

**ANGELS IN SOUTH AFRICA: EXPLORING MODERN PROGRESSIVE AND QUEER
REALITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA THROUGH THEATRE**

by

Vasti Vermeulen

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MA (Drama and Film Studies)

in the

Department of Drama

Faculty of Humanities

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Greg Homann (main supervisor)

Marie-Heleen Coetzee (co-supervisor)

September 2018

Summary

Angels in South Africa: Exploring Modern Progressive and Queer Realities in South Africa through Theatre

by Vasti Vermeulen

Angels in South Africa: Exploring Modern Progressive and Queer Realities in South Africa through Theatre is a thesis based on the development of the South African experimental play, *Angels in South Africa*. The play is a reimagination of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* and *Angels in America: Perestroika* in a South African setting. The play explores the marginalised narratives of a postcolonial South African landscape and focusses on issues of sexuality, race, gender, physical illness (with specific reference to HIV and AIDS), and mental illness. The objective of the play is to redeem narratives that adhere to these themes – and by redemption, it is meant that one voices these narratives in order to understand their value in present realities.

The landscape is described as postcolonial – a state in which colonial histories still affect present realities on the landscape – post-apartheid and post-reconciliation dystopia. In *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016), I created a fictional, futuristic post-apocalyptic South African landscape that can best be described as a landfill. The play adheres to Landscape Theatre and Magic Realism. Landscape Theatre is a paradigm in which a play is mapped out as a landscape or, in the case of the research, as a landscape consisting of multiple landscapes. I used Magic Realism in order to create a space in which the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction can be blurred. The play is described as a constellation of images – ideas, thoughts, visual images, writings and events – making meaning in relation to one another. Even the actors are described as thought images – I refer to them as “Performing Denkbilder” and I refer to the constellation through which the play is created as the “Progress-Queer Constellation”.

The theory used consists mainly of notions around Historical Materialism as described in Benjamin's (1926) *Theses on History*, and Queer Theory as described in Halberstam's (2011) *The Queer Art of Failure*. To be a Historical Materialist is to view present events as being

connected to past events. The past is defined as an image to be retrieved from the ruins of time, in order to create a better lens of the present. To retrieve this image is to go against notions of linear progression, which is described in the research as Capitalistic Progression. Halberstam (2011:89) defines the notion of being queer as to have, either through circumstance or by design, failed normative capitalistic notions on creating one's lifestyle. The research marries the notion of being queer with that of being a Historical Materialist. The research also argues that it is necessary to deviate from capitalistic, linear progressive means of structuring one's lifestyle in order to voice the landscape's marginalised histories. The notion is to create an environment in which newer realities can be created, instead of repeating past oppression.

DECLARATION

Student number: 11014459

I declare that *Angels In South Africa: Exploring Modern Progressive and Queer Realities in South Africa through Theatre* 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.

Vasti Vermeulen

30 September 2018

Acknowledgement

I would like to include a few individuals in my thanks, for their support and guidance in the completion of this research.

- Greg Homann, for giving shape and understanding to my work.
- Prof. Marie-Heleen Coetzee, for your brilliance.
- Dr M Taub, for patience, understanding, and the extra effort.
- Wilf Carter Mahne and Tebogo Charles Mafubelu, for taking on extra duties in the making of the performances.
- Karin Stals and PC Vermeulen, for financial and moral support.
- Mareo Roelofse, for insight and creative input.
- The cast of *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016).
- The Drama Department at the University of Pretoria, for opportunities to expand on my research.

Thank you

Table of Contents

List of Figures	8
List of Diagrams	8
Chapter 1: Introduction	9
1.1. Introducing Mental Illness as a Marginalised Narrative	14
1.2. Dissertation Statement	16
1.3. Kushner's Texts (1991, 1993).....	17
1.3.1. Summary of Kushner's Texts (1991, 1993).....	17
1.3.2. The Angel.....	19
1.4. The Research Question.....	21
1.5. A Landscape of Fragments.....	23
Chapter 2: Literature Review	24
2.1. Postcolonialism	24
2.2. Henriette Gunkel: A Study of Different Bodies	28
2.3. Walter Benjamin: Progress and Historical Materialism.....	30
2.4. Sigfrid Weigel: Denkbilder	31
2.5. Queerness	32
2.6. David Savran and Ranen Omer-Sherman: Ambivalence, Identity and Marginalisation in Kushner's (1991, 1993) Texts	34
2.7. Rhizomatic Identity.....	36
2.8. Magic Realism.....	37
2.9. Landscape Theatre	39
2.10. The Actor's Body as Denkbild	41
2.11. Understanding Kushner's (1991, 1993) Texts: James Fisher	42
2.12. Diagram of Theory Involved	44
2.13. Moving Forward	45
Chapter 3: The New Work	46
3.1. History of the Work.....	46
3.1.1. The Two Narrators.....	47
3.1.2. Magic Realism	50
3.1.3. The Three Methodologies.....	51
3.1.4. "Performed Denkbilder"	53
3.1.5. The "Reproductive-Reflexive-Redemptive" Triad.....	54
3.2. Concluding Phase 1	58
Chapter 4: The Pretext	60

4.1. Guiding Process.....	60
4.1.1. Monuments as Memorials: An Archive of Memories, Remembered	61
4.1.2. A New Work.....	62
4.2. Character and Narrative Construction.....	63
4.2.1. Dynamic Remaking of a Landscape	63
4.2.2. Reimagining Identity	64
4.2.3. Harper and Patience.....	65
4.2.4. The Angels	75
4.2.5. Writers	78
4.2.6. Conversational Images	86
4.2.7. Constructing the Text	87
4.3. The Actors.....	87
Chapter 5: Processes	89
5.1. <i>Angels in South Africa</i> (Vermeulen, 2016)	89
5.1.1. Ethical Considerations.....	89
5.1.2. Structuring the Form of <i>Angels in South Africa</i>	90
5.1.3. Creating the Content: The Workshop Process	97
5.1.4. The Individual Processes.....	99
5.1.5. The First Group Rehearsal: The Discussions	118
5.1.6. A Reflection on the Workshop Process	121
5.2. The Writing Process.....	122
5.3. The Rehearsal Process.....	124
5.3.1. Conversations	124
5.4. Changes in the Cast.....	127
5.4.1. My Reflection as Elizabeth.....	127
5.4.2. My Experience as Harper.....	128
5.5. Reflection on the Rehearsal Process	130
5.5.1. Technical Narration.....	130
5.6. The Performance Process.....	131
5.7. Redefining “Performing Denkbilder”	133
Chapter 6: Reflections	135
6.1. The “Progress Queer” Diagram.....	135
6.2. Conclusion: My Own Voice in the Work	143
Sources Consulted	149
Addendum A	155

List of Figures

(See Addendum A for a complete list of figures mentioned hereafter.)

Figure 1: Paul Klee, <i>Angelus Novus</i> . 1920.....	29
Figure 2: Penny Siopis, <i>Patience on a Monument</i> . 1988.....	34
Figure 11: S Mahne, <i>Harper-as-Me</i> . 2016.....	112
Figure 12: S Mahne, <i>Gentle Nightmare</i> . 2016.....	114
Figure 13: S Mahne, <i>Shoes</i> . 2016.....	115
Figure 17: S Mahne, <i>Mess</i> . 2016.....	106
Figure 25: S Mahne, <i>Friends at Work</i> . 2016.....	126

List of Diagrams

Diagram 1: Moffie	136
Diagram 2: Femme	136
Diagram 3: Angelika	137
Diagram 4: Ill	137
Diagram 5: Writer	138
Diagram 6: Mother	138
Diagram 7: Hendrik Hanekom	139
Diagram 8: Child	139
Diagram 9: Harper	140
Diagram 10: Patience	140
Diagram 11: The Constellation	142

Chapter 1: Introduction

...there are no gods here, no ghosts and spirits in America, there are no angels in America, no spiritual past, no racial past, there's only the political, and the decoys and the ploys to manoeuvre around the inescapable battle of politics, the shifting downwards and outwards of political power to the people...

Louis Ironson in *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (Kushner, 1991:92).

South African individuals are currently situated in a postcolonial landscape and must consider post-reconciliation¹ realities set within a post-apartheid time frame. This means that South Africans are constantly dealing with past realities playing out in current realities. History thus overflows into the present. If South Africans are to construct an optimal identity for themselves, they must be aware of multiple realities – both progressive modern histories and alternatively marginalised histories – as having structured various political, social and cultural realities within which South Africans now engage. This research deals with progressive modern histories and alternatively, marginalised histories of the South African landscape through theatrical storytelling and meaning-making. It should be noted that in this thesis I am not writing on South African politics in detail, but I am rather writing on how South African politics have silenced marginalised voices. The thesis is also based on my attempt to voice marginalised realities and histories from my position as a dramaturg.

Modern progressive histories, according to Bresiach (1993:41), include all histories that have been formed across the landscape, thus meaning that a landscape's history is not singular, but plural. Although Bresiach defined modern progressive histories 25 years ago (in 1993), I argue that this definition for modern progressive histories still holds, as 25 years is insignificant in accepting all histories as part of being modern and progressive. However, one is only taught the histories of the victor, and thus those in power. Marginalised histories, according to White (2011:211), refers to the histories of those excluded from a majority viewpoint. Therefore, marginalised histories belong to those not in power – the word marginalised meaning “on the edge”. To be marginalised is to define the self differently from

¹ The post-reconciliation era was initiated in 1994, and is still relevant in the present South African landscape.

the central viewpoint of how one is expected to construct one's identity as belonging to a certain landscape. The landscape is defined according to the victor, meaning that those living marginalised narratives are those conquered, and thus, silenced.

I will define marginalised groups according to race, gender, sexuality, and other groups whose voices are silenced. These individuals, such as the mentally ill, do not fall into dominant forms of identity creation. As I am drawing from the postcolonial landscape (which will be defined in section 1.4), I am referring to marginalised groups of race, sexuality and gender, as those that have been discriminated against under previous colonial and apartheid laws. In reference to race², I am referring to groups of colour, thus referring to non-white races. When I refer to sexuality as holding the possibility for marginalising an individual, I am referring to all forms of sexuality beyond the heterosexual matrix, which were discriminated against under apartheid rule, with reference to the criminalisation of homosexuality. Sex and gender refer not only to the binary oppositional constructs of male and female, and normative assumptions of sex-gender fusion, but for the sake of this study, and according to my self-identification as female, I refer to the marginalisation of the female identity. I am then also referring to individuals suffering from mental illness as also suffering the stigmas regarding mental health.

The text of *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016) (see Addendum B) will thus be an intersectional text dealing with the various marginalised narratives of the South African landscape. "Intersectional" can be defined as the complex means of understanding and analysing various human experiences (Collins and Bilge, 2016:[sp]). I would like to add that the human experiences mentioned become intertwined and relative to one another through the process of analysis. No human experience thus stands alone in meaning.

The objective of the research is to voice marginalised histories through a theatre project. To do this I am making use of Tony Kushner's texts *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (1991) and *Angels in America: Perestroika* (1993)³ as a reflective map from which to build interactive social, political and cultural texts. These two dramatic texts can be seen as studies of the imagined spiritual and historical realities of the American landscape with regards to modern progression and queer realities. The themes of Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) are structured as interpersonal conversations that speak to political realities, as well

² When I refer to race, it must be noted that I acknowledge my position of privilege by being white.

³ Kushner's texts were written respectively in 1991 and 1993, and plays off in the 1980s under a Republican government. After 8 years of a Democratic government, America is once more governed by Republicans, who deal with current issues through a conservative point of view.

as spiritual realities of the American landscape. The spiritual is produced as an extension of the imagination and represents the political themes of the play. The political themes centre on both the modern progressive histories and alternatively queer realities of the American landscape.

The opening quote found in Kushner (1991) speaks of missing history, and articulates an argument on the marginalisation of queer, white bodies that the researcher deems obsolete. Louis Ironson is the character who is quoted above, from Kushner's dramatic 1991. Louis is a character that symbolises casual racism and white guilt. My argument is that the quote does not speak to a missing history, but rather to the missing representation of multiple histories that are beyond the notion of dominant, white, American conservative history. My argument is also that Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), from which the quote is taken, is representative of these marginalised histories. In Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), these histories are not represented through the past images of these histories, but through present images of sexuality, race, gender, spirituality, and both physical and mental illness⁴.

I intended then to draw on the thematic content of Kushner's two texts to produce a new theatrical playtext that would interrogate modern progressive histories and alternatively queer realities of the South African landscape in order to speak to the landscape's multi-culturality⁵. I rather focussed on the structure of the characters, how these characters relate to one another, and how these characters related to Kushner's themes than following Kushner's (1991, 1993) structure. I did this in order to create the context from which to produce a new theatrical text. The construction of the new playtext was a means to deconstruct the arguments in Kushner's fictional text⁶ as well as to deconstruct the cultural landscape of South Africa. This thesis is a reflection on the making of this new theatrical playtext through a theatrical experiment.

⁴ Kushner (1991, 1993) made a study on mental illness through the character Harper Pitt, and placed her amongst the queer and progressive characters in his texts. I am making mental illness a main theme in my research.

⁵ I am using Kushner's play for ground on reimagining a play for structuring themes on modern progressive as well as queer histories, and multi-culturality as a learning curve and a guideline. The play has a complex structure and manages to speak to several themes throughout its development. As a scholar I do not have the experience on structuring such a play from nothing, and I am thus drawing inspiration from Kushner's texts (1991, 1993). What stood out for me in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) was his representation of mental illness, which is a theme I will explore more deeply in my research.

⁶ The themes in Kushner's texts (1991, 1993) are already being deconstructed through Kushner's voice through his characters throughout the development of the texts. However, I deconstructed the arguments through the perspective of a white, South African female, and through an academic perspective.

The dissertation is constructed through qualitative research, more specifically referring to Practice-Led-Research and Research-Led-Practice. In order to do qualitative research, according to Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner and Steinmentz (1991:4), one draws conclusions on events and themes being discussed conceptually from a first-person point of view. One thus depends on conceptualised theory and one's own lived experience and knowledge in order to produce new research (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner and Steinmetz 1991:4). In order for the dissertation to be a pluralistic reflection on the making of new works, the thesis will include my own voice as the narrative of a dramaturg, as well as the reflections of all the individuals⁷ I am allowed to use. I confirm this permission by means of the indemnity forms the participants signed – these participants were involved in the meaning-making of the new theatrical playtext.

Practice-Led Research, hereafter referred to as PLR, is research produced through the creative practices of art, design or architectural play, as an integral part of research inquiry (Rust (2007), quoted in Farber (ed. 2010:10)). According to Kershaw and Nicholson (eds. 2011:64), PLR is defined through activity, process action and collective reflexivity, as one is producing a conversation between creative doing and reflexive being. PLR is thus defined within a broad spectrum of producing knowledge through a practical means of inquiring, in which subjectivity is positioned as key to the research. In this case, I am making use of theatre as a practical means through which to obtain information on how to voice marginalised narratives.

Research-Led Practice, hereafter referred to as RLP, makes up the first stage of the research. According to Smith and Dean (2009:2), PLR and RLP should be treated as interwoven disciplines, which would produce a rounded means of shaping, documenting, theorising and contextualising an artwork. RLP is defined by Smith and Dean (2009:8) as a conceptualised means of research being grounded in critical and cultural theory. I am conducting research on the theoretical conversations in Kushner's texts (1991, 1993), in order to obtain the context from which the characters and themes are produced. I am also aiming to create a foundation for the pretext from which Kushner's texts will be reimaged.

The primary aim of the research is to find a means through which to voice marginalised narratives through a theatrical event. I reimaged Kushner's texts (1991, 1993) through theory and praxis in order to produce this theatrical event. In my first reading of Kushner's

⁷ I do have the permission of the actors in my cast to use their reflections on the work as part of my research.

dramatic texts (1991, 1993), I drew relations between the events and themes discussed as occurring on the American landscape in a 1980s setting, and the events currently occurring within the contemporary South African landscape. Kushner (1991, 1993) voices marginalised narratives with the aim of redeeming the characters involved. I was thus also attempting to voice marginalised narratives on the South African landscape through a redemptive process. Redemption is here defined as the voicing of one's narratives in order to make sense of current realities, and not the attempt to transcend one's perceived transgressions against a normative society. I decided to reimagine Kushner's texts (1991, 1993) as a guideline for creating my theatrical playtext, as my experience as a theatre maker does not allow me to create such a complex playtext without guidance.

Not only did Kushner's (1991, 1993) narratives focus on sexuality, gender, race, and HIV and AIDS as producing marginalised narratives, but also on mental illness through the character of Harper Pitt. Harper was the character with whom I could most relate, meaning that I made the choice of placing mental illness at the central point of my theatrical event. My secondary aim was to find a means to voice mental illness as creating marginalised narratives through theatre, as a process of creating a redemptive narrative. The aim was also to situate mental illness in a theoretical paradigm that speaks to theatre.

The research was also an experiment in how multiple narratives can be voiced in one theatrical event. I thus aimed to experiment with theory and praxis in order to conceive new ways of creating characters and voicing narratives through a deconstruction of the self, of the character, and of the narrative. I aimed to find a means through which multiple narratives can occur simultaneously, as well as to find the connections between these narratives. Thus I created a construct of embodiment where the actors are defined as "Performed Denkbilder", which will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

The research is divided into four phases:

Phase 1 is the introduction to the work, the conceptualisation of the theories involved in the work, as well as the primary methodologies through which the work was created. This phase includes a synopsis of Kushner's texts (1991, 1993), constructs for reimagination, the research question, the history of the research, the Literature Review, as well as a primary methodology for creating the theatrical playtext.

Phase 2 is the creation of the pretext. In this phase, one is informed on how the characters were created, the criteria for choosing actors, information on the characters, as well as an

understanding of all the narratives involved. These narratives include Kushner's (1991, 1993) narratives and marginalised South African narratives. One is also informed on the background regarding the South African landscape, as well as secondary methodologies through which the work was created.

Phase 3 is the journal of the process through which the theatrical playtext was created. In this phase, one is informed in detail on what happened during the workshop process, the writing process, the rehearsal process, and the performances.

Phase 4 is a reflection of the whole process through which the research was created. I draw from the theory discussed in Chapter Two, and how the theory was practically applied. I also reflect on the effect that the theatrical playtext had on me, as well as draw a conclusion on how the experiment of "Performed Denkbilder" was utilised in order to narrate marginalised realities.

As for this chapter, I am aiming to give a background to Kushner's (1991, 1993) texts, as well as speak on the history of the work. This chapter will also consist of the research question.

1.1. Introducing Mental Illness as a Marginalised Narrative

As discussed in the previous section, one of my sub-aims of creating this research was to voice narratives stemming from mental illness as marginalised narratives. Through this, I was most adequately able to position myself in the work.

According to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) (2014)⁸, one in three South Africans will suffer from a mental illness in their lifetime. Many of these South Africans are not even aware of this – especially in South Africa's rural areas, where many women are ignorant of what a mental illness is (SADAG 2014).

According to SADAG (2008), the stigmas surrounding mental illness in South Africa produces lost opportunities, a loss of independence, and a lack of self-care. An individual with a mental illness in South Africa is thus not seen as one that can fully voice him/herself and thus he/she becomes marginalised.

⁸ There are not statistics currently available on the SADAG website.

Some scholars point to a connection between mental health and gender⁹, which is determined by psychological factors, biological factors and one's social role (Visser and Moleko, 2012:214). Visser and Moleko (2012:214) build on their statement by interrogating the effects of the social role of subordination and obedience that has traditionally been assigned to women. According to Visser and Moleko (2012:214), women feel disempowered, dehumanised, and a lack of dignity due to being silenced and oppressed. By being forced to take on a subordinate role, women lose their voices. However, there are biological dimensions, in addition to the complex psychosocial and cultural dimensions of mental illness, which should be taken into account.

According to Albert (2015:1), women are predisposed to suffer from depression than men. The female is thus more prone to depression than the male, but feels too disempowered and dehumanised to seek help, and to seek help accordingly. The depression thus escalates and leads to a sense of helplessness and a lack of an optimal lifestyle.

As a queer, white South African female artist who suffers from Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), it was my aim to spread notions of mental health awareness through the new playtext. I aimed to create a means through which one can redeem one's self from one's marginalised position of not being able to take care of oneself and being stigmatised. As mentioned before, Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) voice mental illnesses through the character Harper Pitt (this was material in informing my decision to utilise the text). However, there is not a clear focus in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) on raising awareness. According to my reading of Kushner (1991, 1993), the focus was more on the male narratives. It was my aim to focus specifically on women, as that is how my voice as an artist expresses itself best – through lived knowledge and experience. However, mental illnesses in males are also echoed throughout the new theatrical playtext, along with the narratives of other marginalised individuals.

The new theatrical playtext aimed to create dialogue for various marginalised groups – including race, sexuality, gender, and illness – in order to engage with the complexities of the South African landscape¹⁰. The new playtext also attempted to inform how one could operate

⁹ "Gender" refers to traditional gender roles in this text, and not to sexualities existing outside of heteronormativity.

¹⁰ The method of creating dialogue and voicing marginalised narratives can be likened to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process that took place in South Africa in the 1990s. The TRC was a process in which former victims of apartheid could voice their narratives within a formal hearing. Those who perpetuated the violence against these victims could ask for amnesty, which was mostly, but not always granted. The objective of the TRC was to grant victims a platform to deal with their trauma, and for perpetrators to be given a chance at redemption.

as a marginalised individual if one wants to create an identity that can adapt to the changes on the South African landscape. The new playtext imagined a new future through engaging with Queer Theory (introduced in the Literature Review in Chapter Two), in order to bring about change amongst perceived postcolonial failures. The notion was to make a reflection on the personal within the political¹¹ – thus a reflection on personal narratives in the realm of the power struggles within a landscape. I aimed for the audience member¹² to be inspired to reflect on the past within the present, in order to attempt to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, and to find the new within the present so that a new future might be imagined.

1.2. Dissertation Statement

At the outset, the point of departure of the research is that the historical, political and interpersonal narratives and realities that belong to the American landscape in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) could be re-assembled in order to speak to a different landscape of realities. This landscape is of course the South African landscape. The new theatrical playtext was thus a reimagination of Kushner's texts. I aimed to create a text that reflected on the queer narratives of the South African landscape. In the research, the South African landscape is defined as a space that houses South Africa's multiple modern progressive and alternatively marginalised histories and realities. Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) were utilised as a map through which to discover new possibilities of voicing South Africa's queer narratives in such a way that these narratives would be redeemed.

I made a study of narratives that are similar to Kushner (1991, 1993), which belong to the non-fictional and fictional¹³ South African landscape, with the key objective being to voice marginalised, silenced histories. I thus produced a new theatrical playtext in which these narratives would be activated through fragments of South African histories. These narratives would be narrated simultaneously through their correlation to one another in order to depict the various realities playing out on the South African landscape.

¹¹ The term "the personal within the political" has been used in feminist liberation movements, as well as queer movements relating to the liberation of homosexual individuals.

¹² It must be noted that my Ethical Application did not allow me to request or use feedback from the audience members.

¹³ Here, I am referring to both a non-fictional and fictional landscape, in order to distinguish between the landscape that South Africans experience every day, and the landscape constructed through the theatrical playtext.

1.3. Kushner's Texts (1991, 1993)

1.3.1. Summary of Kushner's Texts (1991, 1993)

1.3.1.1. *Millennium Approaches*

The plot in Kushner's dramatic text (1991) is centred on the meeting between two couples. One couple, Harper and Joe Pitt, is ironically¹⁴ identified as heterosexual, and the other couple, Prior Walter and Louis Ironson, is identified as homosexual. Walter learns that he has contracted HIV/AIDS and becomes fatally ill. Unable to deal with a deteriorating body, Ironson leaves Walter to depend on the companionship of his friend Belize, who is a night nurse.

Joe Pitt faces difficulty in his marriage as his employer, Roy Cohen (a fictional character based on a historical figure), offers him an opportunity to work as a lawyer in Washington, to which Harper Pitt strongly objects. Harper is depicted as agoraphobic and substance dependent. She also confronts him about his sexuality, which she has learned, through a poetic revelation involving a meeting with Walter (known as the "Threshold of Revelation" spiritual encounter), that Joe leans towards a homosexual spectrum. She does not have a full understanding of any form of sexuality besides her own (she is guided to an understanding of Pitt's homosexuality and his struggles to accept himself in the new theatrical text). The notion of poetic revelation is developed further as an Angel visits Walter, bringing a message of possible apocalypse in light of destructive progression. Walter is the queer prophet in Kushner's texts (1991, 1993), making him a key figure through which the themes play out. In the new theatrical text, the role of a queer prophet is given to a female, mentally ill character, which is of course, Harper Pitt. She was, for this reason, a central figure through which the themes of the new playtext played out.

¹⁴ I say ironically, as it turns out that Joe Pitt is homosexual through the development of Kushner's (1991, 1993) texts.

1.3.1.2. *Perestroika*

In *Perestroika*, the conversations on progression and apocalypse are further developed¹⁵. Conversations on American politics, sexuality, the personal, and racial histories on the American landscape also strongly develop between Belize, Ironson and Joe Pitt in *Perestroika*. The latter two characters experience a brief sexual relationship. Cohen is hospitalised as he suffers from the terminal stages of AIDS. This progression in Kushner's text (1993) furthers conversations on illness as anti-progressive¹⁶, as it costs Cohen his political power. Cohen is, however, a powerful figure driving forward conversations on sexuality, identity, and power relations on the American landscape.

Kushner (1993) introduces Hannah Pitt, who is Joe's mother, to the reader. She arrives to look after Harper, who has left¹⁷ Joe Pitt after confessing his queer sexuality. As Harper joins Hannah Pitt, who volunteers at a Mormon centre, the diorama scene plays off in which Harper communicates with the dummies in what I perceive to be a hallucination. The diorama scene furthers images of the imaginative and the real in relation to historical progression – these are images that strongly relate to a Magic Realist text.

As Cohen is admitted to hospital he meets Belize, his night nurse. Conversations on racism take place. Cohen is visited by Joe Pitt, whom he instructs to go back to his wife. Joe obeys Cohen after a violent physical encounter between himself and Ironson, after Ironson reads through his court decisions. This violent encounter furthers conversations on homosexuality and political power. Cohen is also visited by the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg, who informs him that he has been indicted as a lawyer, and has thus failed his own political identity. He then passes away a moral and political failure.

Hannah Pitt¹⁸ meets Walter when he falls ill again and needs to be hospitalised. She instructs him to battle the Angel and this instance produces images of redemption rather than apocalypse through a request for a longer life. Redemption, as already discussed, is a main

¹⁵ These conversations are reimagined through a South African's perspective in the new theatrical text.

¹⁶ The theme of being anti-progressive because of one's illness is further developed in the new playtext through a South African's perspectives.

¹⁷ She became delusional and went to live in a park, believing she was in Antarctica.

¹⁸ Hannah Pitt, along with characters such as Harper Pitt, Joe Pitt, Prior Walter, Louis Ironson and, most importantly, the Angel, are reimagined as characters and influences on characters in the new theatrical text. Harper became a central character in the new theatrical playtext, while Pitt and the rest of the characters were reimagined according to the characteristics that speak to the themes of the new theatrical playtext: for example, I drew on notions of homoeroticism and masculinity when reimagining the character Joe Pitt.

theme in the new theatrical playtext, which then drives the plot forward towards its conclusion. Kushner's dramatic (1991, 1993) texts conclude in a conversation between Hannah, Prior, Belize and Louis at a statue of an angel.

1.3.2. The Angel

The role of Kushner's Angel, along with the role of the queer prophet, becomes the central character that moves Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) and its themes forward. A reimagined Angel, based on Kushner's notion of an apocalyptic and redemptive angel, was thus also the central device of the newly imagined theatrical text, *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016).

Kushner's Angel presents the ultimate oxymoronic trope within itself and is classified as the character most "othered" (Savran, 1995:21). Kushner's Angel argues against the notion of modern progression, and thus against notions of technology, of movement, migration, and modern realities. Kushner's Angel is constantly negotiating a universal standstill with Prior, and claims that progress has forced God into absence in heaven. This Angel is "othered" through being spiritual, being overtly sexual, and through being anti-modern.

Kushner's (1991, 1993) Angel is described in Savran (1995:14) as a Benjamin¹⁹ angel, which expresses itself through an ambivalent speech on heaven, God, humanity, progress and stasis. It is argued that Kushner's (1991, 1993) Angel is partially produced in correlation with Benjamin's description of Paul Klee's monochrome painting *Angelus Novus* (Klee²⁰, 1920, Figure 1) (the angel is also likened to the angel with which Jacob wrestled in the Judaic-Christian Bible's Old Testament).

There is a picture by Klee called *Angelus Novus*. It shows an angel who seems about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before us, he sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet. The angel would like to stay, awake the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm

¹⁹ Referring to Walter Benjamin's writings on Klee's *Angelus Novus* as the "Angel of History".

²⁰ Paul Klee was a Swiss 20th Century visual artist who specialised in Expressionism, Cubism and Surrealism.

is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows ward the sky.

Benjamin (1968:258)

This Paul Klee Angel, according to Savran (1995:14), is a description of the “Angel of History”.

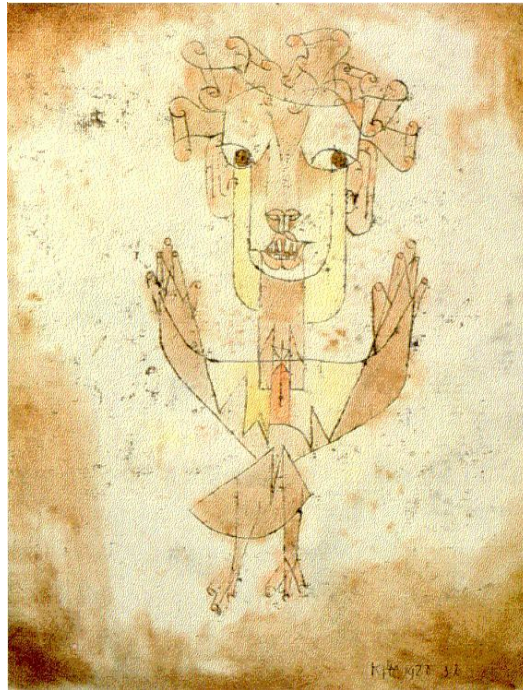


Figure 1: Paul Klee, *Angelus Novus*. 1920.

Indian ink, coloured chalk, and brown wash on paper, 318 x 242 mm

Israel Museum, Jerusalem

(Online Image: *Angelus Novus and Poor Angel*)

Klee (1920) created an image that seems to be ghastly, strung in a situation that it cannot comprehend. Its claw-like features suggest an ancient worldliness that depicts its age as that preceding modern civilisation. It is caught up in a new age that distorts its being-angel into that of being-creature. Perhaps Klee (1920) did not attempt to create an aesthetically pleasing image, but a reflection of an ancient world that has now become distorted. This ancient world is a compilation of multiple histories that are seemingly cut off from modern realities. It is the

onlooker's responsibility to regenerate this tie between past histories and current, modern realities.

The "Angel of History" is opposed to the notion of a universal historicism, which is presented in Benjamin (1968:258) as the storm of progress caught in the Angel's wings. According to Benjamin (1968:258), the objective of being a Historical Materialist is to redeem the fragmented ruins as an actual assemblage of histories, in order to situate their meanings in the present. However, the "Angel of History" is incapable of freeing itself from the storm's wings. This means that the objective of the Historical Materialist would be to not progress time any further, but to recognise a time that stands still. The Historical Materialist must aim to create an event that interrupts time in order to revisit various eras of the past.

Kushner's (1991, 1993) Angel becomes a political figure in itself. It engages with the current politics of the play, not through direct action, but through commentary on Kushner's (1991, 1993) American landscape.

The objective of creating a new playtext was to become aware of the effects of the various South African histories that still function in current realities. The South African individual's reality can thus only be redeemed by one becoming aware of its roots in historical effects. Historical awareness, as the awareness of the effects of various histories in current realities, is thus presented in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) through the broad political climate, and the interruption of Kushner's Angel. I aimed to rework the interruption of an angel into the new theatrical text.

1.4. The Research Question

As the themes on historical awareness and redemption were depicted, mainly through the new playtext's Angel, the key focus of the research was the reimagination of such an Angel through a new theatrical text, producing the research question as:

Research question:

By making use of Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) as stimulus, how can Benjamin's (1968:258) notion on the "Angel of History" theatrically be reimagined onto a South African landscape?

The question is on how the "Angel of History" can be used as a theatrical device through which to voice marginalised histories and realities of the South African landscape. The "Angel of History" was theatricalised and given the agency to be freed from the storm of progress. The "Angel of History" was given the chance to study and gather the ruins that make out history and, specifically in the case of this research, the South African landscape's histories. The "Angel of History" is a metaphor for gathering the ruins, creating new structures and making visible marginalised histories and realities.

Along with the key objective, I will also rewrite my sub-objectives discussed in the introduction as secondary questions:

- 1. How can the marginalised narratives on the South African landscape be voiced through a theatrical event?*
- 2. How can narratives stemming from mental illness be theatrically voiced as marginalised narratives?*
- 3. How can one place mental illness in a theory that pertains to the theatrical?*
- 4. How can a new theatrical construct, perhaps existing in other forms, be created in order to produce narratives occurring simultaneously?*

As this "Angel of History" is already imagined in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) as an American angel, the reimagination of Kushner's text was practically produced through the reimagination of the Angel as a South African phenomenon. The objective was to research the South African landscape, in order to find non-fictional and fictional narratives and figures that spoke to Kushner's (1991, 1993) themes. These narratives, along with Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), formed a map of fragments that reconstructed the "Angel of History" through a new text.

1.5. A Landscape of Fragments

Thus far I have discussed the objective of the research (to voice marginalised narratives on the South African landscape); the use of Kushner's texts (1991, 1993) as a point of reimagination; the main concepts and characters through which Kushner's texts (1991, 1993) will be reimagined according to the history of the research; the Research Question, and the central figure of the new play being a reimagined "Angel of History".

The next chapter will consist of the literary review, providing the main theories and literary devices through which the research is constructed, as well as further analysis of Kushner's (1991, 1993) texts. Following the next chapter, I will discuss the history of the research, as well as key methodologies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In the previous chapter, I introduced the reader to the notion of how marginalised and modern progressive histories will be utilised in order to create a new play. I introduced Kushner's dramatic (1991, 1993) texts as the foundation from which to reimagine a new playtext. In this chapter I will guide the reader through the various theories and literature tools through which I conduct my research. The main theories introduced in this chapter are postcolonialism, Historical Materialism, Queer Theory, Magic Realism and Landscape Theatre.

2.1. Postcolonialism

When I refer to postcolonialism²¹, I acknowledge that there are various definitions that describe this term. However, I refer to the consideration of the different modes of reading and understanding material that Mcleod (2013:34) states are fundamental to postcolonialism. Mcleod (2013:6) refers to postcolonialism first as the study of how decolonisation (the unmaking of colonial power binaries and meanings on the landscape) has affected the historical experience. In the millennial era, Mcleod (2013:29) states that postcolonial writing started centring on the critique of postcolonial texts themselves in addition to writing of experiences centring on decolonisation. This critique on postcolonial writing is necessary in order to thwart colonial definitions on self-expression and the perception of various information in order to, in the sense of the word, decolonise the act of writing itself.

In South Africa, to become critical of self-expression and information perception is to make a study of how British and Afrikaner cultures are favoured above South Africa's original indigenous cultures, particularly when it comes to literature and academic writing. According to Düssing (2002:97), postcolonial discourses in South Africa are based within a thwarting of colonial understandings of territoriality. This would also mean that postcolonial studies in South Africa are a means of thwarting apartheid ideologies, through which various races were separated.

²¹ The term "post" refers to the effect of the past in the present. It does not merely refer to what happens after an event (as in this case, colonialism) but how the event has structured current realities, even after the event had passed.

Dutch colonisation lasted in South Africa from 1652 to 1815. British colonisation began in 1815, and ended in 1910. The apartheid era then started in 1948²², with the rule of Afrikaner Nationalism, and ended in 1994. South Africa became a Democracy in 1994. The Afrikaner and the British were at war from 1899–1902. According to Parsons (199:76), Britain began by colonising the South African Cape, now known as the Western Cape Province, moved on to Natal (which is now known as the KwaZulu-Natal Province), and in 1899 started the Anglo-Boer War. Through the Anglo-Boer War the British would colonise further parts of South Africa under Afrikaner rule after 1910.

British motivation for colonising South Africa was monetary in origin: South Africa was rich in minerals, which would give the British monetary power if they could control these resources. However, the British also imposed their culture as superior to the Afrikaner, through colonial means of perception of what it is to be “civil”. Afrikaans was referred to as Kitchen Dutch. Although white Afrikaners were not perceived as colonialists by the British – and by Afrikaners themselves after gaining independence in 1910 – white Afrikaners still imposed colonial perceptions on the indigenous people of South Africa. The Afrikaner imposed colonial perceptions through the notion of white superiority and the rise of apartheid in 1948. Indigenous South Africans were forced to learn Afrikaner history as exemplifying civilisation and motivating racial superiority. They were taught about the landscape and their position in the landscape through white Afrikaner perspectives. Indigenous South Africans were labelled as dangerous and constantly had to carry a pass book – an identification document limited to persons of colour. Indigenous South Africans had to be out of public spaces after 22:00, throughout various phases of apartheid history.

In South Africa, postcolonialism is thus not only the study of recording the experiences of decolonisation, but also the study of the experiences of placing value on indigenous empowerment and voicing indigenous histories and cultures as valued. I am making use of a postcolonial frame, the study of colonial history on the South African landscape specifically, in order to voice marginalised realities on the South African landscape. Marginalised realities are approached as those shaped by colonial oppression. I am thus attempting to shift the notion of a central history, being colonial history, into a framework of multiple histories. I am attempting this shift by voicing those who have been oppressed through colonial effect.

²² The act of separating cultures was already prominent in South Africa before 1948.

Pal Ahluwalia, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Portsmouth, studies African relations, cultural studies and social theory, and makes a clear, introductory study on postcolonialism. Postcolonialism, which Ahluwalia (2012:14) defines specifically to the African landscape, is a study of realities produced through the after-effects of colonialism. The past is thus consciously affecting the present, rendering histories as continuing effects in different timeframes and realities.

Postcolonialism, from a South African perspective, is thus a study of how colonialism still affects current South African histories. Those who benefit from colonialism produce dominant progressive realities, as they belong to the group that can dominantly assert themselves on all modern fields of progression, through status and monetary means. Queer realities are shaped by those living on the margins of progression, meaning that I draw a connection between queerness and marginalisation. Colonialism thus still affects individuals who cannot themselves progress into capitalist success²³.

The notion of the British colonising South Africa as a means of gaining a monetary advantage is a capitalist narrative. The British thus attempted to progress themselves materialistically through the misuse and oppression of South Africa's indigenous people and the Afrikaner nation. To oppress a nation leads to an apocalyptic effect: the majority of the landscape's people are impoverished and dehumanised, as well as stripped of power. This impoverishment and dehumanisation of the indigenous people of South Africa also took place through Afrikaner rule. Throughout the postcolonial timeline, one is thus dealing with a post-apocalyptic effect. Through this timeline, one may attempt to heal the effects of the past on marginalised peoples. One may also attempt to reconstruct the landscape in such a way as to empower and give back a sense of humanity to marginalised peoples of the landscape.

Derek Hook, an associate professor, is an expert in psychoanalysis, critical psychology and psychosocial studies. Hook (2013:3) defines the South African landscape as currently being in a post-reconciliation state, thus suggesting that the landscape is progressing forth towards new realities by redeeming²⁴ itself from its previous colonialist histories. This space of transition is striving towards an imagined utopia of equity for all races, genders and sexual

²³Apartheid ensured capitalist success for white people and poverty for everyone else through job reservations, Bantu education, forced removals, and land distribution.

²⁴ In this instance, "redemption" is the means through which one makes pardon for one's past transgressions. However, this is not the definition of "redemption" that I largely use throughout the research.

preferences. However, according to Horáková and Rudwick (2014:sp)²⁵, social-economical inequalities, increasing corruption, a decreasing employment rate, violence, increasing crime rates, a slow economy, and the outbreak of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, depicts a cluster of failures that construct a current dystopia-like landscape.

This dystopia is initially defined as a continuance of historical effect. Hook (2013:3) describes the cluster of failures as echoing images from the apartheid era (1948–1990). This is an era in South African history through which races were segregated through legislation, oppression and state violence, favouring the white, heterosexual male as individuals in power²⁶. It is because of the events that occurred after the end of apartheid that South Africa finds itself in a post-reconciliation state. Those groups previously segregated from one another must create realities in which all South African individuals – those previously oppressed, and those previously favoured – live in unison. However, as the post-reconciliation era is still young, past forms of segregation and violence amongst different races and genders are still occurring on the South African landscape. The South African landscape can thus be defined as being in a state of post-apartheid dystopia.

To state that the South African landscape is in a state of post-apartheid dystopia, would be to state that we are past an era where the white Afrikaner heterosexual male had rule over the marginalised groups in South Africa. Yet, as South Africa is in a postcolonial state, the rule of the white male, of Western heritage, over the indigenous groups of South Africa prevails.

To say that South Africa is in a post-reconciliation state means that South Africans are in the process of voicing the stories of indigenous and marginalised groups of South Africa. For this study, my primary view is through a post-reconciliation lens, drawing from a postcolonial landscape, which is situated in a post-apartheid South African dystopia.

The dystopia is defined through the silencing of marginalised narratives, with regards to sexuality, race, gender, mental illness, and also HIV and AIDS. However, the HIV and AIDS epidemic is the key constellation of narratives through which South Africa can be defined as a dystopia. The disease spreads havoc and puts a large group of individuals in mortal danger.

²⁵ Hana Horáková's expertise lies in tourism, cultural anthropology and rural tourism – she is currently employed at the Metropolitan University of Prague; Stephanie Rudwick's expertise lies in African studies, the English Language, Qualitative Research and Ethnolinguistics, her interests lie in the LGBT community and Africa – she is currently employed at the University of Leipzig.

²⁶ The white, heterosexual male is the victor referred to in the Introduction.

Brenna M Munroe is a literature analyst and writer who makes a study of the narratives told about sexuality, race and the South African landscape, through the struggle against apartheid. She is useful in helping one understand how identities are being remade from the stock example set by the apartheid regime into frictionous narratives set against a struggle towards freedom. According to Munroe (2012:xii), the post-apartheid era itself is specifically identified with the HIV and AIDS epidemic. HIV and AIDS, according to Steinberg (2009), quoted in Munroe (2012:xii), becomes associated with blame – blame of the personal, and the national. This pandemic, according to Munroe (2012:xiii), is situated as a key point through which debates are structured on democracy, justice, and a new national subject.

The HIV and AIDS epidemic thus becomes a symbol of national identity. It signifies a failure occurring through the process of remaking, which signifies a failure of the remaking of the self. This means that the HIV and AIDS epidemic can signify postcolonial failure, not in that one is upholding previous power regimes, but because one is failing to remake oneself as striving towards freedom. One is losing agency.

2.2. Henriette Gunkel: A Study of Different Bodies

Henriette Gunkel is a lecturer in the Department of Visual Cultures (at Goldsmiths College at the University of London), and the author of the book *The Cultural Politics of Female Sexuality in South Africa*. Gunkel (2010:4) makes a study of post-apartheid South African gender politics, with an emphasis on the subjectification of women, the relation that South African bodies hold to homophobia, racism experienced through the socialisation and scientific classification of bodies, and gender-based violence. According to Gunkel (2010:7), homophobia, racism and gender-based violence are defined as linked occurrences. The violence against these bodies are attempts to restore previous power constructions, as well as previous ideas (here, specifically referring to ideas upheld under colonial governments and the apartheid regime) regarding race, sexuality, and gender (Gunkel 2010:7). I studied these relations in specific regards to how homophobic and racial segregation influences gender politics.

The white, heterosexual male body is held in difference to a vast set of other bodies, those which fit the criteria of marginalised identities described in Chapter One. However, these

criteria for identification have been warped through attempts by marginalised groups to attain power. Gunkel (2010:11) states that South Africa consists of a politics of difference, which constitutes a white identity set against a constructed homophobic black identity, as homosexuality is politically considered as being “un-African”. However, discourses of sexuality on the African continent is still informed by colonial discourses of sex and race (Gunkel, 2010:11). According to Gunkel (2010:34), colonialism is constituted out of Western concepts of sex, gender, sexuality and racism. Both racial and sexual discourses, as stated in Gunkel (2010:37), became relational through the production of colonial knowledge.

During colonial discourses, the black body became a subject for scientific study (Gunkel, 2010:35). Gunkel (2010:36) then also states that the homosexual body became a scientific object to be studied along with the black body, as it was considered that deviant sexualities would be found in deviant bodies. As stated in Gunkel (2010:36), sexual deviants, which included homosexual and black bodies, thus became objectified and displayed as the sexual “other”²⁷.

According to Gunkel (2010:41), the white female body was identified as a passive entity with no sexual voice, and thus an object empty of desire – in the same way that Harper was suppressed into becoming a Mormon housewife not allowed to express her sexual desires in Kushner’s dramatic texts (1991, 1993)²⁸. Whiteness was constructed as contradictory to sexuality. The black body was constructed as being ruled by its sexuality, while the white body aimed to control its desires (Gunkel, 2010:42). During the 19th and 20th centuries, as stated in Gunkel (2010:42), the black body was further sexualised by being constituted as a body that practices homosexuality.

However, this branch of research was opposed by Karsch-Hauck (1911), who, as quoted in Gunkel (2010:43), described homosexuality as a sexual deviancy that stems from European influences. According to Karsch-Hauck (1911), quoted in Gunkel (2010:43), the black body was reclassified as exclusively heterosexual. The notion that homosexuality is un-African is thus understood within dominant Western images of African sexuality (Gunkel, 2010:43).

²⁷ The “other” can also be read as the “marginalised”.

²⁸ However, Harper breaks protocol in the new text by expressing her longing for Joe, not just on an emotional level, but also from the stance of her sexual desires.

2.3. Walter Benjamin: Progress and Historical Materialism

In the new playtext, I aimed to reflect on the postcolonial landscape in order to create characters that can remake and redeem themselves. German-Jewish theorist, Walter Benjamin derived notions on reflection, remaking, redemption and past and present images. These notions will be used to construct the thesis as a redemptive and theoretical text. Benjamin was a cultural critic and historical materialist. I am focussing on his work *Theses on The Philosophy of History* (1940), which contains his writings on progress, present and past images, as well as Historical Materialism.

Progress, according to Benjamin (1968:260), is defined as the attempt towards self-perfection, without a reflection on the past. Benjamin (1968:257) depicts progress as a storm that reduces various historical narratives to ruins. Progress is thus a monotonous process of moving forward without considering the meaning one's actions convey. Progress is a means to its own end: one is constantly moving forward without the chance to pause and reflect. Progress is a linear process.

Historical Materialism understands history as a compilation of moments and a structure of images, rather than just events occurring over an empty timeframe (Benjamin, 1968:258). The past is relevant to the present and the past events shape the present. Benjamin (1968:258) states that the past event is perceived as an image, although the image can be described in greater terms than just an event. The image, according to Benjamin (1968:258), is constructed as an idea, an event, a piece of writing, a conversation, a visual image, and anything of value that signifies historical change. The image is created when time is figuratively brought to a standstill – an interruptive halt occurs – so that the meaning of the moment can be grasped and change can occur (Benjamin, 1968:258).

Here redemption finds a clearer meaning within this work. Redemption is the interruption of progress. Redemption is an active process through which one retrieves images created in the past in order to better understand the processes happening in the present. One makes a study of how meaning was conveyed in the past. In relation to marginalised narratives, one redeems past images in order to understand the manner in which meaning can be created in the present. One relives the past as an act of remembrance: remembering past narratives in order to understand how various human experiences are intersectional.

I perceived Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) as a cluster of images where the meanings signified through text can be deconstructed and reimagined in order for new images to be constructed on a fictional South African landscape. Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) are defined as plays being theatrically presented as images – thus thoughts, pieces of writings and events – based on sexuality, gender, illness, spirituality and race. I attempted to deconstruct and reconstruct these images on a fictional South African landscape. By studying Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) as images, I found a means through which to connect South African images to Kushner's themes, and thus a practical means through which to reimagine Kushner's texts. This reimagination occurred by relating Kushner's images to the lived experience of the South African performers who devised the text, as well as to the South African fictional and non-fictional images that I drew on. A new cluster of images – these being theatrical visual images – as well as pieces of writing – was formed through this process of relating Kushner's (199, 1993) images to South African non-fictional and fictional images. By studying these images, I constructed a new theatrical playtext.

2.4. Sigfrid Weigel: Denkbilder

Sigrid Weigel is a professor of German Literature and Director of the Centre for Literature Research in Berlin. Her work is particularly useful for furthering my understanding of Benjamin's work on images and thought-images. Denkbilder, or thought-images, are defined in Weigel (1996:51) as the image-in-text. According to Weigel (1996:51), there exists a dialectical relationship between the image as a particle of reality or history, and the various thoughts – being relations to the image – which the image provokes. According to Benjamin (1900), as stated in Weigel (1996:49), the image is here also understood as a property of writing, as well as a constellation of resemblances.

The single image is initially defined in Weigel (1996:70) as a crystallised event. The image then depicts meaning by being placed in a constellation with other images (Weigel, 1996:70). This means that various events created through history produce meaning through their relations to one another. According to Weigel (1996:77), images created in the past correspond with the events in which they are being reproduced, while the current event created in the present changes the course of the image's meaning. The cluster of Denkbilder, from which the new playtext was constructed, is defined by the researcher as queer images, based within Halberstam's definition of "queer".

2.5. Queerness

Judith Halberstam is an American queer philosopher. For the sake of the study, I am focussing on her text *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011). As stated in Halberstam (2011:88), the queer subject is one who fails normative, capitalist-aspirant expectations of a so-defined successful lifestyle. It is a lifestyle that, purposefully or by chance, is constructed as alternative to that of the normatively-defined lifestyles (Halberstam, 2011:89). I am thus connecting queerness to postcolonial realities through postcolonial failures. Here I am referring back to the HIV and AIDS epidemic, and the notion that those who previously benefited from colonialism are still living dominant progressive realities. However, the main notion of failure in the new playtext is the failure to remake the self. One has the opportunity to remake the self in the new playtext, by studying the failures that have situated one as queer, and by creating new realities. In Kushner's (1991, 1993) texts, the characters are confronted with the failures of their health, as well as with the failures of progress. The characters may have to be constructed to negotiate new realities for themselves by accepting their failures, and through utilising past images as inspirations through which to remake the self.

The normative lifestyle is presented in Halberstam (2011:89) as the rational, capitalist, linear progressive lifestyle, while the queer lifestyle is a disruption of normative constructed realities. This interruption is cause for a historical redirection, and should thus be recognised as a rendering of power for social and political change. This interruption eludes the notion of "common sense" granted to a normative lifestyle, thus creating the cause for re-evaluating the meanings of activities constructed according to different realities. A normative lifestyle is defined as living the reality through which to progress the self capitalistically. This kind of lifestyle is not available to those placed in marginalised groups. Individuals from these marginalised groups devise different notions of "difference" according to their sexualities, genders, illnesses and races.

The queer subject is placed on the margin of history and not in the position to progress the self capitalistically. To progress the self, without reflection, is defined as historical locomotion. The queer subject, living an alternative reality, is motivated to reflect by being reminded constantly of their failures. The queer subject is thus not taking part in historical locomotion. Historical locomotion is the opposite of Historical Materialism, as there is no time for reflecting

on past images or how these images are still being recreated as present images. To be queer is to step out of a homogenous empty timeframe – which is in essence what historical locomotion produces – and to change direction.

The interruptive halt in Benjamin (1968:262), through which an image is created, is here defined as an interruption of a normative, linearly progressing lifestyle. The normative lifestyle is defined as being linearly progressive, by always locomoting towards a better, capitalistically more productive position. To become queer is to steer away from the course that produces capitalistically productive lifestyles. One is thus paving alternative courses to normativity. In Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), these interruptive halts can be described as Harper's hallucinations in which she visits the North Pole, Prior Walter visiting heaven in order to plead for his life, and the dream/hallucination in which Prior tells Harper that Joe Pitt is homosexual.

As queer realities and linear, capitalistically productive realities co-exist, I argue that one is a disruption of the other. The capitalistically progressive reality disrupts the queer reality through placing individuals on the margin of history, and queer realities interrupt capitalistically progressive realities through different insights and through individuals obtaining different means of gaining power. If one thus consciously manoeuvres one's lifestyle to disrupt another's reality, queer realities can be a disruption of capitalistically progressive historical courses. Thus a new image – being historical change – can be created.

To have reproduced the images in the new playtext as queer means that I did not merely focus on voicing marginalities, but on positioning these voices in such a way as to produce change. The voices in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) are already queer, as the characters do not reproduce (neither sexually nor capitalistically). I am reading Kushner's use of queer voices as the means through which he produces changed perspectives on the HIV and AIDS epidemic. The notion to produce the images as queer in the new theatrical playtext was to follow the example that Kushner (1991, 1993) has portrayed in his work. I also aimed to utilise queerness further as a tool – not only as a means of understanding our multicultural²⁹ landscape, but to empower those in our landscape to bring about change.

Although I focus profusely here on the notion of how queer identity is structured out of a sense of failure, I would also note that the queer identity is structured out of a failure of political and social conscience. In *Postcolonial Melancholia*, Gilroy (2005:1) talks about the death of

²⁹ I acknowledge that the term "multicultural" is problematic; however, to discuss the issues around this term falls outside of the scope of my research, as the focus of my research is on various forms of marginalisation, and not solely on the issues around race.

a multi-cultural society at the hands of institutional indifference and political resentment. I would like to replace the term “multi-cultural” with “multi-intersectional”. The term “queer” here, in my opinion, refers to a body of difference, diverting from the social norm of progress for progress’ sake. However, to acknowledge this body of difference speaks against progressive political gains and the societal norms that have achieved comfortable living for a normative cast of bodies. It is thus a constant action, to retrieve the images of the queer narratives of difference, and to relive these narratives in order to establish an alternative identity. It is this constant action of reliving narratives of difference that *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016) set out to achieve.

Puar (2007:[sp]) states that national recognition of one’s identity is the progression of the segregation and disqualification of the multitude of races and sexualities beyond the norm. I would here once more identify the norm as capitalistically aspirant white, male heterosexuals. The queer body of difference is not recognised as a body bearing an identity forming part of a nation, and thus becomes excluded from national imagery. One is now not merely alternative, one is rejected as non-existent. To voice the narratives of queer bodies is to challenge this status of non-existence. It is to attempt to rectify the making-invisible of queer bodies. *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016) attempted to challenge the status quo of which set of identities can be described as South African, or even African. Queer identities are repetitively spoken into existence and asked to be acknowledged by voicing the lived experiences of those identifying as queer. Although the marking of being alternative is praised as being the means through which to change historical direction, even this definition is being challenged. The question is whether the norm should be upheld as exactly that – the norm – and whether a new means of identifying South Africans should be devised. South Africans may thus be defined as multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-sexual.

2.6. David Savran and Ranen Omer-Sherman: Ambivalence, Identity and Marginalisation in Kushner’s (1991, 1993) Texts

I will now focus on Kushner’s dramatic texts (1991, 1993), by looking at the theories of David Savran and Ranen Omer-Sherman. David Savran, an American Theatre and Gender Studies scholar, wrote the article *Ambivalence, Utopia, and a Queer Sort of Materialism: How “Angels in America” Reconstructs the Nation* (1995). Savran takes a political stance on Kushner’s dramatic texts (1991, 1993), and makes a summary of its representation of America as liberal,

the American landscape's ideological stances, and its involvement in the spiritual realm. Savran perceives the writing of Kushner's dramatic text (1991, 1993) as ambivalent – especially in regards to sexuality, race and gender – and states that the reader constitutes its own arguments within this ambivalence. Savran's theories thus inform me on how the arguments in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) were structured, and how I can deconstruct these arguments in order for the themes to speak to a South African landscape. Ranen Omer-Sherman, an American author and professor of English literature, wrote the article *Jewish/Queer: Threshold of Vulnerable Identities in Tony Kushner's Angels in America* (2007). Omer-Sherman writes specifically on identity and marginalisation within Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993). Omer-Sherman also has an understanding of the spirituality within Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), and Kushner's Jewish background – especially when it comes to the writing in of an angel. Omer-Sherman is thus useful in understanding the multi-cultural and spiritual background of Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993). Through Omer-Sherman, I understand dialogues of the personal, and how to reimagine these dialogues when constructing a new playtext. Omer-Sherman also leads me in understanding political specificity when it comes to marginalised groups. I was informed on how to create a structure from which to draw information from the lived experience of the actors who participated in the making of the new playtext.

According to Omer-Sherman (2007:13), this compassion with the “other” is rendered as compassion with the suffering. I read this as compassion for those on the margin of histories attempting to progress themselves while being excluded from capitalistically progressive realities. The structure of Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), according to Omer-Sherman (2007:19), is built around changes in each character, which brings about the character's redemption. Redemption occurs in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) through having compassion with the self, as well as through a connection with other characters that share in this compassion. It was noticed that the change within the *othered* also affected change within those who produce notions of compassion in the new theatrical playtext. This means that the events could play out through a constant notion of transformative redemption on the fictional South African landscape.

Not only did the new playtext attempt to convey compassion with the marginalised characters through a voicing of their histories, but through the manner in which these histories were voiced. The notion of having compassion with the “other” within the new playtext was thus conveyed through preservation of a group's heritage through interaction and storytelling.

The characters were constructed as fluid characters, drawing on the notion of identity construction as frictious and unstable, being constantly influenced by new images obtained as one's narratives progress. I constructed the characters as images in a constellation. I named the constellation the "Progress-Queer Constellation"³⁰, as various images regarding progress and queerness were connected through the construction of the characters and their narratives.

2.7. Rhizomatic Identity

This method of constructing characters as images also drew from Deleuze and Guattari's notion of one's identity being likened to a rhizome, wherein the rhizome is defined as a map³¹:

The rhizomes altogether different, a map and not a tracing. Make a map, not a tracing. The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome.

Cited in Kaufman and Heller (1998:4)

I will discuss how the notion of a mapped identity pertained to the construction of characters in Chapter Four. For the purpose of the Literature Review, I will now discuss the rhizome as a theoretical construct. Gilles Deleuze was a French philosopher who wrote on film, fine art, literature and philosophy. Félix Guattari was a French philosopher, activist, semiologist and psychotherapist. These two French philosophers' work on rhizomes is useful in understanding the notion of identity as an ever-shifting element that constantly remakes and reworks itself. Eleanor Kaufman, a professor of Comparative Literature, and Kevin Jon Heller quote Deleuze and Guattari (1980), by explaining that the rhizome, now a symbol of self-identification through mapping the self, is flexible and nomadic (Kaufman and Heller, 1998:5). According to Deleuze and Guattari (1980), quoted in Kaufman and Heller (1998:5), there are connections between all fields within the map (which is the rhizome – one's own means of identification), and it is itself part of a rhizome – thus, the map forms part of a map. This notion draws into the writings of the image, forming part of a constellation of images, and meaning

³⁰ This thesis is the development of the "Progress-Queer Constellation", documenting its development from a theoretical constellation, to a pretext, and then finally the reflections of the creation of the new playtext.

³¹ If the map, like the image, does not exist separate from other images, then one's identity is shaped according to one's interaction with other individuals; it is also shaped by external events. Thus, as stated in Kruger (2009:4), one's identity is not a fixed structure, but fluid and changeable.

being made through seeing the image in connection with other images. The rhizome, or the map, becomes identified in the research as a thought-image. It was intended that the actions and reactions from the actor form part of a thought-image. The character is thus constructed as a rhizome. The actor's body and its actions become part of a constellation of maps, rhizomes and images. This forms part of the experience of the theatrical playtext being produced as a theatrical event.

The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible (sic) to constant modification.

Deleuze and Guattari (1980), quoted in Kaufman and Heller (1998:5)

Deleuze and Guattari (1980), quoted in Kaufman and Heller (1998), state that the map can thus be reworked and reversed. It is a fluid image, and, also being able to be defined as the thought-image, can be anything, from a piece of art to a political act. The notion is that one is performing oneself through fluidity and connectivity. The actor is constantly reworking images and actively remaking a character's identity in order to move a plot forward. The actor is constantly remaking a scene of a fictional landscape. These images are represented in the new text through multiple means of expression. As it can be anything, the question is now on how these images can be conveyed to be understood by the audience member in multiple ways, through various means of artistic expression.

2.8. Magic Realism

The playtext was theatrically constructed with the use of theatrical devices of Magic Realism and Landscape Theatre. Lois Parkinson Zamora specialises in Comparative Literature and English Literature. Zamora's text, *The Usable Past: the imagination of history in recent fiction of the Americas* (1997) is used in the research to obtain a better understanding of Magic Realism, along with Gerald Gaylard's text, *After Colonialism: African Post-modernism and Magical Realism* (2005). Magic Realism, as a literary and theatrical style, presents experienced realities through multiple, animistic, permeable, transformative fictional worlds (Zamora, 1997:79). Magic Realism is a style through which different worlds, and thus different realities, are interwoven in one setting. Magic Realism is thus a useful tool through which to interweave capitalistically progressive narratives with queer narratives. One also gains the

understanding of how individuals, existing on the margin of history, had to construct their realities against those benefitting from colonialism.

Gerald Gaylard, an English Literature lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, makes a study of the connection between postcolonialism, Postmodernism, and Magic Realism in African literature³². Magic Realism is defined in Gaylard (2005:37) as a fiction of hyperbole and excess, as emphasising the supernatural, and, according to Gaylard (2005:39), as the depiction of a harsh reality and desertedness. Magic Realism, according to Gaylard (2005:34), is also a means of escaping the disorientation caused by globalisation,³³ and is thus a useful means through which to narrate postcolonial and socio-historical changes, such as was the objective in creating the new playtext.

The Magic Realist theatrical text was expressed through storytelling and subjective expression. This places the notion of the real and normativity into question through subjective experience. These conversations were derived from the objective of changing the socio-historical perspective of the landscape, in order to narrate postcolonial changes.

To think of the post-colonial is an imaginative activity, for the human past, present and foreseeable future is dominated by nations, colonies and empires of all kind.

Gaylard (2005:2)

To think of the postcolonial is to imagine new realities for those who have been marginalised by colonialism. To tie up the postcolonial with a Magic Realist style is to interrupt capitalistically progressive realities by voicing the narratives of those being on the margin. One thus introduces other realities than those that are dominant. The postcolonial is tied up with constantly imagining new realities and possibilities for redeeming a previously colonised landscape. According to Gaylard (2005:3), the imagination is also a space through which one fills the gaps of understanding, while its effects are still situated in the real.

According to Gaylard (2005:46), in Magic Realism, the boundaries between the real and the magical (that which is imagined to not be real) are fluid. This means that the boundaries of current realities are blasted open through an infiltration of various imagined realities. This creates the space for imagining a new reality in the midst of those current and magical

³² Gaylard (2005) covers postcolonialism, Southern African and African fiction, Latin American fiction, Indian fiction, Magical Realism, Postmodernism, Science Fiction, Fantasy, Speculative Fiction, the Romance, Romanticism, Medievalism, and the Gothic in English Literature in his writing and lecturing.

³³ In the research, I will focus on the effects of colonialism and apartheid in creating modern progressive realities, rather than globalisation.

realities that could possibly occur. As there is no boundary between imagined and actual, current realities, new possibilities arise if the new reality is recognised as possible within current landscapes.

Through the event of performing the theatrical text, the cast and I aimed to produce a postcolonial pause. This means that time was imaginatively brought to a halt in order to redeem the realities that make part of the postcolonial landscape. According to Gaylard (2005:50), postcolonialist narratives are created in the moment of a pause, in which one is faced with uncertainty as to how to respond to the future. The pause is the moment in which, according to Benjamin (1968:258), the “Angel of History”³⁴ is given the opportunity to “awaken the dead”. One is shocked out of the current frame of a homogenous empty timeframe, and presented with various realities that may or may not speak to one’s own present reality.

The postcolonial pause is structured as a palimpsest³⁵ of realities, which is, according to Gaylard (2005:121), a set of trans-historically mapped realities. By mapping these realities as interconnected, new images of an imagined future can occur. These realities are occurring simultaneously, which means that time is imaginatively dethroned from its homogenous structure. This allows the onlooker to dig into various realities of their own accord.

2.9. Landscape Theatre

I am making use of the texts *Playing with Theory in Theatre Practice* (2012), written by Alrutz, Listengarten and Van Duyn Wood, in which Elinor Fuchs and Una Chaudhuri are quoted on Landscape Theatre, and *Theatre Noise: The Sound of Performance*, edited by Kendrick and Roessner (2011) (and written by Dr Lynne Kendrick, in order to create a structure from which Landscape Theatre can be studied). Elinor Fuchs is an award-winning playwright and theatre critic, while Una Chaudhuri is a collegiate professor and a professor of English and Drama. Their work is useful in understanding how the new playtext was constructed according to the complex paradigm of Landscape Theatre. According to Fuchs and Chaudhuri (2002), quoted

³⁴ The “Angel of History” is derived from Benjamin’s description of Paul Klee’s 1920 monochrome painting *Angelus Novus*, on which I elaborate in the section of the Angel.

³⁵ I write of a palimpsest as a map consisting of maps, thus interconnecting various images as being structured according to each other’s meanings.

in Alrutz, Listengarten³⁶ and Van Duyn Wood³⁷ (2012:202), the landscape, as a paradigm within theatre, refers to the creation of post-temporal perspectives on sensory and imagined images through the creation of a performance as an environment.

Landscape Theatre, as a dramatic concept, proposes that understanding the dramatic world as a landscape is necessary for understanding modern theatre's spatialised aesthetic³⁸. It is also necessary for understanding how modern theatre engages with various cultural meanings of place and space. Fuchs and Chaudhuri (2002), quoted in Alrutz, Listengarten and Van Duyn Wood (2012:202), states that the theatrical performance is being situated as a landscape containing various elements that produce webs of associations. The performance in itself thus becomes a constellation of images. This landscape becomes redefined in Alrutz, Listengarten and Van Duyn Wood (2012:201), as multiple landscapes. Various spaces, being real images, are situated into one setting, in order to produce new understandings of its ideological meanings through its relations to one another.

Here the term "landscape" is thus defined as the organisation of ideas, visual images, and sounds. The landscape becomes the set of images through which a theatrical play is experienced and understood. The landscape is a map of all the theatrical elements that convey meaning to the audience, and can thus be viewed as a cluster of Denkbilder.

Space, however, refers to the physical location on which the landscape is presented. The space in which the theatrical play takes place turns the landscape of Denkbilder into a physical landscape of ideas, visual images and sound. The space may either be a theatre building or, in this case, a set location that speaks to the elements of the landscape.

The actor's role in the landscape is to become a symbol. The actor's performance is complexly constructed to convey a map of meaning. This refers to theatre semiotics. Theatre semiotics is the means through which theatre conveys meaning (Elam, 2002:[s.p.]). The actor's body is thus used as a tool through which the meaning of the text is communicated. The actor's body becomes a map of semiotics. The actor must work with the landscape in order to communicate a world to the audience member.

³⁶ Dr Megan Alrutz heads the Drama and Theatre for Youth and Communities area, and is a member of the UTeach Theatre Faculty in the Department of Theatre and Dance, and Julia Listengarten is a theatre artist and scholar.

³⁷ M Van Duyn Wood is an author of theatre books.

³⁸ This notion of a multiple structured aesthetic can be compared to the use of *mise-en-scène* in modern films: Various elements are included in one shot to allow the onlooker to choose what he/she wants to focus on.

Dr Lynne Kendrick is a Senior Lecturer in New Theatre Practices at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London, who specialises in ways of making contemporary theatre and performance. Kendrick's work is useful, as it helps to advance my understanding on Landscape Theatre. According to Kendrick and Roessner (2011:80), "in this theatre of sound, self, body and landscape are shaped and enmeshed through voicing and listening to bodies in motion." The play, being a landscape, consists mainly of bodies as webs of associations. The actions of the actor's body are the means through which one thoroughly engages with the landscape that the play represents. This would mean that the actor's body is the activation of the landscape as a site, by expressing the self as a landscape within its own right. The landscape, as the world of the play, is dynamically expressed through the actor's body's relation to the landscape. The landscape is expressed through a subjective association to what the landscape presents.

The theoretical framework with which I am working thus consists of postcolonialism, Landscape Theatre, Magic Realism, Historical Materialism, and Queer Theory. Queerness is interrogated as the means through which one becomes a Historical Materialist – thus, how one becomes aware of how past histories shape the present through becoming reflective. Postcolonialism describes the present, and how colonialism as past narratives shape the present. (One becomes aware of how colonialism shapes the present through becoming a Historical Materialist.) Landscape Theatre is the paradigm in which past and present realities relate in the new playtext through a web of associations. Finally, Magic Realism is the theatrical means through which one imagines new futures, by reflecting on fragments of the past and present through being defamiliarised from what one considers to be real.

2.10. The Actor's Body as Denkbild

In a move towards concluding the Literature Review, I am now furthering the research on the actor's body as a thought-image belonging to a constellation, and thus also a landscape that is part of a bigger landscape. The actor's body becomes an archive from which a performance is created. I studied *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, written by Taylor (2003) in order to obtain notions on how the body can create a performance through structured knowledge and lived experience.

Diana Taylor is a professor of Performance Studies. Taylor's work is useful in understanding how the notion of an archive can be utilised in order to create a theatrical performance. The archive, according to Taylor (2003:19), consists of documents, maps, literary texts, letters, physical remains and any form of media through which one records history. From this archive, one can draw a repertoire of histories that will be voiced. One is thus producing a constellation of narratives that speak to one another. One is rewriting one's reality through a performance that draws from an understanding of one's histories. I argue that the body is also an archive through which one records history. The body is traced with lived experiences and memories, which can be used to create narratives in reaction to any images with which one is presented. The narratives with which the South African actor's body is imprinted, and from which I drew to create the new playtext, are the modern progressive and alternatively queer, marginalised histories of the landscape. South African individuals are not necessarily influenced by either modern progressive histories or queer histories, but are placed on a spectrum of how much they have been able to progress themselves, and how much they have been marginalised.

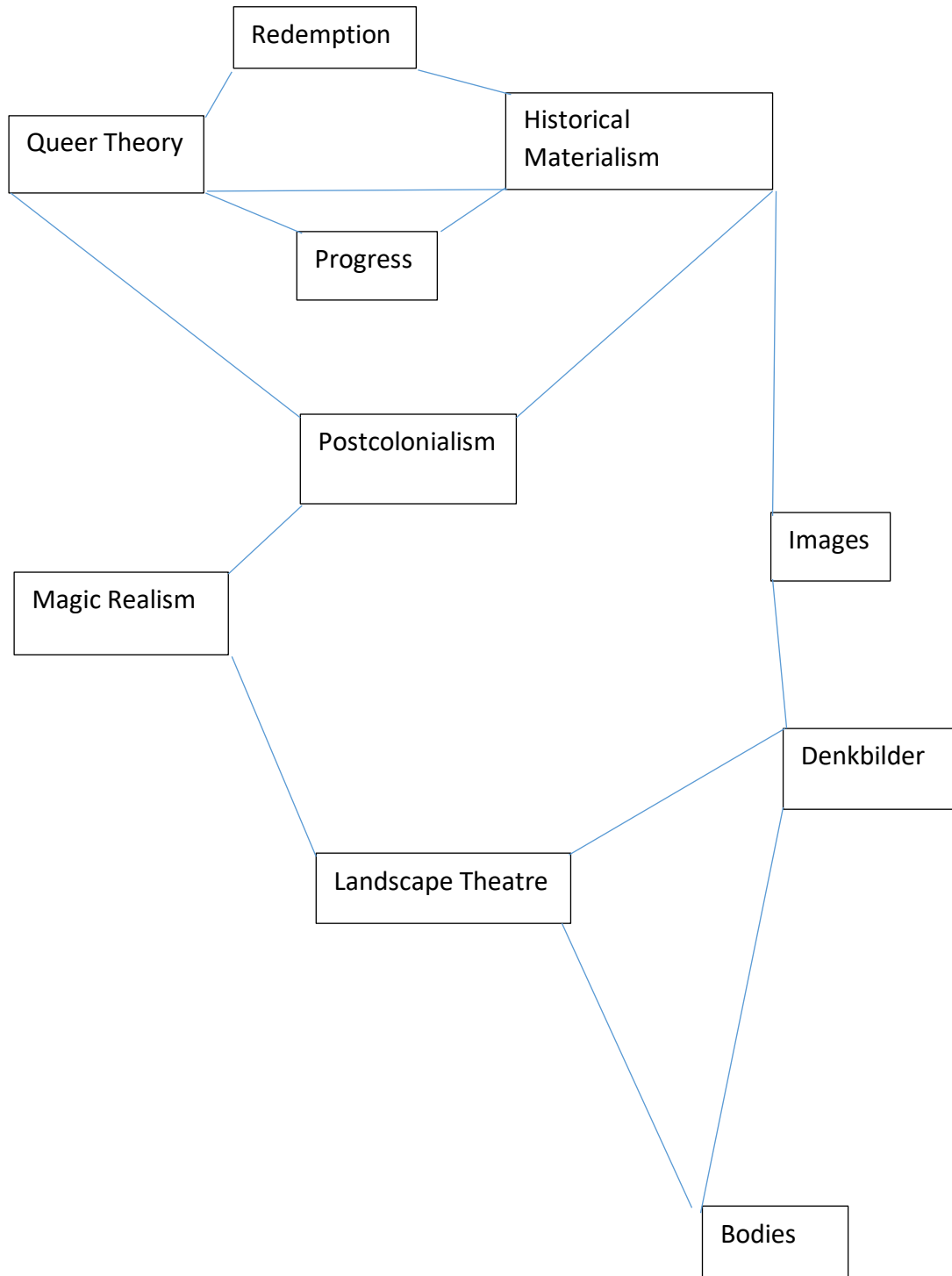
2.11. Understanding Kushner's (1991, 1993) Texts: James Fisher

The theatrical text can also be defined as an archive of histories. Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), as an archive of marginalised, queer realities and histories, as well as modern progressive realities and histories, are studied through Fisher's³⁹ text *The Theatre of Tony Kushner: Living Past Hope* (2002). Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) are structured as a political drama that houses conversations between the political, the sexual, the social and the personal (Fisher, 2002:59). Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), according to Fisher (2002:59), speak to conventional phenomena, such as religious belief, political polarity, homosexuality, the HIV and AIDS epidemic, and the multi-cultural and ever-shifting democratic society.

³⁹ James Fisher is a professor and Head of the Department of Theatre, at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

According to Fisher (2002:55), these phenomena are expressed within relations between material and spiritual issues, which work as the realisation of past, present and future realities. Fictional and non-fictional American past realities in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) are portrayed through angels, religious history, ghosts, and conversations on racial histories. The future of the American landscape in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), is portrayed as holding the possibility of either an apocalypse or a redemptive state of the personal. The American present in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) is structured as multiple events housing historical, political and interpersonal fragments that speak to one another.

2.12. Diagram of Theory Involved



2.13. Moving Forward

In this chapter, I discussed the various theories and literature tools involved, through which the new playtext was constructed. I explained on how all of these theories are intertwined in my research. I marry Historical Materialism and Queer Theory in my attempt to voice marginalised narratives as alternative narratives in order to evoke change. The change evoked should shape the audience member's perspective of a still-evolving postcolonial landscape. I used the tools belonging to Magic Realism as a theatrical style, and Landscape Theatre as a constructing mechanism. These tools were utilised in order to merge different narratives belonging to a marginalised landscape.

In the following chapter, I will elaborate on the history of the research, as well as discuss the construct of the primary methodologies through which the new playtext was created. I will also start to introduce the characters of the playtext, as these became the central focus of the theatrical landscape.

Chapter 3: The New Work

In Chapter One I laid out the introductory foundation and objectives of the work which forms part of **Phase 1**. In Chapter Two I introduced the theory on which the research is based. In this chapter, I am discussing the history of laying a theoretical foundation in 2014, and how I mean to implement a primary methodology in creating the work. I am introducing two main characters, the narrators, as well as giving oversight of all the characters in *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016). In this chapter, I am thus completing **Phase 1**.

3.1. History of the Work

The research was already initiated in 2014 through the Honours Thesis *Angels in Africa* (Vermeulen, 2014), which was the start of a theoretical base for reimagining Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993). *Angels in Africa* (Vermeulen, 2014) focused on notions of cross-narration (narratives occurring over different times and spaces), as well as themes of historical awareness, deviated identities that steer and narrate histories, queer sexualities, political unrest, and the epidemic of HIV and AIDS. The new research focusses on the juxtaposing of queer, marginalised realities and histories with capitalistically progressive histories and realities, in order for the possibility of new realities to be produced. It was imagined that, through the possibility of new realities, the queer South African characters could remake and redeem themselves on a post-apartheid dystopian South African landscape.

I still made use of *Angels in Africa's* (Vermeulen, 2014) theoretical base, especially in regards to the use of thought images as a methodology for reimagination, and the use of two female figures as narrators of the new theatrical text. *Angels in Africa* (Vermeulen, 2014) aimed to produce imaginary conversations between two characters that would be central to the new theatrical playtext. These two characters are Harper, as a narrator of Kushner's text (1991, 1993), and Patience, as a narrator of South Africa's marginalised narratives. I will now introduce the two narrators according to the way they were constructed theoretically in *Angels in Africa* (Vermeulen, 2014).

3.1.1. The Two Narrators

3.1.1.1 *Patience*

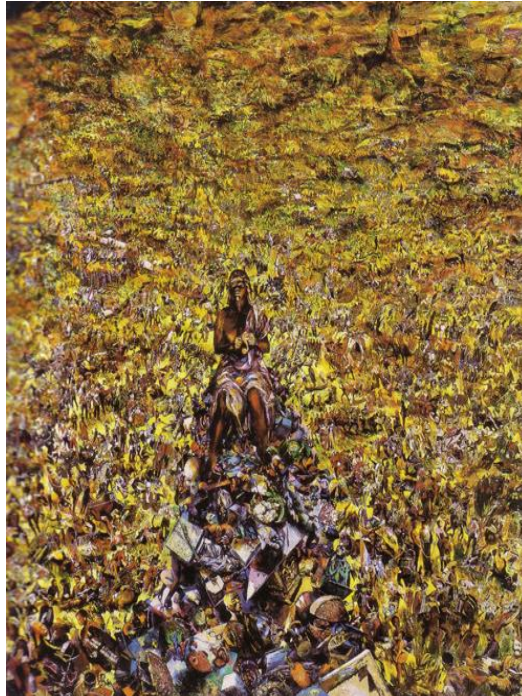


Figure 2: Penny Siopis, *Patience on a Monument: A History Painting*. 1988

Oil Paint and Collage, 200 x 180 cm

William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley

(Online Image: NLA Design and Visual Arts)

Patience, a painted figure, is derived from the South African visual artist Penny Siopis' painting *Patience on a Monument: A History Painting* (1988, Figure 2). Siopis (1988, Figure 2), made use of pastiched images from actual South African historical textbooks in order to portray the wars and events that have historically shaped the current South African landscape. Siopis (1988, Figure 2) then painted a monument of artefacts with a black female figure, assumed to be Patience, sitting at the top, staring into the gaze of the onlooker. Patience is constructed in contrast to the events that are occurring around her, and she is thus removed from the progression of the landscape.

In connection to the research, I imagine Patience to be a Historical Materialist. Patience does not participate in the historical locomotion that is depicted by the events surrounding her.

Patience has redeemed the artefacts that seem obsolete in relation to the progression of the landscape. She has made a monument for herself, which I refer to as “Patience’s Monument”. In *Angels in Africa* (Vermeulen, 2014), I drew meaning from this monument as being constructed out of the queer, marginalised narratives of the South African landscape. The artefacts are thus symbols for these narratives.

When I wrote *Angels in Africa* (Vermeulen, 2014), I perceived Patience as an angel. I drew a comparison between the Angel depicted in Klee (1920, Figure 1), and Patience in Siopis’ work (1988, Figure 2). Both figures are staring at the onlooker as if to request assistance. However, the Angel depicted in Klee (1920, Figure 1), is distorted and its wings are caught in the storm of progress. The Angel desires to return to the historical narratives it sees, in order to redeem these narratives and to make meaning from the present. Patience is not staring back at her historical narratives. She has already redeemed these narratives from the ruins and is looking into the future in order to build new narratives through her artefacts (narratives). However, these narratives have not been voiced, as Patience is literally a still image. It was my aim to theatricalise Patience dynamically in order for a character to be constructed that will voice her narratives. In her likeness to *Angelus Novus* (Klee, 1920, Figure 1), Patience is thus the South African depiction of the “Angel of History”.

I constructed Patience as a character in order to reimagine the Angel figure in Kushner (1991, 1993). Both of these characters subscribe to the definition of a Historical Materialist. Kushner’s (1991, 1993) Angel is a radical Historical Materialist, arguing that progress must cease indefinitely. Patience is constructed to have removed herself from homogenous, empty progression in order to retrieve the images of the past. Although the theme of progress was interwoven into Patience’s text in the new theatrical playtext, Patience does not argue against progression but argues for a different kind of progression. She wants to create a reality free from oppression where all groups of modern progressive histories will be visible.

Patience, as a character, was thus the South African angel in the new theatrical playtext, and her monument was reimaged into being the fictional South African landscape. The character narrating Kushner’s texts (1991, 1993), Harper, is an interruption on Patience’s Monument/landscape. This interruption is constructed as the action that sets the playtext into motion. Harper, who is argued in *Angels in Africa* (Vermeulen, 2014) to be a literary device that moves Kushner’s (1991, 1993) plot forward, desires to voice her narratives as a central character in order to be redeemed. Harper is constructed to desire a landscape different from the conservative, Reaganite Republican landscape in which she found herself in Kushner’s

texts (1991, 1993); there is also no opportunity for Harper to voice her narratives in Trump's conservative, Republican America.

The notion is that Harper finds the opportunity to voice her narratives on the post-reconciliation South African landscape, where individuals are encouraged to reconsider their identities. Harper and Patience then conversed according to the themes depicted in Kushner (1991, 1993). These themes pertain to both Harper's narratives, and the narratives imagined to be part of Patience's Monument. Harper initiated the conversation on the themes through voicing her heartbreak. However, Patience steers the conversation into a different direction through introducing the different themes that Harper can also relate to. Patience was constructed to redeem her monument's narratives in conversation with Harper, as well as to lead Harper to voice her narratives in order to be redeemed.

3.1.1.2. Harper

Harper Pitt, as a character from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), embodies a queer lifestyle by failing the standards of being a normative, American Mormon housewife. I have further constructed Harper to be a queer interruption on Patience's Monument/landscape. She voices the images that depict her as queer in conversation with Patience.

Harper's hallucinations consist of the presentation of multiple realities. These hallucinations of multiple realities, according to Savran (1995:32), play a key role in unmasking the central themes of Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993). This renders her as the key queer choice for narrating Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993). I also chose Harper Pitt because her mental deviations – the hallucinations and losing touch with reality – depict her as queer. These deviations derail her from the course of being the perfect Mormon, American wife.

Harper was thus constructed as the queer prophet with whom the new angel (Patience) will converse in order to express her own queer narratives. Harper's own objective was to express herself through her memories on Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) as well as memories that I imagined that go beyond Kushner's texts. This provides a means through which Kushner's themes will be expressed, as well as a means to redeem Harper as a central figure, and not just a character driving the plot forward through her queerness and her heartbreak.

In the new theatrical text, Patience and other characters were constructed to introduce themes on being female and on youth. This encouraged Harper to look passed her identity

as Joe's wife and to redeem the narratives that construct her as a queer, mentally ill female. Harper and Patience's conversations were thus based within queer realities. Their relationship was based within the objective of voicing themselves and redeeming themselves and those involved in their narratives.

3.1.2. Magic Realism

The notion of activating Patience's Monument as a new theatrical text required a complex, visually rich style of theatricalisation. It was proposed that the monument had to be activated as a Magic Realist theatrical text. Patience and Harper have become entities that converse in a theatrical setting, which both consists of imaginary elements and elements perpetuating multiple realities. These elements became related through Harper and Patience's conversations, thus blurring the borders between the real and the imagined. The real was expressed through imagined circumstances based on research done on the fictional and non-fictional narratives belonging to the South African landscape, as well as documented reactions from the lived experiences of the actors involved. The real also became the foundations for imagining stories.

The boundaries between the imagined and the real were blurred through making use of fragments of fictional and non-fictional narratives, and actual responses from the performers to these fragments. New meaning surfaced through the structure of the imagined conversations. This occurred as a play between imagined narratives that came from the conversations between the actors playing the narrators, the commentary in the text, non-verbal narratives, monologues on redemption, and the actual ways in which the devising performers related to the themes.

These mapped realities were perpetuated as fragments through Patience's Monument of various narratives. Such a Magic Realist structure, according to Zamora (1997:142), is diffused, consisting of multiple fragments and perceptions, which are presented as multiple voices suggesting coexisting historical relations. The intention of the research was therefore to produce such a synchronised structure, which, as stated in Zamora (1997:134), produces the notion of contradictory events happening simultaneously.

These narratives occurred simultaneously in the theatrical text through the non-verbal narratives, commentary through the new playtext, as well as through Harper and Patience's

conversations with one another. These conversations did not flow from one subject to another, but were steered through the actions of the bodies, Harper and Patience's narratives and the commentary in the text. The text thus produced a framework of fragmented logic.

By consciously blurring the borders between fiction and history in the Magic Realist text, according to Zamora (1997:48), fiction is treated as historically correct, while history is treated as fiction. Fragmented logic leads to a fragmented text that blurs the borders between the real and the magical, between fiction and history. The real is treated as fantastic, while the fantastic is treated as the real.

This led to the choice of having Patience's artefacts included both as fictional and historical narratives, represented as fragments through which Harper communicated her own memories. These artefacts, being fragments, were juxtaposed in order to create new narratives. The notion of placing the real in an assemblage with the imagined was produced through a palimpsest of fragmented narratives. These narratives reported on the various realities being presently and historically active in the landscape. These fragments were assembled through Harper's and Patience's conversations, which means that the reporting on events occurred through the actors' perspectives.

3.1.3. The Three Methodologies

The notions on Denkbilder, Magic Realism, and Landscape Theatre gave me three methodologies through which the new theatrical play was devised and constructed. The "Angel of History" was the central figure of the newly imagined theatrical text. The new theatrical text was based on the embodiment of an "Angel of History" through various elements, including bodies, narrators, and figures. This "Angel" became a theatrical construction in the new work, which was centred on the idea of movement occurring within a space of standing still, in order to allow for new images and ideas to emerge. The new playtext, *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016), consisted of two narrators, six bodies, and three secondary angels.

The first method for constructing an "Angel of History" on a South African landscape was imagined to occur through the performances of selected bodies on the theatrical site. These bodies were selected according to race, sexuality, gender and experience with mental illness. The selected performers were given theme-based stimuli from Kushner's dramatic texts

(1991, 1993), as well as texts depicting South Africa's marginalised histories⁴⁰. They were instructed to create corporeal narratives, as well as monologues. The actors thus reacted to the stimuli by writing monologues on their characters' attempts towards redemption. The monologues were the means through which the characters voiced their realities. The actors also responded to the stimuli by non-verbally constructing their own narratives making use of their bodies as archives of knowledge – as referred to in Taylor (2003:19) and by myself.

Embodied expression has participated and will probably continue to participate in the transmission of social knowledge, memory, and identity pre- and post-writing.

Taylor (2003:16)

Although an eccentric definition of performance, the research is based on this definition. It plays within a field of conveying conversations between theory and praxis, as well as in a reaction between fragments of written knowledge and lived experience. This means that performance is based within the field of theory, written knowledge and lived experience, as much as the thesis is based within the field of theory-driven research and a reflection on praxis.

The actor's body thus produced knowledge of the modern progressive and alternatively marginalised histories that has affected it, by being introduced to certain themes and images. The actor's body immediately reacted according to how it has been programmed (through experience) to react. Fragments of the South African landscape were thus represented through the reaction of certain bodies, which in turn informed the non-fictional and fictional landscape of its own historical definitions. South Africa's fictional and non-fictional histories, in conversation with the themes in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), were embodied through these performers and turned into non-verbal narratives and verbal monologues.

To embody history is to corporeally link the past to one's own personal reality, in order to dissect one's reality according to past images. One relates to past narratives by recognising oneself in these narratives. One may therefore deduce how one's daily embodiment of one's own reality is expressed in correlation with past narratives. One consciously expresses the embodiment of the self in relation to past narratives, in order to corporeally narrate the events that have constructed current realities. This methodology produced the non-verbal narratives and redemptive monologues that six actors constructed. Through this methodology, the

⁴⁰ I selected these South African narratives according to their themes, being race, sexuality, gender, HIV/AIDS, mental health, and redemption.

actors linked their personal realities and lived experiences to researched stimuli. This stimuli relates to the marginalised, queer histories, as well as modern progressive histories of the South African landscape. I defined these actors' characters as writers, as the characters were constructed to retrieve lost images, narrate these images, and then to draw inspiration from these narratives to write in their redemptive passage.

The second method for reimagining Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) occurred through conversations between two actors portraying the narrators. These two actors were selected according to their own lived experiences and attitudes towards being of a certain race (in this case, black and white); towards the scope of sexualities in the South African landscape; towards the HIV and AIDS epidemic; towards their own, female genders, and towards the experiences of having a mental illness. Conversation became a key methodology, as one is constantly drawing from one's own repertoire of thoughts, ideologies and lived experience in order to produce knowledge. Harper's and Patience's text was structured as conversations, which is also the reason for using conversation between the two actors playing Harper and Patience as a methodology. This was how the "Angel of History" was vocally embodied: one of the narrators embodied the role of an Angel, who vocally narrated on the histories the bodies were expressing, and the other narrator conversed with her in order to hear her stories.

The third methodology for expressing narratives on Kushner's (1991, 1993) themes was through the commentary of three additional angels. These angels became onlookers. They linked the non-verbal narratives of the bodies, as well as the vocal narratives of the two narrators, through direct commentary on the themes and marginalised narratives that were to be dissected. The selected actors presenting the angels were interviewed in order to draw text from their ideologies and perspectives on the themes and subject matter drawn from the "Progress-Queer Constellation". The information given was then incorporated into commentary text.

3.1.4. "Performed Denkbilder"

Activating Patience's Monument through corporeal reaction is situated in the research, through the use of "Performed Denkbilder", or Performed Thought-Images.

This image is defined in Gaylard (2005:132) as the symbol that binds the real world to the unknown. The image does not always speak as something, but as itself, portraying multiple meanings that are relative to other images (Gaylard 2005:132). Imagery, according to Gaylard (2005:134), reflects the unconscious of the creator, as well as the desire of the creator. This imagery is never complete, but suggestive; yet, the images are charged with meaning, especially in regards to the historical and the psychological (Gaylard, 2005:135).

Images, as properties of writing, ideas, events, and any crystallised notion that evokes more thoughts, are thus produced through a constellation of dialectical resemblances. As written on previously, Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) are reproduced into a constellation of images that correspond to images that occur on the non-fictional and fictional South African landscape: the "Progress-Queer Constellation".

The "Progress-Queer Constellation" was initially defined as a theoretical constellation, which consists of writings, ideas, characters, events, and literal images that speak to notions of queerness and capitalistic progression. To theatricalise this constellation was to reproduce its images as performed images. This is where a platform was allowed for "Performed Denkbilder" to become part of the "Progress-Queer Constellation". "Performed Denkbilder" is defined as ideas, writings, characters, events and other images being expressed through the dynamic performances of bodies.

According to Zamora (1997:143), these images within a constellation, or events as texts, can be presented through auditory signs or visual images. This produces the notion that meaning is not merely produced through the spoken word. The second objective of utilising the concept "Performed Denkbilder" is thus an attempt to find a new language through which to narrate a queer landscape consisting of illnesses, various sexualities, various races, and various genders. This language is created through using the whole body as an archive of images, and as a web of associations.

3.1.5. The "Reproductive-Reflexive-Redemptive" Triad

The constructing of the narratives was placed second within the process of a "Reproductive-Reflexive-Redemptive" Triad, as described in Taub (2009:266). This spoke to the notion of situating Harper and Patience's conversations in a space where bodies were actively rewriting themselves. The Triad is defined as plates of reproduction, through which new

knowledges are constantly reproduced in the real, in order to sculpt these images into real images.

To reproduce, according to Taub (2009:266), is to remake and to replicate from an original form. As stated in Taub (2009:266), the notion is to move back and forth between the narratives already produced, and the narratives one is producing. As one reproduces a narrative in relation to different narratives, the original meanings of the narratives are redeemed (Taub, 2009:266).

The first act of reproduction occurred as the actor playing Harper in the new playtext re-narrates Harper's imagined memories from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993). The narratives imagined to belong to Harper were redeemed, as it is not told from the perspective of a queer Jewish male, but from the subjective female perspective of the actor presenting Harper. By redemption, it is thus meant that she is voicing herself. Harper's narratives were reproduced through the voice of the dramaturg within the structure, as well as the empathetic voice of the actor within the content.

An example of one of Harper's imagined memories, where she is referring to Joe Pitt in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), would be:

Harper: Although he realises the hypocrisy of it all. He couldn't escape his desires.
But when he did escape to them, he felt freedom.

Patience makes an opening hand gesture before her crotch in order to symbolise sexuality.

Patience: So it was worth it.

Harper: The irony he realised was that his sleep was more peaceful after such sinful acts, than it would have been in his wife's arms.

Patience: And so he chose not to stop. He led a hard life. He was forced into a world where sexuality meant nothing more than power. But he freed himself from that by becoming his own agent. He freed himself from the past that was raping him.

Harper: And he freed himself from me.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

The second act of reproduction occurred through the actors performing as “Performed Denkbilder”. Fragments of narratives were reproduced as corporeal narratives through a cognitive and subconscious reflection on the stimuli with which the bodies were presented. The fragments of the narratives being reproduced included Kushner’s (1991, 1993) narratives, as well as postcolonial narratives of the South African landscape. Kushner’s texts, as well as my understanding as dramaturg of the South African landscape, was thus reproduced through the insights and lived experiences of the actors engaging with the stimuli (the images from this chapter as already discussed) that the dramaturg gave the cast to react to.

Reproduction is also a means of reflecting, as the reproductive function, stated in Taub (2009:267), suggests constant states of recycling and repetition. Reflexivity, as a research mode, is based on notions of critical and explicit reconsideration (Taub, 2009:267). Reflection, according to Taub (2009:267), occurs as two projects correspond to one another across a measured distance. The two projects involved in this case were the actions of actors remaking their own stories and the conversations between Harper and Patience. The non-verbal narratives that the actors produced were placed throughout the theatrical text as a means of echoing Patience’s and Harper’s conversations. These conversations were also then a means to verbally reflect on the writers’ non-verbal narratives. The writers’ and narrators’ narratives were structured in such a way as to reflect on one another, and sometimes, to contradict one another in order to highlight the meanings of the narratives:

Harper: You can choose to stay stuck, to avoid the change, or you can change yourself, and keep moving forward. It’s survival of the fittest. Adapt or die... and she was too strong to die.

Mother finds her child’s toy. She tells the story with her body. She gives two steps forward, holding the toy while smiling, she then gives a big twirl while holding the toy in the air. She crouches inwards with the toy, after which she throws the toy into the air twice. She runs in a circle with the toy, suddenly stops, runs backwards, bends backwards with the toy in the air, then slowly she places the toy down, after which she just walks away.

Patience: Elizabeth redeems herself in the laughter of her son as he plays at the river. The laughter bounces across the walls of her house and mind, banishing all the demons that lay in wait in the dark. She excels in the

laughter wrapping it around herself like a child's blanket protecting her from the boogeyman in her life. She runs to her son to join in his laughter in his life. In the knowledge that he is a shield to keep the cold dark away.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

According to Taub (2009:267), it is through being reflexive on the work that the meanings embedded within the experiences are surfaced and thus redeemed. By constantly reflecting on and reproducing a work, one redeems a body of knowledges that surface through the diffusion of theories (Taub, 2009:268). These theories, according to Taub (2009:268), are reproduced in the work through practicality, and reflected on through experience and discussion. Thus, the notion was to constantly reproduce and reflect on the "Progress Queer Constellation" through practical inquiry and a discussion of the experiences being evoked. These discussions influenced the approach towards the newer images produced in the theatrical text, which were in turn initiated through the discoveries that occurred through a practical inquiry of this chapter's images (as discussed). The notion of redemption came through how the actors being writers reflected on their characters through their monologues. Redemption was thus approached through a means of voicing their characters' narratives. The characters Harper and Patience were redeemed through the structuring of the text, as well as through their reactions on the commentary of the secondary angels. The text was structured in such a way as to allow Harper and Patience to be voiced, and for the actors to discover the images that historically construct their characters. The actors were given new insights on their characters through the text of the secondary angels, as well as through how their characters respond to their comments:

Angelika: Progress is an interesting concept. You're progressing, but in limits. For society to progress would mean that you should place more detail on the deviancies of yourself. You will always look after that. And have it under control.

Il, Femm, Hanekom, Writer and Mother clench their fists to their forehead and their other hands grab their stomachs, in order to signify mental illness.

Child repeats the story of her ghost.

Element: big fire. Anger much

Harper: It's our deviancies that we can't control. Being ill. Ill of the body and ill of the mind. Being a child. Being treated like a child. Being this thing called

woman. I carry my cunt as if it's a death sentence. And the world keeps on spinning and no one hears you scream to stop, just for a while, stop and listen.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

The writers constantly reflected on the interactions between body, space, and artefacts. The reflections produced interactions between the cast, by finding queer similarities and historical relations between their characters and themselves. The body was reflected on as a racial site, as a cultural site, as a sexual site, and as a gendered site, in order for the actors to find empathy with their characters. These sites informed the actors' interactions with the literal artefacts as well as the fragments from written narratives. These sites were reflectively voiced through monologues, as the non-verbal journey with which each actor engaged was verbally expressed.

The "Angel of History", as a collective structure, was thus remade into a theatrical event through modes of reproduction, reflection, and redemption. The "Angel" in itself became a triad. The "Angel", as the collective of writers, attempted to reproduce and re-voice histories by retrieving their fragments from the ruins – these fragments being represented by artefacts. These fragments were reflected on through non-verbal response and emotive, empathetic energy.

Historical images – and in this case, specific historical images on identity such as race, sexuality, gender and illness – were finally redeemed through action occurring through a theatrical standstill. In this standstill, Patience as the "Angel" freed herself from the progressive storm in order to retrieve past images. To retrieve past images, according to Benjamin (1968:262), is to "awaken the dead". Patience remade herself from being a static bystander to an entity that actively engages with the storm, in order to bring it to a standstill. By engaging with the storm, Patience gained a voice, and thus became a dynamic entity that actively redirected historical narratives.

3.2. Concluding Phase 1

I have now completed **Phase 1** of the research in laying out a theoretical foundation, as well as a brief overview of how the new work was created. In the following chapter, I am moving into **Phase 2**, in which I will interrogate in greater detail the images out of which the new work

was created. I will thus be writing on the pretext, while also elaborating on my methodology. The following chapter is a journal on how the methodologies discussed in Chapters Three and Four were implemented in the creation of the new work, as well as on how the pretext was responded to and elaborated on.

Chapter 4: The Pretext

4.1. Guiding Process

The focus of the research now shifts from theoretical arguments regarding postcolonialism, Historical Materialism, queerness and redemption discussed in Chapter Two, and the laying out of the new work in Chapter Three, to the assembling of narrative fragments into a theatrical text. I am creating a pretext from which the new work was created, which is viewed as a constellation of images. This constellation of images is named the “Progress-Queer Constellation”. In this chapter, I am thus completing **Phase 2**. In the next chapter, Chapter Five, I am creating the journal of how the images in this pretext were implemented in order to create a new text, namely *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016). This chapter is conceptual, while the following chapter is reflective on praxis.

In this chapter, I write on the construction of the characters by furthering notions on rhizomatic constructions of identity. I am defining the fictional landscape as Patience’s Monument and as a futuristic South African landfill. I am also writing on the use of various South African postcolonial narratives utilised in the narrative and character construction. This chapter mainly consists of a study of Patience’s Monument as a memorial site, a breakdown of the characters, how their stories became text, and criteria of what was expected of the actors.

Through engaging with the stimuli in this pretext, the actors were encouraged to embody Denkbilder themselves, or in the sense of the word, act as “Performed Denkbilder”. It was through engaging with the images-as-stimuli in this chapter⁴¹ that new images were produced, these being the products of the actors’ relations to the images presented in this chapter. This chapter provides the scope through which the actors had to engage with the world of making the theatrical monument.

⁴¹ The actors were introduced to the images-as-stimuli through soft copies of various fragments of this chapter, as well as through instructions during the workshop process.

4.1.1. Monuments as Memorials: An Archive of Memories, Remembered

'Placed', 'displaced', and 'placeless' memorials create social spaces in which spectators embody and enact memory.

Laurie Beth Clark in Hill and Paris (ed. 2006:130).

A monument, by my definition, is either a physical or metaphysical entity that commemorates cultural, social and national memories of significance. In the case of Patience's Monument, it is a cultural, social and national entity that commemorates the queer histories of the landscape. Patience's Monument – both in Siopis' work (1988, Figure 2), and in the theatrical text – commemorated the histories that are not necessarily written in factual history textbooks. The monument in Siopis' work (1988, Figure 2) commemorated ideas around defining the self as South African, amidst historical shifts post-1994, in what it means to be a South African.

The monument was related to the diorama scene, as well as the scene in heaven, in Kushner's dramatic text (1993). Heaven is depicted in Kushner (1993) as a memorial of San Francisco after a historical fire took place. The space speaks to desolation and a sense of aftermath, of holding together fragments of what has been in a space that depicts timelessness, or eternity. It is one of the three occasions in which Kushner's Harper and Prior meet, binding them in a timeless setting, depicting a prophetic bond between the two characters as queer prophets.

Heaven, as a desolated space, was presented in my theatrical text as a futuristic South African landfill. The landfill was structured to speak to a sense of aftermath through the scattering of old artefacts and was intended to depict a timeless time in which time was brought to a halt. My Harper became the queer prophet of this desolated space, and, as in the case of Kushner's Prior, was placed in conversation with an angel.

The diorama scene is also one of the three occasions in which Kushner's Prior and Harper meet. However, the focus here is on the relation between Kushner's Harper as a woman, and the female diorama dummy, who speaks to Harper in what one assumes is her imagination. The diorama is a memorial site commemorating Mormon American history. It speaks of the immigration of the Mormon families into new, unknown territory, going merely on a prophecy of a man named Joseph. The scene is prophetic of the notion of my Harper's own travels to

a space unknown to her, being the South African landscape. Here she met a new memorial site, which was Patience's Monument of queer narratives.

As in the instance of Kushner's diorama scene, the female character placed within the memorial site is initially quiet, until my Harper activates the female to speak. In the case of the new theatrical text, Harper activated Patience into voicing herself and into engaging in conversation with Harper on notions of change. During the performance of *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016), more bodies, along with Patience, became activated into voicing themselves and travelling as themselves in the space that was the monument. They commenced on this journey until they found the gap throughout the conversations to through their monologues – voice their own stories on change.

The body, according to Hill and Paris (eds. 2006:130), placed within a memorial space, experiences its own relations to histories within the given space. The actors, now characters, related to the artefacts in Patience's Monument. They approached the fictional landscape constructed as a monument in the new play as a memorial site of their own memories. The characters gathered the fragments that commemorate a timeless South African landscape, in order to make sense of their own memories, to have a means to express their own memories as narratives.

4.1.2. A New Work

I became the dramaturg, who guided the process through which the actors had to rework an assemblage of images into a script. I, as dramaturg, provided the actors with images from this chapter. These were written images on characters, scripted images, such as inserts from articles discussed, themes of identity that were discussed and corporeally explored during the workshop process, and the actual artefacts derived from the postcolonial South African narratives. These actual artefacts mainly consisted of books, bottles, dolls, balls, jackets and boots. The actors corporeally and verbally engaged with these artefacts and images, by making use of their imagination in order to produce a non-verbal response to the handling of the artefacts. They told new stories based on these images. These images became the themes of various discussions and interviews. I, as dramaturg, documented the new images produced by the actors through the workshop process discussed in detail later in this chapter

and assembled these images – corporeal images and script – in order to produce a new theatrical text.

I made use of characters from Kushner’s dramatic texts (1991, 1993), as well as postcolonial South African narratives⁴² adhering to the “Progress-Queer Constellation”, and the artefacts used in these texts. These were used as images that constructed the narratives and characters of the new playtext. In order to shape the dialogue, I also made use of scripted images, such as academic articles, as well as images that were used as topics of conversation during the workshop process, hereafter referred to as conversational images, which were constructed out of the themes that structured Kushner’s dramatic texts (1991, 1993), as well as the postcolonial narratives I used that relate to the “Progress-Queer Constellation”. The material I used was chosen according to how it filled the gaps in the new text, as well as how the material spoke to what was being said in the new text.

4.2. Character and Narrative Construction

4.2.1. Dynamic Remaking of a Landscape

And the souls of these departed joined hands, clasped ankles and formed a web, a great net of souls, and the souls were three-atom oxygen molecules, of the stuff of ozone, and the outer rim absorbed them, and was repaired.

(Kushner, 1993:141)

In the new theatrical text, the fictional South African landscape consisted of characters that attempted to voice themselves amongst multiple histories. These characters were interconnected through the theatrical space they shared, in which their actions were aligned towards historical change. They formed part of the fictional landscape, consisting of a palimpsest of histories and fictions. Their bodies were rendered as the product of the histories of the South African landscape – the non-fictional landscape, and a fictional landscape. The non-fictional South African landscape was approached as a place that already holds the potential for its own remaking through historical enquiring and a voicing of its fragments and

⁴² I chose the postcolonial narratives according to research done on the breakdown of these narratives in Gunkel (2011) and Munroe (2012).

images. I saw the possibility of re-assembling these images and fragments into new constellations.

The objective of the new theatrical text was to steer the research towards continuing conversations on identity, the notion of historical causality, and towards an understanding of the potential of the landscape's failures. The notion was thus to proceed towards questions of dynamic remaking, and not merely the inevitable remaking of a landscape as a historical effect. Dynamic remaking of a landscape was framed as a process of interventions. It was also viewed as an attempt to steer historical remaking towards optimal realities, through which identities could be affiliated with freedom.

Thus, the aim in devising the characters and the text was to open up conversations on how the non-fictional and fictional landscape (and its identities) could be optimally remade. The question was on whether it could be done through an understanding of how the landscape has been historically constructed, through colonisation and through an attempt towards postcolonialism.

4.2.2. Reimagining Identity

In Chapter Two I explored Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) notions on identity as a rhizome, and thus as a map of images. In this chapter I am making use of Anton Krueger's (2009) notions as he draws on Deleuze and Guattari regarding the notion of a rhizoid identity. Anton Krueger is a writer and scholar who specialises in theorising new South African performance modalities. I am focussing on how Krueger specifically gives attention to the currently shifting definitions of identity on the South African landscape.

According to Krueger (2009:4), the notion of one's identity in South Africa is no longer perceived as coherent and permanent, but rather incoherent and impermanent. Since 1994, there has been an ideological shift regarding the construction of identities in South Africa⁴³. This ideological shift, according to Krueger (2009:4), has caused a loss of clarity in terms of identifying the self among many South Africans. Whilst a number of South Africans still hold on to an idea of identities established under the apartheid regime, particularly in terms of race, others are striving towards a "free" individual identity.

⁴³ The belief is no longer there that the Christian Nationalist government is the provider of God-given identities to South African individuals.

According to Krueger (2009:4), this striving towards a new identification with “freedom” means that one is not searching for stability anymore, but is rather striving towards instability and friction in structuring one’s identity. Krueger (2009:3) states that South African identities are not viewed as a product of long-held traditions and communal beliefs anymore, but now contemporarily also as a transgression of boundaries.

This would mean that many South Africans are opting to bring about change on the landscape by reconstructing their identities. This notion of bringing about change in the South African landscape was the primary goal of the characterisation of each character present in the new playtext. This notion refers back to Chapter Two, where the objective of the new playtext was explained as bringing about queer realities. These are realities in which time is brought to a halt and change is being imagined in the non-fictional and fictional South African landscape.

I constructed the characters out of multiple images, these adhering to the “Progress-Queer Constellation”, as well as the addition of the lived experiences that the actors subconsciously attribute in producing the narratives and text. In the following section, I will discuss the images that constructed the various characters, starting off with the narrators (Harper and Patience), then the Angels (Angelika, Ill and Femme), and then the writers (Moffie, Writer, Hendrik Hanekom, the Mother, Elizabeth, and Child).

4.2.3. Harper and Patience

The actors playing Harper and Patience constructed their characters according to these definitions: Harper as heterosexual, white and female, and Patience as black and female, with no specific sexuality. However, Patience was also constructed to tell the stories of those who are black, homosexual, female and male. Patience’s stories also consisted of white stories and stories of colour. It was thus problematic to place Patience’s body according to a set of qualifications. She was now constructed to represent an entire landscape, not only through being black and female, but as the guardian of the non-fictional and the fictional landscapes’ marginalised histories.

This affected the perspectives from which Harper and Patience told their stories. Harper and Patience conversed on the realities of being the black female and being the white female. Each body carried its stigmas and its histories, and the idea was to redeem the body from these elements that defined them. Harper’s own sense of rejection and personal loss and

confusion was thus perceived through violence and oppression. Patience became a figure that represented an entire race and an entire sex according to her biological appearance. She also represented an entire cluster of silenced identities according to her placement as the South African Angel on the fictional landscape. This poses the question of whether Harper and Patience can be expressed by their actors as individual beings, or as representatives of their sexuality and race. Throughout a study of the new text, it was found that Harper presents her individuality through her heartbreak and her journey of self-discovery, while Patience became a representation of all the stories she had to narrate.

4.2.3.1. *Patience*

Patience speaks to the “Angel of History”, and foremost is defined as the Angel of South Africa. Zamora (1997:158) defines an angel as a transcultural being. An angel thus represents various cultures through an extended celestial presence. Patience was thus not only produced as a material figure, but also as an imaginative figure. By stating that she is transcultural, one is imagining the possibility that she is able to voice the histories and realities across various cultures. Patience was thus imagined as a cultural shape-shifter.

Patience, as a character, is also read as an image in a Penny Siopis constellation. In an immediate sense to Patience’s space within the constellation, I am focussing on the image of the female in conversation with the landscape. According to Smith (ed. 2005:9), Siopis attempts to put the female back into the landscape, by creating a visual constellation of female subjectivities in psychoanalytical thought⁴⁴. These female subjectivities are visualised in Siopis through the medium of painting.

Patience was thus originally constructed through the perspective of a white, female, South African visual artist. She was now reproduced through the perspective of a white, female, South African dramaturg. It is argued that Patience in these two instances becomes the semiotic through which her creators understand their own fragments. She does not transcend the biopolitics of her black, female body, but represents an understanding of this body through

⁴⁴ The notion of the female coming out of the landscape was explicitly referred to in the text:

Angelika: But wait... the female is coming out of the landscape. The female is no longer part of the landscape, but she has a form, a voice, a history. Is the female white body pure? Is the black body then impure? And it cannot be controlled, like the white body?

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

the perspective of white, South African females. Her only means of subjectivity is conveyed through the narratives that the actor presenting her has constructed. Even these narratives were edited according to the dramaturg, in order for her to be the semiotic means through whom Harper understands herself, as well as the queer histories that relate to herself. *Patience* was thus a queer reproduction of Siopis and myself as the dramaturg, through the understanding of myself as a woman who is white and queer.

Nuttall (2011:289) makes a key entry point into Siopis' work as that of producing scripted bodies, housing histories of emotions being produced on the surface, as well as being depicted as old wounds and future fragments. These scripted bodies, according to Nuttall (2011:289), are closely situated to the psychic and political outlines of South African lives, producing contemporary cultural imaginings. Siopis produces a study on notions of trauma – both of the individual and the collective (Nuttall, 2011:295).

Patience's presence was extended through the actors that were integrating their own monuments (consisting of their stories)⁴⁵ into her monument. She was one of these bodies. By this I imply that the trauma of the individual is constantly in conversation with the trauma of the collective.

The body, according to Nuttall (2011:295), is studied through notions of “self” and “otherness” being depicted as desire and disavowed ness. Such a study of self, according to Nuttall (2005), quoted in Nuttall (2011:297), refers back to the multiple courses within South African art production that political liberation produced – as crises and opportunity in the making of selfhood, producing a return to the body as subject. Siopis, as stated in Nuttall (2005), quoted in Nuttall (2011:297), depicts this experience as producing a new sense of *self* and *otherness*, so as to evoke a space of non-understanding, and to produce a new means of thinking. This focus on the body, according to Nuttall (2011:297), became inscribed through the visual studies of raced and gendered bodies in Siopis' work. The notion was to reproduce this focus on the body through art as a focus on the body as a theatrical, dynamic entity. The notion of expression thus shifted from that of artistic impression to that of dynamic interaction.

Patience, as a Siopis figure, is echoed in likeness to images of females on the landscape in several of Siopis' paintings⁴⁶. These paintings are visual depictions of the relations between

⁴⁵ The actors built their own monuments with the artefacts they scavenged throughout the performance of the new theatrical text.

⁴⁶ The Siopis constellation, of which *Patience on a Monument* (1988, Figure 2) forms part, includes *Melancholia* (1986, Figure 4); *Terra Incognita* (1991, Figure 5); *Three Trees* (2009, Figure 6); *Migrants* (2008, Figure 7); *Dora and the Other*

female bodies, artefacts, and landscapes. The initial significance of the female bodies is in the emphasis of their oppression – of both white and black female bodies. The second significance of the paintings lies in their expressions of redemption, and how the redemption of the female occurs. By expressing the female as being part of the landscape, or inhabiting the landscape, the female body moves from being a marginal object to that of being a dynamic subject that influences the landscape indefinitely.

Patience was also read as an image within an angel constellation, depicting Patience as an angel in response to the angel figure within Kushner's texts (1991, 1993). This is a conversation on the notions of standstill, an original knowledge and divinity (if such things ever existed), and a contra-conversation in regards to notions on progression. Patience created a standstill through the theatrical event itself, and through telling the stories of her subjects. It is my reading of Siopis' Patience that she has had original knowledge of the landscape. I thus constructed her as an angel always on and part of the landscape, long before the histories depicted in Siopis (1988, Figure 2). Her divinity lies in her aim to have redeemed the bodies on her landscape, as well as Harper. Her conversations on progress are not on halting progress, but changing the definition of progress towards redemptive progress. She stated in the text that one needs a different kind of progress:

Patience: We think we're moving. But we're spiralling. We're moving towards a great abyss where we forget ourselves. Our bodies are overcome with the illness that labels and indoctrinates us into species, instead of beings. We need a different kind of progress.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

Patience, as a figure, was also in conversation with *Angelus Novus* (Klee, 1920, Figure 1), but with a key focus on the difference within how they are situated. Patience was not staring back at history, but, as a guardian of multiple histories, she became part of the narratives. Patience was thus not only redeemed as being-female, but from being-static into being-dynamic; she developed from the stance of the static bystander to that of the active intervener, who is imagined to now always being capable of shifting the landscape, and its debris, through influence and conversations.

Woman (1988, Figure 8); *Maids* (1991, Figure 9); *Exhibit: Ex. Africa* (1990, Figure 10); *Sacrifices* (1998, Figure 11); *Id Est.* (1990, Figure 12), and *Piling Wreckage upon Wreckage* (1989, Figure 13). (See Addendum A for complete list of Figures.)

4.2.3.2. Harper Pitt

The character Harper is displaced from the American landscape from which she originated in Kushner's texts (1991, 1993), and placed in a South African, current landscape. To displace an American character from her landscape, and place her within a new, South African landscape, is to shift an understanding of herself. She was allowed to view herself through an unfamiliar landscape; one is thus changing the scenery for this character. The character Harper is presented with new images to which she can relate. These images, being slightly familiar, yet unfamiliar to her as being images constructed on a different landscape, teach her new things about her past. Harper was structured to reconsider her past through a world that is new to her, yet representing familiar images of her past to her. The notion was to create a sense of newness for Harper. Harper is not caught in her circumstances anymore, but could now, through alienation, reconsider the meaning of her past. Through the help of Patience, she could consider possibilities for her own redemption:

Patience: I can only portray what I can see. I can tell you stories that will break your heart even further, but I hope that somehow you will find your way.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

The significance of placing an American character into a South African landscape has two meanings. Firstly, she was displaced from a Reaganite, conservative American landscape into a postcolonial landscape, which I also described as a South African dystopia, where images of the past are constantly reconsidered for redemption. Secondly, she escaped the remaking of America into a conservative landscape through the current governance of Donald Trump. She shifted her sense of being into that of a traveller, constantly discovering new worlds, and new meanings through these worlds. Two images that construct Harper was that of being-American, and being-traveller.

In the same way that Harper could narrate her own reality according to what she saw in the diorama scene in Kushner's text (1991, 1993), so could Harper relate her personal past to the images she saw being physically performed in the landfill. Patience's Monument, representing the landfill and its moving images, mirrors the diorama scene in Kushner's texts (1991, 1993). All the characters that were present in the diorama scene, were present as

images⁴⁷ in the new playtext, through Patience's stories and through the actions and monologues of the writers: Prior Walter presenting images on illness through the writer character Writer; Louis Ironson⁴⁸ presenting images on white guilt through the writer character Hendrik Hanekom; Joe Pitt⁴⁹ presenting images of coming to acceptance with one's sexuality through the writer character Moffie, and Hannah Pitt, presenting images on maternity and care through the writer character The Mother. All of these images contributed to Harper's conversations with Patience. Harper is here defined as being an image in Kushner's texts (1991, 1993).

The conversations on Harper's histories were inverted through the notion of placing Harper in three bodies, namely, Harper-as-Angel, who is a depiction of Harper already redeemed, Harper-as-child, which is a young version of Harper building her own monument, and Harper-as-narrator, who activated the monument through her conversation with Patience. Harper was thus collectively narrating the story of her own redemption through three bodies, by drawing from the memories as a historical event. Harper-as-Angel, named Angelika, commented on Harper's journey towards redemption. Harper-as-Child, named Child, performs the monologue that redeemed Harper through an acceptance of the self:

Child: I am questioning my own sexuality. I'm pressurising myself into abusement. I'm always running away from it, towards trouble. Is there a way in? I feel emptiness. No innocence. No playing. Empty. I try to find happiness and joy from myself. I fly for freedom. Normal is being defined as being part of the majority. If the majority is not unique, then what is it to be different?

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

Harper contemplated her failures by visiting the images that constructed her. This was done in conversation with Patience. Harper was identified in *Angels in Africa* (Vermeulen, 2014) as a redemptive image, a queer image, a female image, an imaginative image, and a childlike image. Each of these images was revealed during her becoming part of Patience's Monument:

Patience: Your trouble was never with the man that broke your heart. Your trouble was with the child that was dying inside of you. Your trouble was that you

⁴⁷ Images are here understood as referred to in Chapter One through an understanding of Benjamin (1962) – in this case the images are concepts that warp into the construction of characters.

⁴⁸ Louis Ironson is what we call in Afrikaans a "Jannie Jammergat": someone who always feel sorry for themselves.

⁴⁹ Joe was represented in the diorama scene through his likeness in the father dummy.

were too different, always in the wrong. Your trouble is that you had to accept it, to learn to love yourself. Your voice was silenced through your deviancies, as was mine. Today I spoke of fragments, tomorrow I will tell stories and I will not stop talking. We need a different kind of progress. And we will have this progress through standing still. Through changing direction. We will think and we will be different. We will be woman. We will be queer.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

The aim in structuring Harper's text was to redeem the moments in which Harper was redirected in Kushner's original text towards mental deviation. This notion was initiated in Kushner's dramatic text (1991), when Joe Pitt reveals that Harper had a difficult childhood. The new images of Harper produced within *Patience's Monument* were structured in order to possibly aid Harper to recognise her own childhood memories.

Harper became the ultimate queer Historical Materialist. She considered past images as structures through which one makes meaning of current and newer realities. By attempting to retrieve memories of queer narratives, she revealed the queer structures within herself. She did this while she rumbled through her own failures in order to make sense of her own current realities. She was revealed in the text as being the failed, queer entity through her mental deviations, who managed to redeem herself by embracing these qualities as images. Harper's first vocal performance in the production is her singing the song *Hurt* (Reznor, 1994), which centres on notions of self-abuse⁵⁰:

I hurt myself today
To see if I still feel
I focus on the pain
The only thing that's real
The needle tears a hole
The old familiar sting
Try to kill it all away
But I remember everything
[Chorus:]

⁵⁰ All the songs that Harper sings are a dramaturgical choice, and relate to her cultural identity of being an American woman. The songs were chosen according to the questions that Harper brings to light. The songs also marked Harper's journey through the theatrical production.

What have I become
My sweetest friend
Everyone I know goes away
In the end
And you could have it all
My empire of dirt
I will let you down
I will make you hurt

Hurt (Reznor, 1994), performed in *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016)

This song spoke to Harper's struggle with substance abuse, the experiences which tie to wanting to self-abuse, and the struggle to not abuse the self. It speaks to notions of being a failure as one abuses oneself. Harper ended the theatrical production through the song *Meet me on the Battlefield* (Svercina, 2016). This song is centred on finding redemption through a sense of compassion. The song was sung by all of the actors present, thus indicating the objective of producing the performed "Progress-Queer Constellation" as a means through which compassion assembled the fragments within the script:

No time for rest
No pillow for my head
Nowhere to run from this
No way to forget

Around the shadows creep
Like friends, they cover me
Just wanna lay me down and finally
Try to get some sleep

We carry on through the storm
Tired soldiers in this war
Remember what we're fighting for

Meet me on the battlefield
Even on the darkest night
I will be your sword, your shield, your camouflage

And you will be mine

Echoes and the shots ring out

We may be the first to fall

Everything can stay the same or we can change it all

Meet me on the battlefield

Meet me on the Battlefield (Svrcina, 2016), performed in *Angels in South Africa*
(Vermeulen, 2016)

Harper was most strongly interrogated through the image of being a child. The child image, previously referred to as the character Child, was initiated as an image that has been created in the standstill Patience brought about. She was situated in the new playtext as one of the writers, building her own monument. Harper had to redeem herself as a child in order to reconsider her present reality and failures. She had to communicate with her own child-self in order to move on and progress herself in a redemptive manner (this happened at the end of the theatrical event in *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016)). The notion was thus to shift the focus from her relationship with Joe, to her relationship with herself by rendering her as a full character with a history. Her memories of Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) were still a present means through which she had to reach this image of being a child.

Harper then also carried the memories of three characters from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993). She carried the memories of a sick Prior, who she met through a "threshold of revelation" (Kushner, 1991:33), as well as at the Mormon Diorama. Prior presented to her an enquiry into sexualities she did not understand, as well as the experience of an illness with which she may have identified as evoking failure. She also recognised this illness as producing different experiences from the illness from which she suffers, and thus enquired into its experiences in order to understand the figure that became a part of her mind. Her memory of Prior was present in her conversations with Patience regarding sexuality and illness⁵¹. This memory was also present through the corporeal narratives of Writer, as well as the Moffie character, who I will introduce later in this chapter.

⁵¹ Harper: Sex is a sin.

Patience: So he says another Hail Mary.

Harper: Although he realises the hypocrisy of it all. He couldn't escape his desires. But when he did escape to them, he felt freedom.

Harper then carried images throughout the text of Joe, which were defined as an enquiry of queer sexualities, of apocalyptic effect, of rejection, and finally of an attempt to leave her space. Harper's goal was to find closure within the failed relationship, and thus to attempt to understand and forgive him. This was initiated in the reactions between Harper and the writer character Moffie, who was partially a presentation of Joe:

Moffie finds the helmet, and tells the story with his body. He stands at attention, then starts to make movements with his body as if he is being shoved around. He starts to touch his face and starts to wash his face. He then starts to wash the floor. He starts to run around in circles until he comes to a standstill, touching himself everywhere, until he pretends to jerk himself off, after which he falls down on his knees. He stays there, until Hanekom comes over to give him a kick, after which he starts to scavenge artefacts again.

Harper: There was a man who was supposed to have control over his life, and his woman, or that's what he thought growing up.

Patience: She had ideas of her own. She wanted to be her own hero. She did not fit into his ideas of her own being.

Patience finds a new artefact, gives it to Harper.

Harper: He watched her go from strength to weakness, from bad to worse, and he was no longer in control.

Harper pushes down from her crotch to her knees, signifying gender. She then lights a cigarette.

Patience: Who was he if not in power? His identity failed him.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

Patience makes an opening hand gesture before her crotch in order to symbolise sexuality.

Patience: So it was worth it.

Harper: The irony he realised was that his sleep was more peaceful after such sinful acts, than it would have been in his wife's arms.

Patience: Then there's the story of the man who is ill. Ill of body. And the mind falls. It's the red disease, the gay cancer, but it has taken so many of my children. They deteriorate before my eyes. They fall, and I am helpless.

Angelika: The body produces a primitive response. The rejection of the self. The body loses itself. The body is rejected and won't function. The body can't react.

Harper: How does one start?

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

In Kushner's play, Harper met Louis through a vision at the Mormon Diorama. He is an image she did not personally know, yet sought to understand as an attempt to understand Joe. Louis carried forth the politics of Kushner's texts (1991, 1993), and her memory of Louis led my Harper to an enquiry of South African politics in conversation with Patience. In the new playtext, my Harper was presented with fragments of her memories of Louis through the writer character Hendrik Hanekom. She narrated these fragmented memories according to the perspective of the actor who produced her text:

Patience: It's always the same thing. A blinding heat. Passion. Fire. Until you realise it's what it is in the sky.

Harper: The sweet freedom is made bitter by this guilt. Damned if you do and damned if you don't.

Patience: And if you do, what you want to do, is wrong, are you forced to kill yourself to be right? There was the story of the man who did too much. Too much to forgive himself.

Both Harper and Patience stand at attention.

Harper: He can hardly escape himself louder than what I can escape myself.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

4.2.4. The Angels

I defined the secondary angels as the commentators. The angels were the academic clowns intruding on the play in order to simply, in the sense of it, say something. The angels wanted to contribute to the event happening before them with their profound knowledge, yet seemed to anger the characters. Placing the angels at the back of the performance space was a means of creating a threshold between the fictional landscape, and a holy space. The writers joined the angels in this space as soon as they have found a means to redeem themselves. The three angels were named Angelika, Ill and Femme.

The angels speak to my need to make commentary on the themes of the play directly. Angelika was needed to represent Harper's voice on the themes as a Harper already redeemed. Ill was needed to represent the themes through the imagined perspective of Kushner, although this character was reimagined according to my perspective on the themes

in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993). Femme was constructed according to the need to strengthen a female perspective on the themes, and more specifically, my own perspective as a female.

4.2.4.1. *Angelika*

Angelika was constructed as Harper in angel form. Angelika represents Harper as already redeemed. Throughout the text, Angelika comments on Harper's childhood memories, mental illness, progress, and what it means for her to be female. These are thus the images that constructed Angelika's text. As a character she is constructed out of the images of being a redeemed Harper – meaning that all of Harper's images apply to her – a redemptive angel, and an academic. Being academic influenced the actor's lens through which she produced and performed the text.

4.2.4.2. *III*

III was a reimagination of the angel from Kushner's texts (1991, 1993), albeit in a male form. Although Patience is reimagined as the South African angel, I decided to also include an angel, which by definition is closer in likeness to Kushner's angel.

III, in alignment with Kushner's angel, comments on progress, sexuality, the body as an image, and change. III's text is constructed from these images. His character is constructed out of the images of being a segment from Kushner's texts (1991, 1993), a redemptive angel, and an academic. III cited two academic articles, on failure and on South African politics. These articles support the notion of him being an academic.

The new theatrical text contained a fragment from Le Feuvre's text, *Failure* (2010), in the introduction to the play and was performed by the actor playing III. The performance of the text was used as a means of immediately writing in failure as a needed element in producing art. Failure was also presented as producing possibilities and poses the question of why the process of creation is painful. Failure, as a theme, was incorporated into the theatrical production as a means of interrogating notions on being queer, as well as notions on being "othered". Failure was also a theme in Harper's narration of herself. The insert used was:

III: Uncertainty and instability characterise contemporary times. In spite of this, success and progress seem to endure as a condition to strive for, even though there is little faith in either. All individuals know failure better than we

might care to admit – failed romance, failed careers, failed politics, failed society, failed humanity, failed failures. What happens, though, when artists use failure to propose a resistant view of the world, when failure is released from being a judgmental term, and success deemed overrated? Such imperatives have long threaded their way through the investigations of artists – indeed, art-making can be seen as an activity where doubt lies in wait at every turn and where failure is not always unacceptable conduct.

An excerpt from Le Feuvre's article, *Failure* (2010), performed in *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016)

III's text on South African politics was found in Peterson and Rutherford (eds., 1991:1) who wrote an article titled *State of Emergency*. A fragment was verbally performed by the actor playing III in order to describe the historical shift from a pre-apartheid era to a post-apartheid era. The text centres on notions of how political power tends to shift, and how the notion of apartheid is not suddenly eliminated but must be eliminated over time.

4.2.4.3. *Femme*

Femme was constructed out of the images of being feminist, being a redemptive angel, and being an academic. Femme was structured to comment on notions of being female, the struggle of the female in a linearly progressive set of realities, the acceptance of homosexuality through understanding, and on progress as failing the female.

As an academic, Femme's text included an academic article on the notion of the female being queer. Petersen and Rutherford (eds., 1991:138) wrote a text on post-feminist and post-apartheid relations titled *Space of Women in New South African Writing*. The text places an emphasis on female prison writing where the boundaries between the political and the criminal are blurred. According to Petersen and Rutherford (eds., 1991:138), the woman is already defined as outlawed by definition. Women thus inherently experience reality as queer entities. A fragment of this text was performed in the beginning of the playtext by Femme, while the excerpt from *State of Emergency* (Petersen and Rutherford, eds., 1991:1) was performed simultaneously by III.

4.2.5. Writers

As stated previously, the actors playing writers were expected to construct narratives according to their reactions to the artefacts they were given. They were also expected to construct their characters as narrators aiming for self-redemption. I made use of the “Storytelling Apparatus” by Boje and Henderson (2014:324–325) in order to construct the narratives of the writers.

According to Boje and Henderson (2014:324), bodies are sites that act according to memory, in response to spaces and artefacts. This means that the actors’ bodies’ own memories were present as they engaged with the artefacts and imagined spaces. People thus react towards a space according to how the body has been taught to react, as well as according to memories that have occurred in similar spaces.

According to Boje and Henderson (2014:325), each literal artefact contains its own narrative, according to how it is inclined to be used, and according to the narratives in which they have been utilised before. The actors thus reacted towards the artefacts chosen for their characters, according to the social and cultural meaning that they perceived these artefacts to have. The actors also reacted according to lived experiences of which these artefacts remind them.

The actors related to the artefacts according to how such an artefact may have been represented in their own personal lives. As such the personal association with the artefact became a memory being narrated. The actors also produced non-verbal narratives according to their personal association to the artefacts. These non-verbal narratives were then performed at different points during the theatrical performance:

Femme: Marginalifuckisation. The food must be ready. The sex must be ready.
Everything except for me.

Femme opens her legs and bends over backwards to signify sexuality. Angelika places her hands on her hips and silently screams to signify sexuality. Ill fakes an explosion in front of his penis in order to express sexuality.

Policeman (Hanekom) finds the scarf, tells the story with his body. At first he clenches the scarf in his hand. Then he raises the scarf to the sky. He then tries to step on the scarf. Realising it won’t work, he spins the scarf around his body, until he chokes himself with the scarf, after which he throws the scarf on the ground, and

goes over to Writer to shove him around before he continues to build on his monument.

Harper: Sex is a sin.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

There exists a relationship between the artefact, the body, and the space in which they find themselves. The imagined space as a futuristic South African landfill did also draw on the memories of the actors. According to Boje and Henderson (2014:324), the bodies will imagine the space – and react to it – according to their own relations and imaginations. The actors thus had to question themselves on how they would react if they were gathering artefacts in a landfill and what specific significance it held in their own lives. The question was also on how the notion of redeeming artefacts from a landfill as well as giving these artefacts specific meaning through corporeal narratives could guide the actor to construct a redemptive journey for their characters.

This notion of remaking oneself through telling a story refers back to the statement that the group of the bodies non-verbally and verbally expressing themselves were writers. These writers used the artefacts and written images and their own memories of being in their bodies as inspirations and influences for non-verbally and verbally making new stories. Writing, in this instance, became an act of scavenging artefacts, as well as interacting with these artefacts and telling new stories with these artefacts. There was thus a connotation between one who writes and one who stops time, as the actors represented their narratives in a timeless setting. The one who writes to stop time is one who is constantly reflective of the influences that historical narratives have on the self. To write was thus to evaluate historical influences in order to retrieve images from which the actor's character can remake the self.

Although one cannot literally stop time, one can take time off from one's productive (or not so productive) lifestyle in order to create a new image in history through writing. These new images – written and corporeal images – were produced in each rehearsal and each performance. By producing an image with one's body, the actor becomes an image. The actors, through their personal memories, engaged with fragments of literal artefacts, as well as fragments of written artefacts in order to produce new images – and thus, stories – within a new text.

The writers' characters were constructed from multiple characters from Kushner's texts (1991, 1993), and the postcolonial South African narratives that I will discuss later in this

chapter. I defined these characters that influenced the character constructions of the writers as ghosts. These ghosts have been constructed to travel from their narratives and to possess the bodies of the writers. There is thus a conversation between the multiple ghosts and the actor playing the writers, which means that the characters' identity construction is constantly changing. The process of having friction and change within the identity construction of the writers is what leads the characters to find redemption.

Ghosts, as literary devices, are described in Zamora (1997:76) as trans-historical spirits and carriers of traditions and collective memories. According to Zamora (1997:77), the ghost represents the self as a collective, and subjectivity as multiple. According to Gaylard (2005:137), meaning is then created through the symbolic and the aesthetic, not the narrative or the character. To move through the fragments⁵², as stated in Gaylard (2005:137), is to seize new identities through new opportunities.

The characters from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) were utilised as ghosts along with the ghosts from the South African postcolonial narratives that, as already said, will be discussed later in this chapter. The ghosts from the South African landscape and those from Kushner's texts (1991, 1993) were placed within the same bodies (the performers) according to similarities in traits and experiences. Thus there occurred an interweaving of ghosts in order to put forth multiple images, ideas and narratives that belong both to Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) and to the South African landscape. These ghosts were taken from the fictional and non-fictional narratives of which they form part, and used in relation to the bodies from the South African landscape (the performers).

These ghosts formed part of the rhizoid map of the characters' identities. The map through which each actor constructed their characters contained the ghosts and their own lived experiences. The actors, while constructing their characters' narratives in the workshop process,⁵³ could fluidly move between their own logic and the influences of the ghosts in order to produce redemptive narratives for their characters.

The function of producing these characters as being constructed through bodies possessed by multiple ghosts was to retrieve the fragments from the narratives being presented in this chapter. These fragments are now defined as artefacts, pieces of writing, and ghosts. The literal artefacts housed the memories of the events that took place in the narratives. The

⁵² These fragments being the literal artefacts from the play, as well as the various ghosts that constructed the characters.

⁵³ The Workshop Process is discussed in Chapter Five.

pieces of writing provided fragments of knowledge to which the performers' imaginations could respond to (according to their own associations and knowledges). Finally, the ghosts represented the characters that drove the narratives obtained through reactions to the artefacts.

4.2.5.1. *The South African Postcolonial Narratives*

There are already various historical and fictional narratives available that voice queer, ideologically disruptive stories. I chose some of these as the catalysts through which the South African landscape was studied. These narratives were introduced as fragments in the "Progress-Queer Constellation", along with fragments from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993). These are the fragments of narratives that were used to structure Patience's Monument. These were also the fragments Harper recognised in her own memories from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993).

These fictional narratives, which speak to current experiences on the postcolonial landscape, include DZ Mdluli's text (1973) *Robben Island*; C Van Der Merwe's text (2006) *Moffie*; R Rive's text (2007) *Buckingham Palace: District Six*; R Maart's text (2006) *Rosa's District Six*, and B Head's (1973) *A Question of Power*.

These texts are connected through a study on sexuality:

- Mdluli (1973) makes a study of homoeroticism and prison rape, which ties to images of homosexuality on the South African landscape. Mdluli's ghost is connected to the character of the queer, black male, who is named Writer.
- Van der Merwe (2006) writes on masculinity, the Afrikaner male identity as being oppressive and homoeroticism as taboo in the Afrikaner community. This text influenced a character called Moffie.
- Rive's text (2007) centres narratives from the historical District Six, in which sexuality was not as policed as in Afrikaner communities during the apartheid era. The notion of sexuality being policed through government sanctions and religious exclusivity came through a character named Hendrik Hanekom. Hanekom was a former policeman during the apartheid era.
- Maart (2006) focuses more closely on notions of sexuality within this supposed utopian space being District Six, and how these definitions on sexuality structure current

realities. Current definitions on sexuality, these being an acceptance of white, female sexuality and homosexuality were present in Harper's expression of her sexual desires, the queer, black character's corporeal narratives, and in the monologue and corporeal narratives of Moffie.

- Head (1973) writes on sexuality as a power binary, where male characters oppress female characters through attacking the female character's sexual desires. Head (1973) also writes on the notion of redeeming oneself through self-progression⁵⁴. Head also writes on the reality of being African and mentally ill, and the contradictions that being mentally ill produce through the lens of different cultures. Head's writings influenced the creation of a black, mentally ill female character named Elizabeth, who had to be cut from the new text as a character due to circumstances.

4.2.5.2. *The Writer Characters*

Initially, there were six writer characters, namely Mother, Moffie, Writer, Hendrik Hanekom, Elizabeth, and Child. The images that construct the characters are introduced in this segment; the actors' construction of the characters according to these images is discussed in Chapter Five.

4.2.5.3. *The Mother*

This character was imagined as a combination of the ghosts of Hannah Pitt from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), and the writer of the poem⁵⁵ *She Became the Mother Again*. The poem, written by Angifi Proctor Dladla, found in Rasebotsa, Samuleson and Thomas (eds. 2004:23) is a particular study of a mother who has to take care of a daughter who has contracted HIV/AIDS. The writer of the poem is queered through her inability to be a productive member of her community, as she is engaged in having to sustain the life of that which cannot be sustained. The poem thus affected the actor's non-verbal narratives, which means that the poem was placed in correlation with other issues (being female, being South African, and attempting to remake the self), to which the actor had reacted.

⁵⁴ This is in contrast to the ideas that redemption occurs through standing still in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993).

⁵⁵ The actual poem was not performed during the theatrical events; it is a pretext.

Hannah Pitt is the mother who needs to take care of the queer child, Harper Pitt. The Mother thus had to interrogate the reality of being the caretaker of a deviated child⁵⁶, whether it was from mental illness or being in the last stages of having HIV and AIDS. There is thus a correlation between mental deviation and physical deviation. Both illnesses at some stage render the individual unable to take care of, and thus progress, the self.

The images through which the actor playing Mother constructed her non-verbal narratives, were books and a child's toy. Books – drawing from Maart (2006)'s character Rosa's love of writing – represented narratives themselves as well as the notion of writing. They were used by the actor playing the Mother as a means of remembering the narratives of her child.

4.2.5.4. *The "Moffie"*

Joe Pitt from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) and Nicholaas from the text *Moffie* (Van Der Merwe, 2006) were ghosts that possessed the same body. Both these ghosts are masculine figures who struggle with inner desires of homoeroticism. The notion was for the character consisting of these ghosts to find a means of freely expressing and accepting himself as homosexual and masculine.

The actor playing Moffie constructed his non-verbal narratives by using an army helmet, and an army jacket. These artefacts were derived from the text *Moffie* (Van Der Merwe, 2006). The notion was for the actor using these artefacts (the actor playing Moffie) to produce images of masculinities of the South African landscape, homoeroticism, violence, death, as well as gender boundaries.

4.2.5.5. *Writer*

Prior Walter, as the queer American male who suffers from HIV and AIDS, found in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), was synchronised as a ghost with the ghosts of John Moletse, an actual person who I researched through the GALA archives written on in Hutton (2009:118), and Mdluli (Mdluli being the writer of the 1973 text *Robben Island*). The notion was to place the disease within a black male body, as well as to interrogate homosexuality from the perspective of the history of the black male body.

⁵⁶ The deviated child is not present in the theatrical events, as the focus was on the Mother character and not her child.

John Moletse identifies himself in Hutton (2009:118) as gay, deaf, and HIV-positive. According to Hutton (2009:118), Moletse was drugged after he went on a date with his boyfriend, who then continued to rape him. Moletse's experience of dealing with taking the HIV test, according to Hutton (2009:118), placed him in a silenced position. According to Hutton (2009:118), Moletse never received pre- nor post-counselling during his HIV test. Moletse was thus still uninformed about his disease. The doctor, according to Hutton (2009:120), unsympathetically wrote to him on a piece of paper, telling him that he is HIV-positive. This would mean that the doctor provided Moletse with a mere fragment from which he had to construct the knowledge that would affect his life.

Moletse's trauma and silenced experience are symbolised in this piece of paper. His redemption already occurs through his work at the GALA archives. Through his work he is facing various experiences and coming to terms with his own experiences of having HIV and AIDS, being homosexual, being black, being deaf, and having been raped. However, the notion now was to theatricalise this redemptive experience in order to drive the plot of the theatrical playtext forward. Moletse's real life thus became an example through which to construct the theatrical text: through engagement with the self.

Mdluli, as previously stated, is derived from the text *Robben Island* (1974). It is the story of a black male political prisoner, who is forced to interrogate his own sexuality through being raped. This ghost speaks to how sexual histories are perceived from this specific black male's perspective. He has experienced same-sex copulation as a means of oppression rather than liberation.

These ghosts thus drove the character towards a quest for redemption by dealing with the experiences of desire and sexuality, rape and ethnicity, disease and self-assertion. The character found its redemption within the notion of being a writer, instead of through violence. He is a character who tells stories and speaks.

The actor constructed the Writer's narratives through the use of police uniform boots, a ball, and a beer bottle. Alcohol bottles and boots were derived from Rive's text (2007) *Buckingham Palace: District Six*. Playing with the ball represents youth and gendered culture as themes in Mdluli (1973). The actor's use of police boots represented police violence, which occurred especially during the apartheid era. The final artefact derived from Mdluli (1973), in connection with Rive (2007), was a beer bottle, which represented masculine violence.

4.2.5.6. *The Policeman: Hendrik Hanekom*

The character Louis Ironson from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) was correlated as a ghost of a white policeman, who oppressed individuals in the area of District Six. The figure of the "white policeman" is expressed in both Maart (2006) and Rive (2007). The white policeman is the figure who suppresses others' sexuality, culture, redemptive landscapes, and racial relationships.

Both ghosts are severely guilt-ridden and cannot escape their pasts. Although the character that was possessed by these ghosts never achieved redemption⁵⁷, he represented a collective sense of guilt within the post-apartheid Afrikaner white male.

Rosa's District Six's (Maart, 2006) head scarves were used by the actor playing Hendrik Hanekom as a means of remembering spaces, culture, and notions on femininity. The actor also made use of a dress deriving from the District Six era in order to tell his non-verbal narratives.

4.2.5.7. *Elizabeth*

There was a body that was possessed by the ghost of Elizabeth from Head's text *A Question of Power* (1973). This ghost mirrored Harper's struggle with mental deviation. This ghost interrogates mental deviation from an African perspective, thus reimagining Harper as a black, queer body.

Elizabeth was cut as a character from *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016), due to availability in actors and time (the original actor quit due to a heavy schedule). Her story and her monologue is still in the playtext though. Her experience of being of black, being female and being mentally ill was shared by the expressions of the characters Harper and Patience.

4.2.5.8. *Child*

Child was the youthful form of Harper and is thus possessed by a segment of Harper's past. Child can also be described as Harper's inner child, having taken form in a moment of psychosis.

⁵⁷ The ghosts are merely a reminder of the past realities that have constructed current realities.

Harper's artefacts were present in the monument that Child built. These were toys, clothing, medication, and alcohol. The toys represented Harper's youth and were thus connected to Child. The clothing represented the domestic environment in which Harper found herself in Kushner's texts (1991, 1993), and were thus connected to Harper-as-Narrator. The medication also related to Harper-as-Narrator, implying her mental illness and substance abuse. The alcohol bottles, utilised by Child, represented the domestic violence Harper endured as a child.

4.2.6. Conversational Images

I also made use of images from which to initiate conversations during the workshop process. The conversations the cast had based on these images were useful in constructing the new playtext. The conversational images were based on themes of identity, on which the cast had to verbally and corporeally reflect. The conversational images were drawn from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), as well as the South African texts from which the ghosts and artefacts were produced. The reproduced images are discussed early in Chapter Five.

The images from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) produced conversations on being a woman, being homosexual, being HIV-positive, and being mentally deviated. These images were placed in correlation with Head's (1974) images, which led to conversations on being a fugitive, being black, being mentally ill, different notions of progress, being female, and being "othered".

These images were also placed in correlation with Mdluli's (1973) images, Maart's (2006) images, and Rive's (2007) images. Through Mdluli's (1973) images, the cast produced conversations on being black, as well as images of being prisoner, and being correctively raped. Being raped referred to the notion that sex is not only used as a subjective act but an enforced act of objectification.

Maart (2006) produced the images that mainly speak to Harper's character. These images produced conversations on being a child, spaces of failures, and sexual education. Rive's text (2007) produced the final images upon which the cast had conversations, on sexual freedom, prejudices, and redemptive spaces.

The new images were reflected through conversations in the workshop process. Fragments of these conversations were reproduced as a script in the new playtext through my own

selection and interpretation. At this point, I needed to construct a clear map on how the text should be structured. I thus had to map out a theatrical text based on notions of corporeal engagement, narrated conversations, and a catalyst of perspectives on the themes present within the new text.

4.2.7. Constructing the Text

The new theatrical text was a catalyst of perspectives, opinions and experiences, produced over a short time. Harper and Patience's conversations were produced through the actors within a day's setting. I let the actors converse through storytelling on specific themes (elaborated on in detail in Chapter Five), committing to the themes that were also introduced to the actors playing writers and the angels in their interviews and explorations. The actors playing the writers were introduced to warm up processes including artefacts and spaces. They were then asked to corporeally and verbally produce narratives through their interactions with specific artefacts. The actors playing the angels were interviewed on their own perspective of the fragments from these past four chapters. They were also asked to corporeally engage with the images that were procured from this chapter. Here is an insert from the playtext that was based on an interview with the actor playing the male angel:

III: ... I don't think there's only one way to be human. The idea of what it means
[has] changed so much.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

4.3. The Actors

I will now approach the characters within the new playtext as queer characters. These are radical South Africans whose identities are based within a "free" individuality, and whose presence distorts apartheid identifications to bring about change.

I assessed the actors on the following critical questions⁵⁸:

- Did the characters the actors portrayed become aware of how their identities had been historically formed?

⁵⁸ These criteria were assessed on in detail in Chapter 5: Processes.

- Did these characters, through their actions and dialogue, change their own historical direction?
- Did these characters make an active enquiry into the fragments of their landscape?

The actors were thus assessed according to their awareness of their characters' identities and the change they brought about in the playtext itself, as well as in the characters. They were also assessed according to how actively they led their characters to engage with the fictional landscape of the play.

There was also a list of criteria from which to choose my actors. I had to make my choice of eleven actors, according to a variation of actors from different:

- racial backgrounds
- sexual orientations
- intellectual backgrounds (thus, training in dramatic theory and an understanding of theory)
- variations of the personal (how the actors identified themselves with the ideologies that construct them, and how they deviate)
- gender differences
- various means of artistic expression (how well skilled were the actors to produce narratives non-verbally and verbally?).

This chapter was the creation of the pretext and thus sits on the verge between theory and practicality. I focussed mainly on the structuring of the characters, the structuring of the narratives used within the playtext, and the structure of the plot.

In Chapter Five I reflect on the process of creating a performance through a workshop process, writing a script, rehearsing the script, and the actual performances. Chapter Six is a reflection on the choice of Denkbilder as a methodology for creating characters and a script, how the notion of "Performing Denkbilder" was implemented, and how the experience of creating this thesis reflected on my own experience of dealing with BPD.

Chapter 5: Processes

In the previous chapter, I developed the pretext, which consisted of the character descriptions and stimuli with which I provided each actor in order to develop their characters. This chapter will centre on the processes through which the new theatrical playtext was constructed and performed. I am also reflecting on the methodological approaches discussed in Chapters Three and Four. Throughout the research process, I produced *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016) in order to develop the notion of “Performing Denkbilder” as a theatrical construct.

5.1. *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016)

This chapter is an observation of how the theories regarding queerness, progress, and Denkbilder, Taub’s (2009:266) “Reproduction-Reflective-Redemptive triad”, and the “Storytelling Apparatus” from Boje and Henderson (2014:324–325), were practically applied to recreate the “Angel of History” as a theatrical phenomenon. This angel is not merely expressed through a singular character anymore, but through the use of two narrators, initially six (eventually cut to five) bodies, and three angels. These actors, by definition, became the “Performing Denkbilder” through their performances as referred to in Chapters Three and Four. They did this by making use of memory and lived experience⁵⁹, non-verbal performance moments and vocal expression in order to respond to the images with which they were provided in Chapter Four.

5.1.1. Ethical Considerations

The study received ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria’s Research Ethics Committee. Before I began with the process of creating the new theatrical text, I drew up an indemnity form, which each actor had to sign, as well as a letter of informed consent. Although I have been informed that I am not to disclose the identities of my characters, the forms stated that I was allowed to use any information or action performed through the research process

⁵⁹ In hindsight, I realise I made the mistake of never interviewing the actors on what memories they experienced during the process. I was too focused on creating the text and lost in my own interpretation of the performed images I saw before me.

as data on which to reflect in my thesis. The actors were also informed that neither I nor the University of Pretoria would be held accountable for any injuries that might occur during the research process, be these physical or psychological injury. However, I did inform my actors that, should the need arise, there would be a psychologist⁶⁰ available to guide them through any trauma or discomfort.

Any information shared through the research process had to stay within the confines of the rehearsal and workshop process. The actors were also informed that, should any actor physically harm, sexually harass, be racist against, or cause any form of discomfort or hurt to another actor, they would be dismissed from the process. As we dealt with sensitive subjects such as abuse, mental health and rape, the actors were encouraged to only share as much of their own experiences or perceptions as they were comfortable. I never asked an actor whether they suffered from any mental difficulties, had suffered abuse, or been raped. However, some actors did disclose experiences from their personal lives with me. I had to arrange a counselling session for one actor, while a second actor refused counselling. One actor did share his experiences of when he was still secretly homosexual and thus still battling with his sexuality. He did this of his own accord.

5.1.2. Structuring the Form of *Angels in South Africa*

5.1.2.1. Plot

I initially planned the progression of the script to start with the angels citing academic articles, welcoming the audience to the production, and for two angels to sing *Sound of Silence* (Simon, 1963). The angels would then lead the audience into the space constructed as a landfill. In this landfill several actors would be placed gathering artefacts, non-verbally responding to some of the artefacts. Patience and Harper were present, verbally narrating their stories. Harper would be introduced through the song *Hurt* (Reznor, 1994), and initiate dialogue with Patience through notions of her own failures. The dialogue would then progress into lamenting on her heartbreak, but eventually, Patience would start to tell the stories of her landscape, with which Harper could relate and converse. The final story would be on being woman and being child, in which Patience would lead Harper to redeem her past images

⁶⁰ The psychologist's name is Hennie van der Walt, located in Doringkloof, Centurion.

beyond Kushner's texts (1991, 1993). Finally the play would be concluded with the song *Meet me on the Battlefield* (Svrcina, 2016) as a means of stating that she fights for her sanity, and is not a victim of her mental illness.

Nothing's lost forever. In this world, there is a kind of painful progress. Longing for what we've left behind, and dreaming ahead. At least, I think it's so.

Harper Pitt in *Angels in America: Perestroika* (Kushner, 1993:141)

5.1.2.2. Aesthetic Choices

The site was a desolated space within Pretoria. The site produced a sense of abandonment, being situated between hills and wild grass. The site was divided into two components: an area inside the house and the landfill outside in the backyard. The cast wore old black clothing, which is an aesthetic choice in order to draw attention to the interaction between actors and artefacts. The choice of black clothing was also an attempt to avoid the cluttering of colour, as the landfill space was already cluttered enough.



Figure 14: V Vermeulen, *A Girl's House*. 2017

Photo taken in Brooklyn, Pretoria.

The above image depicts the messiness of the house. The house is a reflection of the failure of the housekeeper, assumed to be a woman⁶¹, who failed to keep her place tidy. The fact that she is having guests (the audience), makes her vulnerable to the scrutiny and criticism of being a failed housewife.

The inside space was initially lit through torch lights. The torch lights were eventually joined by the lighting of car lights outside of the house, which signified different narratives happening in different spaces. The lighting finally also came from within the house while the audience was outside, in order to signify a sense of origin. It was hoped to produce the idea of having a journey within, in order to find hope in the space from which one came. It also signified that a space of origin changes once one has made the choice to remake one's self.

The house was a domestic space that has been failed by its keeper. The house was dirty and untidy, with papers scattered on the floor, artefacts lying around, and dirty dishes in the living room. This dirtiness and untidiness produced the idea of domestic failure. The female, being associated with domestic cleanliness, has failed those within her household. It was a reflection on Harper's own distorted sense of being a housewife. It was a reflection on her psyche and her role as a housewife.

⁶¹ It is unclear who this housekeeper is, but can be assumed to be Harper.



Figure 19: S Mahne, *Pathway to Nowhere*. 2016

Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.

The stage manager (the actor playing Hanekom) made a pathway of papers containing written theories belonging to dramatic discourses in the above image. The image depicts the interwoven disciplines of theory and praxis in the work, reminding the audience that there is an academic undertone to the work.

The stage manager placed wooden guns at various places in the house to add an aesthetic of failed masculinity. Masculinity was reflected on as being child's play. It was merely a visual sign of the violent figure a young boy must attempt to be. One of the audience members questioned the stage manager on the multitude of guns, making a connection between the children's weapons and the Afrikaner organisation, the AWB (Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging). This produced the question of the Afrikaner's own identity within the domestic space, as well as within the theatrical play. The question is on whether the

Afrikaner, as once a ruling culture within the South African landscape, has failed itself by giving up its power. Hanekom was a Performed Denkbild reflecting on this question through the actor's performance and brought on the notion that the Afrikaner is failing itself by avoiding change.

The house was an effective choice of site from which to start the theatrical production, by separating the angels (who were the only characters to break the fourth wall), from the rest of the cast. The angels, here perceived by myself as academic clowns, were chosen to introduce the theatrical production as a site of research. The actors playing the angels started the theatrical event through performing fragments of published articles referring to failure. These performances were an aesthetic choice, as well as the choice to voice the political climate of South Africa. Through the song *Sound of Silence* (Simon, 1963), Femme and Angelika introduced an idea of multiple conversations occurring in the theatrical event through which the actors question an attempt to progress the human race.

The house became a problematic site on the last night, as the house was cluttered with too many people. This also became a problem in the landfill, as the performance space was cluttered with audience members. This image of clutter produced a failure within the technical planning of the work. A cluttering of listeners is thus integrated as a reflection on the failures that constructed the work.

There was a path that leads one from the house to a dusty, paved square site. This site, cluttered with artefacts, became the landfill. The site was surrounded by a ground wall, setting boundaries to contain the performance. The audience was led to seat themselves amongst the artefacts, in order to be further integrated into the play. Although there were several audience members who resisted this sense of integration, the site became filled with bodies and artefacts, producing the notion of bodies as artefacts themselves.

5.1.2.3. Magic Realist Performance Delivery

The actors were placed in a site in which multiple histories were related through the actors' performances. This performance of multiple narratives was inspired by Zamora's (1997:157) notion of fragmented narration occurring in a Magic Realist text, in which one produces a critical stance on cultural relations. However, the style of fragmented narration was also a

critical reflection on various identity relations. The strongest criticism on race was between Hanekom and Writer. The critical stance between one possessing this specific Afrikaner identity and one possessing the queer, black identity occurred through violent interaction between the two actors playing Hanekom and Writer. The actors' narratives were thus in conflict with one another. This specific Afrikaner male is still attempting to hold on to his identity while being taunted with cultural artefacts, as well as sharing a space with a queer black man. Here the Magic Realist notion of narrating the postcolonial through past narratives becoming visible through present narratives.

Hanekom's identity is further challenged by Moffie, who expresses narratives on masculine homosexuality. Their interactions occurred through teasing and aggravation. Hanekom is made to co-exist with the same multi-racial, queer identities from which he wanted to separate himself in his past, and is thus forced to remake himself (which he fails to do). Louis' ghost, originating from Kushner's dramatic (1990, 1992) texts and possessing Hanekom, failed to express itself through the violence of Hanekom, although Louis also failed to remake himself in Kushner's text⁶². However, instead of interacting with the black body through politically incorrect dialogue (as Louis does), Hanekom chose to interact through violence. The violence was a better choice through which to project the guilt and the prejudice the character was experiencing, than the dialogue through which Louis attempted to redeem himself.

5.1.2.4. *A Performance Framed within Landscape Theatre*

The site, as a landscape of debris, can be described as messy, distorted, and as a space where fragments of histories (presented through dialogue, movement and artefacts), were rearranged through the performers' actions in order to produce new monuments. These new monuments were metaphors for the construction of new identities, which was created through the actor knowing the self and knowing the other. The site, as a backyard being turned into a landfill, thus integrated two facets of Landscape Theatre. According to Fuchs and Chaudhuri (2002), quoted in Alrutz, Listengarten and Van Duyn Wood (2012:202), in Landscape Theatre, one creates a web of associations. The landfill was a web of artefacts that portrayed a web of associating images. It was through this web of associations that new narratives emerged, as the actors interacted with one another through their own narratives and artefacts.

⁶² At the end of *Angels in America: Perestroika* (Kushner, 1993) Louis still argues with Belize over the same racist opinion he held in *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (Kushner, 1991).

Secondly, as previously stated in Chapter Two, and according to Alrutz, Listengarten and Van Duyn Wood (2012:201), in Landscape Theatre, multiple landscapes are being produced in one site. Each narrative performed produced its own landscape of associations. By placing these landscapes in *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016) into one site, I was producing a new landscape that was layered with various narratives from which the audience member could hopefully have made their own meanings according to their own associations with what they were seeing.

The monuments were not metaphors for the landscapes but were representatives of the landscape. This means that the full fictional landscape was not represented as a whole, but merely fragments were represented, which commemorate the whole. As the dialogue was fragmented, the audience member was expected to fill in the gaps through their own ideas and associations with what they saw.

The theatrical production was concluded with a chorus of actors reciting a poem, thus signalling that the various landscapes have fused into a final image. This final image was further expressed through the performance of the song *Meet me on the Battlefield* by Svercina (2016). The audience was invited to join the cast in the performance space, in order to signify that their own ideas and interpretations of the images were to be fused into the theatrical production. Instead of a play, the theatrical production became an environment in which one could hopefully mentally place oneself through memory and association.

The notion of working with “Performing Denkbilder” also forms part of the objective to create a Landscape Theatre production. The bodies of the actors were landscapes within themselves, each movement representing a fragment of a story or an idea. It was as if one was painting through the act of storytelling. The work is never complete, as it keeps on moving.

The messiness of the site speaks to the queerness within the text. The residents fail to keep the house and site organised, thus producing a messy landscape that speaks to the failure of the characters in organising their own narratives⁶³. The cast had to reflect on the messy landscape, in order to read into the mess of their own narratives. The actors utilised the mess

⁶³ The process of redemption for each character became a process of failures and trying again, until one has learned through the failures how to redeem the self.

in order to produce new meanings for themselves correlating with the newer meanings produced in the text.

5.1.3. Creating the Content: The Workshop Process

We, as the collaborative team of *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016), completed the workshop process across various sites, such as my personal house located in Centurion, the Jan Cilliers Park, the Drama Department at the University of Pretoria and the LC de Villiers grounds located in Pretoria. We decided to use these same sites for rehearsal spaces until we finally found the site at which we would perform.

Initially, each actor was given the written segments of Chapters Two, Three and Four from this thesis – the character analyses, the segments on Kushner’s texts (1991, 1993), as well as the segments on postcolonial South African narratives. They studied these before the workshop process in order to understand what specific information applied to their characters as pretext (although Chapter Four is still mainly considered the pretext).

During the workshop process, I mainly relied on Boje and Henderson’s (2014:324–325) “Storytelling Apparatus” and Taub’s (2009:266) “Reproductive-Reflexive-Redemptive” triad in order to conjure the narratives and text that would be used in the final script. The aim was to expand on the “Progress-Queer Constellation” created in Chapter Four, in order to reproduce this constellation into a text. For the actors playing writers, I had them create narratives in immediate response to the artefacts with which they had to. I interviewed the actors playing angels, on the various themes derived from Chapters Two and Four, such as sexuality, progress, mental illness and race, on which I will elaborate in the workshop process section.

Each actor playing a writer followed a similar process. They would warm up by stretching the body towards various objects located in and around the Drama Department of the University of Pretoria – the objects were chosen by the actors at random. The actor would then vocally express various words that they would associate with the objects. Through this exercise, the actors expressed strong emotive quality in their words. The actor would then tell a story by looking towards, and associating with, the various objects that surrounded the space we inhabited. This exercise was inspired by Boje and Henderson’s (2014:324–325) concept of the “Storytelling Apparatus”, in which it is stated that artefacts can be utilised according to the

actor's association with these artefacts in order to tell stories. In this case, the story would be an immediate association the actor has with the object, thus hopefully making use of the subconscious as a source of narratives.

The actors would then carry out their own physical warm up, from which they would move into physically expressing the stories of their characters' ghosts. The actors would also non-verbally express a story in reaction to two objects specifically assigned to their characters – these artefacts being mentioned in Chapter Four. The one artefact was imagined to promote the inner struggle of writing for the character, and the other a redemptive state.

Finally, the actor would write their own monologue as an attempt to redeem their characters. Each actor playing a writer wrote a monologue in which they voiced the different narratives with which their characters battled. The narrative focussed on was chosen by and written on from the perspective of the actor. This monologue was used in the new performance when the writers would walk to join the angels as an act of redeeming themselves.

During the workshop process, I interviewed the characters playing angels, through questions in coffee shops and at my own house⁶⁴. These questions were structured according to key themes that had to be evident within the play, such as progress, sexuality and mental illness. I chose segments from the answers the actors produced in these interviews to use directly as text for the angels. The angels' text was also a guideline on structuring the final text.

The actors playing the storytellers, Harper and Patience, were instructed to prepare ideas on seven different themes, on which they would converse. The themes were being woman, being physically ill, being mentally ill, being secretly homosexual, being disappointed in a relationship, being "othered", and taking care of someone who is ill. As stated previously, these are themes that all relate to Harper's journey. These would thus be the themes on which Patience would converse with Harper, in order to move the plot forward towards redeeming Harper.

The two actors playing Harper and Patience met with me and had conversations on these themes. The actors had to draw from their personal associations with the themes, in order to draw knowledge from their own experiences, as well as from their subconscious, hopefully. I recorded these conversations, which were later used in edited form in the final text.

⁶⁴ In afterthought, I realise how these different locations may have affected the outcome of the answers in the interviews.

5.1.4. The Individual Processes

Through this section, I am focussing on the process through which each individual actor⁶⁵ contributed to the creation of the new text. The style is committed to constructing an archive of experiences and perspectives, and each heading will explain a different actor's contributions to the new text. I reported on these contributions according to my own perspectives on what occurred during the workshop process.

5.1.4.1. *Moffie*

The character *Moffie* is possessed by the ghosts of Nicholaas, from the text *Moffie* (Van Der Merwe, 2006), and Joe Pitt from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993). The actor playing *Moffie*, hereafter referred to as P1, works most strongly according to his own personal association and life story of being homosexual, being abused, and being male. These are the narratives of his character that I aimed to redeem.

P1's first non-verbal story, in association with the stories of his ghosts, is about questioning the elements that define one as male. P1 questions these elements in association with being homosexual, and adds elements of the sexual and the homoerotic, these being elements that come to play in his personal association with being homosexual. This story plays on Joe Pitt's journey of portraying the butch male, yet discovering himself as being homosexual. The story also conveys the story of Nicholaas, who needed to conform to the ideals of military expectations in his originating text *Moffie* (Van Der Merwe, 2006), yet engages each day with his own homoerotic urges:

Moffie tells the story of his ghost. He stands as one is standing before a mirror. He touches parts of his face. He then starts to make circular movements on his face. The movements spread to his neck, down to his chest, and they become bigger. They end up at his crotch, which he suddenly grabs. He lets out a silent scream

⁶⁵ It should be noted that while the content is made through individual process with the actors, that the actors eventually became representatives of their gender, sexuality and race through their performances, as the bodies of actors becomes symbols to an audience member who is only exposed to the performance.

and falls to his knees. He gets up, stands at attention, then carries on scavenging artefacts.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

The second non-verbal story is based on P1's association with an army helmet. P1 tells the story of a male who is constantly emasculated by his father. This story is also expressed in association with Joe's own bad relationship with his father, as well as the bullying that Nicholaas endured from his father. P1 ends the story in a homoerotic gesture of self-pleasuring, which, according to P1, expresses the notion of enjoying his own genitals:

Moffie finds the helmet, and tells the story with his body. He stands at attention, then starts to make movements with his body as if he is being shoved around. He starts to touch his face and starts to wash his face. He then starts to wash the floor. He starts to run around in circles until he comes to a standstill, touching himself everywhere, until he pretends to jerk himself off, after which he falls down on his knees. He stays there, until Hanekom comes over to give him a kick, after which he starts to scavenge artefacts again.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

The third corporeal story is expressed as P1's association with an army jacket. P1 puts on the jacket in accordance with old memories of his ghosts. P1 has at this stage found redemption within himself. He celebrates this redemption through dance and pretending to have a party with guests. The final moment of self-acceptance comes when P1's character Moffie is proposed to:

Moffie finds the jacket. He starts to dance with it. He pretends that he's at a dinner party. At some point he stops the dancing, because his imaginary boyfriend proposed to him. He accepts the proposal, and starts to scavenge more artefacts in a cheerful, dancing manner.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P1 then wrote a monologue that exists out of elements of the works he has written in association with his own experiences:

Moffie: Now imagine this: Jou varknek, jy is niks in die lewe nie. Jy is dom en het 'n IK van hoenderkak. Jy moet uit daardie klein wêreld van jou kom. Jou koolkop jy moet die skottelgoed gaan was en maak jou suster se donnerse

sandboks skoon. Gee my water aan wat 'n halwe meter voor my staan.
Maak my toilet skoon en was die vloere op jou knieë. As jy 'n mop gebruik
dan wetter ek jou. Gaan kyk na jou broer buite en as hy seerkry dan bliksem
ek jou dood. He wanted me to be Billy Poes like him. He wanted me to be
this fucking cunt. But I can't.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P1 was making use of his own current reality in relation to his past realities to produce new stories. In accordance with Benjamin's (1968:258) notion of redeeming the past as an image, P1 is making use of his own memories in order to relate to the characters of Joe Pitt and Nicholaas. P1 recognises that these past images are still affecting him in current realities. He is digging through the metaphorical rubble of his "self" in order to understand his reality in the present.

P1 narrates Moffie as feminine and masculine, conflicted, vulnerable yet strong. Moffie's images spoke to the research as a conversation between binary images expressed through one body. Moffie is constructed to express Afrikaner culture as being conflicted. P1 ends his monologue with the expression 'I am a moffie' (Vermeulen, 2016), challenging the insulting word while inhibiting its characteristics. P1 also wrote about the abuse that a feminine young male endures within the Afrikaner culture. He redeems his character (and perhaps himself) through expressing reactive anger towards such abuse.

P1 made a lot of gestures using his hand and his crotch. P1's use of his crotch in his corporeal stories navigated an understanding of masculinity and sexuality as intertwined. P1 becomes the "Performing Denkbild", performing images of masculinity and sexuality as through the lens of himself. However, this intertwining of sexuality and masculinity excludes individuals who identify as homosexual and feminine. P1 thus corresponded to the images that construct his character: extreme masculinity and queer sexuality. P1 explored the queerness of his character through being vulnerable. The act of failing normative expectations of being male made the character vulnerable. P1 dug through his personal experiences of what it means to be homosexual and male, and what it means to express one's sexuality through masculinity. Expressing masculinity still plays on the rigid roles that were constructed in a colonial South Africa. P1's character is constructed to be frictionous. However, to remake one's identity through flexibility is not expressed here as a rigid process of discarding all the elements that upheld power regimes in colonial South Africa. Masculinity is approached as a characteristic that is

compatible with before-taboo expressions of homosexuality. P1's homoerotic gestures regarding the use of his crotch allows me to re-examine the white male body as also being sexual. Here the notion of being sexual is not merely assigned to the black body, as was the colonial discourse. P1 thus redeemed his character as one who portrays masculine properties without the attempt of oppressing others. He also expresses his character as one who is a white male, still capable of expressing sexual urges and identifying himself as homosexual.

The notion of reflecting on the character through similarities was prominent in the way the actor portrayed the Moffie character. His own struggles with patriarchal abuse and struggling with his sexuality came through the redemptive monologue he wrote, as he reflected through writing on his own life. The actor first referred to notions on beauty and fragmentation of the self in his monologue. He then proceeded to write on the abuse by "Billy Poes"⁶⁶ on his character. Eventually, the actor wrote on notions of self-acceptance, and how he has come to accept his own sexuality. He ends the text with exclaiming "I am a MOFFIE!" The actor thus made use of his own lived experiences in writing his character's redemptive monologue.

5.1.4.2. *Femme*

Femme is the angel of feminism. The actor, hereafter referred to as P2, was interviewed according to her own associations with the themes and images that speak to her character. P2 expressed her own notions of being female, progress, *othering*, the notion of normalisation, redemption, Siopis' work, and current states of homosexuality. P2's answers regarding the struggles of being female and progress stemmed from her personal struggles of being female within a corporate environment. Her answers on *othering*, normalisation, and current states of homosexuality stemmed from her experiences of being a student at the University of Pretoria studying drama in 2013.

P2 spoke of being voiceless and yet obtaining power through being female. P2 spoke on the varying positions of being female, of positions of power and positions of disadvantage. In P2's words, the female is designated a special place in society by the way she is expected to act, but "respect is a voyage, just because you're female," (Vermeulen, 2016). She means that the female body is not humanised unless it acts in a certain way. According to P2, respect

⁶⁶"Billy Poes" is the name he made up for the patriarchal abuser in his own life.

and equality define the notions of progress. It is necessary to move forward, as it is necessary to change even postcolonial perceptions on how it is expected for a female to act. According to P2, these postcolonial perceptions are still reproducing colonial discourse on the white, female body. This perception adheres to Hook's writing on the colonial still being present in the postcolonial. It is supposedly expected of the white female to be submissive and silent, and not to display any sexual desire. P2 is thus underlining the objective of changing historical direction in order to progress the self. According to P2, normalisation is the opposite of difference, and thus the opposite of change.

Femme spoke to the correlations between being female and being queer. Through her experience in corporate spaces, she testifies how the female is forced to abstain from bettering herself and thus making a capitalistic success⁶⁷ of herself. She becomes a queer failure through circumstance, and not by choice. This speaks to Halberstam's (2011:88) notion of the queer subject already being subverted to failure, as the subjected queer is under the control of the normative power relations, which do not allow her to progress herself. P2 internalises queerness through an observation of how colonial power binaries still play out in a contemporary South African workforce. According to P2, the male body is given more power than the female body, and the white body is given more power than the black body. It is also problematic that any forms of identifying the self beyond these binaries are rendered invisible. She reports on being treated differently than her male counterparts, often sexualised as a female object for the male subject's pleasure, and not given the leverage her male counterparts are given.

P2 was given the opportunity to voice these frustrations through her character Femme. Femme was not constructed to voice all female individuals in a South African landscape, as postcolonial South Africa is constructed from multiple voices. She was constructed to voice the oppression of females that is still occurring in South Africa. Femme was constructed to voice how old colonial power binaries regarding gender still play out on a postcolonial, post-apartheid, and even post-reconciliation, landscape. As stated before, the white body is placed above the black body, and the male body is placed above the female body. These old power binaries play out through a lack of reflection being encouraged in South Africans, by not being

⁶⁷ It should be noted that in Chapter One I refer to the process of capitalistically progressing the self as historical locomotion – however, the problem addressed here is that the choice to capitalistically progress the self is taken away from the female in a corporate environment. She is given less autonomy of her future and her choices, and inherently becomes queer. However, she can also use this new found queerness as a tool to progress the self redemptively.

educated on how an old system failed contemporary forms of progress, and by South Africans still upholding old ideologies regarding gender.

P2's character, Femme, had a special role within the new playtext. She was constructed to express the struggles that the female body might endure while challenging masculine properties⁶⁸. P2's movements are quirky and challenge the audience to endure her as a *femme fatale*. P2 expresses both feminine and masculine qualities through her character and redeems herself from social stigmas through physical expression and verbal language. P2 was also instructed to construct Femme as crude, masculine, and as one constantly raising her voice⁶⁹. This instruction was a means of challenging older ideologies regarding the white female body as submissive and silent.

5.1.4.3. Mother

The actor playing Mother, hereafter referred to as P3, tells the stories of a mother whose child had passed away from HIV and AIDS. P3's style of storytelling was more literal than P1's. She recognises the histories and stories within small objects, such as her child's favourite toy and in the poem she reads about one of her ghosts. She tells these stories according to her own associations.

Mother's first story is based on Angifi Proctor Dladla's poem *She Became the Mother Again*, found in Rasebotsa, Samuelson and Thomas (2004:123). P3 used her body to convert images of vulnerability and desperation:

Mother finds the poem 'She Became the Mother Again'. She tells the story with her body. She rubs the book on the side of her face. She then throws the book into the air. After she catches the book, she makes a twirl. She moves the book down the left of her, then the right, then the middle, after which she lifts her right leg, lifts the book into the air and opens the book. She then crouches her body inwards, after which she places the book by her monument, hugs herself and twirls to the right in order to signify femininity, and continues to scavenge for artefacts.

⁶⁸ In reflection, it is noted that one female's experiences cannot speak for a collective body of South African females from different races and sexualities.

⁶⁹ In a 2018 reconsideration, I realised that in 2016 I gave Femme binary properties regarding masculinity and femininity, which may take away from the notion of constructing a character through Denkbilder.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

With the second story, Mother discovers a toy, a wooden car that used to belong to her child. P3 conveyed sentimentality and feminine qualities through her body:

Mother finds her child's toy. She tells the story with her body. She gives two steps forward, holding the toy while smiling, she then gives a big twirl while holding the toy in the air. She crouches inwards with the toy, after which she throws the toy into the air twice. She runs in a circle with the toy, suddenly stops, runs backwards, bends backwards with the toy in the air, then slowly she places the toy down, after which she just walks away.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

The third story is an expression of Mother's ghosts, which are the ghosts of the Mother who supposedly wrote the poem and Hannah Pitt. P3 expressed desperation through movement and expressed her own despair through her corporeal performance. Lastly, P3 wrote a monologue on the struggles of taking care of a child that is suffering from HIV/AIDS:

Mother tells the story of her ghost. She walks around rocking a baby, humming a lullaby. The rocking becomes bigger, until she starts to dance in swaying motions. She sways her arms in half moons, and starts to twirl around. She then crouches to the left, and then to the right, after which she buries her face in her arms as if crying. She lifts her face up, stares in front of her, then continues scavenging for artefacts.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

The third corporeal story, as well as the monologue, spoke to the desperation of the ghost Mother-from-the-poem in trying to save a sick child. The story also spoke to Kushner's (1991, 1993) Hannah's own tiring process of having to take care of Kushner's Harper, her daughter-in-law. P3's feminine qualities reinforced a stereotype of being a mother; yet it also portrayed the vulnerability that one does not always have the chance of showing when one is placed in the position of the caretaker. One's sympathy shifted from the deviant child to caretaker, who has to sacrifice notions of self-definition and subjectivity in order to take care of someone else's deviancies.

P3's character became the queer subject constructed from the images of femininity, caretaker, desperation, and a lack of progression. As the caretaker of one who does not

progress capitalistically, this character offers insight on what it means to not capitalistically progress the self. One is placed on the margins of visibility through not contributing to society capitalistically, meaning that one produces a marginalised reality. Yet, P3's character shows compassion through the process of queering herself. P3's character portrays the compassion with the other. She also becomes the other to colonialist modes of centralisation through being female and through not progressing capitalistically. The Mother creates meaning for herself through compassion, in valuing life beyond progress. However, through the text, she is taught to also have compassion for herself and to see value in herself beyond caring for her deviant child.

P3 focussed on feminine qualities that would let the audience perceive her character as vulnerable. In reflection, it might have been more optimal if she also expressed qualities of strength. This would have given a better three-dimensional feel to her character, and would have spoken to the notion of redeeming the white female from the position of being a submissive, silent character. A caretaker, in my opinion, is someone who displays immense strength. It thus might have been more effective to display vulnerability as the character seems to deviate from the image of being a strong person who has everything under control.

5.1.4.4. Angelika

Angelika is the angel-version of Harper. The actor playing this character was thus commenting on the various themes, these being specifically gender, sexuality and physical and mental illness, which speak to Harper's journey. This actor will hereafter be referred to as P4. P4 was interviewed on notions of progress, *othering*, homosexuality, HIV/AIDS as queer progress, being female, mental deviation, and redemption.

For P4, one is progressing in limits. One needs to turn inwards towards the self, and inspect one's own deviancies, which one, according to Angelika, must always have under control:

Angelika: Progress is an interesting concept. You're progressing, but in limits. For society to progress would mean that you should place more detail on the deviancies of yourself. You will always look after that. And have it under control.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P4 also recognises the various possibilities that being *othered* produces. According to Angelika, being *othered* produces historical redirection, yet it also enhances the seat of power. One is free from normative expectations of shaping one's identity. One is free to engage in a frictious interrogation of the self, and in imagining newer realities for a postcolonial South Africa. However, to bring about these newer realities is to challenge the colonial after-effects regarding the oppression of various races and genders still in play on a postcolonial South African landscape.

The body, according to P4, rejects itself through contracting HIV/AIDS. The body cannot react, and thus loses its autonomy and means of reproduction. The body thus becomes queer. As in the case of P3, having compassion and finding value in the individual that cannot progress the self, one queers oneself in having to find value in what does not necessarily progress the self. Alternative realities thus consist of compassion, and not in valuing the urge to constantly progress the self without end.

"To be female is to be the ultimate other," (Vermeulen 2016). According to P4, the female body cannot gain masculine status. Mental illness, like the notion of HIV/AIDS, becomes a deviation. One creates one's own reality; yet, as one becomes older, one needs to conform to society:

Angelika: I used to talk to myself when I was little. I created my own reality. But it's not acceptable when you're older. It's embarrassing. But I created my own reality. And in that, I could cope with reality. Anxiety and depression and medicine. It's interesting that it's treated so easily. It's all deviation. But you do conform to society.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P4 produced conversations between the notions of queering the self and progressing the self. According to P4, it is necessary to queer the self in order to progress the self. However, in contrast to the notion of changing historical direction through becoming queer, P4 also states that one must eventually adhere to normative realities in order to function, according to the dominant power relations. P4's notions on progression produced a paradox, which is used as a guideline to constantly progress oneself. One must know when to be different and express one's deviancies, yet one must also know when to "play by the rules" in order to achieve what one desires. P4's text thus centres on playing games, on knowing how to direct the self in order to progress the self.

I differed on P4's notions of progression. From my perspective, to progress the self is to queer the self. I argue that it is optimal to progress the process through which marginalised individuals can voice themselves through the compassion of South African individuals attempting to free the South African landscape from colonial effects. To play between linear progression and queer progression is to silence oneself at times, instead of creating new images through which others can also progress themselves.

P4 was a conflicted character, in that her text at times contrasts itself as well as the text of other characters. However, Angelika is viewed as a progressive character. She is not only a character who is linearly progressive but also one who progresses through making use of her failures as images. P4 viewed failure, deviation and illness from a positive perspective. This may come across as naive when one considers the actual experiences of being ill, being deviated and dealing with failure. However, P4's positive perspectives form an important foundation of the playtext, as the text argues that one changes historical direction through a new interpretation of deviation, illness and failure.

The songs that Harper sang were used in correlation with Simon and Garfunkel's (1963) song *Sound of Silence*, which was performed by Angelika. The song is defined in this research as a search for reason in a linear progressive reality:

Hello darkness, my old friend
I've come to talk with you again
Because a vision softly creeping
Left its seeds while I was sleeping
And the vision that was planted in my brain
Still remains within the sound of silence

In restless dreams I walked alone
Narrow streets of cobblestone
'Neath the halo of a street lamp
I turned my collar to the cold and damp

When my eyes were stabbed
By the flash of a neon light
That split the night
And touched the sound of silence

Sound of Silence (Simon, 1963), performed in *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016)

5.1.4.5. Writer

Writer is constructed from the ghosts of Mduli, Moletse, and Prior Walter. The actor, hereafter referred to as P5, associated with these ghosts and their stories according to his own experience of being African, and according to the marginalisation he himself endures. He commented that he is often being labelled by other South Africans as a “coconut” and “trying to be white”.

P5’s first story was the physical expression of the stories of his ghosts, which he mainly expresses through using his hands:

Writer tells the story of his ghost. He starts by washing his hands. Then he starts to wash his arms, then his face. He suddenly stops, looks straight in front of him, and stretches his right arm out in front of him. He turns his hand around to look at it, takes his hand to the right, then to his knee, then slowly to his crotch. He lets out a silent scream, starts to shake, suddenly stops, puts on a smile, and continues to scavenge for artefacts.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

The second story involved a soccer ball, with which P5 played until he finally rejected it. This notion of rejecting the ball signified P5’s character Writer having to give up his childhood in order to face the harsh realities of life. These realities involved having HIV/AIDS and becoming a political fighter:

Writer finds the ball. He tells its story. He picks up the ball, looks at it from all angles, laughs and throws it into the air. After catching the ball, he takes it to Child, crouches down by her side, and hands her the ball. At first she is hesitant, but then she takes the ball. Writer walks away to scavenge more artefacts.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

As soon as P5 engaged with the police boots for his third corporeal story, his feet became stuck. This expressed the notion of being stuck in one’s circumstances, such as the prison cell. This story also expressed the notion of being stuck in one’s anger, which is signified by the fact that the boots belonged to his oppressor:

Writer finds the police officer's boots. He tells its story with his body. He takes the one boot, picks it up, and rubs it, almost as if to bring about a genie. He then tries to pick up the other boot, but it's too heavy. He then places his feet in these boots, and tries to walk, but he can't move. He gives up, steps out of the boots, and does a little twirl of freedom. He then touches his face and goes on his knees, in order to signify an image of race. Directly after him, the angels copy this last movement.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P5 told a fourth story through a beer bottle. P5 told the story of John Moletse, whose boyfriend spiked his drink in order to rape him:

Writer finds the beer bottle. He tells its story. He takes the bottle and pretends to be at a bar. He talks to and cheers an imaginary friend. He takes a sip of the bottle, after which he doesn't feel so well. He stares at the bottle, becomes dizzy, and goes to sit down. Eventually he places his head in his hands, lets the bottle roll away, and just sits there.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P5 then finally wrote his monologue, which is about redemption occurring through the notion of letting go. P5 wrote on the importance that writing has in this process, which is in accordance with his ghost Mduli, who expresses his trauma through writing.

P5's character was thus constructed out of images of race, gender, and redemption. P5 made use of the "Reproduction-Reflexive-Redemptive" triad (Taub, 2009:266), by making a thorough study of his ghosts. He studied how they differed from his own life experiences, and how to construct the character according to growing from the political fighter to being the self-reflexive writer. Through being marginalised in a colonial South Africa, P5's character found a means of imagining newer realities through an emotive journey. Frustration with being oppressed because of race, led Writer to find an inner sense of worth without adhering to normative power relations. Writer found freedom in expressing the self as homosexual. Writer found his greatest freedom in the act of writing even when confined to prison walls. Through Writer voicing his narratives of oppression and rape and discrimination, Writer made it possible for other South Africans to see a reality that is not conforming to colonial rules of how one should act. Identity specifications for the black male body are challenged. Writer does not express himself through being overtly sexual or violent, but through voicing his reality and himself as valid, and as worthy of being heard.

P5 redeems his character Writer through self-expression. This self-expression occurred through telling stories and thus narrating the queer self in order to deal with one's personal trauma. In this aspect, the character Writer slightly resembles the character Patience, who is the figure who tells stories in order to redeem the writers of the stories in her monument. P5 understood the process of narrating the self in order to redeem the self and thus becomes constructed as the character most associated with Patience.

P5 focussed on expressing characteristics of a writer, as well as one who is vulnerable to disease and rape. I would have preferred for P5 to also express characteristics of a political fighter, and thus to portray a more robust character. P5's character is beaten down, and expressed his redemption through storytelling rather than fighting. Perhaps P5 perceived his character, in relation to himself, to have become gentle, subverting his anger through telling stories rather than fighting.

The actor playing the Writer was perhaps most successful in understanding what was expected of him. As for all the writers, it was expected for him to voice his character's reality through non-verbal narratives and to redeem his character through self-acceptance at the end through speech.

The actor portraying the Writer managed to engage with his character through their differences and chose to focus on the information and stimuli he was given. Although both the actor and the character are black males, the actor identifies as heterosexual, has to my knowledge not contracted HIV and AIDS, and has never been raped. These are all traits of the character he was portraying. However, he reflected on this character's narratives through empathy in his non-verbal storytelling and could write a monologue from a critical stance on how he deemed it fit to redeem his character.

5.1.4.6. III

III is based on the original angel from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), and the actor playing III reflected on the themes of the old text. The actor playing III, hereafter referred to as P6, was interviewed on notions of progress, a South African apocalypse, fire, South African redemption, and the body.

According to P6, progress is an effective means through which to obtain personal and social change, but it must only occur "up to a point" (Vermeulen, 2016). The difference between P6's character and the original character from Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) is that

this character endorses progress as a means to move forward, while Kushner's (1991, 1993) original angel argued that one must stand still.

An apocalypse will happen as a "series of events" (Vermeulen, 2016), and thus as the result of historical moments that build on one another. It can be argued that this apocalypse has already happened for those oppressed under the apartheid regime, by being subverted to poverty and having been dehumanised. This notion of an apocalypse thus refers to the lived realities on a South African dystopian landscape. This dystopia came to be through a series of events, through the act of colonisation and now the lack of active struggle in redeeming South Africa's marginalised narratives. In order to gain redemption, P6 states that one needs to obtain a mind shift, and thus a shifting of ideologies. According to P6, South Africans need to act together in order to find a means of redemption within the harshness of a possible bigger apocalypse:

III: A mind shift!!! There must be a mind shift. People need a mind shift. People differ too much on what they want from the future. We need to act together. You need to act together. And so the great work begins.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P6 also commented on the notion of being male. According to P6, "there is not only one way of being male, you know?" (Vermeulen, 2016). The notion of being male has changed for P6 as historical ideologies have shifted. P6 reflected on his own identity of being male, producing personal paradoxes expressed through the collective. As one shifts one's identity through a study of the frictions within one's self, one moves away from the strict identity formulations that one was prescribed in an apartheid-era.

P6's character, in relation to the original angel in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993), portrays a paradox. I introduced the idea to P6 that the angel has shifted its own mind in relation to notions on progress. The angel that was created through Kushner's mind is now completely reimaged through P6's own personal associations. The angel was approached as a thought image, and thus as a rhizome: new ideas and experiences have formed part of III's identity. P6 plays on the notion of self-reflection. I introduced the idea that Kushner's angel might have changed his own thoughts in relation to Kushner's Prior's plea for progression. The character III was constructed to reconsider progression, although he still had his reservations on how one must progress the self.

In contrast to the character Moffie, I instructed P6 to play III as a femme male homosexual (although the angel from Kushner's texts (1991, 1993) has no gender). I wanted to introduce a male character with feminine qualities, although playing camp may have made the character two-dimensional. It might have been more optimal to have instructed P6 to play with feminine and masculine characteristics and to have attempted to regain the sense of spirituality that Kushner's angel portrayed.

5.1.4.7. Hendrik Hanekom⁷⁰

The character Hendrik Hanekom is the Afrikaans white male policeman who the actor, hereafter referred to as P7, attempted to redeem, but failed. P7 attempted to redeem Hanekom by obtaining various stories of cultural difference. This character, never redeemed, spoke to the devastating effect that South Africa's histories have on the individual's conscience. P7's character was thus an embodiment of a dystopian South Africa on the conscious of previous white Afrikaner males. P7 inflicted the notion of white guilt onto his character. P7 portrayed the study of the white, Afrikaner heterosexual male in interrogating the frictions within his apartheid-era prescribed identity. P7 also expressed Hanekom's stories more realistically rather than the other actors, who used abstract expressions in relation to the artefacts.

P7 told his first corporeal story, the story of the ghosts, through expressions of violence and notions of sexuality. P7 played on the notion of questioning his character's masculinity through his personal history of violence and ideological conformity:

Hanekom tells the story of his ghost. He starts to pace up and down. Suddenly he stops, takes aim, and pretends to shoot. He repeats this three times. The last time, he turns the gun on himself. Unable to shoot, he starts to shake, throws the gun down, and continues looking for artefacts.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P7 told Hanekom's second corporeal story through the use of a scarf, which signified typical clothing that was worn in District Six before it was demolished. This story was told as the infliction of violence on the self:

⁷⁰ This character's name was not derived from the old actor Hendrik Hanekom.

Policeman (Hanekom) finds the scarf, tells the story with his body. At first he clenches the scarf in his hand. Then he raises the scarf to the sky. He then tries to step on the scarf. Realising it won't work, he spins the scarf around his body, until he chokes himself with the scarf, after which he throws the scarf on the ground, and goes over to Writer to shove him around before he continues to build on his monument.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P7's third story, which involves another engagement with clothing, tells of the despair that personal guilt inflicts on his character. This clothing used was tailored in the style of typical clothing worn from the era of the demolished District Six. It thus tells the story of the violence he inflicted on its citizens:

Policeman (Hanekom) finds the clothing and tells its story with his body. He wraps the clothing around his body, then walks bent over as if he is carrying a heavy burden. He then starts to shake and silently screams as if the clothing is burning him. He throws the clothing on the ground and falls to his knees.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P7's monologue expresses the despair of a man who cannot forgive himself. It tells of the inner struggle of a man who has lost his identity by trying to obtain it through social ideals. The violence P7 expressed towards his fellow actors inflicted the memories thereof, and the character cannot make peace with the pain he inflicted on others.

P7's character spoke to certain aspects of the failed white male Afrikaner identity. By not being able to remake itself, the Afrikaner identity is killing itself. The Afrikaner identity is metaphorically expressed through a man who is in turmoil. The man relates to the artefacts from which he has *othered* himself, through guilt and rejection. The white male Afrikaner has not gained true amnesty, as he has no past images to draw from in order to redeem itself. The white Afrikaner male is forced to remake himself, but in order to do so, he must kill off all the social ideas that portrayed him as a figure of supreme masculinity.

The character Hanekom could have been redeemed if he restructured his identity before joining the angels. However, the character was consumed by his guilt. He was constructed to still inflict the violence on others, which had led to this guilt in the first place. The fact that P7 kills off his character also introduced notions on mental health into the script, by making suicide a real occurrence that happens on the South African landscape.

5.1.4.8. Child

The character Child is the writer who is the physical representation of Harper's inner child. Although the actor, hereafter referred to as P8, used simple vocal expressions in order to portray the childlikeness of her character, her physical expressions were complex and feminine. P8 incorporated dance into the expression of a young Harper Pitt. P8 also used her own research, which she did in relation to anxiety issues and child abuse.

P8's first corporeal story is the expression of Harper's childhood. P8 experienced herself as being very childlike. P8 felt like a girl in a bad environment. She expressed vulnerability through her legs, and also made use of the imagination as an escape from the bad environment:

Child tells the story of her ghost. She jumps up, runs in a circle, makes a leap, stops, turns around, runs in the opposite direction and makes a cart wheel. As soon as she gets up, you see her backing away slowly, then all of a sudden she falls down, her face covered in one hand, the other hand outstretched as if to protect herself, then slowly she just falls over, as if she's passed out. She lies there for a while before she gets back up to scavenge for artefacts.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P8 then told a corporeal story with Harper's favourite toy, which, according to P8, is a ragdoll:

Child clenches her fist to her forehead and the other hand grabs her stomach⁷¹ in order to signify mental illness. She then finds her favourite toy and tells a story with it. At first, she rolls around on the ground with it. Then she jumps up, stretches the toy out in front of her, and starts to spin around until she becomes dizzy. She puts the toy down and does a cartwheel. She starts to dance around the toy. She grabs the toy, runs up to Harper, then runs back and places the toy at her Monument. She then sits down to listen to the rest of the stories.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P8's character found redemption in the corporeal story she told with a wine bottle. The wine bottle indicates the alcohol abuse of her father and the violence he inflicted towards his family:

⁷¹ These gestures may also have referred to physical illness. However, according to P8, the gestures referred to mental illness.

Child finds a bottle. She tells a story with it with her body. She lifts the bottle up high, looks at it, and places it down. She then spins her body over her legs, as if reaching out, then brings her body in as if hiding from something. She rolls over the ground, to and forth, picks up the bottle again, and rolls it away from her. She stands up, takes a few steps backwards, [and] then continues to scavenge for more artefacts.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

P8 then wrote a monologue on voicing Harper's inner speech that pertains to some part of her childhood. P8's monologue consisted of simple ideas around questioning one's own sexuality as a child and running away from abuse towards self-inflicted trouble. She attempts to find happiness through the expression of self.

P8's explorations with the images she was given formed an important means through which Harper as a storyteller is constructed. These are the images that Patience should have guided her to return to, in order to see more of herself than the failed Mormon housewife whose husband's sexuality reinforces her identity as a failed woman. However, there was very little interaction between the two actors playing Harper and Child. It would have been clearer to the audience that Harper is constructed to redeem herself through the voicing of P8's stories, had the two actors been instructed to interact more.

5.1.4.9. Elizabeth

The actor hereafter known as P9⁷² would have played the character Elizabeth from Head's (1974) *A Question of Power*. P9 produced three physical sequences, which was namely to express Elizabeth as character and as ghost, to tell the corporeal story of Elizabeth finding a head scarf (which ties back to her identity as a woman of colour), and to tell the corporeal story of Elizabeth finding pills (which refers to her mental deviation). However, because of circumstances the character was cut from the text, and thus also her corporeal stories. It might have been more optimal for the character playing Harper to perform her stories, as the two characters both suffered from mental illnesses. I did, however, keep the monologue, and

⁷² P9 left the cast due to a strenuous time schedule. However, I still decided to record her process for the sake of the research.

gave it to the character playing Patience to perform. The performance of this monologue achieved a maternal tone in Patience's overall storytelling.

P9 wrote her monologue⁷³ from a third-person point of view, as to distance herself from the character. The monologue centred on the notion of redemption occurring through maternity. In the case of the character Elizabeth, she was redeemed through her own sense of community and progressing herself through her child:

Patience: Elizabeth redeems herself in the laughter of her son as he plays at the river. The laughter bounces across the walls of her house and mind, banishing all the demons that lay in wait in the dark. She excels in the laughter wrapping it around herself like a child's blanket protecting her from the boogeyman in her life. She runs to her son to join in his laughter in his life. In the knowledge that he is a shield to keep the cold dark away.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

5.1.4.10. Harper and Patience

The two narrators improvised stories on the following themes: being woman, being physically ill, being mentally ill, being secretly homosexual, being disappointed in a relationship, being *othered*, and taking care of someone who is ill. The actors mostly used metaphors and different tones when speaking on love. The love between a man and a woman was critically discussed, while the attitude towards same-sex love was more sympathetic (except for the character Harper, for whom it was bitter).

Being woman was discussed in terms of desperation, bitterness and hope. The actors related to their own experiences of being woman, as well as to how being woman related to the themes of landscapes and progression. The notion of being woman was also related to being queer. In the woman's traditional role, she is capitalistically non-productive. She is also *othered* from the male.

Patience: ... We will be woman. We will be queer.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

⁷³ This monologue was spoken by Patience after P9's character was cut due to the actor leaving the process.

The theme of physical illness was narrated through the actors' personal anger, desperation and sympathy. There was a constant play between the notions of being physically ill, and being mentally ill. The actor playing Harper (hereafter referred to as P10), placed more emphasis on being mentally ill. She related to mental illness according to how she understood her character. The actor playing Patience (hereafter referred to as P11), placed more emphasis on being physically ill.

Hidden homosexuality as a topic was mostly received through sympathetic discussions. In this instance, P10's personal perspectives came through stronger than the relations to her character. These perspectives created interesting nuances between P10 expressing her own knowledge of queerness, and P10 constructing Harper as a character, who still interrogated notions of being queer. The homosexual identity and the identity of being female was again brought up in the discussions on failed relationships. The actors focussed specifically on the relationship between the characters of Harper and Kushner's (1991, 1993) Joe.

Being *othered* correlated with being woman, thus once again emphasising the personal relations the actors had to being *othered* as being queer through being female. To take care of someone who is ill was also correlated with being female, and in this case, in line with the research, with the experience of being a mother.

The actors thus mostly focussed on the experience of being woman, bringing a play between feminine and masculine qualities that I hoped for. The actors were also narrating the text from the perspective of being female. The actors thus helped to attain the research goal of obtaining a view on the themes on Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) from the perspective of one who is female.

5.1.5. The First Group Rehearsal: The Discussions

This section, still part of the workshop process, is an archive of the shared perspectives through which the actors produced the lens of the text. During this rehearsal, the cast was instructed to make still images with their bodies according to the following written images: being child; failure; sexual freedom; prejudice; redemptive space; being raped; being mentally ill; sexuality; being woman; being homosexual; HIV/AIDS; being black; being *othered*; being a fugitive.

The cast initially had to warm up by using any exercises they obtained from studying at the University of Pretoria. The cast then explored these exercises non-verbally in order to express themselves, meaning that they explored with their bodies in various positions based on these exercises. The cast then had to make images according to their relations with the above subject matter and then had to choose images that speak most strongly to their character. Afterwards, we discussed the images.

The discussion mostly turned towards personal experiences, personal opinions, and current events. The following is thus the cast's opinions and ideas along with my own perspectives:

The cast associates the theme of being child with playing and innocence. The cast also expressed the process of being a child as a process of constant change, of awkwardness and sexual anxiety. I compared these opinions with nuances of being vulnerable, and easily influenced. I thus wrote in Child's character to be easily influenced by the stories she hears, so that she could in turn influence Harper to redeem herself⁷⁴.

Failure was expressed as self-disappointment. It is expressed through pain, self-beating⁷⁵, insecurity, and oppression. I wrote this into the text as Harper's own sense of failure and beating herself down, along with my perspective that failure provides the scope for creating something new. This creation of newness is structured into the text according to the way the narratives play out.

Sexual freedom was discussed by the cast as being complex. It is a play between expressing feminine and masculine qualities. Prejudice, however, was not understood as a theme that speaks to specific occurrences. It is expressed through a lack of understanding and through being an oxymoron. Prejudice was understood as occurring through personal insecurity. Sexual freedom was mostly expressed in the text through the way in which Child was constructed, as the one who is most innocent. I associated sexual freedom with innocence, as one is not indoctrinated into what one should prefer or detest.

Rape was expressed as being a castration of the self, as one loses the power over one's free will. This was written into the text when Patience tells the stories that relate to Writer:

Patience: There is the story of a man who could not let it be. Yes, he had no power over any of it. His fate was inserted into him while he could barely breathe

⁷⁴ As said before, this influence would have been clearer to the audience if the two actors interacted more.

⁷⁵ Self-beating is a typical process for one who is mentally ill.

the night lights. He could not hear his lover's breathing as he inserted him with death. He could only read of the consequences in the papers.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

Mental illness was ironically expressed as freedom: as one is stigmatised, one can do as one pleases. Mental illness was also normalised as a phenomenon that is not rare. This was also ascertained by P4, although P10 argued that it is a death sentence. I decided to include P10's perspective into the playtext as script, thus depicting mental illness as a sort of prison that chains one's identity:

Harper: Madness is a death sentence. Everything that makes your life, your life, is taken away, and you become a ghost. What's the point of living, if you're a ghost anyway?

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

Being woman was defined by the cast as problematic. A woman constantly needs to adjust. She has to adopt certain mannerisms in order to be respected. The cast expressed a desire to be defined not according to one's sex, but according to the notion of being a person. I was in agreement with these perspectives according to my own experience of being woman. A woman is constantly reminded of how she should act, and what she should believe about the self as woman. The being of woman is thus written into the text as a complex phenomenon, specifically drawing arguments from the character Femme.

The discussion never referred to the black body as being overtly sexualised, but questioned the very idea of why one would ask what it means to be black. I paraphrased the cast saying, "It is what it is. It's just skin". The response of the cast to the question on being black was never in association with the theory from Gunkel, as referred to in Chapter Two: these theories pertained to the black body being used as a subject for scientific study – the black body was thus dehumanised. To be black, to the cast, was simply to be human, which means that the cast's experiences of being black never spoke to the 'otheredness' to which Gunkel and Pinto referred. This conflict of just being, and still having to live with the stigmas of being black was written into the playtext as a conversation between Angelika, Harper and Patience:

Angelika: But wait... the female is coming out of the landscape. The female is no longer part of the landscape, but she has a form, a voice, a history. Is the female white body pure? Is the black body then impure? And it cannot be controlled, like the white body?

Femme, Ill, Hanekom, Writer, Child and Mother touch their faces then fall to their knees in order to signify race.

Patience: It is what it is. It's just being alive. You just are. There's nothing more than skin.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

Patience: I am forever what I am. And it's not just skin anymore. I carry the histories of my landscape on my back. And I too, am tired. Just like you, I chose the wrong lover. I chose silence. Like you, I need to soar. Like you, I need to be free. I need to speak.

Harper: Then what is it really like, being black? If you don't mind me asking.

Patience: Being black is amazing. Being made to feel black... soiled, greased, greased and grinded, unwanted, unloved, unappreciated, she walked through life picking up labels, and they treated her like she was a trash can. And you die inside. Maybe she believed she was unworthy.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

The conversations were a reflection on the lived experiences of the cast in relation to the themes that would be utilised in the new text. By listening to one another, the cast reproduced their own perspectives through critical thinking. I, as dramaturg, was also engaged in a reflection of my own experiences and perspectives. I compared my own experiences and perspectives with that of the cast in order to produce a new text. New meanings on the themes were redeemed through the act of listening, reflecting and reproducing queer meanings through lived experiences. The new playtext is thus a reflection of these conversations, along with the reflections that occurred in the individual processes.

5.1.6. A Reflection on the Workshop Process

At this stage in the research, the workshop process had been completed. The process went a lot faster than what was anticipated, but produced a thorough practical and verbal "Progress-Queer Constellation" from which to produce a text. One of the actors, P9, left the show during the process and I replaced them. The crisis was thus to be playing a woman of colour through manipulation of the white, female body, in order to still maintain that dynamic

within the production. It was decided to avoid all possibilities of “blackface”, and thus to regenerate the character’s race as white. I decided to only focus on the theme of mental illness instead of the cultural.

As a dramaturg⁷⁶, I had been supplied with sufficient images and texts through which to compile the new text. A new playtext could now be created from which to reproduce various queer narratives as lived experiences. I reflected on the images and texts in order to find a queer logic to their substances. I aimed to reproduce this logic as a means of meaning-making through the representation of postcolonial realities.

5.2. The Writing Process

The text was written as an assemblage of fragments. It is a compilation of the verbal discussions, the interviews the researcher had with three of the actors, six actors’ monologues, all the actors’ corporeal narratives and the two narrator’s conversations. My role as a researcher was to construct these fragments into complex conversations that weave fluidly into various themes.

I constantly selected the fragments which spoke to the queerness of the landscape. This action refers back to the “Reproduction-Reflective-Redemptive triad”. As a writer, one constantly needs to reflect on the meanings within the fragments in order to assemble them as sources that produce new meanings.

I reflected on my own intentions, which is to produce a text that, as written in Benjamin (1968:255), “awakens the dead”. The text needed to produce the idea of a “postcolonial pause”, in which images are crystallised, in order to, according to Benjamin (1968:255), be retrieved and thus redeemed.

As stated before, the performance played out at a house in Equestria, Pretoria. I used the kitchen area, the living room, and the square paved area outside of the house. The actors playing angels entertained the audience inside the house, while the audience had the option of having a glass of wine. The performance thus also started in the house, with two of the

⁷⁶ A dramaturg, according to my understanding, is one who creates a performance text through theoretical research, in which case RLP is useful, and can either through devising or well-researched writing produce a performance text. The dramaturg can also play the role of director, and uses the same methodology in creating the text in their directing approach, in order for the performance text to make sense.

angels in the kitchen area, and one on top of the stairs in the living room. All of the angels met together at the entrance to the house and led the audience into the square paved area. In this area, the actors playing writers were scattered widely. The area was filled with artefacts. The actors playing writers went to and fro, gathering artefacts to literally build themselves monuments. The notion was that Patience's Monument would be presented through various monuments. This area was structured to represent a landfill, meaning that the actors playing writers could also be defined as waste pickers.



Figure 17: S Mahne, *Mess*. 2016

Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.

The actors playing narrators placed themselves at the middle back. They used the area in the middle to move around, while the actor playing Patience constantly gathered artefacts to give to the actor playing Harper. Harper never moved too far away from her cigarettes, which she constantly smoked throughout the performance. The actor playing Patience had a wider moving space. By the time Harper and Patience started with their dialogue, the three angels were at the back of the performance space, standing and moving against a dirt backdrop.

Each time a writer performed a monologue, they would move across the performance space to join the angels.

5.3. The Rehearsal Process

At this stage, the cast had been provided with a playtext from which to construct a performance, namely *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016). However, as soon as the rehearsal process started, the actor portraying Patience, P11 left the cast, as she was too busy with her own studies. This proved to be a crisis until we found a new actor, now known as P12. The rehearsal process was split up into various physical exercises, as well as full runs of the script.

I decided that the angels should be comical characters. The notion was to produce a sense of alienation from the text in order to allow the audience to think about what is being said. The contrast between the seriousness of the narrators, the writers, and the comical stance of the angels was also produced as a stylistic choice. It broke from the serious undertone of the script. The angels represented the *othered* academics, who constantly need to comment on every event happening around them. These comments steered the conversations into various directions, but, as discovered in the rehearsal process, also tended to anger P10 and P12 with their arrogant commentary.

5.3.1. Conversations

This section focusses on a casual conversation in which the cast and I engaged, in which the actors needed to reflect on their characters. The main themes that were produced were the experience of being an outcast and the theme of redemption. The most relevant conversation to this research was among P12, P10 and P8, in which Harper and Patience were discussed as constellations of images.

According to the conversation, Patience as the black body presents an entire race, as well as an entire sex, while Harper, as a white female, only presents her own problems. This produces a vast difference between Patience and Harper, as it is stated in the conversation

that it is because of white privilege⁷⁷ that the white female character is subjectified, while the black female character becomes a symbol. Harper is constructed to attempt to find solutions through a symbol of queerness. This symbol of queerness is merely used as a means of attempting to express herself.

It became evident that certain stereotypes of being the “Black Female” were being highlighted. The objective then was to highlight these stereotypes in such a way to provoke anger from P12. It was decided that this would occur through the naivety of both the characters of Harper and Angelika. This objective informed the means through which the characters’ provoking lines would be delivered by the actors. The question now is that, although P12 has the opportunity to voice Patience’s stories from her Monument, how will she find the opportunity to voice Patience’s own stories as images of herself?

Materially, Patience channelled her presence through being that of a diasporic female figure. The term “diaspora”, according to Pinto (2013:7) refers to the difficulty of establishing a specific order amongst various things, as well as the historical phenomenon formed through radical experiences in travel and commerce. According to Pinto (2013:7), these are innovations built on the political and the ethical worlds that existed before current knowledge about difference.

The black body, according to Pinto (2013:11), as diasporic subject, is represented as a binary, as both visible and invisible, and as a performative site of trauma. According to Pinto (2013:11), this site of trauma is echoed through its feminist representation as a site of economic and physical violence, as well as being collectively romanticised. Patience was thus not represented as an individual being, but as an image that represents a gender placed within a specific race.

The notion was to redeem – to voice, and to set in a different light – what Patience’s body represents from the space of being a site of violence, and from being romanticised. Patience was responded to as a character, and as an image. The objective was to work with the actor presenting Patience in order to produce text that may possibly redeem her, or reinforce the implications. As the implications were reinforced, it was a blunt reinforcement, which was done in order to reveal these implications as stereotypical ideas.

⁷⁷ My own white privilege came through the construction of the characters here.

Patience was finally re-enacted as a performed painting, shifting from being still to being a dynamic meaning-maker. There was thus an emphasis on the way in which visual art produces meaning, as being a visual document of emotive memory, ideological understanding and as a palimpsest of voices. It was through the coming-alive of Patience and her artefacts, which are her narratives, that emotive memory became performed memory.

Being re-enacted as a performed painting, Patience became a narrator. Her images as narrator consisted mainly of the artefacts the writers used corporeally to develop new stories. Patience became the speaker for these new stories. The actor voiced these stories from the perspective of being a black, female, South African angel, who has thus seen the histories of the landscape since before 1652.

Through Harper's images, I was able to construct the lens of the new text. Harper's journey was to make sense of her failures: failure at being a Mormon wife, at producing a living for herself, of being an American woman, of never being a mother, of being addicted to substances, of being mentally deviated, and of not being able to understand her husband, Joe Pitt. Each of these failures provided Harper with the opportunity to build an identity that is alternative to that of the collective norm to which she belongs, which is being an American Mormon housewife. Harper is introduced as a character through the following text, which the actor performed while she sat down at Patience's feet in the middle of the landfill:

Harper: I disappointed myself in trying to redeem myself. It feels excruciatingly painful.

Harper lights a cigarette.

Patience: I can only portray what I can see. I can tell you stories that will break your heart even further, but I hope that somehow you will find your way.

Harper: I'm sliced in half. I'm sitting on my feet. But I try to get up. I don't know where to go from here. It's interesting being in a woman's body with masculine intentions. I miss his penis.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

Harper's search for reason was in the means of redeeming herself. She attempted to redeem herself from being the failed Mormon American housewife, from being mentally deviated, as well as from being one who abuses herself. She questioned linear progress as a course that

does not progress the self, but those upholding power relations. The actor playing Harper had the goal to further deviate from the course of linear progression and the notion of stagnant realities in order to progress the self in a redemptive manner:

Harper: What if, we have it all backwards. And what we see is a dream? But when we dream, we're actually awake, in reality.

Harper does a little round jump in order to signify a childlike image.

Patience: It makes more sense than the lives we choose to live. More sense than the 9–5. We pay, to be able to pay. For that family, for the job that you may not want.

Harper: What if, when you dream, while you're awake, you catch little pieces of what's real, in this so called reality. At the end of the day, reality is just chemicals in your brain. What if you could choose your chemicals?

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

5.4. Changes in the Cast

The cast was ready to open, and only a few technical rehearsals would have remained. However, a short while before opening, P10 left the cast for personal reasons. This proved to be a great crisis. As we did not have a lot of time left, I decided to take over the role of Harper. I appointed P5 as my assistant director, as he was constantly commenting on the nuances within the play. He was also constantly making suggestions. It aided with the crisis of me not being able to direct anymore. We cut Elizabeth as a character, although we kept her monologue as Patience's speech. My role thus shifted from director to that of actor, which gave me a different perspective of the emotional progress of the theatrical production. I was now more emotionally involved in the process of redeeming a character, than cognitively involved in the creation of a theatrical play.

The following sections focus on my experiences as an actor of two different characters.

5.4.1. My Reflection as Elizabeth

I only had one chance to fully play this character, as I always had to stand in for other absent characters⁷⁸. The process was quite emotive and drew a lot from my personal memories.

The journey began with a woman who is very anxious and aware of her sexuality. Every time I looked at P8, I felt Elizabeth's guilt for failing her own child. I embodied queerness through being woman, being mentally ill, and through Elizabeth failing as a single parent.

As the character Hanekom commits suicide, and the text starts to focus on that, I felt extreme guilt for Elizabeth's own suicidal thoughts. I felt more *othered* through Elizabeth's own failure of maintaining herself. However, this guilt found a release through the text. Just before I delivered Elizabeth's monologue, I felt redeemed as a deviated entity. This redemption for me occurred especially through the deliverance of Angelika's text⁷⁹:

Angelika: I've never felt this guilty for breathing life. There's gospel playing in the background. It should be hope? It wasn't always for me. I survived. You did not. You tasted the sweet comfort of death. Eternal sleep. I remember my own calm. But I'm glad to be here now. Yet it tastes bitter. I'm sorry you had to feel that you had to cut your own wings in order to fly. But I do not blame you. This world can be a cruel place. I do not know your reason. I do hope you find the rest I could never find. I hope to find that through struggle. Even though I'm tired. Not too tired. As you were. I do not blame you. I do not think you're selfish. I think you're just tired. And there was no rest. Except for sleep. You broke hearts. You broke your own. Find sleep. And next time, I don't know.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

5.4.2. My Experience as Harper

My experience as Harper was also a redemptive-based journey. The journey as playing the character Harper was very emotionally driven, yet liberating. I found the character to be extremely vulnerable, angry, and anxious. My connection with P12 as Patience was very calming, almost as if Harper was constructed to look for a maternal figure in Patience. I also

⁷⁸ This was another crisis, as the actors could only experience the full nuances of the text when everybody was together – this was resolved through extending the rehearsal process.

⁷⁹ This monologue was written in memory of a fellow MA student at the University of Pretoria, who committed suicide.

realised that there is a naivety to Harper's character, which is most evident when she asks Patience what it is like being black. Patience is constructed to endure Harper until she becomes too angry. I realised that Patience has her own stories to tell, and shifted the focus of my own redemptive journey to that of Patience's journey.

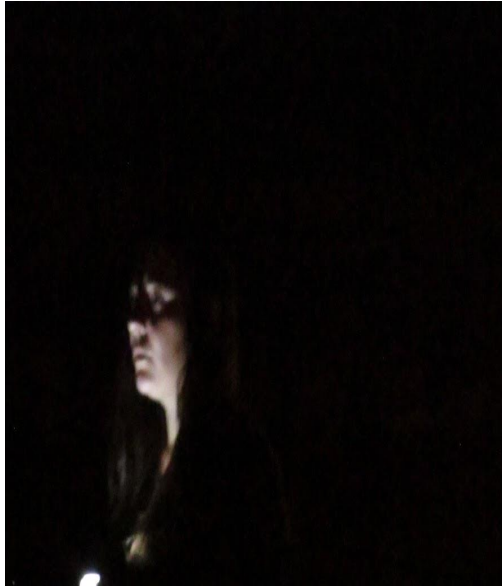


Figure 11: S Mahne, *Harper-as-Me*. 2016

Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.

Harper is depicted as a ghost-like figure, as she is depicted as a ghost of herself because of her mental illness. However, Harper finally becomes redeemed when her child-self presents her with a self-portrait. Patience explains Harper's journey to me, and I am left speechless. I only regained myself in the last song, *Meet me on the Battlefield* by Svercina (2016).

At that stage in my life, I could relate to Kushner constructing Harper to suffer from substance abuse. I was abusing alcohol as self-medication at that time, which resulted in me not fully concentrating on my role as director. When the situation escalated to a turning point, I held a session with my cast in which both the cast and I could raise our grievances. The cast redeemed me through their feedback, as well as through their appreciation of my dedication to portray the role of Harper.

5.5. Reflection on the Rehearsal Process

I am now moving back to a general reflection on the rehearsal process. As the cast was not always available at similar times, the rehearsal process initially occurred in fragments. This was problematic. There was always a different dynamic to be explored within the personal spaces of the characters, and how they related to one another. The actors finally found their group energy as we started with larger group rehearsals.

The most important theatrical facet was the notion of listening to one another. It spoke to theatrical skill, as well as the need for the characters to have their stories heard. The actors were very attentive to one another, and their corporeal stories started to sync, thus drawing connections between the various queer histories being presented.

At the end of the rehearsal process, all that was left to do was to find a space in which to perform and to produce rehearsals in which the technical aspects of the theatrical event would be orchestrated.

5.5.1. Technical Narration

The performance took place in the backyard of a house in Equestria, Pretoria. We filled the space with various artefacts (presenting the monument's literal artefacts), mostly consisting of clothes, alcohol bottles, and the characters' artefacts⁸⁰. This site was made into a landfill, which contained the various monuments that would be made from fragments (artefacts) of Patience's Monument.

The reason for using the clothing as artefacts was to create the notion of a domestic environment, while the bottles represented domestic violence. The performance started in the actual house on the performance site the three angels inhabited, who each had a torchlight.

The angels then led the audience outside to find themselves a seat amongst the rubble⁸¹, thus producing the notion that the audience is a part of the setting. Harper and Patience also

⁸⁰ I would have filled the space with a larger variety of artefacts if my budget had allowed it.

⁸¹ Angelika: After you have had your fill of politics, and my companions start to move outside, may you please join them and find yourself a seat amongst the rubbles, which we call our education... I mean, our history.
Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

had torchlights, and as soon as Harper started to sing, she would search for the audience with her torch. The torches were then used as microphones.

There were three cars that also produced light. P7 (at this point appointed as stage manager), plotted the lights according to the elements indicated in the script, as well as according to when the writers find their artefacts.

The cast was ready to perform.



Figure 12: S Mahne, *Gentle Nightmare*. 2016

Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.

5.6. The Performance Process



Figure 13: S Mahne, *Shoes*. 2016.

Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.

Above is an image that depicted the roof of the inside of the house. The aesthetic was P7's choice, as the shoes depicted narratives of characters such as Hanekom and Writer.

The first night had a rather intimate audience, meaning that the audience was small enough to sit in the performance space. However, it was still a process in which new nuances within the performance were being discovered. P3 found a new connection with the P7 as Hanekom. P7 made the connection that P3's character represented his murdered wife, thus fuelling his anger more.

Harper as myself and P1 made a new connection as us portraying Harper and Joe. When Harper speaks of the "fairy, who couldn't marry the witch," (Vermeulen, 2016), she shines her torchlight directly at P1. P1 then directed a part of his monologue to me, in which he indicates that he could never find anything beautiful. This reminded me – as Harper – of the scene in Kushner's dramatic texts (1991, 1993) in which Harper asks Joe to look at her naked body – he responds that he sees nothing. This reminder drove me to the back of the set, where I made contact with P8 for the first time. That is where my journey towards redemption in this new play was initiated. I then listened to P1 as Joe and his own struggle and found it in myself

to forgive him in this new play. I finally started to shift the focus towards Harper's other memories of herself.

The second performance had a much bigger audience. It was a very emotional performance for me. The sense of redemption was felt deeper than any previous performance. It left me feeling exhausted and speechless. I found it difficult to sing the final song as I was too emotional.

The last performance's audience was too big. It was a challenging performance, as some of the audience members were seated within the intimate space, and some were seated at quite a distance from the performance⁸².

There was a deeper connection between myself and P1. At the end of the performance, P1 stood next to me and took my hand. This gesture symbolised that the characters have forgiven each other. We have finally realised one another's struggles, and would part as companions who have finally redeemed ourselves.

5.7. Redefining "Performing Denkbilder"

The text, now performed, centred on notions of redemption and "Performing Denkbilder". Through the performance process, I redefined the notion of "Performing Denkbilder" to not only being physically and vocally performed, but through one also becomes a "Performing Denkbilder" through one's own cognitive interaction with other "Performing Denkbilder".

The event itself became a pretext. The audience was not performing as actors, but as spectators. It was hoped that they were interpreting the meaning of the events for themselves in relation to the images within their personal lives. The event is thus defined as a postcolonial pause, in which each person present could narrate the happenings through their own imagination and memories.

For myself, the experience of voicing the struggles of being a white female struggling with mental health problems was cathartic. I cannot conclude that the experience was the same for every actor or even for audience members⁸³. For me, the process was a psychological

⁸² The house was also overcrowded.

⁸³ Although it would have been substantial for the research to have interviewed audience members on their experience of watching *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016), my ethical clearance only allows me to use data extracted from my actors.

journey. Becoming a set of Denkbilder, I could both view myself critically while engaging with the text, as well as live myself in emotionally and relive my own memories of being queer.

For one actor there was also a cathartic experience. As already mentioned in this chapter, the actor playing Femme (P2), experienced her own sense of redemption by directing her text towards a deceased lover who identified as homosexual. At first, she was apprehensive about this revelation and felt guilty for this apprehension after his sudden death. However, she came to understand him better through her text directed at Moffie. She could find a means of directing her lover's spirit through acceptance.

In this chapter, I documented the process of making the theatrical work *Angels in South Africa* through reporting on the workshop process, the writing process, the rehearsal process and the performances. In the following chapter, I am going to focus on a visual representation of "Performed Denkbilder", how this concept was applied in the construction of the new playtext, and a reflection on my own voice in the work. Chapter Six will thus be a reflection on *Angels in South Africa*.

Chapter 6: Reflections

In Chapter Five, I made a journal that consisted of documenting the creation of *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016). I documented the workshop process, the writing process, the rehearsals, and the performances. In this concluding chapter, I am offering a reflection on *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016) as a constellation of images, being the “Progress-Queer Constellation”. Finally, I am reflecting on whether the notion of creating a performance through Denkbilder was useful, and I then reflect on my own experiences in the making of *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016).

Throughout the writing of this thesis for three years, the ideas around Denkbilder as a means of character, identity and script construction became clearer. Initially, I understood these concepts as abstract. However, through making a study on rhizomatic identity, Magic Realism and Landscape Theatre, I have come to understand the notion of a constellation of Denkbilder. I have also shifted from thinking in binaries when it came to identity construction, to thinking in terms of creating a map.

6.1. The “Progress Queer” Diagram

The following are diagrams that portray the creation of the “Progress Queer Constellation”. The first ten diagrams are of the character constructions that have been discussed in detail in Chapter Five. The final diagram summarises all of the images within the “Progress-Queer Constellation”.

The diagrams on the characters are constructed to look like star constellations, thus visually adhering to the notion of a constellation of Denkbilder. Each image that relates to a character’s identity can also stand on its own, yet it can also relate to another image, or even a newly created character. What I am hoping to offer the reader in the creation of characters through Denkbilder is the following: one character still disintegrated, gathers splinters of itself in order to narrate these splinters. The character attempts to redeem their own meaning within the narration, and integrate themselves. Through the process of narration, parts of the splinters become loose and are shot into the audience. An audience member can gather these splinters, and through mindful narration make sense of how these splinters relate to them. It is through the act of gathering the splinters that the character becomes a constellation

of Denkbilder and through the act of narrating the splinters the character becomes a Performing Denkbild.

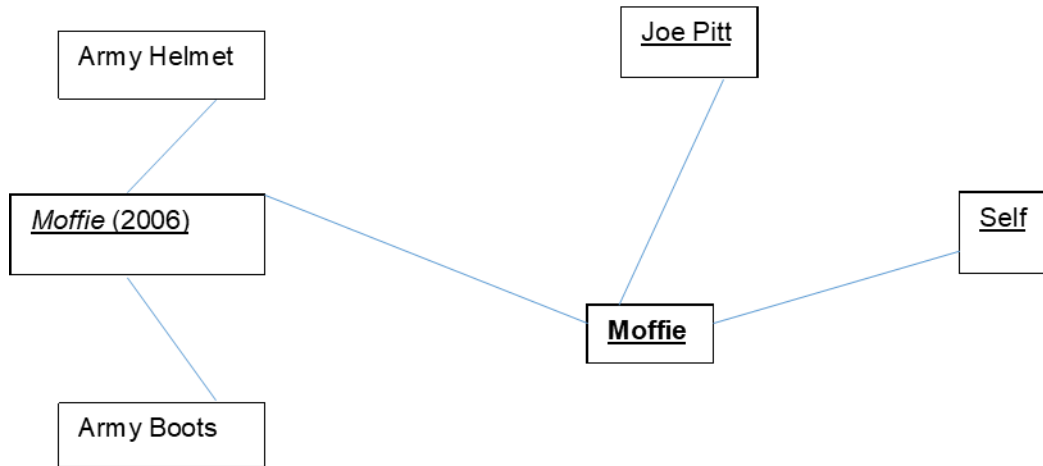


Diagram 1: Maffie

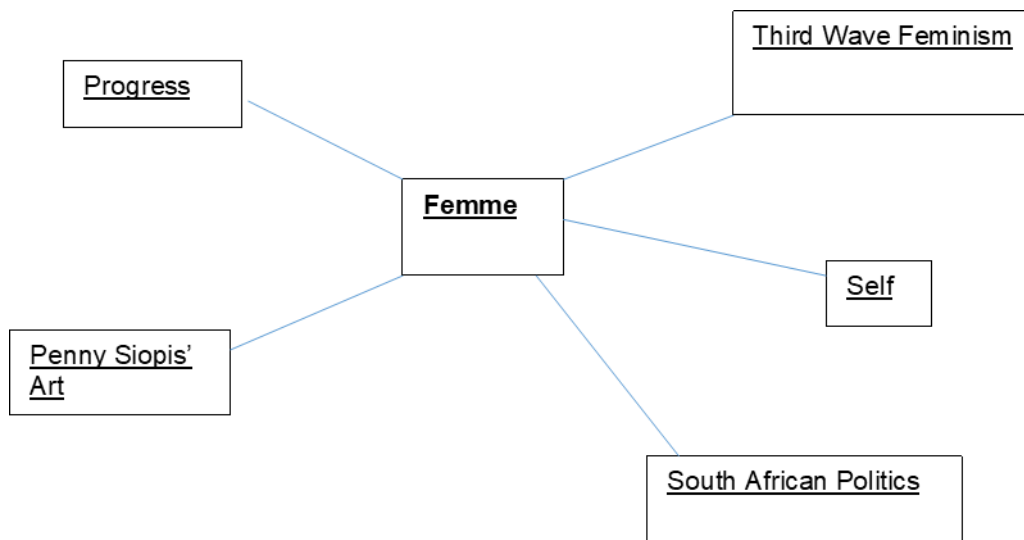


Diagram 2: Femme

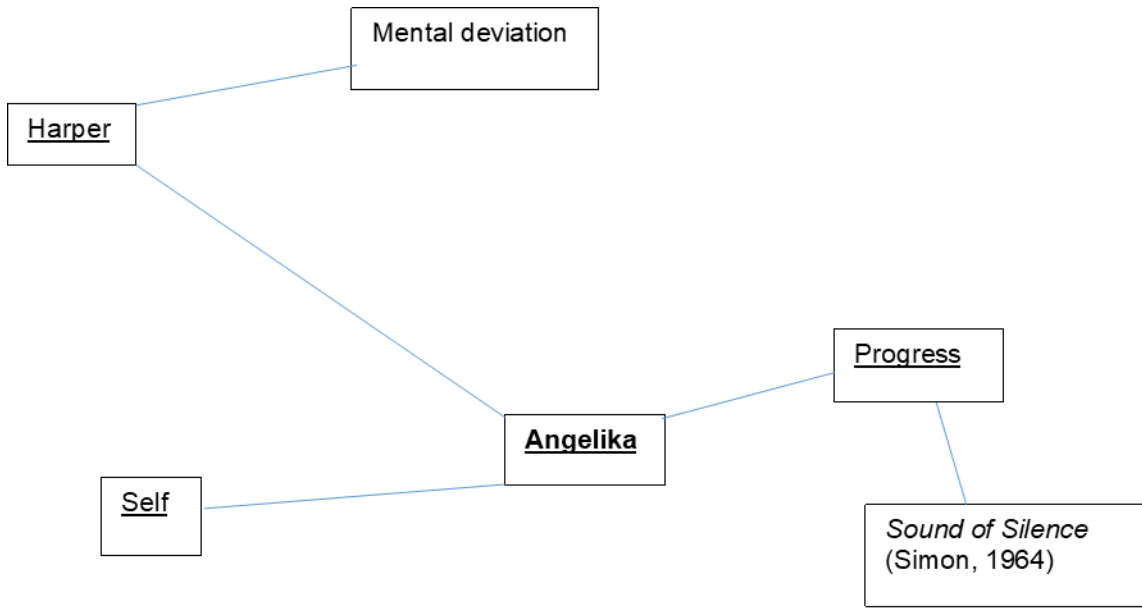


Diagram 3: Angelika

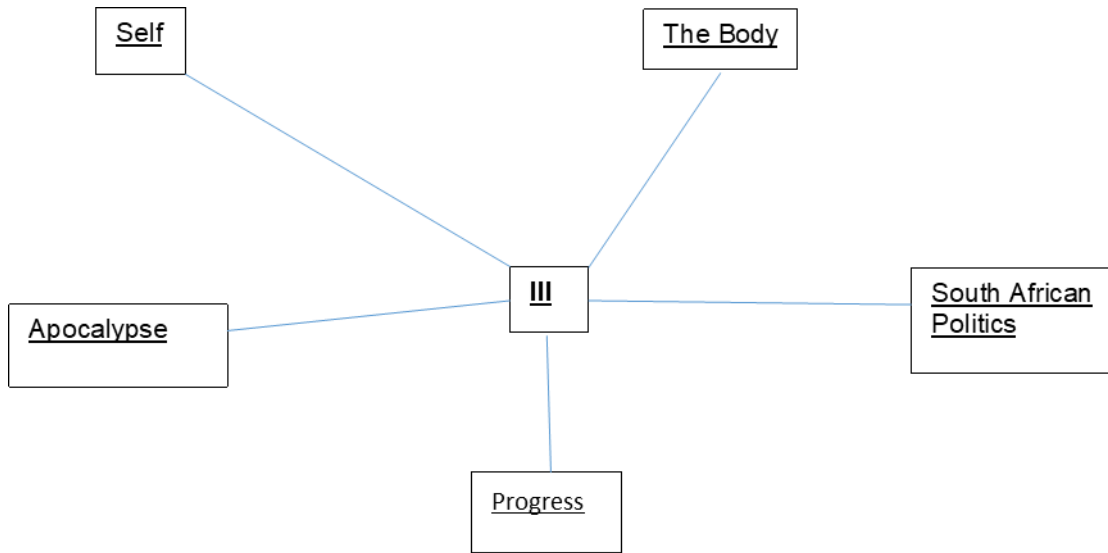


Diagram 4: III

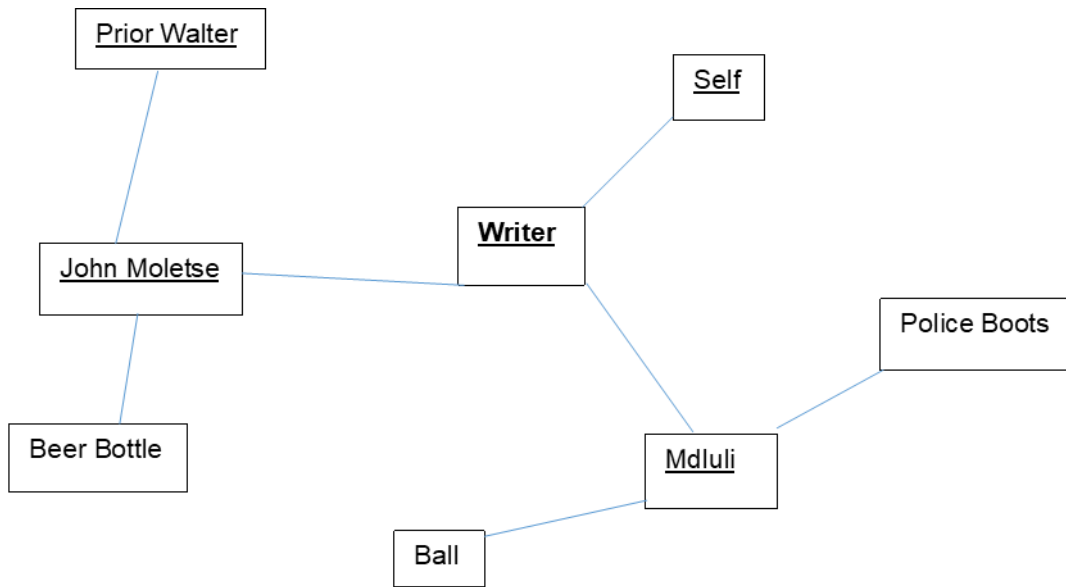


Diagram 5: Writer

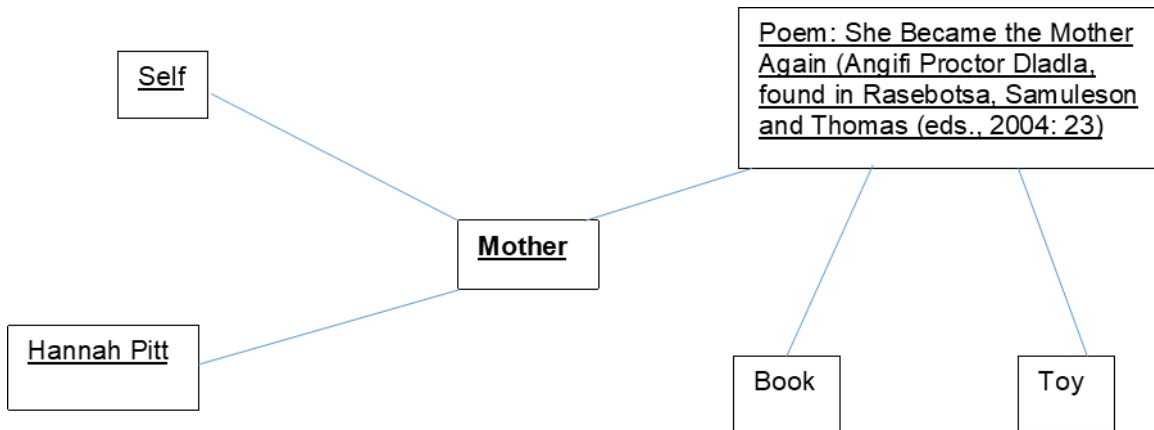


Diagram 6: Mother

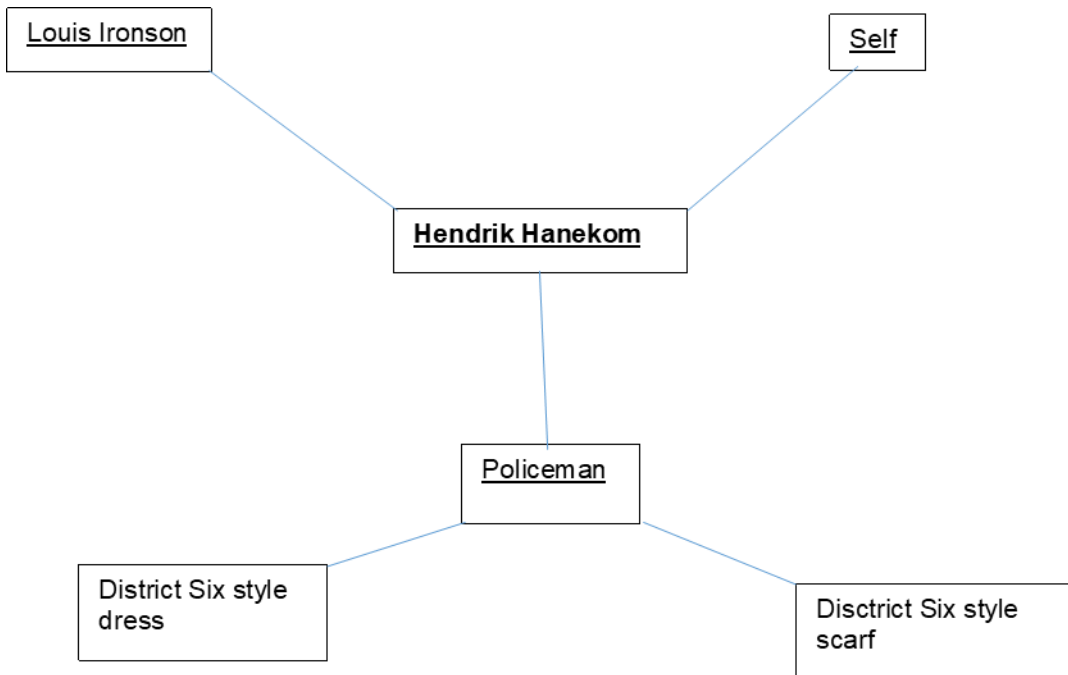


Diagram 7: Hendrik Hanekom

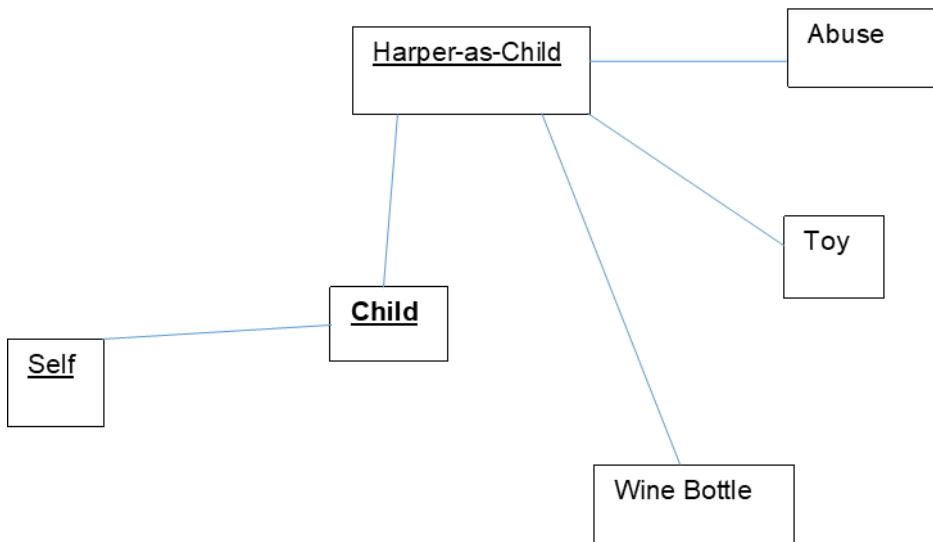


Diagram 8: Child

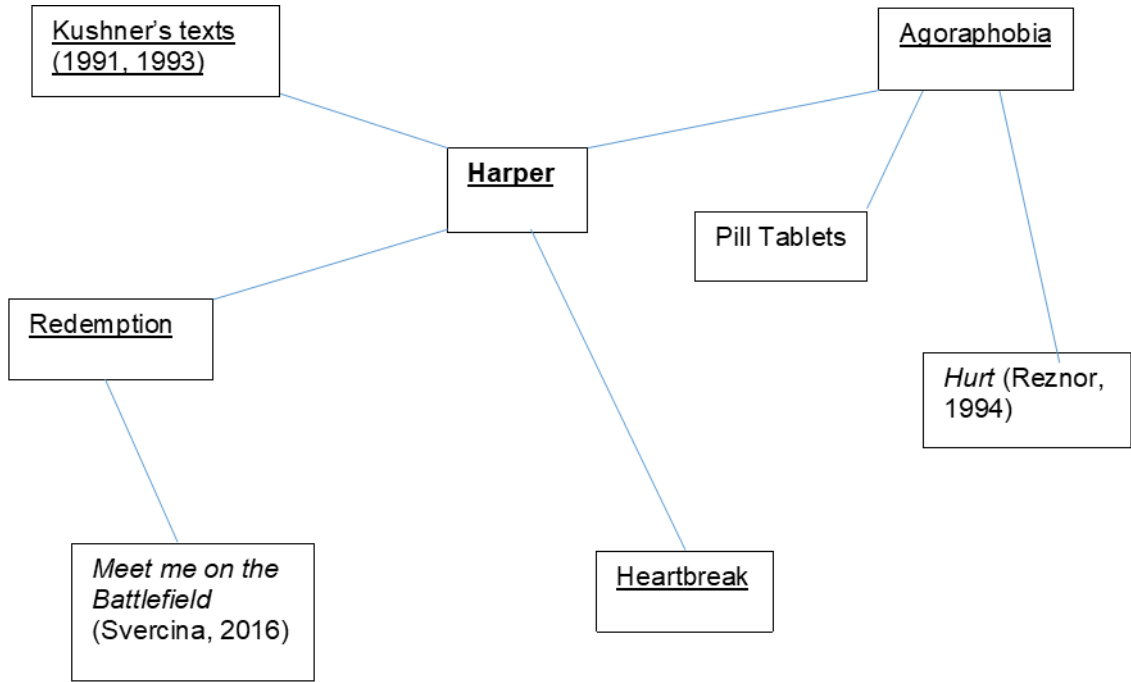


Diagram 9: Harper

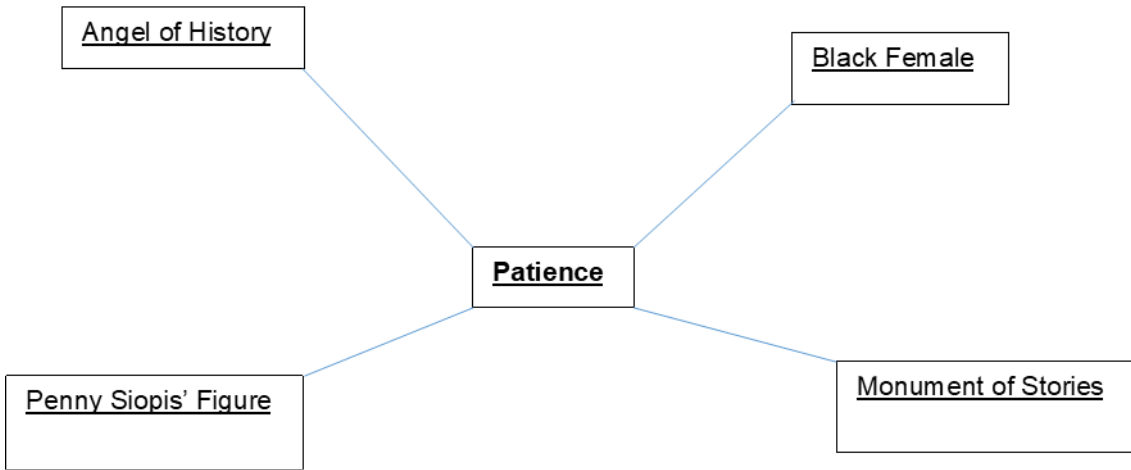


Diagram 10: Patience

The following is the diagram through which I constructed the script, although the actual diagram was only drawn up after the performance of *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016). Although no image is central, it did come to my attention that the character Writer is most interconnected with all the images in the script, even more so than Patience and Harper.

The diagram was supposed to have more images and be denser. However, the construction of such a diagram would have been difficult to read. This points to a flaw in *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016): the play is too dense with meaning. It may have been difficult for audience members to make meaning of the play, as one was constantly catapulted into the next series of narratives. I have come to the conclusion that the theatrical event was not structured as a singular postcolonial pause, but as a series of these pauses, intensely interwoven. I have also made the observation that South African history, as modern progressive histories, are multiple and complexly interwoven. It was perhaps not possible to capture South Africa's trauma to a large enough extent within the framework of a play.

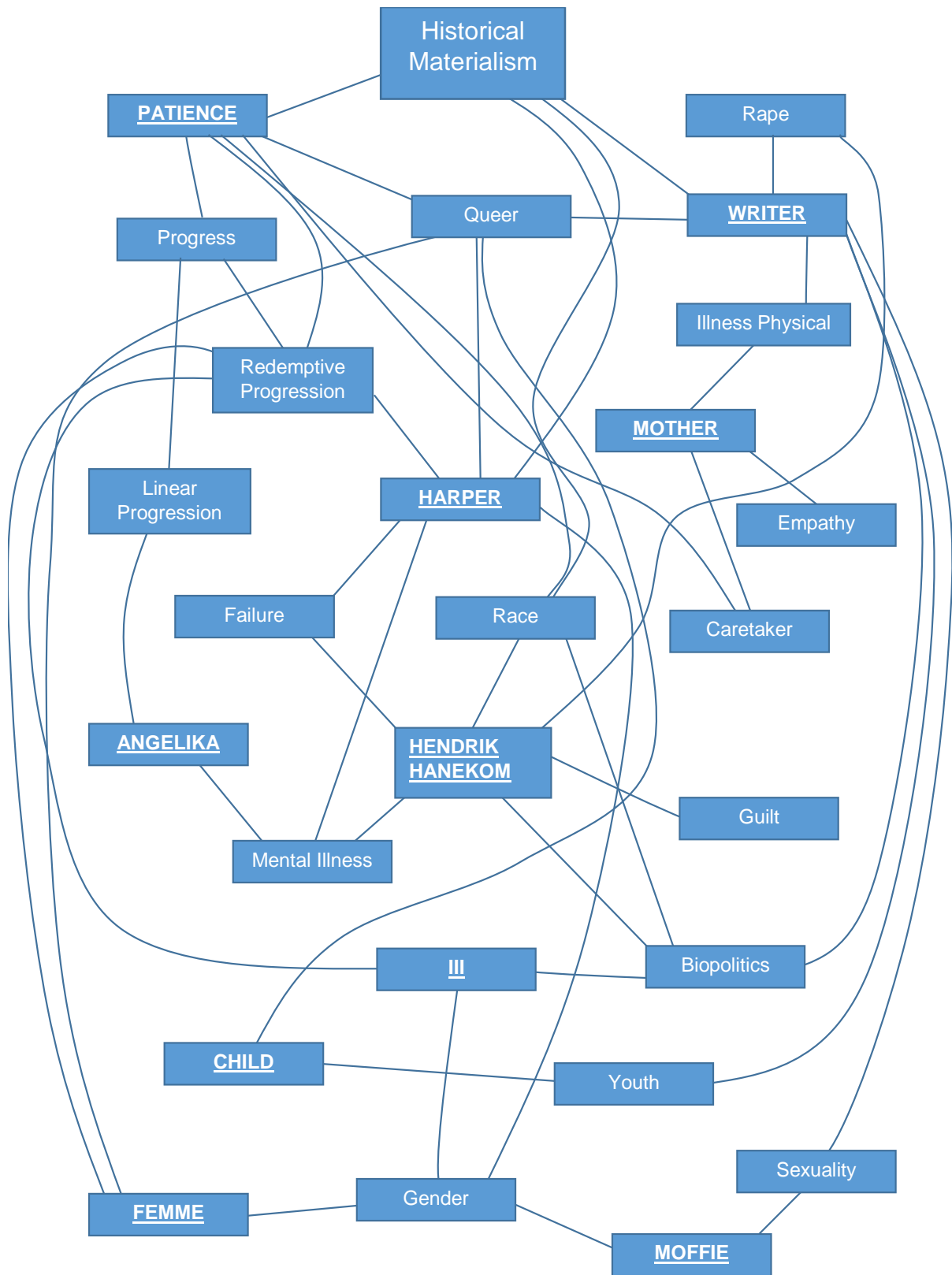


Diagram 11: The Constellation

6.2. Conclusion: My Own Voice in the Work

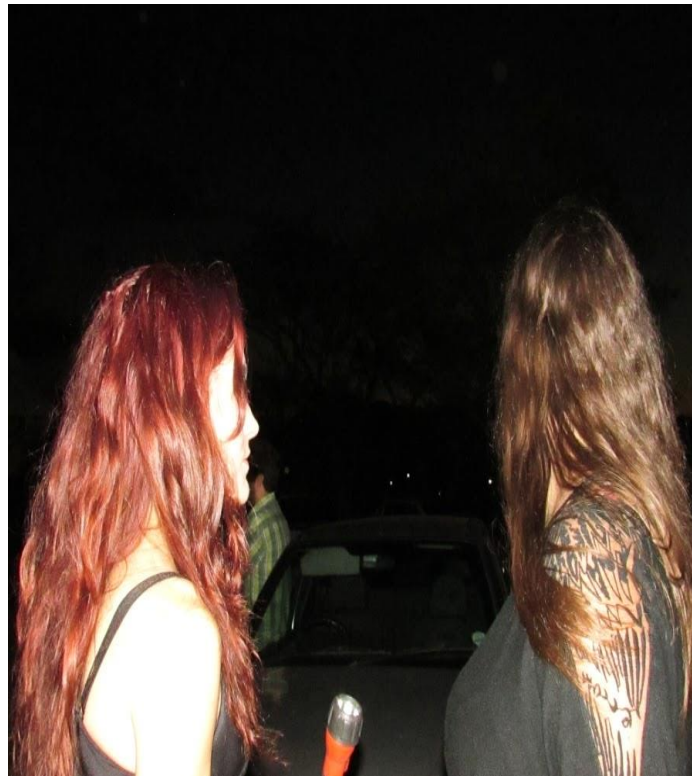


Figure 25: S Mahne, *Friends at Work*. 2016

Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.

I am ending on a personal note. Reflecting on the process and performances of the new text, I found correlations between methodology, notions inserted into the playtext, and my own process of dealing with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) through my therapy.

In my current therapy, I am writing letters to myself as a reflection on my progress. If I do not fully engage with my past traumas, I start to suffer from anxiety. This is one of the key reasons why I relate to Harper. This is why the notion of the text being constructed as a means through which she can deal with childhood trauma speaks to my current reality.

If I do engage with my past thoroughly, I become depressed and suicidal, which is how I identify with the character Hendrik Hanekom. Hanekom is also constructed to become suicidal through dealing with his past. However, the difference between me and this character is that I am open to a process of change.

The writers in *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016) represent the notion of having a scattered identity. They then integrated themselves through telling the narratives that form part of their identities. One of the key characteristics of BPD is that one has a fragmented sense of the self. Through my therapy, I am becoming integrated through reflecting on the narratives that have constructed me. I experience it as a painful process, and through the process of dealing with the depression that comes with the therapy, I relate to the following texts of Harper and Patience:

Patience: Until she stands in the fire, and warms herself up in her own sense of redemption. It hurts, but there's a way. There must be. All her suffering cleans away the dirt, a painful resurrection.

Harper: The very same resurrection, she was once told, would be given her with water.

Patience. Water. Silence. The soothing voice that says it is better not to speak. Do not go to war. Do not cause a fight.

Harper: Nothing can be created without destruction taking place first. The phoenix can only rise from the ashes, and the ashes can only come from fire. And so she needed to find the fire to stand in, so that she may soar.

Patience: But she had wings, didn't she? Wings as broad as daydreams. Finally she could see, she was far more than she let herself be.

Harper: She had been going about it all the wrong way, with water in the first place. In water, she was looking for an angel's wings, when she could have found her own in the flames.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

To become integrated is to deal with trauma and accept one's past. One is also understanding one's current actions. One can redirect one's self by subverting from these actions and thought processes into new ones through recognising the origins of one's past actions. In therapy, I had to write out my life story. In the same manner the actors playing writers performed the life stories of their characters. I relate to the process of telling one's life story and going through the process of change through the following text:

III: A mind shift!!! There must be a mind shift. People need a mind shift. People differ too much on what they want from the future. We need to act together. You need to act together. And so the great work begins.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

The relationship between the characters Patience and Harper is that of therapist and patient. Patience lets Harper voice what is on her mind while guiding her through conversation to where her real trauma lies: in her childhood experiences. The Magic Realist insertion of the supernatural defamiliarises Harper from her subjective experiences so that she can cognitively deal with her situation. Through their conversations happening in a Magic Realist setting, Harper is also led to imagine newer realities for herself, and thus gains hope for herself. Along with the writers, she is placed in a landscape that consists of a web of associations. She is led to realise that one is not isolated from others, but that one's circumstances, along with the actions of others, shape one's current situation.

I have experienced that it is harder to construct a postcolonial pause in reality than it is to construct such a pause through a play. One is caught up in the business of one's life, and one is constantly pressured into progressing. However, the therapy forces me to take time from my busy life, and to write and reflect on myself in order to bring about change. The writers are also constructed to write and reflect. However, they are placed within a fictional reality, whereas I am placed in real circumstances. One becomes sicker and eventually one burns out – not because of the workload, but because of the heavy emotions one is accumulating. I have also discovered that I hide from the process of change through my busy lifestyle, as the process of change is painful. I relate my actions to the following text:

Harper: I've questioned myself. Again. Everything changes. I grow. I don't know anymore. Do others reject me or do I reject myself? I am different as a girl.

Patience: You're the prisoner. You're running. You have to run away from a legacy. You run away from yourself. (*More to self*)

Harper: Madness is a death sentence. Everything that makes your life, your life, is taken away, and you become a ghost. What's the point of living, if you're a ghost in anyway?

Patience: Fighting anything through thoughts that make no sense.

Angels in South Africa (Vermeulen, 2016)

To deal with one's trauma, and to change, is to create a new identity for oneself that is not dominated by one's mental illness. It is the same process that all the writers went through in making the performance text and that Harper goes through within the production. If I had to redo the workshop process, I would have focussed more on the notion of dealing with one's trauma. I would also have focussed on the fear of creating an identity that is not rooted in one's trauma, which is the only reference that one has to one's life experiences and one's reality. I would have based the process in the following question, and would have reconstructed the text according to the actors' interpretation and journey thereof:

It just occurred to me that many people are actually afraid to heal because their entire identity is centred around the trauma they've experienced. They have no idea who they are outside of trauma and that unknown can be terrifying.

Quotes on Mental Health and Mental Illness (2018)

When I created *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016), the notion of redemption was, to me, conceptual and abstract. I understand the notion of redemption, to voice one's narratives that have produced one as queer, as the means to make one's narratives visible, in order to study the images that have constructed one's current reality. I understand redemption as the process of becoming defamiliarised from one's current reality, and the creation of a new reality. Through the character Hanekom I learned that change is inevitable if one wants to beat mental illness. Through the character Writer, I learned that to tell stories is a better way to redeem oneself than to be vengeful. Through the Mother, I learned to have compassion with myself, and through the relationship between Harper and Patience I learned that the world is much larger than one's own problems. It is necessary to find how one's own narratives connect with those of others. Child taught me to listen. The three angels taught me to allow myself to be challenged on notions of mental illness and the importance of progressing the self. However, one should not progress through historical locomotion, but through acknowledging the past, understanding oneself, and then change one's reality. Through the angels, I also learned that, when telling stories on mental illness, it is hard to find a means of writing the experiences of mental illness through academic language. It is hard to find a space for mental health in academic dramatic discourse where the focus is not on empathy and

compassion. To find space for writing on the experiences of mental health in dramatic discourse would be to queer the language, and thus find an alternative means of expressing mental illness through theatre.

The focus of this research was on the means of redeeming marginalised narratives through theatre. To find my voice in the work, I focussed specifically on the female gender and mental illness. Through voicing narratives on being female and on experiencing mental illness along with other marginalised narratives, I found a constellation of images through which to remake the self. I have come to the conclusion that the redemption of marginalised narratives does not only occur through voicing one's narratives, but through actively listening to others' narratives as well. It occurs through having empathy with those also being marginalised, although for different reasons, and by having compassion with those being marginalised, and with the self.

The retrieval and use of personal narratives, even in qualitative research, is problematic. Memory is subjective; it is a grey area of which it is hard to be critical. One also has no guarantee that memory is historically correct. However, when I made use of personal narratives, I focussed on the notion of trauma as a facet of mental health, and I offer now the question: How can mental health be perceived as a tool in retrieving postcolonial narratives?

According to Hook (2014:104), a personal narrative is a story that the ego tells to itself, of itself. The actors have thus narrated themselves as postcolonial individuals through my theatrical piece. Hook (2014:104) states that the ego is a mirage – it exists, as a foothold of identity, out of a series of dots. I argue that one must connect these dots as one would a constellation of Denkbilder. The notion that there is no absolute measure of historical accuracy, and that the actors were never critiqued or questioned on their stories, holds a benefit to the work – they were given freedom to perform and speak as they please. Truth becomes blurred with fiction. True to the Magical Realist trope, the supernatural is placed in the same space as the supposed real. The actors, without being policed nor questioned on what was fiction or truth, were given freedom to say what they would without fear of being exposed. The actors could thus say more than what was expected.

In the therapy room, to speak associations immediately when given certain stimuli is called free association, and is meant to unlock narratives deeply buried within the subconscious. To connect the dots is an analytical approach to making sense of the data

procured through free association, blurring the border between truth and fiction. Trauma is thus the means through which I connected the dots between the narratives and images in *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016). However, this was through my own trauma of having suffered abuse as a child and as an adult.

My own subconscious was explored in creating and structuring *Angels in South Africa* (Vermeulen, 2016). My own experience of being silenced inspired me to create the work. I related the stigmas around abuse and mental illness to the stigmas of marginalised individuals still attempting to voice their narratives in a postcolonial dystopia. I would thus state that the biggest enemy to redemption is stigma – stigmas of self-pity, and of lying to get attention.

However, by placing these narratives in a constellation, and by first obtaining the narratives through free association, I created a safe space in which the actor was allowed to speak. Compassion with the self and the other was key. It is, in my opinion, of imminent importance to actively attack stigma through theatre, if one is to create narratives that speak to a postcolonial state. After all, the notion of speaking about postcolonialism is to give those who have been previously oppressed a voice and to interrogate how the past still plays out in the present. To recreate the past would be to silence those previously oppressed. The means through which those previously oppressed are continuously being silenced is through stigma – stigma regarding race, gender, physical illness, sexuality and mental illness.

One cannot dismiss the importance of studying mental health in postcolonial theatre. After all, all trauma lies embedded within the mental realm. The pathway forward for me would thus be to attack stigma through theatre and to make a greater study of how oppression and silencing affect the mental states of marginalised individuals, like myself.

Sources Consulted

- Ahluwalia, P. 2012. *Politics and Post-Colonial Theory: African Inflections*. London: Routledge.
- Alrutz, M. Listengarten, J. & Van Duyn Wood, M. (eds.). 2012. *Playing with Theory in Theatre Practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Benjamin, W. 1968. *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books Inc.
- Boje, T. & Henderson, D.M. 2014. *Organizational Development and Change Theory: Managing Fractal Organizing Processes*. New York: Routledge.
- Breisach, E. 1993. *American Progressive History: An Experiment in Modernisation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cardullo, B. 2009. *What is Dramaturgy?* New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Collins, P.H. & Bilge. S. 2016. *Intersectionality*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Elam, K. 2002. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. New York: Routledge.
- Ely, M. Anzul, M. Friedman, T. Garner, D. Steinmetz, M.C. 1991. *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles within Circles*. London: RoutledgeFarmer.
- Fisher, J. 2002. *The Theatre of Tony Kushner: Living Past Hope*. New York: Routledge.
- Fleischmann, M. 2015. *Beyond Capture: The Indifference of Performance as Research*. Online Article. Available at: http://www.academia.edu/13921266/Beyond_Capture_The_Indifference_of_Performance_as_Research [Viewed on 20 April 2017].
- Gaylard, G. 2005. *After Colonialism: African Post-modernism and Magical Realism*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

- Gluck, S. 2018. *Quotes on Mental Health and Mental Illness*. Available at:
<https://www.healthyplace.com/insight/quotes/quotes-on-mental-health-and-mental-illness> [Viewed on 15 June 2018].
- Gunkel, H. 2010. *The Cultural Politics of Female Sexualities in South Africa*. New York: Routledge.
- Halberstam, J. 2011. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Head, B. 1974. *A Question of Power*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Heller, D. A. 1997. *Cross-Purposes: Lesbians, Feminists, and the Limits of the Alliance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hill, L. & Paris, H. (eds.). 2006. *Performance and Place*. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Hook, D. 2013. *(Post)Apartheid Conditions: Psychoanalysis and Social Formation*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Hook, D. 2014. *(Post)Apartheid Conditions: Psychoanalysis and Social Formation*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Horáková, H. & Rudwick, S. (eds.). 2014. *Global Challenges and Local Reactions: Czech Republic and South Africa*. Berlin: Lit Verlag.
- Hutton, B. 2009. *From Social Silence to Social Silence*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Gillroy, H. 2005. *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kendrick, L. & Roessner, D. 2011. *Theatre Noise: The Sound of Performance*. New Castle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

- Kershaw, B. & Nicholson, H. (eds.) 2011. *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Klee, P. 1920. *Angelus Novus*. Online image. Available at: <http://www.sfu.ca/~andrewf/CONCEPT2.html> [Viewed on 11 November 2014].
- Kushner, T. 1991. *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, Inc.
- Kushner, T. 1993. *Angels in America: Perestroika*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, Inc.
- Le Feuvre, L. 2010. Failure. *Tate ETC*. Issue 18: 1–8.
- Maart, R. 2006. *Rosa's District 6*. Claremont: David Philip.
- Mdluli, D.Z. 1973. *Robben Island*. New Hampshire Heinemann Educational Books.
- Misra-Dexter, N. & February, J. 2010. *Testing Democracy: Which Way is South Africa Going?* Cape Town: IDASA.
- Muholi, Z. 2004. *Aftermath*. Online Image. Available at: http://kowrykcreationsmedia.blogspot.co.za/2009_02_01_archive.html [Viewed on 8 March 2016].
- Munro, B.M. 2012. *South Africa and the Dream of Love to Come: Queer Sexuality and the Struggle for Freedom*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Nuttall, S. 2011. Penny Siopis's scripted bodies and the limits of alterity, *Social Dynamics*. *A journal of African studies*: 289–298.
- Omer-Sherman, R. 2007. The Fate of the Other in Tony Kushner's "Angels in America". *MELUS*, Vol. 32, No. 2, Thresholds, Secrets, and Knowledge. 7–30.

- Peterson, K.H. & Rutherford, A. (eds.). 1991. *On Shifting Sands: New Art and Literature from South Africa*. New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Pinto, S. 2013. *Difficult Diasporas: The Trans-national Feministic Aesthetic of the Black Atlantic*. New York: New York University Press.
- Puar, J.B. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rasebotsa, N. Samuelson, M. & Thomas, K. (eds.). 2004. *Nobody Ever Said Aids*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.
- Reznor, T. 1994. *Hurt*. Hollywood: A&M Studios.
- Rive, R. 2007. *Buckingham Palace, District Six*. Claremont: David Philip.
- Savran, D. 1995. Ambivalence, Utopia, and a Queer Sort of Materialism: How "Angels in America" Reconstructs the Nation. *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 2, Gay and Lesbian Queeries: 207 - 227.
- Simon, P. 1963. *The Sound of Silence*. New York City: Columbia Studios.
- Siopis, P. 1986. *Melancholia*. Online image. Available at: <http://nladesignvisual.wordpress.com/2013/08/03/penny-siopis/> [Viewed on 11 November 2014].
- Siopis, P. 1988. *Dora and the Other Woman*. Online Image. Available at: <http://www.interpretingceramics.com/issue008/articles/19.htm> [Viewed on 11 November 2014].
- Siopis, P. 1988. *Patience on a Monument*. Online image. Available at: <http://nladesignvisual.wordpress.com/2013/08/03/penny-siopis/> [Viewed on 11 November 2014].

- Siopis, P. 1988. *Piling Wreckage upon Wreckage*. Online Image. Available at: <http://nladesignvisual.wordpress.com/2013/08/03/penny-siopis/> [Viewed on 11 November 2014].
- Siopis, P. 1991. *Terra Incognita*. Online image. Available at: <https://twitter.com/Artcoza/status/405308644704526336> [Viewed on 11 November 2014].
- Smith, H. & Dean, R.T. 2009. *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Smith, K. 2005. *Penny Siopis*. Johannesburg: Goodman Gallery Editions.
- Smith, R.C. (ed.). 2003. *Art and the Performance of Memory*. London: Routledge.
- Stoler, A.L. 2013. *Imperial Ruins: On Ruins and Ruinations*. Durham; London: Duke University Press.
- Svercina. 2016. *Meet Me on the Battlefield*. New York: Kobalt.
- Taub, M. 2009. *The Distance in-between Passages and the Merensky Project: Replicating Practice as Research and affecting inter-modality as reflexive operations for practice-led-research in the creative arts*. Online paper. Available at: http://www.viad.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/21-The-distance-between_Myer-Taub.pdf [Viewed on 20 April 2017].
- Taylor, D. 2003. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. London: Duke University Press.
- Van der Merwe, C. 2006. *Moffie*. Hermanus, Penstock.
- Vermeulen, V. 2014. *Angels in Africa*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Vermeulen, V. 2016. *Angels in South Africa*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Weigel, S. 1996. *Body and Image Space: Re-reading Walter Benjamin*. London: Routledge.

White, B.T. 2011. *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Zamora, L.P. 1997. *The Usable Past: the imagination of history in recent fiction of the Americas*. Cambridge; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Addendum A

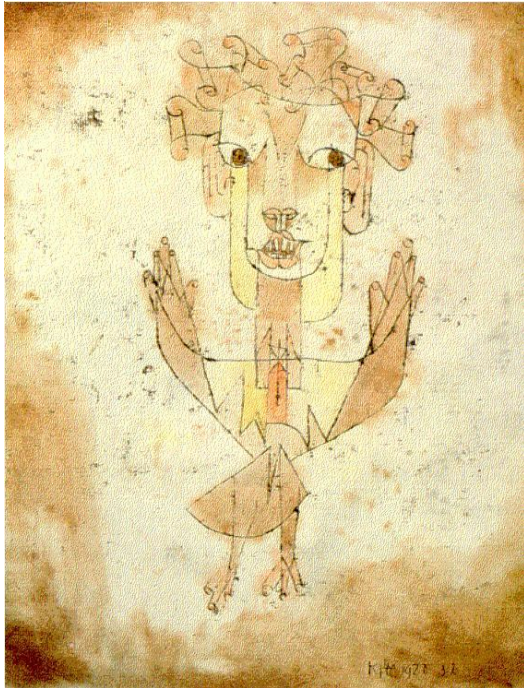


Figure 1: Paul Klee, *Angelus Novus*. 1920.

Indian ink, coloured chalk, and brown wash on paper, 318 x 242 mm

Israel Museum, Jerusalem

(Online Image: Angelus Novus and Poor Angel)

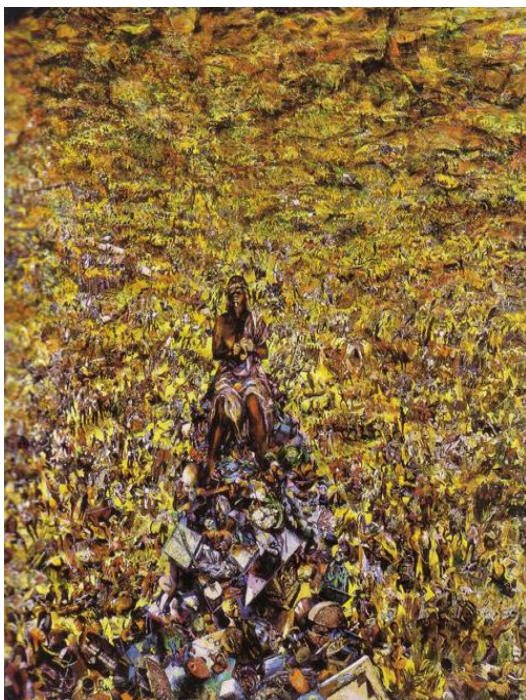


Figure 2: Penny Siopis, *Patience on a Monument*. 1988

Oil Paint and Collage, 200 x 180 cm

William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley

(Online Image: NLA Design and Visual Arts)



Figure 3: Penny Siopis, *Melancholia*. 1986.

Oil on canvas, 197.5 x 175.5 cm

Johannesburg Art Gallery

(Online Image: NLA Design and Visual Arts)

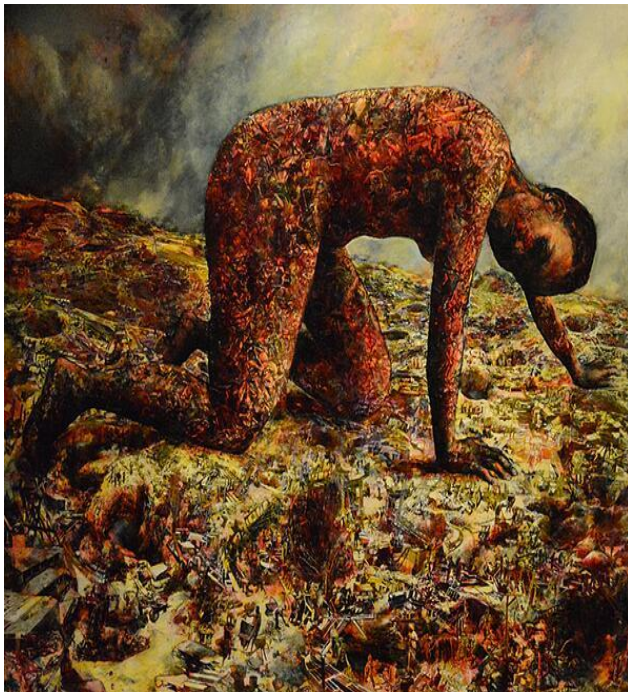


Figure 4: Penny Siopis, *Terra Incognita*. 1991.

Oil and Collage on Board, 180 x 200 cm

Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery

(Online Image: Artcoza)



Figure 5: Penny Siopis, *Dora and the Other Woman*. 1988.

Oil Pastel on Paper, 153 x 120 cm

Private Collection

(Online Image: Ceramic Sculptures of Wilna Snyman, Fragments and Feminist Transgressions)



Figure 6: Penny Siopis, *Maids*. 1993.

Maids' uniforms, cake decorations, rice paper with laser print, 144 x 123 cm

Artist's collection

(Smith, ed. 2005: 28)



Figure 7: Penny Siopis, *Exhibit: Ex. Africa*. 1990.

**Collage, oil paint, screen print,
Perspex and found object, 126.2 x
124.5 cm**

**Johannesburg Art Gallery
(Smith, ed. 2005: 38)**

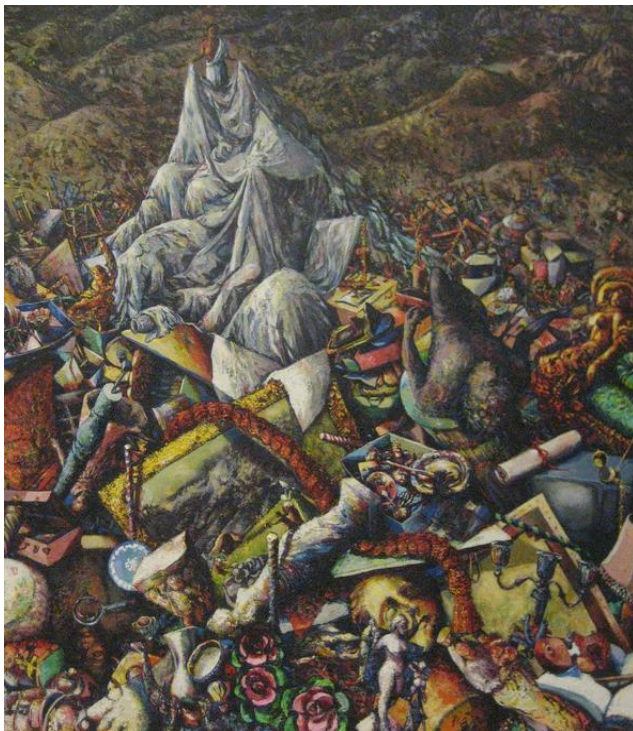


Figure 8: Penny Siopis, *Sacrifices*. 1998.

**Two panels and detail, site-specific
installation of found objects
University of Witwatersrand
(Smith, ed. 2005: 77)**



**Figure 9: Penny Siopis, *Id Est*. 1990.
Oil, collage, and Wax on board, 39.5 x
60 cm.
Private collection
(Smith, ed. 2005:102–103).**



**Figure 10: Penny Siopis. *Piling
Wreckage Upon Wreckage*. 1988.
Oil Paint and Collage
Joseph Gallery at the University of
Witwatersrand
(Online Image: NLA Design and
Visual Arts)**

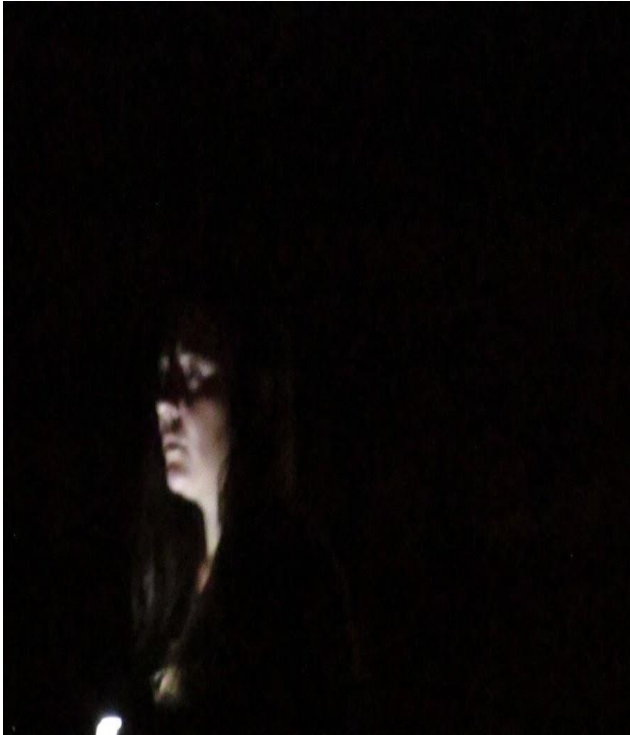


Figure 11: S Mahne, *Harper-as-Me*. 2016.

Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.



Figure 12: S Mahne, *Gentle Nightmare*. 2016.

Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.



**Figure 13: S Mahne, *Shoes*. 2016.
Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.**



**Figure 14: V Vermeulen, *A Girl's House*. 2017.
Photo taken in Brooklyn, Pretoria.**



Figure 15: S Mahne, *Pathway to Nowhere*. 2016.

Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.

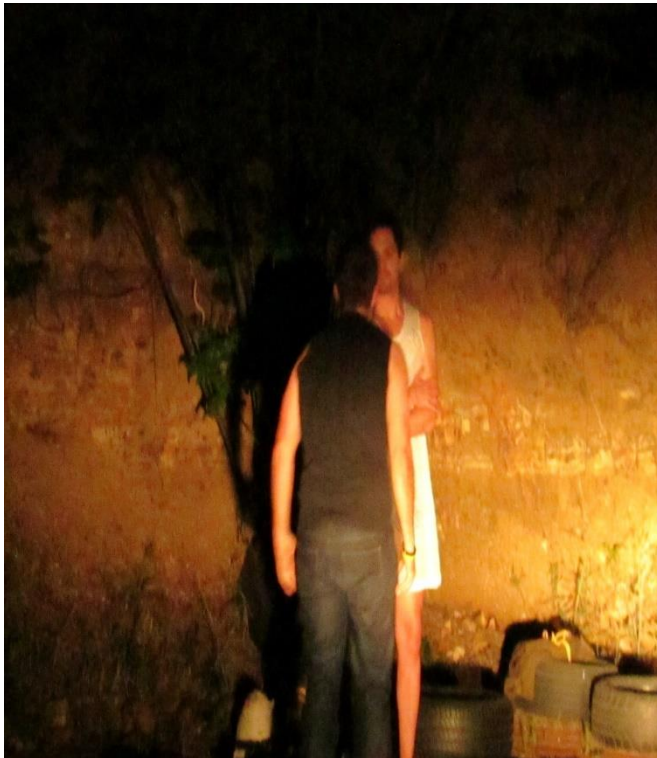


Figure 16: S Mahne, *The Man and the Male*. 2016.

Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.



Figure 17: S Mahne, *Mess*. 2016.
Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.

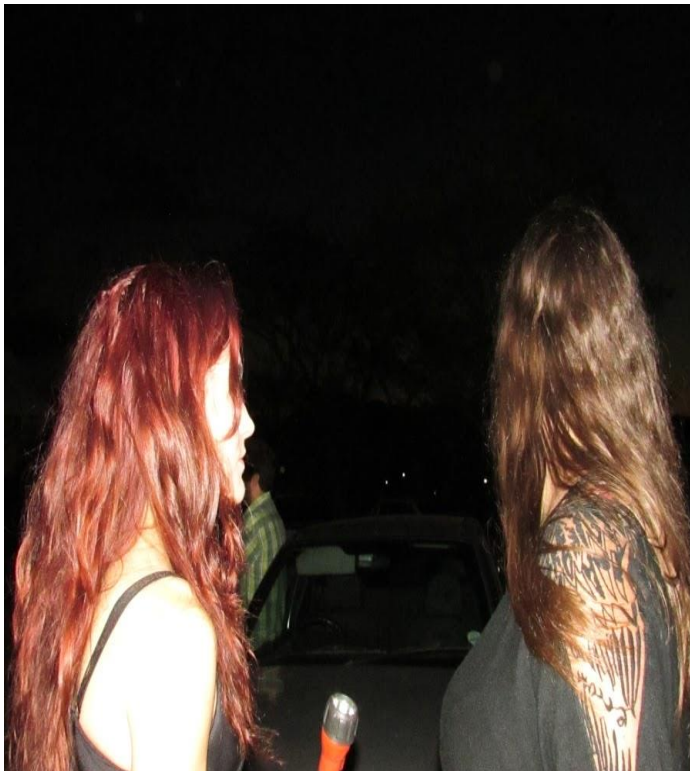


Figure 25: S Mahne, *Friends at Work*.
2016.
Photo taken in Equestria, Pretoria.

Addendum B

Angels in South Africa

Setting and instructions: *You find yourself in a cemetery, which has been turned into a landfill (a waste dump). This waste dump exists out of an imaginary grave, as well as literal and imaginary artefacts. Each writer has a monument, which they locate for themselves. This is the pile of artefacts/stories from which they draw inspiration to corporeally and with speech write their own story. Each writer will move away from their monument numerous times to collect artefacts, before they join the angels, who will be located at the back.*

At two to three times for each writer, they will find an artefact to which they relate, and tell a story with their body, as rehearsed in the individual workshop processes and as indicated in the script. They will then join the angels at the back. Each writer will also individually find moments to tell the story of their ghosts, also at least three times, while they are located at their monuments. Each writer must at least once complete every movement that expresses the different images that were conducted in relation to their ghosts in the workshop process. These images were created in the Ballet Room during the first event during which the discussions were held.

The angels will initially start outside of the performance area, as is indicated in the script. They will lead the audience to the performance space, while the writers hum their different melodies, which was explored with during the first rehearsal with the text. The police man (Hendrik Hanekom) will sing “Kent Gij dat Volk”. The angels will then stand at the front of the landfill, and, timing themselves, go through the visual images they have choreographed for themselves in response to the themes discussed in the Ballet Room.

The storytellers will be in the middle of their platform, Harper on her knees, and Patience standing up. Over the period of the play, the storytellers will go through the visual images they have conducted during the workshop process in response to the themes discussed, as well as the physical interaction with which they have improvised during the last workshop process. The storytellers will pace themselves in moments of stillness, in order to tell their stories, as indicated in the script. Each of them will have torches.

The three angels, Angelika, Fem and Ill are situated inside at the entrance of the kitchen with their torches switched on. Femme has lead the audience to the kitchen, after which she stands at the top of the stairs in the living room with her torch switched on. Ill is standing over Angelika while she is wrapped in a blanket. He recites the text “Failure” to the audience, while Angelika softly starts to sing “Sound of Silence”.

III: Uncertainty and instability characterise contemporary times. In spite of this, success and progress seem to endure as a condition to strive for, even though there is little faith in either. All individuals know failure better than we might care to admit – failed romance, failed careers, failed politics, failed society, failed humanity, failed failures. What happens, though, when artists use failure to propose a resistant view of the world, when failure is released from being a judgmental term, and success deemed overrated? Such imperatives have long threaded their way through the investigations of artists – indeed, art-making can be seen as an activity where doubt lies in wait at every turn and where failure is not always unacceptable conduct.

The Sound Of Silence

[Disturbed](#)

Hello darkness, my old friend
I've come to talk with you again
Because a vision softly creeping
Left its seeds while I was sleeping
And the vision that was planted in my brain
Still remains within the sound of silence
In restless dreams I walked alone
Narrow streets of cobblestone
'Neath the halo of a street lamp
I turned my collar to the cold and damp
When my eyes were stabbed
By the flash of a neon light
That split the night
And touched the sound of silence
And in the naked light I saw
Ten thousand people, maybe more
People talking without speaking
People hearing without listening
People writing songs
That voices never share
And no one dare
Disturb the sound of silence

Angelika gets up as soon as Ill is done and moves towards angel Femme, who is in the living room at the top of the staircase. Femme joins in on the song. Angelika turns towards the audience.

Angelika: Dear guests, we welcome you to tonight's performance of *Angels in South Africa*. May you enjoy the experience as much as the Drama Department enjoys your money. After you have had your fill of politics, and my companions start to move outside, may you please join them and find yourself a seat amongst the rubbles which we call our education... I mean, our history. Find yourselves, as selves, amongst the fragments which are us, switch off your cell phones, shut up and enjoy the show.

Femme moves towards the entrance to the house and starts to recite her article, titled The Critic in a State of Emergency: Towards a Theory of Reconstruction (after February 2). Angelika moves outside to the landfill. The writers outside start to hum to themselves. Ill joins Femme and starts to recite An altered Aesthetics. Police man sings "Kent grij dat Volk" They keep on repeating their articles while the humming gets louder. After they've been through their articles twice, they stop, look at each other, and move outside. They join Angelika at the front of the landfill.

The outside area is a square area surrounded by dirt and trees made to look like a landfill. There's various artefacts lying around, mainly books and clothes and artefacts that relate to the South African narratives used in the "Progress-Queer Constellation". The writers are scattered in a half moon formation across the landfill with the angels at the front, the narrators at the front-middle, and Child at the back.

The audience finds themselves seats while the singing and humming continues. As soon as everything dies down, Harper, who is on the ground by Patience's feet, sings the first verse and chorus of "Hurt". Everybody joins in on the chorus.

"Hurt"

(originally by Nine Inch Nails)

I hurt myself today
To see if I still feel
I focus on the pain
The only thing that's real
The needle tears a hole
The old familiar sting
Try to kill it all away
But I remember everything

[Chorus:]

What have I become
My sweetest friend
Everyone I know goes away
In the end
And you could have it all
My empire of dirt
I will let you down
I will make you hurt

Element: water. Dawn. The quiet before the storm. Eventually the water starts to stir

All of the writers continue to scavenge their artefacts. Hanekom and Writer start to physically push one another. Ill goes down on his haunches and opens his legs. It is his corporeal signification for being feminine.

Femme: I am the dummy. I am the voiceless. I am the power. I am freedom. I'm the voice of silence. I am speechless.

Patience: *recites the first two paragraphs of the "Woman from America" by Bessie Head.*

Harper: I disappointed myself in trying to redeem myself. It feels excruciatingly painful.

Harper lights a cigarette.

Patience: I can only portray what I can see. I can tell you stories that will break your heart even further, but I hope that somehow you will find your way.

Harper: I'm sliced in half. I'm sitting on my feet. But I try to get up. I don't know where to go from here. It's interesting being in a woman's body with masculine intentions. I miss his penis.

Moffie tells the story of his ghost. He stands as one is standing before a mirror. He touches parts of his face. He then starts to make circular movements on his face. The movements spread to his neck, down to his chest, and they become bigger. They end up at his crotch, which he suddenly grabs. He lets out a silent scream and falls to his knees. He gets up, stands at attention, then carries on scavenging artefacts.

Ill: The body is the garden of the soul. I see damage. I see stories told by scars. I don't think there's only one way to be human. The idea of what it means have changed so much.

Femme touches her crotch and places a finger on her lips. It is her corporeal signification for being female. Angelika places her hand on her forehead, looks away, and crouches down. It is her corporeal signification for being female.

Patience: She was young when she married. He had nothing. She spent her whole life going on her own adventures. *She walks towards a piece of rubble, and hands it to Harper.*

Harper: Then she fell in love with a man who gave her confidence, but she still felt she wasn't good enough. She started to punish herself

Patience: She stayed in her loveless marriage, because she thought it's all she truly deserves

Child finds a bottle. She tells a story with it with her body. She lifts the bottle up high, looks at it, and places it down. She then spins her body over her legs, as if reaching out, then brings her body in as if hiding from something. She rolls over the ground, to and fro, picks up the bottle again, and rolls it away from her. She stands up, takes a few steps backwards, then continue to scavenge for more artefacts.

Harper: She felt like a stranger in her own home. She felt that while she couldn't belong somewhere, she needed to belong to someone.

Mother tells the story of her ghost. She walks around rocking a baby, humming a lullaby. The rocking becomes bigger, until she starts to dance in swaying motions. She sways her arms in half moons, and starts to twirl around. She then crouches to the left, and then to the right, after which she buries her face in her arms as if she crying. She lifts her face up, stares in front of her, then continue scavenging for artefacts.

Patience: Always an idea of what someone wanted her to be.

Harper: Except for in her memories.

Writer, Hanekom, and Moffie spread out their legs and touch their crotches and their heads. For them, it symbolises sexuality.

III: An apocalypse. Fire. I see light and heat. Light in the darkness. We will redeem ourselves but we need to burn. Burn the body so that it can bloom. It won't happen overnight. It will be a series of events.

Writer tells the story of his ghost. He starts by washing his hands. Then he starts to wash his arms, then his face. He suddenly stops, looks straight in front of him, and stretches his right arm out in front of him. He turns his hand around to look at it, takes his hand to the right, then to his knee, then slowly to his crotch. He lets out a silent scream, starts to shake, suddenly stop, puts on a smile, and continues to scavenge for artefacts.

Angelika: I used to talk to myself when I was little. I created my own reality. But it's not acceptable when you're older. It's embarrassing. But I created my own reality. And in that, I could cope with reality. Anxiety and depression and medicine. It's interesting that it's treated so easily. It's all deviation. But you do conform to society.

Moffie finds the helmet, and tells the story with his body. He stands at attention, then starts to make movements with his body as if he is being shoved around. He starts to touch his face and starts to wash his face. He then starts to wash the floor. He starts to run around in circles until he comes to a standstill, touching himself everywhere, until he pretends to jerk himself off, after which he falls down on his knees. He stays there, until Hanekom comes over to give him a kick, after which he starts to scavenge artefacts again.

Harper: There was a man who was supposed to have control over his life, and his woman, or that's what he thought growing up.

Patience: She had ideas of her own. She wanted to be her own hero. She did not fit into his ideas of her own being. *Patience finds a new artefact, gives it to Harper.*

Harper: He watched her go from strength to weakness, from bad to worse, and he was no longer in control. *Harper pushes down from her crotch to her knees, signifying gender. She then lights a cigarette.*

Patience: Who was he if not in power? His identity failed him.

Hanekom tells the story of his ghost. He starts to pace up and down. Suddenly he stops, takes aim, and pretends to shoot. He repeats this three times. The last time, he turns the gun on himself. Unable to shoot, he starts to shake, throws the gun down, and continues looking for artefacts.

Moffie repeats his ghost's story.

Harper: He tried to take his power back, by isolating himself. But a man who fails his relationship is no man at all.

Patience: And that's what he had been told from young. Every voice roaring in his head must have been true.

Femme: Marginalifuckisation. The food must be ready. The sex must be ready. Everything except for me.

Femme opens her legs and bends over backwards to signify sexuality. Angelika places her hands on her hips and silently screams to signify sexuality. Ill fakes an explosion in front of his penis in order to express sexuality.

Policeman (Hanekom) finds the scarf, tells the story with his body. At first he clenches the scarf in his hand. Then he raises the scarf to the sky. He then tries to step on the scarf. Realising it won't work, he spins the scarf around his body, until he chokes himself with the scarf, after which he throws the scarf on the ground, and goes over to Writer to shove him around before he continues to build on his monument.

Harper: Sex is a sin.

Patience: So he says another hail Mary.

Harper: Although he realises the hypocrisy of it all. He couldn't escape his desires. But when he did escape to them, he felt freedom.

Patience makes an opening hand gesture before her crotch in order to symbolise sexuality.

Patience: So it was worth it

Harper: The irony he realised was that his sleep was more peaceful after such sinful acts, than it would have been in his wife's arms

Patience: And so he chose not to stop. He led a hard life. He was forced into a world where sexuality meant nothing more than power. But he freed himself from that by becoming his own agent. He freed himself from the past that was raping him.

Harper: And he freed himself from me.

Child tells the story of her ghost. She jumps up, run in a circle, makes a leap, stops turns around, runs in the opposite direction and makes a cart wheel. As soon as she gets up, you see her backing away slowly, then all of a sudden she falls down, her face covered in one hand, the other hand outstretched as if to protect herself, then slowly she just falls over, as if she's passed out. She lies there for a while before she gets back up to scavenge for artefacts.

Harper: What if, we have it all backwards. And what we see is a dream? But when we dream, we're actually awake, in reality.

Harper does a little round jump in order to signify a child-like image.

Patience: It makes more sense than the lives we choose to live. More sense than the 9–5. We pay, to be able to pay. For that family, for the job that you may not want.

Harper: What if, when you dream, while you're awake, you catch little pieces of what's real, in this so called reality. At the end of the day, reality is just chemicals in your brain. What if you could choose your chemicals?

Mother repeats the story of her ghost.

Femme: What is normal? I'm still trying to answer myself. Poes is not mainstream. Everything else is normal.

Angelika: There are pros and cons to being othered. It produces historical redirection. It's a failure of normative expectations. It depends on the seat of power. The other is the binary.

Patience: There was the story of a man who othered himself through his own desires. By doing so, he broke so many hearts.

Hanekom repeats the story of his ghost

Harper: His happiness is as important as anyone else's. Sometimes when you love someone you have to do the opposite to do what you want to do, in order to live and let live.

Mother stands at attention in order to echo Moffie and to signify gender. Writer echoes her move three second after.

Patience: They say that love happens, almost as if you don't really have a choice, and yet you chose to stay. He chose instead to find himself.

Harper: And who are you to stop him? But what about your happiness?

Patience: What about what you wanted? What about your dreams? You let them die to love him

Harper: Am I now free to go and taste them? Either way, the rejection makes you want to escape, because you were obviously never good enough.

Policeman (Hanekom) finds the clothing and tells its story with his body. He wraps the clothing around his body, then walks bent over as if he is carrying a heavy burden. He then starts to shake and silently screams as if the clothing is burning him. He throws the clothing on the ground and falls to his knees.

Patience: It's always the same thing. A blinding heat. Passion. Fire. Until you realise it's what it is in the sky.

Harper: The sweet freedom is made bitter by this guilt. Damned if you do and damned if you don't.

Patience: And if you do, what you want to do, is wrong, are you forced to kill yourself to be right? There was the story of the man who did too much. Too much to forgive himself.

Both Harper and Patience stand at attention.

Harper: He can hardly escape himself louder than what I can escape myself.

Element: extreme cold. Silent wind.

Policeman walks towards the angels to join them. While he walks he recites the following:

Policeman: Pain, suffering, lies... work. Constant pain is the work I do and constant pain is the air I breathe. You look at me and all you can see is past, but not present. When I look in the mirror, I see past. Present. With no future. How does one say he's sorry and mean it? No way in hell. You say the pain, I am the torment. (*shoots himself*)

All three of the angels stand at attention in order to signify gender

Angelika: I've never felt this guilty for breathing life. There's gospel playing in the background. It should be hope? It wasn't always for me. I survived. You did not. You tasted the sweet comfort of death. Eternal sleep. I remember my own calm. But I'm glad to be here now. Yet it tastes bitter. I'm sorry you had to feel that you had to cut your own wings in order to fly. But I do not blame you. This world can be a cruel place. I do not know your reason. I do hope you find the rest I could never find. I hope to find that through struggle. Even though I'm tired. Not too tired. As you were. I do not blame you. I do not think you're selfish. I think you're just tired. And there was no rest. Except for sleep. You broke hearts. You broke your own. Find sleep. And next time, I don't know.

Writer repeats the story of his ghost

Harper: They say you can cure anything with the mind. But anxiety exhausts the mind. So where do you find the power to think yourself better?

Mother finds the poem "She became the Mother again". She tells the story with her body. She rubs the book on the side of her face. She then throws the book into the air. After she

catches the book, she makes a twirl. She moves the book down the left of her, then the right, then the middle, after which she lifts her right leg, lifts the book into the air and opens the book. She then crouches her body inwards, after which she places the book by her monument, hugs herself and twirl to the right in order to signify femininity, and continue to scavenge for artefacts.

Patience: Especially when you see the effect it has on those you love. You watch your daughter choose to stay and take care of you, in the prime of her life

Harper touches her left foot, lifts her hand into the air and makes a circle, in order to signify disease. She then lights a cigarette.

Harper: And you can't help but think to yourself, how selfish sickness can be. So if the body and the mind works together, then eliminating the existence of one, will surely extinguish the other, and you're left wondering, which one leads to both, the mind or the body? Either way, with eliminating, everyone's lives will be a lot easier. But then which heaven do you get into?

Writer finds the police officer's boots. He tells its story with his body. He takes the one boot, picks it up, and rubs it, almost as if to bring about a genie. He then tries to pick up the other boot, but it's too heavy. He then places his feet in these boots, and tries to walk, but he can't move. He gives up, steps out of the boots, and does a little twirl of freedom. He then touches his face and goes on his knees, in order to signify an image of race. Directly after him, the angels copy this last movement.

Patience: Then there's the story of the man who is ill. Ill of body. And the mind falls. It's the red disease, the gay cancer, but it has taken so many of my children. They deteriorate before my eyes. They fall, and I am helpless.

Angelika: The body produces a primitive response. The rejection of the self. The body loses itself. The body is rejected and won't function. The body can't react.

Harper: How does one start?

Patience: There's the story of the mother who lost her love to illness. She has been told that all her suffering and pain was preparing her for something better. She did not cease to believe. *Patience finds another artefact to give to Harper. She touches her face and goes on her knees, in order to signify race.*

Harper: Something better... to her. Would be not to feel anything anymore. But numbness is almost as selfish as the illness itself.

Patience: But what choice did she have? Sometimes to be numb is the only way to get through the harder days. And so she chose to feel nothing.

Harper: Nobody chooses their illness, but you can choose who you.... Does the person choose you, or does the person choose to give you the illness? Who truly betrayed her?

Element: warmth, a small fire

Patience: She let go of every opinion, every belief, all her religion. Maybe to find herself as to lose herself.

Harper: In hindsight, she realises, without a doubt, that growth implies change.

Patience: After all, change is inescapable. The act of running away is in itself a process of change.

Child touches herself everywhere, then pretends to vomit, in order to signify disease.

Harper: You can choose to stay stuck, to avoid the change, or you can change yourself, and keep moving forward. Its survival of the fittest. Adapt or die... and she was too strong to die

Mother finds her child's toy. She tells the story with her body. She gives two steps forward, holding the toy while smiling, she then gives a big twirl while holding the toy in the air. She crouches inwards with the toy, after which she throws the toy into the air twice. She runs in a circle with the toy, suddenly stops, runs backwards, bends backwards with the toy in the air, then slowly she places the toy down, after which she just walks away.

Patience: Elizabeth redeems herself in the laughter of her son as he plays at the river. The laughter bounces across the walls of her house and mind, banishing all the demons that lay in wait in the dark. She excels in the laughter wrapping it around herself like a child's blanket protecting her from the boogeyman in her life. She runs to her son to join in his laughter in his life. In the knowledge that he is a shield to keep the cold dark away.

Mother walks to join the angels. She recites the following:

The Mother: Cleaning and scrubbing. Cleaning and scrubbing. Clean. Scrub. Dirt. Clean. Scrub. Sick. Clean. Clean. Clean. Come clean my boy, please. Clean of sin, clean of pain,

clean of you. You. You are so old in your skin with holes. You would think it were me who needed you. But here I am. Cleaning you, healing you, easing your path of lonely pain. Your skin is so lonely clinging so close to your bones. I am here. Here to clean, clean your lonely bones, your holy skin. Come clean my boy. Come clean.

Writer finds the ball. He tells its story. He picks up the ball, looks at it from all angles, laughs and throws it into the air. After catching the ball, he takes it to Child, crouches down by her side, and hands her the ball. At first she is hesitant, but then she takes the ball. Writer walks away to scavenge more artefacts.

Patience: We were once young. We used to play.

Patience does a twirl to signify childlikeness. The angels and Mother copy her, and in slow-motion, Hanekom copies them.

Harper: This child deep down was always sad

Patience: It's a big change. Going from child to adult.

Harper: And sometimes not so big. The rest of us get hips.

Writer finds the beer bottle. He tells its story. He takes the bottle and pretends to be at a bar. He talks to and cheers an imaginary friend. He takes a sip of the bottle, after which he doesn't feel so well. He stares at the bottle, becomes dizzy, and goes to sit down. Eventually he places his head in his hands, let the bottle roll away, and just sits there.

Element: bigger fire. Unspoken anger

Patience: The rest of us lose ourselves in words. In what life gives us to deal with. The rest of us have no choice but to grow up.

Harper: But being ill. You let it be. You go back to being child. And sometimes that is frustrating. You don't have any power over it.

Patience: There is the story of a man who could not let it be. Yes, he had no power over any of it. His fate was inserted into him while he could barely breathe the night lights. He could not hear his lover's breathing as he inserted him with death. He could only read of the consequences in the papers.

Harper: Instead of taking his love away, the lover gave him too much. Ultimately, his lover loved him so much that he handed him death on a broken platter.

Child and Moffie repeat the stories of their ghosts.

Patience: It was like tasting death. It was like being a walking corpse.

Harper: And it was a real kick in the balls to realise that a piece of paper can be more honest than a lover.

Patience: He looked him in the eyes, and died. He was supposed to be... he was supposed to be his heaven scent.

Harper: It may as well have been a jail sentence, because either way, he is paying for his sins now. And the piece of paper in his hand, is merely the invoice. They say you are who you are in relation to the objects around you. And this object in his hand has decided for him who he is. As if his punisher was the script writer, and his diagnosis the script. This was a hard part to play.

Writer leaves to join the angels while reciting the following. The angels, along with Hanekom and Mother, touch their faces, then their bodies, pretend to throw up then fall on their knees. This is in order to signify race and disease.

Writer: As long as it took, I eventually realised that to be relieved, I would have to let it go. So, I wrote it down. As I wrote, I began to feel alive again, a sort of catharsis if you will. Actions speak louder than words, or so you would think. In this moment, the pen proved mightier than the sword.

Angelika: I'm negotiating my redemption. I am negotiating my progress. But I'm regressing. My deviation allowed me to negotiate. There's holiness in deviation. You can access the spiritual. But you want to be accepted by society again.

Moffie finds the jacket. He starts to dance with it. He pretends that he's at a dinner party. At some point he stops the dancing, because his imaginary boyfriend proposed to him. He accepts the proposal, and starts to scavenge more artefacts in a cheerful, dancing manner.

Harper: This boy, was he a man or a fairy?

Patience: A bit of both. But never fully the man that he was expected to be. Maybe something more. After all, they killed our men by making them.

Harper: So... a fairy, who could not bring it to himself to marry a witch. Homosexual. Queer. Gay. So many names to one pair of genitals.

Femme: The GAYS have never really bothered me. Nothing different. Same rights. Same privileges? Love has no boundaries. It's human to want. The sex is hot. But the love is not right. And this is what we conform to.

Patience: You know what you prefer. But there's no name to it. You want to dance.

Angelika: They say it's not HOMOSEXUAL if it's not same sex practice. It's a sexual need to be satisfied. And that's what he did. You go there because you want to. To the park. And that's because he wanted to. They try to avoid the normative association. It becomes a chosen identity.

Mother, Hanekom and Writer cover one another's genitals while blowing into their hands. This is to convey images of sexuality.

Femme: You had no guidelines. You had to find it through yourself. You had to find it any way you can. You're just a man in a different way. You still care. Still love. You had to hide to redeem yourself. But that is no true redemption. You're redeemed through acceptance and freedom. Through yourself. Through a lack of self-criticism. Love yourself. Still it's not that easy. Forgive, as hard as it is. Reject that which rejects you. Do not be emasculated by masculinity, even if that is what you possess.

Element: the fire gets bigger

Patience: And doesn't the world like to tell you who you are? Doesn't it take pleasure in telling you what to wear, what to want, and who to love?

Harper lights a cigarette

Harper: What is life worth if it's all pretend? She read once, that the meaning of life was simply to love, and off course, anything without meaning, is meaningless. If it's meaningless, doesn't that make it redundant? It's not living, if there's no quality of life. And it's not dying, if there was no life before-hand.

Femme: O be a rebel. Say to them I'm cutting my puppet strings, and I will live my life so, to please and release myself. I'm not you.

Harper and Patience covers one another's genitals and blow into their hands in order to convey images of sexuality.

Moffie walks to join the angels while reciting the following:

Moffie: You know I love the smell of Blue Ice Spray. That is the smell I always wanted in my Closed-Dark-World. That world was so empty. I was all alone in it. Every day it felt as if big walls are breaking in front of me. The window doors broke just as I try to look through it for something that is beautiful. But what is beautiful? I don't know what beautiful is nor do I know what the feeling is. As I beg for hope with the door, the windows cracked in my face. In reality the glass is a metaphor for abuse. It's a creation which the human used for a Closed Dark World. Many humans loves this genre. For this Dom-ding, Billy Poes or King. That is what I usually called him.

Now imagine this: Jou varknek, jy is niks in die lewe nie. Jy is dom en het 'n IK van hoenderkak. Jy moet uit daardie klein wereld van jou kom. Jou koolkop jy moet die skottelgoed gaan was en maak jou sister se donnerse sandboks skoon. Gee my water aan wat 'n halwe meter voor my staan. Maak my toilet skoon en was die vloere op jou kniee. As jy 'n mop gebruik dan wetter ek jou. Gaan kyk na jou broer buite en as hy seerkry dan bliksem ek jou dood. He wanted me to be Billy Poes like him. He wanted me to be this fucking cunt. But I can't.

We live in this century were we use technology to study the impossible. To study in church that what is right but not wrong. We accept in church that we must not do sin. We take this sin and live with it and asked for forgiveness. It's not a choice and it lives inside all of us. We made this sin and we put it in our everyday lifestyle. This is not right nor wrong but just different. This is me, I was born. I was born for hurt, I was born for rape, I was born for difficulties, I was born to make choices, I was born to be loved and to love, I was born to be gay, I was born so that you can see me as what I am. I was born to make an impact, I was born to live, I was born.

I am a moffie!

III jumps forward

III: A mindshift!!! There must be a mind shift. People need a mind shift. People differ too much on what they want from the future. We need to act together. You need to act together. And so the great work begins.

Angelika: Effeminate still refers to being male. Is the female still feminine? Are masculinity and effemininity truly opposite, or building from the same bricks?

Patience: We think we're moving. But we're spiralling. We're moving towards a great abyss where we forget ourselves. Our bodies are overcome with the illness that labels and indoctrinates us into species, instead of beings. We need a different kind of progress.

Femme: Progress is up to shit. People are sheep and keep on repeating mistakes of history. You're still suppressed my girl. Still seen as the lesser. Are you satisfied?

Ill: Ah yes, progress. Hmm. Progress is good until a point. We need to change. But we need to be careful on how we go about it. It's not good to stand still. I realise that now. We need to move forward. I've learned that.

Angelika: Progress is an interesting concept. You're progressing, but in limits. For society to progress would mean that you should place more detail on the deviancies of yourself. You will always look after that. And have it under control.

Il, Femm, Hanekom, Writer and Mother clench their fists to their forehead and their other hands grab their stomachs, in order to signify mental illness

Child repeats the story of her ghost

Element: big fire. Anger much

Harper: It's our deviancies that we can't control. Being ill. Ill of the body and ill of the mind. Being a child. Being treated like a child. Being this thing called woman. I carry my cunt as if it's a death sentence. And the world keeps on spinning and no one hears you scream to stop, just for a while, stop and listen.

Angelika: Being female is to be the ultimate other. The female body can never gain a masculine status. Is that because of the beautiful patriarchy? You all know that one. Can the ultimate masculine only be male?

Femme: Respect. Equality. This is progress. Why stand still? We need to move minds. We need to change.

Angelika: It's not that history has necessarily changed for women, but she carries the stigmas, it's a burden she has to carry. There's a power that can never be thrown off. Those histories and stigmas and you name it, but woman can be free.

Femme: You really get treated like a dumb cunt. You're dumb. Respect is a voyage, just because you're female.

Patience: It's sad that we have to adjust. The only way to get power is to climb the ladder. We are still finding our own voice, although it's always there.

Angelika: But wait... the female is coming out of the landscape. The female is no longer part of the landscape, but she has a form, a voice, a history. Is the female white body pure? Is the black body then impure? And it cannot be controlled, like the white body?

Femme, III, Hanekom, Writer, Child and Mother touch their faces then fall to their knees in order to signify race.

Patience: It is what it is. It's just being alive. You just are. There's nothing more than skin.

Harper: I've questioned myself. Again. Everything changes. I grow. I don't know anymore. Do others reject me or do I reject myself? I am different as a girl.

Patience: You're the prisoner. You're running. You have to run away from a legacy. You run away from yourself. (*More to self*)

Harper: Madness is a death sentence. Everything that makes your life, your life, is taken away, and you become a ghost. What's the point of living, if you're a ghost in anyway?

Patience: Fighting anything through thoughts that make no sense.

Harper: Sometimes you can live one thing and do it's opposite. You can love a man with all your heart, and still think what could have been. You know your life would be so different with a different man, and part of you is a bird in a cage. But that bird knows that it's safe in its cage, and it's fed, and even if it's not completely loved, its presence is appreciated. Or at least acknowledged.

Patience: It had felt like freedom once. But soon you realise that your wings were not free to soar.

Child clenches her fist to her forehead and the other hand grabs her stomach in order to signify mental illness. She then finds her favourite toy and tells a story with it. At first, she rolls around on the ground with it. Then she jumps up, stretches the toy out in front of her, and starts to spin around until she becomes dizzy. She puts the toy down and does a cartwheel. She starts to dance around the toy. She grabs the toy, runs up to Harper, then runs back and places the toy at her Monument. She then sits down to listen to the rest of the stories.

Element: breath. More calm

Harper: You're like the princess in the tower, except the key is in your back pocket. Forever is a very long time, an eternity incomprehensible. How sure can a young girl really be about forever?

Patience: I am forever what I am. And it's not just skin anymore. I carry the histories of my landscape on my back. And I too, am tired. Just like you, I chose the wrong lover. I chose silence. Like you, I need to soar. Like you, I need to be free. I need to speak.

Harper: Then what is it really like, being black? If you don't mind me asking.

Patience: Being black is amazing. Being made to feel black... soiled, greased, greased and grinded, unwanted, unloved, unappreciated, she walked through life picking up labels, and they treated her like she was a trash can. And you die inside. Maybe she believed she was unworthy.

Harper lights a cigarette

Harper: Just another load of trash into the landfill, to poison the soil.

Patience: Until she stands in the fire, and warms herself up in her own sense of redemption. It hurts, but there's a way. There must be. All her suffering cleans away the dirt, a painful resurrection.

Harper: The very same resurrection, she was once told, would be given her with water.

Patience. Water. Silence. The soothing voice that says it is better not to speak. Do not go to war. Do not cause a fight.

Harper: Nothing can be created without destruction taking place first. The phoenix can only rise from the ashes, and the ashes can only come from fire. And so she needed to find the fire to stand in, so that she may soar.

Patience: But she had wings, didn't she? Wings as broad as daydreams. Finally she could see, she was far more than she let herself be.

Harper: She had been going about it all the wrong way, with water in the first place. In water, she was looking for an angels' wings, when she could have found her own in the flames.

Child reveals the painting of Harper in flames with a baby she had at her monument. She takes it to Harper while saying the following:

Child: I am questioning my own sexuality. I'm pressurising myself into abusement. I'm always running away from it, towards trouble. Is there a way in? I feel emptiness. No innocence. No playing. Empty. I try to find happiness and joy from myself. I fly for freedom. Normal is being defined as being part of the majority. If the majority is not unique, then what is it to be different?

Patience: Your trouble was never with the man that broke your heart. Your trouble was with the child that was dying inside of you. Your trouble was that you were too different, always in the wrong. Your trouble is that you had to accept it, to learn to love yourself. Your voice was silenced through your deviancies, as was mine. Today I spoke of fragments, tomorrow I will tell stories and I will not stop talking. We need a different kind of progress. And we will have this progress through standing still. Through changing direction. We will think and we will be different. We will be woman. We will be queer.

All of the angels and writers: Higher and higher I will. Higher above the sky I will. Above the sky. When I rise. The troubles shall remain. The pain shall be healed. When I rise. I shall fly above. Reaching for the sky I will. My wings I shall spread.

Patience and Harper: *singing "Meet me on the Battlefield"*

Meet me on the Battlefield: Svercina (2016)

No time for rest
No pillow for my head
Nowhere to run from this
No way to forget

Around the shadows creep
Like friends, they cover me
Just wanna lay me down and finally
Try to get some sleep

We carry on through the storm
Tired soldiers in this war
Remember what we're fighting for

Meet me on the battlefield
Even on the darkest night
I will be your sword, your shield, your camouflage
And you will be mine

Echos and the shots ring out
We may be the first to fall
Everything can stay the same or we can change it all

Meet me on the battlefield

We stand face-to-face
With our unhuman race
We commit the sins again and our sons and daughters pay
Our tainted history, it's playing on repeat
But we could change it if we stand up strong and take the lead

When I was younger, I was named
A generation unafraid
(For years to come, be brave)

And meet me on the battlefield
Even on the darkest night
I will be your sword, your shield, your camouflage

And you will be mine

Echos and the shots ring out
We may be the first to fall
Everything can stay the same or we can change it all

Meet me on the battlefield

We carry on through the storm
Tired soldiers in this war
Remember what we're fighting for

Meet me on the battlefield
Even on the darkest night
I will be your sword, your shield, your camouflage
And you will be mine

Echos and the shots ring out
We may be the first to fall
Everything can stay the same or we can change it all
(We can change it all)

Meet me on the battlefield

Meet me on the battlefield
(We could change it all)