. They would make themselves look like a perfect couple, living a perfect life on social networks, where else that was not the case in real life. The couple showed the audience what was expected of them from how they have defined themselves as, in public. Their lives in public was completely different from how it was when they were in a private space. This raised a question on the performance for the sake of the audience and what it means to be different people in different spaces.

Burkell, et al. point out that, “something is considered public if it occurs in a space (real or online), where there can be no expectation of freedom from observation by others”, (2014, 977). This implies that the observers of an action done in public expect the “performer” to “act” in a way that is “expected” from him, by the “audience”. In other words, the “performer” must always consider his “audience”. Every action that he makes must be in alignment to his character, the one that he has sold himself to be, to the audience. Nonetheless, that does not only forbid the “performer” freedom to share what he likes, anytime he wants to, but it also becomes more of “acting” all he does, to the public. Bensman and Lilienfeld (1979) talk about roles, and they refer to “public” roles as, “highly specified and highly structured, both in the communication and organization of expected behavior, skills,” (1979, 9). The behavior of the sold dream becomes more of an expectation than of spontaneity and freewill. The performer’s actions become influenced by the expectations from the audience.

Nancy K. Baym and Danah Boyd (2012) talk about how social media is complicating the audience and public. This goes back to the notion of social media creating a place where the audience/user/ can also be the storyteller. Linking this to *The Ancient*, the ability of the audience to comment on the play’s Facebook page allowed them to be both the public and storytellers. Another dilemma is expressed by Bensman and Lilienfeld that, “the boundaries between public and private disappear in the mass media,” (1979, 34). The two authors make an example of television and radio. That television shows pictures, whereas radio does not, that way radio news presenter for an example, has privacy than the one in television, especially if it is a live presentation. Also radio allows imagination to go wild. Associating that with *The Ancient*, there is a scene where three mine workers are listening to news during their lunch

break⁹. The news presenter delivers news about the birth of the child with an unknown device in her hands. This allows the actors' imagination to go wilder as they start sharing jokes about what could this mean, and who could be the father of the child. In opposition, Social Networks allow a combination of both videos and voice notes in one platform. Users are able to decide whether they want to record a clip that can be seen by other people, or, only record their voices as a way of communication. In a way, it has advanced communication.

Erving Goffman talks about performances having a “front” (1959:32) of which is what we have selected for our observers to see, which is shown to the public. On the other hand, there is always the backstage, where individuals show their real selves. This is where they can get naked and do what they need to do without being selective or mindful of who is watching them, because they are in a “private” space. However, the boundaries are still blurred. One may be in the backstage but still not have privacy because of the people surrounding them, which could be other performers. This extends the concept of privacy and supports Henderson (1999) that, it is not only a claim of an individual but also of a group. In *The Ancient* there is a scene¹⁰ where *gogo* shows the Social Networks how life used to be before *they*¹¹ were invented. In this scene there is a gaze within the performance. The social networks as well as *gogo* watch how children used to play without any technological devices. That shows a shift in performance, from the main front being the *social networks* and *gogo*, to it being the kids. That is assisted by the use of lights; directing to the new main focus.

The Praxis of *Panopticon* in *The Ancient*

The concept of Panopticon coined by Jeremy Bentham became a voluminous work for Foucault, where he associated self-discipline with power to theorize surveillance, (Lyon, 2006; Foucault, 1977). This notion looks at how prisoners behave when they know that they are being watched. The guards may not be in their presence but the thought of knowing that there is someone watching them results in discipline. That is the purpose of surveillance, training of individuals to behave in a morally accepted way. Analyzing it, the prisoners do not have freedom because they are behaving in a specific way to please the guards, not in the way that

⁹ Appendix F shows mine-workers in *The Ancient* listening to the radio.

¹⁰ Appendix G shows the scene

¹¹ Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

they would always want to, out of their own freewill. Breaking it down, power is playing a huge role in this process, it is because of the guards' superiority that the prisoners are coerced to behave in a particular way. In relation to *The Ancient* a Satellite dish¹² was on stage throughout the performance which was part of the set used for the play. Similarly to the concept of Panopticon, the Satellite dish served as an "All Seeing Eye" representing the online space, as how the audience is, representing the real world. As a director I was not aware of this observation, it brings about notions of not having privacy as well. In the same way as the prisoners do not have privacy, so is the internet users

In as much as users are promised privacy, there are still surveillances, there are still individuals controlling what is to be seen, and not be seen by the public. In other words, what cannot be seen by the public, can still be seen by the gatekeepers, while the individuals are promised privacy. This way there is constant performance from both the people who promise privacy and those who think they have it.

Everyday life Vs. Social network life

The baby being born with a phone in her hands is the crux of the matter in *The Ancient*. That on its own is meant to hyperbolically show how the influence of technology is taking over humanity. In this case it reveals that humanity will reach a point where it cannot be separated with technology, which is already visible with Stelarc's theory and practice of the body being obsolete.

The baby scene shows how everyday life gets challenged by the birth of a foreign object¹³ which brings confusion to everyone. It also shows that not only has social networks created a space of sharing stories, but it also becoming a "story", (refer to Scheub, 1998; chapter 2) we are now able to share stories based on the influences and the making of them.

Public sphere towards online sphere

The German sociologist and philosopher Jurgen Habermas coined the concept of public sphere. In his article, Manuel Castells (2008) defines the public sphere as, "the space of

¹² Appendix H shows the Satellite Dish used as part of the stage set in *The Ancient* ¹³ Refers to a Cellular phone

communication of ideas and projects that emerge from society and are addressed to the decision makers in the institutions of society,” (2008, 78).

Social networks have opened a similar space, in which different people can talk about anything, creating different groups and communities online. It has become a platform for intercultural diversity, where users can meet without any geographical barriers. This platform has disregarded verbal communication but written discourse.

In *The Ancient* we find *MaKhumalo*¹³ asking for her lost daughter from her friends on Facebook, instead of asking other people. It becomes clear that she has developed a certain relationship with the friends she has on social media; than the ones in real life. It also shows her inclination on the community she has online more as compared to the one she can physically meet and verbally talk to. Thus the play raises issues of the public sphere relationship towards that of an online sphere. Moreover, it reflects how cyborgs are created, (Haraway, 2013; Turkle, 1991, in chapter 2)

One storyteller Vs. Multiple storytellers

Social networks break the boundaries of who the storyteller is. The same person who shares information to the friends of Facebook, can also be an audience member at the same time. One decides when they want to be storytellers and when they want to be the audience. Hence, there are many people who have Facebook. On the other hand, with oral tradition storytelling, there is only one storyteller, and the rest is audience. The audience is limited to verbally intervene or write something back to the storyteller as the story unfolds. The storyteller is the only creator, (Scheub 1977) in the entire process.

That was illustrated in *The Ancient* at the beginning of the play, where the grandmother was trying to tell a story to the audience before the intervention of the cellphones. In her storytelling, she set the rules. An example is when she told the audience that when she says, “*Khilikithi*¹⁴” they must say “*Khalakatha*”, the significance of that is also to demand the audience’s presence and see if they are still paying attention to the story. The storyteller remained the only person sharing a story until the intervention of the social networks which

¹³ Smangele’s mother. The woman who is fond of Social Networks. Refer to appendix C

¹⁴ *Khilikithi* and *Khalakatha* are Zulu words, which in this case are used for call- and- response.

brought about a completely different way of communication, by allowing the audience to be storytellers as well.

Challenging the norms of 'Conventional' Theatre

The Ancient defied the conventional theatrical norms where the audience is asked to switch off their cellphones during a show; in theatre. It lent the ideas of participation from applied theatre. As a result, instead of the audience being requested to switch off their cellphones, they were asked to turn them on.

That method was challenging, apart from it being something that I have never done before, it seemed to create dislocation amongst the audience. This is based on some of the feedback I got from other audience members who came to watch the show. One person said, "*it was very different from what I'm used to see and experiment in a theatrical space, I liked commenting on the Facebook page, but that also gave me an opportunity to check my other messages on other social networks such that I ended up not focusing so much on the play.*" There were no boundaries and parameters created or set, and this seemed to have been a shortcoming.

However, this seems like a possible medium of communication and interacting with what is seen on stage while it is still happening. It seemed to have a lot of potential in being used in theatre for social change, because the audience has the opportunity to comment as the play is happening and the performers could possibly change what they're doing on stage to accommodate the audience's opinions. It could also be limiting to those who don't have Facebook but would love to comment. Though I had planned to have a "wall book" where people would comment and share their thoughts on what they saw, on their way out from theatre. The best aspect about having used Facebook in *The Ancient* is that all the information, and comments that were shared are still there and can be revisited anytime.

4.3.2. Analyzing the character of *Smangele* and *gogo* in *The Ancient*

The character of *Smangele* and *gogo* are completely different characters. The character of *gogo* represented old ways of communication. She is the storyteller, the one who becomes overly excited to share her stories to the audience. On the other hand, the character of *Smangele* represents the new technological world. That is visible by how she is born with a phone in her hands and how she gets attached to it, such that when it gets stolen she feels defeated by the

world and is indecisive whether she should kill herself or not, hence she sits on the swing looking defeated and purposeless in life.

Smangele's body is also represented on the projected screen, the picture of the three feet¹⁵ showing her growing is connotative, it has two references to it. First being that, it represents the physical growth of Smangele, secondly, the growth of technology. The grandmother disappears throughout the performance as she got chased away by the "social networks". She only reappears towards the end of the performance, where she comes back and asks the social networks to look at what they have done with Smangele. This suggests that no matter the influence of social networks, it all goes back to the primary means of communication being the word of mouth. It also becomes metaphoric, that the grandmother and the social networks stand as though surrounding Smangele, it shows how an individual can still feel lonely even in the midst of all the possible means of communication, which supports Turkle's notion of being "alone together" (Turkle, 2011).

The language that is used by both characters, as well as other characters in the play is mixed. They speak *English*, *isiZulu* and a bit of *Tsotsitaal*. The reason behind that was to show a diversity of the users of social networks. How gogo was telling her story also brought the element of culture orientation. The audience was welcomed in the Zulu language. However, the other language speakers were also accommodated in the process of storytelling. That process brought a sense of togetherness. *Gogo* made sure that she had their attention, such that they were able to participate even in repetitions that gogo kept bringing up as she was telling her story.

4.3.3. Symbolism

In as much as this analysis revolves around discussing the themes of *The Ancient*, there are specific symbols which brought the existing themes in the play. Following are those symbols:

Swing

The stage set had a swing hung on stage as well as a satellite dish. It also had platforms and a screen at the back. The swing mainly represented childhood. An example is how children would generally play on a swing lively and energetic. In *The Ancient*; the swing is specifically

¹⁵ Refer to appendix H

used to symbolize life and death. Smangele sits on it before the introduction of social networks, as well as when she loses her cellphone and is indecisive whether to kill herself or not. While directing this play I was not aware of both life and death being represented by the swing. The main idea was for the swing to contrast the satellite which symbolizes the rise of technology. Perhaps Smangele could have had a moment where she joyfully plays on the swing before the intervention of Social Networks to show liveliness and freeness. Thus that would strongly contradict the ending which represented the wing as a place of uncertainty of life. Towards the end Smangele's body on the swing becomes a sign of defeat, powerlessness and uncertainty. The body language expressed that, the posture and gestures were evident. The platforms on stage were used for the world of technology. Thus there were two worlds created on stage, first, the world of oral tradition storytelling, then the world with the influence of technology

Satellite Dish

The Satellite Dish was used in relation to the Bentham's concept of Panopticon. It symbolized the consistent effect of technology on humans. Whenever the characters wanted connection they would go near it, and when they get there they would be well connected. It was in contrast to the swing. It was almost as though both props were there as choices that the audience and performers could choose from. Both are very extreme from each other as the swing has no attachment to technology and the Satellite Dish being used to "convert microwave signals into electric signals that can be used by a computer, television and other devices"(Technopedi). Both the satellite dish and swing are on stage from the beginning to the end of the performance, not moved nor touched by anymore

Cellphone

In *The Ancient*, a mother gives birth of a child carrying a phone in her hands. This is something completely abnormal. Looking at that scene, it represents humans getting inseparable with the technologies they use. Reflecting on Stelarc's relationship with technology where he shows the inside of his stomach, *The Ancient* gives an opposite example of how humans will now be born with technological artifacts. It also shows how something that was once considered impossible might become a norm. Moreover, it supports what Stiegler (1991) says about humans coexisting with technology.

Chapter 5 NEW PRAGMATIC EPISTEMOLOGY

5.1. Social Network Interventional Theatre

Through the production of *The Ancient*, it seems that a different type of theatre method emerged. This method is open for analysis, critiques and practice. I refer to it as *Social Network Intervention Theatre (SNIT)*. In the literature review, Haring- Smith and Causey (2002) talk about theatre and its relationship to the audience (refer to chapter 3). Causey (2002) also talks about theatre being a place where we can witness its operations and play with its possibilities. SNIT is a product of playing with theatre possibilities. It simply explored the possibilities of using a social network (Facebook) as a medium of communication during a theatre show; between the world of the audience and that of the performers.

In *The Ancient*, the audience could participate by commenting on *The Ancient*'s Facebook page created for the show. The objective of asking audience members to use their cellphones to share their thoughts, was to get them to participate unlimitedly. It was also to explore new ways of intervention in a conventional, mainstream theatre space where the fourth wall was broken by technological participation. All the comments that people were sending on *The Ancient* Facebook page, were shown on screen¹⁶. The audience could read as they comment, which seemed to be exciting to most of them, as they were able to see exactly what was happening in other people's minds, in terms of how they thought each scene was. Nevertheless, the performers could not respond to the comments made online. This idea started as an imagination of different networks intertwined in one physical space, as well as online space, the thoughts of the possibilities of that, what it could lead to.

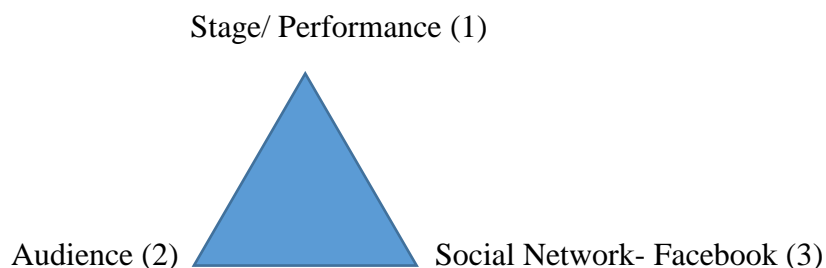
There were setbacks along the way. I think a big mistake was to not reply to all the comments that were made on the group during the performance. I did not have a specific individual who had to focus only on responding to the messages. The crew that was present was made up of three people including myself; one was a stage manager, a technician and sound manager.

¹⁶ Refer to appendix I

Through everything that was happening in the lighting box, the biggest challenge was the projected screen. There was only one screen used and that was disadvantageous as we had to change what was on the screen in order to display the comments made by people on the page. At times it felt as though it was distracting the flow of the performance. This intervention became applicable in two different spaces at the same time. Firstly, it was motivated by what was happening on stage, thus the audience were able to comment on what they thought of each scene they saw). Their comments would be shown back to them on the screen in front of them. In a way, the audience members became a “community” (Ma and Argawal 2007, 42) in cyberspace because of the platform that was given to them, they became *The Ancient* participants.

Watching all of this happening from the lighting box; it took me back to the point made by Helbo et al. (1987) that we should not refer to theatre as being pure art. This is clarified by the possibilities of theatre being connected to media. The most recognizable action in the performance of *The Ancient* seemed to be in a triangular form, refer to *diagram 1* below.

Diagram 1



The diagram above demonstrates a clear relationship between the performers on stage and the audience, as well the interaction on Facebook. It shows the level of communication that took place in theatre while the audience was watching the performance taking place on stage. Throughout the performance what was happening on stage became the main source of interaction; though the information from Facebook could not affect what was happening on stage. Moreover, what is mostly visible is how the audience also becomes the storyteller on Facebook responding to what they see on stage.

However, there are aspects that came across as being negative that also came out during the process. One of them was the dislocation of some audience members from watching what was

happening on stage, responding on Facebook and seeing an opportunity to respond to their other social networks. That seemed to be shifting their focus away from what is happening on stage. There was a sense of dislocation as well to the audience members who could not respond, or intervene to the online platform because they either did not have Facebook, had no data bundles, left their cellphones or not interested in social networks at all. Nevertheless, I had thought of a ‘wall book’ where they could share their thoughts as well. There was no luck of that happening. This was due to the setback of not getting consent of participation from the audience which has resulted to not being able to go through their comments about on the Facebook page of *The Ancient*. Nonetheless, the page still exists, for interest sake it is called “*The Ancient*” on Facebook. The fact that the bodies of the audience members were in the theatre where they could watch the performance in the dark and not be able to see everyone else who was in the audience, yet they were able to see everyone else on the Facebook page shows the fluidity of the body.

At the end of the performance there was a short video clip that was shown on the screen, the clip was showing the background of human communication from oral tradition to the development of technology and the explosion of social networks, at the end of it posed a question which was inspired by Stiegler (1991), “what is the future of humanity?” When deciding to include this video clip, I was not aware of the implications it might cause, especially in terms of questioning the essence of theatre and comparing it to cinema (refer to chapter 3, *Theatre in Crisis?*). The idea of combining the two (theatre and cinema) seemed to make sense to me, this was based on the impression of getting the audience to experience different mediums of communication, in a theatrical space, and theatre on social media.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. Overall Challenges encountered while putting *The Ancient* together

One of the biggest challenges I had in the making of *The Ancient* was putting it on stage. I struggled with finding ways to embody social networks on stage. The time I had to work on it was not enough. However, it was eventually satisfactorily done. The reason why I do not consider it as an excellent piece of work is because of the execution of it. As I reflect on

everything, I believe that the concept was very strong as compared to how it was put on stage. In the newness of the concept, I discovered that directing is not my strongest ability.

The second challenge was developing the storyline in a way that is coherent. I think that was caused by the fact that the story was a bit of a flash back transmitting to the future and the present. The challenge was starting from the present and going to how things used to be and questioning the future of humanity. As I look back I realize that there are moments that deserved more attention, which they did not get. My challenge was getting other characters to perform different ages. That seemed to be a challenge to the actors, yet it was very essential for the storyline of the play. The ending was also challenging, I did not want to leave a solution or clarity to the audience at all. I do think that, was successful, though I do not know how the audience received it.

The third challenge was to use Facebook for participation. Firstly, it was a gamble as I was trying to do something that I have never experienced before. Moreover, because there was only one screen, and it was also being used for other multimedia items. Reading the messages of the audience members from the screen while the play was still showing; shifted the play altogether. It created choice for the audience to decide whether they want to see the play through the eyes of the comments made on Facebook, or through what they see as happening on stage.

Lastly, I had a challenge of having a balance between positive and negative information about social networks. As a matter of fact when it came to social networks, I was biased and prejudiced. However, I had to learn to distance my emotions and seek for existing, factual knowledge not personal assumptions.

6.2. Recommendations

The following recommendations are mostly for other emerging directors. First and foremost it is imperative that the consent forms get organized earlier in case the director is planning to include audience's participation, with an intention of analyzing it afterwards, which was my downfall. It is also important that the audience is asked to use their cellphones only for what has been requested from them, in case one wants to explore *Social Network Interventional*

Theatre. This is to help not to have audience members who will sit on their phones and not focus at all on what is happening on stage. A suggestion would be to provide with a pen and paper to the individuals who might have various reasons for not being able to access their social network accounts. Perhaps they could write their comments as they watch the show, then leave them in a box provided by the director or production crew.

6.3. Conclusion

This paper has managed to dissect how the body behaves in different spaces, specifically in the cyberspace and physical space. However, in as much as that is the case, the body does not seem obsolete as Stelarc would say it is. The biological body is still a relevant and potent tool for humans.

The Ancient illustrated a possible life for humans which looks impossible and out of this world in the eyes of an external observer. Nonetheless, metaphorically, humans are getting attached to cellphones in such a way that a separation between the two can now cause a havoc. Moreover, it seems more convenient that humans are given the satisfaction of using their cellphones in theatre. This is based on the fact that cinema has become more popular than theatre, and what adds to that is the freedom that the audience have when in cinema as opposed to the one restricted when in theatre. Though it always comes across as being rude to the people sitting at the back, in cinema the audience can freely use their cellphones as they want. On the other hand, in theatre, that is the first thing that is usually prohibited. The audience will be asked to switch off their cellphones, and will be told that any recording of some kind is strictly prohibited.

The Ancient demonstrated interrelation between technology and humans through the birth of the child with a phone in her hands. It revealed that the relationship between the two is becoming inseparable, moreover the girl wanted to commit suicide after losing her phone. Through that we see extremity, one would question that, how can something as tiny as a cellular lead to something as big as death? Already there are cases of people dying from taking selfies in awkward and unsafe positions, therefore we are yet to see the worst.

Among the other things that this paper evaluated, it looked at how the body is physicalized online. This was through the performance of *The Ancient* and observation of people's

commentary on social networks. It is by no doubt that in as much as the millennials and Gen Z are so engaged with social networks, they are still lazy to type the whole words as they are. It seems that most of them have moved from the “mixit” time, where most users would shorten the words, to the use of emojis. Laziness to write has increased a lot, in such a way that other users end up forgetting how to write correct spellings because of what social networks can provide us with. One of the highlights is the haphazard use of emoticons/emojis and video records.

The second aspect is, the relationship between the online and offline space. There is enormous power in what one can do with technological artifacts nowadays. From being connected no matter where in the world is the biggest achievement brought by technology. The power of the influence of technology online and offline space was shown in *The Ancient*, the audience were in theatre, yet able to comment to what was happening on stage, in cyberspace, and the comments were being displayed back on stage. In as much as that could have brought about the notion of being watched, it also created a “community” (Ma and Argawal 2007, 42) for the audience members, and I believe it made them feel relevant and important as they were able to share their thoughts.

The third one looked at how the online body and offline body inform each other in storytelling. In the case of *The Ancient* the offline body seemed to inform the online body. This happened by how the audience members would comment on the production Facebook page. They would write what was in their minds and it would be displayed on the screen. That on its own; seemed to be a performance as they would also read and laugh at what other people have commented online. However, the performers’ world was still drifted away from the audiences,’ the only interaction that the performers had with the audience was when the grandmother was telling them the story, after the intervention of the social network characters; there was no interaction between the two worlds, except through social network.

This research serves as evidence of the unlimited communication and performance that can happen in a theatrical space with the influence of technology. It has also attempted to bring a new way of participation in theatre. Rather than rejecting technology in a theatrical space, why don’t we embrace it and bring the best out of it?

There is no going back from where we are, in terms of technological advancement. The existing knowledge can only lead to more discoveries of other possibilities. Identities will remain fragmented and overly reconstructed on social networks. One can only hope for the best with online bodies' identities, as the body has become a site of communication and performance.

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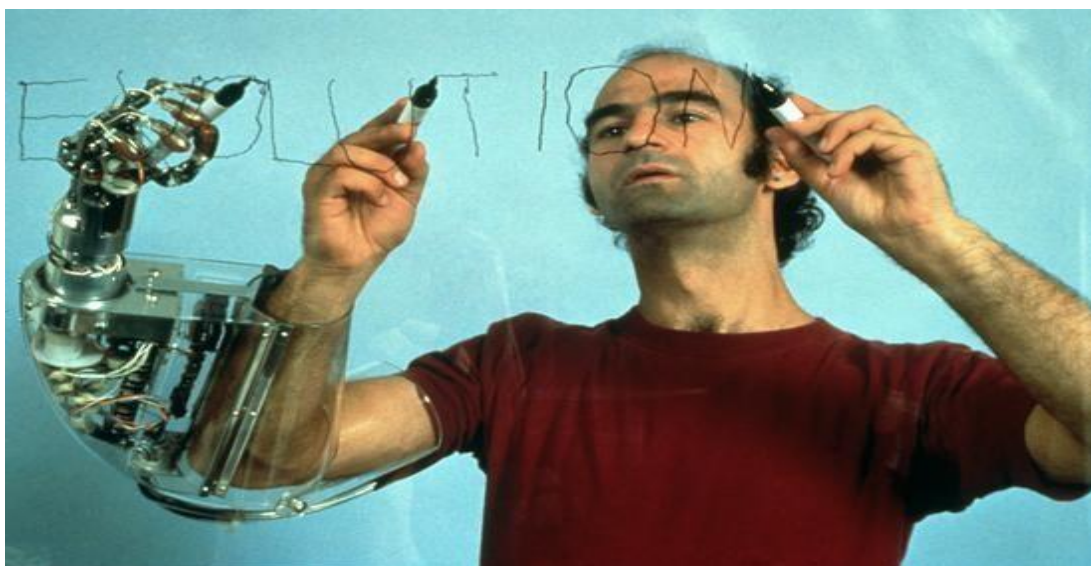
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APPENDICES

Appendix A



Stelarc with an artificial ear on his arm



Stelarc with an artificial arm

Appendix B



Stomach sculpture

Appendix C



Smangele's mother and father obsessed with Social Networks. Smangele standing alone

Appendix D

Storyteller/ *gogo*

Appendix E

Gogo being chased away from the world of the performers.

Appendix F



Mine workers in *The Ancient*, listening to the radio news.

Appendix G



Children playing, from *The Ancient*.

Appendix H



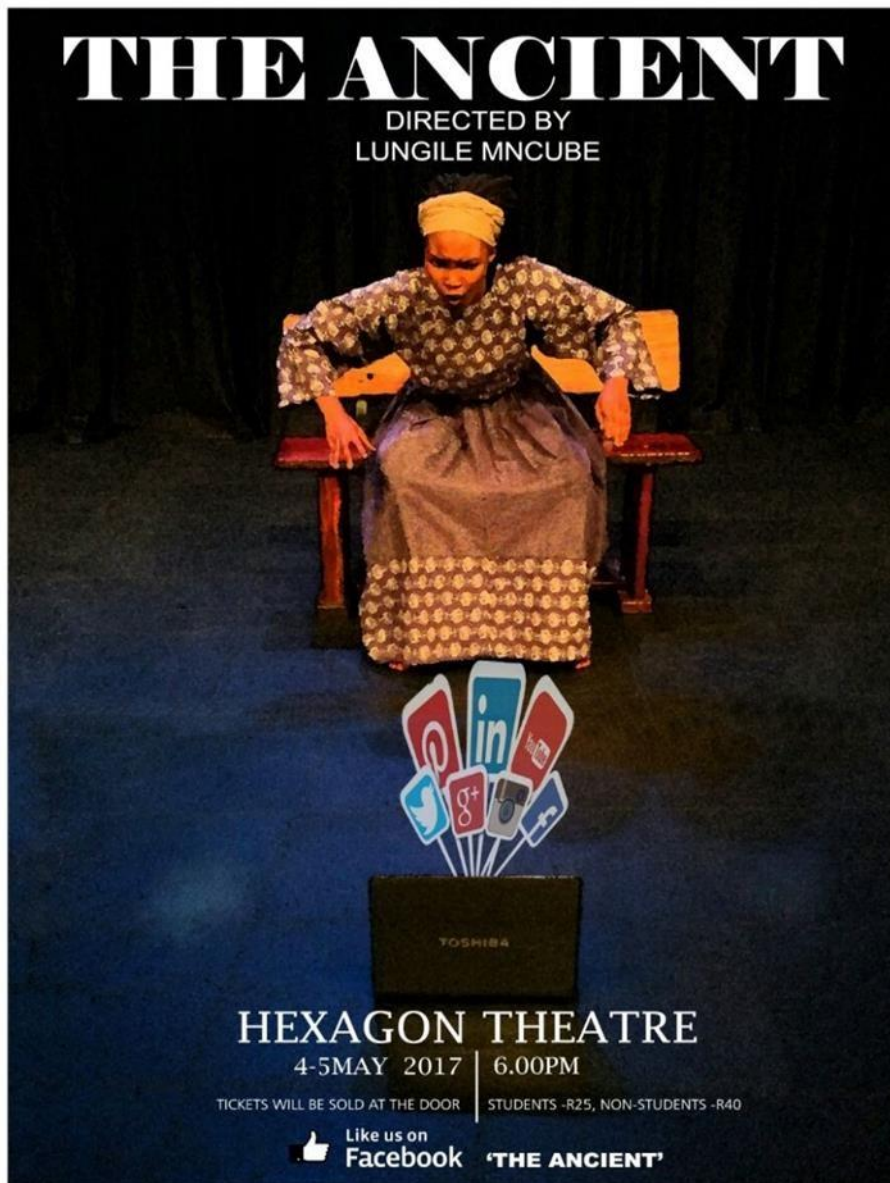
Stage Set of *The Ancient*

Appendix I



The screen in *The Ancient* showing Facebook comments.

Appendix J: Poster of *The Ancient*



A poster of *The Ancient*.