MAGNET THEATRE'S NOTION OF "MAKING SPACE":

WITH A FOCUS ON TWO SOUTH AFRICAN MIGRANT PLAYS

AND THE CLANWILLIAM ARTS PROJECT

by

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Magnet Theatre's notion of "making space": with a focus on two South African migrant plays and the Clanwilliam Arts Project

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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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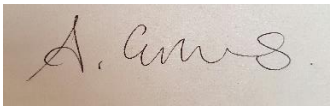
I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



30 January 2024

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to all the children who were members of ComNet during the 10 years of my involvement with this community theatre group. Ultimately, these children inspired me to write this paper.

Prof Marisa Keuris, your guidance, unparalled expertise, and unwavering support have been instrumental in shaping my academic journey and personal growth. Your insightful feedback, constructive criticism, and encouragement have challenged me to push my boundaries. I am deeply grateful for the countless hours you have dedicated to guiding me through the research process.

I am also incredibly grateful to my family and friends for their support and encouragement through the process of writing this thesis.

ABSTRACTS

English

The study explores Magnet Theatre's notion of "making space" for transformative ideas through their migrant plays, *Die Vreemdeling* and *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking*, as well as through the Clanwilliam Arts Project, which they presented in Clanwilliam for 18 years until 2018. Michel Foucault's theory on discourse and power reveals how vulnerable migrants are and how easily they may fall prey to exploitation, xenophobic attacks, rape, and even murder (as demonstrated in *Die Vreemdeling*), are excluded from the dominant discourse and consequently have no power. Space is a dominant metaphor in the work of Magnet Theatre. Henri Lefebvre's theory of space was used to demonstrate how, through creating and performing their plays, Magnet Theatre both created a safe physical space for participants in the Clanwilliam Arts Project, and made space for new ideas and concepts relating to migrants in South Africa. The study shows that theatre has the potential to be a catalyst for change in South Africa, enabling marginalised voices to be heard. Workshop theatre is a useful tool for advancing transformation through creating a safe space in which participants from all walks of life can, not only learn theatre skills and express themselves, but also voice their concerns and their grievances as a means to achieve healing.

Migrant plays, xenophobia, discourse, power, "making space", transformative ideas, metaphorical space, physical space, safe space

Afrikaans

Hierdie studie ondersoek Magnet Theatre se begrip van "making space" (om ruimte te skep) vir transformerende idees deur middel van hulle toneelstukke rakende migrante, *Die Vreemdeling* en *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking*, sowel as die Clanwilliam Arts Project, wat hulle in Clanwilliam aangebied het vir 18 jaar tot in 2018. Michel Foucault se teorie oor diskoers en mag illustreer hoe kwesbaar migrante is en hoe maklik hulle die prooi word van

eksploitasie, xenofobiese aanvalle, verkragting en selfs moord (soos gedemonstreer in *Die Vreemdeling*), omdat hulle uitgesluit is van die dominante diskoers en, gevolglik, geen mag het nie. Ruimte is ’n dominante metafoor in Magnet Theatre se werke. Henri Lefebvre se teorie oor ruimte is ingespan om te demonstreer hoe, deur toneelstukke te skep en op te voer, Magnet Theatre terselfdertyd ’n veilige fisiese ruimte geskep het vir die deelnemers aan die Clanwilliam Arts Project, sowel as vir die kweek van idees en konsepte ten opsigte van migrante in Suid-Afrika. Die studie dui aan dat teater die potensiaal het om ’n katalisator vir transformasie in Suid-Afrika te wees wat gemarginaliseerdes ’n stem kan gee. Werkswinkelteater is ’n bruikbare instrument om transformasie te bevorder deur ’n veilige ruimte te skep waarin deelnemers van alle vlakke van die samelewing, nie net teatervaardighede kan leer nie, maar ook hulle bekommernisse en griewe kan lug om heling te bewerkstellig.

Migranttoneelstukke, xenofobie, diskoers, mag, ruimte skep, transformerende idees, metaforiese ruimte, fisiese ruimte, veilige ruimte

isiXhosa

Olu phando luphonononga ingcinga ye*Magnet Theatre* “yokudala indawo” ekuthiwa yi”making space” yeengcinga ezinenguqu ngokusebenzisa imidlalo yeqonga yabafuduki, i*DieVreemdeling* and *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking* nange*Clanwilliam Arts Project*, abathi bayibonisa e*Clanwilliam* iminyaka eli18 kwade kwaba ngo2018. Ithiyori kaMichel Foucault ye*discourse and power* ibonisa indlela abafuduki abasesichengeni ngayo kunye nendlela ekulula ngayo ukuba babe ngamaxhoba okuxhatshazwa, ohlaselo localucalulo ngokobuzwe, udlwengulo kunye nokubulawa (nanjengoko kubonisewe kwi*Die Vreemdeling*), ukungabandakanywa kwabo kwiingxoxo eziphanbili kwaye ngenxa yoko ababinagunya. Indawo siskweko esiphambili kumsebenzi we*Magnet Theatre*. Ithiyori kaHenri Lefebvre yendawo isetyenziselwe ukubonisa indlela iM*agnet Theatre*, ngokudala nokudlala imidlalo yeqonga yaba bafuduki, edale ngayo indawo ekhuselekileyo kubathathinxaxheba

be*Clanwilliam Arts Project*, yaze yadala indawo yeengcinga neengcamango ezintsha ezinxulumene nabafuduki eMzantsi Afrika. Olu phando lubonisa ukuba ithiyetha yemidlalo yeqonga inamandla okuzisa utshintosho eMsantsi Afrika, nto leyo eyenza ukuba amazwi asingelwa phantsi aviwe. Ucweyo lwethiyetha yemidlalo yeqonga sisixhobo esiluncedo sokuqhubela phambili utshintsho ngokudala indawo ekhuselekileyo apho abathathinxaxheba abavelo kuzo zonke iinkalo zombomi banako kungekuphela nje ukufunda izakhono zemidlalo yeqonga kunye nokuzibonakalisa, kodwa nokuvakalisa iinkxalabo nezikhalazo zabo njengendlela yokufumana ukuphila.

Imidlalo yeqonga yabafuduki, ucalucalulo ngokobuzwe, ingxoxo, igunya, “ukudala indawo”, iingcinga ezinenguqu, indawo yomfuziselo, indawo, indawo ekhuselekileyo

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Title

Magnet Theatre's notion of "making space" with a focus on two South African migrant plays and the Clanwilliam Arts Project

1.2 Background

For 10 years, from 2008 until 2018, I have been involved with the community drama group, ComNet, in the town where we live, Clanwilliam. ComNet was established after a group of young people from Clanwilliam, who were all participants in the annual Clanwilliam Arts Project, wanted to practise their drama skills throughout the year, not just for a mere week during the project each year. During this time, I experienced personally how workshop theatre can provide a safe space where empathy is built, perspectives are broadened and marginalised voices are amplified for individuals from all walks of life and races, particularly previously voiceless individuals. ComNet was one of the first organisations in Clanwilliam that managed to bring these groups together, where many friendships across colour lines were forged.

I was also a witness of Magnet Theatre's mode of operation during the workshops and performances they presented in Clanwilliam during the Clanwilliam Arts Project. I found it remarkable how they managed to create a safe space during the workshop sessions where previously voiceless people could fully express themselves, as well as learn theatre skills, and where many social issues could be explored. It can almost be described as therapeutic. The participants loved Mark Fleishman and Jennie Reznek, the founders of Magnet Theatre, who presented the Clanwilliam Arts

Project in Clanwilliam. The participants would look forward to partaking in the programme each year, and Mark and Jennie became household names in our town. The participants fondly called Jennie “Mama Jennie”.

As a result of experiencing Magnet Theatre’s notion of “making space” in practice during the Clanwilliam Arts Project, I was inspired to study this notion theoretically, as well as to apply this notion to two of their migrant plays.

1.3 Research Questions

This dissertation addresses the following main question, namely: did Magnet Theatre’s notion, as applied to two of their migrant plays and the Clanwilliam Arts Project, manage to “make space” for both actors and audience to address societal issues?

Sub-questions are:

(i) Did Foucault’s *theory on discourse and power* and Lefebvre’s *theory of space is power* assist in gaining a better understanding of Magnet Theatre’s concept of “making space”?

(ii) Is workshop theatre, as used by Magnet Theatre, a useful tool to activate and advance transformation/change in society?

1.4 Aims

The main aim of this study is to explore the notion of “making space”, as it was used by Magnet Theatre, by analysing two of their migrant plays, as well as the Clanwilliam Arts Project.

Other aims:

- To identify and discuss the most suitable theoretical framework to explain the notion of “making space” in theatre.
- To determine how *power and space relations* can influence the process of “making space” in theatre.
- To explore the possibility of workshop theatre as a tool to assist transformation in societies.

To achieve these goals, I have adopted the following approach:

1.5 Theoretical framework

For the theoretical framework, Foucault's *Theory of Discourse* and Lefebvre’s *Theory of Power is Space*, will be used. The underlying concepts of Foucault’s *Theory of Discourse*, power and knowledge, and how they have become tools for social control by dominant groups, as well as Lefebvre’s concept of how space is socially constructed, will be discussed.

These theories will be applied to two of Magnet Theatre’s migrant plays to enable us to demonstrate how Magnet Theatre managed to “make space” for a new, transformative discourse within societies. The migrant plays will be analysed and discussed within the framework of the relevant theoretical concepts, as introduced by Foucault and Lefebvre. The Clanwilliam Arts Project is a unique project which was presented for a predominantly Coloured group of residents from Clanwilliam by Magnet Theatre for 18 years. In this study, the focus will be placed on whether and how Magnet Theatre’s conception of “making space” made an impact on this specific group of people.

1.6 Scope

The focus of this study is Magnet Theatre and its conception of “making space” by exploring two of their migrant plays and the Clanwilliam Arts Project. Although Magnet Theatre is internationally renowned, and has created numerous productions over three decades, not many in-depth discussions of Magnet Theatre’s work are available. Lewis and Krueger (2016) *Three Decades of Making Space: Magnet Theatre* is therefore an important source for this study, especially Part 1, titled *Concepts: Making Space for Ideas*. Many artists and collaborators who have worked with Magnet Theatre, as well as Mark Fleishman and Jennie Reznek, have written contributions for this book and it is the main source to explore Fleishman and Reznek's notion of “making space”. Since the concepts of *power*, *discourse,* and *space* are important for the exploration of Magnet Theatre’s notion of “making space”, the contributions of Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre in this regard have been used as the main theoretical framework of this study. The study is based on Foucault’s *Theory of Discourse* and Lefebvre’s *Theory of Space is Power* as he presented it in his book *The Production of Space* (1974).

It was also necessary to consult a few contemporary studies regarding migration (i.e., Cox 2012, 2013, 2014 and Erwin 2012, 2017), as well as Applied Theatre (i.e.,Thakur 2013). De Bruyn (2008) and reports I have received from Magnet Theatre also received scrutiny regarding the Clanwilliam Arts Project.

Primary sources consulted include Magnet Theatre’s migrant plays *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking* and *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger], as well as reports and newspaper articles about the Clanwilliam Arts Project.

1.7 Structure

The dissertation consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 presents a background to the study, a research question and sub-questions, the aims of this study, the theoretical framework followed by the scope, as well as the structure of this study.

In Chapter 2, the two theories this study relies on will be explored. The main theoretical framework of this study is Michel Foucault's (1926-1984) *Theory of Discourse,* with a focus on power relations in society as expressed through language and other practices. According to Foucault, discourse shapes the way in which we interpret the world around us. Discourse is a framework through which power operates and influences society. Foucault's notion of power is important for this study, because it indicates the relationship between power and knowledge and how this is used as a form of social control by dominant institutions, noting for example, that how we speak and write is shaped by the structures of power in society. It is through discourse that certain groups obtain power.

Lefebvre's theory of *Space is Power,* as introduced in *The Production of Space* (1974), will also be discussed. According to Lefebvre, space is a social construction, moulded by power relations. He argues that space is a social product, i.e., a complex social construction, based on values and the social production of meanings, which affects spatial perception. Magnet Theatre's work has engaged with space on a physical and metaphorical level, where, for example, they moved theatre into the townships and to the rural town of Clanwilliam (e.g. the Clanwilliam Arts Project).

The connection between the two theories will also be explored, because discourse plays an important role in the process of creating and maintaining space, i.e.,

discourses by powerful people or groups determine who lives and works where and who not. The power over these spaces is maintained through discourse (socially constructed).

In Chapter 3 Magnet Theatre's notion of "making space" is discussed with reference to their migrant plays. Firstly, a few definitions of migrants and migration are given. Migration and xenophobia as global issues are discussed, which will be followed by an exploration of how the global discourse affects South Africa. Theatre-makers have responded to these phenomena and Magnet Theatre has richly contributed to the genre of migrant plays. Theatre is a space in which social issues can be explored, and where existing perceptions in South Africa can be challenged and changed.

In Chapter 4, a discussion is given of Magnet Theatre's migrant play *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger] about the impact of a stranger on an insulated, fearful community. This play explores familiar South African themes such as xenophobia, migration, and identity and comments on the fences, boundaries and gates people construct, not only physically in a landscape, but also in themselves.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the exploration of their play *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking,* about what home means and what it means to lose the safety and security of home as a result of war. It follows the journey of a young refugee girl and her mother when they are forced to flee their country. Refugees are often unable to tell their stories, because they do not speak the language of their new country or they are afraid to speak up. The inadequacy of words for refugees to tell their stories and how physical theatre can be used as a tool instead, will also be discussed.

In Chapter 6, Magnet Theatre's workshop-based Clanwilliam Arts Project, aimed at returning the heritage of the Clanwilliam area to the community, is discussed. In particular, how Magnet Theatre's Clanwilliam Arts Project managed to disrupt the status quo to make space for a new future in Clanwilliam receives focus. This programme was initiated to develop the theatre skills of the underprivileged youth in Clanwilliam, as well as *returning the heritage* to the community of Clanwilliam.

Chapter 7 consists of the conclusion of this study. A bibliography will then follow, as well as an Annexure with photographs taken of the project.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: MICHEL FOUCAULT'S THEORY OF DISCOURSE WITH A FOCUS ON POWER RELATIONS AND HENRI LEVEBRE'STHEORY OF SPACE IS POWER

2.1 Introduction

The main theoretical framework of this study is Michel Foucault's (1926-1984) Theory of Discourse, considering his concept of power he introduced. This chapter considers Foucault's theory in order to introduce the various concepts relevant to a discussion of Magnet Theatre (Chapter 3). Thereafter, the chapter turns to Henri Lefebvre's theory of space and power. To argue for contributions of these two theorists in terms of discourse, power and space will be helpful in understanding Magnet Theatre's consideration of "making space" when discussing their migrant plays and the Clanwilliam Arts Project.

In the realm of theory, French philosopher Michel Foucault's name reverberates prominently. Revered for his ground-breaking contributions to various fields, including philosophy, social science and cultural studies, Foucault's theory of discourse stands as a cornerstone in understanding power dynamics and the construction of knowledge within society. At its core, it challenges the traditional notion that knowledge is objective and universal. According to Foucault, discourse refers to a system of language, knowledge, and power that shapes the way in which we understand and interpret the world around us. Discourse, in Foucault's view, is not merely a means of communication, but rather a framework through which power operates and influences societal structures. Foucault proposes that in our daily lives, the way in which we write and speak is shaped by the structures of power in our society. Discourses can and do produce power, and can reinforce it. Foucault

challenged the idea that power is wielded by groups of people by way of sovereign acts of coercion. He argued that “power is everywhere” (1979: 93), i.e., power comes from everywhere: “Power is not an institution, nor a structure, nor a possession. It is the name we give to a complex strategic situation in a particular society.” In other words, power is dispersed through society. Foucault addresses the relationship between power and knowledge and how they are used as a form of societal control through societal institutions (by means of discourse).

Foucault’s concern about racism will also be discussed, because his view, which provides a useful tool for guarding against racism, is relevant to the way in which Magnet Theatre operates. In their plays, they demonstrate the way in which xenophobia is often rooted in racism.

In a world where every aspect of our lives is intertwined with space, from the places we inhabit to the social organisations in which we participate, it becomes crucial to understand and examine the relationship between power and space. Henri Lefebvre, also a prominent French philosopher and sociologist, introduced the concept that space is not solely a neutral backdrop, but a dynamic entity, permeated with power dynamics. Lefebvre’s theory of *space as power* was introduced in his work, *The Production of Space* (1974). According to Lefebvre, space is not only a physical dimension, but a social construction moulded by power relations. Lefebvre (1991) states that society and space are definitely correlated, because space is produced by society. He argues that space “is at once a precondition and a result of social superstructures” (p. 85). According to Lefebvre, space is a social product, based on values and the social production of meanings – which affects spatial practices and perceptions. He explains that space is perceived through human senses, when we

mentally conceive of and represent those spaces, and then finally we live in those spaces. Lefebvre argues that *power over space is power over life*.

To be able to change and understand the plight of migrants or other people who did not previously have a voice (i.e., “make space” for them), we must first change space, because power over space is power over life. Magnet Theatre has not only made space for new ideas, but has also used unconventional spaces (such as a showground, warehouses, school grounds, church halls, school halls and many other physical spaces) where they presented their projects, for example, the Clanwilliam Arts Project, which was presented in a warehouse at the local showgrounds.

Magnet Theatre’s book *Three Decades of Making Space: Magnet Theatre* invokes the spatial metaphor and Gay Morris explores this concept regarding Magnet Theatre’s work in Chapter 15. She refers to Magnet Theatre’s theatrical practices in the townships, with particular emphasis on spatial aspects, where the same can be done with regard to the Clanwilliam Arts Project. Morris recruits Lefebvre’s theorisation of space to explore Magnet Theatre’s contribution in spatial terms (2016: 225). She proposes that Magnet Theatre’s work engages with space, space-time and with spatial practices. Through Magnet Theatre’s strategies and tactics of theatre-making and education in the townships and in Clanwilliam, as well as through their responses to social and cultural needs and the lack of infrastructural spaces for theatre-making in the townships and in Clanwilliam, they make space for new ideas.

Lefebvre proposes that space is not only physically, but also socially produced. In the absence of purpose-built spaces, Magnet Theatre shaped physical and social

space with a pattern of use that serves the needs of theatre-making, for example, they would transform a bleak hall in a township into a theatrical space (Morris 2016: 234), but in the process they do not only transform a bleak hall, but also make an impact on people's lives.

Therefore, Foucault's theory of discourse in tandem with Lefebvre's theory of space is power provides a useful foundation for the argument presented here.

According to Foucault, discourses produce power. Space is also produced by society through discourses and Lefebvre argues that *power over space is power over life*. In other words, the people who are able to control discourse in society will have the power. They will also have power over spaces that will give them even more power. For example, the Nationalist Party controlled discourses during the apartheid years and through discourses managed to justify laws and town planning to keep black people in townships on the periphery of Cape Town. In other words, the link between Foucault's theory of discourse and Lefebvre's theory of space is power, where spaces are almost always created through discourse; for example, politicians with power in parliament use discourse to motivate or dismantle policy. Discourses are used as a tool by the powerful, but because power is in a state of flux, the possibility for change persists. Therefore, it is possible for an institution like Magnet Theatre to help "make space" for migrants by creating a new discourse, which exposes actors, audiences, and crew to their migrant theatre performances.

2.2 Michel Foucault's Theory of Discourse

2.2.1 Introduction to Foucault

According to Willcocks (2004: 242-245), Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was born in Poitiers, France, graduated in philosophy (1984/9), and then in psychology from the

École Normale Supérieure, Paris, from 1952-1955, where he taught philosophy at the University of Lille, whilst he also did research in a hospital in Paris, and finished his first book in 1954. He later became professor in psychology at Clermont-Ferrand University, where he stayed on until 1968, when he was appointed professor at the University in Vienna and during this period he published *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1963), *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). He also became politically more active between 1969 and 1975 and this gave rise to the publication of *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976).

Willcocks (2004: 242-245) states that Foucault, in *This is not a Pipe* (1983), regarded his work as mainly concerned with analysing the classification of subjectivity in terms of the dividing and self-subjectification practices across three fields of subjectivity, namely, the body, population, and the individual. He was interested in taking part in three types of struggles: firstly, against forms of domination, against forms of exploitation that separate individuals from what they produce, and against forms of subjectivity that tie the individual to him- or herself.

2.2.2 Foucault's new conception of power

Foucault introduces a new conception of power, namely, he argues that power constitutes a positive (not just a negative force) (Gaventa 2003: 1, Stone 2013: 355), which is productive (it produces truth and knowledge) (Reisigl & Wodak 2016: 26), and which circulates (we are all either oppressors or the oppressed) (Foucault 1980: 98), which is cunning (it can change at any given time) (Koopman 2017: 3), and ubiquitous, and appears in every moment of social relations (Gaventa 2003: 2,

Reisigl & Wodak 2016: 26). Knowledge is always a form of power (Hall: 1997: 76) and it is definitely not centred in one institution, but comes from everywhere (Stone 2013: 355). Foucault (1978: 100-101) argues that discourses "can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy." In other words, discourses can produce power and can reinforce it, but they can also expose or undermine it.

Willcocks (2004: 239) notes that Foucault was passionate about transgression and resisted any form of labelling. What Foucault wanted to do above all, was to question accepted methods. Foucault was generally suspicious and tried to steer away from universal claims. He tried to focus on the usefulness of research in novel and neglected fields, such as, writing history, social studies, cultural interpretation, studying medicine, madness, prisons, and sexuality.

For the purposes of this study, the focus is placed on a few key ideas, but it is not an easy task, because, according to Gutting (2005: 1), Foucault actually wanted to evade any kind of "interpretative categories" where:

> […] the need to interpret Foucault sits ill with his desire to escape general interpretative categories. More important, as the enterprise of interpretation is usually understood, interpreting Foucault is guaranteed to distort his thought. Interpretation typically means finding a unifying schema through which we can make overall sense of an author's works.

According to Turkel (1990: 171), Friedrich Nietzsche's "literary power" and "genealogical method" inspired Foucault's work, because Nietzsche regarded power relations as the general focus of philosophical discourse.

Turkel (1990: 172) explains that Foucault's focus on power relations as follows:

> Based on Nietzsche, Foucault formulated power as the core relation from which morality emerges, rather than from universal principles of truth or transcendental values. The truth of morality is to be found in the particular conditions that give rise to it. The circumstances of everyday life at particular moments in history must be investigated to demonstrate sources of moral claims and ethical definitions. Moreover, Nietzsche inspired his belief that enquiry should not formulate universal truths, that studies should not yield congealed ethics or moralities, but rather demonstrate the contingency of power and claims to truth by transgressing that which is assumed and taken for granted.

According to Turkel (1990: 172), in line with Foucault's unconventional academic career, his approach to power also sprouted from a general dissatisfaction with philosophical reason. Foucault tried to indicate that he was intent on uncovering that which was silenced. According to Turkel (p. 172), Foucault argues the philosophy that developed through modern times (19th and 20th centuries) eliminates thoughts, actions, experiences, and languages that are considered atypical or deviant. Combined with processes of exclusion and physical, as well as social isolation, the philosophy gave rise to discourses of domination during the 20th century, for example, in the fields of mental illness, crime, as well as in social institutions like the

military, education, work, medicine, sexuality, and rules of classification. These rules then become the defining standards for normality. The deviant and criminal are defined based on these normalising standards, which have their foundation in dominant institutions, who cooperate with state power to create systems of power and control.[1]

Willcocks (2004: 239) states that what Foucault wanted to do, above all else, was to question the accepted methods of the time, as well as remove all forms of labelling in these discourses. He notes that Foucault's self-selected title at the Collège de France was "professor of the history of systems of thought", but that Foucault himself was "far from being a systematic thinker and he once described his work as a Swiss cheese: readers found themselves in the holes and it was up to them to find their way out, choosing their own direction" (2004: 239). Here we notice the unfinished character of Foucault's work, and that is indeed the case, because Foucault himself described his work as analytical work and not theory, and he argued that his analysis of power relations is not theory, but rather a way of theorising practice.

Willcocks (2004: 239) states:

> Foucault's impulse is also to think from the outside, constantly to question accepted interpretation and method, in fact at times to provide the opposite interpretation, surface subjugated knowledges, construct counter-memory, offer a new, provisional method, to see what can be learned from this. In this, at his best, he constantly fights against the self-images of the age. At his not so best, he provides an intellectual gymnasium with endless sets of

[1] See full article: Turkel, G. 1990. "Michel Foucault: Law, Power and Knowledge". *Journal of Law and Society*, Vol. 17. No. 2, pp. 170-193

> formidable exercises, whose intents are not clear, sometimes because they reflect Foucault's own, often painful debates with himself.

According to Willcocks (2004: 239), Foucault "harboured a deep-seated drive to transgress" whether that may have been intellectually or politically. Part of this transgression is his personal resistance against all forms of being labelled, for example, as a structuralist, or a postmodernist. Moreover, Foucault's suspicion of all systems of thought requires him, like Nietzsche, not to become an "–ism" himself. Although Foucault has been criticised over the fact that he offered little political commentary, in practice he contributed significantly to the question of politics, with a grand scale cross-disciplinary impact, "…creating new questions that could be asked and methods which could be used, for example, in the fields of education, criminology, mental illness, architecture, social work and public policy" (p. 239).

2.2 Foucault's notions of power and knowledge

It is necessary to focus on Foucault's various notions of power, because this can either be renewed, or it can be maintained. It is a tool or a mechanism to bring about change.

According to Willcocks (2004: 254-255), for Foucault, the concepts of power and knowledge are always linked, and he hardly ever uses the word power on its own, because he mostly uses the terms *power relations* and *power/knowledge*. Willcocks (2004: 254-255) states that for Foucault, power generates knowledge, as well as discourse, and discourse and knowledge in turn generate power and the truth.

Hall (1997: 76) brings knowledge into the equation when he states that Foucault argued “knowledge is always a form of power and knowledge linked to power assumes the authority of ‘the truth’ and ‘has the power to make itself true’” (Foucault 1977: 27). Hall also states that, according to Foucault, if one uses knowledge to control the conduct of others you constrain, regulate, or discipline them. Thus, according to Foucault, no power relation can exist without the corresponding arrangement of a field of knowledge. In other words, Foucault argued that what we know in a particular historical period, for example, about crime, determines how we or that generation punishes criminals, because knowledge does not operate in a void, but it operates by using specific strategies in specific situations, historical contexts and regimes. This led Foucault to not speak about “Truth” of knowledge in the absolute sense, that is, a Truth which cannot ever change over time. However, according to Foucault, it was rather the discursive formations that sustained a regime of truth. Foucault thus formulated a completely new concept of power, one which does not operate from top to bottom, but from the bottom up. A power that does not come from a single source alone, for example, from the state, but which circulates and is diffuse (i.e., it is everywhere). This means that we are all involved in this circulation of power as either oppressors or the oppressed.

Willcocks quotes as follows from Foucault’s *Society Must Be Defended* Lectures at the College de France (1975-76) which was published in 2003:

> Power is the implementation and deployment of a relationship of force … the continuation of war by other means. Power must be analysed as something that circulates … that functions only when it is part of a chain. It is never localised here or there, it is never in the hands of some, and it is never

> appropriated in the way that wealth or a commodity can be appropriated … Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks: they are in a position to both submit to and exercise power. They are never the inert or consenting targets of power, they are always its relays. In other words, power passes through individuals.

According to Gaventa (2003: 1-2), Foucault's notion of power is quite unlike other notions of power, because Foucault's idea of power is positive: it is not something that is wielded by individuals or institutions, and actually, power is not "wielded" at all, it is rather seen as diffused through society and "subject-less", as mere elements of strategies. He further argues that Foucault's subjects are "discursively constituted through power; their actions may contribute to the operation of power" (p. 1-2). Secondly, he argues that "power is ubiquitous" (p. 1-2) and "appears in every moment of social relations – hence, the operations of power are not departures from the norm, but rather [are] constantly present" (p. 1-2). This interpretation focuses on the diffuse nature of power, and goes against the bipolar power or powerlessness view.

Foucault (*History of Sexuality* 1979: 93) writes about this diffuse nature of power as follows: "Power is everywhere: not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. [...] Power is not an institution, nor a structure, nor a possession. It is the name we give to a complex strategic situation in a particular society." He sees this interpretation of power in a positive way, because this means that power does no longer only affect those without it, but affects everyone (i.e. it is a much broader concept). In other words, subjects can change the flow of power through their actions, because power is ever-present.

Mills (2003: 30) writes that Foucault does not agree with the earlier Marxist theorists and is far less concerned with focusing on oppression, but rather chooses to focus on individuals' resistance to power. Foucault (1975: 194) states in *Discipline and Punish*:

> We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.

Thus, Foucault does not see power as a mere force that oppresses, censors or excludes, but rather that power produces truth. She notes that Foucault introduces a bottom-up model of power, which emphasises the way in which power relations permeate all relations within a given society. This conception of power as "enabl[ing] an account of the mundane and daily ways in which power is enacted and contested" (Mills 2003: 30), and opens up the possibility for an analysis of individuals as active subjects (rather than passive) who are able to influence the power process.

Reisigl and Wodak (2016: 26) state that Foucault's notion of power can be seen as an "asymmetric relationship among social actors who have different social positions or who belong to different social groups". Furthermore, they also regard power as socially omnipresent. It is everywhere, in other words, power can produce, as well as destruct, it can be sanctioned, or permitted in discourses. Those with power can limit and regulate discourses by various controlling procedures. Thus, power is discursively constructed, not only by grammatical form, but also by a person's

control of the social occasion, or by means of the text, as well as through the management of access to certain public spheres or places.

Stone (2013: 355-356) asks the question: “Why have we been led to believe that power is simply a negative force that prohibits those things that we actually want to do” and argues that we should rather explore the invisible elements and operations of power, “avoiding the red herrings of repression and prohibition”, because otherwise, this negative picture of power will conceal the true functioning of power at play. Stone states that Foucault (*History of Sexuality* 1979: 93) saw power as neither centralised, nor static. Foucault’s notion of power is that power is constantly in a state of flux and is everywhere. In other words, there is a build-up of force relations, with many sites of unsteady pockets of power, and this is what Foucault means when he argues that power is everywhere, because there is no exact place where we can say “power is here”, because power comes from everywhere.

Stone notes that Foucault (*History of Sexuality* 1997: 94) offers five concepts regarding the proliferation of force relations:

First, “[p]ower is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared […] power is exercised from innumerable points” (p. 94). The build-up of force relations suggests that power is utilised from countless points, that is, the notion that there are those who have power and those who do not prove itself false. Second, power is intrinsic in relationships. Power is not exterior, but, instead, power relations play a directly productive role, wherever they come into play. Third, the top-down model of power adopted in the juridico-discursive model is denied. Power is heterogeneously diffused throughout the entire social sphere: from king to subject, from subject to king (in the case of revolt), from parent to child, from child to parent. Fourth, power

operates intentionally, yet incognito. According to Foucault, “there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives” (p. 94). Finally, Foucault is quite clear that, wherever there is power, there is also resistance. Wherever there is a majority, there is also a minority, and both sides are constituted in terms of power relations.

According to the theorist, Colin Koopman (2017: 3), Foucault’s notion of power can be described as follows: “Power is all the more cunning because its basic forms can change in response to our efforts to free ourselves from its grip.” In other words, forms of power can coexist and come into conflict with one another, and these forms of power can also change. Koopman uses the example of how Foucault argued for a classically sovereign space, viz. the judicial court, which came to accept in its proceedings the testimonies of psychiatric and medical experts whose power was exercised without the option of violence. A psychiatrist’s diagnosis of “insanity” a hundred years ago would have differed greatly from a diagnosis of “insanity” today, because the diagnosis is based on the belief system of that specific period. In other words, different diagnoses would have been made during different time periods. Koopman regards other forms of power as the most significant development regarding the discourse on power that has emerged since Foucault’s death in 1984, and which has an immense influence on our society today, for example, the power of data, the information power of social media, as well as the algorithmic assessment of our activities on the internet.

Power must always be analysed as something which constantly circulates from one person to another or from one group to another. If power circulates, it has the potential that the once powerless might come into power. According to Foucault, in

Power/Knowledge (1980: 98) power is “something which only functions in the form of a chain” and the power is never situated merely “here” or “there”, it is never “in anybody’s hands” and cannot be possessed like a car or piece of jewellery. Foucault argues as follows: “Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organisation ... Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application.”

Foucault (1988:38) also argues that power is never centred in one institution, but that it is distributed or spread throughout society. In the interview “Critical theory/intellectual theory” he writes:

> I am not referring to Power with a capital P, dominating and imposing its rationality upon the totality of the social body. In fact, there are power relations. They are multiple; they have different forms, they can be in play in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration.

Foucault warns that these relations of power are often not easy to observe. In an interview entitled *Power and sex* he states that these relations of power are often very well hidden and not easy to investigate, but it is our duty to investigate and “[…] to anchor them in the economic structures; to trace them not only in their governmental forms, but also in the intra-governmental ones; to discover them in their material play” (p. 119).

2.3 How to analyse the relations of power

The theorist, Plaatjies van Huffel (2012: 80), suggests that the following useful questions could be asked to analyse those relations of power which are not always easy to observe:

- Who speaks?

- What is the status of the person who has the right to speak?
- Who, within the totality of speakers, is the speaker that has been given the right to speak?
- Who is qualified to speak and why?
- Is this right to speak sanctioned by law or tradition?
- Who, by law, is allowed to speak?
- Is this a right by law or a spontaneous right?
- From which institution or platform does the speaker make this contribution?
- What is the position of the subject?
- In what relation does the subject stand to the objects?
- How are the different groups of utterances linked?
- What is the intention of the author?

Only after we have answers to some or all of these questions will we be able to determine how power relations constructed by social practices can determine inequalities and oppression.

2.4 Foucault's discourse and discursive formations

Foucault (1972: 80) describes the concept discourse in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* as "the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualised group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements."

Hall (1997: 73) notes that Foucault shifted the focus from "language" to discourse, in other words, Foucault did not study language as such, but rather discourse as a system of representation. Discourse would normally be regarded as a linguistic

concept (i.e., passages of connected writing or speech), but Foucault gave new meaning to this concept, because he was interested in the rules and practices that produced meaningful statements and regulated discourse in different historical periods. According to Hall, Foucault argued that discourse actually constructs the topic, because it determines and produces the objects of our knowledge, and also influences the way in which ideas are put into practice, and how they are used to control the conduct of others.

Hall (1997: 74) also discusses how Foucault managed to historicise discourse in the sense that things had meaning and were “true” only within a specific historical context. Foucault did not believe that the same phenomena could be found across different historical periods, but considered that, in each period, discourse produced forms of knowledge, objects, subjects, and practices of knowledge, which differed radically from one period to another. For example, for him, mental illness was never a fact, in other words, an objective fact that would remain the same over all historical periods, but it was only within a discursive formation within a specific historical period that mental illness could become meaningful. He also indicated how this concept changed from one period to another.

Mills (2003: 42) in turn notes that Foucault means by “the general domain of all statements” that discourse can be used to refer to all utterances which seem to form a grouping, such as the discourse of femininity or the discourse of racism. At other times, Foucault has used discourse to refer to regulated practices (the unwritten rules which produce particular statements) that account for a number of statements. A discourse is a regulated set of statements which combines with others in predictable ways. Discourse is regulated by a set of rules which lead to the

distribution and circulation of certain utterances and statements. For example, some are circulated widely, like the Bible, which is always in print and can be found in many homes; universities have theological departments where students study the Bible; political leaders use quotations from the Bible and interpretations and commentaries are written about it, where, in comparison to other religious texts, circulation and support abound.

In his *History of Sexuality* Foucault (1979: 100-101) states that discourses can be either a tool or a hindrance:

> Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.

2.5 Discourse is a social practice

Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 258) present a more developed definition of Foucault's concept of discourse, which they reckon have become popular amongst critical discourse studies researchers: they state that critical discourse studies see discourse as a form of "social practice". When describing discourse as a social practice this suggests a dialogue between a specific discursive event and the situations, institutions, and social structures which shape it. In other words, the discursive event is shaped by the situation, institution, and social structure, but they

also shape one another. That means that discourse is “socially constitutive”, as well as “socially conditioned”: discourse shapes situations, knowledge, and the relationships and identities between people and groups of people. It is essential to help sustain and maintain the status quo, but it also helps to transform it. Discourse always has social consequences and it results in important issues of power. In other words, discursive practices may have major ideological effects in the sense that they can help construct and reproduce unequal power relations through how they constitute and position people, for example, ethnic majorities and minorities, women and men or social classes.

Foucault’s theory of discourse still gives rise to discussions by new theorists. Wodak and Meyer (2016: 3-4) take the definition of *discourse* one step further:

> Thus, discourse means anything from a historical monument, a lieu de mémoire, a policy, a political strategy, narratives in a restricted or broad sense of the term, text, talk, a speech, topic-related conversations, to language per se. We find notions such as racist discourse, gendered discourse, discourses on un/employment, media discourse, populist discourse, discourses of the past, and many more – thus stretching the meaning of discourse from a genre to a register or style, from a building to a political programme.

Therefore, discourse should not be seen as mere language. Discourse can also include a political strategy, which politicians use to implement certain policies. Topic-related conversations are also discourses, for example, a discourse could be a racist discourse or a gendered discourse. Discourses can help create unequal

power relations, for example, in the case where a politician uses an anti-immigrant discourse to garner support from voters.

2.6 What is it all about, is it new and how should we think about power relations?

A brief discussion of contemporary approaches will now follow to establish the usefulness of Foucault's theory: firstly, Stone (2013) explains Foucault's new approach to think about power relations and analyse racism and Van Dijk (1993) analyses anti-racist discourse in Brazil. According to Foucault, we should be thinking about race in a whole new way which could change the way we have always thought about racism.

2.6.1 Stone's argument

Perhaps one of the most enlightening contributions regarding the new way Foucault makes us think about his notion of power is Stone's chapter, titled *Power, Politics, Racism* in *A Companion to Foucault* (2013), in which he discussed Foucault's *Society Must Be Defended* lecture course at the Collège de France (1975-76) and the powerful new interpretation of power, politics, and racism, which Foucault puts forward. Stone (2013: 353-354) writes that according to Foucault there exists a completely new way we should be thinking about race. If he is correct, it would change the way we have always thought about and resisted racism. In order to better understand racism, we need to be careful not to misunderstand the notion of power, leaving the actual functioning of power unnoticed or invisible and therefore unrestricted.

According to Stone (2013: 353-354), Foucault argued we have to move away from the juridico-discursive model of power towards a model in which power is everywhere (even in resistance) and where the notion of power operates without an appeal to laws and regulations. Foucault provides for a new notion of power which should be understood in terms of a proliferation of forces. Foucault argued that the earlier analyses of power relations has become a false division, because, on the one hand, power is understood in the sense of repression and therefore liberation should be sought from it, but, on the other hand, it is also seen as absolute domination without any chance of escaping from it. Thus, this is what Foucault calls the false division of the juridico-discursive model of power as a model that has long been in play in the Western society and is closely connected to the idea of sovereignty.

In his *History of Sexuality* (1979: 83-84) Foucault gives five characteristics of the juridico-discursive model of power:

i. He argues that according to this model, power has a negative association and is regarded in terms of non-acceptance, banning, refusal, barring, obstructing, and concealment, in other words, the establishment or body which says “no”.
ii. Power is also regarded as a legal affair, which only divides matters into what is allowed or not allowed.
iii. Power is seen to apply itself in the form of forbidding or barring and taboos.
iv. The logic of censorship which is applied allows for power censors to dissent or not allow even the existence of that which it forbids.
v. Power is seen as uniform and is exercised in the same way on all levels.

Foucault (1979: 85-86) argues that this way of looking at power misses the true operations of power and he writes the following:

> [A power] … poor in resources, sparing of its methods, monotonous in the tactics it utilises, incapable of invention, and seemingly doomed always to repeat itself. Further, it is a power that only has the force of the negative on its side, a power to say no: in no condition to produce, capable only of posting limits, it is basically anti-energy … centred on nothing more than the statement of the law and the operation of taboos.

In other words, Foucault argues that this model is worthless and poses the question of why power would only be a negative force. Foucault argues that the hidden elements of power should be explored and he proposes five propositions of force relations.

Foucault (1997: 92) states that we need a model of power which regards power in terms of "the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation". In other words, there is a build-up of relations, various areas of unstable pools of power and this is exactly what Foucault means when he states that power is everywhere, that is, there is not one place where you can point to claim that is where power resides, because power comes from everywhere.

Foucault (1997: 94-95) supplies five propositions regarding the "proliferation of force relations":

i. The proliferation of force relations implies that power is not something that is gained, taken hold of, or divided, but that it is utilised from countless points. The notion that there are those who have power and those who do not, is simply false.
ii. Power is imminent inside relationships. Power is not exterior; instead, power relations have a directly productive role, whenever they come into play.
iii. The from-the-top-to-the-bottom model of power adopted in the juridico-discursive model is rejected. Power is heterogeneously dispersed throughout the entire social sphere: from king to subject, from subject to king (in the case of revolt), from parent to child, from child to parent.
iv. Power operates deliberately, yet incognito. Foucault asserts that there is power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject.
v. Foucault is quite clear that "[w]here there is power, there is resistance … this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power."

According to Stone (2013: 356), Foucault states four rules to keep in mind to prevent us from slipping back into the juridico-discursive way of interpreting power:

- the rule of immanence, because power operates internally to knowledge;
- the rule of continuous variation, because power is not fixed or stable, it is transformative;

- the rule of double conditioning, because both sides are informed; and
- the rule of tactical multivalence of discourse, because discourse is never power neutral.

Furthermore, Stone (2013: 356-357) states that for Foucault, power is flexible, unstable, and volatile, like war "in which the momentum can switch at any moment". For Foucault, politics is itself a kind of war and this is a model for all power relationships. Foucault follows Nietzsche's hypothesis that "the basis of the power relationship lies in a warlike clash between forces" – the forces cluster together, others resist, thus we have to look at forms of domination, how one force overcomes another, in other words, "it is not the weight of a dominant force over non-dominant forces, but merely the triumph of one force cluster over another". This changes the way we analyse power relations: instead of focusing on sovereignty and the juridico-discursive model of power, we focus on forms of domination. And the inquiry is never neutral – that is the price of Foucauldian methodology – no objective, transcendental, "Truth out there" that adjudicates between warring forces. Because there is no neutrality or universality, we are obliged to be mindful of the different forces at play, because we are all someone's adversary. This can be seen in the emergence of what Foucault calls "historico-political" discourse, which is a good way to describe Foucault's understanding of genealogy.

Stone (2013: 363) writes that Foucault's notion of race, in his *Society Must Be Defended* lectures, differs from those in other discussions of race theory. According to Stone, Foucault argues that we should actually start with one group of people and, metaphorically, divide them into who must live and who must die. At the beginning of

the Classical Age, the sovereignty started dwindling and a shift in history occurred from the concept of sovereign to nation, which resulted in notions like nationality, race, and class. Although the notion of *nation* existed in the time of the sovereign, it was only used regarding the territory possessed by the sovereign, in other words, the nation resided in the person of the king. However, Foucault argues that the notion of nation does not stop at the frontiers, but it actually moves from one frontier to another, through states, beneath states, and at an infra-state level. Stone notes that in the age of the sovereign, the terms “nation” and “race” were synonyms and wars between races were actually wars between states (the sovereign of one nation against the sovereign of another nation), but the new idea of race is freed from sovereign states. What we see now is not a clash between two distinct races, it is the splitting of a single race into a super-race and a sub-race. In other words, there is no longer a war between one nation and another or the mere dislike of someone with a different skin colour and features, but the war is now between two different groups within one society and we now have to defend society against the sub-race (we no longer have to defend ourselves against our enemies/another society/nation), because this sub-race presents a danger to the super-race. Modern racism is the result of a decision, which is an operation of power, about who can die, either directly, for example, during the Holocaust or apartheid, or metaphorically, for example, the group of people without recourse to medical aid. Stone cites rich households in the US whose property taxes fund better schools as an apt example of “letting die”. This may not appear unfair at first glance, but this system lets poorer students receive a worse education, where as a result, they will always fall short when it comes to standardised testing and getting admitted to university. This in turn

results in them being trapped in a lower economic class of society and left to fend for themselves.

Foucault (1975-1976: 245-255) gives the following definition of modern racism in his *Society Must Be Defended* lectures:

> What in fact is racism? It is primarily a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power's control: the break between what must live and what must die […] It is a way of separating out the groups that exist within a population. It is, in short, a way of establishing a biological type of caesura within a population that appears to be a biological domain. This will allow power to treat that population as a mixture of races, or to be more accurate, to treat the species, to subdivide the species it controls, into the subspecies known, precisely so, as races.

In other words, no effort whatsoever will be made to proliferate those nations or groups that are allowed to die (metaphorically), because they are a danger to the super-race and must therefore be eliminated: so, these groups will be divided into those who are worth preserving for the greater good of the super-race, and those allowed to die. Migrants are often that group perceived to threaten the super-race (in this case, the citizens of a country). Although the Refugee Act 130 of 1998 stipulates that refugees are entitled to basic healthcare services in public healthcare facilities in South Africa, medical xenophobia in the form of negative attitudes and perceptions of healthcare providers towards non-national patients

still occurs. The main reason for this type of discrimination is that the healthcare workers do not understand the language the migrants are speaking.[2]

Foucault (1975-76: 245-255) states that "the death of the other; the death of the bad race, of the inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal) is something that will make life in general healthier […] the enemies who have to be done away with are not adversaries […] they are threats […] to the population", for example, under Nazism, because this movement quite literally lets one group of people live and others die (Jews, Slavs, mentally ill, the physically disabled, homosexuals).

Although the concept of racism in South Africa is complex, I think Foucault's concept of racism will enable us to properly guard against racism in our everyday lives, because racism is still quite prevalent in our society if we apply Foucault's new notion of race. Many journalists and academics regard poverty as the underlying cause for the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. My question is: why were no white foreigners targeted during any of these xenophobic attacks?

Stone (2013: 366) notes that "racism goes beyond the narrow issue of skin colour aesthetics" and "thrives in questions concerning health care, crime, incarceration, birth rates, mortality rates, insurance premiums, and the quality of schools in a given neighbourhood." It is often the case that the super-race is not even aware of the power relations at work in themselves, nor in their societies, and often assumes that "the plight of those allowed to die is due to a lack of will, ability, desire, etc., a plight

[2] The result is often the scapegoating of the migrants. In August 2022, the provincial Health Minister of Limpopo, Dr. Phopi Ramathuba, said on camera to a woman from Zimbabwe who was in a car accident in Harare, who came to a government hospital in Bela-Bela and was awaiting surgery, "you are killing my health system." She also said the patient should go to Zimbabwe to receive health care and that the patient was taking away health services from South African citizens, which she considered to be "unfair", while onlookers can be heard laughing and agreeing with the minister's comments.

that, if only ‘they’ would get their act together, could easily be overcome” (Stone 2013: 366).

2.6.2 Van Dijk’s argument

Because xenophobia is often rooted in racism, Van Dijk’s analysis of racist discourse can be considered useful for this study. Van Dijk (2016: 75-76) presents an analysis of racist discourse in Brazil, which is also relevant to the discourse regarding migrants in South Africa. He examines the prominent role of the denial of racism, especially among the elites, in many contemporary texts and discussions of ethnic relations. Various types of denial are examined in everyday conversations, press reports, and parliamentary debates. Among these forms of denial are disclaimers, euphemisms, excuses, negative discourse about minorities, and blaming of victims.

He defines racism as “a social system of racial or ethnic domination, consisting of two major subsystems: social cognition (prejudices, racist ideologies) underlying racist practices (discrimination)” (p. 75-76). He goes on to say that racist discourse is one of the discriminatory racist practices, and also the main source for the acquisition and propagation of racist preconceptions and beliefs. The social element of the theory of racism is not restricted to an account of everyday discriminatory practices in interaction, whether discursive or non-discursive, at the micro-level. More broadly it points to those groups and organisations that control the public discourse on immigrants and minorities, that is, the main source of the propagation of racist attitudes and ideologies. According to Van Dijk, this control, and hence domination, is exercised by the “symbolic elites”, who have privileged

access to the controlling public discourses in politics, the media, education, and business corporations. According to him, racism in Europe and the Americas has been a dominant system for centuries, authorising colonialism and slavery in the past, as well as anti-immigration policies, xenophobia, and racist parties in most European countries today.

The question is as to how controlling speakers enact their power through *discourse*. Van Dijk (1993: 249) argues that power always involves control, for example, where members who belong to one group exercise control over another group, where that control may be through action or cognition, in other words, a more powerful group will restrict the freedom of another group, as well as influence their minds. This does not only mean a direct control action, for example, where the police act against demonstrators. A modern and more effective power is mostly cognitive, and enacted by "persuasion, dissimilation or manipulation" so as to change the minds of others in that specific dominant group's interest, thereby "managing the minds of others is essentially a function of text and talk" (p. 249).

According to Van Dijk (1993: 302), such mind management is not always manipulative, but "may be enacted and reproduced by subtle routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear acceptable". He further states that critical discourse analysis is actually interested in power abuse, in other words, in how those who control power breach the laws, rules and principles of "democracy, equality and justice" (p. 302), as well as how the domination is contested by counter-powers. The dominance is often so subtle that it almost seems normal, where for example, male dominance over women or white over black, because the

minds of the dominated have been subtly controlled to the extent that they accept that dominance, and start acting in the interest of the powerful, out of their own free will. This is precisely the function of dominant discourse, namely to manufacture a consensus of dominance.

According to Van Dijk (1993: 302), power and dominance are usually “organised and institutionalised,” where social dominance is therefore not only exercised by an individual in a group, but is also condoned by its group members or legitimated by laws or enforced by the police, for example, in the case of racism or sexual harassment. This social, political and cultural organisation of dominance also implies a hierarchy of power: the power elites, some members of dominant groups and organisations have a special role in planning, decision-making, and control over the relations and processes of the enactment of power. How do these powerful speakers (power elite) enact their power in discourse? And through which discursive strategies are they able to influence their audiences? Van Dijk distinguishes between two dimensions of the discursive production of dominance: firstly, the production (enactment, expression) of dominance, and, secondly, the reception of such structures.

How is power enacted through discourse production? Van Dijk (1993: 303) states a crucial factor is privileged, controlled access to discourse through control of the “time, place, setting and the presence or absence of participants in such events”, in other words, “to control context”, for example, a doctor makes an appointment with his patients or tax auditors with tax-payers. A critical analysis of the access to these communicative events, which are illegal or illegitimate, for example, men exclude women from meetings or white people restrict the movement of black people, is

crucial. Through these exclusions and restrictions, it is then possible to identify *discourse* dominance, because “some voices are censored, some opinions are not heard, some perspectives ignored” (Van Dijk 1993: 303). This exclusion “may also mean that the less powerful are less quoted and less spoken about, so that two other forms of (passive) access are blocked”, but, even when present, members of a less powerful group may still be dominated by “convention, rule or law” (p. 303). One example may be when a chairperson organises discussions, and not everybody gets a turn to speak or attend the meeting; another may be when men exclude women from meetings or a policeman not allowing an immigrant to defend himself during an interrogation.

2.7 Conclusion

Foucault’s notion of power is important for this study, because he addresses the relationship between power and knowledge and how these are used as a form of social control through dominant institutions. His discourse theory proposes that the way in which we write and speak in our daily lives is shaped by the structures of power in our society. Through certain discourses, certain groups obtain power.

2.8 Henri Lefebvre’s Theory of Space is Power

2.9 Introduction to Lefebvre

Magnet Theatre’s work engages with space on a physical and a metaphorical level. For example, when considering their theatrical practice in the townships (when they moved theatre into the townships and to the town of Clanwilliam for the Clanwilliam Arts Project), a great deal of emphasis was placed on spatial aspects (Morris 2016:

225). It is therefore the case that theorists have often based explorations of Magnet Theatre's work on Lefebvre's theorisation of space.

There are many ways in which Magnet Theatre's work engages with space. Firstly, their physical theatre performances "incarnate, transform, dissect, traverse, rewrite, reinvent, re-mythologise, and represent the symbolic and physical space of theatrical production" (Morris 2016: 226). Secondly, Magnet Theatre metaphorically made space when they engaged thematically with routes in Africa and Southern Africa in productions such as *ingcwaba lendoda lise cankwe ndlela* [The grave of the man lies next to the road] (2009), *Inxeba Lomphilisi* [The Wound of the Healer] (2010-2014) and *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking* (2006-2016) (p. 226). Thirdly, they physically made space for theatre from 1987 until 2007, when they did not have a specific theatrical home yet. They obtained space for workshops, rehearsals, performances and administration by "renting, squatting, organising, inhabiting, and representing spaces – both indoors and outdoors – in custom-built theatres, as well as streets, containers, school halls and sports fields, prisons, museums, disused warehouses, and public open spaces in the city" (p. 226).

Magnet Theatre was continually making spaces into rehearsal, workshop or performance venues. This was a response to the lack of theatres in the townships, as well as to social and cultural needs of the timeframe in which they operated. They also tried to "make space" metaphorically. It would thus make sense to explore Magnet Theatre's work based on Lefebvre's theorisation of space.

2.10 Space is power

Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) (Elden 2007: 101), a French Marxist theorist, became prominent during the 1930s with his first translation of Marx's[3] 1844 *Manuscripts*. His first ground-breaking works, such as *La conscience mystifiée* and *Le materialisme dialectique* were also published at that time. He continued to publish until his death, producing 72 books on topics such as social space, urban politics, everyday life, structuralism, existentialism, state theory, social struggles and Karl Marx. Compared to his contemporaries, Jean-Paul Satre and Louis Althusser, he is relatively unknown. His most significant work was published in 1974 (*La production de l' espace*). This book, *The Production of Space* (1991), is his best-known work. It has been well received in the fields of geography and urban studies, but not so much in the fields of political science and philosophy. Lefebvre was a critic of structuralism (Louis Althusser's version) and existentialism (Jean-Paul Satre's version). He joined the French Communist Party (PCF) in 1928, but was excluded from the party in 1958 due to his critique of Stalinism. Most of his works were never translated in English, which must have limited their wider reception.

McCann (1999: 166-167) writes that until the early 1990s, Anglo-American geographers' involvement with Lefebvre's work had been very limited, especially prior to the translation of his most important work, *The Production of Space* (1991). Before the translation of this work, the understanding of his corpus had been negotiated by a handful of interpreters, with the necessary linguistic skills to work through the French originals. It was not until the 1990s that Lefebvre's work on space

[3] Karl Marx (5 May 1818-14 May 1883) was a German revolutionary, sociologist, historian, and economist. He published (with Friedrich Engels) *The Communist Manifesto*, the most well-known pamphlet in the history of the socialist movement. He is also the author of the movement's most important book, *Das Kapital*, which forms the basis of the body of belief known as Marxism. www.britannica.com.

and urbanism became central to many discussions in Anglo-American geography. The translation of *The Production of Space* (1991) increased accessibility to his work and has since been complemented with numerous and extended discussions of his theorisation of space.

Magnet Theatre's work often coheres around a spatial metaphor, for example, if we examine their work in Clanwilliam during the Clanwilliam Arts Project. In their objectives on their website, Magnet Theatre states that they want to make performances and the arts more accessible by taking theatre and arts education out of conventional spaces into rural and peri-urban communities.

2.11 Lefebvre's concepts of "space" and "production"

Lefebvre (1991: 73) states that space is not a "thing", nor a container (p. 94) either. Space is also not a subject or an object (p. 92). Space is a product and a means of production (p. 85). Space is a result and a cause, as well as a product and a producer (p. 142). Social space is "always, and simultaneously, both a field of action […] and a basis of action" (p. 191). Social space "interrelates everything that is produced either by nature or by society – living beings, things, objects, works, signs and symbols" (p. 101).

Lefebvre (1991: 181) states that spaces have boundaries, where space has a form and therefore space is circumscribed. Social space also has boundaries (both physical and conceptual) which are socially produced, but always "interpenetrates and superimpose" other spaces (p. 86). People "demarcate, beacon or sign […] space, leaving traces that are both symbolic and practical" (Lefebvre 1991: 192).

The boundaries of space are communicated by either marking it physically or through discourse and signs so that it becomes symbols (p.141).

Lefebvre argues humans create the space in which they live: “it is a project shaped by interests of classes, experts, the grassroots and other contending forces” (Molotch 1993: 887). By “space” he does not simply mean the space we inherited from nature, he argues that space is produced and reproduced through human intentions, even if consequences develop, which have not been anticipated and even though space influences and constraints those who produce it.

According to Molotch (1993: 887- 888), the production of space could also mean that space is like other economic goods, for example, the built environment, which can be bought and sold. Economies produce goods and services, but also spaces. In other words, Lefebvre expands the meaning of space: it is not merely a container or a milieu, but it is the setting upon which all activities occur. It is even more than a setting upon which all activities occur, because, for example, walls and roads privilege certain kinds of activities and not others, as well as support certain kinds of projects and not others. On top of that, beyond the material, there are symbols and styles that also influence behaviour, for example, certain types of suburban architecture, certain types of houses, which falsely imply real choice. Thus, space is not simply a list of ingredients or a medium, but "an interlinkage of geographic form, built environment, symbolic meanings, and routines of life” (p. 888). Molotch writes that, according to Lefebvre, globalisation created confrontation amongst diverse values and chosen arrangements. The stakes are very high for the different groups, where classes or fractions of classes cannot represent themselves, unless they generate a space in which to do so.

People in society can deliberately produce signs to make objects take on meanings that are “culturally created, stored, disseminated, and communicated,” for example, the borders of a nation state are physically marked by the borders of that state and these borders are controlled by the state. There is a distinction between that state’s citizens and non-citizens (who is inside and who is outside the border) in the form of who has a passport and who does not. These passports will grant some access and others not and it will provide rights for some and not for others. The passport is thus a sign: it is a symbol of political power which constitutes an inside and an outside of the state. The borders of the state are usually the result of a history of wars and political struggles. For example, many countries in Southern Africa supported the fight against apartheid and provided training and refuge for freedom fighters, but now migrants from those countries are often the victims of xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

2.12 Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space*

For the purposes of this dissertation, focus is placed on Lefebvre’s concept of “making space”, as well as his notion of *power over space is power over life,* which he wrote about in his book, *The Production of Space*. Lefebvre (1991: 27) writes that “social space is a social product […] the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action […] in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power”. This is Lefebvre’s main argument.

Lefebvre (1991: 116 & 407) approaches the study of space in *The Production of Space* (1991) as neither a subject nor an object, but rather as a “social reality” (i.e., a

set of relations and forms). He defines space in three ways: firstly, he identifies physical space as nature, which surrounds us when humans have not yet interfered with this space. Secondly, he writes that mental space is the sphere reserved for all logical and mathematical categories. He is mainly interested in the third type of space: social space. Social space implies that humans and their intentions form an integral part of spaces: “theoretical thought […] has re-embraced the body along with space, and as a generator (or producer) of space” (p. 407).

2.12.1 Lefebvre’s notion: there is a relationship between space and politics

Busquet (2012: 2) notes that during the 1940s, Lefebvre started to become interested in everyday life in the modern world, which also led to an interest in city and urban life. He became interested in the everyday activities of individuals and groups, which lay the foundations for social practice. Lefebvre was a Marxist theorist who criticised the exploitation (and alienation) of the working classes. According to Lefebvre, social relationships are reproduced through these everyday activities. Based on this reasoning, it must then also be possible to change social relationships of power through daily activities, because these activities are able to reproduce a different outcome.

Busquet (2012: 2) states that the city can be regarded as the “backdrop” of everyday life. The city is alienating due to urbanism, because the state and the capitalist system use urbanism to organise space for social production and reproduction. He notes that Lefebvre has devoted himself to criticism of the state, and capitalist production. This criticism was not new, and other ideological systems can also be criticised. Lefebvre, however, criticises capitalism through space and regards space

as a possible tool of change. In other words, social space is a social product, space is political and it is a political product. It is a political product because it is the result of conflicting practices that take place to serve the interests of a particular group or class. All ideologies serve a particular group or groups, capitalism is not the only ideology which does this, but the important point is to apply this information to grasp what has been happening in South Africa, and why Magnet Theatre tried to undo the unjust political practices of the past. The political practices created spaces that only served the one group of people in South Africa with the exclusion of other groups.

2.12.2 "There is a politics of space, because space is political"

Space (who may use a specific space and who may not) is often the result of a certain ideology. In South Africa, we must cope with the legacy of the apartheid regime, which greatly influenced and continues to influence the spatial configuration of the towns and cities in the country. Lefebvre's criticism of capitalism reveals how it influences the rich and the poor, and is helpful in examining space, power relations and class differences, but it is important to keep in mind that all ideologies influence people's lives to a greater or lesser degree. Although Lefebvre argues from a Marxist point of view in a European context, certain aspects of his argument are relevant to South Africa, especially in an unequal society such as ours, where space remains allocated according to class.

We have more of a shortage of space, especially in the densely populated cities of the highly industrialised countries of the world. Social space is allocated according to class. Social planning, by architects and town planners, reproduces the racist class structure inherited from apartheid, resulting in either an abundance of space for the

rich or too little for the poor. More now than ever, the class struggle is connected to space.

Elden (2007: 106) states that it is not only in cities in which this happens, but also in under-developed countries, in rural areas, as well as in the marginal areas in capitalist countries, for example, some neighbourhoods where poorer people live. For example, the township, Khayelitsha, in Cape Town, is situated far from the business centre of the city. In not a dissimilar way, across the world, ghettos are situated on the peripheries of cities. Although local studies are necessary, it is necessary to examine the whole picture, for example, how colonialism[4] excluded certain groups and included other groups. According to Lefebvre, one of the reasons why capitalism has survived until now, is due to its ability to construct and reconstruct the relations of space and the world markets. Therefore, it can be argued that *there is a politics of space, because space is political*.

Le Roux and Napier (2022: 6) argue that apart from the fact that townships in South Africa are situated on the peripheries of cities, the "planning, zoning and building regulations are still influenced by colonial systems where standards are high and beyond the reach of most urban dwellers." This leaves people no choice but to locate in unsafe spaces in shelters built with temporary materials where they are at risk of fires, floods, and heat. Le Roux and Napier (2022: 6) suggest that city authorities ought to develop a more positive response to informal settlements to improve life in these settlements. The reality of urban migrants stretches well into the

[4] Borocz and Sarkar write that colonialism is a practice, as well as a worldview. As a practice, it involves the domination of a society by settlers from another society. As a worldview, colonialism is a "global geopolitical, economic, and cultural doctrine" which is rooted in the worldwide expansion of West European capitalism that survived until well after the collapse of colonial empires. – Borocz, J. & Sarkar, M. in Anheier, H.K. & Juergensmeyer, M. 2012. Colonialism. *Encyclopaedia of Global Studies*, Vol 1, https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452218557.n75, SAGE Publications, Inc., p 229-234.

future, and should be faced and addressed with a sense of urgency. eThekwini Municipality has upgraded unplanned, informal settlements. According to Le Roux and Napier (p. 6), less-regulated development, rather than ignoring the challenge of informal settlement growth, is necessary to cope with this overwhelming challenge.

As noted earlier, it is necessary to consider that Lefebvre was quite critical of capitalism. It is also necessary to note that contemporary town planners and architects will take the above-mentioned factors into consideration, but there will always be a competition for space, especially where expensive villas have been built, for example, in Clifton or Camps Bay (near Cape Town). The owners of these expensive properties will also try to protect the value of their properties by opposing developments for low-cost housing in the vicinity of their neighbourhoods. These are complex matters, illustrating the way in which *space defines power*.

The influx of migrants from rural areas to urban areas has placed extra strain on the infrastructures of cities. To make matters worse, the influx occurs into those areas (i.e. townships), where there are already socio-economic problems and where the infrastructure is taking the most strain. Monyai and Chivanga (2020: 1) argue that although laws have changed regarding this issue, many obstacles remain. The "challenge" they refer to is the challenge of equitable forms of urban settlement. Informal settlements continue to grow at an alarming pace. This challenge is made worse for the people who live in these townships, because they often live far away from their workplaces and the transport system is sometimes dysfunctional and expensive (for them). In other words, many obstacles regarding equitable housing in South Africa remain.

2.13 Conclusion

It is evident from the above discussions that there are connections between Foucault's notion of discourse and power/knowledge and Lefebvre's notion of space. The discussion about Lefebvre's theory of *space is power* also entails that discourse plays an important role in the process of creating and maintaining a space. Discourses by powerful people determine who can live or work where and who not (i.e. the power over these spaces are created and maintained through discourses – they are socially constructed).

Gregory et al. (2012: 2) argue as follows:

> Centers and peripheries are always socially constructed. They appear at various scales, ranging from a primary group of persons to a global perspective of world cities. The center of a social system is the place from which the rest of the social system is ruled, guided, and coordinated. The center is a point of reference and orientation; it provides perspectives and worldviews on how "the other" should be seen. [all sic]

The groups or individuals who are closest to the centre, for example, of a city, enjoy the benefit of being close to the centre (i.e. it gives them power). Centres and peripheries are socially constructed, which means that it does not happen accidentally that a specific group is close to the centre of power (physically and symbolically). From these centres (of cities or towns) the social systems in those societies are ruled, because the centre constitutes a point of reference and provides perspectives of how "the others", for example, the migrants, should be treated.

Discourse is the main process that gives certain groups in the centre their power. Discourse (Hall 1997: 73) influences the way in which ideas (and laws or policies) are put into practice and these discourses are used as a tool to control others. For example, politicians in parliament can abolish or proclaim laws about who is allowed to live where. These proclamations are often also justified in the media (also through discourse), but resistance is always possible, because power can circulate between oppressors and the oppressed (Foucault 1980: 98). Circulation of power is possible, because power is always in a state of flux. Power is regarded as unstable and it can be challenged at any time in the process.

An example of how power has been challenged is the homeless people sleeping under the bridges in Sea Point in Cape Town (Shoba 2021) who are trying to make space for themselves in the city's centre after the government has failed to provide jobs and homes for them. This can be seen as a form of passive revolt. Owners of businesses in the City Bowl and home owners in rich suburbs will resist in turn, because this tendency may cause their valuable properties to decrease in value and they may associate the homeless with crime.

Secondly, Fourie and Adendorff (2015: 10) support the above argument. They note that it is with regard to the creation of an "other" space on the margins of society (i.e., far from the centre) that there is also a link between Foucault and Lefebvre's work. The creation of such an "other" space on the margins of society is directly related to how a society's power relations dictate who may live where or not. Foucault introduced a "power-knowledge-space complex", which allows for those spatial inhabitants who possess the power to banish other inhabitants with less power to the peripheries of cities. For example, blacks were banished to Khayelitsha under the

Nationalist Party's ideology of apartheid, outside Cape Town, and Operation Dudula today wants migrants out of our country. People with less power are thus called outsiders and labelled as Other.

Fourie and Adendorff (2015: 10) write:

> Lefebvre's lived spaces are the spaces in which otherness becomes prominent, due to the fact that through society inhabiting a space, having given it certain attributes, that society's power dynamics become apparent. This occurs because these attributions made by a society are intrinsically based in power and knowledge, resonant of Foucault's power-knowledge-space complex. Through social practices which occur in a given place, representations of space are made, which lead to the existence of representational spaces.

The process of othering has been described by Jenson (2011: 65) as the "discursive process by which powerful groups who may or may not make up a numerical majority, define subordinate groups into existence in a reductionist way which ascribes problematic and/or inferior characteristics to these subordinate groups." This process keeps the powerful in power and helps them to gain even more power, through the subjugation of their subordinates. As a reaction to such a subjugation, the others can choose to either accept this form of banishment (to the periphery of society), or to resist it (through various violent or non-violent means).

I agree with Foucault's and Lefebvre's theories: there should be an inclusive discourse with all groups participating to solve these issues. To be able to change the lives of the homeless, the poor and migrants in our cities, we must first change

the spaces they occupy. All inhabitants of a city should participate in creating their own spaces (by partaking in the relevant discourses about space) so that they can live safe, meaningful and healthy lives in these self-created spaces. For example, migrants and poor people should also be included in discourses about the space they occupy to enable them to create safe spaces in which to live.

CHAPTER 3: MAGNET THEATRE'S CONCEPT OF "MAKING SPACE" REGARDING THEIR MIGRANT PLAYS

3.1 Introduction

The main focus of this study is Magnet Theatre's notion of "making space". Magnet Theatre is probably one of the most innovative and socially conscious theatre companies in South Africa, known for its unique and engaging productions. One of the ways in which they have contributed to the South African theatre scene is through their contribution to the migration play genre. Magnet Theatre has been at the forefront of this genre, producing several thought-provoking plays that have resonated with audiences both in South Africa and abroad.

In many of their plays, for example, *Every Year, Every Day, We are Walking* (2006), *ingcwaba lendoda lise cankwe ndlela* [the grave of the man is next to the road] *(2009)*, *Die Vreemdeling [The Stranger] (2010)* and *Inxeba Lomphilisi* [The Wound of the Healer] *(2010)*, they focus on migration, as well as aspects of the migration experience migration experience, such as xenophobia. In the introduction of *The Magnet Theatre 'Migration' Plays* Fleishman explains (2012: 6) that Magnet Theatre is committed to engaging with and reflecting the landscape of South Africa, especially the "contested histories and spaces", amongst others, the migrants.

To be able to see Magnet Theatre's contribution to the new genre of migration plays in context, it is necessary to first establish what migrants and migration are. Migration and xenophobia as global issues will then be discussed, followed by the influence of these global discourses on South Africa. A discussion of the response of South African theatre makers on migration and xenophobia will then follow. Magnet Theatre

has created many migrant plays by using tools, such as the moving body and collective creation.

Many contemporary theatre performances focus on social issues (e.g., gender, racial and/or economic inequities, etc.). Currently, these issues are often linked to the global prevalence of large-scale migration of individuals, but even of whole populations. At the 2018 World Congress of the International Federation for Theatre Research in Belgrade, more than 1 000 academics and practitioners of theatre and performing arts from over 50 countries congregated to explore the theme of *Theatre and Migration - Theatre, Nation and Identity: Between Migration and Stasis.* In the introduction of the catalogue of this Congress, Professor Ivana Vujič (2018: 5), a member of the organising committee of the Congress, writes that the "term *migration* immediately invokes one of the central political, social, humanitarian and cultural issues of our time".

The questions grappled with at this Congress constitute an example of how theatre studies focus on migration as a social issue: How have theatre responded to issues of displacement and Otherness? How can the notion of migration be employed to understand issues of cultural cross-fertilisation and transfer?

Academics across the world have also explored this social issue within contemporary theatre studies, for example, *Envisioning Asylum/Engendering Crisis: Performance and Forced Migration Ten Years On* (Cox & Wake 2018); *Performing Manaaki and New Zealand Refugee Theatre* (Hazou 2018); *Performing Statelessness in Europe* (Wilmer 2018); *What Can Theatre Do about the Refugee Crisis? Enacting Commitment and Navigating Complicity in Performance Interventions* (Marschall

2018); *Aesthetic Citizenship: Immigration and Theatre in Twenty-First-Century Paris* (Fisek 2017); *Migration and Performance in Contemporary Ireland: Towards a New Interculturalism* (McIvor 2016); *Theatre & Migration* (Cox 2014); *Staging Asylum: Contemporary Australian Plays about Refugees* (Cox 2013); *CMI (A Certain Maritime Incident): Introduction* (McCallum 2006); and *'Politics Begins as Ethics': Levinasian Ethics and Australasian Performance Concerning Refugees* (Burvill 2008).

Because migration is a very broad topic, the focus of this chapter will be narrowed down to cover only a few aspects of migration to serve as background information to put Magnet Theatre's notion of "making space" into context.

A brief exploration of global discourses about migration and xenophobia will follow, because global migration issues are rapidly increasing in occurrence and complexity, with South Africa being no exception to this rule. An overview of the history of migration theatre in South Africa will then be given. Finally, a more detailed discussion of Magnet Theatre's concept of "making space" will follow.

3.2 A few definitions of migration and migrants

Since the earliest times, migration has resulted from a search of either work or other economic opportunities, to study, to escape conflict, terrorism, war or persecution, the violation of their human rights, as well as in response to disasters or environmental factors.

Four recent definitions of what a migrant is, are given below, followed by a short discussion of migration.

The United Nations Migration Agency (IOM)[5] defines a migrant as:

> any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.

This provides a broad definition that serves to focus attention on the fact that people migrate for different reasons. Politicians, the police and anti-immigrant groups often fail to distinguish between groups of migrants, for example, some migrants are asylum seekers, however, economic migrants are usually only in search of a better life for themselves and their families.

Cox[6] (2014: 7) describes a migrant as follows:

> A migrant can be a person who leaves one home and makes another, or one with multiple homes, or none, or a person who eschews geographical fixity altogether. Migrants can be individuals, families or political communities. They may move by choice or by compulsion. They may be welcome or shunned. And each of these contingencies can bleed into another.

In addition, this definition emphasises that migrants may indeed have one or multiple homes, or no home at all. Migrants can either be individuals, or they can be groups

[5] The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) extended operations to South Africa in 1995. IOM provides a "comprehensive response to the humanitarian needs of migrants, internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities through humanitarian direct assistance, recreational activities, and a variety of other efforts. IOM Global is a global intergovernmental organization [sic] in the field of migration" (southafrica.iom.int [Accessed 15/07/2022]).

[6] Dr. Emma Cox is the Head of Department Drama, Theatre and Dance at the Royal Holloway, University of London in Surrey and is involved with the Centre for International Theatre and Performance Research. Her research often focuses on the intersections of migration, memory, and place in contemporary culture. She is the author of *Performing Non-citizenship* (2015), *Theatre and Migration* (2014) and she was the Editor of the play, *Staging Asylum* (2013). [re.royalholloway.ac.uk]

of people, for example, the Huguenots[7] (French Protestants) in the 16th and 17th centuries, who fled to South Africa in fear of religious persecution.

Although it is true that migration can be regarded as a process by which people relocate to another place, it should be guarded against regarding all migrants as dangerous others, and migration as a worldwide crisis. Migrants relocate to foreign places for many different reasons, and these reasons should be taken into consideration.

Cox (2014: 3) notes that migration encompasses all "encounters with foreignness":

> Even when we exclude its non-human forms, "migration" is a word that encompasses a lot. What we can say is that whether it is thought of in terms of individuals (immigrant, expatriate, temporary worker, exile, refugee, itinerant cosmopolitan, nomad, et cetera) or collectives (colonial settlement, diaspora, slave or convict transportation, trafficking, displacement), migration is, at its heart, about encounters with foreignness – with foreign people, and with foreign places. These are, it may be supposed, ingredients of good storytelling.

It is probably safe to say that international migration is likely to increase over the next decade, because migration drivers, for example, economic disparities and pressures worldwide, human rights violations, war, the rapid rate of urbanisation, as well as population growth, are likely to intensify. It would make sense to create new opportunities for a mutually beneficial movement of migrants across the world, but

[7] The Huguenots were French Protestants who, due to religious persecution, were forced to flee France to countries, for example, South Africa in the 16th and 17th centuries. See www.nationalhuguenotsociety.org [Accessed 16/08/2022]

that is not just going to happen automatically. Solutions for migration would be to protect the human rights of migrants, to eliminate migrant exploitation (including human trafficking), to protect migrants against discrimination and xenophobic attacks, to improve public perceptions of migrants, to stop conflicts between locals and migrants, to integrate migrants into our country's development planning, and to fight extreme poverty in local communities.

Can performance or theatre assist in changing ideas about migration, as well as "make space" for new ideas? Before we can answer this question, we must briefly explore global discourses about migration in order to better grasp the situation in South Africa.

3.3 Migration: A local and global issue

3.3.1 Some global discourses about migration and xenophobia

Migration is a global challenge, and often the result of conflict, economic inequalities, human rights violations, or other events which seriously disturbed the order in many places across the world. Forced migration has impacted negatively on the world and has resulted in pressure on resources, pressure on each country to protect their lower and middle classes, an increased level of pollution, and racial discrimination. It is important to explore global trends, because South African responses to migrants are symptomatic of such.

The creation of nation states during the 19th and 20th centuries gave rise to notions of belonging and citizenship tied to a specific geographic space. As a result, worldwide migration is regarded as a "crisis" (Erwin 2017: 4) and a "social problem" and nation

states fear a “flood” of migrants to their “stable” states. These fears have in turn resulted in “ludicrous” responses, for example, Donald Trump’s idea of building a wall to keep migrants out of the USA (p. 4). Although people migrate for many different reasons and come from many different backgrounds, they are all stereotyped as “foreigners” and are often regarded as one “indistinguishable mass” (p. 4).

Erwin (2017: 4) notes as follows:

> Sensationalist (at times hysterical) commentary from the media and some politicians worldwide, positions migrants as dangerous others, this in turn serves a variety of agendas within the nation state. Local and global systems of privilege and power sculpt deep inequalities between citizens within a state. Globally, there are reasons for this phenomenon.

The flow of migrants into a country “challenges the integrity of the state” (Klotz 2000: 833), resulting as it does in a change in the political community with a bigger demand on resources, which forces states to “make critical political, economic and ethical choices”. The way in which a state chooses to demarcate migrants (“illegal aliens”) serves to define that state’s citizenship, nationality, and acceptable cultural characteristics, that is, who belongs to the community and who not. Globalisation (with an increased economic competition) has put states under pressure in the sense that the state must protect its lower- and middle-class citizens, but also must integrate successfully externally (globally): “… globalisation undermines the ability of states to provide both security and welfare to their populations, thus challenging the traditional conceptualisation of the state” (p. 833). According to Klotz, during the apartheid regime the Nationalist Party officials managed to create an “inhospitable

environment for Africans" (p. 833) by refusing to grant any legal basis for migrants other than temporary permits and sanctions kept South Africa economically cut off from the rest of the world.

Klotz (2000: 833-834) describes South Africa's new more "normal" position from 1994 onwards as follows:

> South Africa re-entered a substantially altered international system, where increased capital, population and information flows, intensified cultural interactions, and the expanding scope of global governance all create new challenges to national autonomy. South Africa now struggles to become economically competitive; demands for it to contribute to regional peacekeeping efforts escalate; the country finds itself the locus for people seeking jobs or fleeing regional conflicts. The increasing (legal and illegal) flow of people across South Africa's borders is simply a very visible reminder of these new global realities.

Although Klotz refers here to the new more "normal" position of South Africa in 2000, the country is still struggling to become economically competitive and the demands for peacekeeping efforts have escalated ever more so since. He argues (2000: 834) that race still plays a role in xenophobia in many parts of the world. Migrants are often labelled as foreigners, regardless of their actual legal status, for example, in Europe, radical right-wing parties often engage in anti-immigrant discourses and even violent attacks against migrants have taken place. South African responses to migrants are symptomatic of global trends. Like all other states, South Africa as a state continuously redefines its identity by "re(creating) 'outsiders'" (p. 834): what is

meant by the terms “foreigner” or “alien” may vary or change over time, as social context also changes. Not only has the 1994 transition “opened the policy-making process” (p. 836), but it has also made leaders more sensitive to a broader range of views. There has been a dramatic shift in regional and global politics and this placed new issues, such as migration, on the foreign policy agenda.

The “laager mentality” (Klotz 2000: 836) persists, although the images of what is threatened and who is allowed within the laager has now expanded even further. During the 1970s, the military dominated South Africa and all domestic unrest was blamed on a “communist insurgency” (p. 836), which was a “total onslaught” (p. 836) backed by the Soviet Union. At present, new external enemies have been identified, and they are the migrants who infiltrate across the country’s borders.

According to Klotz, South Africans still presume themselves to be superior to the rest of the African continent in terms of politics and economics, and discourses demonstrate a near consensus about needing to keep the rest of Africa at bay. These ideas are often reinforced by politicians, foreign policies, and discourses over migration. Controversy over the number of illegal immigrants in South Africa constitutes one aspect of the new onslaught, with estimates in recent studies, often “using somewhat dubious methodologies” (p. 836), and with the difference ranging from two to ten million unauthorised migrants. Another aspect of the numbers debate is the failure to distinguish between asylum seekers and other types of refugees, for example, until 1993, South Africa refused to acknowledge the presence of Mozambicans as refugees who fled their war-torn country. Even legal residents, for example, asylum seekers with paperwork in order, often remain subject to violence. According to Klotz, street vendors, for example, “have borne the brunt of anti-

foreigner animosity" (p. 836). Africa "remains the mental location of the threat" (p. 836). What apartheid defined as the "black threat", South Africans in general now apply this mind-set to the whole of Africa: the *amakwerekwere.*[8] Africa is still perceived as a place "rife with crime and political instability" (Klotz 2000: 836).

Often, West Africans, and Nigerians in particular, become the stereotypical criminals, followed by Mozambicans and Zimbabweans (Klotz 2000: 839). Innumerable reports link illegal migrants with crimes ranging from the drugs trade, car-theft syndicates, and covert weapons. One report even linked taxi wars to hired assassins from Mozambique. We must guard against a general discourse of threat regarding migrants in South Africa. The discourse creates significant problems such as xenophobia, which results in incidences of violence, but this discourse also "detract[s] from designing successful policies" (p. 840):

> The overtly racist component of the apartheid version of the security state has been discarded and replaced by a xenophobia articulating a "national" identity which can encompass South Africans of various hues and most classes. How deep do the socialisation effects of the total strategy discourse run? Is this a vocabulary of the elite, perhaps especially the media?

It is evident that race still plays a part in xenophobia in many parts of the world, as well as in South Africa. Globalisation (and an increased competition for resources) has put countries worldwide under pressure to protect their lower and middle classes, but also to integrate into the global economy successfully. The media and

[8] *Makwerekwere* or *amakwerekwere* is a derogatory colloquialism for foreigners, and especially illegal immigrants, in South Africa. See www.globalvoices.org [Accessed 15/07/2022]

politicians worldwide play a role in regarding migrants as a problem, a crisis, and a burden.

3.4 A summary of the history of migration in South Africa

South Africa's history is a history of migration. This history of migration in South Africa started long before Jan van Riebeeck came to the Cape in 1652. The movement of black Africans occurred before and after the white settlers came to the country. South Africa has also become, in recent years, a top immigration destination for migrants from the rest of Africa due to its relatively stable economic status and an industrialised economy, especially compared to the rest of Africa. Keuris (2020: 3) states correctly that a historical overview of migration in South Africa will have to mention all the people who came to this country. Firstly, the Khoisan in the Cape; secondly, the migrating black tribes from the north; thirdly, the arrival of the first Europeans, such as, the Dutch in 1652 and the British settlers in 1820; fourthly, the slaves who were imported from Indonesia, as well as other countries; and, finally, the migration of people from neighbouring countries, including Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, as well as other African countries (Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, amongst others).

Keuris (2020: 3) notes as follows:

> While one would have expected that after the demise of the Nationalist Party and its ideology of apartheid in 1994 and the African National Congress (ANC) came into power, to see an influx of migrants from neighbouring countries, few people would have predicted the upsurge in xenophobic attacks that followed in its wake. In many of the neighbouring countries – notably Zimbabwe and

> Mozambique – decades of political turmoil had led to failed economies. Citizens of neighbouring countries hoped that in a new South Africa (led by the South-African freedom fighters and supported by these neighbouring countries) that South Africa would welcome them with open arms after the struggle had been completed.

It was to be expected that there would be an increase in migration to South Africa after the apartheid regime was abolished, especially since many of the neighbouring countries supported and were also involved in the struggle against the apartheid regime. What could not be predicted was the simultaneous upsurge of xenophobic attacks which followed. It seems as if the post-apartheid era South Africa has failed to deal with migrants from the rest of Africa.

Fleishman (2012: 6) states in the Introduction to *The Magnet Theatre 'Migration' Plays*:

> The end of apartheid and the advent of democracy have resulted in the forceful reintegration of South Africa in the global economy. One result of this has been the development of a new migratory sub-system centred on South Africa. Rather than attracting international migration from Europe and Asia, as has been the case prior to 1994, this new system attracts migrants from surrounding states in sub-Saharan Africa and seems intimately connected to the existence of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). At the same time, internal circular migration patterns set up during apartheid, rather than declining post-1994, have continued to grow. While South Africa experiences an outflow of citizens, particularly from the White population, after

> the abolishment of apartheid, the country still experiences an inflow of migrants from other African countries. In the media, this outflow is referred to as the “brain drain”. Migration patterns set up during apartheid have also continued to grow. There has been a change: this change is that the themes of Black theatre have changed since post-1994.

3.5 A summary of the history of migration theatre in South Africa

For the purposes of this study, it is necessary to briefly explore the history of migration theatre in South Africa. Labour migrants “have been part of the South African socio-historical context for a long time: they worked either as farm labourers or as mineworkers on the gold or diamond mines” (Keuris 2020: 11). This reality was reflected in plays as early as the 1970s. Black performances during the 1970s especially represented a response to the apartheid regime of the South African government. Themes of oppression and exploitation became a major concern with pass arrests often featuring as a theme.

Peterson[9] (1994: 44) summarises the themes of black performance from 1973 to 1986 as follows:

> The themes of oppression and exploitation in South Africa have been the major concern of black performance. The most frequent depictions have been those of pass arrests, the humiliation experienced at the medical examinations conducted at the labour bureau, petty bureaucracy, police violence, prison conditions, examples of racial discrimination, the struggles of migrant workers,

[9] Bhekizizwe Peterson, Professor of African Literature at the University of the Witwatersrand, was an award-winning author, a leading practitioner of working-class theatre, a literary critic, an intellectual and a mentor. His research themes were youth culture, popular music forms, the visual arts, Black intellectual history and autobiographies. He passed away in 2021. [www.wits.ac.za] Accessed 28/09/2022

conditions in the hostel compounds, and the breakdown of moral and cultural values in the townships.

Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona's *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* (1972) portrays the "political reality of the 1970s" (Keuris 2020: 11-12). The Bantu homeland and the pass system imposed restrictions on black freedom of movement inside the country. The exploitation of black mineworkers by white mine managers during the apartheid era was portrayed in *The Hungry Earth* (1979) by Maishe Maponja. Zakes Mda's award-winning *The Hill* (1979),[10] portrays the reality of migrant workers from Lesotho. This play is set in Lesotho, presenting men waiting to go and work on the mines near Johannesburg. This play deals with the bad treatment of miners, how husbands leave their wives in Lesotho, never to return, and how prostitutes often prey on miners for their wages. Astrid von Kotze (1988) discusses plays dealing with migrants in her study of the Workers Theatre movement in South Africa. *Why Lord?* And *Once Bitten, Twice Shy* both portray the contradictions the characters experience between urban life and traditional beliefs, as well as the influence of working in a foreign country on family life. Coloured people were also affected by the apartheid laws from the 1960s until the 1980s. When the Group Areas Act was implemented, many coloured people were displaced, for example, during the District Six[11] removals. These removals and the socio-economic and political effects of the apartheid era were portrayed in Adam Small's[12] *Kanna hy kô hystoe* (1965), *Joanie*

[10] Zakes Mda is one of South Africa's best-known playwrights. He was born in 1948 in Herschel in the Eastern Cape and became an author, poet, playwright and academic who lectures abroad as Professor of Creative Writing at Ohio University. See www.mambaonline.org [Accessed 17/08/2022]

[11] District Six became the Sixth Municipal District of Cape Town in 1867. On 11th February 1966 District Six was declared a white area under the Group Areas Act of 1950. By 1982, more than 60 000 people were forcibly removed to outlying areas known as the Cape Flats, and their houses in District Six were flattened by bulldozers. See www.districtsix.co.za [Accessed 15/07/2022]

[12] Adam Small was a poet, playwright, academic, philosopher, columnist, social worker, Black Consciousness activist, one of the founders of UWC and the recipient of many accolades and prizes. A common theme found throughout his works is the focus on political, social, and economic effects of apartheid, especially on the Coloured community. See www.sahistory.org.za [Accessed 15/07/2022]

Galant-hulle (1978) and *Krismis van Map Jacobs* (1983). In *Kanna hy kô hystoe*, the family places their hopes on Kanna, who had managed to escape the socio-economic realities of the family by migrating overseas. He returns home to South Africa for his mother Makiet's funeral, but then tells his family that he is going back to his “home” after the funeral. The family saw his return as his homecoming, he is coming “hystoe”, but Kanna now thinks his home is overseas.

Elsa Joubert’s novel, *Die Swerfjare van Poppie Nongena* (1978), was also adapted as a play, titled *Poppie – Die Drama* (1984) by Elsa Joubert and Sandra Kotzé (Keuris 2020: 13). It was then also translated into English in 1980, with the title *The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena* and has since been translated into many other languages. Christiaan Olwagen also produced a film based on the play, which was released in 2020 (*Poppie Nongena*). Elsa Joubert wrote the real-life story of an Afrikaans-speaking isiXhosa mother and captured her struggles during the apartheid era. Poppie struggled to keep her family together during a time when pass laws dictated their daily lives. From this brief overview the pre-1994 plays were mainly influenced by the apartheid era and laws that regulated the movement of black and coloured people in South Africa. Blacks and coloured became migrants in their own country.

3.6 Magnet Theatre’s notion of “making space”

Magnet Theatre, a Cape Town-based physical theatre company, under the auspices of Mark Fleishman, Jennie Reznek and Mandla Mbothwe, has made the largest contribution to post-1994, contemporary South African migrant theatre. From 2006 to 2012 they produced plays such as *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking (2006)*,

ingcwaba lendoda lise cankwe ndlela [the grave of the man is next to the road] (2009), *Die Vreemdeling [The Stranger] (2010), Inxeba Lomphilisi [The Wound of a Healer] (2010)*.

These plays were developed through research projects based on three different routes: firstly, the N7 from Cape Town to Namibia; secondly, the N2 where migrants travel from Cape Town to the Eastern Cape; and, thirdly, the route from Cape Town to Cairo, which is also, a route travelled by Africans who came to seek a better life in Cape Town. All of these plays were in-house productions employing physical theatre, rather than being script-based. These plays explore different themes than the themes explored pre-1994, for example, migration, xenophobia, and ethnically-based violence.

The main focus of this study is Magnet Theatre's notion of "making space". The reason for this focus is to explore Magnet Theatre's belief that the theatre is a space where social issues (such as migrant issues) can be explored and whether existing perceptions in South Africa can be challenged and changed. In other words, through the exploration of Magnet Theatre's migration plays, the aim is to establish whether they have managed to "make space" for new ideas.

Fleishman (2016: 55) explores how Magnet Theatre's performative practice consciously "makes space" for new ideas in his article "Making Space for Ideas: The Knowledge Work of Magnet Theatre". Fleishman argues that the work Magnet Theatre has produced for 29 years until 2016 can be seen as "boundary work" in the way that Henk Borgdorff (2012: 177) has used the term. Borgdorff states that artworks that are also research projects are "boundary works," because "artistic

research places itself on the border between academia and the art world." It is regarding this statement of Borgdorff that Fleishman wants to explore the works of Magnet Theatre to indicate how they "made space" for ideas, how they generated a particular way of thinking about the plays, as well as about the world outside the theatre.

Magnet Theatre's work is a process of research both with regard to "research for" theatre, in other words, gathering information to make a play, as well as "research about" theatre and "research by means of" theatre (how the work they make functions in the world):

Fleishman (2016: 55-57) proposes that:

> ... it is hopefully performative in the way in which it enacts something, bringing something into being in the world through doing and making, as well as through the fabrication of concepts, ideas and speculative projections that might change attitudes and beliefs – a process I would describe as a project of active and creative citizenship in a transitional social context.

Fleishman (2016: 57) regards Magnet Theatre as part of the performance as research (PaR) movement, which concerns research that is carried out, at least partly, through performance. The PaR movement attempts to explore what "performance as thinking" (p. 57) means. Fleishman has been involved in the PaR movement in the South African context, as well as in the context of the International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR). Fleishman has been a member and co-convenor of one of the IFTR PaR working groups for several years. His work with Magnet Theatre has also contributed to this discourse. PaR concerns itself with

research that is carried out through performance, where methods known to performance practitioners are used during the process, and that the output is, at least in part, presented through performance.

Fleishman (2016: 57) describes this process of PaR as follows:

> It begins with energy (an impulse, an idea, an intuition, a hunch), which is then durationally channelled through repetition, on both micro levels (of bodies, movements, sounds, improvisations, moments) and macro levels (of events, productions, projects, installations), in variable and indeterminable directions, in search of difference.

In other words, this process entails constant adjustments made to the process of creating a play in the rehearsal space through the actors moving in that space and through improvisations.

Fleishman refers to Laura Cull (2012: 20-25), who suggests we need “less philosophy per se” and more attention paid to “specific philosophies” which “provide us with the resources to rethink performance itself as a kind of philosophy, and indeed to reconceive what counts as philosophy”. Cull argues that it is not simply a matter of applying philosophy to performance, but rather “that the rare marriage between performance and philosophy is at its richest and most egalitarian if philosophy is willing to encounter performance as thinking”.

For Cull (2012: 20-25) the meeting of performance and philosophy must bring forth new ideas.

> […] the production of knowledge is arguably only one definition of thinking, or specifically of 'research' […]; indeed, rather than applying this definition of thinking to practice (as if it were the same as text-based research), perhaps we need to look to performance itself to produce new ideas of what thinking is.

In South Africa academics and theatre-makers often focus on the output of theatre production rather than the *process* of theatre-making as the source of critique. In an article about the University of Cape Town's ReTAGS[13] project published by Batzofin and Muftic (2020) entitled *The Digital Archive as Storyteller,* the authors argued that African theatre-makers and academics should rather engage with the ways in which they archive and showcase the stories involved in the process of making theatre, such that these stories can be available for academic research and artistic development. In other words, the bodies in the rehearsal space generate the research data, but they are also simultaneously the object of study. The South African diverse rehearsal space revolves around "collaboration, networks of exchange and flows of stories" (p. 3). Every participant is "an equally weighted node of information" (p. 3) and contributes with their skills, perception, background, and talent. These types of archives can also strive for the *decolonisation in digital spaces*, because the archive is not static and can be updated and re-curated at any given time. Archives, just like storytellers, "are custodians of narratives and are constantly generating stories" (p. 15). The ReTAGS project aims to open space for multiple perspectives and narratives. It entails the "opening up a South African rehearsal room to the world" (p. 15).

[13] ReTAGS is a digital archival project of the University of Cape Town. https://zivahub.uct.ac.za/articles/presentation/The_Archive_as_Storyteller_Curating_Narratives_from_a_Rehearsal_Process/13109777

3.6.1 Dwelling in a space

Linked closely to the idea of performance as thinking is the notion that people do not bring their ideas into the rehearsal space (and into the world), they only think these thoughts because they already dwell in the world (or in the rehearsal space). The practice Magnet Theatre has been involved in for the past 35 years is the making of productions. It is important for Fleishman to spend time in a landscape first before they start a project. He calls the spending of time in a landscape "dwelling". Fleishman (2016: 58-59) argues that dwelling in the specific landscape is of utmost importance when "making space": "... we dwell in the landscape over time in order to learn how to build". In other words, the dwelling in the landscape reveals what they should create, so it is important to spend some time in that specific landscape first before they embark on the project and start creating.

Fleishman (2016: 58) explains the concept of "dwelling" as follows: they need to dwell in a landscape over a certain period of time in order to learn more about that landscape and how to create it. They creatively discover and pay specific attention to the landscape. Fleishman uses the example of their play *Cargo*[14] (2007) where they dwelled in the slave archives before they started creating this play.

Thus, his conceptual approach to dramaturgy is based on the notion of "dwelling" (Fleishman 2011: 12). He borrows this term from the anthropologist Tim Ingold, whose work on dwelling was inspired by a question posed by Heidegger on the difference between dwelling and building. For a long time, the response was that we build in order to dwell and that buildings are the mere containers in which we live (the

[14] *Cargo* (2007) is a play that tells the story of thousands of slaves upon whose bodies the Cape Colony was founded. The aim was to tell the story of the voiceless slaves and to evoke the sexual and labour exploitations.

building perspective) (Ingold 2000: 179). In other words, in our world, houses are designed for us before they are built for us, but Ingold's perspective introduces another point of view: we build forms, not due to having had thoughts, but as a "consequence of dwelling, of being in the world, of beginning in action." And one kind of action we take, is thinking or imagining ways of meeting our needs. Consequently, in the process of dwelling, whether that may be in our imagination or on a site, we build. The landscape we dwell in is also a record of the lives and works of previous generations who have dwelt in it who inevitably leave something of themselves there.

According to Fleishman, his dramaturgical method involves locating himself in the landscape of a particular "site of memory" that is filled with meaning of the past. In other words, he adopts a view from within the landscape: "paying close attention and involving myself, and others I work with, in an active, participatory, embodied way" (Fleishman 2011: 12). He does not build a structure for the performance to dwell in, but he dwells in the landscape over time in order to learn how to build (how to create) there.

Fleishman (2016: 72) further writes that Magnet Theatre's work is never finished:

> As a kind of thinking, Magnet's work can be considered to be 'unfinished' (Borgdorff 2012: 194; with reference to Hans-Jörg Rheinberger); it is a productive not-yet-knowing against the backdrop of an ever-receding knowledge horizon. Our work at Magnet is a leap into the unprecedented and the unknown. Furthermore, it does not reveal the meaning of the work/world as if it had been hidden away, out of sight, awaiting our arrival and our sudden raising/parting of the curtain; the sudden capacity to see it or make it be seen

> as if for the first time. Rather, such thinking is a form of *poesis*: an "action that is the cause of something to emerge from non-existence to existence", which "means both making and imagining" (Plato, cited in Seremetakis 1994: 15). Our work at Magnet brings something new into being, new concepts, new methods, new ideas, new questions, projections and possibilities. In this way, it becomes a machine for thinking about the future, even when, as is the case with much of Magnet's work to date, it works with material from the past that will not easily pass. To this extent, it is motivated by an ethical project: the concrete obligation to intervene in the present; to respond to the task that is before us in South Africa today, the task of being free.

Magnet Theatre has played a key role in cultural interventions in many communities across our country. The historical context in which they have existed has motivated their actions. Lewis and Krueger (2016: 3-5) write that Magnet Theatre has existed for over 30 years. During this time, our country has undergone a major transition, that is, from a minority rule (Nationalist Party) to a democratic dispensation from 1994 with ANC majority rule.

Magnet Theatre has been committed to addressing the injustices of the apartheid era and has tried to create a space for contributors who did not get a chance to affirm the wealth of their own experiences previously. For example, *Cargo* (2007) highlights the history of slavery in South Africa and *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking* (2006) focuses on xenophobia.

3.6.2 Magnet Theatre and the notion of the *moving body*

Reznek received training at École Jacques Lecoq in Paris from 1984 until 1986, which greatly influenced Magnet Theatre's work (Reznek 2016: 143). It is also important to note that Magnet Theatre was founded in 1987, during a period when the resistance against the apartheid regime in South Africa started gaining momentum. Both Reznek's Lecoq training and the South African political context gave rise to a "central obsession and driving exploration" (p. 143) of the *moving body*.

The body in which Magnet Theatre has been interested is "the body threatened*".* Reznek (p. 143) describes the body threatened as "one which faces erasure in the face of mortality; a body that is subject to oppression, to racial categorisation, embattled through being immersed in social and political environments". In other words, Magnet Theatre's work can be regarded as a reaction to a context of violence during the apartheid era, one which extends well beyond it.

Lecoq (2006: 35) regarded this kind of response as inevitable: "The return to nature and spontaneity of gesture is an inevitable result of the overwhelming limitations that suppress life". Although Lecoq was referring to the revival of the focus on the moving body in the context of WWII, this notion can be applied to the Magnet Theatre's work as well. The focus on death or oppression, whether as a result of war or violence, results in a focus on the living body. This response has been likened to a pendulum-like reaction to violence. The culture of violence in South Africa has turned the body into a "marked site" (Reznek 2016: 144). If the body is the site where apartheid made its mark, then the body can also be the site where the unmaking of apartheid (and

the remnants of the apartheid era) can occur. Magnet Theatre responded by putting specific strategies into place to resist violence in the South African context.

This response by Magnet Theatre is rooted in four notions:

i. Everything Moves
ii. The Body as Subject
iii. Transformation and Play
iv. Collective Creation

(i) Everything moves (*tout bouge*)

Reznek (2016:146-147) translates Lecoq as follows (Lecoq, as cited in Keefe & Murray 2007: 192): “Everything moves. Everything evolves and progresses. Everything rebounds and resonates. From one point to another, never in a straight line. From port to port, a journey. Everything moves, as do I!” She argues that if everything moves (nothing is fixed), then change is always a possibility. Because change is always possible, structures of power can necessarily change, and if they can change, this poses a challenge to all hegemonies, whether these are political or ideological. This means that political structures are unlike prisons from which people cannot escape. This is a liberating notion, both with regard to the apartheid regime, as much as under the regime of corruption overseen by the ANC government.

By creating work that focuses the audience’s attention on the human body, Magnet Theatre affirms the notion of the possibility of change. For example, *The Show’s Not Over Until the Fat Lady Sings* (1991-93) represents a shift from earth-bound to air-borne in a story about liberation, which has a fat lady who wants to fly as its main

theme. Bodies also shift from slaves to dancers and back to slaves in *Cargo* (2007), where these images in Magnet Theatre's performances reaffirm the possibility of change, as well as transformation. Another example is *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking* (2006), which as Magnet Theatre's longest-running and most travelled show, sets out to move people towards an empathic understanding (as opposed to the judging) of the inner emotional landscape of the story of two refugees in Africa.

If you teach a body which is always capable of moving, it means you accept that change, development, and growth is possible for that individual's body. Magnet Theatre's educational process not only teaches bodies to move physically, but also involves movement in a broader context (symbolically). That is, it means to move away from those thoughts and feelings which trap people (Reznek 2016:146-147), and away from the restrictions associated with substandard education, out of the geographically isolated places which are the legacy of apartheid, and closer towards being visible themselves as well as towards opportunities. For example, Magnet Theatre has taught bodies to move in Clanwilliam during the 18 years (from 2000 until 2018) in which they presented the Clanwilliam Arts Projects. This project will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. By spending time on these projects, they allowed for the local people to develop skills, and taught the bodies of the participants to move away from their substandard education, and their economic confines. Drama workshops often provide a safe and supportive space for individuals to explore their creativity and express themselves in new ways. Through improvisation exercises and other workshop activities, participants are encouraged to take risks, make mistakes, and embrace their own unique perspectives. Collaboration, communication, and empathy are all components of most successful

drama performances, and participants are encouraged to work towards a common goal.

Reznek (2016: 149) states that the *body in space* can impact on its environment both in terms of space and the people who witness it, in other words, the audience. Magnet Theatre's mission statement conveys this notion as an aspiration to confront participants in their activities, performers, and audience alike, through experiences that shift bodies, assumptions, feelings, beliefs, and understandings (Magnet Theatre n.d.). Magnet Theatre strives to be a force that shifts the minds and lives of people regarding changing local and global contexts (Magnet Theatre, n.d.). It is for this reason that Magnet Theatre is not interested in employing people who affirm a singular vision, but they instead choose a diversity of performers and participants to work with.

Tout bouge is an image that moves beyond its time, because it contains a "notion of migrancy that is embedded in contemporary thinking" (p. 149). People move across the world, where there is constant movement of people, objects, and ideas. When Reznek came back to South Africa after having studied abroad, she brought Lecoq's ideas back to South Africa with her, and these ideas had an influence on Magnet Theatre. Migration has been one of the main themes of Magnet Theatre's work. It has resulted in the creation of four productions with migration as a main theme. These four productions have been published in *The Magnet Theatre 'Migration' Plays* (2012), which are written in four different languages: Afrikaans, English, French, and isiXhosa. Magnet Theatre regards language diversity as one of the key elements contained in the story of the movement of people from one place to another.

Being committed to the notion of *tout bouge*, Magnet Theatre now has a small theatre on their premises in Cape Town, but before this, they used to move the rehearsals or performances to accommodate those with whom they worked. These spaces that they occupied were often very unconventional spaces, such as school halls, sports fields, beaches, and community centres. By moving into the townships, they ensured that certain groups of people were no longer excluded, and did not stay captured in the legacy of the architectural structuring of our cities during the apartheid regime.

Reznek (2016: 149) states that *Pump* (1998), an outdoor production, was specially created to maximise access both regarding style and mobility, and has been performed all over the Western Cape to approximately 16 000 audience members in different spaces, such as beaches, rugby fields, streets, and prisons. *Onnest'bo* (2010) and *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger] (2010) were also outdoor productions that could be performed in any space, and which dealt with movement as a main theme. Magnet Theatre offers a bus subsidy to enable trainees to get to Magnet Theatre's premises daily for their training.

The continued use of English as the predominant language was problematic for Magnet Theatre, where instead, the group started using the *body as a bridge* to be able to reach multilingual audiences. The potential to marginalise or exclude certain audiences by the use of a single language presents a real obstacle. The continued use of English as the most common language used by performers is problematic in the post-apartheid context. The rise of English as a lingua franca is a global phenomenon, but in South Africa equal status for all official languages remains an ideal as part of a post-apartheid transformation. The depreciation of indigenous

languages has continued post-1994 in the education and public sectors and could be regarded as forming part of South Africa's colonial legacy. Reznek therefore states that Magnet Theatre delegated the power to cross these language barriers to the body which is used as a tool to communicate (instead of language). This way of communication demands the creative, imaginative participation of each audience member.

Reznek (2016: 150-151) notes:

> Through our engagement with the physical image, Magnet Theatre encourages a diversity of responses, an active listening and feeling that is the conversation we hope to have with each and every member of the audience. There is no right or wrong in each individual's attempt to decipher the image; there is only the desired active participation in grappling with meaning.

In other words, Magnet Theatre has often used the body as a tool to overcome language as an impediment. The audience is then forced to make sense of the play by watching the body instead of listening to the actors. For example, in the play *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking* (2006), the older sister, Ernestine at one stage disappears from the stage and the only clue the audience gets as to what has happened to her is the symbolically ambiguous burning of her photograph. Reznek argues that if the image supplied is a good one, it will open layers of meaning without confusion, where, for example, the image of the black boots walking over Mama represent her rape.

Reznek states that in their multilingual context the body as a bridge allows them to be totally inclusive (p. 150-151). They have also chosen their collaborators to be as

inclusive as possible), for example, Jazzart Dance, with whom they co-created eight new performances over 13 years. Sonja Mayo started this studio, which specialises in modern jazz dance, in 1978. In 1986, Alfred Hinkel bought the company and with Dawn Langdown, John Linden and Jay Pather changed its name to Jazzart Dance Theatre. In an era when professional dance theatre was the exclusive domain of the ruling white elite, Alfred Hinkel forged a teaching and performance ethos rooted in the progressive ideological principles of the anti-apartheid struggle.

(ii) The Body as subject

Magnet Theatre's teaching of the body attempts to "restore the body to its subject position and central to that subjectivity is the fact that the body can move" (Reznek 2016: 153). Magnet Theatre considers the body as the centre of performance. They believe the notion of the body as an object should be challenged, because the position of the body as an object is entrenched in the racial classification of the apartheid regime. By teaching the body and allowing the body to lead, Magnet Theatre initiates processes which allow resistance to the "oppressive nature of objectification that occurs through both actual violence and the symbolic violence of prejudice" (p. 153). By teaching the body, Reznek is choosing to teach something which is constantly changing: "moving, resisting, accepting and growing" (p. 154). Thus, the body can move, it is not fixed, and it can affect a space (and even the world); but a body can also learn, grow, and change itself. Magnet Theatre's emphasis on the body has been evident since their earliest plays, such as *'I Do' x 22* (1997).

(iii) Transformation through play

It is necessary to understand the notion of play before we can grasp Magnet Theatre's practice of transformation. Lecoq taught improvisation, which aimed to reveal identity and subjectivity through play (improvisation). This practice to reveal the identity of participants in Magnet Theatre's projects was carried forward from Reznek's days as a student under Lecoq. Reznek writes that Lecoq gave her the "gift of herself" and he allowed her to "recognise [her] own historical and physical contexts and stories as the creative source of [her] theatre making" (Reznek 2016: 158). This complemented her background of interpretive training at the University of Cape Town's Drama School (1979-1983).

Reznek (2016: 158) states:

> Embodied play is the central impulse that allows for the generation of new work, and a tool that Magnet Theatre continues to use exhaustively in its creative processes. Mark Fleishman's process as a director initially involves the setting of improvisatory tasks around particular themes. The material thereby generated by the performers on the floor is then accepted, rejected or adjusted for incorporation into the final product.

One of the most important aspects of play is that it "generates pleasure" (p. 158), which causes the group members to relax and to start trusting one another. Reznek uses the example of a group of refugee women from the Whole World Women Association she worked with in 2010, which wanted to create a performance for World Refugee Day on June 20th (every year). The group members were highly diverse when it came to language, culture, and age. The only thing they had in

common was that they were all foreigners in South Africa. She started by playing clapping games and running games and soon there was much laughter and the members started relaxing and enjoying one another's company. Reznek (p. 159) notes that "play determined a space in which who they were as human beings could be defined by their own imagination, as opposed to their being defined by others as victims of violence, or as *makwerekwere*."

(iv) Magnet Theatre's method of collective creation

Magnet Theatre's preferred method of collective creation was a result of Lecoq's influence on Reznek, as well as the legacy of workshop theatre in South Africa. I think this method of collective creation is Magnet Theatre's forté. By following this process, they have managed to include many voices of people who were previously excluded. In other words, they have managed to "make space" for many people in their performances as well.

Collective creation is the process whereby a new piece of performance is created 'on the floor' (as opposed to 'on paper') by a group of people, rather than an individual author (Reznek 2016: 159). For Magnet Theatre, the workshop method stands as central to their process of creating a play. Fleishman (1991: 1) states that the workshop process "foregrounds collectivity and physical making as opposed to individual writing."

Reznek (2016: 159) states that workshop theatre has its roots in the "carnivalesque", and portrays the power struggles between those in power and those who are not. In workshop theatre, the body and the text carry equal weight. In every Magnet Theatre production "we have started out by gathering together the performers, dancers,

choreographers, musicians, videographers, set, and costume designers (and everybody else involved with the production) to ask them to embark on the project with us as collective collaborators" (p. 160).

I think Magnet Theatre's strength lies in their use of the workshop approach to create plays through play, as well as how they *dwell* within a landscape, space, or place before and while they create their plays. It is this combination of workshop theatre and dwelling that enable them to include groups of people who were previously voiceless. I witnessed this process in Clanwilliam during the 18 years they organised the Clanwilliam Arts Festivals. They would explore a San theme in a week-long workshop involving children from the local schools, facilitators from the community, as well as students from Cape Town with Fleishman and Reznek as the co-directors. They would use many genres, for example, dance, drama, storytelling, shadow puppetry and many more, to explore San cultural themes. The week-long workshop would then culminate in a performance by the locals of Clanwilliam to an audience from the local community.

3.6.3 A new generation of theatre-makers and contemporary evaluations of its legacy

Mandla Mbothwe was a student of Fleishman and Reznek at the University of Cape Town and he later went on to play a major role in the development of Magnet Theatre's Community Groups Intervention in Khayelitsha (Mbothwe 2016: 129), which he ran with Reznek from 2002 until 2008. Thereafter he ran the Magnet Theatre training programme from 2008 until 2011. In 2009 and 2011 he directed Magnet Theatre's first two shows in Xhosa: *ingcwaba lendoda lise cankwe ndlela*

[the grave of the man lies next to the road] (2009) and *Inxeba Lomphilisi [The Wound of a Healer*] (2010-2014) (2016: 129). Although Mbothwe remained a trustee on the board of Magnet Theatre, he left in 2011 to become the director of the Steve Biko Foundation until 2014, when he became creative manager at Artscape in Cape Town (Mbothwe 2016: 129).

Mbothwe states that his first interactions with theatre was never really inside a proper theatre, but other spaces were used for performances: it happened in “high schools, in community halls, clinics, hospitals, playgrounds” (p. 129). He realised that drama was not only for entertainment and he became interested in using drama to educate people. In other words, he believed theatre needed to be political.

The inclusion of many voices and different groups of people is especially important to Mbothwe. There is a strong link between the vision of Magnet Theatre and Mbothwe’s views. Magnet Theatre’s influence on Mbothwe is evident, but Mbothwe also brought his own ideas to Magnet Theatre.

He (2016: 131) states:

> We mustn’t pretend we’re all in this big rainbow thing singing together; that’s not true. It’s not that everybody’s wearing the same costume and doing the same things, and everybody’s trying to be like each other. People are doing different things, and the unity is imperfect, but just the attempt, even if you try, proves we are in it together, even if we’re different.

Anton Krueger (2016: 113-114) warns that “in the effort of being representative of all, there lies the danger of representing nobody, leaving one merely with a bland

averaging out of generalisation. The stranger is the way out of the general." He refers specifically to post-1994 South Africa. Krueger argues that Magnet Theatre has, however, managed "to sidestep both the potential bigotry of a narrow-minded ethnicism as well as the compromise of homogeneity."

Hutchison (2016: 177-179) also examines how Magnet Theatre made space by comparing marginalised stories with mainstream discourses. For example, in Magnet Theatre's play *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*, stories told by the /Xam elder //Kabbo, and recorded by the German linguist Wilhelm Bleek and his sister-in-law, Lucy Lloyd in the 1870s, saw dramatisation. //Kabbo and others cooperated with Bleek and Lloyd at the time to tell their stories, because they realised the San culture was in danger of extinction, and they wanted their stories to survive for future generations. Without the efforts of Bleek and Lloyd, very little would be known about the legends and myths of the San people.

Magnet Theatre managed to destabilise fixed discourses of identity, history and memory, as well as facilitate the audience's ability to derive meaning imaginatively from a dialogue between text and embodied images (Hutchison 2016: 179). Hutchison cites poet Antjie Krog (in Brown 2006: xix): "[w]e have had many years of telling stories", only "some were heard; others went underground; some were written; some were oral; some were trapped in neglected mother tongues [...]", hereby indicating the importance of engaging with marginalised stories. Magnet Theatre's work has created troubles, discomforted, or disturbed dominant narratives related both to the past apartheid regime and the present ANC regime - particularly regarding identity, history, and memory, while at the same time negotiating the place of narrative in the work. South Africa has always been bothered by the issue of

belonging which has profoundly informed claims to various rights: to land, to citizenship and to kinds of representation. Magnet Theatre has used non-hierarchical ways of exploring multiple identities, histories, and memories present in South Africa.

Lewis and Krueger (2016: 3) write that, over 30 years, Magnet Theatre has been "making space" in our country for: "creativity, innovation, and embodied work, as well as for collaboration, community and dialogue". From Magnet Theatre's inception in Johannesburg in 1987, by Fleishman and Jennie Reznek, to the founding of their own theatre space in Cape Town in 2011, Magnet Theatre has been committed to exploring socio-political issues through unconventional, physical, and personal expressions. Magnet Theatre has also played an important role in cultural interventions in our country, where, guided by *performance as research*, they are committed to social development.

Over a period of eight years, Magnet Theatre created a series of performance projects that engaged with important sites of memory in and around Cape Town in attempts to try and put back together the broken social body (Lewis and Krueger 2016: 6):

> Robben Island (a place of banishment and incarceration); District Six (an evacuated apartheid-era working-class city district); The Bleek and Lloyd collection of /Xam records) an ethnographic archive at the University of Cape Town); and the archive of slavery at the Cape (a dispersed collection of trial records, household inventories, legal and bureaucratic documents and physical sites). Magnet's second focus, since 2006, was on migration and these public performances, as well as cultural inventions have led to four

separate interventions, including workshops regarding xenophobia and migration, along three routes, namely, Cape to Cairo, the N2 and the N7.

3.7 Can Magnet Theatre “make space” for new ideas?

Theatre has the power to “make space” for change all over the world, because the stage is a platform for ideas, discussions, and insights that can contribute towards the transformation of society. Theatre can serve as a means of both social and political critique and cultural expression. Theatre has a way of communicating ideas and emotions through its blend of various art forms and it requires the audience to be engaged from beginning to end, thereby creating an opportunity for the audience to become invested in the outcome. The theatre experience compels us to think, reflect and feel, thereby creating a conducive environment for change. Across the world performance and theatre have created spaces where transformation could take place.

Johnston and Pratt (2019: 5) argue that there is a turn towards performance as a result of the disillusionment of people across the world with the current global political predicament in the rise of populist politics. There seems to be an urgency to enliven the imaginations of people to what is possible and to contribute to “informed, nuanced public discourse” (p. 5). In other words, there is a turn towards artistic practice to reinvigorate political imagination, which has been deteriorating under precarious political conditions. People want to detach from real life, because real life has become too destructive, particularly political life. Performance acts as “places of abeyance” (p. 5), as a temporary suspension from everyday life to a time-space where new social relations can come into being.

Johnston and Pratt's book *Migration in Performance: Crossing the Colonial Present* (2019) presents an account of their attempt to move academic research about labour migration onto the stage to better understand the issue of state-sponsored migration to Canada. Through collaboration between Filipino migrant organisations[15] in Canada and the Philippines, they brought together audiences in performance spaces so that migrant issues could be experienced, felt, debated, and addressed (Johnston & Pratt 2019: 1). They created a play, titled *Nanay*, from research transcripts (consisting of verbatim monologues) and travelled from Canada to Berlin to Manila with the play (p. 1). This book follows their journey, sharing that which was involved and learned in the process.

At first, the academics thought they were "disseminating scholarly research" (p. 1) on the lives of Filipino migrant domestic workers in Canada to a public beyond the academic sphere to prompt debate about the issue. The theatre makers in turn thought they were experimenting with "testimonial theatre" (p. 1). What eventually emerged was a completely new way of doing research, and a slow process of "unlearning and relearning about labour migration, our whiteness and racial formations within both colonialism and settler colonialism" (p. 1), in other words, the play remade them. While travelling with the play, they experienced an exchange "exploring possibilities situated at the intersections of research, performance, and politics." As the play travelled, new stories emerged by dwelling in the different spaces, for example, when they took the play to Manila, they were forced to grapple with other questions, viz.: 'What are the effects of a mother's migration on the fate of

[15] The Philippines has one of the world's largest labour diaspora. Thousands of Filipino women leave their own families behind annually to go and work as caregivers in Canada through the Live-in Caregiver Programme. By 2007, almost 14 000 Filipinos were admitted annually to Canada.

her children she leaves behind, to care for other children or the elderly in another country?'

Performance also holds the potential to prompt audiences to rethink their worlds, for example, Jacques Rancière[16] (2004) has developed many of his ideas about democracy and politics around a theatrical metaphor. Not only the performance itself, but also the relationships between actors and audience, as well as amongst audience members, can also mix up existing identifications and "redistribute what we see, hear, think and say" (Rancière 2004: 7). Thus, theatre holds "radical possibility" (p. 7), because it allows for and encourages "disidentification and dissensus" and for Rancière, these are the moments full of democratic potential, when taken-for-granted hierarchies of who is allowed to speak or be heard are temporarily suspended. That is when new political attachments are made possible.

Also, performances often involve physical coordination taking place in time and space, for example, *Nanay* brought together writers, researchers, activists, set designers, directors, as well as actors, migrants, stage managers, technicians, and audiences.

One of the best examples of how theatre/performance made space recently, is *The Walk* by Little Amal,[17] a young refugee puppet, who embarked on a journey from the border of Syria to Manchester in the UK, over 8 000 kilometres, through 65 cities, towns and villages, with over 100 events of welcome, in order to create an awareness about the plight of refugees. *The Walk* can briefly be described as a theatre show which took place on an 8 000 km stage. Events took place in venues

[16] Rancière, J. 2004. *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible.* Trans. Gabriel Rockhill. London: Continuum.
[17] See https://www.walkwithamal.org/ [Accessed 14/04/2022]

ranging from beaches, opera houses, cathedrals, thermal pools, bridges, mosques and even a cemetery. *The Walk* united no less than 250 charities and community and arts organisations along one of the world's busiest refugee routes, in a gesture of hope for refugees. Hundreds of civic and religious leaders and hundreds of thousands of well-wishers accompanied this puppet on her journey. In other words, Little Amal "made space" wherever she walked.

Coincidentally, a colleague of Mark Fleishman and Jennie Reznek from Magnet Theatre, Craig Leo, was involved in the *The Walk* project. Ashraf Hendricks writes in *Times Live* on November 10, 2021 on Reuters online,[18] Craig Leo was the Director who trained the core puppeteer team, three groups of three people from all over the world, who were interchangeable, from a base in Cape Town using Zoom and videos. A South African company, The Handsprung Puppet Company, based in Cape Town, also created Little Amal, who began her journey on July 27 in Turkey. The Artistic Director of *The Walk* and Good Chance Theatre, Amir Nizar Zuabi, spoke at Ted Monterrey[19] about the vision behind *The Walk* and why he believes that meaningful art has the power to change hearts and minds and bring communities together. He explains that they took theatre to the streets, out of the theatres. He calls *The Walk* with Little Amal "a theatrical journey celebrating the refugee experience" and says this is a new model of theatre, a walking art festival. It was not intended as a walk of misery, but a walk of hope, to honour the experience of the thousands of refugees, to spread goodwill and to make people aware of what it means to be a refugee. Followers across the world could follow Little Amal on social

[18] https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-11-13-one-giant-leap-for-refugees-puppets-8000kmjourney-starts-in-sa/ [Accessed 14/04/2022]

[19] See https://www.ted.com/talks/amir_nizar_zuabi_walk_with_little_amal_a_theatrical_journey_celebrating_the_refugee_experience?language=en [Accessed 14/04/2022]

media and see how she was welcomed in the communities and they could donate money towards the cause.

The example of Amal is especially interesting if compared to Magnet Theatre's notion of "making space", because as Amal moves the spaces, she continuously occupies changes. She moves into people's spaces to convey the message of the dire plight of migrants. This is exactly what this innovative project aims to do, namely raise awareness about the challenges of migration and displacement by bringing a life-sized puppet into people's spaces. While many people are sympathetic to the struggles of migrants, there are those who are unaware of the difficulties they often face. By bringing the reality of migration into people's everyday lives, the puppet can help foster empathy and understanding. As the puppet moves through public spaces such as markets, parks and city centres, it invites passers-by to engage in conversation and learn more about the issues facing migrants today.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter started by showing that migration is a global issue that affects millions of people around the world and exploring global discourses about migration. The issue of migration has become more significant in recent years due to the increasing number of people who are forced to leave their homes, due to conflict and persecution, but when they arrive in the new country, where they are often subject to xenophobia. Secondly, a discussion followed about how global discourses affected South Africa. Our country has a long history of migration and concomitant xenophobia. The response of South African theatre-makers to these phenomena was then explored. Magnet Theatre has contributed richly to the emergent genre of

new migrant plays. They often use “tools” like the moving body and collective creation to create these productions to explore the concept of “making space”.

Magnet Theatre has a unique perspective on the challenges and experiences of migrants, and their work has been praised for its thought-provoking and moving depictions of the migrant experience. The company frequently works with artists (as well as other locals from various communities) from different cultural backgrounds, and they draw on a variety of disciplines in their productions. This approach not only leads to richer and more varied productions, but it also reflects the company’s belief in the importance of diversity and inclusivity.

CHAPTER 4: *DIE VREEMDELING* [THE STRANGER]

4. 1 Introduction

Die Vreemdeling [The Stranger] is a play about a stranger who arrives at the gate of a closed community. This play explores the "rich ambivalence of attitudes towards strangers" (Kreuger 2016: 120).

Firstly, a discussion of Magnet Theatre's commitment to cultivate cultural inclusivity will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of how theatre-makers often create work that reflects the socio-political issues of the world and xenophobia in particular. As a result, Magnet Theatre has created a number of migration plays, using physical theatre as a tool, where words (dialogue) were inadequate. A discussion of the background of *Die Vreemdelin*g [The Stranger] will then follow. The play itself will then be explored in more detail, followed by how the play was received by audiences. Finally, the plight of foreigners will be discussed.

4.2 Magnet Theatre: cultivating cultural inclusivity

Since the elections in 1994, it has been a priority of the African National Congress government to cultivate unity in diversity through the concept of a so-called "rainbow nation". Krueger warns that by doing so, there is always the danger of focusing on one cultural group's traditions over another or that differences may be "flattened out" (Krueger 2016: 113). In the "effort to be representative of all, there lies the danger of representing nobody, leaving one merely with the bland averaging out of generalization. The stranger is the way out of the general" (Krueger 2016: 113). Krueger argues that Magnet Theatre managed "to sidestep both the potential bigotry of a narrow-minded ethnicism as well as the compromise of homogeneity" (p. 114).

Instead, Magnet Theatre cultivated an increasing awareness of cultural inclusivity and their culturally diverse performances have since become their hallmark.

In 1994, Magnet Theatre created their first large-scale production, *Medea* (1994-1996), which embraced a diversity of languages and cultural dances in a culturally diverse performance. Krueger describes *Medea* as a ground-breaking production, due to the "juxtaposition of different styles of dance and physical movement brought Indian *kathakali*[20] onto the same stage as African gumboot dancing and both dances maintained its integrity" (p. 114). This production could be described as a celebration of cultural diversity, which also dealt directly with the "confrontational issues of strangeness both within and between its characters" (p. 114).

Flockemann (2016: 85) writes that *Medea* was Magnet Theatre's first collaboration with Alfred Hinkel (from Jazzart Dance Theatre), and in this production they used a "powerfully visceral style of embodied and multilingual storytelling that marked a shift in the theatre landscape of the period". The performance is about a confrontation between Creon and Medea. Medea defends herself against Creon's command that she must leave Corinth for fear that her presence will jeopardise the new marriage of her husband, Jason, to Creon's daughter. Medea wears a skimpy dress and high heels which makes her appear vulnerable in the face of Creon's dark-glassed stare. Her heels sink deep into the sand on stage, and she struggles to walk. She claims to have made herself "over" to be "one of you now" (Flockemann 2016: 86), but she is clearly not comfortable in her new form. The sea sand also evokes the arrivals and departures of migrants from one continent to another (p. 86). Medea describes

[20] 'Kathakali,' a 300-year-old Indian classical dance-drama genre, is associated with storytelling. 'Kathakali' communicates to the audience through clever footwork and gestures of the hands and face complimented with music and singing. (www.culturalindia.net)

herself in the beginning of the play as a “migrant stranger who unsettles the hostile hosts by becoming ‘one of you’” (p. 86).

South Africa is “a nation of strangers, an uneasy mishmash of heterogeneous economic groupings, cultures and languages, a nation of marginalised minorities awkwardly pasted together” (Krueger 2016: 303). Although the South African government has attempted numerous times to create a sense of nationalism, xenophobic attacks plague particularly African migrants to the country. It can be argued that one of the main reasons for the xenophobic attacks, since the reforms in 1994, was that the South African government has tried its best to develop pride in the newly formed nation’s identity (p. 304). Krueger argues that the stranger is by definition those who exist “outside of” us, but simultaneously defined by the projection of who we think we are. In the process of seeking our own identity, as well as our nation’s identity, we oust the stranger/foreigner from our circle. In other words, the stranger can show us who we *think* we are, because he is what we *think we are not*. The stranger makes us notice ourselves in a particularised way. The stranger upsets the status quo and often increases fear or suspicion of everything and everybody that is unfamiliar to a specific community.

4.3 Performing xenophobia

Theatre-makers have long been known for their ability to create thought-provoking productions that reflect the world around us. Theatre has the unique ability to reflect and comment on issues and concerns that are important to society at a given time.

It seems that society does its best to forget about the refugees in our midst, and that is probably exactly why theatre makers in South Africa have chosen to put them in

the limelight on stage. Theatre-makers are finely tuned into socio-political issues and many plays about refugees and migrants have been written both before and after the xenophobic attacks in 2008 (Krueger 2016: 116).

In 2005, Acty Tang performed *amaQueerkwere* in a historical prison in Grahamstown (the venue for the annual National Arts Festival). The title of the drama refers to the derogatory term *amakwerekwere*. The play explores the ways in which sexual orientation and belonging to a community can force a person into a manner of exile, away from everything that is familiar. In 2009, Jonathan Nkala created *The Crossing,* which told the true story of Nkala as a refugee from Zimbabwe, who crossed the crocodile-infested Limpopo River to come to South Africa. Nicholas Spagnoletti's *London Road* (2010) told the story of Stella, a Nigerian refugee, who befriends an elderly white woman from Sea Point. *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking* (2006) tells the story of two refugees, a mother, and her daughter, who flee to Cape Town.

Miki Flockemann (2017: 3) writes that it was evident how many works at the annual National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in 2016 considered South African identities and belonging, as well as migrancy, both locally and across Africa. She also notes that the 2008 xenophobia has featured often in performances about migrant experiences, for example, Gina Schmuckler's play *The Line* (2012). The source of this play was unedited interviews with perpetrators, witnesses, and survivors of xenophobic attacks in Alexandra-township near Johannesburg. It is especially shocking to learn that some of the so-called foreigners who were attacked were neighbours (from Mozambique) who were living in shacks next door to the attackers.

Flockemann (2017: 3) refers to Krueger's view that the rise in migrant theatre in South Africa is so prevalent that it could be regarded as a new genre or at least a new theme in South African theatre.

Mike van Graan is another playwright who contributed to this new theme or genre. He wrote the satirical revue, *Pay Back the Curry*, which was performed at the 2016 National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, as well as *When Swallows Cry* (2017). Keuris (2022: 17) regards Van Graan as one of the leading contemporary playwrights in South Africa, who has written 27 plays and has received many awards and accolades. His work, like Magnet Theatre's work, is characterised by a concern for social justice and he often explores the themes of xenophobia, racism, and migration. *When Swallows Cry* consists of three playlets and deals with different themes regarding migration: one is a "migrant" Canadian teacher, who is captured by bandits in West Africa; the second is about two Zimbabwean teachers who flee their economic hardships in Zimbabwe; and the third is about a Somalian who leaves his war-torn country for South Africa.

Many South African playwrights have explored the theme of xenophobia in our country and Magnet Theatre has certainly contributed richly to this new genre.

4.4 Magnet Theatre: performing migration and xenophobia

Magnet Theatre's migration plays, created between 2006 and 2012, developed from research projects based on three main routes, namely, the N7 along the West Coast to Namibia, the N2 along which migrants from the Eastern Cape would travel to Cape Town (a legacy of the apartheid era's migrant labour system) and the route from Cape Town to Cairo, which encompasses the journeys taken by foreign

Africans seeking a better life in Cape Town. The migration plays were published in a collection in *The Magnet Theatre 'Migration' Plays* (2012), and they were all in-house physical theatre productions.

The first of these plays were *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking* (2006-2012), which was performed by Jennie Reznek and Faniswa Yisa and directed by Mark Fleishman. It has become Magnet Theatre's most performed production. Like *Medea*, this play also anticipates the xenophobic attacks of 2008 in South Africa. Fleishman (cited in Reznek et al. 2012: 12) noted that this was "a story that needs to be told and retold". In the case of *Medea,* Fleishman claimed that he did not have a clear idea of how he would make *Medea* relevant to this time period and he also described that *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking* was "not meant to be," because it was not planned for or thought about, but the play surprised all with the "urgency of its call" (p. 12).

The other plays in this collection offer other insider and outsider experiences of, and through, travellers and foreigners (i.e., migrants) through using local vernaculars. These plays are rooted in the communities that generated the plays, for example, *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger], draws on vernacular storytelling to explore what happens to a community when a stranger enters through a gate that has been closed for a long time. The two other plays in this collection, that were directed by Mandla Mbothwe, i.e., *ingcwaba lendoda lise cankwe ndlela* [the grave of the man lies next to the road] (2009) and *Inxeba Lomphilisi* [The Wound of the Healer] (2010-2014), explores the migration along the N2 to Cape Town. Both these works employ modalities that create a sense of "being there", in other words, they employ a "thick" performance aesthetic, where meanings are created through sound, movement and

bodies, as well as subtitles on a screen (Flockemann 2016: 97). The themes of belonging and exclusion are paramount in these plays.

Physical theatre aesthetics characterise all Magnet Theatre's works. This characteristic can be regarded as an integral part of the identity of the works of Magnet Theatre.

Fleishman (cited in Reznek et al. 2012: 8) notes:

> These productions reflect our commitment to the body, to multilingualism and indigenous language theatre in South Africa, and to taking theatre out of conventional spaces.

A distinguishing characteristic of Magnet Theatre's work is the way in which their physical theatre approach is complemented using vernaculars. In *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking*, English and French are used and in *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger], a rural regional (West Coast of South Africa) version of Afrikaans interspersed with English words and phrases are used. Similarly, in *Medea*, the Nurse speaks Kaaps (Fleishman cited in Reznek et al. 2012: 8). In the other two plays in the collection, isiXhosa is spoken with English subtitles.

Die Vreemdeling [The Stranger] reflects the South African situation where it focuses on the aspect of foreigners as *others*. Even the title of the play indicates that this play is about strangers/foreigners/migrants/the other.

4.5 Background: *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger]

Die Vreemdeling [The Stranger] tells a story about gates, fences, and borders. It is also about how important it is to sometimes find a gate in the fence and see what

would happen if you dared to open the gate to let a stranger in. Frances Marek (Reznek et al. 2012: 95), Assistant Director of *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger], writes the following regarding the play in *The Magnet Theatre 'Migration' Plays*:

> …the things we construct to keep out what we fear. And how sometimes it's important to find a gate in the fence and to see what would happen if you opened it. In the story there is not only a fence around the entire town, but also around the hearts of the people who live there. What happens if you open a gate in your heart to someone from beyond the fence?

Die Vreemdeling [The Stranger] was created by the original cast, with Mark Fleishman (Director), Frances Marek (Assistant Director), David Johnson (original music), Dann-Jacques Mouton, Ephraim Gordon, Sherna Botto (Production Manager) and Craig Leo (Designer), through the workshop method, and is based on a short story by Frances Marek (2012: 95). The play was originally created to be performed outdoors at venues in towns along the N7, i.e., in community halls, on sports grounds and sports fields. It was later recreated to be performed indoors in theatres (February, 2011 at Magnet Theatre in Observatory, at the GIPCA Directors and Directing Conference in the Arena Theatre in Cape Town, in March 2011 at the Toyota US Woordfees, in April 2011 at the KKNK in Oudtshoorn and in August 2011 at the St. Anne's Diocesan College in Hilton, KwaZulu-Natal.

The three main characters, namely Oom Johannes, Spider and Lippe (a travelling troupe of actors), travel the country in their donkey cart loaded with sets and props to go and tell a story which happened in their own town. It seems as if the three witnessed the events described in their story, where a young woman, Ella, opens a gate to their small town to let a stranger in. Although the stranger brings unknown

abundance to their town, the locals do not want to accept the stranger in their midst, and they eventually kill him. After the tragic course of events, the travelling troupe has decided to go out into the world and tell his story to as many people as possible, in the hopes that something similar does not happen again.

4.6 *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger]

Die Vreemdeling [The Stranger] explores a "rich ambivalence of attitudes towards strangers" (Krueger 2016: 120). He notes that there are two ways of viewing *The Stranger* in *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger]. On the one hand, he is a mystery and he has sole access to knowledge and goods not available to the community. In other words, he is from another place, and brings magic to this community. On the other hand, he is viewed by the townspeople as not human, a barbarian and an *amakwerekwere* (p. 122). He brings understanding and sympathy for Ella and gifts for the community, but simultaneously he also brings uncertainty and anxiety, suspicion, and fear. George Simmel (1971: 145) notes that strangers can reflect on the accepted practices and behaviour of a group who has perhaps become blind with familiarity of their own mistakes.

The three actors are already on stage when the members of the audience enter and the actors interact with them until everyone is seated (Reznek et al. 2012: 99). The actors and members of the audience have probably never seen one another before and do not know one another, but the actors are friendly and chat to them – although the members of the audience are complete strangers to them (despite the irony that the play is titled *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger]).

The three main characters all play different characters, as well as a few animals and objects in the story. They transform from one character to another by using minimal costumes and props, like hats, an African cloak, a policeman's cap, a metal bucket, a floral skirt, a biscuit tin, a ladder, a lacy headscarf, a farm gate, a door frame and a wooden chair (Reznek et al. 2012: 96).

There are three main characters: Oom Johannes, the narrator of the story who also plays the guitar and sings, Spider, who also sings, and Lippe, who plays the violin and sings and the Portrait of the Mother, depicted by the actor holding up a portrait frame (p. 96).

Conventions of theatre are used in this play, rather than portraying characters through specific characteristics, for example, right in the beginning of the play the characters interact with the audience until everyone is seated.

Role playing within a role is often used as a tool to delineate a character. When a playwright depicts a character through a secondary role or roles he/she has to play, there is often the suggestion that, ironically, the secondary role is closer to the character's true self than his every day, real personality (Hornby 1986: 67). These "false faces" (p. 67) reveal deep inner truths about the character, for example, when Oom Johannes and Spider persuade the reluctant Lippe to dress up as the little girl again. The idea of a play within a play is emphasised when Lippe complains to the others that he must play the role of the little girl again (Reznek et al. 2012: 105) and this probably indicates that the other two characters regard Lippe as the naive and childish one amongst them. They are in charge, and Lippe simply has to do what they tell him to do, even if he does not want to do so. Even if the role is obviously false, this doubleness device sets up a feeling of ambivalence for the character. The

dualistic nature of the portrayal suggests depths of characterisation that would not have been suggested if he operated in a straightforward manner (Hornby 1986: 67).

Oom Johannes seems to oversee the troupe of actors and asks them if they are ready to start. They indicate that they are ready, but then Lippe misses his cue. This conversation amongst the actors (as actors) reveals a play within a play. This technique is often used to comment on the events of the central narrative or to comment on the nature of dramatic signification. The actors then proceed to tell the story about how the members of their community refused to let strangers in. Those who stayed behind built a fence around their town to keep out (Reznek et al. 2012: 103):

> … thieves, gangsters, gangs, drugs, drug addicts, rough people, dirty people, bad apples, rotten apples, poisoned apples, foreigners, bad behaviour, bad influences and strangers …

Each actor plays multiple roles, where the actor playing Oom Johannes also plays The Stranger (depicted by an African cloak), Sheraton (depicted by a policeman's cap), Boxer (depicted by a metal bucket worn on the head) and Lillian (depicted by a delicate grey sunhat). The roles Oom Johannes plays indicate that he is in charge of the group and probably is the instigator who wanted to tell the story of The Stranger, because he also plays that role. It could be argued that he is the one who identifies most with The Stranger.

The actor playing Lippe also plays Ella (depicted by a soft, floral skirt), Tant Stienie (depicted by a lilac, flowered hat), Gert's wife (depicted by a large, shapeless black hat), and Koos (depicted by a floral biscuit tin worn on the head). Lippe plays mostly

female roles and he even plays the role of the little girl, Ella, as well. This attaches a predominantly female nature to his character, where he receives orders from the other two, he has to do what they want him to do and it could also mean they regard him as naive and childish.

The actor playing Spider also plays Pa, also called Piet (depicted by and old brown leather veld hat), Windpomp/windmill (portrayed physically by climbing up the ladder), Griet (depicted by a lacy headscarf), Dominee (depicted by a stiff, navy blue, gentleman's hat), Gert Regopstaankruiper (depicted by the same black hat as Gert's wife), Saartjie, the chicken (portrayed physically), The dog (portrayed physically) and The dog's owner (portrayed physically). Spider plays predominantly male roles, but he also plays the role of the chicken and the dog. Pa, Dominee, Gert and the dog are the traitors in the story. Spider mostly plays the roles of the traitors. This raises the question: is he perhaps also an unreliable traitor? He does rather enjoy bullying Lippe a few times throughout the plot.

The use of metadramatic techniques gives the audience an opportunity to see the play from a different perspective and allow the playwright to comment on the nature of theatre itself. The audience member becomes a character on the stage, vulnerable to the actions of other members of the play and the fate of the characters. From the beginning of the play, the actors included the audience by interacting with them.

Ella runs home with a bucket of water (Reznek et al. 2012: 107). When she gets home, she serves breakfast to her father. Ella and her father have a strained relationship. They do not talk to each other at the breakfast table and they do not even make eye contact. Ella only stares at the portrait of her mother (who has died)

(Reznek et al. 2012: 107). Pa is depicted as a father who does not have a good relationship with his daughter, a liar, and a greedy person. He is not a moral person, and is easily manipulated by the reactions or even just the anticipation of reactions of the townspeople. To him, it is just a matter of being accepted that counts, as well as not giving the townspeople a reason to expel him from the town. He is even prepared to sacrifice his relationship with his daughter in the process.

Compared to her relationship with her father, Ella has a much better "relationship" with the portrait of her mother on the wall of their home. It is clear that she misses her mother a lot, and that she regards her mother as her moral compass. She also blames the community for her mother's death, because they did not want to open the gate of the community to let help in when she was sick.

Oom Johannes is sitting on his stoep and continues to tell the story (Reznek et al. 2012: 108):

> And here I sit, Oom Johannes, cooling off on my stoep, and I watch how the people here build fences around their hearts. And every day was the same as the day before … Except for this day, this day was a different day!

Ella goes to fetch water at the windmill and notices a man approaching the gate. At first, she is afraid of the man and her first words to him are as follows (p. 109):

> Who are you? What do you want? Go away, it's not safe for you here! [...] The people in this town don't like strangers! They will kill you! Go away!

She considers calling the townspeople to summon the police, but knowing what their response would be to the stranger's intrusion into their community, she decides against it. When the man collapses at the gate, she feels sorry for him, opens the

gate, and offers the man some water. The man crawls through the gate and again she tries to chase him away, but ultimately decides to help him. She then dresses his wounds and hides him in the chicken coop, saying: “If the people of this town find out I’m helping a stranger, we’ll both be killed!” (Reznek et al. 2012: 111). In deciding to help him, Ella has “unwittingly put herself in opposition to the community (Krueger 2016: 119).

When her father returns home, he discovers the man and finds out that he does not speak their language (Reznek et al. 2012: 112). He wants to kill him. In the end, he lets the man stay, but he is only allowed to stay in the chicken coop. It is evident that he fears the townspeople’s opinion of him more than he fears The Stranger. He fears that if he associates with The Stranger, the townspeople will also cast him out of the community. Krueger (2012: 119) notes that sometimes, “worse than the fear of the stranger, is the fear of becoming strangers ourselves, of being cast out, exiled”. To emphasise this fear of the unfamiliar, the word “vreemd” [strange] is articulated strangely every time it is used during the play. The word is repeated many times throughout the production, gaining in “ever darker resonance as the piece progresses” (Krueger 2016: 119).

The Stranger does not utter one word during the play, although he is one of the main characters. He does not even speak to Ella, whom he falls in love with later in the play. Their only communication is through movements (physical theatre), for example, the dance (Reznek et al. 2012: 132). This dance “speaks” of their budding love for each other and it is clear that Ella has a much better relationship with The Stranger, than she has with her own father. This is a physical theatre play and movement is a powerful “language.” When The Stranger arrives, the orange trees

start bearing fruit, and the hen starts laying many eggs. Ella gives these products as gifts to the townspeople. How is it possible for The Stranger to do this? He is depicted as someone with superhuman characteristics. This is reminiscent of Jesus in *The Bible* who came to save the world from their sins, in the sense that The Stranger appears to have arrived in the closed community to save them from poverty and misery.

Ella*'s* father arrives home and she serves him eggs and orange juice (Reznek et al. 2012: 118). He asks where all the food came from and she shows him how many eggs the hens have been laying. When he realises The Stranger has brought them good fortune, he becomes greedy, and wants to sell the product. Ella manages to persuade him that they must not sell the produce, but share it with everybody else in town. Ella secretly goes out at night to deliver the produce to the townspeople's doors.

One night when she goes out to deliver the product, The Stranger follows her. She tells him to go home for his own safety. They run home, but a dog starts barking and they are discovered. A person accuses The Stranger of being a thief. Ella runs to her father for help, while The Stranger tries to escape, but he is unable to and the townspeople gather around him.

The sheriff asks Ella's father if he knows The Stranger and he says he does not. The sheriff wants to know who let The Stranger in at the gate and the father indicates that it was Ella. Her father denies that he knows anything about The Stranger, because he does not want to be associated with him. Pa fears being cast out of the community himself. He betrays The Stranger and we subsequently find out that *Ma* died as a result of the townspeople's fear of opening the gate when she was sick.

Ella tries to persuade the townspeople to open the gate this time (Reznek et al. 2012: 142):

> When Ma was sick you could have opened the gate for help, but none of you did. Now help has come to us. Look at all the gifts this stranger has brought, and you all took and ate and drank of those gifts, but now these secrets are eating away at you and filling your hearts with guilt.

Ella's pleas fall on deaf ears, and it is her father who is the instigator: "Cast him out! (p. 142-143) and the sheriff repeats his words. Then Pa says: "Kill him!" and the sheriff again repeats the words. The townspeople start joining in the chant. Ella runs away and they proceed to beat The Stranger to death. Later Ella discovers The Stranger's bloody cloak. She first attacks the sheriff with a knife and then she brings the knife up to her own throat, but her father eventually persuades her to let it go.

This presents the climax of the play. From the start of the play, it was clear that the townspeople did not want to allow strangers into their town and in the end, they killed the Stranger. The play builds up to this scene where the townspeople kill The Stranger, even though he brought prosperity and good fortune to their town. After they have killed The Stranger, the town goes into decline again.

Ella is the only character who changes during the play. At first, she also chases away The Stranger (p. 110):

> Now go! Get lost! Let go of me! You rubbish! I gave you the pinky and you took the whole bloody hand! You have to go! If you won't go on your own, I will take you myself.

She even tries to pull him out of the gate. She then decides to help him, but when she gets home, she still closes all the shutters so that no one can see that she is helping The Stranger. She also blows out the lamp when her father comes home, because she does not want her father to see him. Although she is scared, she follows the promptings of her heart and helps The Stranger.

Later in the play, Ella falls in love with The Stranger. The love scene takes place in the kitchen of Ella and her father's home. The didascalia tells us (Reznek et al. 2012: 132) that Ella reaches over The Stranger's shoulder and he takes her hand and sweeps her into a dance. A romantic dance full of yearning follows (p. 135):

> Oom Johannes sings:
>
> At the same time, the love between
>
> the stranger and the last girl in town
>
> began to flower, and blossoms
>
> sprang forth.

At the end of the play, Ella is prepared to defend The Stranger with a knife (p. 144):

> While they speak, Ella stands, she moves away from them at first and then all of a sudden she whips around and runs at Sheraton, her hand raised with the knife in it, ready to stab him.

Ella then decides to leave the community (Reznek et al. 2012: 147):

> Ella wakes up, stands and dresses herself in Die Vreemdeling [The Stranger]'s cloak. The Portrait of the Mother and the chair are both set up to

> establish the inside of the house. Ella turns and goes home, walks through the front door, past her sleeping father, to the Portrait of the Mother and carefully takes it off the wall. As she takes it in her hands, the actor playing the Mother walks silently off stage. Ella leaves the house then, carrying the portrait (now just a frame), and goes towards the gate.

On the other hand, Ella's father does not change. In the beginning he gets his knife when he discovers The Stranger (p. 112) and in the end he is the instigator and helps to kill The Stranger. Unlike Ella, he does not question his beliefs. Ella realises that it is wrong to exclude strangers from their community, but he does not think it is wrong or he is too scared of what the rest of the community is going to think about him. He might also be worried that the other members of the community will kick him out of the community, or that they will harm him if they discover he hosted a stranger.

One of the biggest advantages of accepting migrants/strangers into our communities is the fact that they bring new skills to contribute to society. Many migrants come from countries with different cultures, ideas, and educational backgrounds than their host countries, which means that they may have skill sets that are valuable to the economy of their new home countries.

Krueger notes that the separation from the *Others* would not be so damaging if difference was not inevitably hierarchised, and if separation did not apportion rank. In other words, the *Others* (the foreigners/migrants) are ranked lower than the citizens of that country. Kristeva (1991: 14) writes: "The humiliation that disparages the foreigners endows his master with who knows what petty grandeur." But, in the case of The Stranger in *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger] Krueger (2016: 122) notes that

The Stranger “evokes a richer grandeur of the strange and mysterious” due to his extraordinary talent.

4.7 Reception of *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger]

Die Vreemdeling [The Stranger] was first performed as part of the N7 Tour in 2010 by Magnet Theatre, on the netball court of Bergsig High School in O’Kiep in the Northern Cape (Reznek et al. 2012: 93), on Thursday, 15 April 2010. Thereafter they also performed the play at the following places during the N7 Tour: O’Kiep High School, O’Kiep Sportsgrounds, Leliefontein Community Hall, Garies High School, Vredendal Sportsgrounds, Citrusdal Sportsgrounds, PW de Bruin Primary School, Lambert’s Bay and Cederberg Arts Festival, Sederberg Primary School, Clanwilliam. In October 2010 they also performed the play at Aardklop National Arts Festival in Potchefstroom.

Die Vreemdeling [The Stranger] was also the launch production of the Magnet Theatre premises in Observatory, Cape Town, in February 2011. It was performed at the GIPCA Directors and Directing Conference at the Arena Theatre in Cape Town (February 2011), as well as at the Toyota US Woordfees in Stellenbosch (March 2011), at the KKNK in Oudtshoorn (April 2011) and the St Anne’s Diocesian College, Hilton, Kwazulu-Natal (August 2011).

Die Vreemdeling [The Stranger] has received the following award nominations (Reznek et al. 2012: 94):

- Aardvark Best Afrikaans Production at Aardklop (2010);
- Best Actor: Ephraim Gordon, Aardklop (2010);
- Best Newly-created Afrikaans Presentation: The KykNET Fiestas (2010);

- Best Upcoming Artist: Ephraim Gordon, KykNET Fiestas (2010); and
- Best Supporting Actor: Dann-Jacques Mouton, KykNET Fiestas (2010).

Awards and accolades are key to recognising a playwright's work in the world of theatre and acknowledgement of creative excellence. Winning an award can be a sign of validation for playwrights that their work is respected by their peers. A playwright's career can be greatly impacted by an award, leading to a wider audience and more productions. This recognition can also help playwrights acquire grants that may not have been available to them otherwise.

Cox (2014: 27) notes that audiences experience migrant theatre as follows:

> The way an audience member interprets and responds to any piece of theatre is influenced by the way he or she imagines his or her relationship to the artists that made the work, and to the story being told. In theatre of migration this may be summed up, crudely, as "Is it by/about them or is it by/about us?

The role of drama critics is to serve as a bridge between the theatre community and the public, offering insightful critiques and analysis of plays. In essence, they act as evaluators, providing feedback on the quality of productions to guide audiences in deciding whether or not to buy tickets. Their role is critical, as it helps to foster the development of theatre and to help maintain the standard of artistic work. They often help to create an interest in new works or revive interest in older works. Quite a few critics wrote positive reviews about *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger].

What the critics said:

Layered triumph of content, form […] What really makes this play such a wonderful little gem is the way it tells the story. It uses humour and music and cleverly

constructs a story within a story to make these elements a natural part of the play […] Fleishman has drawn out a sensitive and vivid depiction of a whole range of characters from the cast. They are all exceptional.

- Tyrone August, *Cape Times*, February 2011

No stranger to grace and beauty, these performers are talented and physically committed, switching from the different portrayals with alacrity.

- Zane Henry, *Argus Tonight*, February 2011

The heart's gates are opened […] This play leaves us with a lot to ponder, because although the portrayal is comical, the message and the consequences are far reaching.

- Maryke Roberts, *krit*, 8 April 2010

With comedy, original music, physical theatre, as well as clever décor and props by Craig Leo, the three actors brilliantly bring the townspeople to life, as well as a few animals and objects too. Here lies a rich harvest for theatregoers in the new theatre.

- Marina Nel, *Die Burger*, 2 February 2011

4.8 The plight of foreigners

It can be argued that this play also concerns the plight of *foreigners* or *migrants* in general. The title of the collection in which this play can be found is *The Magnet Theatre 'Migration' Plays,* a collection of plays about foreigners or migrants. There is also a specific reference to "foreigners" and "strangers", who must be kept out of the community in *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger] (Reznek et al. 2012: 103).

This fear of strangers is also part of the psyche of many South Africans. Foreigners create fear and suspicion. Zygmunt Bauman (2007) writes in his book *Liquid Times* about the refugee crisis worldwide, and explores the attendant rise of xenophobia. He writes that there is an acute crisis because millions of men and women are already deprived of their land, jobs, and safety nets and are, in this capacity, somehow regarded as "human waste" (Bauman 2007: 28). These refugees are not only not part of the nation, but they also stand outside the country's economy, and have no recourse to the law. The reason for this is the "recent rapid increase in the value of fear saturating the whole of society" (p. 16). The moment these refugees move across the borders of their homelands, they do not have their support any longer (p. 37). The Stranger in *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger] also lost all his rights when he entered Ella's community, where, if Ella did not secretly look after him, he would have died. However, in the end, Ella could do nothing to protect The Stranger against the murderous vengeance of her community.

Bauman (2007: 37), citing Agier, argues that in this era of globalisation, refugees exist outside the law, not only outside the law of their homelands which they have left, but certainly also outside the law of the country to which they have moved, i.e., they are outside the law per se. They are in this way outcasts and outlaws of a novel kind, as the products of globalisation, because they have been cast into a space of "liminal drift", and they do not know whether this is likely to be transitory or permanent. Even if they stay in one place, they remain on a journey, by virtue of having relocated to a place that remains to some degree inaccessible to them. They also may not be able to return to their homeland, even if safety permits.

Bauman (2007: 41) writes that refugees have become “the embodiment of ‘human waste’”, because they have no useful part to play in their new country and they have no realistic prospect that they will be assimilated into the new social system:

> Nothing is left but the walls, the barbed wire, the controlled gates, the armed guards. Between them, they define the refugees’ identity – or rather put paid to their right to self-definition, let alone self-assertion. All waste, including wasted humans, tends to be piled up indiscriminately on the same refuse tip. The act of the assignment to waste puts an end to differences, individualities, idiosyncrasies. Waste has no need of fine distinctions and subtle nuances, unless it is earmarked for recycling; but the refugees’ prospects of being recycled into legitimate and acknowledged members of society are, to say the least, dim and infinitely remote. All measures have been taken to assure the permanence of their exclusion.

The camps of asylum seekers are “artifices of temporary installation made permanent through a blocking of their exits” (p. 45). They do not truly belong in the host country, they exist separately from the rest of the country by means of an “invisible, but all the same thick and impenetrable veil of suspicion and resentment” (p. 45). It would appear as if they are suspended in a spatial void where even time has ground to a halt, they have neither settled nor are on the move, they are neither sedentary nor nomadic. They are "ineffable”, “unthinkable”, and “unimaginable”.

Krueger (2012: 115) refers to Bauman to argue that the divisions between worlds now exist within countries, and not amongst them. This fear of strangers is also noticeable in South Africa.

> As levels of inequality in South Africa continue to rise and security companies become an ever-present feature of urban life, our response to strangers has become increasingly driven by fear, and it is a short distance between fear and violence.

Nowadays, communities are defined by "…closely watched borders rather than [their] contents" (Bauman 2007: 94), defended as they are by armed guards who control entries and exits. The vagabond and the foreigner are now regarded as enemies. However, in a city, strangers are likely to meet. When strangers meet, it is an event without a past, as well as an event without a future (p. 95). Getting rid of the stranger seems a much more attractive option, because they want to avoid "the risk-fraught commerce, the mind-taxing communication, the nerve-breaking bargaining and the irritating compromises" (p. 105).

The ability to live with differences, let alone enjoy such living and to benefit from it, does not come easily. Even though The Stranger brought many gifts and abundance to Ella's community, it was only Ella who was willing to accept him into their midst, where the rest of the community could not bring themselves to accept a stranger into their community. They were not willing to open their minds to see that strangers can bring other skills, knowledge, and talent into their community. The ability to live with differences is an art which, like all arts, requires study and exercise. The inability to face up to the plurality of human beings and the ambivalence of all classifying decisions are, on the contrary, self-perpetuating, and self-reinforcing, i.e., the more effective the drive to homogeneity and the efforts to eliminate the difference, the more difficult it is to feel at home in the face of strangers, the more threatening the difference appears, the deeper the anxiety it breeds. In keeping with this dynamic,

Ella’s community has locked themselves up behind a gate for too long, and they have lost the skill of feeling at home in the face of strangers.

CHAPTER 5: *EVERY YEAR, EVERY DAY, I AM WALKING*

5.1 Introduction

Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking follows the journey of a young refugee girl and her mother when they are forced to flee their country. It was performed in at least 20 countries around the world (from 2006 until 2012), and received many positive reviews, both in South Africa and London, as well as six nominations.

Firstly, in this chapter, focus will be placed on how refugees are often unable to tell their own stories, because they do not speak the language of the country they had to flee to and, for many reasons, they are sometimes afraid to speak up. Secondly, shoes as a powerful symbol will also be explored. The different characters are often represented by their shoes in this production, and the shoes are a symbol of sadness, but also of hope. A discussion of the dehumanising effect of official processes in an unfamiliar, often hostile, new country, will then follow. Finally, the inadequacy of words to tell the stories of refugees fleeing to new countries will be explored. In this production, physical theatre is effectively used as a tool to tell the story of the girl and her mother.

5.2 Background of the play

Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking is a theatrical production that explores the refugee experience, as well as the themes of victimhood and hope. The play sheds light on the struggles and challenges that migrants, especially women, face daily. The play highlights the fact that migrants are often forced to leave their homes due to war, persecution, or economic hardship. They must then navigate an unfamiliar, complex, and often hostile world in search of safety and a better life.

This play is an example of applied theatre, which is a form of theatre that is used to address social issues, and promote social change. According to Sanae (2020: 354) applied theatre is an “artistic form with social, political and ethical responsibility”:

> It is, indeed, a form of art that is equipped with tools that permit the real projection of the irregularities and social scars of the community. It is a podium that motivates its contributors to interact with the community and try to find possible strategies to social change.

Thakur (2013: 2) notes that, as the aspects of life constantly change, theatre also makes transformations. He writes that theatre is “changing, improving and modifying itself to the needs of the changing situation” and that theatre is approved as an “effectual element for social change as well as behavioural change (p. 2).” In other words, theatre plays a social role especially with regards to social conflict, control, protest, as well as to create broader awareness. Sanae (2020: 354) writes that theatre as a form of art involves equipping itself “with the appropriate strategies to meet the needs of communities and participate in social development”; and that theatre is often a “channel via which theatre practitioners attempt to fix problems in a critical and artistic manner”. This is exactly what Magnet Theatre has done in the case of *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking*.

Mark Fleishman (2012: 12), the director of the play, writes *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking* was created in 2006 in response to the developing refugee crisis in South Africa. This play follows the journey of a young refugee from somewhere in Africa who brutally loses family and home, and is forced to flee to South Africa through many uncertainties and perils. This play addresses this dislocation, considering as it does so what home means for all of us, about Africa and the

obstacles of living on this continent, about loss, and about the first steps towards healing after trauma. The play tells a contemporary story told through physical images, music, and movement, “celebrating the ability of human beings to heal and regain a sense of dignity and identity through the power of imagination” (Fleishman 2012: 12).

Mark Fleishman writes that this play was never meant to be, it was not planned for or thought about, but it arrived “unannounced and took us by surprise, surprised us with its simplicity, its raw intensity and the urgency of its call” (p. 13). He explains that an invitation to Cameroon led him to write it. They wanted to create a play that was small and mobile, that would take them back to the roots of Magnet Theatre as “a compact, travelling theatre of simple physical images, sparse but carefully selected objects, and the clear emotional power of abundantly talented performers” (p. 13).

Fleishman writes (p. 13):

> Taken by surprise, there was little to be done but to trust the story, its excruciating inevitability. It creeps up and bites and then refuses to let go until right at the very end. Understanding the power of the story is humbling. The creation of the work was influenced by the Common Plants Project[21] under the direction of Judith Rudakoff and by the book *The Suitcase Stories* by Glynis Clacherty.

The project was meant to be a psychological support programme for refugee children in Hillbrow in 2001, which then resulted in the book *The Suitcase Stories:*

[21] Magnet Theatre participated in the Common Plants research project in 2006. The project was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The project, initiated by Judith Rudakoff of York University in Toronto, linked artists and school learners in Iqaluit in Arctic Canada with their peers in Cape Town, South Africa. These linkages occurred through workshops and a website which became a virtual garden into which participants planted their creative ideas. (www.magnettheatre.co.za)

Refugee Children Reclaim Their Identities (2006).[22] Hutchison (2016: 186) notes that the play was not based on a specific historical moment or archival sources, but that it resonates with various contemporary issues of migration in general. The play was originally commissioned for the African Festival of Children and Youth Theatre in Yaounde, Cameroon in November 2006. It has since been performed in many African countries, as well as India, Brazil, Japan, the United Kingdom, France, Argentina, Sweden, Germany and the United States.

5.3 Reception

(i) The tenacity of *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking*

Cox (2012: 131) writes that the "tenacity" of theatrical productions such as *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking* " seek, country by country, night by night, to transform hope into social change".

The play was performed in the following venues: In *2006* at The Festival for Children and Young People (FATEJ), Cameroon; In *2007* at NAF Main Programme, Grahamstown; Baxter Theatre, Cape Town; In *2008* at the Market Theatre, Johannesburg; SADC Tour: Windhoek, Namibia; Gabarone, Botswana; Mbabane, Swaziland; Lusaka, Zambia; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Bulawayo, Zimbabwe; Blantyre, Malawi; Maputo, Mozambique; The London International Festival of Theatre; In 2008 at (LIFT); Hilton Festival, Pietermaritzburg; In *2009* at the KKNK, Oudtshoorn; the Proyecto 34 Degrees South Festival, Argentina; St Anne's College,

[22] This publication includes artistic expressions and narratives by refugee children in South Africa. It was both a forum for them to tell their stories and a reflection on the use of therapeutic art to address the psychological implications of conflict-induced displacement. The art therapy took place in Hillbrow, and each child chose a second-hand suitcase with which to create their stories. Later, the narratives of these children were also recorded in written form (Review by Christina Clark-Kazak of The Suitcase Stories: Refugee Children Reclaim their Identities by Glynes Clacherty. 2008. *Children, Youth and Environments*, University of Cincinnati Press, Vol.18. No 2. pp. 272-274).

Pietermaritzburg; Aardklop National Arts Festival, Potchefstroom; Juice Festival, Newcastle; International Theatre Festival of Kerala, India; In *2010* at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town; Oval House, London; IDEA World Congress, Brazil; In *2011* at the Magnet Theatre, Cape Town; ASSITEJ World Congress, Malmo and Copenhagen. The list above makes it clear that this performance was seen by many different audiences in various countries, and that hundreds of people were as a result exposed to the production and were confronted with the struggles of refugees.

(ii) Awards and nominations

Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking was nominated for and received the following awards: Argentina, 2009: *Best Foreign Production* nomination; *Kanna Awards KKNK*, 2009: Best Actress: Jennie Reznek; and *Aardklop National Arts Festival*, 2009: Best Actress Awards to Faniswa Yisa and Jennie Reznek.

Many reviewers praised Reznek and Yisa as highly accomplished actors with the ability to draw people to the show, and to invite the audience to be part of the experience, e.g., for example, Folb, in his review in the *Weekend Argus* (2019), as well as Frank (2008) and Stark (2010) in their reviews.

One reviewer in Namibia wrote that Reznek's work has "long entered the psyche of the theatre world in our region" (Frank 2008: 17) and compares the production with other works created by Magnet Theatre:

> *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking* explores the universal theme of loss and recovery – what it means to lose home, and to rebuild it. This is a subject Magnet Theatre has pursued over recent years, with the outdoor play *Onnest'bo* on the demolition of District Six under Apartheid, and the historical

> play, *Cargo*, about slavery in the Western Cape. Through reflecting reality, members of this innovative and dynamic theatre company are doing their part to change the world.

Frank (p. 17) also notes that the audience "becomes part of this arduous journey as the fire destroying the village hut made from paper engulfs the theatre", and when dust is kicked up by the shoes of the refugees. By involving all the senses of the audience members, they are drawn into their experience.

Chris Thurman (2008) notes the performance's local resonances:

> [*Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking*] is salutary to South African audiences. For when mother and daughter arrive in Cape Town – "our turf" – they are utterly lost in the South African babel without even the lingua franca of English to help them. They do not understand, nor are they understood. The Capetonians (of all race groups) that they interact with do not come across as a very sympathetic lot. In fact, quite the opposite: our fictional compatriots give voice to the xenophobic resentment of many South Africans when it comes to citizens of other African countries living within our borders. At school, while she stutters her way through class, Aggie has to put up with taunts of 'Amakwerekwere!' Her mother receives the same insult as she is shown from pillar to post while trying desperately to find a Home Affairs office where she can obtain refugee status.

Other South African reviewers wrote the following:

Adrienne Sichel wrote in her review of the play in the *Argus Tonight* in 2008 (Reznek et al. 2012: 10) that the play is like "creative sorcery" and that "simplicity is key to this

profoundly moving tale about loss and survival". She also compliments Reznek and Yisa's "articulate bodies and voices", which they use to tell this "heartbreaking tale".

The production received equally glowing reviews from London reviewers. Chris Thurman writes in *Weekender* that this play's greatest achievement is "to make it impossible to ignore the millions of individual tragedies bound up in […] 'forced migration'" (p. 10). Lindsay Johns wrote a review in *Afridiziak Theatre News* (2010) in London that this production is a "harrowing and yet uplifting meditation on the plight of the refugee in the modern world" (p. 10) and that it thoroughly deserved the standing ovation it received on press night. She wrote that it is "pregnant with raw emotions and one which functions as a noble and lyrical testament to the power of the human spirit in the face of crushing adversity". Howard Loxton wrote in *The British Theatre Guide* (2010) that this "piece of captivating physical theatre" was told with "such life affirming intensity that, rather than the heavy political study one might expect, this is a joyous celebration" (p. 10).

As can be inferred from the above, the bulk of the reviews shared the sentiment that Magnet Theatre's migrant plays received glowing praise both locally and abroad for their powerful storytelling and making audiences aware of the plight of migrants.

5.4 *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking*

The play follows the journey of a young girl, Aggie, and her mother, who flee to Cape Town as refugees from an unknown Francophone country in Africa. The three main characters are Aggie, Ernestine, and Mama. Aggie is always played by the same actress and Ernestine and Mama are likewise played by the same actress (Reznek et al. 2012: 14).

There is a circular hessian floor cloth on the floor of the stage (p. 14). This cloth is made from the hessian bags of African products. In the centre of this cloth is a metal table, and attached to the table is an orange paper house (which looks like a child's drawing). When the play starts, there is a pair of children's shoes on the table, as well as a wire radio, and a beaded wire elephant. A washing line is stretched across the back of the stage. Two large grass baskets containing props are set on either side of the stage at the back. Much of the play is "underscored" with music (p. 15). The music used to represent "home" is Central African music, and when they arrive in Cape Town, the music changes to South African music. The music for the journey is "atmospheric and haunting" and reflects the distances they must cover, as well as the emotional landscape of loss.

In the first scene, two children, Aggie and her sister, Ernestine, play next to a stream. The intimate connection between them is illustrated by their imaginative manipulation of their shoes, which they pretend to be birds' wings. They also wrap traditional African cloths around their heads, pretending to be grown women. From the beginning of the play, the shoes become a powerful symbol, depicting the happy, sad, or desperate emotional states of the characters. Their everyday happiness is interrupted by the news of killings in the neighbouring village. The sound of machetes being sharpened becomes audible behind the scenes, while the two sisters tell the story of the elephants. Ernestine speaks in French, and Aggie speaks English. They say that the elephants, who once populated the African continent, could walk "anywhere and everywhere," because "there were no borders, no barriers, no barbed wire fences"; "when they were lonely, they walked to find friends and when they were hungry, they simply walked to find leaves to eat. When they

were frightened, they went to their mothers for comfort (Reznek et al. 2012: 28-29). While the story is being told, Aggie is demonstrating these acts with a wire elephant, pretending the elephant is walking, eating, or being rocked by its mother. These scenes stand in sharp contrast with the next scene, where Aggie and Mama have to flee their house, and Ernestine dies within the burning house.

Aggie and Mama's flight and the rest of their journey are mostly depicted by their two pairs of shoes. Firstly, Mama's shoes run up and down to look for Aggie, then the two pairs of shoes walk together, becoming exhausted when they walk through a desert (illustrated by manipulating the shoes through sand on a metal table). When Aggie's shoes falter, Mama's shoes pick her shoes up, and carry her further. Robbe (2019: 507) notes that this scene represents the intimacy and care between mother and daughter. At some point, Mama physically picks Aggie up and carries her on her back, while Aggie wipes the sweat from Mama's brow.

With their arrival in Cape Town, the characters feel the full force of hostility towards refugees from other African countries. This act of the play focuses on the alienation experienced by the two women, as well as their estrangement from each other (p. 507). The humiliation is further emphasised by a scene in the Home Affairs Office where they undergo fingerprinting. This dehumanising process is taken further when Mama climbs into a black rubbish bag, covers her head with another bag, and disappears: "She rolls slowly on the floor as if she is a bag of human rubbish being blown around by the wind" (Reznek et al. 2012: 42). Aggie experiences similar treatment at school when she undergoes physical and verbal abuse and is called an "amakwerekwere." Both women go through this alone. Mama and Aggie's suffering is illustrated through parallel episodes, where, although the audience can see them

both suffer, they do not communicate with each other. Mama keeps quiet about Ernestine's death, although Aggie keeps on writing letters to her sister, asking her where she is. She then gives the letters to Mama to send to her sister, but Mama hides them away in a bag.

The climax of the play comes when Aggie discovers the bag full of letters she has written to her sister. She wants an explanation from her mother and "perceives the truth, conveyed through Mama's emotional gesticulating, since she is still unable to put what she witnessed into words" (p. 47). Aggie runs away to a park, where she plays with Ernestine in a dream. They play the games they used to play at home, retell the elephant story, and pretend to fly together with the shoes as imaginary wings. Mama and Aggie reconnect in the park and Mama manages to persuade Aggie to "try and find a way to say goodbye" to her sister (p. 50). Aggie does this by burning the letters she wrote to Ernestine and she gives away their shoes, symbolising that she recognises her loss, and accepts it. Mama then gives Aggie a new pair of shoes, replacing the pink children's shoes that symbolised the link with Ernestine. Mama helps Aggie take her first steps in her new shoes (p. 52):

> Delicately these steps develop into a faint Mapantsula[23] dance that brings back physically some of the gestures from home that she and Ernestine performed together – the clapping, the cooking, etc. This is a very slow, delicate development – a slow journey to opening up again.

[23] "South African street gangs are identified by their style of clothing and music. In their harsh surroundings there are no rules and survival of the fittest is the order of the day. Mapantsula (1988) is a screenplay written by Oliver Schmitz and Thomas Mogotlane and the Mapantsula/Pantsula is a highly energetic dance form which originated in the black townships of South Africa during the apartheid era (Davies, Matt. 1990. Review: Mapantsula and the Culture of Resistance in South Africa, *Africa Today*, Vol. 37, No 1, pp. 97-99).

This depicts the slow, gradual healing of Mama and Aggie, with Mama supporting Aggie and teaching her to walk in her new, adult shoes.

5.5 The language barrier

Hutchison (2016: 188) writes that, all too often, refugees are unable to tell their own stories and some of the reasons for this are that they often do not speak the local language, that they try to protect their children, or that they have been sexually abused and are afraid to speak. They often fear rejection if the truth comes out (Tankink & Richters 2007: 191), or they choose to move under the radar, because it is safer that way. Instead of just words, Reznek and Yisa do not use a lot of language to tell the refugees' story; instead, they use their bodies and props, for example, their shoes.

Refugee mothers also often do not share all the hardships of loss and displacement with their children, in order to protect them. Robbe (2019: 508) notes that the "embodied repertoire of the play reflects both the silences and the developing conversations between the mothers and the daughters." Mama is unable to tell Aggie that her sister died in the fire, and Aggie herself goes through a period of stillness, when she waits for her sister to reply to her letters. Later, she is so desperate to hear from her sister, that she starts writing on her own body. The "dialogic practice, throughout the play, is conveyed through bodily movement, which forges effective connections between estranged mothers and daughters" (Robbe 2019: 508). This influences the audience, making them engage with the characters' experience.

The languages spoken in the play are both English and French. Even if one does not understand French, one will still mostly understand what is unfolding on stage, such

as when they act as if they are children playing a game, they are fearful when they flee the violent attack on their home, and they are confused when they arrive in Cape Town. The performers, Reznek and Yisa, characteristically use props and movement to communicate emotions, as well as the experiences of the two refugees on their journey. For example, pairs of shoes symbolise refugees, violent acts, and flying birds.

It is interesting to note that while Mama and Aggie find themselves ignored, and even abused, in Cape Town's xenophobic environment, the use of French in the play has the effect of estrangement on the audience, because in the places where this production was performed, many of the audience members probably would not understand French, but only English or Afrikaans. French is thus spoken to create empathy with the refugees, and to show the members of the audience how it must feel not to understand a language; this clearly illustrates how excluded refugees must feel when they do not understand the language of their new country.

5.6 Shoes as a symbol

As noted, the three main characters are mainly represented by their shoes (Reznek et al. 2012: 14). Their shoes are always kept close to them throughout the play – either carried or worn. Mama is represented by a pair of worn, cream, court shoes and her headscarf. Ernestine is represented by her pair of green, plastic flip-flops and Aggie is represented by her pair of pink girl's shoes (they are shoes for a small child) – so the actress never wears these pink shoes. In the end, she is given a pair of adult shoes by her mother, in this case, green pumps (Reznek et al. 2012: 14).

The play begins with the young Aggie (Yisa), who walks and runs the perimeter of a circular cloth, changing direction and losing her way. This walking represents the title of the play: walking, every year, every day, very far, without a sense of belonging. The play explores the many reasons for displacement. Although violence is the main reason that Aggie and her mother flee their country, the play also explores both psychic and economic displacement (Hutchison 2016: 188).

The performers use the shoes and movements to accomplish the emphatic engagement of the audience. They illustrate their emotional experiences as refugees by moving the different pairs of shoes in different ways. In the beginning of the play, Aggie remembers her sister, Ernestine (Reznek), who tempts her back by manipulating Aggie's shoes on a metal table in the centre of the floor cloth (Reznek et al. 2012: 17).

The mother's cream court shoes and Aggie's little pink shoes are used almost like hand-held puppets, which are manipulated by Reznek and Yisa, for example, walking across the table, or over their bodies, to illustrate their emotions. In the scene *The Journey*, Mama and Aggie make the two pairs of shoes walk in the sand that they have spread on the table. These movements suggest that they are walking very far, in a huge landscape. When Aggie gets tired from walking so far, her pink shoes falter, and slide into the sand on the metal table. Mama's shoes then lift Aggie's shoes onto her, where one set of shoes now carries the other pair of shoes (Reznek et al. 2012: 33). These movements are followed by Mama literally picking Aggie up to carry her, while Aggie wipes the sweat from Mama's brow (p. 33).

Later in the play, both actresses walk their shoes down their bodies and then scoop them up to “beat like a heart against their breasts” (p. 36). These beating movements suggest that they were being trampled on.

Later, when they are in a refugee camp where they seek shelter, Mama is sexually abused. This violent act is illustrated by Reznek walking a pair of heavy, black men’s boots all over her body, while trying to shift herself from under the weight of the imaginary body on top of her. When she cries, her shoes are shaking with sobs as well (p. 35). Hutchison (2016: 189) notes that the shoes create “just enough distance between the violence of rape, so that the audience can take in and witness the rape”. Rape is a reality for many migrant women.

The shoes in this play are “multifaceted symbols” (Hutchison 2016: 189). These symbols evoke sadness and loss, as well as previous joy. For example, one of the first games Aggie remembers which she played with her sister, is that of a blue origami bird that appears from within the pink shoe. Her sister imitates the flying bird by moving her hands in the air (Reznek et al. 2012: 18-19). Aggie loses the blue origami bird, as well as her sister, when she and her mother flee the country after an attack on their home (p. 37). Towards the end of the play, Aggie rediscovers the “little bluebird nestling in the toe” (p. 52) of the new shoes her mother gives her as a gift. Through this act she finally accepts that Ernestine has died, and that she will not return ever again.

The image of the bird may have different meanings for different members of the audience. In African folktales, birds are often believed to give advice on how to be happy, how to fulfil a dream, or how to overcome poverty (Hutchison 2016: 189 quotes McCall Theal 1886). In European fairy tales, bluebirds are associated with

happiness. In this play, the image of the bird is not only beautiful, it also evokes different associations, because it is a general symbol. In this play, it is clear that the bird suggests the power of memory and the fragility of happiness.

5.7 Dehumanizing effect of official processes

Official processes often dehumanise refugees during their first attempts to navigate themselves in an unknown, often hostile, city. Aggie and her mother's dehumanisation is portrayed when they are finger-printed and repeatedly questioned in English, Afrikaans, and isiXhosa. They respond to this by using two black plastic rubbish bags to first create the rhythm of the sea to indicate how they were tossed "like flotsam and jetsam" (Reznek et al. 2012: 41).

Then, Reznek et al. (p. 42) note the following:

> Mama climbs slowly and ceremoniously into the black bag and sweeps the second bag over her head as if she is making a blessing. She covers her head with the second bag, so that she has completely disappeared. She sweeps up her shoes into the bag, and collapses onto the floor. She rolls slowly on the floor, as if she is a bag of human rubbish being blown around by the wind. She climbs out holding her shoes to her chest and looks at the audience.

Thompson (2009: 144) notes that the image of Mama and the black bags are both beautiful and sad. The beauty of these images can be rooted in the object or the experience, but these images invite the audience to engage individually and emphatically with the plight of migrants, i.e., they will realise that Mama has the same fears, hopes, and dreams they have. In other words, the engagement is on an aesthetic and somatic level, and not just on a rational level, where they might

question the validity of the narrative or assume a specific political position regarding migrants.

Hutchison (2016: 190) argues that this is an example of “dramaturgy of displacement”, where Magnet Theatre has “communicated a strong emotion related to a specific experience without speaking *for* the subject. The audience is left with a choice of how to respond to the play. They might reconsider their own views about migrants as the Other, they might decide to engage more critically in discourses regarding migrants, or they might even decide to actively seek to change the experiences of migrants.

5.8 Inadequacy of words

Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking clearly demonstrates the inadequacy of words to make sense of traumatic experiences, especially in the case of refugees, who often do not understand the language of the new country they find themselves in.

The two actresses use physical theatre to bring the refugees’ message across, because bodies can be read by all. The actresses and the audience are aware of the space between the actresses and their characters. This space is created because the actresses play multiple roles. Although Reznek and Yisa are not refugees, they have also experienced loss, and are able to put themselves in the shoes of the refugees. Their empathy helps them to play their roles.

Throughout the play, Aggie attempts to make sense of their circumstances through words, for example, she writes her name in the sand with her shoe (Reznek et al. 2012: 34) and she also writes her sister numerous letters, asking her where she is

(pp. 35 & 41). Aggie and Mama also name parts of their faces in English, trying to learn the new language (p. 43).

Hutchison (2012: 28-29) notes:

> Narration is intrinsic to plot and storytelling, even the way in which we make meaning from our lives. Yet the extent of its inadequacy is illustrated in the story Ernestine tells Aggie about the elephants “a long time ago”, who were free to walk “anywhere and everywhere in Africa”, and who could find friends when they were lonely or their mother when they were afraid. This is a story of an “ideal” world without frontiers, but throughout Ernestine’s narration, machetes are being sharpened; and as Ernestine relates how one of the youngest elephants strays to eat from a delicious tree and is separated from the elephant family; she disappears forever.

The story of the elephants also tells the story of Ernestine’s disappearance and death. The rest of the play is about the significance of this disappearance for Aggie. It demonstrates the inadequacy of words to capture their traumatic experience.

While verbal communication and expression are essential features of the human experience, refugees who have undergone traumatic experiences may, for several reasons, find it challenging to articulate their thoughts and feelings about the experience adequately.

5.9 Conclusion

Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking is one of Magnet Theatre’s most important works for several reasons. Firstly, this production explores the universal theme of

grief and loss in a way that is relatable to many audiences from all walks of life. The themes that are explored are both poignant and timely, and resonate with audiences on a deep emotional level. Secondly, the production is a prime example of the unique and impactful storytelling that is synonymous with Magnet Theatre. The production is rich in visual imagery, for example, when the actors use the different pairs of shoes to depict the characters' lives. The use of physical theatre adds a layer of depth and intensity to the storytelling that resonates with the different audiences. Thirdly, this production is instrumental in showcasing the talents of Magnet Theatre.

This production is a powerful exploration of loss, grief, and the healing process. One of the reasons why this production holds such importance is its ability to connect with audiences of all walks of life, all over the world, on a deeply emotional level. It is a universal story that touches upon the themes of pain and the search for healing. The play provides a reminder that loss and grief are experiences that all of us will inevitably face at some point in our lives.

The discourse about migrants and migration often takes place on a more theoretical and abstract level. This discourse is mostly dominated by abstract terminology and statistics. The media and public institutions tend to frame the question of migration in terms of numbers, regulations, and policies, but often, the human dimension is neglected. When audiences see this production, this discourse is presented on a more personal, as well as a more subjective level, which is where the impact of this production lies. Productions such as *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking* is a powerful tool to raise awareness of and empathy for migrants. By bringing the stories of individual migrants to the stage, these works can give a human face to an issue

that is often debated in abstract terms. It is through these stories, and the emotions and experiences they convey, that we can start to relate to the lives of migrants and understand the challenges and hardships they face.

Space is often explored in Magnet Theatre's productions. In the case of this production, they explored the concepts of the home space, which is normally a place where we feel safe and comfortable, where leaving this behind to flee to an unfamiliar, potentially dangerous country (space) can be a very difficult and daunting experience for migrants. This production literally puts us in the shoes of two migrants, and shows us how it must feel to move from your safe and comfortable home, to how it must feel to arrive in an unknown, hostile country.

Chapter 6: MAGNET THEATRE'S CLANWILLIAM ARTS PROJECT

6.1 Introduction

Magnet Theatre's Clanwilliam Arts Project is a transformative programme that deserves recognition for the impact it has had on the community it served for 18 years. Located in the Western Cape Province on the West Coast of South Africa, Clanwilliam is a community facing a range of socio-economic challenges. Magnet Theatre understands the power of the arts in bringing communities together, fostering creativity and creating opportunities for community growth. As a result, they initiated the Clanwilliam Arts Project, a programme that has been transforming the lives of many young people in the area for nearly two decades.

The Clanwilliam Arts Project was primarily aimed at *returning the heritage* of the Clanwilliam area to the community. This project offered a comprehensive programme, including workshops, training, and a number of performances. Since its inception, Magnet Theatre has been dedicated to the advancement of theatre, education, and social transformation in South Africa, where the focus of this programme was on developing theatre skills, leadership, critical thinking, and communication skills. Through workshops and training, young people have gained an understanding of the mechanics of theatre production.

In this chapter, a brief history of the Living Landscape Project, will be discussed. This will be followed by discussions of the histories of the Clanwilliam Arts Project and Clanwilliam itself. A discussion of how Magnet Theatre's Clanwilliam Arts Project made space for a new future through *performance* as a *social disruptor* and by using

beauty as a tool is also provided. The creation of an immersive environment through ritual will then be explored. This results in the (re)formation of the community of Clanwilliam. Finally, a discussion of how performance can unite individuals of different backgrounds, and how diversity should be celebrated, will follow.

6.2 History of the Clanwilliam Arts Project

6.2.1 The forerunner of the Clanwilliam Arts Project: The Living Landscape Project

The Living Landscape Project is a community-based heritage and education-based project with the main aim of “returning the archaeological archive” (Simon 2015) to the community of Clanwilliam (De Bruyn 2008: 12). Professor John Parkington, emeritus professor from the Department of Archaeology of the University of Cape Town, notes that, during the 1990s, a strong sense began to develop among archaeologists that they ought to dedicate more time and effort to communicating knowledge of heritage back to the communities. As a result, he launched this project in the early 1990s to give back the knowledge he gained through his research to the community of Clanwilliam. The project aimed to raise awareness of the rich archaeological history of the region in the local schools. Professor Parkington and his colleagues spent almost 20 years teaching children from the town how people lived in this region thousands of years ago.

Secondly, they tried to boost heritage tourism in order to create job opportunities for local unemployed people. They trained local people in computing skills, first aid, entrepreneurship, craft making, guiding, and catering. Professor Parkington believes

that, through the Living Landscape Project around R12 million were raised for projects in and around Clanwilliam, with an impact on around 3 000 schoolchildren, while also training several adults (Simon 2015). The project was located in the Old School in Park Street, Clanwilliam, purchased by the University of Cape Town for use as a field station. This venue was where the idea of the Clanwilliam Arts Project originated. The Living Landscape offices, a craft shop and accommodation, were also situated on the premises, and drama workshops were held here. This location is adjacent to where the coloured community lives, and participants in the drama workshops were able to reach them without having to walk too far.

6.2.2 The Clanwilliam Arts Project – an arts intervention

The Clanwilliam Arts Project was initiated in the mid-1990s by Professor Pippa Skotnes, but quickly grew to include the University of Cape Town's Department of Drama and Magnet Theatre (2001) (Fleishman 2012a: 132, Ravengai 2015: 212). It became an annual project co-ordinated by Magnet Theatre and included student facilitators from UCT Drama School, Michaelis School of Art, UCT Music School, the Community Networking Creative Arts Group and other independent practitioners who all used the project as a *space* for community arts training. Workshops in art, drama, dance, lantern making, storytelling, drumming and stilt walking were run with up to 700 learners from the schools in Clanwillliam. This usually occurred over a period of a week during Heritage Month in early September, for 18 years. The project usually culminated in a lantern parade and performance of a /Xam narrative (chosen from

the Bleek and Lloyd collection)[24] by the children, and the facilitators and was attended by between 2 500 and 3000 audience members from the town.

Pippa Skotnes, describes the performance night at the end of a week of workshop sessions as follows (www.magnettheatre.co.za):

> The parade begins at dusk. The local band leads the children, carrying figures and puppets and candle-powered lanterns, wearing masks and helmets through the township. As it darkens and the procession weaves through the streets, it becomes a magical display of glowing lights hovering almost disembodied against the black mountains and deep violet sky. Hundreds of people come pouring out of the little houses, and join the parade, until they reach the wood mill, where dancers make fire drawings from sawdust and actors tell stories. The whole performance is illuminated by the lanterns and evokes the first campfires and the storytelling performances of the San, who have been this project's inspiration.

According to the narrative reports from 2015 to 2018 about the Clanwilliam Arts Project, the format would usually be as follows:

Planning for the projects was done from January to June each year. This involved meetings with Cederberg Municipality, funders and all stakeholders in Clanwilliam, to discuss logistics regarding security, provision of electricity, and the presence of the

[24] Over a 14-year period between 1870 and 1884, a set of research encounters took place in Mowbray, Cape Town, between die European philologist Wilhelm Bleek, his sister-in-law, Lucy Lloyd, and a group of /Xam speakers from the Karoo region between Vanwyksvlei, Kenhardt, and Brandvlei. Convicted on charges of stock theft and other crimes arising out of defensive acts against colonial encroachment, the /Xam speakers had been incarcerated in the Breakwater Prison. Rassool, C. Beyond the Cult of "Salvation" and "Remarkable Equality": A New Paradigm for the Bleek-Lloyd Collection, p. 244.

police and the fire brigade. Through the years, the showgrounds was the venue for the main event, and the workshops were usually presented in the warehouses at the showgrounds. Many other spaces were also used, for example, in 2018, the workshops and the main event were moved to Sederberg Primary School, because renovations were underway at the showgrounds.

From June to September each year, the buying of materials, confirmation of accommodation, transport, catering, fireworks, coordination with stakeholders in Clanwilliam (Sederberg Primary School, ComNet, the local Police and Cederberg Municipality) would take place.

Every year, approximately 50 facilitators from Cape Town would go to Clanwilliam to facilitate the project, including Mark Fleishman, Jennie Reznek, Magnet Theatre Coordinators and Performance Trainees, students from the University of Cape Town, (Fine Arts students and students from the UCT College of Music), dancers from Jazzart, videographers, a photographer, researcher/facilitators and a cook. Facilitators were usually accommodated in the dormitories at Living Landscape, as well as in the guest house on the same property. During later years, the group would be joined by members of ComNet. All facilitators assisted with preparations for the workshops and the cleaning of warehouses.

In the mornings, the facilitators would run workshops for different grades at Sederberg Primary School. In the afternoons, some of the children would go to the showgrounds (or return to the school grounds) for workshops in drama, dance, music, drumming and storytelling, mask-making and lantern-making. In the evenings, the facilitators created the large sculptural objects in the shape of the creatures that

featured in that year's San story. The children were told the story and they were encouraged "to interpret the story for themselves and unpack the themes and images in terms of their own experience of their community and their families" (Narrative report on the 18th Clanwilliam Arts Project, 2018). Workshops were also presented at the BOSASA Youth Development Centre and at Elizabethfontein Primary School, situated in the isolated Agter-Pakhuis area. On Saturday a rehearsal would take place and the facilitators would put up all the artworks created by the children during the workshops. On Sunday, the final preparations took place: setting up scaffolding and the lantern screen and preparing for the fireworks and setting up the sound equipment. The children arrived at 16h30, special T-shirts would be distributed and decorative slip clay would be applied to everyone's faces, which marked a separation between normal life and the specialness of the event. All the lanterns would then be lit, as well as the candles in the big structures and the parade would begin to the music of the drummers just after sunset at 19h00.

In their last report (2018) Magnet Theatre wrote the following:

> Again, thanks to the support of our funders, a very committed team of young people and the joyful participation of approximately 700 children, we managed to deliver a wonderful, enriching and eagerly awaited cultural event to the community of Clanwilliam. The children were extremely invested, both in the workshops and the performance, as evidenced by their attendance over the week. The work in the schools was very successful this year and the facilitators were able to achieve a lot in a focused and disciplined environment. We were able to include drumming and choral singing as a

result of the skill set of the facilitators. We also had strong support from the Clanwilliam ComNet members, who have a long and historical relationship with the project. It is with great sadness that Magnet Theatre has to withdraw from this project going forward. It has grown into a huge beloved event, but the budgetary demands on the organisation as a whole make it very difficult for us to sustain.

A few examples of the San stories on which the performances were based through the years: in 2018 the San story *The Owl's Warning*[25] was picked from the Bleek and Lloyd collection, in 2017 *The Lizard, The Beetle, The Mice and the Mantis,*[26] in 2016 *The Mantis and the Catskins,*[27] and in 2015 *The Rooikat, The Anteater and The Springbok Child.*[28]

To understand the impact of the Clanwilliam Arts Project on the community of Clanwilliam, it is necessary to take a closer look at the history of this small town situated in the foothills of the Cederberg mountains, and home to many rock art sites.

[25] A man is warned not to rest where an owl is screaming, because the lions are around. One day he walks a long way up a hill. He gets tired and decides to sleep. An owl screams to warn the man, but he does not pay attention. The lion finds him and eats him. The dead man becomes an owl. His wife finds the dead owl and puts him in a pot of hot water. Just before she is about to cook him, she hears a cry from the owl and recognises her husband. He becomes himself again and the wife cries with joy. The moral of the story is to listen to warnings (Narrative report on the 18th Clanwilliam Arts Project, 2018).
[26] This story is about the relationship of an overprotective father, Lizard, with his very beautiful daughter, Beetle. Lizard hides Beetle in a hole and only Striped Mouse is clever enough to trick Lizard into finding Beetle and rescuing her. The story explores the relationship between fathers and daughters and touches on themes of an unhealthy relationship with alcohol – Lizard tricks the suitors by encouraging them to drink contaminated water, which clouds their judgment (Narrative report on the 17th Clanwilliam Arts Project, 2017).
[27] This year's story dealt with themes of sharing, selflessness, and caring for the overlooked members of the community. Ichutegaua, a mythical creature capable of walking through fire without being burned, teaches a praying mantis how to perform his fire spell. The mantis captures and skins several cats, using their skins as enchanted fireproof robes, but he does not share his bounty as is the custom and is taught a lesson by Ichutegaua (Narrative report on the 16th Clanwilliam Arts Project, 2016).
[28] This year's story dealt with themes of damage that can exist between children and adults. The Springbok mother neglects her child, who is then stolen by Anteater and brought up as Anteater's own. Rescued by Rooikat, the Springbok child is eventually restored to its mother. The story reflects some very harsh sociological realities in the community of Clanwilliam. (Narrative report on the 15th Clanwilliam Arts Project, 2015).

6.3 History of Clanwilliam

Clanwilliam lies just off the N7, about 240 kilometres North-West of Cape Town, in the Cederberg Municipality. This region is a strong agricultural centre, with citrus, rooibos, potato, vegetable, and grape farming driving the economy. It is the centre of the rooibos tea industry of South Africa, and is currently the only place in the world where rooibos can be cultivated. Light industries include a wood mill and engineering services, and the Strassbergers Shoe Factory. It is the seventh oldest town in the country and many tourists are attracted by the spring flowers and the San rock paintings, as well as the Clanwilliam Dam (De Bruyn 2008: 8).

Historical and archaeological sources name three indigenous groups who inhabited the region during the 17th century: the /Xam, the Namas and the Griquas (Olifantsrivierontwikkelingsvereniging 1987: 3). Land alienation in the region started around 1712 when white colonists entered the Olifants River Region (Penn 1995: 38-40). The first loan farms in the Olifants River Valley were allocated in 1725, and by 1732, the entire length of the Olifants River had been occupied by white farmers. The local white population increased significantly with the arrival of the 1820 settlers, and many of them also acquired farms. The /Xam pastoralists who inhabited this region had practiced a form of “transhuman pastoralism”, which was dependent on their access to water sources (Guelke 1992: 804-805). Since a minority of white farmers controlled most of the suitable land for pastoralism, the /Xam, who had used the land before, were banned from it. They were forced to become farm labourers, or form tenancy relationships with these landowners, or to move further North (Penn 1995: 141-158). For the /Xam, the years between 1770 and 1800 were characterised by a

struggle for survival. The advancing trekboers vied for their land and water and by the 1870s the last few free /Xam had been either killed or worked as labourers for the Cape Colony (Penn 1996: 81-91).

The impact of history on Clanwilliam has “at its roots tensions among the /Xam, the English settlers, the slaves who escaped from the Cape of Good Hope and other outlying areas, the trekboers and other white farmers” (De Bruyn 2008: 10). The impact of colonisation on the community and apartheid has caused a collapse of historical memory of the coloured community, but performance “offers a platform to those whose voices have been silenced and omitted from history for generations” (p. 10).

6.4 Making space for a new future

Magnet Theatre’s Clanwilliam Arts Project has been a game-changer in disrupting the status quo to make space for a new future in Clanwilliam. This programme was not only initiated in order to promote the development of theatre skills of the underprivileged youth in the Clanwilliam area through the use of a series of workshops with a performance at the end of the week, it was also *returning the heritage* to the community of Clanwilliam.

Before the Clanwilliam Arts Project was introduced, the town did not have any major creative outlets for young people. The community faced limited access to creative spaces, inadequate resources for arts education and a general lack of interest in investing in the arts. The introduction of Magnet Theatre’s programme was a revolutionary move. It introduced a new way of using theatre/performance to create a

positive impact in the community, by encouraging the youth to explore their creativity and express themselves through the performing arts. Through the workshop process, the youth were empowered by learning skills they did not possess before this programme.

6.4.1 Performance as a social disruptor

Rossouw (2018), a student of Mark Fleishman, explores the role the Clanwilliam Arts Project played as a social disruptor, especially the role that *performance* played in this process of disrupting the status quo, including how these processes of social disruption and other factors contribute to community (re)formation, and considers the programme in its form and function as an immersive environment. She writes that the programme “seeks to reawaken a sense of connection between a physical and social landscape, through reawakening engagement with a cycle of stories that were likely to have been historically shared in that location” (Rossouw 2018: 34, Fleishman 2012a: 133, 142). The Clanwilliam Arts Project juxtaposes narratives and fragments of narratives from the Bleek and Lloyd Collection with the Clanwilliam landscape in a performative way.

Performance has been used by humans throughout history not only to express creativity and captivate audiences, but also to create transformation in the social fabric, challenging norms and disrupting the established order. Performance can act as a powerful social disruptor, amplifying voices and experiences typically marginalised by dominant cultural norms. Performance can also create spaces for individuals to connect with one another. The experience of shared emotions and collective energy can both cultivate empathy, and build new futures.

The main aim of the Clanwilliam Arts Project is to return the heritage to the community. Clanwilliam remains “largely divided along racial lines disguised as economic segregation” (Rossouw 2018: 35). The white minority population is still the most affluent, while the majority of the coloured and African populations are poor. The territory of Clanwilliam is historically San land. The few remaining San clans do not live here anymore, but some of the present-day inhabitants of this town claim to be their descendants (De Bruyn 2016: 257). Many members of the coloured community work either as farm labourers, or are unemployed. Rossouw (2018: 38) writes that the Clanwilliam Arts Project began with the acceptance that “this disenfranchisement existed and that this power-disparity must be sustainably equalised as soon as possible.”

When the San stories (that may have been performed here many years ago by the San) are performed here, the Clanwilliam Arts Project aims to reclaim this region’s heritage, therein “returning a sense of ownership over it to the people who currently inhabit the space” (Hutchison, 2015). In other words, the San heritage takes back its space in the community of Clanwilliam, because the project made space for these San stories to be retold. The project has been arranged in the past to coincide with Heritage Day every year.

The main way in which the Clanwilliam Arts Project has disrupted the status quo, is through the creative arts training of the children of Clanwilliam, and through the workshops, with a shared performance as the highlight at the end of the week. The intervention was initiated by lecturers and students from the University of Cape Town as an external and privileged community (Rossouw 2018: 39). During the

intervention, some of the children that regularly attended the annual programme, later became facilitators themselves. A group of young people also started an award-winning permanent drama group, called the Community Networking Creative Arts Group (ComNet) (Rossouw 2018: 39, De Bruyn 2008: 13). In other words, these young people were encouraged, through the Clanwilliam Arts Project, to step into spaces of leadership that they would never have been able to outside of the Programme. They stepped into spaces in which they learnt to express themselves, where performance as a tool enabled them to take these steps.

Secondly, performance also interrupted the status quo in Clanwilliam, by showcasing the outcome of the weeklong workshops. Only one of the primary schools in Clanwilliam accepted the invitation to attend the programme. The workshops in the afternoons took place to give children the opportunity to decide whether or not they wanted to attend (without their school's decision). These workshops were sometimes the only arts training these children would have access to during the year (Fleishman 2012a: 134, 142).

At first, these workshops took place at the Living Landscape premises in Park Street, Clanwilliam, but were later moved to the showgrounds/sports field in order to accommodate an increase in participation. Each year, the programme catered for 500 to 700 children (Fleishman 2012a: 134). The only school that chose to participate is a coloured school, where most of the children who attended the programme in the afternoons were also coloured. An ever-increasing amount of African children started attending in later years, but almost no white children ever attended. The same group of children who took part in the lantern parade also took

part in the performance at the end of the week. At these performances the audience was also mostly coloured, with a few African people, and very few white people in attendance. The white people present were mainly from the media, or were funders of the project (Rossouw 2018: 42).

The performance therefore functioned as a social disruptor, because “it holds up a mirror to the society in which it is embedded” (Rossouw 2018: 42):

> Breaking the rhythm of everyday life, it provides a collective pause in which the social body ‘sees itself’ through the individual moments of reflection that it engenders.

In other words, when the community gathers at the showgrounds to watch the performance, this foregrounds the racial demographics of the audience, as well as the social disparity involved. As an audience member, it is easy to become aware that the participants are all underprivileged children, prompting self-reflection on positionality in the space, including positions of those who are not present (p. 42). When the community of Clanwilliam carries on with their daily activities, it is not so easy to notice these disparities, however, when they gather in a group, this becomes evident.

The children who continued to attend the programme learnt new skills every year. Every opportunity for performance offers to disrupt social space, and “is offered in the nature of an invitation” (p. 42), because performance never forces anyone to participate. If you accept the invitation to participate, performance “flowers in its full transformative power as a mechanism to inspire and support social change” (p 42).

6.4.2 Encounters with the beautiful

The project also disrupts social space through “leveraging the disruptive function of beauty” (Rossouw 2018: 148). When participants in the Clanwilliam Arts Project have a beautiful experience, it lifts them out of their “creatively impoverished states of mind” (p. 42), and this creates a space for them to overcome these circumstances. It creates an awareness that their lives can be better, and can extend beyond the boundaries of their own difficult circumstances, through the “insertion of the otherness of beauty into your world” (p. 42). Encounters with the beautiful affect our lives in unique ways, because “beauty speaks directly with affect”, in ways that are not necessarily logical. Beauty also affects our emotions and constitutes an extension thereof (Fleishman 2012a: 171).

When performance is the tool by which moments of beauty are created in our lives, it can become a mechanism which inspires change, by “creating spaces for hope to flourish” (Rossouw 2018: 43). It therefore uses beauty as a disruptive effect: this is one way in which performance can assist in erasing social injustice. Beauty must be presented in a way that “encourages participation in the processes of its making” (p. 43), rather than by mere observing.

The key lies in actively and collectively creating beauty, rather than being a passive recipient of it (Thomson, cited in Fleishman 2012a: 172). When beauty is experienced in underprivileged spaces, it provides a contrast to the daily circumstances of those underprivileged people. This experience foregrounds the disparities that exist between the beautiful moments and the mundane everyday lives

of the underprivileged. Encounters with beauty can be a powerful tool to generate social critique and transformation (Fleishman 2012a: 175).

For example, the Clanwilliam Arts Project invites the community of Clanwilliam to create something beautiful together. This process creates a space within which the participants may encounter these moments of beauty, while helping to create a beautiful performance for the audience, such as when 700 children with lanterns walked down the streets of Clanwilliam. The performances every year included dancing, singing, acting, and fireworks. When these beautiful moments are compared to their everyday lives, it opens up the possibility that things can actually be better than they are, this is because, even in poor circumstances, something beautiful can be created (Fleishman 2012a: 146-148). In this way, performance can be used as a tool for both individual and social transformation.

The Clanwilliam Arts Project also practically made space and increased participation. Often, these week-long workshops were the only art training some of the children received all year (Rossouw 2018: 44). In other words, these children would otherwise not have been exposed to this form of self-expression. After attending the programmes for a few years in a row, they had developed the skills to express themselves, which ultimately constitutes a process that begins to disrupt the status quo, but can also be applied throughout the town after the programme has finished.

Rossouw (2018: 44) describes this as follows:

> Suddenly there begins to grow a generation of subalterns who can describe experiences in ways that lie beyond the limits of language. Thus, surreptitiously, the effects of generations-long systemic silence begin to be undone by this annual event. Within the crucible, participants model in miniature an agency over space that can be extended into worlds beyond the project.

The preservation of heritages is essential for the sustainable evolution of society, because an awareness about heritage shapes the way in which the future is negotiated. For the heritage process to be fulfilled, it relies on people to maintain, create and integrate the spaces produced “in relation to the physical places commemorating the pasts” (Deacon, cited in Fleishman 2012a: 135). This awareness may then be used as a tool to create new futures, in other words, to break with the status quo.

6.4.3 Creating an immersive environment through ritual

The Clanwilliam Arts Project created a safe, immersive environment in which children could develop their talents. Participants were invited to enter a different state of consciousness, where a different set of rules applied than those which apply to their everyday lives. This means that they left the worries of their mundane everyday lives behind, and became creatively involved in the immersive environment of the workshop session. It allowed participants to actively engage and become part of the new narrative, blurring the lines between fiction and reality. By integrating physical

theatre, dance, sound, visuals and ritual, immersive theatre workshops can create an enhanced experience that stimulates the senses and transports everyone involved to a whole new realm.

Rossouw (2018: 49) explains this as follows:

> Immersion, created partially through collective and performed ritual practice, appears to be a significant contributor to performance's ability to function in social innovation terms. It is through invoking an immersive experience that an extraordinary reality is lifted out of the mundane, and this opens a spaciousness that allows for the rehearsal of social and individual transformation.

Entering and operating in this immersive environment can be achieved through ritual. Ritual takes place in a facilitated space, and the Clanwilliam Arts Project provided that space. Rossouw (2018: 47) proposes that when you operate "outside of ordinary reality, this space fosters the freedom to try different things, rehearse and grow different behaviours, and the safety of a place to exist in unexpected ways." It allows the participant the freedom to fail without persecution and it becomes a "space of potential" (p. 47) in which transformation is a real possibility, because the risks involved with transformation are mitigated.

The Clanwilliam Arts Project relinks the people to the land they inhabit "through the gateway of story" (Rossouw 2018: 44), showing in the process that "rituals practices can function to resuscitate and preserve intangible heritage as an important ingredient in disrupting the status quo" (p. 44). This is the tool with which they make

space for new futures, while also enabling participants to awaken to the possibility of active recreation. This opens up the “possibility to traverse this landscape in new ways” (Fleishman 2012a: 142), in other words, create new futures.

Rituals can thus be an important tool for the conservation of intangible heritages, as well as to inspire transformation. These shared experiences, through encounters with the beautiful and sublime, illuminate experiences of utopian moments. These glimpses into utopia are inherent in such performative communities, and illustrate the concept that things can be better than they are (Rossouw 2018: 45).

The Clanwilliam Arts Project’s main event, the performance, occurs only once a year in a specially prepared space (the Clanwilliam sports grounds/show grounds). The space was prepared during the week, and on the day of the performance. The participants prepare to enter the special space by attending the week-long workshop sessions. Many facilitators spent time building the large lantern sculptures used in the procession, which took place before every performance. The procession led the participants into the space of ritual (and they left their everyday lives behind). Another ritual cue that made the experience out of the ordinary was the painting of all participants’ faces with white clay. Within this space, the participants could experience feelings that they would not normally experience in their everyday lives. The effects of these rituals over time led to the strengthening of social networks. This shows that new communities can be formed in these safe, ritualistic spaces. A new ritual space was developed in Clanwilliam, and has given rise to new ways of being. It can be argued, therefore, that “Performance rituals function as a space which cause [...] a reawakening of a connection to the past” (Rossouw 2018: 48).

6.4.4 A community's (re)formation

The Clanwilliam Arts Project contributes to the Clanwilliam community's (re)formation by disrupting the status quo. After the week-long workshops and performances, the community members go back to their everyday routine, however, these social rituals in which they have partaken created a common ground that allows a space where they might react. During the project, ritual is used to increase social cohesion, not only to disrupt the status quo, but also to open up new realms of possibility. For example, the Clanwilliam Arts Project has witnessed the formation of a derivative community, the Community Networking Creative Arts Group (ComNet). This permanent drama group was established by young people who had participated in the programme for many years.

ComNet was formed in March 2007 under the auspices of Lavona de Bruyn, Riana Alfreds and Mandla Mbothu (De Bruyn 2008: 13). Their vision was that ComNet would continue to function with Magnet Theatre's support until they could become self-supporting. Magnet Theatre's contributions varied according to what was needed at any given time, for example, they financed transport, accommodation, food for participants, workshop material and organised a venue for workshops.

Originally, fourteen young people from Clanwilliam's coloured community between the ages of fifteen and nineteen became the founding members of ComNet. Four of the participants had already matriculated and the rest still attended high school at the time. Two of the participants attended Augsburg Agricultural Gymnasium, a former Model C school in town, and the rest were from Clanwilliam Senior Secondary

School. The local DYC Dance Group formed the core of the group, but they wanted to develop their drama skills.

De Bruyn (2008: 14) describes ComNet as follows:

> ComNet developed into a microscopic community within the broader community; based on their interest in drama, their concern for other young people, and the community of Clanwilliam. This group reflected some of the conflicts, attitudes, and hopes of the broader community…

De Bruyn argues that Community Theatre "offers a platform to those whose voices have been silenced and omitted from history for generations" (p. 10), in other words, it allows communities to explore ideas regarding their forgotten past, and to engage in dialogue about these issues using theatre as the tool.

One of ComNet's aims was to establish more cross-cultural relationships (Hutchison 2015: 65, Ravengai 2015: 212). This indicates clearly the perceived absence of cross-cultural relationships in the community of Clanwilliam, and the desire to change this.

6.4.5 Converting silence into noise

The production of memory is a controversial issue in transitional countries such as South Africa. Discourses about how we ought to remember or forget colonialism and apartheid differ vastly. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommended in 1999 that South Africans ought to "celebrate different aspects of the

past" (Fleishman 2011b: 234) regarding heritage, but despite this recommendation, Fleishman notes that "the heritage industry in South Africa remains largely untransformed" (p. 234).

In this regard, two kinds of memory dominate our urban spaces in South Africa: firstly, a conservative colonial type, based on the preservation of colonial and apartheid memorial sites, for example, the statues of Afrikaner trekkers, Rhodes, and apartheid presidents. Secondly, a decolonial strand of memory, for example, Robben Island, statues of Nelson Mandela, and the renaming of places. This strand is described as the "ANCification" of memory and history (Ravengai 2015: 210). In other words, there are two centres of memory (colonial and decolonial), which threaten to silence other "subaltern" voices, for example, the minority groups such as the San, Khoi, and coloured people of South Africa.

It is for this reason that Magnet Theatre chose to stage their "history plays" to give voice to these knowledges. Michel Foucault (1980: 82) explains this concept as follows:

> […] something which in a sense is altogether different, namely, a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity.

Regarding the Clanwilliam Arts Project the "subjugated knowledges" take a position of silence and the aim of Magnet Theatre's "history plays" is to convert silence into noise, as a tool of resistance (Ravengai 2015: 211). The "history plays" use

postmodernist methods of employment instead of realist dramatic theatre. Magnet Theatre's "history plays" can be regarded as struggle plays, although the politics of these plays are not always clear, and Fleishman is evasive about the nature of his politics, but he does state that Magnet Theatre uses performance "as a way of exploring or dismantling certain ideologies" (Fleishman 2007: 153). Francis (2006) regards Magnet Theatre's plays as the "theatre of struggle and transformation". She notes that, although the struggle is over, several other struggles have taken the place originating in and extending from the original struggle.

Francis (2006: 104) explains this as follows:

> …Fleishman's work is a reflection of the complex socio-political situation of the country at present, where European, African and other traditions are struggling to find their place, constantly transforming into new organic forms. Thus, a multiplicity of images and meanings are placed in conflict with each other, producing a theatre of struggle; not active depictions of "struggle", but constant conflict on stage, as in life.

In other words, Magnet Theatre's plays can be regarded as theatre of struggle against colonial and decolonial narratives. Fleishman (2011a: 10) argues that performance and "a particular practice of dramaturgy" is one way of "intervening in this process of remembering, one way of making the silent dead speak."

Magnet Theatre's dramaturgical strategy can be described as generative performance, because it allows the members of the audience to each generate their own meaning. Their work is political, but not prescriptive. Fleishman (2011a: 19)

explains that what Magnet Theatre intends “is to offer mnemonic provocations so that the audience might creatively remember, might bring fragments of remains of the past together in the present into a narrative of restitution. But the narrative aims for no resolution, no sense of closure.”

6.4.6 Clanwilliam Arts Project: a memory machine

Monica Prendergast and Juliana Saxton (2009) argue that theatre can aid the creation, dissemination, and retention of memory through the genres of museum[29] and reminiscence[30] theatre. Although the Clanwilliam Arts Project was not physically enacted in a museum, Ravengai (2015: 212) argues that “the Clanwilliam landscape with its flora, fauna, and rock paintings, is in essence museum cartography.”

Prendergast and Saxton (2009: 153) give three characteristics of museum theatre: firstly, it usually involves a role player representing a historical figure, secondly, it enacts a performance to help people understand a particular time period, and, thirdly, it usually involves the reconstruction of a historical event, for example, a battle.

Although Magnet Theatre does not refer to their work as museum or reminiscence theatre, Ravengai (2015: 213) proposes that these theoretical descriptions capture the essence of Magnet Theatre’s work in Clanwilliam.

[29] Museum theatre involves “the use of theatre and theatrical techniques as a means of mediating knowledge and understanding in the context of museum education” (Hughes and Kidd, cited in Prendergast and Saxton 2009: 153).
[30] Reminiscence theatre is somewhat akin to museum theatre, because it also recalls the memories and experiences of the elderly (Ravengai 2015: 212).

The Clanwilliam Arts Project can be regarded as a "memory machine",[31] where the Project produced 18 performances based on the stories of //Kabbo and the other small group of informants who stayed in Mowbray, Cape Town, with Bleek and Lloyd, to tell their stories. Stories like *//Kaggen and the Baboon* (2007), *The Children are Sent to Throw the Sleeping Sun into the Sky* (2008), *The Resurrection of the Ostrich* (2009), *The Lion, the Crows and the Little Tortoise* (2011), *The She Rhinoceros* and *Elder Daughter's Suitors* (2012).

Since 2001, the same methodology was used during the Clanwilliam Arts Programme every year in order to create the performances, As Fleishman notes, "the same set of stories, the same methodology, the same broad outcome: a parade through the streets with lanterns and a performance of the story for the community" (Fleishman 2012b: 31-32).

6.5 Participatory processes intervene for the "unfree"

Fleishman (2016: 193) argues that, although many people in South Africa have acquired freedom in terms of the law, they still do not have the power to benefit from it. He refers to the words of the political scientist, Lawrence Hamilton, who notes that the majority of South Africans post-apartheid continue to live "unfree" (2011: 35).

Fleishman proposes that participatory performance projects, such as the Clanwilliam Arts Project, amongst the "unfree" sectors of the South African society, might intervene to assist in shifting authority. Theatre and performance are collective

[31] The term "memory machine" was first used by M. Carlson in his book *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press (2004).

practices for which a temporary community of some kind is created. Magnet Theatre's project aimed to activate the participants in three ways: firstly, by making them producers of the event rather than just consumers of a spectacle; secondly, where at least some of the authorial control is ceded to the participants within predetermined structures; and thirdly, with the possibility that participation in the collective event can, if only for a limited time, "repair the disintegrating social fabric by restoring the social bond" (Fleishman 2016: 196). In other words, the dramaturgy leads us "off the stage, into the social realm" (p. 196).

How do participants speak for themselves during participatory processes? According to Fleishman, this happens through storying: "the process of 'making' and 'doing' with stories, which involves, variously, but not only, composition, construction, playing, performance, listening, watching and responding" (p. 198).

Storying allows participants to voice their own concerns and agendas – which often run contrary to dominant narrative. Theatre offers the possibility of an alternative space for the production and distribution of other images and stories that reflects the reality of "unfree" people.

Fleishman notes that play constitutes an essential element of storying. Play is a method used during the participatory processes to create the performances performed at the end of the Project week. Play can also be dangerous. During many of the Clanwilliam Arts Project's performances, actors literally played with fire. On a social level, the risk of playing with fire involved disrupting the social order and proposing a new order. On a personal level, individuals risked doing things they had never done before, and with which they were unfamiliar, or which may alienate those

they knew (Fleishman 2016: 200). Fleishman warns of the possibility of dark play, which can sometimes emerge, for example, in what was witnessed during the parades before the performance events. Sometimes, these events threatened to spin out of control, when boys who were not party to the participatory process during the week grabbed lanterns from the hands of the younger participants of the Project, hitting them on the head with them. This necessarily blurred the boundaries of the kind of play, and complicated the definition of play in which the participants found themselves participating.

For Fleishman, projects such as the Clanwilliam Arts Project involve a manner of redistributing authority. During the programme, a collective community was formed for a short time every year, for the purposes of creating a performance with young people under the age of 30, raised under difficult socio-economic conditions and who experienced compromised basic education, who as a result encounter limited prospects of finding employment or further education; otherwise articulated, the "unfree" sector of society.

These young people were dependent on Magnet Theatre for the ongoing existence of the collective community. Although some representatives from Magnet Theatre come from the academic elite and occupy the 'managerial class', other facilitators were from the same communities as that of Project participants. Magnet Theatre has always used the workshop method to make theatre, where the emphasis has always been on participation. Fleishman (2016: 202) notes that everyone participates, but not everyone participates equally. Magnet Theatre's theatre experts had the authority, because of their connection to Magnet Theatre, in other words, there was

an “authoritative power relationship”. Participants in the Project agreed to grant Magnet Theatre the authority, and they subjected themselves to the constraints laid down. However, authority necessarily shifted over time. For example, as skills levels improved throughout the years, some participants gained authority within the Project and in their community, where they became facilitators in the project, or became leaders of outside projects.

Blencowe (2013: 41) corroborates this, arguing that “participatory practices can [constitute] technologies for redistributing authority”. Participatory processes such as the processes Magnet Theatre has used during the Clanwilliam Arts Project contributed to the redistribution of authority, because they widened participation, not only in theatre, but also in the community. These processes helped participants to “reconfigure the perception of what constitutes reality” through facilitating the production.

This is successful because it is achievable, that is, it does not operate in a sphere beyond the grasp of the young participants, and they are actively doing something to change their circumstances (Fleishman 2016: 209).

6.6 Was the Clanwilliam Arts Project successful?

The Clanwilliam Arts Project was successful in the sense that it empowered learners and student facilitators who participated in the programme for 18 years. Fleishman (2011b: 236) says the aim was “to provide access to the arts for learners who have been denied access in the past”, as well as “to train student facilitators to work in community contexts in arts development”. The project offered participants a platform

to hone their artistic skills, and enhance their skills in acting, dancing, storytelling, drumming, craft-making, etc.

Every year a group of undergraduate drama students from the University of Cape Town came to Clanwilliam to help facilitate the programme. This gave them the opportunity to put into practice what they had learnt in community theatre courses, and due to this exposure, they emerged better prepared to assist with development in rural areas.

The establishment of a permanent drama group, the ComNet, can also be regarded as part of the success story. The drama group operated all year round, and enacted history plays themselves. In one such play, they undertake a journey in a donkey cart, with passengers pointing out places as they pass, for example, Leipoldt's grave, footpaths along the Cederberg, Traveller's Rest, rock art, the Englishman's grave, and Wupperthal.

Ravengai (2015: 214) argues that the Clanwilliam Arts Project was less successful at preserving and re-purposing memory. Fleishman (2011b: 263) explains that the programme aimed to attempt to reclaim the heritage of the /Xam by reconnecting story and landscape and by putting that heritage to work in the community. In other words, the project aimed to reverse what was identified as "de-culturation, by liberating the /Xam stories from its archive and reinserting it into a particular geographical landscape from which it had been extracted", and then allowing the occupants of that landscape to play with it in multiple ways.

Ravengai (2015: 214) points out that Fleishman is more interested in how the past narratives can be used as a tool to deal with current issues. Fleishman reworked //Kabbo's stories and chose to use these as a tool to explore colonial and decolonial narratives.

Carlson (2004) confirms that theatre often relies on recycling material to the extent that a production is "haunted" or "ghosted" by previous experiences; but he also notes that when directors modify old stories, they often do so for self-serving purposes, which are often guided by those occupying the field of politics. Ravengai problematises the new performance text that emerged after the performance in the town of Clanwilliam. He argues that the "ghosting" is very faint, and far removed from the original San story. He studied the way in which *Tears Become Rain*[32] was modified. In Magnet Theatre's performance, only three characters, the buffalo, the lizard and the bird, are featured. It was not apparent whether /Xue and his father ever featured. The three characters were made from wire and paper during the workshops and were larger than life. The performance involved a combination of music, dance, fireworks and games – that is, a spectacle. The performance itself "did not in any way suggest the plot of the story described", in other words, the performance did not depend on the plot of the original story. It depended on "creative recombination of games, carnival, music theatre, dance, fireworks and spectacle" (2015: 216).

[32] In *Tears Become Rain*, /Xue, a boy, is playing in a tree, when he sees the fruit of the tree, and without warning he transforms into a fruit himself, upon which a pigeon eats the fruit, and /Xue transforms into a pigeon. He then falls out of the tree and transforms into a buffalo carcass, which birds of prey come to eat. At sunrise, the carcass becomes the boy again, he heads home, but trips and hurts himself on a sharp object. He calls for help from his father, but his father ignores him. /Xue cries for so long that his tears become rain, which turns into a flood and washes away his father's huts. The father cries for help, but /Xue does not help him, because he is afraid that his father might beat him. When his father wants to beat him, the boy turns into a lizard. The father tries to kill the lizard, but the lizard bites him, turns into a bird, and flies away (Ravengai 2014: 216).

Fleishman recycled the characters of the original story and a new text emerged, which is only faintly haunted by the original story. Ravengai (2015: 217) proposes:

> This visceral appeal is experienced through spectacle based on the designers of make-up, scenery, costumes, figures, lighting, fireworks, choreography, burning lanterns, police lights and sirens, as well as the inventive architecture of steel, beams, terraces and figurines. This appeal to the eye is a source of pleasure and satisfying beauty which, however, cannot be reduced to a story.

It can be concluded that the performances meant different things to different people and it was the mere spectacle that attracted the attention of the audience, rather than the development of the plot.

Ravengai (2015: 217) questions the impact of this method in an African postcolonial subaltern community such as the town of Clanwilliam, although Fleishman uses this method deliberately for its luminous and liberating qualities, with a view to overthrow the authorial power. Ravengai writes as follows (p. 217):

> Through recourse to non-periodic and non-linear activities such as improvisation, play, parataxis, dances and games, *Tears Become Rain* breaks down the illusion of rationality and authorial power over meaning, inserting into the performance disorganisation characterised by turbulence, noise, chaos and indeterminacy. What is gained is a kind of evolution towards a higher order of complexity, which introduces secondary explosions, with the potential to create new levels of meanings.

The result is that every member of the audience will create his/her own meanings, which does not necessarily create cohesion amongst the subaltern groups of Clanwilliam.

Because the performance operates on the level of the visceral, with little cognitive engagement, “the performance ends on the level of noise”. Noise will inevitably attract attention, but will not create collective action.

Fleishman (2011b: 245) justifies the noise as follows:

> […] to make noise is to disrupt the situation, to initiate events that have the capacity to transform the situation, the regime of established knowledge. Noise as an event is a supplement, in Derridean terms, both an addition to what is known, and a replacement, or substitution. It brings something new into being, a new way of seeing the world.

This prompts the question as to whether it is enough to simply make noise without raising an awareness of the situation of the subalterns of Clanwilliam?

Ravengai (2015: 217) argues that the San people are the subaltern group of Clanwilliam, even in a post-apartheid context. He notes that the San men had been either enslaved or killed by their colonial masters, and their women had become concubines or wives of these masters. Today, there is not a single person in Clanwilliam who speaks the San language, its place having been taken by Afrikaans. The land they used to hunt and farm on is now dedicated to rooibos tea and citrus farmers, for whom they provide their labour.

The Clanwilliam Arts Project was useful as a manner of memory machine, and as a tool to recycle the San stories that the /Xam people shared in the 1800s, but it has been argued that it “ends on the level of making noise and does not go beyond that” (Ravengai 2015: 128).

Theatre is necessarily ideological, and although it seems that Magnet Theatre takes a position of neutrality, no art/theatre can escape the class power struggles that rule our lives. Most community theatre projects, such as the Clanwilliam Arts Project, take the perspective of the working class. The workshop process followed, in order to create a performance that at first glance may appear democratic, but is ultimately, as Fleishman in his capacity as director asserts: “I am still the writer of that work, it’s my ideas, it’s my conceptions in most cases” (2006: 106). He makes the final decisions about the methods of gathering and generating content, and Magnet Theatre is not neutral in this process. They do not seek to ask questions about the Clanwilliam subalterns.

Ravengai (2015: 219) establishes that theatre can be an effective memory machine that is capable of recycling stories and spaces, but Magnet Theatre chose to de-historicise the performances, and in the process, excluded other issues which could have raised awareness of the Clanwilliam subalterns’ situation. None of the 18 performances that have taken place have provided an explanation of the subaltern narrative of dispossession. The folktales took on more importance than did the situation of the subalterns. Magnet Theatre’s intervention in this archive, which lay dormant for 100 years after Bleek’s death, although not exhaustive, provides a rubric.

6.7 Conclusion: celebrating diversity

One of the most significant advantages of joining a cross-cultural drama group, like ComNet, is the opportunity to celebrate diversity. Drama can unite individuals from different backgrounds, giving voice to stories that explore various cultures, languages and traditions. Through collaboration and collective creative expression, participants not only learn about cultures other than their own, but also promote empathy towards people of other cultures. It is through this exchange of culture that we can truly begin to understand and appreciate the broader richness of our country's community.

I was a member and served on the committee of ComNet for 10 years. My tasks included organising drama classes, rehearsals, administration and I also applied for funding, wrote scripts on request, and directed. The highlight of my time at ComNet was in 2000, when we presented a play, entitled *Stap Saam*, during Clanwilliam's 200 year celebrations. More than 100 school children, from three different schools in Clanwilliam, as well as adult performers from the Sederville neighbourhood, participated in this performance. Both the cast and the audience members were from all walks of life, and a diversity of racial backgrounds in Clanwilliam. We managed to create a sense of safe environment for the inhabitants of Clanwilliam, where they could express themselves and develop their performance skills.

Unfortunately, with the advent of the pandemic, we were no longer allowed to gather in groups, and we were forced to halt the drama and dance classes, and funding from the Department of Sports and Culture subsequently fell away. Quite a few participants of the Clanwilliam Arts Project became members of ComNet, and later got jobs as dance and drama facilitators at local schools. One dance instructor now

works as a dance instructor at Sederberg Primary School. Another one is still coaching the Steel Band in a classroom at Clanwilliam Senior Secondary School. One member, who was one of the founder members of ComNet, is working as a drama facilitator at Elizabethfontein Primary in the Agter-Pakhuis in the Cederberg. A member of ComNet, who sang a solo in ComNet's *Stap Saam* concert when she was in Grade 1, is now a student at the Cape Choral Academy in Stellenbosch. She received a full scholarship to study at the Academy and she stays in the hostel near the school. This school's mission is to empower their students with a mindful perspective of life, as well as develop their cognitive abilities through academic excellence, mentorship, physical and mental fitness programmes, where music is used as the binding factor of all these elements.

Chapter 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 “Making space”

This study has explored Magnet Theatre’s notion of “making space” for new, transformative ideas through their migrant plays, *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger] and *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking*, as well as through the Clanwilliam Arts Project which they presented for 18 years.

It has been argued here that Foucault’s theories on discourse and power provide insight into Magnet Theatre’s notion of “making space”. Power imbalances between the citizens of a country and migrants can render migrants vulnerable to economic exploitation, and even physical abuse. Power disparities between the government of a country and migrants passing through it can also often result in discrimination and marginalisation. Migrants often face social exclusion, as well as limited access to education, healthcare, and job opportunities in their new country. Discriminatory practices based on racism, legal status, or nationality can exacerbate these inequalities. Foucault’s theory on discourse and power relations demonstrate how vulnerable migrants are, and how easily they may fall prey to exploitation, xenophobic attack, rape and even murder (for example, as illustrated in the play *Die Vreemdeling* [The Stranger], because migrants are excluded from the discourse, and as a result, have no power. These circumstances limit their ability to integrate into society.

The question therefore arises as to how it might be possible to change these circumstances for the better. Although scaling such an intervention may be

challenging, localised migrant theatre productions, like Magnet Theatre's migrant plays, as well international arts projects, such as puppet Amal's *The Walk*, do make a substantive impact. Magnet Theatre can be seen, as demonstrated here, to have altered the community of Clanwilliam through the Arts Project that spanned 18 years.

Participants in the Clanwilliam Arts Project were from the predominantly marginalised coloured community and were without the chance beforehand to voice their ideas, concerns or grievances, however, through the workshop method, Magnet Theatre provided them a voice, and as a result, they started creating a new discourse, in other words, the previously voiceless gained the power to start changing the discourse.

Lefebvre's theory of space as power has also greatly contributed to a better understanding of Magnet Theatre's notion of "making space". Magnet Theatre's work is permeated by the metaphor of space. This is not only because Magnet Theatre made theatre in unconventional physical spaces, for example, on school grounds and the show grounds in Clanwilliam (during the Clanwilliam Arts Project). This resulted in the creation of a safe physical space for the participants, where they could express themselves, and in doing so, Magnet Theatre also made metaphorical space for new ideas. Magnet Theatre brought out the power latent amongst the participants of the Clanwilliam Arts Project. They also made space for new ideas and concepts about migrants in South Africa, through both creating and performing their migrant plays.

Magnet Theatre has managed to create a platform promoting dialogue, empathy, and transformation. This study has shown that theatre has the potential to be a catalyst

for change in South Africa, providing a platform for marginalised voices to be heard. By creating productions that engage with social issues, they empower actors and audiences alike to explore their own experiences, to question prevailing beliefs, which may result in empathising with others.

This study has also shown that workshop theatre, as used by Magnet Theatre, is a very useful tool to advance transformation in South African society. Workshop theatre provides a safe space for participants from all walks of life, not only to learn theatre skills and express themselves, but also to voice their concerns and their grievances, and to bring about healing. I was a witness of the workshop modus operandi used by Magnet Theatre to create the performances at the end of their week-long Clanwilliam Arts Project each year. Additionally, during my years of involvement with ComNet, I witnessed the way in which relationships between individuals from different groups were built.

The findings of this study also provide important insight into the synergy between workshop theatre, and helping to create a new, transformative discourse in South Africa. Magnet Theatre's workshop theatre fosters a greater understanding of the complexities of the human experience, encourages empathy towards others, and can promote positive social change. Magnet Theatre's migrant plays and the Clanwilliam Arts Project served as a platform allowing participants and members of the audience to step into someone else's shoes, creating a safe space for understanding one another's circumstances, and building empathy. By exploring diverse perspectives through improvisation and role-playing, individuals are immersed in situations that challenge their beliefs and biases.

We live in a country where the call for transformation has never been louder. One of the important aims of this study is also to demonstrate that a theatre company like Magnet Theatre is able to play an important role in the transformation process in South Africa, because their migrant plays and the Clanwilliam Arts Project provide the perfect catalyst for transformation.

In other words, they managed to “make space” for both actors and audience to address societal issues, such as inequalities that still prevail in a community like Clanwilliam, as well as every other town in South Africa, through their workshop modus operandi, and through exposing actors, participants and members of the audience to new, transformative ideas. They have created a space that allows actors and audiences alike to engage in meaningful conversations about the pressing global issues of our time, of which migration is arguably increasingly central.

South Africans might often feel either detached or overwhelmed from the socio-economic issues that shape our country. Magnet Theatre’s modus operandi may help to breathe new life into political discourse, providing a safe space for reflection, cultivating empathy and, ultimately, transformation. Magnet Theatre has been committed to creating a safe space for dialogue and offers a unique environment for individuals to share their grievances, resentments, concerns, and perspectives in a non-threatening setting, and it has been argued here that this is a process that any country with a history of colonial violence must consider indispensable to a decolonial mandate.

8. ANNEXURE

PHOTO 1: *During the Clanwilliam Arts Project, workshops in art, drama, dance, lantern making (see above), storytelling, drumming and stilt walking were run by Magnet Theatre with up to 700 learners from schools in Clanwilliam. This usually occurred over a period of a week during Heritage Month early in September, for 18 years. The project usually culminated in a lantern parade and performance of a /Xam narrative by the children, and facilitators, and was attended by audience members from Clanwilliam. This photo of the lanterns was taken during one of the outdoor performances (2018) during the Clanwilliam Arts Project.*

Photograph taken by: Alicia du Toit

PHOTO 2: *The highlight of my time at ComNet was in 2014, when we presented a play, entitled* Stap Saam*, during Clanwilliam's 200 year celebrations. More than 100 school children, from three local schools, as well as adult performers from all walks of life, participated in this performance. Both the cast and the audience members were from a diversity of racial backgrounds.*

Photograph taken by: Alicia du Toit

PHOTO 3: *Photos taken during ComNet's* Stap Saam *performance in 2014.*

Photograph taken by: Alicia du Toit

PHOTO 4: *A Dance Workshop at the Community Hall in Clanwilliam which was organised by ComNet.*

Photograph taken by: Alicia du Toit

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