

Speaking the International Language of Art: A Practice as Research Study to explore
the legacy of Theatre for Development in making a new play for a social justice
theatre festival in post-conflict Rwanda.

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Abstract

In 2017, I was lucky enough to work alongside some of the renowned female theatre makers that constitute a network called ARIADNE, in a reworking of a testimonial theatre project, *Dear Children, Sincerely*. I was inspired by international performance practice from women who use theatre in conflict and post-conflict zones to create social change, and through meeting distinguished Rwandan theatre maker Hope Azeda, I realised my passion for aesthetically rich applied theatre practice. During this residential, Azeda talked of her festival – the Ubumuntu Arts Festival, which is held annually at the Kigali Genocide Memorial to ‘commemorate humanity’ – and spoke of her belief in the ‘healing powers’¹ art has in uniting communities. Her commitment to producing such work left me enthused and invigorated, with an open invitation to attend the 2018 Festival.

The work of Hope Azeda and theatre in post-conflict zones is interrogated in this thesis, along with the branch of Applied Theatre (AT) known as ‘Theatre for Development’ (TfD), and considers its historical and current use across areas of Africa in advocating for social justice. Research into the problematics of exporting messages and ‘advice for life’ often found in TfD is undertaken to underpin the positionality and ethics of my practical work. Through consideration of TfD, this research will interlace theoretical analysis and practical application to consider the legacy and future of artistic dialogues between ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ nations.

Key words: Theatre for Development (TfD), Applied Theatre (AT), Rwanda, Ubumuntu Arts Festival (UAF), genocide, Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), aesthetics,

¹ Two of the fundamental principles of the Ubumuntu Arts Festival

festival, social justice, otherness, strangers, conflict, mental health, *Thirteen Reasons*

Why Not (TRWN)

Introduction: “Rehearsal for the revolution” (Boal, 2000, p.122)²

The term ‘Theatre for Development’ was coined as a way of defining how theatre is used as a ‘tool’ for providing a dialogical form of theatre practice that encourages participation with and is led by the people of the community. Tfd found expression particularly in parts of Africa,³ where the withdrawal of brutal and repressive colonial regimes had left a legacy of civil conflict and the systematic and purposeful stratification and division of society. Tfd has been particularly evident in work across countries such as Nigeria (see Prentki, 1998, p.425)⁴, Tanzania, and Rwanda; countries where former colonial powers had vested interests, and where interventionist strategies could be modelled on Applied Theatre methodologies that had flourished at ‘home’. The issue of European domination is closely interrogated throughout this thesis, and questions Western influence and interference as a theme that runs through all chapters in the theoretical research into the legacy of Tfd, prominently where issues of cultural hegemony and assumptions of artistic authority colour the making of a British-originating piece of theatre for a Rwandan social justice theatre festival.

The Ubumuntu Arts Festival is the brainchild of renowned theatre professional Hope Azeda, who, in 2015, saw the debut of her festival, with a strong intention to “create an avenue where people from different walks of life can come together and speak to each other in the language of art.” (Ubumuntu Arts Festival)⁵. it

² Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, (Pluto Press, 2000), p.122

³ Readers might be directed to Osita Okagbue, ‘A drama of their lives: Theatre-for-development in Africa’, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1+2, (2002): 79-92

⁴ Tim Prentki, ‘Must the Show Go On? The Case for Theatre for Development’, *Development Practice*, Vol. 8, No. 4, (1998): 419-429, p.425

⁵ Ubumuntu Arts Festival, ‘Overview’, ubumuntuartsfestival.com, <<http://www.ubumuntuartsfestival.com/About/>>, (accessed 14th September, 2018)

prides itself on the motto “I am because you are. You are because I am. We are human together.” (Ubumuntu Arts Festival); the fundamental principles that gives the festival such legacy. The UAF takes place at the Kigali Genocide Memorial at a prominent time in Rwanda; a country that is still recovering from a traumatic past of the Rwandan Genocide of April 1994. (for more information, see ‘Rwanda genocide: 100 days of slaughter’, BBC)⁶ This barbaric event became embedded in Rwandan consciousness, and 25 years later, it still remains a schismatic and re-formational event by which the country continues to be defined. Annually, Azeda extends an open global invitation to theatre-makers, drawing international practitioners into the country in order to use the narrative and aesthetic potential of the festival to invite participants to align the causes and consequences of global tragedies, and to promote this corner of the Great Lakes region as a flourishing artistic hub.

The title of this thesis is drawn from the Ubumuntu Arts Festival, and asks the animating research question, ‘How can I – as a white, British, female theatre maker – take a piece of original theatre to a post-conflict, post-genocidal state, and seek to connect with audiences whilst avoiding cultural domination, sublimation or appropriation?’ Considering the use of TfD approaches by Azeda through Mashirika, and thinking about the legacy of post-colonial theatre-making partnerships between the UK and African nations, this brings in related questions such as ‘Is TfD recoverable from its history of paternalistic control, toward a future of peer to peer solution-making?’, ‘Why might people turn to performance and art in times of conflict and destruction?’ and ‘What might be specific to the conditions of the festival that permit a meeting place of alternative ideas?’. The fundamental aim of

⁶ Unknown, ‘Rwanda genocide: 100 days of slaughter’, *BBC*, April 2019, <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-26875506>>, (accessed 10th May, 2019)

this investigation prepares the groundwork for an ethical and informed approach to my own theatre making for my commission to make a piece for the Ubuntu Arts Festival in 2018.

Although the title and content of this thesis should be considered in two parts, the whole acts as a critical commentary to the practical work undertaken as part of this research, and therefore, it should be viewed through the lens that the theory is inseparable from this work. The first half – ‘exploring the legacy of Theatre for Development’ – will present a concise investigation of TfD as a term and a practice, and, using Ananda Breed as a focal scholar, will be closely interrogated as a window that helps to question intervention schemes particularly across the Global South where development progresses at a slower rate. Chapter One will concentrate on this assessment by focusing on the deployment of TfD, and its impact across specific African communities. Using projects such as the ‘Laedza Bantanani’ (see Kidd & Byram, 1982, p.91)⁷ project in Botswana as reference, I will provide a brief history and insight into the ways in which TfD has struggled to become community-led theatre, and what the potential difficulties might be in top-down enforcement of hegemonic approaches, where the practitioners are disseminating an agenda that does not emanate from local actors.

Some of the research methodology within this chapter includes analysis and problematisation of hegemonic interpolation within the context of both more widespread post-conflict situations, and then post-genocide more specifically. In light of this, Chapter Two will continue to question some of the consequences of certain

⁷ Martin Byram & Ross Kidd, ‘Demystifying Pseudo-Freirian Development: The Case of Laedza Bantanani’, *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 2, (1982): 91-105, p.91

intervention schemes through an international lens, placing focus upon the tensions held within creating a piece of theatre and taking it across international borders. Importantly, this thesis will aim at unpicking how “the socio-political significance of the production changes when performed for an international audience.” (Breed, 2014, p.72)⁸

Chapters Three and Four take a more reflective approach, offering detailed insight into my process and theatre-making methodology undertaken in order to evaluate the successes and difficulties in working on the commissioned piece. Chapter Three will also acknowledge the influence of the work and theories of practitioners and theatre companies such as Augusto Boal, Dymphna Callery⁹, Frantic Assembly, Litz Pisk and Stans Café, to determine precisely how their ways of working fed into my own. Following this, I will examine my own role as a young, white female UK-based theatre-maker transporting work to a post-conflict, post-genocidal environment, and will further investigate the ecosystem of the UAF in bringing ‘humanity a step closer to equality’, asking whether there is potential for material change in its “calls for unity amongst all peoples of the world, promoting love and inclusion and rejecting hatred and discrimination.”¹⁰ I will also examine how the topic of my play – a piece to explore the theme of mental health and resilience –

⁸ Ananda Breed, *Performing the Nation: Genocide, Justice, Reconciliation*, (Seagull Books, 2014), p.72 - “the use of fictional frames can serve as an aesthetic and imaginary border to negotiate counter-narratives outside national ideological and political borders, or alternatively can reinforce the performativity of national identity construction after conflict. The context within which the productions have been staged for various political and social purposes has been provided to contextualise how performative iterations of nation building become ingrained into performances or otherwise resisted.” (p.83/4)

⁹ Dymphna Callery, *Through the Body: A Practical Guide to Physical Theatre*, (Routledge: New York, 2001)

¹⁰ Ubumuntu Arts Festival, ‘Ubumuntu Arts Festival Returns, Binding Art to Resilience’, ubumuntuartsfestival.com, <<http://www.ubumuntuartsfestival.com/News/article/Ubumuntu-Arts-Festival>Returns-Binding-Art-to-Resilience>>, (accessed 12th September, 2018)

might be pertinent across Rwanda, and will analyse where my piece stood in advancing a shared understanding of a network of mental health issues.

It must be recognised that it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a full examination of the intricacies at play with regards to mental health and the Rwandan genocide, and it must be understood that the piece created for the Ubumuntu Arts Festival was a commission that encouraged a conversation on mental health, aiming to align alongside international work that was currently being undertaken by Hope Azeda herself, therefore offering an addition to a debate within a well-rounded social-justice theatre festival. This research and thesis uses TfD as a model to examine the processes involved in creating theatre that would cross international borders, irrespective of the subject at hand: TfD is pursued in this thesis to act as a practice which can offer insight into how not to reinscribe damaging colonial narratives through intercultural theatre.

This research seeks to question the ways in which TfD has metamorphosed across many years, and how it might still have currency between individuals and communities, artists and participants, but more so now in a way that can “be employed beyond immediate, local effect”, providing sophisticated impact in grassroots self-development. (Prentki, 1998, p.429) Here the conclusion will argue that the need for TfD is still pertinent, but must be conceived as a programme of ‘active participation’ and community initiated development. Through this research, this thesis aims to identify the ways in which we can successfully ‘Speak the Language of International Art’, and aspires to provide a creative contribution to the

dialogue between former colonial and colonised, adding to shared spaces that are celebratory of international theatre collaboration.

Chapter One: The Changing Role and Status of Theatre for Development ¹¹

“Performance is an especially effective tool for carrying out research that aims to raise consciousness, foster local knowledge and spark social action because it opens a space for dialogue that practically anyone, regardless of background, can enter.” (Zakarki & Steve, 2009)¹²

Introduction

Performance and theatre have become effective tools for many development-oriented organisations and practitioners to spark social action. Theatre for Development (TfD) offers an application of theatre practice, aimed at disseminating ideas that introduce individuals to a spectrum of raising consciousness from small alterations to more substantive acts of rehabilitation and transformation. However, as articulated in the recent work, *Anthropology, Theatre & Development*, TfD – both as a term and a practice – has a problematic history. (Flynn & Tinius, 2015, p.11)¹³

Whilst TfD has been a part of theatrical practice that has “progressively gained currency throughout the second half of the twentieth century” (Prentki & Preston, 2013, p.11)¹⁴, it continues to be an approach where practitioners use their status to directly and materially “intervene in social and political discourses” (Prentki & Preston, 2013, p.11) constructing a direct correlation between the events of a play and

¹¹ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, (Pluto Press, 2000), p.ix – “Theatre is a weapon ... a weapon for liberation.” (back cover)

¹² Jenks Zakari & Oga Steve, ‘Getting to the bottom of the story with theatre for development’, *openDemocracy*, (Dec 2009), <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/getting-to-bottom-of-story-with-theatre-for-development/>>, (accessed 5th May, 2019)

¹³ Alex Flynn, & Jonas Tinius, *Anthropology, Theatre & Development*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.11 - “In a manner which scholars like Dale Byam (1999) term as propaganda for colonial government development policies, theatre was utilised by development practitioners to disseminate ideas such as immunisation, sanitation and cash crop production.”

¹⁴ Tim Prentki, & Sheila Preston, *The Applied Theatre Reader*, (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), p.11

the events in real time. Theatre in this sense, therefore, has become a ‘tool’ to offer both dialogue and reflection upon one’s actions. (Prentki, 2015, p.8)¹⁵

History

The initial appearance of TfD is indeterminate. According to Tim Prentki, the concept of Development might have first been given to the world in the late 1940s, via the words of President Harry Truman in his Inaugural Address (Prentki, 2015, p.9). President Truman’s discourse immediately designated the division of the world into the ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’, and subsequently the nomenclature of TfD was conceptually problematic before the term had even been properly established. Echoing the false binary of dividing the world into two opposing groups, the terminology of TfD replays former colonial oppression, and suggests that as a part of the ‘developed’ world, the West is permitted to enforce totalising hegemony on those that are ‘underdeveloped’ in order for ‘them’ to become ‘more like us’. In a post-colonial state, such as Rwanda, the question here is whether the legacy of TfD creates difficulty in avoiding the repetition of previous power exchanges and possible cultural sublimation in the sharing of contemporary theatrical experiences between the West and communities hitherto designated as ‘less developed’.

To answer this question, it is possible to look in more detail at the range of TfD practices and projects to note where the impetus for ‘intervention’ emanates from, and where this might complicate the idea of Western imposition. Although more modern practice will postdate some of the projects identified in Byam’s *Community in Motion* (1999), this seminal text affords an insight into the early

¹⁵ Tim Prentki, *Applied Theatre: Development*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p.8

implementation of some more lateral and stakeholder-driven practices of Tfd.

According to Byam's research, the 1970s saw the birth of the first Tfd project in the post-colonial context held in Botswana, which has since encouraged additional countries to explore the use of theatre as a method of addressing "matters of socio-economic concern." (Byam, 1999, p.37)¹⁶ The aptly titled "Laedza Batanani" – usually translated as "community awakening" (Byam, 1999, p.39) – aimed to 'enlighten' a rural Botswanan community from "prevailing apathy" towards development (Byam, 1999, p.39), by focusing on solutions driven by the individual, creating a "response to the cultural abyss created in the aftermath of colonisation." (Byam, 1999, p.31)¹⁷ The Laedza Batanani programme offered a significant milestone in the construction of Tfd, as it was the first time to see theatre being made with ordinary people, rather than for. (Plastow, 2014, p.108)¹⁸

Tfd continued to be a sought-after method of dialogue-based solution making through the 1980's when African independence was rife and 'Popular Theatre' was an explicitly politically driven practice. March 1989 saw Oga Steve Abah found the non-government organisation (NGO), the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA), "to see how they can push some of the community problems to solve them" (Abah, 2015)¹⁹, placing heavy emphasis on "communication and development through

¹⁶ L. Dale Byam, *Community in Motion: Theatre for Development in Africa*, (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999), p.37

¹⁷ The project was developed under the adult literacy programme of the University of Botswana, funded by the Canadian University Services Organisation, and prided itself on the slogan "The sun is already up. It's time to wake up and come together for a common effort" (Gambles, 2010, p.4), which reflected the strong motivations of this project. Laedza Batanani aimed to incorporate innovative, participatory approaches to "overcome problems of low community participation and indifference to government development efforts" (Byam & Kidd, 1982, p.91)

¹⁸ Jane Plastow, 'Domestication or transformation? The ideology of Theatre for Development in Africa', *Applied Theatre Research*, Vol. 2, No 2, (2014): 107-118, p.108

¹⁹ Community Development Journal, "It Belongs to the People' – Oga Steve Abah on Community Development", *YouTube*, 3:39, (Sept 2015), <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9EmpnrYIj8>>, (accessed 6th May, 2019)

alternative means for the rural and urban populace.” (Chukwu-Okoronkwo, 2012, p.63)²⁰ The key to TfD in Africa was subsequently born: using theatre tools to encourage active participation in shared issues, giving community development back into the hands of the people it mattered to, making it fundamentally “important for people to write their own histories”. (Breed, 2014, p.29)

As we move forward into the 21st century, we recognise that TfD is still pertinent as a post-conflict dialogical tool. Azeda’s theatre company Mashirika’s continual use of TfD methods encourages a thriving ‘togetherness’ of a broken community, “very much founded on a community theatre model, where education is of major concern.” (Montei, 2011, p.92)²¹ This is evident in their partnerships with UNICEF, the National Commission for Children (NCC), and the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) in their spearheading of a three-month campaign in 2017, aimed at using theatre “to promote family based care for children” (Mashirika)²² through educative yet entertaining artwork and poetry. Mashirika continue to strive to create an exchange that puts pertinent issues for Rwanda at the forefront, in order to make their theatre practice community-led and dialogical. In an interview conducted by CNBC Africa, Azeda stated:

The impact that we’ve had is that we’ve developed our own home-grown methodology, because our story is our story...we started making research-based work, and the impact is that at least we have art forms that can help communities engage in certain conversations that can help them

²⁰ Samuel Okoronkwo Chukwu-Okoronkwo, ‘Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance [NTPA] Further Dimensions in Trends of Alternative Theatre Practice in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2012):63-70, p.63

²¹ Amanda Montei, ‘Performing Reconciliation: Transnational Advocacy in Rwanda’, *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, Vol. 33, No. 2, (May 2011): 80-93, p92

develop...you can use art to make them understand it. (Azeda, CNBC Africa, 8:37)²³

The idea of making research-based theatre is undoubtedly fundamental towards the development of this optimistic country, and it is ‘home-grown’ work such as Azeda’s that is making positive impact in the Tfd realm: “Art is a great tool for healing. Art is good for change...Art takes us to a place where we can reflect and go through that journey of introspection...” (Azeda, CNBC Africa, 6:15) Mashirika is proving that the role of theatre for positive impact is still very much in motion, and building on the examples of practice identified above, Azeda’s work connects to previous Tfd theatre projects that do not repeat the damaging colonial hegemony of colonial paradigms and presence.

Post-Conflict Theatre ²⁴

The deployment of Tfd in many African states has been connected to the issue of war and conflict resolution, and “theatre for the sake of recovery has become a natural tool in conflict and post-conflict areas” (Kalisa, 2006, p.516)²⁵. Broadly speaking, the term ‘conflict’ remains on a wide spectrum from local or domestic disputation to full-scale war and “denotes the incompatibility of subject positions.” (Diez & Pia, 2007, p.2)²⁶ Conflict is not always indicated by violence; conflict appears on interpersonal, minor scales, not immediately apparent to the outsider’s

²³ CNBC Africa, ‘The role of art and media in Rwanda’s peace and reconciliation efforts’, *cnbcfrica.com*, (May, 2019): 0:00-13:22, <<https://www.cnbcfrica.com/videos/2019/05/06/the-role-of-art-and-media-in-rwandas-peace-and-reconciliation-efforts/>>

²⁴ Terry Eagleton, *Figures of Dissent: Critical Essays on Fish, Spivak, Žižek and Others*, (Verso, 2005), p.20 - “Any terror put into an accomplished enough artistic form becomes enjoyable” (p.20)

²⁵ Chantal Kalisa, ‘Theatre and the Rwandan Genocide’, *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, Vol. 18, No. 4, (2006): 515-521, p.516

²⁶ Thomas Diez & Emily Pia, ‘Conflict and Human Rights: A Theoretical Framework’ *SHUR Working Paper Series, Human Rights in Conflicts: The Role of Civil Society*, (2007), p.2

eye. That being said, it may also have physical, destructive results and escalate past the point of peaceful change, and whilst productive resolution may be realised eventually, there is undoubtedly long-lasting strain on societies and communities surrounding such violence. (Diez & Pia, 2007, p.2)

In her book *A Different Kind of War Story*, Nordstrom pitches her argument towards the use of theatre to redress the ‘actions of the perpetrators’:

If violence seeks to crush the possible, people, far from passive victims, re-create the possible as a tactic of survival and political agency. If the grotesque is used against people to repress them, then people identify these grotesque tactics to delegitimize the politics and the actions of the perpetrators. In illuminating the harsh realities of terror-warfare, its victims are demonstrating that those who employ the grotesque are, by definition, not fit to govern. The use of the grotesque negates its own claim to power. (Nordstrom, 1997, p.172)²⁷

The concepts illustrated above raise lasting and perhaps unresolvable questions (see footnotes)²⁸ about performance in times of conflict, and lay the foundations for the argument that “theatre may serve as a mediating mode in post-conflict societies, facilitating dialogue between government-appointed officials and those citizens traumatised by past violence.” (Rovit, 2013, p.49) Furthermore, Nordstrom’s ideas highlight the importance of joy, comic play or beauty in understanding why people turn to theatre in such extreme circumstances, shedding light on another aspect of the

²⁷ Carolyn Nordstrom, *A Different Kind of War Story*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p.171

²⁸ Michael Balfour, Jenny Hughes & James Thompson, *Performance in Place of War*, (Seagull Books, 2009), p.32 – “Do the practices described manage to dissipate or...express the terror of warfare? ... Are different kinds of styles and genres more or less effective as the responses to these needs? When might a creative response become a re-articulation of the other as enemy? When might laughter be used to forget and when might it be an accusation in the face of another?”

model of Tfd. In 2011 article ‘Laughter Diplomacy: Transcultural Understanding at Play in Rwanda’, McFarren brought to light the idea that ‘comic play’ allowed for participants to “contain and transform painful references” (McFarren, 2011, p.170)²⁹ particularly in Rwanda, to “reconstruct a sense of community” (see footnote)³⁰ (McFarren, 2011, p.164). The comedy seen to be held in the workshops conducted across Rwanda as part of this research “encouraged participants to discover potentials and practice positive social interaction.” (McFarren, 2011, p.164), placing great emphasis on key principles of Tfd and placing the onus of positive change into the hands of the people at stake. These concepts all champion the use of imagination and innovation to “maintain a sense of an everyday liveable life in the face of threat and uncertainty” (Balfour et al., 2009, p.32).

Turning to theatre in times of conflict can be argued to “bridge the abyss, if not to reconstruct the past, to make the present liveable.” (Balfour, et al., 2009, p.29) From this, we can infer that the ‘imaginary’ qualities of the theatre allow for projection and possibility and a greater sense of optimism, by making daily life seem more ‘liveable’, ushering in creativity in building towards reconciliation after the devastations of war. Some Tfd processes, like the performative grassroots activity of airing and settling community grievances through the Gacaca courts in Rwanda, are rooted in documentary and the retelling of testimony (see Bronéus, 2010)³¹, but still connect to imagination through processes of memory and story-telling. However, it is

²⁹ Cheryl Kennedy McFarren, ‘Laughter Diplomacy: Transcultural Understanding at Play in Rwanda’, *Theatre Topics*, Vol. 21, No. 2, (2011): 163-173, p.170

³⁰ These are also hugely important points to consider as part of the research towards my own writing of a comic piece of theatre, as my contribution towards the Ubumuntu Arts Festival.

³¹ Karen Bronéus, ‘The Trauma of Truth Telling: Effects of Witnessing in the Rwandan Gacaca Courts on Psychological Health’, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (2010): 408-437 - “Truth telling has come to play a pivotal role in post-conflict reconciliation processes around the world.” p.408

arguable that it is only through the act of *collective* imagination when communities are enabled to explore possibilities of problem solving and solutions to challenges in their lives – however temporary – where art can become more tangible and material; more ‘real’ than the ‘reality’ of suffering itself.

With worldwide organisations, charities, NGOs and INGOs becoming an integral part of global development, there comes greater demand for sharing knowledge and information to address issues that concern the general welfare of communities. Considering colonial history, the West has been involved in Africa and has been providing aid since 1929. (Hudson, 2006)³² Whilst the stated motivation is to alleviate poverty and famine, UK development funding in Africa has also served to “promote British commercial interests, foreign policy and security concerns” (Hudson, 2006); arguably, it seems to have never been more necessary for a practical and dialogical mechanism to explore local issues using African-led methods. TfD was designed to encourage a minimized gap between researcher, development practitioner, and the community (Kvam, 2012, p.47)³³, equalising the participants and centering ideas developed by the people themselves. The involvement of NGOs – such as that of Abah’s NPTA (see p.12) – and INGOs across Sub-Saharan Africa since the millennium has become far more widespread, taking on roles in conflict resolution, (El-Bushra & Kerr, 2005, p57)³⁴ and through implementation of TfD, INGOs have become a driving force behind the inception and installation of performance around times of conflict. However, according to El-Bushra and Kerr

³² Alan Hudson, ‘UK Aid to Africa: A Report for the UFJ Insititue’, (January 2006), <<https://www.odi.org/publications/2810-uk-aid-africa-report-ufj-institute>>, (accessed 9th April, 2018)

³³ Hilde Kvam, ‘Theatre for Development – A Tanzanian Road Towards Citizenship and Cultural Renewal’, *Journal of Urban Culture Research*, Vol. 5, (2012): 44-53, p.47

³⁴ Judy El-Bushra & David Kerr, ‘NGOs, Performance and Conflict Transformation’, *Leeds African Studies Bulletin*, Vol. 67, (2005): 57-71, p57

(2005), many of these humanitarian organisations have scant knowledge of local cultures and/or conflict management devices, ironically paralysing them by ‘cultural sensitivity’. (El-Bushra & Kerr, 2005, p.57) As the majority of NGOs or INGOs are Western-based, we might hypothesise that intervention in post-conflict scenarios returns us to the danger of reinforcement of a top-down hegemony from the West.

Post-Genocide Theatre³⁵

The concept of the act of genocide (see footnote)³⁶ – of a very specific and systematic devastation through an intent to destroy – can also manifest as a complex set of alliances which can complicate Lemkin’s original definition of one ethnic group obliterating another (see Lemkin, 2008, p.79)³⁷. The Rwandan genocide was a convoluted succession of barely describable horrors, in which the poor of differing and mixed ethnic backgrounds (Eltringham, 2009, p.6)³⁸ were mobilised to fight and help a murderous political party (identifying as Hutu) grab power. As a result, nearly one million Rwandans – most of whom were Tutsi, or could be determined as such through a process of persecutory classification – “were systematically exterminated in approximately three months”. (Edmondson, 2018, p.38)³⁹ The cataclysmic event “plays a crucial role in the region’s maelstrom of violence” (Edmondson, 2018, p.38),

³⁵ Susan Stewart, *Conflict Resolution: A Foundation Guide*, (Waterside Press, 1998), p.7 – “Conflicts involve struggles between two or more people over values, or competition for status, power and scarce resource.” (Coser, 1956)

³⁶ see United Nations – Treaty Series, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, No. 1021, (December 1948)

³⁷ Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Law of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*, (The Lawbook Exchange Ltd., 2008), p.79 – “It [genocide] is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves...Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.”

³⁸ Nigel Eltringham, ‘Introduction: Identity, Justice and "Reconciliation" in Contemporary Rwanda.’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 11, No. 1, (2009): 5-10, ISSN 1462-352, p.6

³⁹ Laura Edmondson, *Performing Trauma in Central Africa: Shadows of Empire*, (Indiana University Press, 2018), p.38

and continues to punctuate the legacy, history, politics and identity of this area of the Great Lakes region. (Edmondson, 2018, p.38)

In the case of deep-rooted and protracted conflict, such as genocide, theatre may seem a minor addition in the context of other more direct and instrumental ‘mediation tools’. Restorative justice bodies have been multiply criticised for not alleviating the underlying causes of conflict through their practices, rendering them ineffective in “transforming a fractured society into one of stability and peace.” (McMorran, 2003)⁴⁰ However, and especially where other frameworks are nascent or fragile, theatre may allow a deeper exploration through dialogic intervention and participatory modes, gaining greater first-hand knowledge of the underlying causes of conflict, offering a dynamic and proximate replaying of testimony sited within communities: “Narratives of pain and suffering allow the spectator to feel, connecting to pain and suffering which is potentially more psychological than physical in the Western World.” (Breed, 2014, p.74/5)

Laura Edmondson writes, “Scholars of mass violence commonly invoke the term “unspeakable” to describe violence of such magnitude that defies description and confounds the imagination.” (Edmondson, 2018, p.20) In light of this, it is important to allude to the notable writings of Theodor Adorno, who once famously wrote “To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.” (Adorno, 1983, p.34)⁴¹ Both Edmondson and Adorno highlight the issues that have been long debated by a number of philosophers and literary scholars, suggesting not a moratorium or cessation of art

⁴⁰ Chris McMorran, "International War Crimes Tribunals.", *Beyond Intractability*. (Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess) Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, (2003), <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/int-war-crime-tribunals>>.

⁴¹ Theodor Adorno, *Prisms*, (MIT Press, 1983), p.34

after Auschwitz – or indeed any genocide for that matter – but rather offering a caution to writers, “to consider their moral obligation as artists when seeking the proper medium with which to re-present...” (Rovit, 2013, p.45)⁴² The moral obligations that Adorno infers in representing the ‘barbaric’ or ‘unspeakable’ artistically, is to make necessary the examination and re-examination of the ways in which we can produce art in order to avoid issues of re-traumatisation or, in the instance of this thesis, cultural sublimation. Adorno is right to offer a caution to producing art when devastation has occurred, and the issues of trauma will be later discussed in this thesis. With reference to my own theatre-making, Adorno becomes an ethical guide, helping to ensure my piece – whilst not about the genocide itself, but playing within a palpable post-genocidal location – remains within necessary boundaries that do no breach what Rovit called above the ‘proper medium with which to re-present’, but rather acts as an addition to important and necessary conversations.

We might argue that theatre is an effective mediation tool for the resolution of genocide, able to intervene in the spaces that consolidate ideological disputes; “It is our imagination that fuels our power to adapt, and adaption – of ideas, opinions, replacing old beliefs with new facts – is the basis of education.” (Jackson & Vine, 2013, p.91)⁴³ This contributes to a greater understanding as theatre can be a suitable method of development from the barbarism of genocide; individuals are “better able to connect with the deeper wants and needs that motivate the core conflict” (Search for Common Ground, p.3)⁴⁴, subsequently gaining a greater understanding which aids

⁴² Rebecca Rovit, ‘Introduction: Witnessing History, Performing Trauma’, *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, Vol. 27, No. 2, (2013): 45-52, p.45

⁴³ Anthony Jackson & Chris Vine, *Learning Through Theatre: The Changing Face of Theatre in Education*, (Routledge, 2013), p.91

⁴⁴ Search for Common Ground, ‘Participatory Theatre for Conflict Transformation Training Manual’. <<http://www.dmeformpeace.org/sites/default/files/Participatory-Theatre-Manual-EN.pdf>>

effective solution-making and problem-solving. (Search for Common Ground, p.3)

There are multiple interactive methods deployed by TfD that enhance envisaged ‘deeper connection’ through image-based, nonverbal techniques. Boal’s greatly pioneered image theatre “provides a means for personal, nonverbal expression to develop into communal discussion.” (Blair & Fletcher, 2010, p.25)⁴⁵, offering an outlet to explore one’s imagination. As outlined by Blair & Fletcher in their 2019 article “‘We Cry on the Inside’: Image Theatre and Rwanda’s Culture of Silence’ (2010), Image Theatre was a key method used when conducting a series of workshops in July 2007 and 2008, “us[ing] theatre exercises to address the culture of silence that surrounds the genocide”. (Blair & Fletcher, 2010, p.23) In this instance, the significance of ‘active participation’ was appealing to workshop participants as a nonverbal means of articulating their experiences, “encouraging personal exchanges over the genocide” (Blair & Fletcher, 2010, p.23). The effects of such a practice are indeed conditional and potentially temporary, but according to Blair and Fletcher, “they have been described by Rwanda genocide counsellors as “truthful” and as revealing “unexpected truths”, suggesting that there may be an ongoing role of theatre in helping to address the trauma of the genocide.” (Blair & Fletcher, 2010, p.23)

Post-Genocide Mental Health and Trauma

In 2017, journalist Alice McCool wrote: “Research and understanding of mental health is still in its early stages across the world, and this is particularly so in developing countries.” (McCool, 2017)⁴⁶ The documentation of mental ill health in

⁴⁵ Brent Blair & Angus Fletcher, “‘We Cry on the Inside’: Image Theatre and Rwanda’s Culture of Silence’, *Theatre Topics*, Vol. 20, No. 1, (2010): 23-31, p.25

⁴⁶ Alice McCool, ‘Masculinity and Mental Health in Post-Genocide Rwanda’, *Vice*, <https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/evb7ae/masculinity-and-mental-health-in-post-genocide-rwanda>, (accessed 10th August, 2018)

post-conflict zones such as Rwanda is seemingly under researched, and as Krippner and McIntyre emphasised, “The psychological literature on the impact of war stress on civilians is scarce”. (Krippner & McIntyre, 2003, p.2/3)⁴⁷ However, there are plenty of accounts that evidence the Rwandan genocide had horrific after-effects on civilians who lived during, and those that live now with the legacy of, the barbaric mass devastation; the implications across many studies is that mental health illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder or depression, have only seemingly increased in the post-genocide period. Genocide scholar and author of *Negotiating Genocide in Rwanda: The Politics of History* (2017), Dr Erin Jessee worked closely with and interviewed Rwandan nationals from various “ethnic, political, religious, regional and economic background” (Jessee, 2017, p.16)⁴⁸ to develop a greater understanding of culturally and politically appropriate and sensitive ways to question the experience of the genocide, offering a link to Adorno’s assertions in finding an appropriate way to discuss the aftermath of a genocide. Jessee states: “...many of the Rwandans I interviewed – having been exposed in the post-genocide period to human rights discourses and counselling opportunities that decried the high rates of trauma and PTSD among the population – identified as being traumatised or having PTSD.” (Jessee, 2017, p.21) As this research occurred in 2017, and with the fundamental research question around how to discuss issues of mental health with genocide victims and survivors, Jessee’s observations affirm that further work is urgent in addressing lasting mental illness in Rwanda, making the conversations held at the Ubumuntu Arts Festival 2018, and in particular, the theme of mental health and resilience important. Perhaps, therefore, we can infer that the dialogic and embodied

⁴⁷ Stanley Krippner & Teresa McIntyre, *The Psychological Impact of War Trauma on Civilians*, (Praeger, 2003), p.2/3

⁴⁸ Erin Jessee, *Negotiating Genocide in Rwanda: The Politics of History*, (Springer, 2017), p.21

nature of theatre has never been a more necessary tool to imagine, respond and replay issues, thoughts and feelings had by survivors who are living with the legacy of the Rwandan genocide.

The question here becomes situated around whether TfD and other kinds of theatre offer a sense of reconciliation for victims, or perhaps via secondary witnessing, it re-traumatizes survivors of the genocide; it is through the debates surrounding other socially performative ‘truth-telling’ means – such as the Gacaca courts – that research considers whether allowing victims and survivors to endure the purported cathartic process of ‘truth-telling’, “bring[s] relief from emotional and psychological pain, anguish and suffering” or does the opposite, which observers argue causes further emotional harm “by re-traumatising victims”. (Mendeloff, 2009, p.595)⁴⁹ This leads us to question whether perhaps the ‘witnessed’ and shared nature of these ‘truth-telling’ processes are contributing to mental illness rates, and therefore whether theatre might be venturing into the same ethical problematic areas.

Ananda Breed adds to this in her 2008 article ‘Performing the Nation: Theatre in Post-Genocide Rwanda’, in which she makes a reference to members of the audience of ‘genocide plays’ feeling re-traumatized from the events performed. (Breed, 2008, p.45)⁵⁰ Furthermore, she goes on to note that “audience responses to [the] grassroots and legendary theatre productions fluctuate according to location, population, and theatre content.” (Breed, 2008, p.45) Reactions from audience members varied hugely, as she recognises that in one performance, “a child started

⁴⁹ David Mendeloff, ‘Trauma and Vengeance: Assessing the Psychological and Emotional Effects of Post-Conflict Justice’, *Human Rights Quarterly* vol. 31, (2009): 592-623, p.595

⁵⁰ Ananda Breed, ‘Performing the Nation: Theatre in Post-Genocide Rwanda’, *TDR: The Drama Review*, Vol. 52, No. 1, (2008): 32-50, p.45

screaming and was carried away by first aid workers” whilst others have reported to laughing during scenes of genocide. (Breed, 2008, p.45) Various reactions to these plays are arguably coping mechanisms, offers Breed, some of which sometimes would lead to “several confessions triggered by the drama” (Breed, 2008, p.45).

It is important here to recognise the connection between Breed’s discoveries and some of the fundamental questions I sought to ask throughout my praxis, my combined research and theatre-making process. My play was not about the genocide itself; rather, I was responding to an invitation from Azeda to join an intercultural dialogue about mental health and “resilience”⁵¹, the elected themes of the social justice theatre festival. My work did not directly engage with the genocide, nor post genocide Rwanda; rather I fulfilled my brief from the Festival Director to make something that speaks about issues in the UK, but of course, from my own research I was deeply mindful about both the recolonising suspicions around TfD and the legacy of poor mental health in the post genocide. The issue that Breed faces with audience responses is something that I had to consider when making my piece, especially when comic play and exaggeration were brought into the theatre. It was beyond my reach to know or predict who was going to attend the night of our performance, and to what extent they personally may or may not have experienced mental health issues. With that in mind, therefore, audience sensitivity was something to be mindful of – as per Adorno’s requests – but equally could not become something that paralysed the intended force of the piece, and the request from Azeda to speak honestly about the issues that faced UK young people.

⁵¹ As quoted from email exchange with Hope Azeda on 18th August, 2017: “Am still digesting on the festival theme for 2018 and my heart whispers one word RESISTANCE... (Imagine if humans resisted evil?) ... I think it would be good to shade light on heroes resistance.”

There are always going to be considerable difficulties in creating theatre located physically and psychologically in the long shadow of the Rwandan genocide, especially when these relationships are further complicated by the tensions around assuming power, exploiting privilege and cultural sublimation as expressed above. However, when also considering the attested power of theatre in these contexts, as Breed powerfully describes in her article, it seems to be never more important to have ‘unspeakable’ issues – such as the genocide – recognised and re-witnessed by theatre productions in all sorts of direct and indirect ways (see footnote)⁵². Whilst my piece *Thirteen Reasons Why Not* was in no way attempting to tell the story of trauma or PTSD in post-conflict Rwanda, it nevertheless aimed to offer something of a moment of solidarity and recognition, in joining global conversations about mental health that, through the media and other forms of communication, we know are prevalent across all strata of societies. This could be a reason as to why my piece still ostensibly communicated with an audience in an environment of recent social trauma.⁵³

For further information regarding PTSD and the Rwandan genocide, readers are directed to articles such as Karen Bronéus’ ‘The Trauma of Truth Telling: Effects of Witnessing in the Rwandan Gacaca Courts on Psychological Health’, *Negotiating Genocide in Rwanda: The Politics of History* by Erin Jessee, or the *Psychiatric Times*

⁵² Breed, 2008 - “Remembering the genocide for Rwanda is important for everyone, because the whole world knew and did not do anything to stop the genocide, so everyone around the world shares a little something in our country of Rwanda. So it is better to remember than forget, because if you do not remember, then you do not have all of the truth.”, p.28

⁵³ [For more information on specific effects of the Rwandan genocide, see article]: Thomas Elbert & Susanne Schaal, ‘Ten Years After the Genocide: Trauma Confrontation and Posttraumatic Stress in Rwandan Adolescents’, *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, Vol. 19, No. 1, (2006): 95-195, p.101 - “This study examined the rate of traumatic event exposure and PTSD in a sample of orphaned Rwanda adolescents aged 13-23 years, 10 years after the genocide. Generally, finding indicated that most orphans were exposed to multiple serious traumatic events and displayed high rates of PTSD and posttraumatic stress symptoms.” (p.101)

article, 'PTSD in Survivors of Rwanda's 1994 War.' This thesis aims to elucidate how we can encourage an international dialogue about a universal problem or social phenomena, through the exploration of language and aesthetics, and in the next Chapter, how the environment of a festival – paying close attention to the Ubumuntu Arts Festival in Rwanda – seeks to harness an ecosystem in which a global conversation can be provoked, using universal suffering at its basis. It is sadly beyond the reach of this research to delve too deeply into issues of mental health and PTSD, concentrating instead on the ideas of learning lessons from evolved TfD practice to reduce cultural sublimation and to flatten any markers of hegemonic dominance. Refining my research closer towards the making of theatre in a post-conflict environment, combined with research in this chapter referring to the temporal development of TfD, the subsequent Chapter will explore how the theatre piece might be shaped to be dialogic, welcoming of difference, and ready to learn from others.

Chapter Two: The Role of the Festival and Aesthetics in International Theatre for Development

Introduction

This chapter seeks to gain a greater understanding of the aesthetics that intersect within the wider practices of Theatre for Development, and to focus more closely on how the role of a Festival seeks to harness a learning, community-based environment. Using research from Stuart Hall (1997) about the notion of ‘otherness’ in conjunction with the issue of the stranger, as identified through Alan Gregerman (2013), the subject of identity will be a key point of focus throughout this section of my dissertation, analysing it both from a theoretical lens, but also within the perspective of my own identity at the Ubumuntu Arts Festival. Further investigation in this chapter will address the interesting and problematic debate over indigenous versus imperialist languages, and will seek to gain insight into the dilemmas faced by post-colonial writers who compete against the issue of the successes and pitfalls of writing in their native languages. Thus, the exploration into language will reflect on my own experience of writing from a British perspective, and will contribute to answering the animating research question(s) outlined in my introduction.

“Otherness is served as a constant reminder of difference.” (Hallam & Street, 2000, p.245)⁵⁴

The notion of ‘otherness’ (Hallam & Street, 2000, p.245) proves particularly problematic within the parameters of this thesis and the context of exploring Tfd in

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Hallam & Brian V. Street, *Cultural Encounters: Representing ‘Otherness’*, (Routledge: London & New York, 2000), p.245

African states. The definition of ‘other’ denotes a person or thing that is notably different or idiosyncratic from the ‘norm’, or what is already known within communities. ‘Otherness’ also communicates a resistance of identification, and consequently deepens a sense of ‘alien’ distinctiveness (Hallam & Street, 2000, p.249): by being marked as not adhering to the ‘norm’, individuals are by definition classified as the ‘other’. British sociologist Stuart Hall argues that the identification of ‘other[ness]’ is often due to social hierarchies where the balance is maintained through law, media, religion etc., and what these estates deem to be ‘normal’. Throughout Chapter 4 – ‘The Spectacle of the ‘Other’’ (Hall, 1997, p.225)⁵⁵ – of his book *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (1987), Hall analyses the ways in which appearance affects our perceptions of the ‘other’; it is often the case that we define ourselves in relation to another (see also Okolie, 2002, p.2)⁵⁶, and that these relational definitions tend to be drawn from somewhat dangerous binary opposites determined by the dominant group (especially in countries with a colonial history such as Western Europe, USA or Australia)⁵⁷.

It is useful here to note that with the concept of ‘otherness’ comes the idea of the stranger, and their potentially positive influence on social development. In Bakhtin’s conceptualisation of the *carnivalistic mésalliances* (‘carnival polyphony’ or ‘multi-voicedness’; Bakhtin, 1984, p.122-123)⁵⁸, for instance, the potential reunion

⁵⁵ Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, (SAGE, 1987), p.225

⁵⁶ Andrew C. Okolie, ‘Introduction to the Special Issue – Identity: Now You Don’t See It; Now You Do’, *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, (2009): 1-7, p.2 – “Social identities are relational; groups typically define themselves in relation to others. This is because identity has little meaning without the ‘other’. So, by defining itself a group defines *others*. Identity is rarely claimed or assigned for its own sake.” (p.2)

⁵⁷ Zuleyka Zevallos, ‘Other Sociologist’ Blog, (October 2011), <<https://othersociologist.com/otherness-resources/>>, (accessed 16th May, 2018)

⁵⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p.122-123

and integration of that which is socially separated in carnival forms of art might offer a space for the categorisation of strangers to be diminished. There is, of course, a growing body of study that identifies the privileged role of the white practitioner and guide in postcolonial relationships⁵⁹, and how these dynamics might lead to cultural sublimation and appropriation. Nevertheless, there is an alternative perspective to this. Since I, and other attendees at the Festival, may be deemed a stranger to the UAF, it is interesting here to assess the works of Alan Gregerman, who, in his book *The Necessity of Strangers: The Intriguing Truth About Insight, Innovation and Success* (2013), considers the question “What if strangers are actually, in many ways, more important than friends?” (Gregerman, 2013, p.6)⁶⁰ Whilst it might seem ‘natural’ to some to base their understanding on the premise that a stranger is one who should *not* be embraced or integrated, Gregerman offers a persuasive argument for why strangers could in fact be necessary to social growth, connection and development, suggesting that it is precisely their differences and differing knowledge that helps to “make all of us complete, compelling, innovative, and successful.” (Gregerman, 2013, p.7) If I acknowledge my own positioning as a white practitioner, and therefore a ‘stranger’ in the Rwandan context, perhaps my position entails something more complicated than straightforward privilege and domination, but rather places me at a nexus of exchange, dialogue and shared experience within this new temporary community. In turn, this then promotes the argument that other individuals and participants within the dialogic space of UAF – whether Rwandan

⁵⁹ see articles such as Sonya Andermahr, ‘Decolonizing Trauma Studies: Trauma and Post colonialism’ – Introduction, *Humanities*, No. 4., (2015): 500-505

⁶⁰ Alan Gregerman, *The Necessity of Strangers: The Intriguing Truth About Insight, Innovation and Success*, (John Wiley & Sons, 2013), p.6 - These strangers whom we quickly chose to ignore or form an opinion about, are the people who force us out of our comfort zones and challenge us to question the knowledge, beliefs, and habits we hold dear. Most of us assume that strangers are a problem rather than a remarkable opportunity to learn, grow, and reach our full potential (Gregerman, 2013, p.3)

nationals or ‘others’ – were, too, in the productive position of the ‘stranger’ or ‘outsider’, the *xenos* who becomes ‘guest-friend’, proffering the Festival as a meeting place offering an opportunity to learn.

Introduction to the Ubumuntu Arts Festival

Festival is an event, a social phenomenon, encountered by virtually all human cultures. The colourful variety and dramatic intensity of its dynamic choreographic and aesthetic aspects, the signs of deep meaning underlying them, its historical roots and the involvement of the “natives” have always attracted the attention of casual visitors, have consumed travellers and men of letters alike. (Alessandro Falassi, 1987, p.1)⁶¹

I suggest that the UAF continues ancient rituals of celebration and commemoration and as such attests to the legacy and importance of the festival as ‘social phenomenon’. More than merely a community event, the UAF is also a celebration of the multiplicity of art itself, with innate idiosyncrasy and volatility also at play, and with a range of comforting or disruptive messages being articulated by a global cohort of artists and performers, that aims at “us[ing] art to create a new space to live with one another.” (Breed, 2014, p.86) True to carnivalesque plurality, multivocality and intertextuality of the festival as defined by tradition in a range of cultures, the UAF may therefore create a dynamic, fertile environment in which to use theatre as a tool of reflection and transformation in community life. For a post-colonial, post-genocidal state like Rwanda, the vibrant ecosystem of a festival allows for formed and forming communities to engage in original and provocative

⁶¹ Alessandro Falassi, ‘Festival: The Definition and Morphology’, *Time out of Time: Essays on the Festival*, (1987): 1-10

conversations, and arguably allows the restorative and rehabilitative qualities of Tfd to take place, in a place where “the world learns from the community as well as the community from the world.” (Prentki, 2007, p.200)⁶²

According to their mission statement, the UAF celebrates an awareness of international humanity; of “creating an avenue where people from different walks of life can come together and speak to each other in the language of art” (Ubumuntu Arts Festival)⁶³, with an aim to re-conceive a traumatic past to a positive effect. In *Performing the Nation*, Breed argues,

I consider the genocide a source of creation and cultural production. It is an inspirer of creation for cultural creations must have deep emotions and feelings...genocide has given us very deep emotions and feelings. It could also give many serious ideas which could inspire many important actions. (Breed, 2014, p.21)

Given Breed’s argument, there is a clear rationale for using the Kigali Genocide Memorial Amphitheatre as the flourishing home to the UAF, but the idea that the genocide offers a sense of ‘inspiration’ to potential art work is something that I find particularly poignant and important. This festival seeks to give art prominence, “at policy, educational and practice levels...to open up and share civic dialogue” (Living in Kigali)⁶⁴, and by using the idea of the genocide as its grassroots foundation, the UAF opens up a platform for international conversations and dialogue, using what

⁶² Tim Prentki, ‘From Neocolonial to Postcolonial: Some implications for the Practice of Theatre for Development’, *Caribbean Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 1/2, (2007): 194-204, p.200

⁶³ Ubumuntu Arts Festival, “Overview”, < <http://www.ubumuntuartsfestival.com/About/Overview>>, (accessed 11th April, 2018)

⁶⁴ Living in Kigali, “Ubumuntu Arts Festival”, <<http://www.livinginkigali.com/events-articles/completed-events/ubumuntu-arts-festival/>>, (accessed 15th April, 2018)

was arguably an event of global devastation and significance at the forefront, and thus heightening a sense of global unification. This perceived cathartic process of engaging in international ‘dialogue’, encouraging a global community of artists and theatre makers, looks to provide us with further enlightenment as to what a contemporary arts festival might mean and achieve today.

Language⁶⁵ and TfD

The issue of indigenous versus imperialist language is vastly debated across scholars within the arts, and is something that was of great importance and interest to this research. According to the editors of the influential book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature*, “language becomes [under colonialism] the medium through which a hierarchal structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of ‘truth’, ‘order’ and ‘reality’ become established.” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003, p.7)⁶⁶ Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah had earlier reflected on the politics of this dynamic in his speech on the advent of his country’s attainment of independence, *Ghana is Born* (1957), stating, “the use of European languages [is] one of the problems compromising the freedom, equality and independence of African countries.” (Botwe-Asamoah, 2001, p.747)

Although French is the coloniser’s language in Rwanda (following the country’s occupation by Belgium in 1916), the proliferation of English as a ‘business’

⁶⁵ Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, ‘African Literature in European Languages: Implications for the Living Literature’, *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 31, no. 6 (July 2001): 746-763, p.748 – “Language... is the essential instrument of social cohesion that provides a community of people with the understanding of their reality.” (p.748)

⁶⁶ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths & Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, (Routledge, 2003), p.7

language across contiguous areas, and the widespread acceptance of English in Rwanda in the twenty-first century, means that issues of linguistic hegemony, and how not to duplicate this as a writer in situ, are important to this thesis. I use Hope Azeda herself as a prime example in this scenario. Azeda was born to Rwandan parents in Uganda, who had fled there as a result of rising ethnic tension between Hutu and Tutsi communities. Being born in Uganda meant that the language Azeda would have been brought up with would have predominantly been English, considering that to be the main language spoken there across the latter half of the 20th century. Azeda had always longed to return to Rwanda, a country she had been brought up to think of so fondly as a place of beauty, as somewhere that many of her relatives adored, and as “a place she called home despite never having lived there.” (Holocaust Memorial Day Trust)⁶⁷ In 1998, Azeda followed her dream of returning to Rwanda, a place that was no longer marked by beauty, but instead was suffocating with grief and tragedy post-genocide. Having grown up speaking English, Azeda placed herself within an environment in which the English language was scarce; Kinyarwanda and French remained the *lingua franca* in post-genocide Rwanda. Nevertheless, English was becoming more prevalent and influential, partly as a result of the victory of the Anglophone Rwandan Patriotic Front and its leader Paul Kagame, and partly thanks to the influx of Rwandan refugees many of whom had been in the same position of exile in neighbouring English-speaking countries as Hope Azeda. Inevitably, English began to bleed across the country’s borders into Rwandan culture. The complex relationship between European countries and languages and their colonial subjects (Uganda was, of course, Anglophone because it was occupied by Britain until 1962; Tanzania the year before) unavoidably places

⁶⁷ Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, ‘Hope Azeda’, *Holocaust Memorial Day Trust*, <<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/hope-azeda/>>, (accessed 15th May, 2017)

English alongside the cultural hegemony of other European powers, in particular France and Belgium who enforced French as a dominant language in the region, which forces scholars and artists to remain cautious towards the topic of language for that very reason; European languages reinforce the sense of dominance and hegemonic interference across Rwanda and neighbouring countries.

In *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theatre* Brian Crow and Chris Banfield contend that native language assures a cultural identity, asserting that owning and utilising an indigenous language must secure a sense of self-worth and determination. (Banfield & Crow, 1996, p.76) Although Rwanda is somewhat unique in that English was imported primarily from other African states, there are numerous examples of how it became an imposed language upon natives of various African communities and countries. This was further expressed in a range of colonial measures, including enforced Christianity – i.e., renaming people with Anglicised names, forcibly taking children into Christian children’s homes to save them from becoming ‘savages’, etc. – as a route by which African populations became stripped of their own identity. Even “traditional forms of worship became questionable through European influence.” (Byam, 1999, p.4) Robin Horton elaborates:

With the advent of the twentieth century...Europeans came to be seen as symbols of power, and Christianity itself came to be seen as part of a larger order, comprising Western education colonial administration, commerce and industry, with which everyone had henceforth to reckon. (Nunn, 2010, p.147)⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Nathan Nunn, ‘Religious Conversion in Colonial Africa’, *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings* 100, (2010): 147-152, p.147

Of crucial importance in the present context, Christian missionaries also used indigenous African forms of performance as a mechanism of instruction, particularly the method of story-telling as “a tool for the domestication of the African” (Byam, 1999, p.4)⁶⁹ to infiltrate African culture with Christian teachings. This meant that community ritual and local theatre practice was gradually impregnated with tropes and interpretations of theatre from the West. Considering this style of theatre to be aimed towards “social order and the glorification of man”, it was ideally suited to the objective of ‘education’ of colonised subjects during the colonial period and beyond. (Byam, 1999, p.4)

The Voice of the Playwright

Some of this colonial subjection (Fanon, 1967, p.18/19)⁷⁰ is still damagingly repeated in some of the ‘educative’ practices of Tfd, and it has become evident with some post-colonial writers – such as Badal Sircar – being forced to resist telling their own stories in their own languages, with the English language being substituted as the common language for educated, post-colonised individuals. (Banfield & Crow, 1996, p.7/8)⁷¹ Sircar suggests, “To us, it [English] is not a neutral language. It is associated with the British imperialist rule over our country” (quote from Badal Sircar, unpublished manuscript, 1988, in Banfield & Crow, 1996, p.7/8), and continues to

⁶⁹ L. Dale Byam, *Community in Motion: Theatre for Development in Africa*, (CT: Bergin and Garvey), 1999, p.4

⁷⁰ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, (Pluto Press, 1967), p.18/19 – “Every colonized people – in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country’s cultural standards. He becomes white as he renounces his black-ness, his jungle. In the French colonial army, and particularly in the Senegalese regiments, the black officers serve first of all as interpreters. They are used to convey the master’s orders to their fellows, and they too enjoy a certain position of honour.” (p.18/19)

⁷¹ Chris Banfield & Brian Crow, *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theatre*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.7

assert that logically, one should be thankful for the imperialist tongue, since “this language has been a window to the wide world”. (Sircar in Banfield & Crow, 1996, p.7/8) The phrase ‘window to the wide world’ could perhaps provide explanation as to why playwrights and artists such as Wole Soyinka and Derek Walcott actively ‘chose’ to write in the imperialist tongue, “forging distinctive and often strikingly powerful styles of English.” (Banfield & Crow, 1996, p.8), and again, offers us an explanation as to why English may be viewed as a ‘business’ language in the sense of providing the means of cultural transaction and exchange.

This could also offer an explanation for the approach taken by Hope Azeda’s theatre company Mashirika, who use multiple languages within their performances. Although they pride themselves on their fundamental language being art itself, using such to “translate the language of loss into a poetic vision of desire.” (Blair, Huff Post, 2017)⁷², the company are renowned for engaging in international conversations and collaborations that enable dynamic and important relationships between Rwanda and the rest of the English-speaking world. Perhaps in Mashirika’s hands, English isn’t and shouldn’t be seen as a negative reminder of former colonial times, and instead should be recognised as an opportunity to make and maintain national and international connections. Nevertheless, the legacy issues that remain intrinsic to the English language makes it unavoidable to consider in light of my own theatre practice.

⁷² Brent Blair, ‘Africa’s Hope For Us’, *Huff Post*, (December 2017), <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/africas-hope-performance_b_1897854?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xILmNvbS8&gucce_referrer_sig=AQAAAMraexddGk0Th1_MhNP1xc-U5pyngVsHHAyApnb9tgFEh6gY9V2jR9MwzQUrRNC22mInsC6T_R_sjcg6AgC4alFdBv6RpfuI0FDCVNDcu6G072vuM0ONlcA7zL7vpuHfIVz869WL4QIyMVb2ooBngMRN4ZgEHZgYPMzDubTRK5Qv>, (accessed 15th May, 2019)

The word ‘choice’ here comes with multiple complexities which may encourage us to problematise the nature of ‘choice’ when adopting the colonialist tongue. Botswe-Asamoah in ‘African Literature in European Languages: Implications for the Living Literature’, makes an interesting remark about one’s ‘choice’ of language, in suggesting “the adoption of European languages as national languages in African societies is a measure of convenience, arising out of colonial experiences, and not a logical response to the truth of the African situation.” (Botswe-Asamoah, 2001, p.750) In turn, we can assert the parallel to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, where, “Caliban [is] forced to use the language of his oppressor” (Duckett)⁷³, meaning Caliban paradoxically uses Prospero’s own spell-giving nature to hasten his own oppression. This argument, therefore, comes closer to the position of Fanon, where speaking the language of the colonist was indeed a source of immense trauma for the oppressed colonial subject, and being raised to the standard of the ‘mother country’ intensifies the need for the subject to obey their masters’ orders. As Ghanaian novelist Awoonor argues, an African writer could – like Caliban – convert an (enforced) European language into “an internalized weapon of our self-assertion...to liberate ourselves from the stranglehold of Western cultural structures.” (Awoonor, quoted from *Tradition and Continuity in African Literatures*, in Botswe-Asamoah, 2001, p.750) This hegemonic, restrictive and violent process is something that the UAF tries to redress, where all countries are encouraged to perform in their native

⁷³ Katharine Duckett, ‘Unreliable Histories: Language as Power in *The Tempest*’, *Shakespeare On Tor.com*, <<https://www.tor.com/2015/03/23/unreliable-histories-language-as-power-in-the-tempest/>>, (accessed 15th April, 2018) – “Prospero teaches Caliban to speak his language, but never gives him access to his books. There is no indication that Miranda ever sets her hands on these fabled tomes, either: Prospero controls the reality of both Caliban and Miranda through language and stories, giving them no other means of education or perspective ... and knows that the way to destroy Prospero is through his books, telling Stefano and Trinculo to burn them before they kill him.”

tongue, creating a plurality of response in the audience where different pockets of people comprehend one, two or more of the spoken languages used in the performances.

There is something to be said for the debate that the coloniser language creates concerns towards the ethics and efficacy of Tfd, particularly when focusing on this practice within African countries. If Tfd is seen as a tool for social and educational change, we therefore return to the predicament as to whether through imperialist rule, Tfd – using the language and vocabularies of the former oppressor – can provide its intended transformative result. During the colonisation period across Africa, native languages were “relegated to second place, and to an extent inferiorised and degraded.” (Losambe & Sarinjeive, 2001, p.95)⁷⁴ However, recent developments in pedagogical approach, educational systems, and across theatre practice hold out the prospect that drama might be used as a way in which to assert and reinforce indigenous languages to “enhance communal development.” (Losambe & Sarinjeive, 2001, p.96) If one aim of this approach to Tfd is to restore the power and value of native languages, then it would seem likely that this might lead to the further intended outcome of transformation, and its efficacy is seemingly well established.

Ultimately, what we see now, especially in the diverse practice celebrated at UAF, is a greater emphasis being placed on the ‘language’ of art itself, rather than focusing on individual languages and the barriers and oppressions they carry within them. Azeda’s main motto for the UAF is exactly that: that all sorts of people must come together to speak the ‘language’ of art, and I think that raises an important and

⁷⁴ Lokangaka Losambe & Devi Sarinjeive, *Pre-Colonial and Post-Colonial Drama and Theatre in Africa*, (New Africa Books, 2001), p.95

crucial message going forward in using TfD practices to make a change within the community.

The Language of Dance⁷⁵

An instructive diversion here is to recognise the universality of the language of gesture, and more importantly, in relation to the UAF, dance: “One need only recall that dance needs neither common race nor common language for communication; it has been, and remains, a universal means of communication.” (Welsh-Asante, 2010, p.7). Dance throughout Rwanda is used as self-expression, as a way of instilling values and uniting generations across the culture, (Mbabazi, 2018)⁷⁶ as a way of communicating between groups and individuals, or, as Edmondson identifies, as a way of “courting”, using the “medium of dance as an opportunity to flirt and convey their interest.” (Edmondson, 2018, p.99) Dance and song is often used in performances when “language no longer works as a container for the violence being addressed.”, to “prompt an otherwise unspeakable emotive response to [the] testimonies, and in a way, de-authorize the dramatic text.” (Montei, 2011, p.89) It is important, however, that we recognise that there is also a ‘politics’ at play within Rwandan dance culture, with messages of unity and communal expression becoming akin to propaganda; in fact, Rwandan performance has a more conflicted and repressive history than the standard narrative perhaps now suggests.

⁷⁵ Breed, 2008, p.33 – “Grassroots theatre embodies nationalist slogans of reconciliation through text, song, and dance proclaiming that Rwanda is one culture with the same language.”

⁷⁶ Donah Mbabazi, ‘Rwandan traditional dance: A firm grip on culture’, *The New Times*, <<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/lifestyle/rwandan-traditional-dance-firm-grip-culture>>, (accessed 30th August, 2018)

Of relevant interest here is the traditional Rwandan ballet form, which identifies as one of the main pillars of Rwandan culture. The *Intore* dance – loosely defined as warriors/leaders or ‘chosen ones’ – is heavily based in preparations for battle, defining strength and dancing the “dance of Heroes” (Kabiza Wilderness Safaris, 2017)⁷⁷ According to Breed, “Intore dancers...are the pride of Rwanda...Dance is frequently cited in Rwanda as an example of the sharing of a single, homogenous culture among Hutu, Tutsi and Twa – the source of a common heritage from which all Rwandans can draw equally.” (Breed, 2014, p.53) The idea that the dance form is intrinsic to communication across African culture – and indeed other cultures around the world – perhaps suggests how and why the dance-based pieces at the UAF were well received, proving theatre and dance to be a great “vehicle for dissemination” (Breed, 2014, p.55). However, for fear of perpetuating propagandistic ‘tourist’ information, it is imperative here that we shine a critical lens on Breed’s assertions. The *Intore* dancers – and indeed the Rwandan ballet as a whole – traditionally sang the praises of the ruling (Tutsi) minority during pre-colonial times, thus reinscribing the social divisions between Hutu and Tutsi communities which re-emerged during the genocide. Just as the *Griot* (see Schulz, 1997)⁷⁸ praise-singers were unofficial propagandists for the ruling classes in West Africa, or the numerous bands and troupes who provided cultural legitimacy for Mobutu’s repression of rival ethnic groups in post-colonial Zaire, the *Intore* dancers – whilst no

⁷⁷ Kabiza Wilderness Safaris, ‘Rwanda – Home of some of the Best Cultural Dances and Music in Africa’, *kabiza.com*, <<https://kabiza.com/kabiza-wilderness-safaris/rwanda-home-of-some-of-the-best-cultural-dances-and-music-in-africa/>>, (accessed 30th August, 2018)

⁷⁸ Dorothea Schulz, ‘Praise without Enchantment: Griots, Broadcast Media, and the Politics of Tradition in Mali’, *Africa Today*, Vol. 44., No. 4., (1997): 443-464 – “In the past, *griots* played an important role – as public speakers, family historians, and musicians – in lending legitimacy to the rule of various kings and chiefs.” (p.443)

doubt offering a ‘common heritage’ – reinforced political implications of social divisions that permeated African culture and defined Rwanda’s genocidal legacy.

With the above in mind, it is important to understand where a festival such as the Ubumuntu Arts Festival sits within an ethical framework. Considering the issues of indigenous vs imperialist languages, each individual participant at the festival was encouraged to communicate in the most appropriate way for their performance, whether that be through speaking their native tongue, or performing through physical gesture and dance. It is interesting that most performances did chose to engage in an English-speaking narrative, leading us to question whether their history of colonisation inflected the choice, or the wish to appeal to ‘strangers’. I was concerned at taking an English-speaking performance to a country that was once dominated by countries including – but not exclusive to – the UK, and whether or not my performance would land within the aesthetics of celebration and ‘togetherness’ pioneered by Azeda. I would contend that the Festival successfully allowed each individual to explore their individuality, whilst encouraging the resounding theme of resilience and unity. The UAF appears to have established a successful means in which the issues of language, freedom, and the disputed role of the stranger seem to be relegated in favour of ‘art for the sake of humanity’.

Chapter Three: The Creation and Making of *Thirteen Reasons Why Not*

“... limitations create freedoms and breed creativity.” (Graham & Hoggett, 2009, p.7)⁷⁹

Introduction

The tone of this chapter will see a diversion towards analysing practical work in relation to theories and devising techniques researched throughout the project. It will first seek to analyse initial research and development stages, in order to examine how group work translated into working one-on-one, and subsequently enabled me to get closer to answering questions of the ‘communicability’ of British experience and narrative in a pan-African festival context. This chapter will also see a development of working heavily within physical theatre which speaks a language of gesture and movement, into a dialogue-based piece, and will examine the difficulties of creating a narrative that will deliver a ‘universal’ message. I will analyse various devising techniques and dramaturgical approaches used in this project to create theatre that sought to add to the dialogue surrounding the idea of rehabilitation for an environment which foregrounds social justice, and the theme of resilience was at the forefront; this encouraged my work to respect the legacy of trauma that is pertinent within a post-conflict area such as Rwanda, and subsequently will see this chapter examining how my work surrounding a very specific, but international conversation can add to a dialogue surrounding pain and suffering. It is important to note too the great deal of work that went into conducting research-based workshops with young

⁷⁹ Scott Graham & Steven Hoggett, *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*, (Routledge), 2009, p.7

people, in order to gain important participation necessary towards the making of *Thirteen Reasons Why Not*.

“A successful R&D week is as much about what doesn’t work as what does.”⁸⁰

Heart & Horizon was developed as a foundation to our Arts Council application, and to create the groundwork for the working, professional theatre company environment I wanted to foster. The vision of the company was to create theatre surrounding issues that are close to the ‘hearts’ of young people, and subsequently adding to and engaging in important global conversations.

The work of Augusto Boal was key to our research and development, not least for his emphasis on creating theatre with both actors and non-actors alike, but also for the fundamental paradigm of Theatre of the Oppressed (TO). As a model that is “about acting rather than talking, questioning rather than giving answers, analysing rather than accepting” (Boal, 2005, p.xxii)⁸¹, TO is used globally with its multiple degrees (Belingardi, 2013, p.41)⁸² [See Figure 1: The Tree of Theatre of the Oppressed] that emerged from the initial practice of searching for dialogical forms within theatre. This model of practice encapsulates the shared desire of the festival

⁸⁰ (<https://www.insaneroot.co.uk/single-post/2017/08/13/Research-Development>), (accessed 27th July, 2018)

⁸¹ Augusto Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors (translation by Adrian Jackson)*, (Routledge: London & New York), 2005, p.xxvii

⁸² Chiara Belingardi, ‘Inclusive Planning through the Theatre of the Oppressed’, *Planum. The Journal of Urbanism*, No. 72, Vol. 2, (2013), p.41

we were to take part in, in using “theatre as a force for change.” (Boal, 2005, p.xxvii). The spread of TO is evident through the work of ASHTAR Theatre in Palestine, in which the model has been pioneered as a democracy-building tool used frequently to enable a company which stands in a vastly politically driven and devastated country,

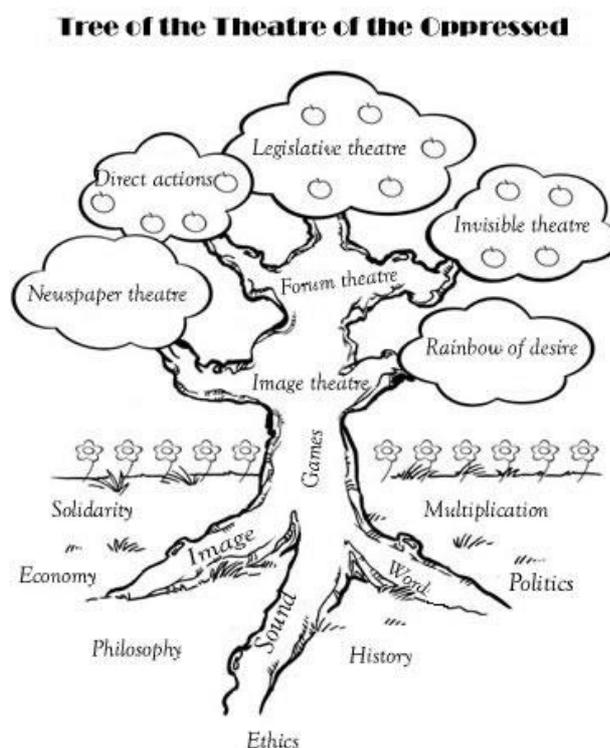


Figure 1: Tree of the Theatre of the Oppressed

to “stand[s] as an agent of change”, “promot[ing] an interactive dialogue and commitment for change within the Palestinian society.” (ASHTAR Theatre)⁸³

Theatre academic Alison Oddey summarises the necessity of Boal’s work in her book *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*: “Boal’s methods of working are useful for any group devising theatre. They enable an exploration of individual and group dynamics, relationships between people, sensitivity, trust, giving and taking, and listening skills.” (Oddey, 2013, p.175)⁸⁴ Much of Boalian

⁸³ ASHTAR, ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’, www.ashtar-theatre.org, <<http://www.ashtar-theatre.org/theatre-of-the-oppressed.html>> (accessed 19th August, 2018)

⁸⁴ Alison Oddey, *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*, (Routledge), 2013, p. 175

practice is used in social justice contexts (also practiced by Azeda via Mashirika Performing Arts), and so creating trustworthy and “giving” relationships as a company was key towards my work in understanding the politics and ethics of building an effective ensemble based piece for a social justice theatre festival.

Devising Physical Theatre

“Devising theatre can start from anything.” (Oddey, 2013, p.1) and it was often the freedoms inherent in these processes that proved difficult for Heart & Horizon. Nevertheless, “When we create material that doesn’t seem to work, we come closer to finding out where the piece is going”. (Orti, 2014, p.11)⁸⁵ In our initial research and development phase we often tried and tested various devising exercises, such as that of RashDash’s ‘Under Over’ technique (National Theatre)⁸⁶ or Frantic Assembly’s ‘Push and Pull’ (‘This Will All Be Gone’, p.21)⁸⁷, and began to establish what did and didn’t work for us as a new-found company: as movement director Litz Pisk explains, “physical experience informs your feeling and your mind.” (Pisk, 1998, p.9)⁸⁸ We adopted warm-up exercises from Frantic Assembly, to “gear [us] towards developing teamwork, stamina, physical confidence and focus.” (Digital Theatre Plus)⁸⁹ and mirror a professional working environment. This was designed to maintain connection within the body, and reinstate the mental focus required for our devising process. Our warm up exercises were the same every rehearsal: mobilising,

⁸⁵ Pilar Orti, *Your Handy Companion to Devising and Physical Theatre. 2nd Edition.*, (Lulu.com, 2014), p.11

⁸⁶ National Theatre Discover, ‘RashDash: Devising Masterclass’, *YouTube*, (2018), <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47QhuLMLDL8>>, (accessed 21st August, 2018)

⁸⁷ Frantic Assembly, ‘This Will All Be Gone’, *Frantic Assembly: A Comprehensive Guide for students (aged 14+), teachers & arts educationalists*, <<https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/resources/579/this-will-all-be-gone-resource-pack.pdf>>, (accessed 21st August, 2018)

⁸⁸ Litz Pisk, *The Actor and his Body*, (Methuen Drama, 1998), p.9

⁸⁹ Digital Theatre Plus, ‘A Frantic Assembly Warm Up’, *Digital Theatre*, (2016), <<https://www.digitaltheatreplus.com/education/collections/digital-theatre/a-frantic-assembly-warm-up>>, (accessed 21st August, 2018)

cardio, muscular, stamina and concentration.⁹⁰ Each exercise used the same musical track, which reinforced the “developing teamwork” I wanted to instil in rehearsals.⁹¹ As a company that “has garnered an international reputation for artistic innovation, and prolific, eclectic performance projects” (Crossley & Yarker, 2017, back cover)⁹², I additionally focused on some of the work of Stan’s Café, to inform our rehearsal process. In their chapter ‘Space and Time’, Crossley and Yarker argue that unlike the notion of physics, arts have the advantages of bending and breaking the rules. (Crossley & Yarker, 2017, p.156). Using this ethos, we employed their idea of marking out a specific area on the stage in which to work, which allowed us to focus more closely on the proximity the actors had between one another, enabling them to be forced into certain situations. When applying simple status exercises within this physical limitation, we began to unfold different dynamics between actors and the space around them.

Funding Processes

Gaining funding for my project was key to the development of my piece, and to my professional development as a theatre-maker (see Appendix 1: Arts Council England application, 2018, p.3) I began by setting up crowd funding which provided me with initial knowledge into the workings of a professional theatre company, followed by an application to Arts Council England for two weeks of R&D in Colchester. This was declined on the grounds of a large influx of applications. I

⁹⁰ [Please see attached rehearsal diaries for more information]

⁹¹ Jonnie Riordan (Frantic Assembly *Things I Know To Be True* associate director), Digital Theatre +, *A Frantic Assembly Warm Up*, (2016) – “If you use the same track each time you’re coming, it can become part of an event of your warm up, so the people taking part... sometimes you just have to put the track on and they know what’s coming. It can be celebrated. It can become a real team-orientated thing. They know what’s coming and it can be something they really enjoy.”

⁹² Mark Crossley & James Yarker, *Devising Theatre with Stan’s Café*, (Methuen Drama, 2017), back cover

subsequently sent out applications to The Rayne Foundation, Paul Hamlyn and Lipman Miliband, redrafting each time to match funding criteria. Despite being unsuccessful, it was an opportunity to refine and clarify our vision and values as a company, ensuring our mission of “creating theatre from the heart, that transcends across the globe” (Heart & Horizon)⁹³ was achievable and strategised.

Getting the opinions of young people

We received a commission from the Ubuntu Festival curator, Hope Azeda, to focus on the ‘importance of raising awareness towards mental health issues in young people’⁹⁴ and with my experience as a working practitioner within a youth theatre environment, I was aware of the need to consult with a focus group of the audience demographic. These workshops conducted were fundamentally designed to help with the conceptualisation of *Thirteen Reasons Why Not*. The young people helped to bring to light certain topics, content and forms that would later feed into the writing and creating process that then became the performance at the UAF. This participatory element towards the research aimed at being a reciprocal experience, in which both myself and my actors got as much out of the workshop as hopefully the young people equally did. As a key learning experience, these workshops acted as a way in which to begin my understanding of certain TfD methodologies in play, and whilst they primarily fed into the learning of what later would become *13RWN*, they played a huge part in my developing an understanding for shared knowledge and education, regardless of age, ethnicity, religion or any other external factor.

⁹³ Heart & Horizon, ‘Home’, www.heartandhorizon.com, <<https://www.heartandhorizon.com/>>, (accessed 21st August, 2018)

⁹⁴ Time to Change, ‘Children and Young People’s Programme’, <<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/about-us/what-are-we-doing/children-and-young-people>>, (accessed 1st August, 2018) - “1 in 10 young people will experience a mental health problem and, sadly, 90% of those young people will experience stigma and discrimination.”

Having engaged in conversations with Azeda about her own work with young people regarding the topic of mental health, I drew correlations between issues dealt with in Rwanda and the UK. Whilst I was aware that social media may not be as consuming in Rwanda, it could not be doubted that repercussions of using such interactive platforms had very similar effects, and subsequently I was encouraged to research towards how my work could speak to similar issues in Rwanda, and on a global scale.

Our first workshop was held at Stage Two, at Norwich Theatre Royal in March 2018, with the other at Colchester's Pauline Quirke Academy some weeks later. These workshops were designed to gain insight into where our physical theatre piece could develop, as the representative survey group were asked questions⁹⁵ throughout the workshops in order to gauge relevant feedback towards our piece. Within these workshops, the theme of mental health was considered in the context of social media⁹⁶, in order to attempt to draw correlations between my work and Azeda's current projects. It was concerned with the pressures and consequences young people face living in such a social media-saturated society, where the mental health impact manifested itself as depression and anxiety. After our session in Norwich, I refined my workshop plan so that our conversation topics were more particular to get more detailed results with our upcoming workshops at PQA Colchester. We subsequently used more source material and stimulus in our

⁹⁵ Have your opinions towards mental health in young people changed from this workshop?"/"What are your opinions on how physical theatre works to explore the theme of mental health in young people?"

⁹⁶ Lucy Nichol, 'How social media affects mental health in young people', The Metro, <<https://metro.co.uk/2018/05/15/how-social-media-affects-mental-health-in-young-people-7544674/>>, (accessed 30th July, 2018)

following workshops, and the feedback and research collated from this was rich; individuals were not afraid to be honest about the pressures they face when posting things on social media platforms. In response to one of the newspaper articles presented, one individual wrote: “People who really need support may be getting ignored; because of social media, everyone advertises having mental health issues because it’s a ‘trend’, so people can be ignored if misinterpreted as someone just following the ‘trend’.”⁹⁷

From Collaborative Physical Theatre to One-Woman Monologue

Considering such a pivotal shift from physical theatre to monodrama, I was encouraged to rethink how my new monologue piece wouldn’t discard or divert from any of the research I had previously done regarding use of gesture or issues of indigenous language.

Paul C. Castagno writes:

In daily life, the monologue serves a transactional rather than interactional function. In transactional speech, no conversation response is anticipated, as monologue pretends to be the last word. As a result, the monologue casts an air of authority, in spiritual realms and pulpits...or in more mundane offerings... The authority of monologue is related to its inherent resistance to interruption or disruption. As practical, everyday language, monologue possesses qualities that are static and planned; it knows where it is going, either in intent or ideology. (Castagno, 2012, p.197)⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Other comments towards the research included - “Social media put me through a very hard time to go to school and to even pop to the shop” and “For me, Instagram has more pressure because I try to maintain a good theme and I find myself comparing myself to others.”

⁹⁸ Paul C. Castagno, *New Playwriting Strategies: Language and Media in the 21st Century*, (Routledge, 2012), p.197

It is pertinent here to note Castagno's use of the words "cast an air of authority" and "transactional", both of which works in opposition to a large portion of research towards issues of power transfer and interactive methods of learning through TfD, as had previously been a point of focus in creating the original, collaborative piece. Likewise, the term "transactional" appears formulaic and impersonal, which – for a piece that attempted to be relevant to a large portion of an international audience – seemed problematic. This is largely where the juxtaposition of physical comedy, dramatic irony and self-delusion was utilised, in order to rid any issues of "authority", and reinstating the universality of gesture, in an attempt to offer an international audience points of connection with a piece of theatre from 'Middle England' that explores a serious and intricate issue through a form that is, at times, the opposite.

The thing about monologue is that it's immediate. It happens now. It happens here. And it is literally "im-mediate", in that there is ostensibly no mediation: nothing intervening between the character and the audience. That's why, in certain magical theatrical circumstances, it can seem to fill the whole stage.⁹⁹

The idea of the monologue form being "im-mediate" seems applicable to a subject matter such as mental health. The form was bringing a pertinent subject matter to the forefront of conversation, leaving both audience and actor alike little space to avoid the exchange, the solo-ness of the performer provoking more intimacy and focussed attention. The protagonist was in a position to build a relationship with the audience; offering her own insights, dictating a strong point of view, but drip-feeding the

⁹⁹ Lynn Truss, 'World of interiors', *The Guardian*, (3rd May 2005), <<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2005/may/03/theatre1>>, (accessed 1st August, 2018)

audience information that would later be exposed as the manifestation of vulnerability and human fallibility, and I hoped would be a point of recognition for the audience.

“The generality of our Audiences seem to be better pleas’d with it [tragicomedy] than an exact Tragedy.” (Rowe, 1709, p.10)¹⁰⁰

As Verma A. Foster puts it, “The tragicomedy is the basic pattern of human experience. It fits both the individual’s experience of life’s daily ups and downs and the human community’s broader perception of its own existence.” (Foster, 2017, p.1)¹⁰¹ It is such patterns within the tragicomedy that arguably inform one’s perception on their personal environment, and allows for a “human” connection to be built between audience and actor. Foster’s explanation of the tragicomedy is what allowed insight into my exploration of the human experience of suffering with mental health issues, prompting me to explore “life’s daily ups and downs”, with the constant juxtaposition of thought versus reality. The tragicomic form, therefore, was necessary to bleed into my piece in order to emphasise the “basic pattern of human experience”. The idea that the piece had even the smallest something(s) within it that audience members could relate to, reinforced the idea of the tragicomedy portraying “life’s daily ups and downs.”

Each of the 13 reasons that the protagonist was explaining, despite her believing it to be an addition to the list of ways to stay happy, was ultimately revealing her weakness and was contributing to cyclical self-abuse masquerading as portable therapy, demonstrated often through her physical misfortune. For example,

¹⁰⁰ Nicholas Rowe, *Some Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespear*, (The Augustan Reprint Society, 1948), p.10

¹⁰¹ Verma A. Foster, *The Name and Nature of Tragicomedy*, (Routledge, 2017), p.1

in Scene Three, the protagonist is explaining the joys of going to the gym, whilst physically harming herself through her constant failing during gym exercises.¹⁰² The physical comedy allowed for an avenue of the protagonist to undermine herself, and expose her self-defeating blindness to the tragedy and tensions that filled the gaps between claims versus tragedy, and the proximity to her having to face her fears. (see Wilson Knight, 2005, p.181)¹⁰³ By placing emphasis on creating physical comedy, I was able to put into practice some of the research I had previously conducted with regards to using the body. Having focused so closely on Boal's slow-motion running (Boal, 2002, p.70)¹⁰⁴ placed Francesca in a position of advantage, as when creating the shadow scene, she had to perform her part of the duet with an imaginary figure on her own. It was important that Francesca was able to conduct herself in a way that would mean her movements were precise and consistently reproducible so that her interaction with the shadow would be accurate, and furthermore, she was able to adapt to new staging, which was particularly important for our performance at the UAF.

¹⁰² [Please see Appendix 5: Thirteen Reasons Why Not (UBUMUNTU FINAL) script, p. 77-78]

¹⁰³ G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire*, (Routledge, 2005), p.181 – “A shifting flash of comedy across the pain of the purely tragic both increases the tension and suggests, vaguely, a resolution and a purification. The comic and the tragic rest both on the idea of incompatibilities, and are also, themselves, mutually exclusive: therefore to mingle them is to add to the meaning of each; for the result is then but a new sublime incongruity.”

¹⁰⁴ Boal, 2002, p.70 - In *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, Boal explains that “Changing our way of walking forces us to activate certain little-used structures, and makes us more conscious of the possibilities of our bodies.” (p.70) Exercises such as Boal's ‘Slow Motion Race’ enabled for this more conscious awareness of the ‘possibilities of our bodies’, and a detailed understanding of one's movements, allowing the actors within my company to be continually aware of both their own and others presence on stage. By intricately working on a shifting centre of gravity and alternating muscle structure, the group was forced into exaggerated moves that not only awoke their bodies, but their minds likewise, in a huge amount of focus and concentration that was necessary for such an exercise.

Filling the Stage

Using technology within this piece was not only a way of bringing additional environments and visual stimulators to the stage, but was a mechanism I used to tell more than one person's story within the protagonist's own. Considering the medium of the monologue to be "immediate", amalgamating other stories with the singular character's narrative seemed the best way to enhance the theatrical experience, to provide interlocutors and an aspect of challenge. A large portion of this technological input came from verbatim speeches from people I interviewed who self-define as suffering with mental health issues. They were asked the question "why are you sad?", and their responses were audio-recorded, allowing for new voices to join Francesca on stage, and enhance the 'filling of the stage' I referred to earlier. These recordings were seen not just as a reflection on her own mental wellbeing, but as a wake-up call, in a meta-theatrical moment where the protagonist found herself speaking to an unknown being. Her enforcement in responding to what was arguably not just other peoples' stories, but representations of her own feelings, was designed to encourage an audience to wonder if it was her own mind forcing her to confront suppressed feelings.

In 2008 newspaper article 'Multimedia in theatre: sound and fury signifying something', Imogen Russell Williams discusses what she calls 'have-your-cake' theatre; theatre that pushes boundaries of multimedia stage-craft possibilities, but never lets you forget you're in a theatre. Not all theatre performances are designed with this in mind, but considering the themes of the festival, it was pertinent that my piece pushed boundaries within the parameters of our given environment, in order to provoke dialogue exchange amongst cultures. The idea of pushing stage-craft

possibilities was something that became evident through the evolution of my ‘shadow sequence’, which depicted Francesca ‘fighting’ with an enlarged shadow of herself. This was designed to show a battle with her inner-self, highlighting the personal battles that many people face when suffering with mental health issues. Using comedy to overarch this piece – and this sequence in particular – could have been seen to demean or belittle the serious experience of dealing with mental illness. However, the juxtaposition against the harsh realities of what she was facing seemingly provided welcome light relief for the audience. Using humorous and obscure imagery – “I went on a date once with someone who made me make pterodactyl noises in the bedroom whilst they played the Jurassic Park theme tune.” (Durbin, 2018, p.11) – within a scene that reflected the loneliness of the character enabled the audience to see this “human” side to a character that initially seemed “inhuman”, by making such a crass statement as “Why don’t people just shut up about mental health?” (Durbin, 2018, p.2)¹⁰⁵

A bold, spectacular trick is played, eliciting a strong response – horror, surprise, delight. Simultaneously, the workings of the trick are revealed, forcing the audience to remain alert and on their toes. We respond, but we’re also made to ask ourselves why we’re responding, forbidden from sinking back into a gently smiling drowse of unthreatened appreciation. The experience of watching the play becomes intensely personal as the audience, in its turn, is placed under scrutiny.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Peter Brook in his book *There Are No Secrets* elaborates on the idea of an audience yearning to be interested in a performance as they wait for it to begin, hoping that the very first words, sounds and actions “release deep within each spectator at first murmur related to the hidden themes that gradually appear.” (Brooke, 1993, opening page)¹⁰⁵ With an opening line such as “I know you daren’t admit it. But I do ... Think back to the last time you scrolled through Twitter and DIDN’T see someone posting about their mental health.” (Durbin, 2018, p.2)¹⁰⁵, *Thirteen Reasons Why Not* allowed an audience to arguably be forced an audience to feel that “release deep within” that – hopefully – then retained an interest they’d hoped to establish from their attendance at the performance.

¹⁰⁶ Imogen Russell Williams, ‘Multimedia in theatre: sound and fury signifying something’, The Guardian, <<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2008/dec/15/theatre-multimedia-rupertgould-katiemitchell>>, (accessed 4th August, 2018)

The initial wording of “Why don’t people shut up about mental health?” allowed for Williams’ mentioned “bold spectacular trick ... eliciting a strong response”.¹⁰⁷ With such an introduction, the audience were “forbidden from sinking back into a gently smiling drowse of unthreatened appreciation”, and as the play unfolded, individuals were gently led into the harsh realities of the piece. By having a central focus on one character, it is possible for a deeper understanding of the solo person, getting to know them, understanding more about the way they think, and ultimately, allowing their journey to speak to you as your own.

¹⁰⁷ “So when you come out going ‘fuck mental health’, I think we’re all going... ‘hmmm, alright then, give us... hmmm.” (Osian England, 2018) / “I liked how at the beginning, it is like, you totally alienate her from the audience and then as it goes on, you realise that actually, you relate to her more and more as it goes on. And it’s like... you still also have that certain level of ‘this girls a little bit crazy’, but you do relate to her in a lot of ways, which is why we, I think, we start to get invested in her as it goes on.” (Chloe Atkinson, 2018)

Chapter Four: Debuting Original Work at the Ubumuntu Arts Festival, Kigali
Genocide Memorial, July 2018

Introduction

This chapter will provide an investigation of my own experience of performing at the Ubumuntu Arts Festival in Kigali in 2018, situating my work in an international context before a diverse audience constituency. I will evaluate the similarities and differences in performing to a UK audience versus an international audience, and seek to analyse the audience feedback the piece received. This chapter will scrutinise my work in relation to other performances at the festival, and consider what aligned the audience perspective with the context of performance. It will use first hand audience responses gathered from Twitter feeds and personal interviews, and use this feedback to examine the strengths and weaknesses of my performance. Therefore the textures of writing in this chapter move from the reflective, to documenting my intimate responses and the subjective nature of much of the comment. This chapter will pursue the investigation of how a theme such as mental health can be translated across the globe, and aims to provide an overarching view of my experience in making and delivering a piece of British theatre in the context of a Rwandan festival, performing mostly for an audience of the Great Lakes region in Africa.

UK performance in post-conflict Rwanda

Talent, craft, passion and a strong belief that the arts are a key contributor to social cohesion are all palpable at the Ubumuntu Arts Festival in Kigali, Rwanda. As a festival that prides itself on the notion of “I am because you are. You are because I

am. We are human together.”¹⁰⁸, the atmosphere at Kigali Genocide memorial for the three days between 13th-15th July 2018, was experientially uplifting and joyful; it was a place I could observe a community of international artists working towards a common goal. Of course, there were many factors impacting every artist’s time there, but the UAF with its hours of performance, music, dance and messages is an exciting and inviting place.

I was largely concerned as to how my piece would be received in Rwanda, with fears that perhaps other works would have minimised spoken language and use more physical action in order to speak to the diverse range of audience members. At this year’s festival, though the predominance of the work was from East and Central Africa – the direct circle of countries around Rwanda – there were fifteen different nations being represented throughout the course of the three days, ranging from Sweden to Kenya, Belgium to the DRC. Each performance had its own successes and pitfalls, but there seemed to be a recurrent theme that the spectacular physical virtuosity within some performances received the loudest and most apparent celebration. Because of the wider global range of performers there were also spectators there from the represented countries, as well as other international individuals who had been previously involved in the festival in past years, but had come back to continue the celebration of *ubumuntu*¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁸ Ubumuntu Arts Festival, ‘About’, www.ubumuntuartsfestival.com, <<http://www.ubumuntuartsfestival.com/About/>> (accessed 6th August, 2018)

¹⁰⁹ “In the context of the genocide against the Tutsi, Ubumuntu means those who selflessly rescued or risked their lives to help those in danger. They are the soul of humanity” quotation taken from the Genocide Memorial Centre, Kigali, 2018

I felt a huge amount of pressure to fulfil the requirements of ‘resilience’ and ‘art for the sake of humanity’¹¹⁰ at the Festival. Whilst I was sure that the theme of mental health, distinguishing shame and ignoring the warnings of distress, was applicable to many countries represented at the festival, it was the nature of the comedy that I was concerned wouldn’t translate. However, in engaging with other artists who had taken their ‘British’ humour to other countries I found some solace, as exemplified by the experience of comedian Eddie Izzard: “Humour is human; it’s not national. I didn’t set up that theory to match my political views, I just think it’s true.”¹¹¹ With this in mind, I hoped that the physical clowning, the exaggeration and word-play, the humour of unreliable narration and dramatic irony, and the overall ‘pull-back and reveal’ structure of my piece provided enough textures of comedy and thus spoke to the idea of humour being ‘human’.

UK Audience vs International Audience

Whilst noting the different reception conditions, this is not to label any feedback we received as disingenuous or to reject the encouragement, critique and citations of connection. Members of the audience were asked to tweet their responses to *TRWN*, and some of their reviews read: “British humour. My favourite. Good old self-deprecating humour. Such wisdom.” (Broadcaster, Nelly Kalu, Nigeria); “A beautiful piece about mental health in young people” (Radio presenter, Cheche Smith,

¹¹⁰ Ubumuntu Arts Festival, ‘Ubumuntu Arts Festival Returns, Binding Art to Resilience’, www.ubumuntuartsfestival.com, <<http://www.ubumuntuartsfestival.com/News/article/Ubumuntu-Arts-Festival>Returns-Binding-Art-to-Resilience>>, (accessed 6th August, 2018) – “The Ubumuntu Arts Festival shares stories of humanity from people from all walks of life and experience. This year, we explore the strength people hold within themselves to rise up again. Using art as a tool to share stories of resilience, the festival aims to plant the seeds of fortitude. I invite everyone to join us at the Kigali Genocide Memorial for three very special days of art, drama, dance and music.”

¹¹¹ Holly Williams, ‘Lost in translation: The fine art of doing stand-up abroad’, *The Independent*, <<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/comedy/features/lost-in-translation-the-fine-art-of-doing-stand-up-abroad-7999521.html>>, (accessed 24th August, 2018)

Nigeria); “#13ReasonsWhyNot a story that most of us can relate to” (Umutoni Fiona, Rwanda). It was thoroughly heartening to hear that the tragicomedy I had tried to deploy throughout the piece translated in a way that provided the audience with stories that could form an empathetic response. Considering this public nature of collecting feedback – i.e., through Twitter – it was unlikely that people were going to voice their criticisms of the piece. However, having conducted brief interviews with other members of the audience, I was provided with a few constructive criticisms that would help the communicability of the piece. Rwanda-based theatre worker, and member of the Festival team, Kurtis Dennison explained:

I felt that the show was building to her ultimate confession that it’s okay to not be happy and sometimes the things we do to try and make us happy ultimately make us unhappier. I think the audience could rest with this information a little longer before her conclusion. I think you can also make the conclusion a little more concise. I think that if you could even make her cleaning more precise as, more ‘self-care’ or taking the time you need to put it together, it may be able to almost stand on its own. (Kurtis Dennison, 2018)

The idea of ‘self-care’ for mental health patients is a huge aspect to ‘survival’, and I broadly agree it could have been given more focus; it alone could have stood as a transformative point, portraying the ultimate theme of looking after oneself and doing things in order to improve our mental wellbeing. Dennison’s analysis of ‘taking the time you need to put it together’ is an interesting remark, with both its literal visual implications, but also the psychological implications it maintains. This possibly suggests that not only was the character literally packing up her life on stage, but was also attempting to piece together her own mind, implying a cyclical nature to the piece, perhaps suggesting to an audience that her recollection of thoughts and objects

was a demonstration of her perseverance, showing the ever-relevant resilience of humanity. The subject of one's mental wellbeing is far more complex than simply categorising an individual as either 'happy' or 'sad', or suggesting that it's a cyclical notion, and the narrative of *TRWN*, attempted to scrutinise the breakdown of the emotional and physical costs to surrounding factors that impact ones' mental health. Perhaps, however, as Dennison alludes to in his suggestion of 'taking the time', the all too quick turnaround in the plot perhaps suggest that happiness is easy, and reads as a matter of ticking boxes in order to be 'okay'. The complexities of depression, anxiety and low-mood that were all focal contributors to this piece arguably cause the piece to lack insight into deep-rooted psychological problems that perhaps someone experiencing post-trauma may experience. From Dennison's response, we can argue that bracketing an individual as either 'happy' or 'sad' is far more de-meritorious than it is plausible, and perhaps becomes reductive and infantilising in making a too-broad attempt to speak to everyone, subsequently speaking to no one.

I additionally interviewed American singer-songwriter Alexander Star after the performance¹¹² to get further feedback from another artist; as Star often works internationally, and had been commissioned to work directly with young people in Rwanda for this Festival, I was interested in his response. It was pleasing to hear that he felt the story could translate across cultures. "That's the human experience" he stated, and continued that everyone in the amphitheatre could identify with the disconnect in the protagonist's public and private worlds. This was also hugely important for me, as I was able to connect my work with the motto of the Festival: "We are human together." Drawing upon correlations between Star's comments and

¹¹² [Transcript for post-performance interview with Alexander Star]

the slogans of the festival leads us to an important debate over the phrase-making that lay as foundations to the UAF. We must recognise here that ultimately, the humanitarian mottos of the Festival are seemingly marketing tools, and perhaps can be deemed as wishful-thinking. The hopeful notions that suggest art can heal humanity are impossible to ever be completely true, and whilst it retains its stance of promoting social cohesion, it is somewhat difficult to complete, in the Festival in which individuals are already attending because they believe the statements to be true. In *Performing the Nation: Genocide, Justice, Reconciliation*, Breed focused on how the use of the term “I am Rwandan” – used as a means of defiance in redefining ‘Rwandanicity’ – perhaps “link[s] to power relations associated with a particular period of precolonial history that communicates its meaning” (Breed, 2014, p.10). Making these false and somewhat damaging claims places emphasis on narratives that, in the case of ‘Rwandanicity’, connect to a traumatising period, or, in the case of the UAF, secures an audience with a false sense of hope. There are multiple things that will and can work in uniting humanity, and whilst art can be a contributing factor to this, it will never be able to completely heal a community¹¹³. It maintains itself as a foundation on which participants of the festival can produce work to, but we must recognise that ‘the human experience’ – as Star quotes – is subjective, and we must criticise work should it fall into a simplistic ‘yes or no’ compartment.

Global Performances

Dance is an integral part of most African expression, and my research notes recorded that the African audience were passionate about acknowledging and

¹¹³ Breed, 2014, p.3 – “the interplay between the arts for healing, post-genocide justice and development aid presents complex performances and performatives that are often contradictory of that limit the espoused objective of justice and reconciliation.”

rewording the array of impressive physical skills demonstrated across a number of performance. The DRC Street Dancers Crew, for example, created a dance –heavy piece that was based on the premise of *The Voice of the Voiceless*, and throughout there was a subtle recurring theme of how the protagonist fought the other members of the crew to stop them from being able to speak their minds. Their use of dance seemingly spoke an array of languages; no matter where you come from in the world, everyone seems to be able to speak the language of dance.

Kenya's *Too Early For Birds* from Histronauts was another addition to a long line of excellent performances at this Festival, however was not one that was heavily based in dance and physical movement. This piece used long-form narration combined with performed scenes to tell their story. This piece had a core narrator, whom the audience followed tirelessly, laughing at his jokes, audibly gasping at the moments of tension and every time the narrator broke out into call and response the sound from the audience filled the Kigali Genocide Memorial. This call and response seemingly resonated with the audience and the company continued to drip feed such a technique, throughout the piece. Jan Cohen-Cruz explains:

The “call-and-response” dynamic of engaged art brings a community together for both political and spiritual reasons. Political because it provides a way for a group of any status to participate in a public discourse about issues that affect their lives; spiritual because a purpose is embedded in the process and goal of such work that goes beyond material results and our day-to-day existence. Both the political and the spiritual provide models of how we live together, suggesting something bigger than our individual selves. (Cohen-Cruz, 2012, p.3)¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Jan Cohen-Cruz, *Engaging Performance: Theatre as call and response*, (Routledge, 2012), p.3

By using such a technique that arguably eradicated any political or spiritual barriers, Histrionauts were able to unite an audience, whilst creating “perfected social interaction.” (Farris-Thompson cited in Smitherman, 1986, p.109)¹¹⁵ If call and response has such a desired outcome as that outlined in Cohen-Cruz’ statement above, then the Kenyan theatre makers had implemented a technique of which contributed towards the Festival uniting humanity in arts, encapsulating a wholesome environment of ‘togetherness’.

Within the setting of the Genocide Memorial, we must recognise that *TRWN* did not necessarily completely fit. Whilst the theme of mental health was one that was sought to be discussed by other participants of the Festival – such as Mashirika Performing Arts Youth Company – my piece stood out as one that did not try to resonate with the topics of war and genocide. Of course, this was an active choice, in order to avoid cultural appropriation in producing a performance about a subject matter in which I was less than educated. The Festival aligned itself as regardless of what story each participant was trying to tell, or where you came from in the world, your art is just as important and relevant as anyone else’s. However, it became clear that issues that overtly stated something about war and/or genocide, translated on a larger scale to an audience. In turn, we should also acknowledge the obscurities in being at the Genocide Memorial centre every day. For international guests, such as myself, I deemed this considerably peculiar, considering us to be surrounded by the memories of the traumas the country faced, and to be watching pieces of theatre that continued to rehash these incidents. Additionally, considering research in previous

¹¹⁵ Geneva Smitherman, *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*, (Wayne State University Press, 1986), p.109

chapters into the issues of the damaging implications reimagining the past can have, added to the strangeness of being at the centre every day. This viewpoint may not have stood for all international members at the Festival, and maybe whilst the frivolities were subsided during the day, it simply became a place of recuperation for the evenings events. Perhaps it was different for locals, who see the 1994 genocide as embedded into the fabric of their history; we can't determine whether certain individuals may find it soothing to be at a place of remembrance and unity for what was an utterly broken country.

Conclusion

Though TfD may have been instigated as an instructional tool that was born from a conceited colonial hangover of the installation of approved behaviours, this thesis has alighted on methodologies that are less hierarchical and more participant-led, meaning that TfD has ethical potentiality in contemporary theatre. Through focus on the history of TfD, to the current approaches and techniques of Hope Azeda's Mashirika Performing Arts Company in Chapter One, this argues the value of TfD is now projected through careful understanding of a problem, enmeshing the artists with the concerns of the community, and working through dialogue rather than directives. The concern as to whether TfD – with the word 'Development' itself a problematic term – is recoverable from its history of paternalistic control, will remain a contested question beyond this thesis; its deployment to fragile post-conflict areas means that messages of 'salvation' are often motivated by economic and political positioning by Western governments. In seeing the UAF as the extension of Azeda's practice and philosophy, with examples of TfD initiated projects embedded in the schedule, we can see direct examples of the deployment of TfD methods in innovative ways, with the 'development' of this practice being Azeda's outputs and mechanisms of delivery, such as the live co-performance between Rwanda and USA in the B.R.I.D.G.E. project, where cultural hierarchies were flattened through the simultaneity of the practice, enabling a promotion of new communities learning and sharing across nations. With collaborations such as this as an example, and with Mashirika's desire to use methods such as image theatre and forum theatre to promote social change, this thesis is therefore able to answer the question of communicability, and suggests that TfD has progressed into a time where dialogues can become an open forum where perhaps dominant hegemony is a less relevant issue; using these methodologies, we

can begin to address the (post)colonial anthropophagism of past practices, and suggest proactive practices in order to move forward. In this context, Tfd becomes less about ‘intervention’, ‘participation’ and ‘conscientisation’”, and much more about engaging in international dialogues, educating and learning from a shared experience of humanity. (Ahmed, 2002, p.218)¹¹⁶

The key question in this thesis surrounded my concerns in creating a piece of theatre for post-conflict Rwanda, considering myself as a white British theatre maker. The artefact of making my new play at the UAF Festival 2018 demonstrates this as possible, given a supportive, plural environment, but an answer to how this is possible, and whether there is reproducibility to my practice as research experiment, remains tentative. The nature of the UAF was conceived as an ecosystem for participants to be learning from each other in reflexive dialogue, where the temporary community of festival audiences and the stacking of different textures of work alongside one another, are intended to diminish hierarchical stratification. Whilst there were conditions at play during the UAF that meant that the ideals of the Festival were not always as luminescent as Azeda’s descriptions or the glowing press coverage, I would firmly argue that the prioritising of reciprocity and the emphasis on shared humanity, fostered the conditions for a piece of theatre by a UK artist, to be well received, provoking laughter and warmly sympathetic response. Where artists can enter into specific environments such as the UAF, we are encouraged towards a future of peer to peer solution-making; perhaps one that eventually ‘make people feel as if reconciliation is a natural thing’.

¹¹⁶ Syed Jamil Ahmed, ‘Wishing for a World without ‘Theatre for Development’: Demystifying the case of Bangladesh’, *Research in Drama Education*, Vol. 7, No. 2, (2002): 207-219, p.218

It is hard to determine whether my work would have been so accepted outside the UAF, where the piece might have been considered as attempting to be educative and emulating the qualities of late capitalism. I turned in Chapter One to investigate TFD as a movement and as a practice, in order to understand and not replicate acts of cultural dominance, sublimation and hegemony, or utilise approaches that reinforce the idea that the West ‘know better’ and thus promote the stasis of ‘underdeveloped’ countries. As articulated in Chapter Three, I would argue that these profound notes of caution allowed me to write from a place which sought to critique such power structures, and by making my protagonist an unreliable narrator – a posturing figure of fun whose projected persona was increasingly paper-thin – my practice as research project aimed to expose the problematics of Western capitalist solutions to problems, rather than to valorise the standards of the Global North. However, this thesis concludes that even within the pluralistic exchange of the Festival, cultural dominance and the promotion of Western hegemony is something that an artist from the colonising nations cannot completely avoid. The recent history of the barbarism metered out to Africa, and the impact of colonisation and war, will continue to remain within Rwanda’s history, and still impacts upon conversations with the fellow practitioners and artists at the Festival.

This thesis acts as an addition to an ongoing body of research, but examining the work of Hope Azeda and Mashirika Performing Arts, we can say that turning to theatre in times of post-conflict was an important part of the therapeutic process for Rwanda, and theatre helped the nation to rebuild a sense of identity. As an addition to the UAF, *TRWN* acted in an important dialogue surrounding current themes, and subsequently sought to adhere to a wishful-thinking ecology that aimed to inspire

change for a proactive future. From this thesis, I would argue that it is possible to ‘Speak the Language of International Art’, and communicate a dialogue between communities within the right environment to harness such work. As animated by artists such as Azeda, and exemplified by community and youth performances at the Festival, Theatre for Development is on a path to prove itself as a successful method to “show that performing arts is not only for entertainment but also a tool for social transformation and source of employment.” (Mashirika)

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THIRTEEN REASONS WHY NOT

By Grace Durbin

(Script as performed at the Ubumuntu Arts Festival, July 2018)

LX: Blackout

PLAY VIDEO: Twitter Splurge.

PAUSE VIDEO: End of Twitter Splurge.

LX: Lights up.

Becca:

Unpopular opinion

(Beat)

Why won't people just shut up about mental health?

(Pause)

No. Really. Shut up about mental health. It's boring.

I know you daren't admit it. But I do, I admit that I don't care.

Think back to the last time you scrolled through Twitter and DIDN'T see someone posting about their mental health. PLEASE. All of us have bad days. But why does the entire world need to know about it?

You have to keep a PMA. A positive mental attitude. You know what they say, quitters never win, be a ninja not a whinger, either you run the day, or the day runs you.

You cannot hang out with negative people and expect to have a positive life. You can't let yourself go on that downward spiral. You can't let yourself give up. If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude. Don't complain. Cry a river. Build a bridge. Get over it.

PLAY VIDEO: List of 13 Reasons Why Not

PAUSE VIDEO: End of List.

There are 13 ways that I keep positive, 13 ways I have developed to make sure I stay happy, 13 reasons why not to be miserable, why not to be negative, why not to be defeated, why not to moan all the time. 13 reasons why not.

PLAY VIDEO: Slide 'Reason 1 - List-Making'

PAUSE VIDEO: End of Slide.

Welcome to Reason Number 1. You run the day or the day runs you, and that is why I am on top of everything from the moment that I get up, (*checks watch*) 8 hours 32 minutes ago, to the moment I go to sleep. Planning. Scheduling. Organising. Order.

Now, the best list breaks your day down into small achievable tasks. So, here we are, arrive at the amphitheatre, tick. Buy a drink, tick. Drink the drink, tick. Storm the stage, tick. Tell you about the 13 reasons, tick. Introduce you to list-making - see what I did there. Tick, tick, tickety-tick.

The best lists are also obviously colour-coded, cross-referenced with thematic recurrences, and have a searchable index, so there is a certain amount of commitment involved, hence why the best lists are also composed the night before, or if you want to get ahead, a couple of days before, or if that begins to crowd in on writing the list for those days, then you might want to start a week before, and then of course you must remember to put the list-writing on your list, and then you probably should put a reminder on your list to make sure you remind yourself to put list-writing on your list. I find that this can keep me occupied all day. Sometimes whole days can go past and I have barely looked up from my lists, must remember to put 'look up from list' on my list. Who has the time to worry, when you have so much to do!

Becca: But if all that's starting to sound like too much like work, like a job, [*Shudder*] then it's time to have some fun. The key to staying happy is to put off getting a 'job' for as long as possible and instead... shop!

PLAY VIDEO: Slide 'Reason 2 - Bidding Wars'

PAUSE VIDEO: End of Slide.

Becca: It's not a question of spending lots of money. No. A bargain is the real thrill. Only amateurs use actual shops now. The really clever people, like me, go online.

And you know where all the action is? Ebay. Bidding wars. Real-life clothes fight, without the physical pain.

Concentrating on the laptop.

Some idiot has just tried to outbid me! So, it's a little over my limit, and I might already have one... alright, maybe ten unicorn onsies... But I like a little magic in my life.

The obsession started with a pair of shoes, then some electrical equipment, a guitar shaped bathtub – things did take a turn for the weird.

Suddenly you find you're in a fierce bidding war against someone for a Dorito that's shaped like Donald Trump. There's 15 seconds to go. 5. 4. 3. 2...

Clicks to place final bid and win item.

What do you mean 'insufficient funds'?! It's only £265! Don't do this to me! Don't... NOOOO!!

LX: Blackout

PLAY VIDEO: 'Everything'

CUE: ... I just wish I could be content and realise that, after all, I am not that much entitled to be sad at all.

PAUSE VIDEO.

LX: Spot centre

Becca looks concerned and confused at the abrupt change of lighting. She investigates the small space that is the spotlight, and begins talking.

Becca:

Does this mean I have to say something now? What, like, to respond to that?

Can't I just move on? The next reason is one of the best.

(Pause)

Ok, fine, umm...

I appreciate what they're saying. And it's unfortunate that anyone would feel that way.

But I still don't get it. Why can't they just try a bit harder. Happiness isn't given, it is earned.

Have they tried my thirteen reasons?!

LX: Cross-fade lights up

PLAY VIDEO: Slide 'Reason 3 - Go To The Gym' → SQ: 'Physical' - Olivia Newton-John

PAUSE VIDEO: End of 'Physical'

Becca sets herself up on an imaginary treadmill, starts with walking, then begins jogging, and so forth. Throughout the speech, she falls off at regular intervals, gradually injuring herself more and more as she continues.

Becca:

It may seem obvious

But going to the gym is great

(Beat)

It's scientifically proven to make you feel so.

I have my routine

And it's the same every time.

Start with a run

Get all those happy mood juices flowing.

She falls. Gets up. Finds her feet again. Continues running.

I walk through the front door at exactly 6:30 every morning

I'm great friends with all the people who work here.

And it's either Sharon or Mick on the desk.

I always greet them with an upbeat “Hellooo!”. [*Pause.*] I guess some people are not really morning people.

Falls again. Repeat above.

Spots a ‘friend’ in the distance.

HEY! HEY, JACK! HEY!!

Goes unnoticed.

That’s just Jack.

He’s got his headphones in.

I’ll catch him on the way out.

Falls again. Recognises that she’s hurt herself this time. Goes to start lifting weights.

Struggles throughout.

Me and Jack workout together sometimes.

He spots for me when I’m doing the old bench press.

Not much of a conversationalist.

But a great guy.

We’re tight.

She tries to lift a heavy bar, falls and gets trapped beneath

I’m all good.

Pain is progress.

No pain no gain

And all that.

Jack? Jack? Sharon? Mick? Anyone? Anyone...?

PLAY VIDEO: Slide ‘Reason 4 - Food Glorious Food’ → SQ: ‘Food Glorious Food’

PAUSE VIDEO: End of ‘Food Glorious Food’

Becca:

Reason Number Four: Food.

Or sometimes, as I like to call it...

POST GYM SNACK.

Step one: first take a large baguette. Then slice it down the side, like so, and set it to one side.

Step two: go to your refrigerator and you will need some butter. Next, find some ham, some cheese, jam, falafel, melon, mayo, some ketchup, extra large gherkin, fish juice, an unripe banana peel, paprika, ample pork scratchings and some chocolate spread.

Apply these all liberally to the bread. In stripes or blobs, you can get creative.

Then step three: allow the concoction to rest for five minutes, stand back and admire your work, then dive in.

Becca begins to eat her sandwich

Ooumphmm, tell me this isn't happiness?

Negative feelings? Who has time for negative feelings, or any feelings at all? Just keep eating your feelings, keep swallowing them down. Cover all the mirrors, buy everything with an elasticated waist, always stand at the back of group photographs, or stand near people that are even fatter than you, and filter the hell out of all your selfies... that is the way to be happy, my friends.

Becca puts down her sandwich after feeling unwell.

I don't feel good I- I can't feel my face. Throats dry. Can't. *[Gasping for air]* Help.

LX: Blackout (CUE: Becca fainting to the floor)

PLAY VIDEO: 'Great British Bakeoff'

CUE: ... "A competitive programme, AND they make yummy stuff."

PAUSE VIDEO.

LX: Spot centre

Becca:

Again? Really? How many of these things do I have to do?

(Pause)

Look, I know I'm guilty of it too. I've also felt like my life is falling apart.

But the concept of sadness is still...

Mm never mind.

LX: Cross-fade light up.

PLAY VIDEO: Slide - 'Reason 5 - Find The Love Of A Good Animal'

PAUSE VIDEO: End of Slide.

Becca:

One of the best ways of keeping happy is to care for others. But not other people. God no. People are miserable, rude, and far too demanding. What we all need is something cute and furry in our lives.

PLAY VIDEO: Images of Becca with various animals (PAUSE VIDEO: when pictures end)

I'm just a pets sort of person. I am that person who instantly connects with animals, everywhere I go, I'm like an animal magnet. I am the pet-whisperer. We are tuned in to each other's vibrations. It's a gift.

Reason Number Five: Get yourself an animal. The local pet shop asked me to stop coming by when I over-squeezed a guinea-pig, and the dogs-home put me on a watch-list.

But now I have Mirabelle and everything is different. I inherited Mirabelle. She came into my life by good fortune. By my neighbours failing to lock the door. It wasn't my fault that Mirabelle managed to get out of her cage, with a little help, and wandered

across to my balcony, and then just, settled herself right down here with no problem at all, after just a week of being tied to the radiator.

Becca pulls out an iguana toy.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me introduce you to Mirabelle, my new pet iguana. Look at how cute she is? How sweet she is. Kisses for mummy. So, she's a little feisty, a little spirited, aren't all the best creatures the ones with personality? Ow. Mirabelle. No. But she's really very good-natured. Stop biting me. No. Mummy's told you about that before. Ow stop it. Mirabelle. You are showing-off in front of all these nice people. Honestly, she's really very lovely most of the tim- Owwww. You little –

Puppet drags Becca off.

Mirabelle, Mirabelle, come back! Come back! No. No. Not that way, no, that's your old - where you used to –

Sorry about that. Mirabelle has just been put on a five minute time out. Ah well, in the meantime, they've got a beautiful chinchilla across the hallway. Now there's an animal that looks great in a top hat.

LX: Light dim.

PLAY VIDEO: Slide - 'Reason 6 - Live Your Life Through Celebrities' → SQ: Justin Bieber - 'Love Yourself'

PAUSE VIDEO: End of 'Love Yourself'

Becca:

Dear Diary. Today I licked Justin Bieber's face. It was awesome. *(Pause)* The thing is in life, people take love for granted. I'd give an arm and a leg to have someone stake out in front of my house, deprive themselves of sleep for 12 hours, become almost hypothermic just to be able to say "Hi, I love you, I think you're really talented and cool."

Seriously. I would give Justin Bieber my arm and my leg if he asked.

I know my love is real because I've loved him right from when he released 'One Time' and 'One Less Lonely Girl', and they only started liking him from when he released 'Baby', which - HAH - is just, so standard!

I think he just need to get to know me - hence why, I licked his face, but it wasn't as weird as it sounds. I waited for him outside his hotel like usual and when he came out his security were being the feisty little bitches they usually are and when I went in for a hug and a kiss they pushed me away, and my tongue just sort of, got lost in the moment. Just something for me to remember him by until our next meeting!

PLAY VIDEO: SQ: Justin Bieber - 'Baby'

PAUSE VIDEO: End of 'Baby'

Dear Diary. Been a bit of a hard day. Everyone was hating on Justin on Instagram. He posted a really fit picture of him in a snapback and everyone was just being such haters! He can't do anything right. I felt really bad for him, so I sent him an encouraging message, but he hasn't replied. He probably hasn't read it yet.

PLAY VIDEO: SQ: Justin Bieber - 'One Less Lonely Girl'

PAUSE VIDEO: End of 'One Less Lonely Girl'

Dear Diary. Today, Justin's manager got me arrested, and supplied me with a restraining order. I swear that guy has got it in for me! And to top it off, they put me back in the same cell as Fat Michelle! Getting so sick of having to see her face every damn week!

PLAY VIDEO: Slide - 'Reason 7 - Drink Your Problems Away'

Becca:

So, you've had a bad day. Your boss reprimands you. Another bit falls off your car. You have a fight with your boyfriend. Well, here, let's have a little drink. It's like seeing an old friend. *(To glass)* Hello old friend. It's *so* nice to see you again.

Reason Number Seven not to feel sad. Drink. Drinking. Lots of drinks. A little drink in the middle of the day. If you want to have a really lovely afternoon, then why not bring your little drink forward to lunchtime? In fact. Scrap lunch. After all, eating is cheating! Breakfast? Start as you mean to go on, I say! Be consistent.

I tend to drink at home now, because last time I went out, all my friends were ready to leave by midnight, but not me. I know how to be happy. I thought I'd go to this new club I'd heard all about. On a boat. A boat on the river. One big party on a boat. So, I went down to the bankside, saw the flashing lights, the loud noises, these amazing orange decorations everywhere, and took myself up the gangplank and went looking for the action. *(Pause)* I spent two weeks on that North Sea fishing vessel. It stank.

No. I've got to be good. I can't go too wild, because when I go too wild, I get too wild... with the men. I have a tendency to go for the wrong men, you see. Like, the cheeky ones. I've always loved the cheeky ones. I've got a thing for the moody ones. And the ones that are really arrogant. The ones with swagger. And the ones who ignore me. Who ghost me. I'm really into them. The unpredictable ones. The ones who walk away without an explanation. The ones that keep me wondering what it was that I did so wrong. The ones who never call. Don't call me. Don't call me okay. If you are continually chasing someone else, then you've little time to worry about feeling sad.

PLAY VIDEO: Slide - 'Reason 8 - Find Love In Other People'

PAUSE VIDEO: End of Slide.

Reason Number 8. People that you shouldn't. I went on a date with this one person who licked my teeth when we kissed. I went on a date with someone who made me make pterodactyl noises in the bedroom whilst they played the Jurassic Park theme tune. I went on a date with someone who was really attracted to short people, only I wasn't short *enough*.

Also reason number 8. People that you should. People leave behind. People that you should delete from your phone. People that you should block from your life. People

that you should lock the door to. People that you should lock your heart to. People you pour yourself into. People that will drain yourself out of you.

LX: Fade to blackout.

VIDEO: 'Lonely'

CUE: ... "How do you cure your loneliness when the only person you can rely on is yourself?"

PAUSE VIDEO: End of Slide.

LX: Spot centre.

Becca:

Stop this. Stop making me do this. It isn't getting us anywhere, and it's disrupting my flow.

(Pause)

This broke my heart, ok? I'll admit that.

LX: Cross-fade to flickering light in front of Becca's face.

PLAY VIDEO: Slide - 'Reason 9 - Watch Something Sad'

PAUSE VIDEO: End of Slide.

Becca:

Reason number 9. Watching something sad to make yourself feel better about your miserable, sad, lonely, pathetic life.

I know I'm sitting here pretty inconsolable right now, but believe me, once the tears subside, you will feel so much better.

Ugh, I mean, poor Kim. Imagine being in love and making one sex video that defines you for the rest of your life. Constantly being the worlds punching bag for being a little bit adventurous. I know Kanye has accepted her and loves her, but it can't be easy for them.

Look, I'm sorry. I thought I could keep up with the Kardashians, but I can't. Cue next track.

LX: Fade to black.

VIDEO: 'Goodbye'

CUE: ... I am sad because of a million reasons, but today you are the main one.

PAUSE VIDEO: End of 'Goodbye'.

LX: Spot centre.

Becca:

No. I'm not doing this. Not any more. Move on. Lights up.

LX: Cross fade to light up.

PLAY VIDEO: Slide - 'Reason 10 - Go Play In A Fantasy World' → SQ: Mario Kart Theme Tune

PAUSE VIDEO: End of song.

Becca:

Reason 10: playing the playstation.

Hour one. Minute twenty eight. Twelve opponents down. Eighty seven to go. This could be the day. Energy drinks stocked. Takeaway on route. Game. Set. Match.

Hour three. Minute fifty seven. Fifty nine opponents down. Twenty to go. I'm on my fifth energy drink and I devoured the takeaway in seconds. Some looney is stalking me to my right.

I KNOW YOU'RE THERE MATE. YOU'RE NOT GONNA GET ME TODAY.

I jump. I dive. I dodge bullets. Left, right and centre. I'm on fire.

Hour six. Minute forty three. Eighty eight opponents down. Eleven to go. I'm behind a tree. Waiting for the opportune moment. The mission: kill and conquer.

Hour nine. Minute three. Ninety six opponents down. Three to go. I've managed to stay pretty well hidden. Everyone else is killing each other, and seems to have forgotten about me.

Hour ten. Minute fifty one. Ninety eight opponents down. One to go. One to go until I am reigning champion. In the last forty eight minutes, I haven't moved an inch.

I edge out. Slowly, but surely. Ready to face my final battle.

PLAY VIDEO: Slide - 'Reason 11 - Go Into Battle'

PAUSE VIDEO: End of Slide.

Becca:

The only question remains: Who will survive?

LX: Light dim.

PLAY VIDEO: Shadow scene.

PAUSE VIDEO: End of Shadow.

LX: Light up.

PLAY VIDEO: Slide - 'Reason 12 - Set Everything On Fire'

PAUSE VIDEO: End of Slide.

Becca is sitting rubbing sticks together to create fire. At various intervals during the speech, she cuts/splinters her hands on the sticks.

Becca:

Someone once told me that watching a fire burn for 15 minutes has the equivalent relaxing benefits as 90 minutes of yoga.

Apparently, our relaxation responses to fire are actually an evolutionary adaptation.

Like, cavemen, would relax around a fire on as a social occasion, which would give them survival advantage.

(Beat)

Survival.

(Pause - thinks for a moment)

(Continues)

Ever since then, I've loved making fires.

It's relaxing powers are more than you could ever imagine.

Strike. Watch. Gone. Repeat.

Anthropologists say fire lowers your blood pressure.

Strike. Watch. Gone. Repeat.

It makes you feel a sense of safety. Of warmth.

Strike. Watch. Gone. Repeat.

If the cavemen could do it, then why can't I?

Strike. Watch. Gone. Repeat.

Strike. Watch. Gone. Repeat.

Strike. Gone. Repeat.

Strike. Repeat.

Strike. Gone.

Strike.

She pauses and looks up at the audience.

If you play with fire

You're gonna get burned.

LX: Spot centre.

Becca: Why am I sad? Because of all these reasons. Because no matter how hard you try, nothing can make everything better. Because no matter who you surround yourself with, or who you talk to, no one else can take any pain away. Because no matter how old you are, or how naive you might be, you feel what it is to be human. Because no matter how many things you do to take the pain away, it still circles back around to face you.

I am sad because I want to be in control, but I am so out of control. I am sad because I have so many people in my life, but I am still lonely. I am sad because I'm not perfect, but because there is too much pressure to be perfect. I am sad because I have everything, but some days I feel I have nothing. I am sad because I am clever, but not clever enough. I am sad because you're gone, and because I'm still here.

I am sad because you are sad. I am sad because everyone is sad. I am sad because people talk too much. I am sad because people don't talk enough. I am sad because sadness is incomprehensible. I am sad because sadness will always be there.

LX: Light up.

PLAY VIDEO: Slide - 'Reason 13 - Sing With Your Heart' → SQ: 'Together'

PAUSE VIDEO: End of song.

LX: Spot centre

Becca: I am happy because we are here and we are together and we are stronger than we ever thought was possible. I am happy because we are better than we thought. I am happy because you are. I am happy because I am. I am happy.

LX: Immediate blackout.